Increased CBS interceptions on late Valencias the focus of thorough analysis, says CGA spokesperson

South African citrus industry to add new CBS mitigation measures

Spanish agricultural union UNIÓ de Llauradors regards the increased number of CBS interceptions on South African citrus during the latter part of the 2017 season as evidence that the South African industry isn't taking the pest seriously, a claim the South African industry denies.

"The industry has done a serious analysis of factors relating to CBS incidences during the 2017 season and have added two measures to strengthen the CBS risk management system to further mitigate the risk to Europe," responds a South African industry spokesperson, adding that these additional measures will shortly be communicated by the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) to its European counterparts. "A comprehensive report on this matter will follow early in December."

A shortage of juicing oranges due to an early end to the Brazilian season and the impact of Hurricane Irma on the Florida industry, stimulated demand for South African Valencias in Europe. South African exporters responded briskly to the unexpected opportunity, shipping volumes rising from 44.9 million cartons at the end of week 38 to 50.8 million equivalent 15kg cartons by the end of week 44.

According to the UNIÓ de Llauradors, there were nineteen interceptions of quarantine pests on South African citrus fruits with quarantine pests in October, of which 13 occurred on oranges, two on lemons and one on tangerines. Of this number, fifteen were of citrus black spot (*Guignardia citricarpa*) and one of false codling moth.

"Up until October, authorities had intercepted 37 shipments of citrus fruits from South Africa with pests on European Union territory. In 2016, authorities intercepted 21 shipments, in 2015 forty-four, and in 2014 fifty-three shipments; so this year's data indicates that the South Africans have returned to their old ways," the union continued, complaining that the European Union was unresponsive to their phytosanitary concerns.

In October the South African citrus industry decided to pro-actively end the export season early in response to these CBS interceptions, saying that the decision was taken as a measure to ensure continued access in future to the European market.

The Citrus Growers' Association's research commercialisation company, River Bioscience Pty (Ltd), in conjunction with research institution Citrus Research International, recently launched a new fungicide against CBS called RB1™, the only pesticide with the active ingredient of Dipotassium phosphate. In his weekly newsletter, CGA CEO Justin Chadwick reiterated the seriousness with which the industry regards CBS: "Regulation EC/422/2014, which is applicable to South African citrus entering the European Union (EU), requires 100 percent control of CBS on export fruit to the EU."

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