

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (38/2010)

John Edmonds (12 November 2010)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Current Exchange Rate	R/\$ 6.89	R/€ 9.45	R/£ 11.12
Last Week:	R/\$ 6.83	R/€ 9.67	R/£ 11.05
Last Year:	R/\$ 7.36	R/€ 11.04	R/£ 12.28

Florida Citrus Florida grapefruit season gets out to a slow start

VERO BEACH, Fla. — This year's Florida grapefruit season is marked by a slow start caused by later maturing and smaller-sized fruit. The season got off to a late start this fall because of failing fruit maturity tests. Instead of starting in early and mid-October, the later-maturing fruit caused harvesting to start about two weeks behind schedule. Shippers describe the start as puzzling as two months of drought conditions stopped fruit growth and delayed maturities and juice levels, making growers and packers struggle to meet maturity levels during harvesting... "A lot of people think the bloom was later, and it was, but it was prolonged and stretched the deal out," Genke said in late October.

Riverfront Groves LLC planned to begin shipping fruit to Japan in earnest in early November, three weeks later than last season, said Dan Richey, chief executive officer. "This wasn't the year to have a late start because this is a year when we have opportunity because inventories are very low in Europe and Japan," he said. "It's unfortunate because the customers really want our fruit."

According to the USDA, this season's 20.3 million boxes, which consists of 6 million boxes of white and 14.3 million boxes of red, is 1% smaller than last season's 21.7 million cartons.

[www.thepacker.com; 10 November 2010]

Belize: Citrus loses \$32.5 million to Hurricane Richard

Long after Hurricane Richard dissipated over Mexico, its after-effects continue to reverberate among residents of the Stann Creek Valley, which took the brunt of its power at landfall on October 24.

Some 80% of the forecast grapefruit crop (1 million boxes) for 2010-11, amounting to 803,000 boxes, and some 24% of the forecast orange crop (5.6 million boxes), about 1.3 million boxes, were lost on 282 farms. After plugging in the monetary values, the CGA came up with a final figure of \$32.5 million, which does not include damage to citrus trees and recovered oranges and grapefruits. The loss was heaviest in the upper Stann Creek valley, where in farms in Mullins River and Middlesex as many as 100% of certain groves were wiped out.

Richard landed on Belize's shores just three days after the start of crop season 2010-11, and while the factories are taking in recovered mature fruit, the loss of immature fruit still represents a missed opportunity for the growers.

But the hardiness of the orange/grapefruit tree and its natural response to adversity lead the CGA's agronomists to suggest that 2011 and 2012, if the growers hurry to take advantage of the opportunity, may see bumper crops of oranges and grapefruits and an earlier-than-expected recovery for the industry.

[amandala.com.bz ; 8 November 2010]

Californian Navel season starts

The season's first California navel oranges have started to come off the trees, and stores should be full of the fruit in time for Thanksgiving. An autumn of mild and moist weather has aided growth in fruit that is still much smaller than last year, said Bob Blakely, director of industry relations for the Exeter-based California Citrus Mutual. The harvest -- which will last throughout the winter and spring -- has begun in earnest in the past week, and growers started shipping this week. "At the beginning of the season, the quality is always good, so we typically start off with very good utilization," Blakely said. "What was interesting about last year is that it stayed that way throughout the season. ... It's way too early to see how that's going to pan out this year, weather being the determining factor."

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service has predicted that the initial 2010-11 navel orange yield will be 93 million cartons, up from the nearly 81 million cartons of oranges picked in 2009-10. A carton weighs 40 pounds (18kg). The new harvest comes after a 2009-10 crop that growers said was one of the best in recent memory, with upward of 85 percent of fruit being good enough to sell as fresh.

[capitalpress.com, 11 November 2010]

Container lines accused of abusing power

A report on shipping services claims that unless there is wholesale reform of shipping arrangements the South African fruit sector will stagnate and possibly contract.

[reeferrends; 11 November 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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