GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (18/2011)

John Edmonds (20 May 2011) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Current Exchange Rate	**R/$ 6.89**	**R/€ 9.83**	**R/£ 11.14**
Last Week:	**R/$ 6.90**	**R/€ 9.80**	**R/£ 11.25**
Last Year:	**R/$ 7.75**	**R/€ 9.52**	**R/£ 11.11**

[www.oanda.com/currency/converter]

HLB insect found in global lemon capital

The insect that carries citrus greening disease has been found in the Argentine province of Tucumán, website Contexto.com.ar reported. Tucumán Citrus Association (ATC) president Roberto Sánchez Loria, told the website there was unrest in the world's biggest lemon-producing region, but authorities were still doing a good job to prevent the disease. Obispo Colombres Agroindustrial Experimental Station (EEAOC) officers discovered the Diaphorina citri insect in the urban forest of San Miguel de Tucumán, but laboratory analysis of host plant samples showed the disease was absent, the story reported. An EEAOC statement said quarantine procedures also involved chemical treatment of trees in the area, as well as the eradication of perennial Murraya paniculata plants nearby. "Based on the results above, it can be confirmed that the presence of D. Citri has been confined to an urban focus point under treatment, and the absence of the disease can be confirmed," the statement said. Citrus greening disease is also known as Huanglongbing (HLB), which means 'yellow dragon' in Chinese…HLB currently exists in 40 countries including Argentina's neighbors Bolivia and Brazil. If the disease is discovered it would pose a serious threat to growers' negotiations for U.S. market entry, as well as existing export relationships.
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 20 May 2011]

Argentine company plans US$50M lemon investment

Argentine company La Moraleja SA plans to invest US$50 million in infrastructure and plantings to double its lemon export harvests in the province of Salta over the coming decade, website Noticias.terra.com.ar reported. La Moraleja president Angel Sanchis made the announcement in a meeting with Salta's Economic Development Minister Julio César Loutaif, while the company's president Maximiliano Klix was also in attendance, the story reported. Klix said the company currently held around 2,000 acres of lemon plantations and planned to double that figure, in addition to the construction of a dam and an irrigation system that did not need energy usage, the story reported. The investments would also involve expansion into the juice processing and oil concentrate industries.
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 20 May 2011]

Port strikes trouble Australian exports

Industrial disputes and strikes at Australia's ports are adding to the woes of exporters challenged by the country's high dollar. Ongoing industrial disputes in Australia's ports are worrying the country's shipping industry, with further potential strikes coming at a particularly bad time for the country's export sector. A long-running pay dispute between the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and company Patrick Stevedores has prompted the company's workers to strike in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Fremantle and Illawarra container ports over the past few weeks. The strikes are expected to affect the movement of around 18,000 containers, according to local media. "Strikes couldn't come at a worse time with Japan affected by natural disasters and the high Australian dollar which also impacts on trade," Shipping Australia's chief executive Llew Russell told Port Strategy. "It's disappointing because we don't see that they have exhausted the negotiation process. We certainly would hope strikes could be avoided." Negotiations between the MUA and Patrick Stevedores appear to have broken down. Patricks has said the union's proposed pay increased would increase the company's labour costs by 80 per cent over three years, a claim which the union said is "total rubbish". The MUA's assistant national secretary Warren Smith told The Australian the union had initially proposed three 10 per cent pay rises over three years, but had reduced that to three 6 per cent pay rises over three years. Patrick said it had instead offered a 4-4.5 per cent pay rise in exchange for productivity increases.
[Fruitnet; 13 May 2011]

Sao Paulo oranges squeeze 19.3% growth

Brazil's largest orange-growing state of Sao Paulo expects production of the fruit to increase by 19.3% this season to 354,980,000 cartons, Agencia Brasil reported. Brazilian Citrus Production Chain Sector Chamber president Marco Antônio dos Santos, said 75% of the crop had already been negotiated for buyers, the agency reported. Sao Paulo accounts for 90% of Brazil's orange production while 85% of its harvest usually goes into juice processing, while the remaining 15% is sold as fresh produce, the story reported.

The country's National Supply Company (CONAB) said the increase was due to favorable weather, the use of technology and the high density of new plantations, the agency reported.
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 9 May 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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