GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (9)

John Edmonds (25 March 2013) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

The University of California presents new citrus varieties

The Citrus Crops Program at the University of California (UC), in the United States, presented, during the first day of Citrus 2013, a series of new citrus varieties to be launched this year. The program manager for the UC, Timothy E. Williams, presented the new varieties released in the last six years and two new varieties that his program plans to launch this summer, after investigating them for more than 15 years. "The Tango, DaysiSL, KinnowLS and FairchildLS mandarin varieties were launched between 2006 and 2012, we will launch the EncoreLS and Nova-No varieties next July," he said. These have similar characteristics: they contain less than 2 seeds per fruit with high cross-pollination, resistant to Alternaria alternata (a fungus of citrus), with a 50 MT / ha average production, a size of 66mm and orange and smooth skin. For Williams, further advantages of their varieties are the harvest times that each one of them has, some are early and others late. Moreover, in some cases the same plant can produce two seasons in one year and its fruits ripen in 1 or 2 months, depending on the variety. The program had already launched hybrid varieties of mandarins USDA 88-2 and gold nugget, which were diploid and the TDEs that are triploid. They have a late maturity, high brix with excellent flavour, good form and reach up to 160 kilos per tree…"The desirable citrus characteristics we want to produce are: seedless or with few seeds, good flavour, having good seasons, easy to peel (the industry requires it), dark skin colour, medium size and the fruit to remain in the tree so it's not lost", he described. He said that the harvest and pruning are done manually and that only 700 to 1,000 trees are planted per hectare to avoid euthanasia or overproduction. The trees are up to 2 meters tall and must be trimmed each month to reduce fungus in the plant. He also stressed that the varieties don't need nets, so farmers can save up to US $4,000 per hectare without risking a reduction in their production. Williams announced some projects that the UC program has on new citrus varieties. "The new program's project for the future is to create a new variety of yellow seeded lemons because the California market requires it, restaurants ask for them, with a large size and a price that will be related to that," he said.
[Freshplaza.com; 20 March 2013]

US (FL): Worst case of citrus drop in 40 years

Florida's growers are experiencing the worst fruit drop in over 40 years, according to Doug Ackerman, Florida Department of Citrus Director. Greening is only partly responsible for the problem, which is being furthered by warm Winter temperatures endorsing over production. “You’re seeing an 18 to 20 percent drop,” said Doug Ackerman, Florida Department of Citrus director. “One out of every five oranges that you are going to harvest and put in a box is laying on the ground rotting.” However, citrus drop is not the only worry facing the state's growers at the moment, as there is talk of a possible big freeze over the next few weeks.
[Freshplaza.com; 19 March 2013]

Morocco: Decreasing citrus export

The existence of the Moroccan citrus export, once the show piece for the country's export, is being threatened. The citrus production was 1.5 million tonnes in 2008-2009 and 1.86 million tonnes in 2011-2012. In 2015 it should be 2.1 million tonnes, and then grow to 2.9 million tonnes in 2018. But the export is not following this trend. In the period between 2008-2012 it decreased from 540,000 tonnes to 465,000 tonnes. This is a huge difference compared to the 70's and 90's, when the export was 700,000 tonnes: 60 to 70% of the production. Nowadays it's barely 30%. In those years an important part (150,000 to 200,000 tonnes) was exported as orange juice. But this is no longer traded with other countries. Besides, nowadays more and more juice is being imported from Spain, Turkey and even Egypt. Morocco's main competitors are taking up an increasingly important place in sales. From around 185,000 tonnes in 1990-1991 the Turkish import was almost 1.4 million last season, and that of Egypt was 923,800 tonnes in 2010-2011 compared to 202,000 ten years ago. Spain has seen its export increase by almost a million tonnes in that same period. Although the export has decreased strongly in the last five seasons, the export objective for 2018 is 1.3 million tonnes. Most exporters expect this to be attainable. But people will have to place the emphasis on the exclusive and noble varieties, that the Moroccan citrus sector knows, and the specific characteristics of the citrus, such as the sweet flavour of the fruit and the seedless clementine. The strategic trade should also be strengthened, starting with Russia. At the moment 60% of the Moroccan citrus export already goes to Russia. A market which is also more profitable than the European and North American market. The Canadian market has been characterised by a strong decline in food prices for the last 2 years, as the market has been governed by the supermarkets. A similar tendency seems to be winning favour in Russia. This is why an important logistics organisation is important.
[Freshplaza.com; 15 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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