

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (02/2011)

John Edmonds (21 January 2011)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Current Exchange Rate	R/\$ 7.02	R/€ 9.48	R/£ 11.19
Last Week:	R/\$ 6.82	R/€ 9.04	R/£ 10.77
Last Year:	R/\$ 7.47	R/€ 10.60	R/£ 12.17

[www.oanda.com/currency/converter]

China: Citrus fruit gets paternity test

The family tree of some of the world's most popular fruit has been deciphered. Citrus fruits have a documented history of cultivation stretching back 4000 years, but until now, no one knew exactly how the fruits were related. A group of researchers from the Southwest University in China used genetic analysis to trace the pedigrees of the sweet, sour and bitter fruits of the Citrus genus. The researchers, led by Zhiqin Zhou, found that both sweet and sour oranges are hybrids of mandarin and pummelo. Grapefruit are hybrids of pummelo and sweet orange. Lemons came from citron and sour oranges. For some fruits, the researchers were even able to determine paternity. Bergamot orange -- a bitter fruit most common in Calabria, Italy -- derived from sour orange mothers and citron fathers. Limes appeared to be a hybrid of a species of Papeda, an Asian citrus fruit, on the maternal side and citron on the paternal. Understanding relationships between citrus trees helps farmers and researchers breed better varieties and avoid disease.

[discovery.com; 19 January 2011]

Japan not a lemon for citrus exports

Japan is spearheading a renewed focus on Asia for the Australian citrus industry, which is bidding to develop high-value alternatives to the deteriorating US export deal. While Australian orange exports were down substantially in 2010 due to the extremely light crop of extraordinary large fruit, the quality-conscious Japanese market shone through. "Japan has been an outstanding market for us this year," says Judith Damiani, CEO of Citrus Australia. "Volumes during our peak July - September season reached 18,000 tonnes, up from 15,500 tonnes in the same period last year, and this looks to be our biggest year yet."

Those volumes make Japan the top export market for Australian citrus in 2010, supplanting the US, which has dropped back to third place behind Hong Kong. "There was a desire by more grower-packers to ship to the fixed-price Japanese market as against the consignment market option of the US this year," noted Brian Charles, general manager of exports for Fresh Produce Group, which has enjoyed "a very good year" in Japan. Japanese buyers are seeking to forge more direct supply links to Australian grower, he said. "They are very keen to know and get involved in direct supply, as against buying from brokers," Charles said. "Quality will always be the main determinant of success. Cheap pricing will never compensate for poor quality."

Similarly, the Australian citrus industry is also keen to gain a better understanding of the Japanese market, and learn how it can further develop its position there, said Damiani. The Japanese market was the focus of a session at this year's national citrus conference, featuring insights from New Zealand kiwifruit marketer Zespri and major citrus importer Celsus Export. But the industry's Asian gaze is not confined to Japan. It is also bidding to improve access to Korea and mainland China, where the need to eradicate the pest fullers rose weevil (FRW) under the protocols has stymied shipments.

"We're taking a systems approach to managing FRW and there's been a lot of good research on it in Australia," said Damiani. "Growers and packers are going to a lot of effort setting aside orchards in order to go out and provide these markets with suitable fruit this coming season." The new fumigant Vapormate also looks set to bring a breakthrough. "We've just finished trialing Vapormate here and presented the results to the Korean quarantine authorities - they're happy with these so we are hopeful of getting a new protocol within two or three years," Damiani said.

[ausfoodnews.com.au ; 20 January 2011]

Australian soft citrus 'unaffected' by floods

Industry body Citrus Australia claims that despite the extensive flooding most growers had escaped major crop damage and had good quality fruit remaining.

[ReeferTrends; 20 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
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