

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (38)

John Edmonds (9 November 2012)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Argentina: frost takes toll on Corrientes citrus growers

More than 600 growers in the Argentine province of Corrientes are in a state of agricultural emergency due to frosts that have damaged orchards this year, website Corrienteshoy.com. The story reported it was estimated the 2013 crop would only be 30% of this year's volume and crops would not recover until 2014. Argentine president Cristina Fernandez visited the region in October offering subsidies for the sector, but Corrientes Federation of Cooperatives (Fedecoop) president Miguel Rosbaco warned this would not solve all problems. "There are two problems. The first is that plants were ruined that cannot obtain more citrus fruit," Rosbaco was quoted as saying. "Secondly, those that managed to survive, as their foliage was affected by the heavy frost, they did not have flowering between August and September. This means that they also won't give fruit. "Surely less will be exported, and in turn, fruits to be traded on the domestic market will be of lower quality."

[www.freshfruitportal.com; 5 November 2012]

Spain: Citrus farmers complain about low orange prices

Growers of oranges in la Vega del Guadalquivir aren't happy with current price levels. They state that 28 cents per kilo isn't profitable. This, according to Nicolás González, chairman of the Córdoba citrus union. Nicolás González stresses the importance of good prices for local growers. The most recent campaigns have seen low returns due to bad weather, floods, frost and unseasonably high temperatures, all of which damaged crops. "I fear prices will go down even further this season, hurting the farmers and the sector as a whole." González also expressed his belief that the recent trade negotiations on the part of buyers, "left the growers out of the equation." With these prices, he said, growers can't grow. The region experienced a production decline of 20% compared to last year.

[www.freshplaza.com; 8 November 2012]

US (CA): Parasitic wasp could be answer to greening

There's a new hope in the fight against citrus greening, in the shape of a parasitic wasp that feeds on the disease carrying Asian citrus psyllid. Biological Control Specialist, Mark Hoddle at the University of California, Riverside, made several trips to Pakistan to capture the tiny wasp that might provide assistance. It's a parasitic wasp, tamarixia radiata, that eats the psyllid from the inside out, after having been laid inside the psyllid nymph as an egg. It's not sure yet how successful it will be, as it is still being trialled, but Hoddle says findings are encouraging. Researchers say that there are no signs, at this stage, that the wasp has a detrimental effect on beneficial insect populations. What still needs to be determined, however, is how tolerant the wasp is to chemical sprays that it will have to face, that are applied for such things as weed control. There are also concerns about how well the wasp will be to stand up to predators of its own. For example, the Argentinian ant, which is also settled in in California, is known to prey on it. The ants are prevalent around the psyllids, as they are attracted to the sugary waste produced at the larval stages. Another concern about the wasp's welfare that needs to be explored is its ability to endure typical California winters, and continue its reproductive and predatory lifestyle in the spring.

[recorderonline.com; 6 November 2012]

China: 150kg of color-tainted oranges sealed

The market watchdog has sealed nearly 150 kilograms of oranges from a shop in the city's northeast Yangpu District following claims that the seller was adding illegal coloring agents to make the fruits look fresher and more attractive. Quality tests are under way to find what kind of chemicals were used, Yangpu officials said. The scandal came to light after a resident, Zhao Zongming, complained that he had bought three oranges from the shop, only to find the orange color fading after the fruits were washed. "The dark-color water even made my fingers turn red," Zhao said...Although covering fruits with edible wax is permitted, fruit coloring is strictly banned according to food safety regulations.

[www.freshplaza.com; 7 November 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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