

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (11)

John Edmonds (5 April 2013)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

US (CA): Citrus spraying possible after psyllid find

The California Department of Food and Agriculture could soon be dispatching squads of pesticide applicators to private residences located near downtown Goleta to coat the leaves of all non-commercially grown citrus trees with chemicals designed to kill an Asian fruit fly that's decimated citrus crops elsewhere in the United States. Agents with the county's Agriculture Commissioner's Office have found one psyllid, the Asian fruit fly in Goleta...Area beekeepers have opposed the chemical applications, objecting that the compounds involved kill bee populations. Most destructive is a synthetic variant of nicotine that's injected into the soil near citrus trees — and is absorbed for years to come from the roots to the flowers by the targeted trees — and inflicts lethal nerve damage on both fruit flies and bees. The beekeepers have argued the chemicals involved have been linked to an onslaught of colony collapse afflicting bee populations throughout much of the United States...

[Freshplaza.com; 4 April 2013]

US (FL): Citrus drop unprecedented

"The fruit drop this season is the worst that anyone can remember for a long period of time — that wasn't related to a freeze event," said Raymond Royce, executive director of Highlands County Citrus Growers Association. The problem, he said, is definitely greening, perhaps exacerbated by erratic weather. "A lot of trees put on a lot of fruit last spring," Royce said. While one season's fruit is still ripening, citrus trees bloom and add a second crop to be harvested in a year. In the past year, he said, "We've had almost weird weather patterns and weird temperature fluctuations."

On Tuesday at Avon Park, Citrus Research and Education Center scientists told more than 300 statewide growers that fruit drop has been unprecedented this season, perhaps averaging 30 percent of the crop.

One University of Florida scientist estimated 18 million boxes of oranges and grapefruit have already fallen, an income loss of \$138 million. Valencias, which are harvested through June, may be even worse.

"I've heard from some growers whose groves did very well," said Royce, who suggested that the countywide fruit drop has averaged 20 percent. "And I heard from others that said they've lost 40 to 45 percent. There are a wide range of experiences." In response, growers are hiring as many pickers as possible, Royce said. Since there is a shortage of domestic labor... "They're trying to get as many people in and get everything picked before they hit the ground," Royce said... The big question now is whether the 2012-13 crop is one bad season. "Is this the new norm," Royce asked, "or is this an odd year?"

[Freshplaza.com; 4 April 2013]

Italy: The Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV) is destroying orange groves in Sicily

The Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV), a disease transmitted to plants by aphids, has infected thousands of hectares of orange groves in Sicily...According to research, plants are affected by more or less aggressive virus strains: with the blander strain, plants can still produce for a number of years, whereas if infected by the most aggressive strains, they decline and there's no other solution than to eradicate them," explains Antonino Catara, chairman of the PST. At the moment, the CTV infects all citrus trees except for lemon, and can be found in all citrus groves around the world. Its incidence depends on rootstocks and on transmission. The countries where the disease has caused the most damage are: Argentina, Brasil, California, Florida, Spain, Israel and Venezuela.

[Freshplaza.com; 29 March 2013]

Chile increases import of lemons

Fruit imports to Chile have almost doubled in the past three years, rising from US\$ 72.3 million in 2009 to US\$ 132.2 million in the previous year...Although the list is made up mostly of fruits that aren't produced in Chile, there are others - such as lemon - that was ranked fourth in imports in 2012. A significant leap, since three years ago, it was in the 11th place within foreign shipments...In the specific case of lemons, the increase in overseas purchases is because the domestic production, due to climatic factors, has not kept pace with demand. In addition, there is a smaller local supply between the months of December and March, causing a rise in prices, so the market needs to be supplied with foreign lemons...The United States was the main supplier of lemons in 2012. This, Allendes explains, was mainly due to the imports made by Walmart. About 15% of the local demand for this fruit is supplied by imports, while the local product covers the other 85%.

[Freshplaza.com; 28 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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