GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (4/2010)

John Edmonds (12 February 2010)
Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Exchange Rate at 12:20 R/$ 7.69 R/€ 10.44 R/£ 12.05

Disease warning for Florida citrus

The number of citrus groves abandoned in Florida has doubled in just the past two years to 288K acres(117K hectares). *[ReeferTrends; 09 February 2010]*

Chilean fruit floods the US

The lucrative United States citrus market looks like being flooded with Chilean fruit this year. Chile normally sends 400,000 cartons of fruit to the US, but this year it's decided to send one and a half million cartons. Peter Walker, chair of Riversun Exports, who runs the Australian citrus exporting program, says that will have an effect on Australian growers.
[abc.net.au; 08 February 2010]

Freeze damages 7% of Florida citrus

Florida citrus growers lost more than 4 percent of their orange crop and more than 3 percent of their grapefruit crop during last month's freezing weather, according to estimates released yesterday.
The Department of Agriculture forecast put Florida's orange crop in February at 129 million boxes, down from the estimate of 135 million boxes in January. Each box weighs about 90 pounds. Growers were relieved the damage wasn't more extensive, given Florida endured eight straight days of below-freezing temperatures last month.
[Boston.com; 10 February 2010]

SUNRAYSIA'S largest citrus packer withdraws from the Riversun co-operative and will independently export fruit to the US this year

In a letter to growers, Mildura Fruit Company (MFC) managing director Russell Witcombe said the move would save growers money and simplify the supply chain. He said the fruit would still be dispatched to DNE World Fruit Sales, which was appointed by Horticulture Australia as the sole importer of Australian citrus to the US for the 2007-12 seasons. MFC was one of the four foundation shareholders of Riversun Export, formed in South Australia in 1992…
"A large exporter like MFC, has the in-house capability to undertake the US supply and administration and can save the Riversun levy (of $25 per pallet)." Riversun chairman Peter Walker was furious MFC had jeopardised the non-profit Riversun program for the sake of saving $150,000 a year. He said many growers and packers wrongly blamed Riversun for last year's disaster when Chilean exporters diverted an extra 850 million boxes of navels and mandarins from Europe and Japan, after the US Department of Agriculture approved navel imports from Chile.
[weeklytimesnow.com.au; 11 February 2010]

Citrus growers getting squeezed out of US market

Citrus growers in the NSW Riverina are worried about being squeezed out of the US market.
This year, Chile is sending one and a half million cartons of fruit to the US, three times more than its 2009 exports.
Frank Battistel, from Riverina Citrus, says this will now have a major impact on volumes sent from his region.
"It'll probably destroy our premium market, which the US has been in the past and we're definitely going to end up with a lot lesser return and less volumes going into that country," he says.
[abc.net.au; 10 February 2010]

China: Mandarins also fall victim to weather

Fruit dealers were recently informed that China has stopped its shipment of mandarin oranges (lokam) and tangerines (mini lokam) for the season, following complaints from importers that earlier supplies were rotten by the time they reached their destination. The unusually cold weather in China and snowfall spoiled the oranges," said a Wholesale Mart representative. A box of 54 medium-sized honey mandarins which cost RM22 last year is now priced at around RM24 each. At the Kent Fruit Shop in Taman Foh Sang, Luyang, a box of XL Jingxuan mandarin oranges costs as much as RM30. Its boss Kent Sih Chua Khen said the recent cold weather in China and hurricane in Taiwan in August last year forced him to raise the price slightly.
[dailyexpress.com.my; *10 February 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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