

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (1)

John Edmonds (11 January 2013)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

EU Citrus Figures

With the exception of grapefruit, citrus production in the EU in 2012-2013 was lower than last year's. This is mainly due to the small orange harvest in Italy and the low production of easy peelers in Spain. The rain in the fall had a positive impact on the size and quality of the fruit. Export is going well, because production in competitive areas was relatively small. After apples, oranges are the most cultivated fruit in the EU. More than 80% of all European oranges come from Spain and Italy. Other producing countries are Cyprus, Greece and Portugal. In total, the EU orange harvest approximates 5.6 million tons. On average, an EU resident eats 10 pounds of oranges a year, but consumption is strongly dependent on the country. In Spain, for example, they eat twice as much. The EU is a net importer of oranges, in which import far exceeds export. The value of import of oranges in 2011-2012 amounted to approximately \$ 611 million, while export was 230 million U.S. dollars. Most EU oranges go to other member states. The main supplier outside the EU, shipping from June to October, is South Africa, followed by Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. The major exporting countries outside the EU are Switzerland, Serbia and Russia. European exporters do their best to penetrate markets in countries like Saudi Arabia, the Emirates and Brazil. The total European production of easy peelers for 2012-2013 is estimated at 2.9 million tons, 8% less than the previous year. The main suppliers of easy peelers on the EU market are Morocco, South Africa and Turkey. The value of import of easy peelers in 2011-2012 is estimated at \$ 394 million, the export value at 352 million. Russia is increasingly buying easy peelers, and is still growing as a place of export. The EU lemon production reached approximately 1.15 million tons in 2012-2013, 9% less than the previous year. The import of lemons in the EU is significantly larger than the export. The export value amounted to \$ 462 million in 2011-2012, while exports scored no higher than 103 million. Argentina is the largest supplier, followed by Turkey, Brazil and South Africa. Outside the EU, Russia is the most prolific buyer of European lemons.

The grapefruit harvest in 2012-2013 amounts to about 91,000 tons and is slightly larger than last year. In 2011-2012 \$ 282 million tons of grapefruit was imported, mainly from Turkey, South Africa, China, the USA, and Israel. [www.freshplaza.com; 9 January 2013]

Morocco: Citrus export down 22%

The Moroccan citrus export is a lot lower than expected this season. This is mainly due to the cold weather during the blooming period. It's expected that less than 400,000 tonnes will be exported, despite the first estimates being at 443,000 tonnes. 175,000 tonnes of clementines will most likely be exported. In season 2011/2012 this was 200,000 tonnes. There is a decrease of over 15% in the whole Moroccan fruit and vegetable export. Yet it is more pronounced in citrus: a decrease of 22%. The citrus season started 15 to 20 days later this time. An important region that exports lots of Clementines is Souss, which suffered the most damage and the harvest was 33% lower than last season.

[leconomiste.com; 3 January 2013]

UK scientists discover ripening control protein

Scientists at Leicester University in the UK have discovered a protein that ripens fruits early and could boost their value and sales dramatically. The finding would enable farmers to accelerate or delay the ripening of entire fruits to prevent them falling victim to unseasonal weather. The researchers have applied for a patent and are planning to test their discovery on tomatoes, bell peppers and citrus fruits. They demonstrated for the first time that a regulatory system that governs how proteins are broken down in plant cells also affects chloroplasts – structures that control photosynthesis. Using thale cress they showed that altering a particular gene could change the speed with which chloroplasts transform into other structures in plant cells, including those involved in the ripening of fruit. Testing the mechanism on crop plants will prove whether it could one day be used commercially to ensure fruit always ripens at the right time, the researchers explain. "We are already transferring the work into tomatoes. So I would think, within a year, we will know whether or not it is going to work in principle," project leader Paul Jarvis says. "It is incredible to get to this point – it has been a long journey. We have known for some time that this was going to be a big breakthrough."

Because the same regulatory system governs various other aspects of plant development, such as how quickly leaves age, it could also be used for other purposes such as keeping crops alive for longer periods, he says.

[www.freshplaza.com; 7 January 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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