

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (21)

John Edmonds (14 June 2013)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Exports of Florida grapefruit decline

Florida growers have faced declining US sales of fresh grapefruit for the past two decades, but they usually found solace and profits in a healthy export market, particularly to Japan. No longer. Fresh grapefruit exports have declined from 11.3 million cartons, or 65 percent of total shipments from Florida, in the 2008-09 season to an estimated 8.3 million cartons (60 percent) in the current season, according to the Florida Department of Citrus. A grapefruit carton contains 42.5 pounds (19 kg) of fruit. Historically fresh grapefruit exports accounted for 65 percent of all fresh shipments from Florida, said Mike Yetter, international marketing manager at the Citrus Department. The drop-off has been particularly stark in shipments to Japan, until last season the world's top market for fresh Florida grapefruit. Shipments there have fallen from 6 million cartons in 2008-09, or 53.4 percent of all the State's exports, to an estimated 3.9 million cartons in 2012-13, just 47 percent of total exports. This season's fresh grapefruit exports to Japan are the lowest in 28 years, Yetter said.

[theledger.com; 12 June 2013]

Brazil: Time to tap into domestic orange juice market

"The orange market is going through its worst moment in two years: world consumption is stagnating, production costs are rising and processors are getting more and more powerful," said Marco Antonio do Santos, president of the Taquaritinga growers' union. In the last season, Brazil produced an estimated 1.4 million tons of oranges, well above the one million tons forecast for the upcoming season. The record harvest solidified the country's ranking as the world's leading orange juice producer and exporter, but it also increased world stocks even as Brazilian exports have been falling since 2007..."The government calculated that we have a production cost of around 5 dollars per crate (40.8 kilograms or 90 pounds), while we are selling it at 3.5 to 4 dollars," said Antonio do Santos, of the growers' plight....According to data from the government's crop supply agency Conab, 36,700 hectares of orange trees were uprooted between 2012 and 2013. Independent growers have been hurt by increasing coordination among the companies that process and market the juice. One coalition of exporters - the Brazilian Association of Citrus Exporters, or Citrus BR, - monopolizes 97% of orange juice exports...."Orange juice faces new competition from energy drinks, multi-vitamin beverages, cold teas, flavored waters and Chinese apple juice, which is cheaper," he explained. Both sides agree, however, their industry could benefit from tapping into new markets - and that one with major potential is right at their feet: the domestic Brazilian market, where orange juice is rarely consumed.

[freshplaza.com; 12 June 2013]

Spain: Economic crisis sees increased citrus thefts

Ricardo Boix, a Spanish farmer who lives off his small fruit groves in Valencia's hilly back country, thought the theft of nearly \$6,000 worth of his oranges was bad enough. But over Easter, tragedy struck when one of the two Bulgarian farm hands he had hired to guard the rest of his crop was shot in the back and killed by robbers they had surprised. The killing was the most serious incident yet in what fruit growers in the Eastern Spanish region say is a big rise in raids on everything from oranges, picked in the thousand of kilos straight off the trees, to tools and even metal gates and beehives. "We've always had robberies, but not to these extremes," said Boix, 49, who continues to work with his five full-time staff as before, unable to afford extra security for his plots spread out around the small town of Cheste. Prolonged recession and record unemployment have hit rural areas hard, forcing more people into poverty and desperation as Spain undergoes a painful transformation after a two-decade economic boom turned to bust. Farm robbers have become more sophisticated, running illegal warehouses and networks that sell their wares to local shops, juice producers or scrapyards, farmers and police say. "With the crisis we've got, people need to eat, they're resorting to whatever they can," Boix said. Along with the Southern region of Andalusia, known for its olive oil, orange hub Valencia is one of the regions with the highest thefts of produce and machinery. ..Those with meagre means are taking security into their own hands, organising night watches and vigilante groups...To counter the problem, Spain's police have sent in the cavalry, dispatching two squadrons of mounted Civil Guards to the region to help run down thieves. "We can get access to areas where cars and other patrols can't," said the sergeant in charge of the squadrons, as he saddled up his horse for a late afternoon outing over rocky outcrops and through remote fields. Valencia's Civil Guard, responsible for smaller towns outside the remit of national police said they had already made 50 arrests related to orange thefts in April, when they began a crackdown...

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