GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (13/2012)

John Edmonds (4 May 2012) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Delays for Argentine Lemon Harvests

Rains have cut back Argentina's lemon harvests by 15 days with impacts expected to be felt on exports to Eastern Europe, website Lagaceta.com.ar reported. The story reported the wet weather meant it was impossible for growers to tend to their lemon fields, while sugar cane and soybean growers have also been affected. Tucuman Citrus Association president Roberto Sánchez Loria told the website the export season was supposed to start in mid-April, but a "paralysis" of harvesting would likely continue until after the first week of this month. "Without a doubt the rain has affected us and delayed the start of the campaign. We are talking about an April that was very unusual, because there was precipitation for almost the whole period," he was quoted as saying. He added orders have already come in from fruit purchasing countries, particularly Russia. He told the website the productive season would also be lower than last year, due to the drought that affected Tucuman's crops from October to March. Despite the fact such declines often raise lemon prices in international markets, Loria said this would probably not be the case in 2012. "The adverse situation in Europe is serious and some countries are more committed than others. In Spain it is particularly serious." Argentina's citrus-growing neighbor Chile is expecting a 2% fall in lemon exports, while previous estimates released by the Southern Hemisphere Association of Fresh Fruit Exports (SHAFFE) forecast a 2.41% year-on-year rise in Argentina's lemon exports. Competitor South Africa is due for a 3.21% rise in lemon shipments.
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 2 May 2012]

Australia grows citrus in Pakistan

Australian citrus growers are taking part in an experiment that is set to demonstrate the potential impact of climate change on their industry. They are cultivating the same varieties of citrus they grown at home in the extreme climate of Pakistan. In Pakistan, during the main growing season, the temperatures are over 40 degrees for three months and there is no access to reliable irrigation. There is a group of citrus industry representatives from Pakistan currently touring Australia to see how they may improve their industry back home, but Dr Tahir Khurshid, from the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, says that the exchange of knowledge goes both ways. "We are sending all those mandarins and citrus varieties to see that how they can survive in Pakistani heat in the terms of climate change, and it will be the benefit, the information that they are going to bring back to Australia."
[www.abc.net.au; 26 April 2012]

FPEF accuses South African DTI

In a reply to a Democratic Alliance (DA) parliamentary question, the Minister of Trade and Industry, Rob Davies, has revealed alarming miscommunication between the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the fruit exporting council… the Berlin Fruit Logistica is likely one of the most important trade fairs for South African fruit producers. The DTI has consistently funded a pavilion for growers to promote their products to European market outlets. Towards the end of 2011 the Fresh Produce Exporters Forum (FPEF) concluded an agreement with the DTI to ensure funding for South Africa's pavilion at the next Berlin Fruit Logistika. The DTI unfortunately never honoured this agreement. The FPEF says that the DTI did not honour the final agreement, never explained why it did not do so and did not responding to e-mail or telephone messages. They claim that the officials involved were disinterested and indifferent to their concerns… the DTI said that there had been a "shift in strategy" after South Africa joined BRICs. No one for the DTI was, however, able to communicate what the new strategy was, and why that meant that no funding would be available for South Africa's pavilion at the Berlin Fruit Logistika…In the reply to the DA parliamentary question, the DTI shifts the blame to the FPEF saying that the FPEF did not meet new funding requirements for established exporters. The DTI also claimed that the FPEF 'had decided to withdraw from the agreement and that they would arrange the exhibition stand on their own.'…The fruit industry is a highly productive sector, employing 460 000 South Africans who in turn support 2 million dependents. The industry' annually earns roughly R12 billion in foreign exchange through exports to 70 countries.
[allafrica.com; 3 May 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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