GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (12)

John Edmonds (11 April 2014) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Spain: Andalusian orange prices down by up to 40%

The Andalusian citrus sector is suffering up to 40% drops in orange prices, resulting, in some cases, in production costs not being covered. Lorenzo Reyes, president of Huelva's Citrus Growers Association, stated that while by this time last season "prices had already started recovering, this year oranges have done nothing but drop, and with no signs of recovery." This is mostly due to the reduction in consumption levels, to demand restrictions measures and to the excessive production volumes resulting from the good weather conditions, "as varieties, which in other years would still be far from ready to be harvested, are overlapping with the current production."... Additionally, the campaign in many areas has been marked by "smaller calibres than usual, with the market preferring the larger sizes. Consequently, many growers have had to sell a large part of their production to the processing industry." Mandarins, on the other hand, are not affected by the situation. Their campaign is developing normally and prices are reaching acceptable levels. Reyes explained that this time of the year is normally one of mandarin shortages, as few varieties are harvested and most are protected. This contributes to "prices being quite good, and in some cases, even higher than last year." According to estimations made at the beginning of the campaign, Andalusia is expected to produce 1.9 million tonnes of citrus this year; 10.4% more than in the previous season. From this total, 1.4 million tonnes correspond to oranges and almost 330,000 to mandarins

[Freshplaza.com; 7 April 2014]

Australian citrus, nuts and cherries to benefit from Japan FTA

Citrus will enjoy a progressive removal of tariffs for mandarins, oranges and grapefruit. Orange tariffs, currently at 15% during peak season, and mandarin tariffs, at 17%, will be eliminated over 10 to 15 years, respectively. The 10% tariff on grapefruit will be removed over five years. Citrus Australia CEO, Judith Damiani, said the agreement should encourage the nation’s already growing citrus market in Japan. “Though the time frames are a little long, this is a great outcome for Australian citrus. Japan is our largest and most important market valued at $40 million in 2013,” Damiani said.

[Freshfruitportal.com; 10 April 2014]

Paraguay: Removal of plants generates crisis for citrus producers

Paraguayan citrus producers from the Cabañas de Caacupé Company expressed their discomfort with Senave's ruling of eliminating the seedlings affected by the Huanglongbing (HLB) pest. The bacteria forced the destruction of some 560,000 citrus plants, and there are still another 5,000 that need be destroyed but there are two nurseries that won't comply with the provision. The order of removal was given with the sole purpose of preventing the disease from spreading, as there are records of the pest in Caraguatay but not in Caacupé. The affected producers went to the municipality of Caacupé this morning to express their concern, since the provision will harm them economically and socially as there will be less work in an area whose primary business is the production and sale of citrus. Citrus fruits take at least two years to develop and be ready for marketing. Even though producers were compensated, they asked for a reclassification. Currently, the subsidy amounts to 3,000 Guarani per plant and the producers are asking that it be 6,000 Guarani.

California mandarin growers enjoy 'net gains'

Bees play a very important role in producing many crops but in some instances they're unwanted guests. Valley growers go to great lengths to get those sweet little mandarin oranges to market. The use of white netting has become much more common in recent years. Those who grow mandarins said the protective measures add to their net gains. Birds must be freed from time to time but the real reason for the netting is to establish a no-fly zone for bees. Local grower James McFarlane said, "Soccer moms don't like to buy mandarins with seeds in them." Cross-pollinating bees can turn a seedless crop into fruit full of seeds. "We're here next to town and there's a lot of people with backyard valencia trees or lemon trees. If a bee flies from that flower to this flower carrying seeded pollen there's a pretty good chance it's going to induce a seed in one of these mandarin oranges." To be sold as seedless, a mandarin crop can have no more than one seeded fruit per 10 piece sample. The persistent bees though can't get enough of the sweet smelling pollen. Holes in the nets must be repaired with plastic twist ties. Workers turned dirt onto the bottom of the nets to prevent other openings. McFarlane said, "It's an enormous pain I can't stress that enough." Still, James said it's worth the effort and cost. "I think for all 40 acres here it cost us something like $75,000." But growers get a lot more money for seedless mandarins. "You talk about that amount of fruit at say a 50% price difference it pays for itself right now."
The nets must go up during the blossom period which lasts about a month. James McFarlane started using nets last year because the industry has put a premium on seedless mandarins -- that is what consumers want.

[abclocal.go.com; 7 April 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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