# GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (37)

John Edmonds (11 October 2013) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

**Group of experts refutes EU position on black spot**

Following a public invitation from the EU for comments, an international group of experts has spoken out against the European evaluation of citrus black spot risk. The response comes shortly after exclusion of South African citrus from the European market due to excessive detections of the pathogen. The working group represents interests from Brazil's Fundecitrus and Instituto Biológico, South Africa's Citrus Research International, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Australian Department of Agriculture and specialists from Argentina. The group has refuted the position taken by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) which argues that the entrance of citrus contaminated with black spot could threaten the local industry and promote plant pathogen Phyllosticta citricarpa. The EFSA welcomed public comments on the topic on July 31, requesting comments on scientific research on Xanthomonas campestris, the cause of citrus canker and Phyllosticta citricarpa, the cause of black spot. The opinion from the international working group focused on perceived faults in the research and argues no clear evidence has indicated that black spot may be spread through infected fruit. The response also highlights environmental conditions and indicates that the pathogen does not spread in Mediterranean climates.
*[www.freshfruitportal.com; 7 October 2013]*

**Spain: Complicated mandarin market due to small calibres**

Two weeks ago, the harvest and sale of the first Satsuma Okitsu and Clausellina mandarins started in Valencia, with slight delays and a huge problem with calibres, "which in 70 to 80% of cases are not large enough for their markets," explained Antonio López, manager of the company Cítricos Asunción López S.L..."The truth is that, in other aspects, the fruit is of good quality, with high levels of sugar and a peel with the right colouring, but calibres have fallen short, as they are mostly smaller than 57. This makes their sale difficult in traditional markets like the Netherlands, Germany or the UK, and even Spain. For now, Eastern European countries accept the fruit, but at really low prices," he explains. In a normal year, 70 to 80% of the mandarins would reach medium or large calibres, but this year things have changed and the market cannot absorb such amounts of small fruit." "In the case of ClemenRubí clementines, which are about to be harvested, very high prices were paid for a fruit which now cannot be sold, with calibres smaller than 50. It is a disaster!" As for navelines, Antonio López warns that a very large production is expected, although they will experience the same problems with calibres. In any case, Antonio López expects the Clemenules season, which is the most important clementine variety, to reach normal levels in terms of production volumes, quality and calibres. Another aspect that has a big impact on the market is the fact that citrus from the Southern Hemisphere are still available, as their campaign started with a two week delay and has consequently been prolonged. "This makes things even more difficult, as there is still a wide range of better quality citrus in the market." "All that is left for us is waiting for temperatures to drop, as this week we have reached 37ºC during the day and 25ºC at night, which is very unusual for this time of the year, when it should be around 12ºC at night to prevent the fruit's peel from dehydrating," he concludes.
*[www.freshplaza.com; 8 October 2013]*

**Spain: Larger lemon production volumes and lower prices**

The rains in late August and early September had promised a two week advance in the start of the lemon season, although the unusual heat and lack of rain that followed have pushed it back to the normal period, allowing for the produce from the Southern Hemisphere to be sold out. Consequently, the Fino lemon harvest started two weeks ago and will last until March, when it will be replaced by the Verna from early April to late June. Production volumes for this season are estimated to reach 910,000 tonnes; an 11% increase compared to last season, when 820,000 tonnes were harvested. "This could still change depending on the weather and pace of the harvest, as calibres may change and consequently also the volumes. It is not a great increase in production, but it will allow us to ensure the fruit's availability for the entire campaign," explains José Antonio García, director of AILIMPO. The bad news for Spain is that Turkey already started with sales on 20 September with a 20% increase in production and much lower prices. "Their production costs are obviously much lower, but it should also be considered that the Turkish government provides financial aid to exports of around 60€ per tonne, and that the exchange rate between the Turkish Lira and the Euro, marked by the 19% devaluation of the former, allows Turkey to reduce prices without it having an impact on profitability." "This makes it difficult for Spanish exporters at the beginning of the campaign, especially in Eastern Europe, where the Spanish and Turkish produce collide. Last year, Turkey had very little presence in those countries, but things have changed this season." In any case, these markets are generally the recipients of second class produce; and thus, if things got difficult in the fresh fruit market, "Spain has the advantage of a really advanced processing industry with a very large capacity."
*[www.freshplaza.com; 9 October 2013]*

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