

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (7)

John Edmonds (8 March 2013)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

US (FL): Citrus industry "not dead but sick"

The threat posed by citrus greening to the Florida citrus industry's getting worse year on year. Every year the harvest gets smaller as a result. The effect this year was a drop of between 5-10%. Recently, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, Adam Putnam, spoke bluntly about the problem, saying "if we don't do something, in five years we are not going to recognize the citrus industry." Collectively, citrus growers have spent roughly six million of their own money on research to find a cure, but more work needs to be done. Putnam is pushing the governor to allocate another nine million in his budget. This figure represents a fraction of the total industry value, which stands at 9 billion. This Wednesday, hundreds of growers will meet in Lake Alfred for a conference to discuss the citrus greening research. The farmers will also discuss new experiments to fight the disease.

Source: abcactionnews.com

[Freshplaza.com; 5 March 2013]

Europe: "Citrus importers currently working in uncertainty"

FreshPlaza reported that the European Union is working on a possible ban of South African citrus fruits. Veerle van der Sypt from Fresh Trade Belgium reports: "We hope that it will not come to fruition; the sector needs to have security. There have been several discoveries of the Citrus Black Spot over the last few years and the EU wants South Africa to take action. The European Union has suggested that they are in the position to take action based on five interceptions from the CBS. The South African season is almost here which means that importers are busy drawing up contracts and making their plans and it is difficult to carry out work amidst uncertainty."

Veerle indicates that there are a number of cases being worked on at the moment:

- Operators in South Africa have been taking measures into their own hands in order to hold back the CBS. We have heard that trying to contain this problem is causing a lot of tension and not at risk shipment deliveries are being made to Europe.
- After consultations with the IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention): South Africa has conducted studies which prove that the transfer of CBS via fruit is almost non-existent. Contamination occurs through the leaves and seeing that citrus fruits are supplied to the EU without leaves, there is virtually no risk.
- The commission has requested a new risk assessment from the EFSA (pest risk analysis) regarding CBS and citrus. The questions at hand are whether CBS is able to flourish in the EU and can CBS be transmitted via fruit. "The EFSA recommendation is expected right before the start of summer. The commission wants to base any measures on these findings. Naturally, South Africa wants things to move a bit faster. Something positive is that there is currently communication between the Commission and the South African phytosanitary services. Also the Commission has promised South Africa that they would be kept informed regarding any interceptions. The sector (via Freshfel) is insisting on speedy, scientific clarity and we are making the economic importance clear to the Commission (more than half of the imported summer citrus fruits in the EU come from South Africa). A pragmatic approach and measures that are equal to the risk, is important. At the same time, operators in South Africa are encouraged to take as many measures as possible to control CBS."

[Freshplaza.com; 5 March 2013]

Mexico strengthens lemon position

According to information from Sagarpa, the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture, the country's lemon export from January to September 2012 increased by 44% compared to the previous year. In this period it exported 492,000 tons of lemons, worth 211 million US dollars. Main destinations were the US, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Canada and Japan. In the past five years, the average yield for lemons in Mexico was 14 tons per hectare. Mexico therefore belongs to the top 3 lemon producers. Lemon production in Mexico in 2011 was 2,148,000 tons, an increase of 14% over the previous year. Since production from India, the hitherto largest producer, decreased by 20% to 2.108 million tons in 2011, Mexico stepped in to take first position on the list of the largest producers.

[Freshplaza.com; 6 March 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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