

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (4)

John Edmonds (1 February 2013)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

AU: Buy Aussie lemons and support flood-affected growers

The national citrus body of Australia is calling on supermarkets and consumers to support Australian lemon growers currently affected by the Queensland floods. Citrus Australia Chief Executive Officer Judith Damiani says the current lemon crop is ready to harvest, but will now be delayed two weeks due to severe inundation across the major growing regions of Central Burnett, which takes in Gayndah, Mundubbera and the Bundaberg area. Judith is urging supermarkets to honour their commitment to support Australian farmers not look overseas to fill the gap. "Orders placed now to import lemons from California will not arrive for another four to six weeks. By the time they land, Australian producers will be back in full production." She says fruit quality should not be greatly affected by the floods and that, providing the water keeps moving, trees should not be impacted. The summer lemon harvest is the main source of income for many Queensland citrus growers and this year's lemon crop is set to be one of the biggest seen in the region.

[www.freshplaza.com; 30 January 2013]

US (FL): "Worst citrus production climate in 40 years"

Just six weeks after the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated that the 2012-13 Florida citrus crop would decline by 5 percent as a result of dry weather and disease pressure, the situation has worsened...Vic Story, who runs 5,000-acre, Lake Wales-headquartered family operation The Story Companies, which grows oranges in Hardee and Polk counties, confirmed that growers are increasingly worried. "We are seeing a decrease in our crop this year, primarily because of the dry weather and the disease pressure from greening," said Story, who has headed the 68-year-old company since the early 1970s...For some small growers, operating margins have been reduced by as much as 40-60 percent, Story said...He added that he has never seen the production climate as bad as it is now in his 40 years running the operation. "The only thing I've ever seen that compares to this is a major freeze," he said. "And the last time we had one was back in 1989." ...Story is concerned that if Florida continues to face a production slump, Brazil might try to take advantage of that by shipping more product into the U.S. "They've got a lot of inventory built up down there," he said. "And if we can't supply the U.S. market, they will. And that would cost American jobs and in particular, it would hurt the Central Florida economy."

[www.freshplaza.com; 30 January 2013]

Spain: Great quality clementine campaign

It is being a good year for Valencian clementine exporters, who started with relatively low production volumes and have later benefited from optimal weather conditions. "We are about to close the Clemenules campaign, and I can say, we had not enjoyed a campaign like this in a long time, with the weather being particularly favourable. The campaign had a wet start, but later on we had stability, both in terms of rains and temperatures, without frost, contributing to the fruit's good quality," explains Salvador Estellés Mechó, of Frutas Estellés C.B. "If it continues like this, the campaign will be really good." The fruit's quality has allowed for the markets to absorb all supplies progressively, respecting the prices. "Last year there were lots of liquidations at really low prices, but this year, in general, that will not happen. Both producers and exporters are getting much better returns," affirms Salvador...

[www.freshplaza.com; 30 January 2013]

Peru: ProCitrus advises against further Tangelo Minneola planting

"In the future, no more Tangelo Minneola should be planted, as the crop has already reached its peak," recommended ProCitrus' General Manager, Sergio Del Castillo Valderrama. He explained that the variety has reached saturation in the international markets, which has entailed low returns for producers. "It has been the most problematic variety this year in terms of prices. Additionally, it is not as common as mandarins," he stated.

He explained that Tangelo Minneola is a hybrid citrus that was well-received by part of the international market. There were attempts to introduce them in Russia, which proved unsuccessful. He pointed out that the international market demands medium-sized mandarin varieties with good colour, easy to peel and seedless. The most demanded are the Murcott and the W Murcott. In this sense, he explained that his firm has plans to introduce new mandarin varieties in Peru. In February, the manager will visit Spain in a search for genetic material.

[www.freshplaza.com; 25 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
YOUR LEVY WORKING FOR YOU – GROWER LEVIES ARE USED TO FUND THE ACTIVITIES OF CGA**