

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (29)

John Edmonds (16 August 2013)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Chinese take up Australian navel grazing

They endured years of drought that posed challenges to production. And when the drought ended, came the floods and hail storms. In more recent years, the nation's orange producers also faced a declining market for their fruit in the United States, a market that had been a cornerstone of the industry for about 20 years. But after years of trying big investment and careful negotiations, orange growers have apparently peeled open a new market with vast potential - China. This year, the citrus industry is on track to export about 500 shipping containers of oranges direct to China, a massive five-fold increase on last year. Two years ago just five containers were exported direct to China, and three years ago none. However, before direct exports to China commenced in 2011, it is likely that some oranges shipped to Hong Kong made it to mainland China via the so-called "grey trade". Citrus grower Tania Chapman, chairwoman of Citrus Australia, described the rise in exports to China as "monumental growth".

[m.smh.com.au; 13 August 2013]

Iran: Lemon output increases

Some 550,000 tons of lemon are expected to be harvested in the current Iranian year (started March 21), which will show a significant increase year-on-year. Mojtaba Shadlou, the head of Iran's Union of Garden Owners, said the lemons would be sold for 20,000 (\$1.62 USD) to 30,000 (\$2.44 USD) rials per kilo, which is lower than last year's price.

[Freshplaza.com; 12 August 2013]

Brazil may have good news for Florida citrus growers

What's bad for the rest of the world might be good for Florida. Global orange production in 2012-13, estimated at 49.6 million metric tons, is down 4.3 million tons from the previous year based on a smaller Brazilian crop. "Brazil's production is estimated to drop nearly 20 percent to 16.6 million tons, based on less land dedicated to oranges and expected poor yields as trees are stressed from good crops the previous two years," said a July 2013 USDA crop report. "Citrus: World Markets and Trade." "There is no doubt that a smaller Brazilian crop puts less pressure on there being an oversupply of juice worldwide," said Ray Royce, executive director of Highlands County Citrus Growers Association. A smaller crop means Brazil will fill its own market needs first. Moreover, Brazilian producers are less likely to dump what has become a one billion gallon orange juice inventory on the U.S. Lower OJ prices and citrus diseases have turned Brazilian growers to other crops such as sugarcane and soybeans, the crop report said. Brazil is the largest producer of oranges in the world, Royce said. Florida is number two. United States production is estimated at 7.6 million tons, down 7 percent largely because Florida's warm, dry, winter weather and disease pressure caused severe fruit drop in 2012-13 crop. Global OJ production is down 1.9 million tons. Lime, lemon and grapefruit production is down 12 million tons.

[highlandstoday.com; 9 August 2013]

Australian authorities intercept citrus pest in curry leaves

Two Australian inspection officers have prevented a potential incursion of citrus greening disease after seizing prohibited curry leaves at Melbourne airport. The officers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) discovered passengers traveling from India were carrying leaves and roots from the curry tree *Murraya koenigii*, infested with eggs and nymphs of the Asian citrus psyllid. As this psyllid can carry citrus greening disease, also known as Huanglongbing (HLB), Australia has strict import conditions for citrus fruits and leaves, as well as parts of the related curry tree. Plant Health Australia (PHA) CEO Greg Fraser praised the inspectors for having potentially saved the citrus industry and the broader community from an expensive incursion. "HLB is one of the most serious diseases of agriculture and Australia doesn't have it. It's a bacterial infection that ultimately kills the plant," he said... This was an important find. "PHA works very closely with DAFF and industry members, such as Citrus Australia, to safeguard our crops from exotic pests. Without such a system, our agricultural industries would be susceptible to pest incursions that could cripple their production and profitability." Citrus Australia CEO Judith Damiani also applauded the officers' efforts. "HLB is a particularly nasty disease that California is grappling with at the moment. Australian growers don't want the same problem. We're grateful for the efforts to stop pests entering our borders," she said. "Citrus growers need to be vigilant as well. Early detection and reporting of HLB and the psyllid would be vital in the event of an incursion. We need people to report anything unusual."

[www.freshfruitportal.com; 13 August 2013]

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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