GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (10/2010)

John Edmonds (8 April 2010) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)
Exchange Rate at 16:25 R/$ 7.32 R/€ 9.77 R/£ 11.13

US: Orange industry quietly going seedless

California's citrus industry is undergoing a significant transition as it tries to make seeded fruit part of its past. Most of the former tree fruit acreage recently planted to citrus is in areas that are among the warmest during the winter months. However, other growers are pushing the envelope by planting in areas traditionally colder in December and January. A degree or two makes a big difference… Among the winners in the transition and the barely noticeable expansion into historically colder areas have been the manufacturers of frost-protection equipment, notably the suppliers of wind machines. Wind machines are like a good warm jacket that protects you in normal winter weather. But when the temperature drops precipitously and stays there, neither a warm jacket nor a wind machine protects completely…One of the question marks hanging over the current expansion/transition is the work of bees. When they collect pollen in orchards of seeded varieties, they often pollinate the next seedless planting they visit, making the hybrids susceptible to seeding. The citrus and bee industries are trying to resolve this issue, but the bees don't always respond to their logic… many citrus growers are placing netting over their trees in the early spring in anticipation of heavy bee flights in and out of seeded citrus orchards and other tree fruit and nut plantings, especially almonds.
[appeal-democrat.com; 6 April 2010]

US: 'Black Spot' discovered

Florida citrus growers already struggling with the costs of controlling the fatal citrus greening disease face a new economic threat from black spot, a fungal disease discovered last month in Immokalee. Once black spot spreads across Florida - which appears inevitable, although it could take many years - growers face increased production costs and smaller harvests because the disease leads to premature fruit drop. The disease could also lead to another ban on sales of fresh Florida citrus fruits in other citrus-producing states, notably California, and other countries in an effort to keep the disease out. "It seems like we can't catch a break right now," said G. Ellis Hunt Jr., president of Hunt Bros. Inc., a family citrus grower and fresh fruit shipper in Lake Wales. "Most growers are up against the wall on the cost of production. Nobody can stand additional costs right now."
[TheLedger.com; 6 April 2010]

What are the production trends for fruits?
The most produced fruit in the world, measured by quantity, are watermelons with 94.494.180 tons of them being produced in the year 2008, followed by bananas (85.998.770 tons), apples (65.430.881 tons), oranges (64.718.891 tons) and grapes (63.314.213 tons). In 2008 production of nearly all Top 10 products was above the figures for 2007, with the exception of plantains which were down in their production by 1.03%. Looking at a longer perspective, the production of the Top 5 commodities indicates that the 2008 production of all with the exception of grapes (down by 3.11%) was above the average of the previous five years.
[Freshfel; 2 April 2010]

SA grapefruit aims for UK boost

A promotional campaign for South African grapefruit in the UK is to focus on educating consumers and highlighting the eating quality of modern varieties. The sector joined the cross-category Beautiful Country, Beautiful Fruit campaign this year, contributing up to R9 million (£813,000) to the initiative. The aim is to increase volume sales to the UK by 10 per cent on 2008, without dropping prices.
[FPJ; April 2010]

ClemenGold ramps up UK presence

The UK's major supermarkets are set to embark upon a new promotional campaign for a premium clementine as increases in worldwide supply strengthen the product. The ClemenGold will be supported with packaging and promotional activity designed to develop the market further and introduce the fruit to more shoppers in Tesco, Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer, Morrisons and Asda. The fruit has established itself in the major UK supermarkets during the British summer over the past six years – a time when high-quality clementines have traditionally been in short supply. But this is the first co-ordinated campaign for the high-class product, which has a network of growers worldwide. The campaign will focus on the southern hemisphere main season from mid-July to mid-September – from sources including South Africa, Australia, Argentina and Uruguay – with future promotions set to encompass the northern hemisphere. The aim is to gain continuity of supply for at least nine months of the year to allow momentum to build behind the product, which already has campaigns scheduled in Europe and the Far East as part of a long-term marketing strategy.
The campaign will include tasting events in stores, information booklets and a competition to win a holiday, as well as online advertising and samples distributed to journalists working in the trade and consumer press. Sampling activities at key outdoor leisure venues are also planned.
[FPJ; April 2010]

If you need more information on any of these issues, or if there is anything else that CGA can assist with, please contact us at 031 7652514, or johne@cga.co.za
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