GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (39)

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

Tropical pepper plant could provide tool against HLB

A tropical pepper plant native to the Amazon jungle may offer a natural tool against citrus greening. Researchers from Brazil's Fundecitrus and the Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) believe that the Matico pepper plant could Piper_aduncumfunction as an insecticide against Diaphorina citri, the species behind citrus greening or Huanglongbing (HLB). The plant found in Acre and southern Amazonas is rich in dillapiole, a compound found in dill weed and fennel root that has been found effective against pest control in India, Europe and the U.S. The compound inhibits the detoxifying enzyme P450, causing the insect to poison itself with its own food, such as orange tree sap. Embrapa researcher Murilo Fazolin said dillapiole interferes with the insect's metabolism, inhibiting its ability to detox and provoking a relatively non-aggressive death. "The compound alters the chemical warfare between the plant and the insect , favoring the plant that is under attack," he said. Oil from the pepper could be used as an insecticide in combination with conventional products to improve efficiency. This could reduce the need for recommended commercial applications by up to 25%, Embrapa indicated. The Embrapa branch in Acre has also found the oil effective against pests for pineapples, beans, corn and coffee.
[freshfruitportal.com; 23 October 2013]

Europe leads volume growth for Northern Hemisphere citrus

As the Southern Hemisphere's citrus season comes to an end, Freshfel-SHAFFE brought together the world's top producers to evaluate the season ahead. The Oct. 14 teleconference included representatives from Spain, Italy, Israel, Cyprus, Greece, the U.S. and South Africa. Further input was provided from Turkey, Morocco, Argentina and Uruguay.
Total citrus production for the Northern Hemisphere was forecast to grow 1% year-on-year in the 2013-14 season. While total U.S. production was expected to drop 10%, European countries were expected to see 7% growth. Mediterranean countries expected 6% growth. In the Mediterranean, Morocco was forecast for 25% growth and Israel at 14% growth. Turkey and Egypt were expected to stay stagnant. Spain is forecast to increase volume by 3% this season to 6.5 million tons (MT). Lemons should have the greatest growth at 11%, contrasted by a 7.5% drop in grapefruit. Spanish mandarins saw an early start to the season and have experienced smaller sizes. Overall growth for Italy is set at 16% for 3.7 million MT.
The Israeli season has started well in terms of condition, volume, quality and size. The nation expected to grow 14%, up to 561,500 MT. The market for Israeli grapefruit continues to be poor, encouraging growers to pull up plantations. The soft citrus market is good for quality fruit. Morocco is expected to recover after a low volume year with 25% growth and an estimated 1.9 million MT.
Private estimates out of Florida noted the impact of citrus greening and unpredictable fruit drop. Slight decline was expected for all categories. Texas grapefruit volume was expected to stay on par with last year at 5 million boxes. California anticipated a 2% drop in navel oranges. Valencia oranges and grapefruit were expected to remain similar to last year, while tangerines were forecast for a 12% increase.
[freshfruitportal.com; 21 October 2013]

Spanish citrus delayed by heat

The 2013/14 Spanish citrus export campaign has got off to a slow start as unseasonably high temperatures cause delays in fruit coloration. Pepe Vercher of Bollo International Fruits said harvesting was running about 10 days later than usual. Fruit quality is reported to be good, although lower-than-average rainfall in recent months means that sizes are somewhat smaller this year. Prices on European markets are reported to be firm, with the onset of cooler temperatures expected to boost demand in the coming weeks. This year, exporters are turning their focus increasingly to markets outside the EU such as Russia and the Middle East where demand continues to grow. In spite of the delayed harvest, shipments to North America are running slightly earlier than in previous years, with the first consignment of US-bound clementines departing from Castellón on Thursday bound for Philadelphia. The 3,000-tonnes shipment is made up principally of the early-season Marisol variety.
[www.fruitnet.com; 18 October 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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