

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (01/2011)

John Edmonds (14 January 2011)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Current Exchange Rate	R/\$ 6.82	R/€ 9.04	R/£ 10.77
Last Week:	R/\$ 6.74	R/€ 8.84	R/£ 10.45
Last Year:	R/\$ 7.41	R/€ 10.74	R/£ 12.03

[www.oanda.com/currency/converter/]

US (CA): New navel standard to go into effect

A new standard by which to measure a navel orange's maturity, which will go into effect next harvest season, is projected to lure consumers into purchasing more of California's most popular fruit. Bob Blakely, California Citrus Mutual's director of industry relations, said the new standard, called the California Standard, is "more reliable" in terms of ensuring quality-tasting navels are sold to consumers. "We're hoping the consumer will experience a good-tasting orange early in the season and come back," Blakely said. As opposed to the old standard, the California Standard does not base a navel's maturity on a sugar-to-acid ratio. Rather, a brix-minus-acid formula is used to predict a navel's taste. Brix is a measure of the sugar concentration in a navel, Blakely said. "[The California Standard] is going to be a better indicator of when the fruit is ready," Blakely said. The old standard allowed poor-tasting navels to penetrate the market. Anyone who eats a poor-quality piece of fruit is reluctant to go back and purchase more, Blakely said. The California Standard, which will go into effect for the 2011-2012 harvest season, only will allow mature and quality-tasting navels to enter the market... For 25 years, there has been a consistent decline in the per capita consumption of navels although the per capita consumption of fruits and vegetables has increased, Blakely said. "This is due to increased varieties. Consumers have more choices," Blakely said. "Consumers tend to buy what tastes good, and they tend to go back again and buy what tastes good. That's what we're trying to accomplish."

[Recorderonline.com; 13 January 2011]

Cape baboons discover new fruit

Cape Town - A troop of baboons has inadvertently discovered a new citrus cultivar for a farmer in the Western Cape. Alwyn van der Merwe, production director of ALG Estates near Citrusdal 200km north of Cape Town, said on Wednesday the new fruit has proved to be not only to be sweeter than normal oranges, but will also lengthen the season by at least three weeks. "Year after year the farm has been struck by a troop of baboons which descended from the mountains," van der Merwe said. "The troop always selected one tree among thousands of trees in one of our orchards and devoured all the fruit before our season really got going. "At closer inspection we discovered that the brix (sweetness grade) of this particular minneola, a soft citrus variety, was much higher than the rest of the orchard and that it started bearing fruit at least three weeks earlier than expected." The farmers then set about grafting some shoots of this tree onto standard root stock and passed it on the Citrus Growers Association (CGA) at Uitenhage where the trees are now being multiplied in greenhouse tunnels. "This process takes two years and as soon as we get the clearance from the CGA the trees will then be tested in real orchards all over the country for a period of four years before it is officially registered," van der Merwe said. ALG Estates cultivates 26 different citrus cultivars on 600ha from five farms. The estate boasts the longest citrus season in the country - 10 months - and aims to produce citrus all year round within the next four years. Recently the estate registered a new cultivar, the Swartvlei Late Valencia, which now produces citrus until mid-December. "We were lucky that the baboons' acute sense of smell led them to this particular tree. It was clearly a case of a spontaneous mutation in the orchard, which would have gone unnoticed were it not for the baboons."

[news24.com; 12 January 2011]

AUSTRALIAN citrus fruit dumped in US.

A heat wave in late 2009 had reduced the volume of fruit on trees, which markedly increased the size of the remaining fruit and created softness issues. AgriExchange divisional manager Richie Roberts confirmed the US market had been flooded with large fruit that had failed to meet specifications. "The high exchange rate, presence of Chile in the market, large fruit and softness issues combined to make the US market difficult," Mr Roberts said. Some shipments have been donated to charity. Riverina Citrus export committee member and grower Sue Brighenti said multiple packers had "let down" Australia's export program to the US by sending inferior produce. "We need good quality and smart marketing to stay in the market across the world," Ms Brighenti said.

[weeklytimesnow.com.au; 10 January 2011]

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
YOUR LEVY WORKING FOR YOU – GROWER LEVIES ARE USED TO FUND THE ACTIVITIES OF CGA