GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (32/2011)

John Edmonds (2 September 2011)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Current Exchange Rate	R/$ 7.00	R/€ 10.01	R/£ 11.34
Last Week:	R/$ 7.24	R/€ 10.42	R/£ 11.83
Last Year:	R/$ 7.32	R/€ 9.36	R/£ 11.29

[www.oanda.com/currency/converter]

AU: Major yield increases for citrus industry

Agriculture Minister Michael O'Brien says new research findings could deliver significant gains for Riverland citrus growers. A South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) study has demonstrated yield increases in navel and Valencia orange orchards of between 17 and 63 percent after the application of animal manure and compost. Mr O'Brien said fruit measured in the trial increased in diameter by 5-7mm on average. "This could provide growers an extra $100 per tonne, with the benefits of the compost lasting well beyond the first year after application," Mr O'Brien said…SARDI senior entomologist Dr Peter Crisp said the study also evaluated a range of tree and soil health factors including levels of soil moisture, nitrogen and soil carbon. The research team found that compost application during periods of drought improved tree health compared to trees that did not receive compost. "Where composted green organics had been applied, trees had dense foliage, good leaf colour and the highest flower production," Dr Crisp said. "Improved tree health where compost was applied may be attributed to increased soil moisture levels in the root zone. "Moisture sensors 10 to 15cm deep in the soil showed that moisture levels were consistently higher under trees treated with the highest rate of compost compared to control trees." A cost benefits analysis from this study found all compost applications trialed showed a positive return on the initial investment. The highest benefit was recorded when an application of 40 m²/ha of compost was used, giving a cost benefit of 5.4 over five years. The benefits recorded giving a return of between $1.90 and $5.40 for every dollar invested in compost over a five-year period. "These are conservative estimates as the potential water savings and improvements in fruit quality were not included in the analysis," Dr Crisp said. Data from the trial site at Loxton will be collected for another three years with support from Horticulture Australia Limited and a voluntary contribution from the Australian compost industry.
[farmonline.com.au; 1 September 2011]

Brazil raises orange crop forecast as dryness boosts yields

Orange output in Brazil's Sao Paulo state, the world's biggest producing region, will rise more than previously forecast this year as dry weather favored fruit maturation, the country's Agriculture Ministry said. Sao Paulo state will produce 377.1 million boxes, up from a May forecast of 355 million boxes, the ministry's Conab crop- forecasting agency said today in an e-mailed statement. Last year, Sao Paulo produced 322.2 million boxes. A box of orange weighs 40.8 kilos. Orange trees in the state, which accounts for about 80 percent of the South American country's output, will cover an area of 580,574 hectares (1.4 million acres), lower than the 610,600 hectares previously estimated. The planting area decreased after growers cut down unproductive trees and small farms switched to sugar cane. About 324.3 million boxes will be processed into orange juice and the rest will be consumed as fruit, Conab said. *[bloomberg.com; 2 September 2011]*

AU: Young citrus growers exiting industry

A citrus grower from Waikerie says the future of the Riverland citrus industry is in doubt because difficult financial times are forcing young growers off the land. The region produced bumper crops this year but growers have struggled to sell the fruit above the cost of production because of the high Australian dollar. Grower Mike Arnold says the dollar is making it very difficult for local growers to compete with the South African and South American citrus industries. "You haven't got the younger growers coming on and the few younger growers we had, if they've had difficult times, and of course some of them borrowed a little bit of money from the banks, and if they find it too hard then we're going to lose them," he said. "I can see unless things do settle down we are going to have very few citrus growers in the years to come." Mr Arnold says the uncertainty in the industry is discouraging the next generation of growers. "We got a lot of families here years ago, [a] lot of them would've carried on in the orchards and things but now lots of them are looking elsewhere," he said. "Some of them are going up to the mines to earn extra money and some of them not really maintaining the orchards but they have to do that to keep their head above water."
Source: abc.net.au*; 1 September 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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