GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (8/2012)

John Edmonds (30 March 2012) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

US: Citrus production down for 2011-2012 season

A USDA Economic Research Service report estimates total citrus production to be down in the United States for the 2011-2012 season. Although overall orange production was up from last year, decreases in all other citrus categories brought total production down. The total citrus forecast for the 2011-2012 season is 11.6 million tons, down from the previous season's total of 11.7 million tons. At 2.3 million tons, California's orange production was down from the 2010-2011 season due to a navel orange crop that, at 1.8 million tons, was 8% smaller than the previous year. Florida orange production was up from the 2010-2011 season with a total of 6.6 million tons. A freeze in Arizona that caused significant damage to the lemon crop contributed to lower production. At 28,000 tons, Arizona's production was down 72% from the previous year while national production was down 14% at 808,000 tons. Imported lemons, mostly from Mexico, helped shore up lower domestic production.
[freshplaza.com; 3 April 2012]

US: Greening disease confirmed in California

Despite the best efforts of all involved the first case of citrus greening was detected in California last week on Friday. The disease was found in a residential area, but the concern is that it could spread to commercial groves. Huanlongbing is called the world's worst disease of citrus," said Dr. Robert Leavitt of the California Department of Food and Agriculture. "It had been present until now in all of the world's major citrus producing areas – except California."… This has been the bad news that the industry has been anticipating since the first psyllid was detected in the state back in 2008. Despite 25 years of intense research and investment there are still no effective controls…All sales and shipments of citrus within a five mile radius of the infected tree have been suspended. However, the closest commercial operation is 14 miles away.
news.kuwaittimes.net; 2 April 2012]

Thailand: $10,000 worth of limes stolen as prices rise

A man has filed a police complaint claiming limes worth 300,000 baht (almost $10,000) have been stolen from his orchard in Phu Phiang district in Nan province. Pairoj Srithep told police there was evidence of limes having been picked from the trees in his orchard, as well as ripe limes that had fallen to the ground. Mr Pairoj said he regularly goes to his orchard to spray fertiliser on the trees and pick the fruit. But on the last visit he discovered most of the limes were gone. Local authorities have stated that some orchard owners have employed security guards to protect their orchard as prices have surged recently. At least some of the recent price increases are down to traders hoarding the fruits to artificially ramp up the value. The ministry vowed to take action against hoarders, who could face a maximum of seven years in jail.
[www.bangkokpost.com; 2 *April 2012]*

Brazil: Fruit exporting sector is pessimistic

The climate in the fruit sector is pessimistic, regarding the external market in 2012….Expectations for this year are that the result will be, in the best scenario possible, stability regarding 2011. Last year a drop of 10.29% in exports by comparison with 2010 (681.2 tons), was registered….agronomy engineer from Ibraf, Clovis Ribeiro, said that this is not a sign of positive attitude for the remaining of the year. "… we must work at previous years levels, between 600,000 and 700,000 tons", he pointed. In an attempt to reduce the strong dependency on Europe, which buys about 80% of the Brazilian fruit, Ribeiro says that they are negotiating the entrance in new markets. While this isn't happening, the only way out for producers is the internal market, still on a high. "… This uncertainty in the exchange rate makes us to pessimistic about prices. Sometimes the Euro is at R$2.37 or R$2.40 and when it used to be R$2.30, because we are afraid of a reduction when the exchange market closes"…According to this businessman, the offer is on a high, sales are falling and the external client doesn't pay enough. He explained that, for lemon, a 4.5kilo boxe costs around 2.8 Euro to be produced. The price paid wasn't above 2.5 Euro. Projections for 2012 are worrying.
[freshplaza.com; 2 April 2012]

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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