GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (2)

John Edmonds (17 January 2014) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

U.S. to give $20 Million to fight citrus greening

Florida citrus may have harvested the first fruits of the federal emergency-response task force against citrus greening created last month. A bipartisan 2013-14 federal budget announced Tuesday by congressional leaders includes $20 million for the fight against greening, a bacterial disease that threatens the future of Florida's $9 billion citrus industry. “By committing an additional $20 million in federal funding to fight citrus greening, we can better work with state governments, universities and industry leaders to control, mitigate and find a cure for citrus disease,” said U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney, R-Tequesta, whose district includes Polk County and much of the state's citrus growing area, in a press statement. “This provision is vital to preserving Florida's citrus industry, strengthening our state's economy and preserving a vibrant American food supply.”...Citrus growers have never felt the need for research money more urgently than this season as they watch fruit falling in unprecedented numbers from their greening-infected trees before harvest.
[theledger.com; 15 January 2014]

Anxious citrus wait for South Africa

...An ongoing study by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the risk that CBS poses European citrus producers is now only expected to be completed at the end of January, less than a month before the new season starts. The European Commission imposed a temporary ban on South African citrus from areas where CBS is prevalent at the end of last season, but warned at the time that the ban could be extended to 2014. Key to the future will be whether the EFSA report finds that CBS, which is harmless to humans, does have the potential to establish itself in Europe's estimated 500,000ha of citrus groves. Shortly before Christmas a high-powered South African citrus delegation, led by Citrus Growers’ Association (CGA) chairperson Pieter Nortje, travelled to Europe to wrap up the season and to hold meetings with Dutch and German importers, the EU authorities, European grower representatives and other interested parties. On its return, CGA spokesman Justin Chadwick said the importance of South African citrus trade in Europe is widely recognised and supported. “We need to comply to keep this market open in 2014,” said Chadwick, who emphasised that everything will have to be done to ensure compliance – including sacrifices. “If (product) is in doubt, then (it should) stay out."...While the South African industry has so far been fixed on the argument that CBS does not pose any risk to European citrus producers, and has presented much evidence to back their point of view, there are some people in the South African industry questioning the current strategy. “It does not always help to be confrontational and nobody, especially the EU and the citrus states, wants to hear that they do not know what they are talking about,” says a spokesman for a large exporter. “South Africa needs to make deals which could mean that South Africa will withdraw from certain sensitive areas in Europe.”...An EU decision sometime in February will leave very little time for South African growers and exporters to make alternative plans. In any event, the EU absorbs such a large portion of the South African crop that it will be impossible to completely shift the fruit somewhere else.
[Fruitnet.com; 8 January 2014]

Spain: Reasonable clementine campaign; disastrous for oranges

Based in the region of Ribera Alta, in the Valencian municipality of Algemesi, Spain, the company Peiró Camaró, founded by Antonio Peiró Pastor in 1922, is devoted to the production and marketing of oranges and clementines. It markets up to 35 million kilos per year and owns over 300 hectares of plantations.In an interview with FreshPlaza, Alejandro Peiró, current manager of the company, reviews the current situation of the Spanish citrus sector, which is being affected by quality problems. Mandarins, clementines and oranges are not up to their usual standard, neither in colour or size, as a result of an excessively warm autumn."In spite of this, the campaign has been reasonable for clementines in terms of quality and prices," he explains. "Additionally, the competition we are facing from Morocco is not so strong, as their calibres are even smaller, and they have decided to focus on Eastern Europe."
Oranges are the most affected by quality issues, as calibres have mostly been small and some have shown signs of splitting. "There is nothing we can do to prevent this situation, which has obviously taken it's toll on prices. We have had a disastrous orange campaign so far," explains Alejandro. Meanwhile, in southern Spain, despite last season's bad results, the current campaign has arrived without any quality problems. Andalusia's production volumes keep growing every year, and this season they were 21% greater than the average from the past four campaigns, according to the Council of Agriculture.Exactly the opposite of what is happening in Valencia, where an increasing number of growers are switching to other crops, like kakis or kiwis, as a result of the poor profitability of citrus. This is forcing many Valencian firms to look for suppliers in Andalusia...The citrus campaigns in countries of the southern hemisphere keep getting longer and are starting to overlap with the beginning of the Spanish campaign; something which, according to Alejandro, "is forcing us to start later every year. For now, we cannot compete with our early mandarin varieties, such as the Okitsu or Iwasaki, or with our Orogrande and Clemenrubi clementines, against quality clementines such as the Nadorcott shipped by Peru, Chile or South Africa." In any case, the Valencian Agricultural Research Institute (IVIA) is currently working on earlier varieties, some of which have already entered the market successfully. *[Freshplaza.com; 16 January 2014]*

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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