GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (32)

John Edmonds (29 August 2014) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

U.S. may allow South African citrus from black spot-infested areas

As South African citrus exporters continue to face challenges in Europe to meet strict rules over citrus black spot (CBS), they may have a new market outlet in the future thanks to fresh proposals from the United States. The citrus juggernaut already ships some of its crop across the Atlantic Ocean from the Western Cape, but a proposed rule put forth by the U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) could also open up opportunities from growing areas where CBS is known to occur. "As a condition of entry, the fruit would have to be produced in accordance with a systems approach that would include shipment traceability, packinghouse registration and procedures, and phytosanitary treatment," APHIS said on the Federal Register. A key driver of the decision was a finding that the CBS status of South Africa was identical to the CBS status of some parts of Florida, and therefore the same standards and practices should apply. APHIS expects that strong competition from domestically produced Valencia oranges would limit additional imports of that variety from South Africa, however the Southern Hemisphere nation could find opportunities for increased Navel exports, as well as grapefruit. The service does not believe easy peeler imports or lemons will be affected significantly by the proposal. "A significant portion of the Republic of South Africa's tangelo and mandarin varieties is grown in areas that are CBS-free and already eligible for importation by the United States," APHIS said. "Therefore, any increase in tangerine and mandarin imports as a result of the proposed rule is likely to be limited. U.S. per capita consumption of tangerines has increased over the last decade, as have imports. "All citrus imported from the Republic of South Africa must be cold treated, and lemons do not survive this cold treatment in a marketable condition. Therefore, no new lemon imports are expected as a result of this proposed rule." Authorities will be accepting comments on the proposal until Oct. 27.

[www.freshfruitportal.com; 29 August 2014]

U.S. could open doors to Chinese citrus

The ice continues to thaw in Sino-U.S. produce trade relations, with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) now proposing to allow imports of Chinese sweet oranges, pomelo, mandarins, satsumas and ponkan. The announcement follows the re-opening of the Chinese market for California citrus this month, and follows a similar announcement in July proposing to allow imports of Chinese apples. APHIS has pitched a systems approach involving registration, the sourcing of pest-free propagative material, inspections, fruit bagging, safeguarding, post-harvest processing and sampling, and only allowing imports of commercial consignments. "Additionally, we would require places of production to trap for several species of Bactrocera fruit flies, and would require the fruit to be treated for those species of fruit flies," APHIS said. While the fruit would compete directly with U.S.-grown production, APHIS expects volumes from China will be relatively small. "The majority of China's fresh orange exports, mostly navel oranges, go mainly to Russia and to neighboring countries in Asia," APHIS said. "China's fresh orange exports to North America, mainly to Canada, are very limited, ranging from 100 to 300 metric tons (MT) per year." The focus is similar for easy peeler citrus varieties, however APHIS has forecast greater benefits in these crops due to rising demand and the fact the U.S. has become a net importer of mandarins and tangerines. "Imports of fresh tangerine and mandarin varieties from China would help meet the growing demand for these citrus species, and the quantity could match the nearly 4.5 percent annual increase in imports (about 6,300 MT) that has occurred over the past 5 years.

[www.freshfruitportal.com; 29 August 2014]

40% less lemons been sent from Southern Hemisphere to Europe in 2014

40% less lemon have been sent from the Southern Hemisphere to Europe in 2014, excluding Russia and the UK, which corresponds to around 100,000 tons. As the leading provider of lemons in the European market, with a share of 74% in the past year, Argentina has experienced a 55% drop in shipments, which represents 110,000 tons less than in the previous season, its participation has dropped to 54% so far in 2014, with 91,500 tons shipped. Nevertheless, against this drop, South Africa has come to partially offset this decline of Argentina, increasing its shipments by 9%, reaching 66,500 tons to date, 5,200 tons more than in 2013, however, this increase has not been enough to compensate the Argentina's fall. Other suppliers such as Uruguay, have also supplemented this market but with low participation, so far have sent a total of 8,600 tons, 15% more than the previous year, while Australia and Peru have had a very low share, with about 50 tons between both. Currently there are few importers who handle Southern Hemisphere fruit and the sales have been swift, despite the high prices which reach an average of 0.5 Euro per kilo higher than in 2013, reaching about 2 EUR/kg at week 33.

[iqonsulting.com; 25 August 2014]

Experts find no evidence to back EU's citrus fears

Amid the debate about the impact of citrus black spot on the European citrus industry, world experts have found no evidence that the disease can spread on citrus products without leaves as a pathway. In a summary report released yesterday, an expert panel of professionals in the plant health field from South Africa, US, Brazil, Argentina and Australia, found the fungal disease had a wide global distribution, but was only known to occur in summer rainfall citrus production areas and not in areas with a Mediterranean climate…This might leave a sour taste in the mouth of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which has introduced more stringent sanitary measures to guard against citrus black spot…The EFSA believes that fruit with citrus black spot could be a threat to EU orchards…The experts said they found responses to the issue of citrus black spot to be erroneous and in conflict with the available body of scientific evidence…Another consideration central to assessing the risk included the fact that despite more than 20 years of large-scale citrus exports from countries where citrus black spot was endemic to citrus-producing regions in southern Europe, the disease had not become established in areas with a Mediterranean climate…It went on to say that the EFSA operated on the premise that it had a better understanding of citrus black spot than the expert panel members.

[www.iol.co.za; 27 August 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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