GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (4)

John Edmonds (13 February 2015)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

HLB vector detected in Spain

Agricultural unions in Spain are demanding urgent action from the Ministry of Agriculture following the discovery of a vector for HLB, one of the most damaging citrus plant diseases in the world. The detection of psyllid Africana in groves in Galicia in north western Spain marks the first time the insect has been spotted on the Iberian Peninsula, leading to fears it could cause irreversible damage to the country's citrus exports, worth around €178m a year. Cristóbal Aguado, president of Valencian agriculturalist association Ava-Asaja said the situation facing the industry was "extremely grave". He has called on central and regional governments to establish a rigorous monitoring plan to prevent the insect's spread to other production areas and eradicate it from the mainland. HLB, or citrus greening, is a devastating disease that enters trees through the leaves and attacks its roots. Healthy citrus trees can produce fruit for multiple decades, however, once infected with HLB, trees can yield discoloured, inedible fruit and can die in as little as five years…It has also been detected in the US, where exhaustive containment policies have so far prevented it from taking hold to the same extent as in other countries. Aguado has demanded "immediate" action from the Agriculture Ministry, claiming it was vital for Spain to adopt a similarly rigorous policy to protect its national industry.
[Fruitnet.com; 10 February 2015]

USDA steps up citrus greening fight

US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced US$30m in funding for 22 projects to help citrus producers combat Huanglongbing (HLB), also known as citrus greening, a devastating citrus disease that threatens the country's citrus production. The money will fund promising projects that could offer near-term solutions as well as research funding that may develop long-terms solutions to combat the disease…"Our HLB Multi-Agency Coordination Group has worked closely with the citrus industry to select and fund projects that we think will make a real difference for growers against HLB," said Vilsack.
[Fruitnet.com; 10 February 2015]

Port shutdowns costing US citrus industry

President of trade association California Citrus Mutual, Joel Nelson, has said that port shutdowns along the US West Coast have lost the indsutry US$500m in export opportunities. Following three months of disputes between the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), operations at along the US West Coast were shutdown at the weekend. The PMA suspended loading and unloading at ports across the West Coast over the weekend, with spokesperson Wade Gates stating that it makes "no sense" to pay port workers extra for less work. Nelson said the shutdown further impacted the US$2.4bn industry at a time when demand for California citrus usually peaks. "Fruit is rotting on the docks, sales are being cancelled by the customer and our industry has slowed its harvest so as not to place matured fruit into the market place," said Nelson in a company statement. "All this damage is created by two entities that seek to maximise their economic well-being while sacrificing others."
[Fruitnet.com; 10 February 2015]

Singapore: 30% rise in prices of oranges from China

Dry weather in China has led to a lower yield of mandarin oranges. This has led to a 20 per cent drop in the supply of oranges in Singapore.Oranges from China now cost 30 per cent more compared to the previous year. Despite a drop in supply, wholesalers believe that they are able to meet the local demand for mandarin oranges. Besides China, they import oranges from other places such as Taiwan and Pakistan….Mr Tan Chin Hian, managing director of Ban Choon Marketing, said: "This year, the exchange rate is very high as compared to last year. It is up by at least 10 over per cent. Besides that, the labour cost from China is also very expensive. The labour cost has increased by at least 20 to 30 per cent as well. On a whole, this year, mandarin oranges from China are more expensive as compared to last year."
[todayonline.com; 11 February 2015]

Morocco revises citrus targets

Half way through the citrus season, the Moroccan citrus industry estimates it will produce 300K MT less than initial forecasts and ship 84K MT less.
[Reefertrends; 12 February 2015]

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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