

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (42)

John Edmonds (22 November 2013)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Targeted restrictions placed on South African citrus exports

Press reports indicate that following the eighth EU interception of a citrus consignment from South Africa infected with citrus black spot (CBS) this season, "shipments to the EU will be blocked from zones with the presence of black spot." This decision was taken following consultations between EU and South African officials, with South African officials proposing targeted export restrictions... In August 2013, a European citrus importer commented on the website Freshfruitportal.com that "demand for South African citrus has been strong." He said that "My clients need to have oranges. If South Africa is blocked, nobody will have oranges in Europe." The importer was exploring the option of "increasing imports from Argentina and Uruguay" – but reluctantly, since "the quality from South Africa is much better than from Argentina."...

Agritrade Editorial comment: The decision to introduce targeted restrictions on exports of South African citrus in response to exceeding the five-interception threshold was taken by the South African authorities following consultations with stakeholders after the joint meeting with the EU. These targeted measures appear to have been taken to avert a blanket ban on South African citrus exports. This highlights the value of traceability schemes, which allow the selective targeting of import restrictions in response to perceived sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) threats. However, this leaves unaddressed the long-standing calls from the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa that "the technical justification for the EU's measures be assessed", given that a pest risk assessment undertaken in response to a 2000 request from the EU "concluded that there was no risk of CBS establishing in the EU as the climate was unsuitable and the fruit is not a pathway". This was subsequently confirmed by a US pest risk assessment in 2010 and by the European Food Safety Agency's conclusion that "the possibility of CBS establishing in the EU is highly unlikely." This underlying dispute highlights once again the need for some form of formal, transparent, independent and science-based process of dispute settlement for the resolution of SPS and food safety disputes (see Agritrade articles 'The growing importance of non-tariff measures', 7 October 2013 and 'Calls for "a right to development" and "a right to trade" to be enshrined...', 11 October 2013). The issue of getting to grips with non-tariff barriers to trade is likely to form a central component of the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations (see Agritrade article 'Discussions on standards in EU-US trade negotiations...', 4 May 2013). There could be some value in ACP exporters closely following the progress of these discussions, particularly with regard to the establishment of joint institutions to determine the scientific basis for SPS and food safety measures. [agritrade.cta.int; 16 November 2013]

Morocco expects record citrus production

For the coming season, Morocco expects a record yield in citrus. Estimated at 2.2 million tonnes on a production area of 92,000 hectares, an average yield of 24 tonnes per hectare. Production this season has increased by 50%. The previous season showed an increase of 37% of the average yield of the previous six years. Increased production is due to nearly 4,000 ha of new orchards in 2013/2014 (17,000 ha since 2010/2011). The Ministry of Agriculture estimates that about 10% of production in 2013/14 is coming from the new orchards. 52.7% of the citrus production consists of small fruit, and 45.5% of oranges.

[Freshplaza.com; 14 November 2013]

Spain: Decelerated clementine market

The current levels of demand reflect a notorious drop in citrus consumption compared to previous seasons; a trend most likely explained by the unusually high temperatures still being registered during the second week of November. Prices are consequently still relatively low. "We are facing a truly complicated campaign, with low levels of demand and problems with fruit calibres. Many exporters who purchased Satsuma mandarins or early clementine varieties such as the Marisol, Clemenrubí, Primasol or Pri23 have suffered great losses because calibres have not been up to commercial standards," explains David López, from the Commercial Department of Cítricos Asunción López S.L. Additionally, the heat has also altered the maturing process for various clementine varieties, and growers fear an excessive concentration of supply to take place once the cold weather finally arrives. Given the market stagnation, David López advises not to harvest and stock large amounts of the fruit unnecessarily in chambers, so that it's as fresh as possible once it is time to ship it and thus complaints and price drops are prevented... Temperatures are expected to drop noticeably from 15 November, which should in turn reactivate sales.

[Freshplaza.com; 15 November 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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