GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (7)

John Edmonds (7 March 2014) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Never seen such a bad Spanish citrus season"

Gert Bouman has been working for the Spanish private producer Frutaria for 25 years but he says he's never seen such a bad citrus season as this one. "I don't think there is one cause, there are multiple factors that influenced it. It hasn't been cold yet and this affects the consumption. Spain also has a large production, there was a large supply from South Africa and there has been a lot of fruit available from Egypt, Morocco and Greece." The Dutchman doesn't have much faith in a revival in the Spanish service. "Spring is coming. The best period for citrus consumption is already behind us. Customers have three times more supply available than they can sell. We are hardly selling within Europe at the moment and have looked for markets outside of Europe. That saved our season a little." Gert does expect the result of this bad season to be incalculable. "We can't invest in the future with the low payout prices. Then it stops and turns into re mediation." "I foresee a division between the quality fruit and the fruit that just isn't. People will start looking for varieties to do better in the future. There is a lot more overlap of seasons and this means there is always a supply of citrus," continues Gert. "You can't blame one party for this situation; whether it's the producers, the supermarket, Egypt or Morocco. The fact is that there's an oversupply. I believe that the European community has to protect itself from products from other continents. If not, the citrus culture in Spain is doomed."
[Freshplaza.com; 5 March 2014]

Spain: Citrus sector pressuring European Commission about Black Spot threat

"The Phyllosticta citricarpa, which causes Citrus Black Spot and the Xanthomonas citri, which causes Citrus canker, represent a risk to the European citrus industry, as Europe's weather conditions are ideal for their spread. The diseases have not been detected in the EU so far and control measures are in place to prevent it," states the EFSA (European Food Safety Agency) in its latest report after conducting a risk assessment. The Spanish citrus sector demands the European Commission takes steps regarding South Africa's citrus exports, as the ban introduced in November was lifted in January. Black Spot has become a key issue for Spanish citrus producers. "Now that the EFSA has again stated that it believes the risk to be real, we consider it essential for the European Commission to introduce the necessary measures, given the ineffectiveness demonstrated so far by the EU's safety and plant health protocols," explains Cristóbal Aguado, general director of the Valencian Growers Association AVA-ASAJA, who stresses that "on no account is this a matter of competition against South Africa, as both campaigns are fully complementary."..."We would not actually like to see South Africa's imports banned; we only ask for more efficiency and strictness in plant health and safety issues."...
[Freshplaza.com; 28 February 2014]

GM citrus on trial in world's top orange-growing region

A Brazilian citrus industry body has planted 650 genetically modified seedlings in the state of Sao Paulo, in an experiment to test resistance to black spot. ...In a release, the organization said the experiment would last 7.5 years so that plants can reach full productivity and variables can be measured at different stages of the plant's growth cycle....Fundecitrus researcher Nelson Arno Wulff said the study was the first in Brazil to evaluate the field performance of GM plants for disease resistance. "Previous steps showed that GM plants have potential for black spot tolerance, fruit fly (Ceratitis capitata) and citrus canker, but planting and flowering is necessary so that we can test these plants in real situations, with sun, rain and dry [weather], and phytosanitary conditions like the presence of other diseases, and operational conditions," Wulff said. Brazil is the world's biggest producer of oranges and Sao Paulo accounts for the vast majority of the country's production, with a heavy focus on citrus for juice processing.
[freshfruitportal.com; 4 March 2014]

U.S. citrus industry feuds with South Korea over frozen OJ

Florida citrus growers, alarmed about South Korea squeezing their business, are pushing U.S. officials to settle a tariff dispute they say is costing them millions of dollars in sales. The fight, which began last year, centres on U.S. exports of frozen orange-juice concentrate to South Korea and comes while the industry is struggling with a devastating plant disease called citrus greening.
For years, South Korea had levied a 54 percent tariff on the product, making sales prohibitively expensive and keeping U.S. exports low. But under a trade agreement that took effect two years ago, the tariff disappeared, leading to an explosion in U.S. business. Exports of frozen orange-juice concentrate to South Korea jumped from $11 million in 2011 to $30 million in 2012, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture....The good times didn't last long, however. Last spring, about a year after the free-trade agreement took effect, customs officials in South Korea began to scrutinize the concentrate coming into the country and questioned the source of oranges in the frozen-juice mix. Under the agreement, only concentrate made exclusively from U.S. oranges is allowed to skirt the tariff, and South Korean officials suspected some of the oranges blended into the concentrate were from another country. "Oranges that came in from Brazil and then went to Korea wouldn't qualify," said Mike Sparks, CEO of Florida Citrus Mutual, a trade group. Sparks said American citrus companies have provided proof that the concentrate going to South Korea is solely of U.S. origin, but to little avail. What's worse, he said, is that Seoul has threatened to retroactively seek tariffs on past sales if customs officials find evidence that foreign oranges were used in the concentrate...
[Freshplaza.com; 28 February 2014]

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