GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (21/2011)

John Edmonds (10 June 2011) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Current Exchange Rate	R/$ 6.73	R/€ 9.78	R/£ 11.03
Last Week:	R/$ 6.78	R/€ 9.77	R/£ 11.04
Last Year:	R/$ 7.74	R/€ 9.28	R/£ 11.22

[www.oanda.com/currency/converter]

Au: Snails Attack Citrus Crops

CITRUS growers and packers have been warned over an explosion in on-farm snail numbers. Murray Valley Citrus industry development officer Mary Cannard said one snail in a shipping container of fruit exported to the US would be enough for inspectors to reject it, and all other containers that were part of the same consignment. Ms Cannard said the fruit would then have to be fumigated, destroyed or re-shipped to another destination, at great expense. "Because we've had such a wet season, snail numbers have massively increased this year, so it's timely to warn everyone to make sure they keep on top of it," Ms Cannard said. "(Snails are) unlikely to be on the fruit. In odd cases, it can happen. The problem is when containers are being packed with fruit, or when fruit is stored in a box on a pallet." Ms Cannard said snail populations were at their highest levels in more than a decade, thanks to the heavy summer rain after 10 years of drought…"There's a number of things growers can do during the season. "Most will have skirted the trees so that when the fruit forms on the tree the branches don't bend down and touch the ground allowing the snail to get up the tree. "They also need to keep weeds down so they don't meet the tree, and will usually apply snail bait around the base of the tree." Once that was done, Ms Cannard said one of a dozen qualified export crop monitors in the area would sign off the patch of citrus, paving the way for export. At least six species of snail commonly occur throughout the citrus growing areas of South Australia, NSW and Victoria.
[http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au; 10 June 2011]

Groundwater overuse hits Mexican state's citrus growers

The central zone of Mexican citrus-producing state Tamaulipas has overused groundwater resources by around 10 million cubic meters, due to lower rain levels and a lack of guidelines, website Hoytamaulipas.net reported. Ricardo Sepúlveda Cantú from the state's arm of the National Rural Confederation (CNC) attributed the problem to federal government concessions many years ago for aquifiers and rivers, without sufficient impact studies. Mexico's National Water Commission (CONAGUA) has announced permits for new wells will not be given in the region, which covers the rural communities of Victoria, Güemes and Padilla, the story reported. A commission representative told the website the consequences of opening new wells would be serious, as they could collapse production yields for the citrus industry due to a lack of irrigation water. It added while the damage was done, the situation could worsen.
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 10 June 2011]

Rising Australian dollar rapidly sinking citrus exports

The Chairman of Riverina Citrus, Frank Battistel has raised alarm at the escalating crisis playing out amongst citrus growers with the rising Australian dollar smashing potential exports of produce to key overseas markets. "Most of our growers in the region are being crucified by the Australian dollar, which makes our exports uncompetitive and sees the Australian market flooded with fruit destined for export as well as cheap juice imports," Mr Battistel said…"Our key export markets won't buy our fruit because the price is too high and the costs for many Riverina farmers to harvest their crop is more than they could ever hope to make, especially with the exchange rate sitting as high as it is. "The markets we are competing with don't face the challenges of a floating dollar as we do. "Rubbing salt into the wounds is the fact that our crop forecast for this year is amazing compared to previous years…"Unless something changes rapidly, a massive amount of fruit will have to be dumped this year. Unless the Government sees this problem for what it is, and offers some help I'm very nervous about the future for citrus growers and every other sector of agriculture across the country," Mr Battistel said. The Riverina is the largest citrus growing region in Australia producing approximately 30% of Australia's total citrus products and a major source of produce for export.
[www.riverinacitrus.com.au; 8 June 2011]