GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (9)

John Edmonds (20 March 2014) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Argentina makes progress in U.S. citrus access talks

Argentina's National Food Health and Quality Service (Senasa) has reported advances with U.S. counterparts in its bid to secure access to the country's lucrative lemon market. The Argentine province of Tucumán is the world's leading lemon-exporting region, but growers have been unable to export their fruit to the U.S. market since it was opened to them for a brief stint in 2000. The existing prohibition on Argentine citrus in the U.S. was subject to a complaint by Argentina to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2012, but the international body deferred the establishment of a dispute settlement gateway (DSG) for the issue. Argentine lemon industry representatives and government officials have made many bold claims about expected access arrangements over the years, but this time SENASA's claim appears to have more scientific grounding. SENASA said that during a March 14 teleconference with the U.S. Animal and Plant Health Protection Service (APHIS), it managed to show lemons were not hosts for citrus variegated chlorosis (CVC), and that the disease could not be transmitted vertically from the seeds of any citrus fruit. The service said these conclusions were the result of studies by the Parana Agronomic Institute of the Federal Republic of Brazil (IAPAR) and Argentina's Obispo Colombres Agroindustrial Experimental Station (EEAOC). "On the occasion, the U.S. agency officials said that the results of this work are consistent with the study conducted by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS)," SENASA said in a release. "This would advance the process of approving the export of lemons from Northwestern Argentina (NOA) to the U.S. and consequently, will have a positive impact on negotiations for the opening of the market for Argentine sweet citrus." A 2011 study by Virginia Tech on Argentine lemons concluded such an opening would be of great benefit to consumers
[freshfruitportal.com; 19 March 2014]

Spain: Orange prices foreshadow costs will not be covered

The first prices paid this campaign foreshadow that citrus growers will, once again, be unable to cover their production costs. Despite some liquidations already reaching 0.15 Euro/kilo, the production shortages will prevent growers from achieving a profitable outcome. According to the head of the Unió de Llauradors (Growers' Association), José Ramón Urbán, the prices currently oscillate between 0.10 and 0.15 Euro/kilo, with peaks of 0.24 Euro/kilo (which would cover production costs), but this year's smaller calibres have had an impact on production volumes...Jorge García, president of the citrus producers association Asociex, also states that "more fruit has been sold this year for juice production and there have also been more discards due to calibres being too small. "This season has not been disastrous, but all factors have been worse than last year."
[Freshplaza.com; 17 March 2014]

Uruguay looks to win back Chinese citrus market

Uruguay has exported citrus fruit to China for many years now, but changes in phytosanitary protocol have momentarily closed off the market due to concerns over fruit fly. In an interview with www.freshfruitportal.com, Uruguayan citrus advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture (MGAP), Federico Montes, discussed the difficulties created by new cold treatment requirements. "What happened with China also happened with Indonesia. Asia, in general, has made significant changes, especially with regards to fruit fly. All countries are asking for cold treatment in transit," Montes said. "While it is feasible to do so, it is also difficult when you have a 40-to-50-day trip, in addition to cold treatment, which means lower temperatures than that of the trip. So, there are interesting markets in development but the commercial development has to be paced with the post-harvest management of the fruit." According to Montes, Uruguay produces around 350,000MT of citrus a year. "2014 will be a year characterized by significant citrus production..." he said. Due to the positive forecast, MGAP has prioritized entrance and growth in promising markets, including China. "China has some difficulties, mainly in distribution and travel time. But we have begun conversations with China regarding citrus. In the next year, we hope to move forward with protocol," Montes said..Other pending countries include Indonesia, the Philippines, India and Vietnam. .

Colombian authorities intercept citrus pest in U.S., Spanish shipments

A major citrus pest that is not present in Colombia has been intercepted by the country's authorities in shipments coming from Spain and the U.S. The Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA) ordered four shipments of the fruit to be turned back from the ports of Cartagena de Indias en Buenaventura; three shipments of oranges and clementines from Spain, and one shipment of California oranges. Assistant manager of border protection Rafael Sanmiguel said if red scales (Aonidiella aurantii) were to enter Colombian orchards they would cause serious economic damages. "Aonidiella aurantii produces damages from chlorosis, falling leaves, dead branches, falling fruit, the reduction of yields through to the death of the tree, especially if it is young," Sanmiguel said. "Additionally, its [the disease's] management and control is very difficult, and management measures for combating it are very costly."The shipments from Spain amounted to 36.9 metric tons (MT) of oranges and 9.7MT of clementines, while the U.S. shipment corresponded to 9.7MT of fresh oranges.
[freshfruitportal.com; 13 March 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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