FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (48/09)

Justin Chadwick (4 December 2009) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:" *The only sure thing about luck is that it will change" Bret Harte*

BIOSECURITY

South Africa is very much aware of it's obligations in terms of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) which aims to reduce the spread of invasive pests and diseases around the world. Therefore it was concerning when press reports circulated regarding alleged interceptions of pests associated with South African citrus in the EU. Fortunately an EU Citrus Experts Working Group set the facts straight when EU Plant Health (DG SANCO) presented the 2009 interception figures – interceptions from South Africa had dropped by almost 75% in 2009 (as compared to 2008). This follows renewed vigilance by both the South African citrus industry and regulatory authorities over the past year. Given the favorable report from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) and the reduced level of interceptions the industry and South African plant health authorities should be applauded for striving to comply with regulations that we all know are inappropriate. The only pest risk assessment ever prepared on CBS concluded that the present EU requirements are inappropriate and are not scientifically justified. Some seventeen years after the introduction of these measures by the EU, trade is still restricted by these uneccessary requirements.
As Asiatic citrus greening further threatens the citrus industry in the USA and central America we need to remain vigilant regarding possible incursions into South Africa. All possible measures must be put in place to keep the disease out. It is therefore somewhat alarming that the call for a statutory Citrus Improvement Scheme (CIS) remains unanswered. It is simply too risky to leave loopholes for the possible importation of contaminated material. The government has the ability to enact the required legislation, and should be urged by the whole industry to do so before it's too late. Many growers' are seeking to get the latest and best cultivars, and those commercializing the new cultivars could be tempted to take short cuts to get a revenue stream going as soon as possible. Without regulated control there is always a risk of somebody taking a short cut that costs the industry dearly.

INNOVATIVE MARKETING

One thing that the recession has done is brought about some innovative marketing as retailers try to capture as much of a dwindling consumer purse as possible. In August in the UK M& S reported on the launch of baby lemons – and the Fresh Produce Journal reported as follows "Marks & Spencer is launching some of the smallest lemons ever sold on the high street this week as it looks to capitalise on the summer gin & tonic market. The Baby Lemons, supplied by Mack Multiples, are just 30-40mm as opposed to standard large lemons which are between 63- 68mm - almost double in size. The retailer is marketing the South African-grown product as "ideal for cutting in half and using in your summer gin & tonic, baby lemons mean the end of any left-over lemon wasting away in your fridge" and will be aimed at consumers using them with salads, grilled fish and drinks. M&S lemon specialist Stuart Henderson said: "These baby lemons are very cute and eye-catching. They are great as an elegant slice in your evening G&T or used as a sophisticated new garnish for your summer dishes. "We are always on the look out for new varieties of the traditional fruit or veg to make things more exciting for our customers and our new baby lemon does just that." The move comes after M&S launched its 25-45mm Tiny Pear grown in Malta last week."
In this week's press we read about Clementiny – "The world's smallest citrus fruit -- a third the size of its larger cousin at just four cms wide and two cms high -- is now available in Britain. Known as the Clementiny, it's being sold at Tesco supermarket chain which is also offering other mini fruits, including baby bananas, mini mangoes and fun-sized apples, as part of a Christmas range, the 'Daily Mail' reported. Marketing experts believe it will appeal to small children because of its easy-to-peel skin, absence of pips and high juice content. Children often find normal-sized fruit difficult to eat, a spokesman for the store said."
So the retailer can use the same shelf space to sell more smaller fruit at a price that is attractive to the consumer but does not dent the retailers bottom line – very clever.
As in the case of lemons this does give an opportunity to sell fruit that in the past had been considered too small, but this could be at the expense of our traditional popular counts.
And a UK retailer has also innovated with a revised Buy One Get One Free (BOGOF) offer – its now BOGOFL – Buy One Get One Free Later where customers get a coupon which can be redeemed by the consumer at a later date. The retailer claims that this initiative will reduce waste as consumers will only go home with what they plan to consume.

PACKED AND SHIPPED 2009

There are no changes to last week – so we can safely say the season is concluded with 81.8 million cartons shipped.

To Week 47 – Million 15Kg cartons	Packed	Packed	Packed	Shipped	Shipped	Original Estimate	Latest Prediction	Final Packed	Final Shipped
Source : PPECB	2007	2008	2009	2008	2009	2009	2009	2008	2008
Grapefruit	14.3 m	12.8 m	14 m	12.4 m	13.7m	15.1 m	14 m	12.8 m	12.4 m
Soft Citrus	6.8 m	7.3 m	6.8 m	6.5 m	6 m	7.4 m	6.8 m	7.3 m	6.5 m
Lemons	7.3 m	9.6 m	8.7 m	8.8 m	7.7 m	9.4 m	8.7 m	9.6 m	8.8 m
Navels	18.7 m	21.5 m	19.4 m	21.3 m	19.1 m	21.6 m	19.4 m	21.5 m	21.2 m
Valencia	43.5 m	43.1 m	38.5 m	40.7 m	35.3 m	43 m	38.5 m	43.1 m	40.4 m
	90.6 m	94.3 m	87.4 m	89.7 m	81.8 m	96.5 m	87.4 m	94.3 m	89.3 m

YOUR LEVY WORKING FOR YOU – GROWER LEVIES ARE USED TO FUND THE ACTIVITIES OF CGA, CRI AND THE CITRUS ACADEMY