GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (33)

John Edmonds (5 October 2012) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

SA, Argentine citrus growers to voice 'sustainability' concerns in Europe

South African citrus growers are set to raise concerns with European retailers over increasingly tough pesticide residue limits which they claim are threatening the industry's sustainability. The Citrus Growers Association (CGA), Citrus Research International (CRI) and Argentine growers are scheduled to meet European Union (EU) importers, retailers, regulators and key stakeholders in Brussels on Oct. 2. CRI head Professor Vaughan Hattingh, said EU regulations were less of a problem than the specific requirements retailers were imposing. "We are looking forward to having an engagement. We will have a debate with them about consumer assurance and sustainability issues. Let's see how it goes." he said. The CGA said it hoped to have a "constructive and robust" discussion about providing reliable consumer assurance while protecting the environment, consumers, workers and economic sustainability. The delegation will also meet with major U.K. retailers to discuss their plant protetction programs and how they can offer customer guarantees. "These types of engagements are seen as critical especially in light of the need for citrus growers to have appropriate tools for compliance with phytosanitary regulations and to address emerging problems such as resistance to some pesticides," the CGA announced in a statement about the trip.
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 26 September 2012]

Spain: Lemon season begins with smaller sizes

After a disastrous lemon season in Argentina due to frosts, the campaign begins in Spain with the Primofiori variety from Orihuela, Alicante, the main lemon-producing area in Spain. Manuel Baides, from Alquimia Fruits, says that he has already shipped 4 pallets of lemons to the UK. "They are also importing lemons from Turkey, Spain's main competitor." According to Baides, some of the lemons shipped by Turkey have less juice and thicker skin than Spanish lemons. Growers receive 80 to 90 cents for them and final prices range between 1.10 and 1.20 Euro per kilo; around 30 cents cheaper than Spanish lemons. "Quality is not as good as that of Spanish citrus, but they are cheaper," he explains. Another characteristic of this year's lemons is their size, especially for the Turkish ones, which are smaller than normal. "Recent rains have been very beneficial; we are now waiting to see if the fruit gains some size, but in general terms, it will be smaller than usual."
[www.freshplaza.com; 5 October 2012]

Israel: Gap in grapefruit market presents opportunity

With the start of grapefruit shipments from Florida and Turkey still a few weeks away, Israeli growers are beginning their shipments to European countries this week. Because there's not much South African product left this year, Israeli suppliers will enter a favorable market with their fruit. While Israeli growers usually take advantage of the gap in production before the Florida and Turkey export seasons get going, this year will present an especially promising opportunity, said Oron Ziv of Mehadrin, Israel's largest exporters of citrus. "Normally, our main competitors in grapefruit are Florida and Turkey," he said. "Since they start a bit later, we have a gap in October." But the difference this year is that there's less South African fruit left on the market, so demand will be high. "Right now, the market is pretty much empty, so we're seeing pretty good potential and we're pushing hard on our harvesting," he added… Ziv noted that good volumes will probably arrive in European markets this week, with shipments going to major EU countries like Italy, France, Germany, Ukraine and Russia. …"Consumers consider Florida grapefruit to be premium, and fruit from Turkey competes on price, so Israel is in between.
[www.freshplaza.com; 3 October 2012]

SA truck strike is hitting fresh produce retailers hard

Supermarket fresh produce shelves look set to be bare within the next few days as negotiations between South Africa's striking truck drivers and employers' organizations failed to reach a deal yesterday. South African Transport & Allied Workers' Union (Satawu) acting national media officer Vincent Masoga, confirmed talks had broken down…Satawu has rejected the employers' offer of an 18% wage rise over the next two years. The strike by 20,000 drivers is about to enter its third week with the effects beginning to bite with empty petrol stations and supermarkets with hardly any fruit or vegetables. Neighbouring Namibia is also feeling the effects of industrial action as it imports 95% of its fruit from South Africa…Citrus producers claim they have been relatively unaffected by the strike which has come at the tail end of their exporting season. …Nel said he expected the South African government would step in to try and resolve the strike within the next few days.
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 5 October 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
YOUR LEVY WORKING FOR YOU – GROWER LEVIES ARE USED TO FUND THE ACTIVITIES OF CGA