GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (22)

John Edmonds (8 July 2015) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Strong season for Chilean lemons despite small fruit sizing

While a lack of rain in central Chile over recent months has led to a smaller lemon sizing, volumes and prices in some key markets have been a cause for celebration. Cabilfrut export manager Felipe Martin told www.freshfruitportal.com the harvest had started at least a couple of weeks earlier than normal due to mild temperatures, and the country's year-on-year lemon exports were significantly higher. "In general the volumes that have left from Chile to date have been more than double what they were last year," he said. "This is partly due to the very little rain which has meant harvesting has been able to continue without interruption."…The company sends on average 65% of its exports to the U.S. and 35% to Japan, and the marketing season kicked off to a strong start in both destinations. "Japan and the U.S. started off very well with very high prices, although toward the end of June much larger volumes of Chilean lemons were arriving to both markets and so prices dropped somewhat, especially for the smaller fruit, but they're both still really good markets." Miguel added he expected around 3 million cartons equivalent to 17.2 kilograms (38 pounds) each of lemons to be exported from Chile in total this season.
[Freshfruitportal.com; 8July 2015]

Changes to backpacker laws could hurt AU citrus

Citrus harvest in South Australia is in full swing and orchards and packing sheds are filled with seasonal workers. Last year Loxton citrus packers Venus Citrus launched an ecological brand; fruit grown by a group of farmers using sustainable practices and minimal chemicals, in an effort to stand out in the market. The new label is likely to increase demand and currently the fruit packer employs 20 per cent of its staff all year round, but swells during harvest with seasonal workers. Managing Director, Helen Aggeletos, said sourcing staff has not been a problem this year. But she expressed concerns changes to backpacker taxation could spell a reduction in seasonal worker numbers in the future. "I'm not sure with the changes to the tax and all that is happening at the moment for backpackers," she said. "At the moment it's not, we get a lot of backpackers coming through the area. It could be very serious if we didn't get the influx of backpackers, 80 per cent of our workers are seasonal workers and there's not enough local people here to fill those positions. "So we'd have to look at other options whether we import workers or we'd have to look at downsizing."
[abc.net.au*; 6 July 2015]*

Increase in Argentinian lemon production, exports

In an interview with Walter Ojeda, one of the sales managers of the company S.A. SAN MIGUEL, of the ALL LEMON group, which accounts for 80% of all Argentinian lemon exports, we discussed the present and future market situation for this citrus. Ojeda, talking about the current season, says: "It's not much better than the previous one. Up to week 25 of 2014 68,000 tonnes had been exported, and currently we are at approximately 70,000 tonnes." He notes, however, that this figure is lower when compared to that of 2013, when around 130,000 tonnes were shipped, but stresses that there is still a lot of uncertainty about the final figures that will be reached by the end of the campaign. What are the causes for this decline? "The harvest was delayed as a result of rainfall. Furthermore, in spring 2013 there was a very severe frost that affected virtually the entire 2014 production. Many plants are still suffering from biological imbalance, added to the drought conditions registered in spring and summer." The province of Tucuman, for example, which in a normal year would produce 1,300,000 tonnes of fruit, of which 280,000 are exported, is only expected to reach 1,100,000 tonnes this year. "This would mean an improvement compared to last year, when 750,000 tonnes were produced, but would still fall short of the usual levels," affirms Walter.
[Freshplaza.com; 6 July 2015]

Argentina could appeal to WTO over U.S. lemon access, says govt official

The Argentine Foreign Minister has warned if the U.S. ban for lemon imports is not lifted, the issue may be taken up with the World Trade Organization (WTO). Héctor Timerman said last week that Argentine lemons were in a similar situation to fresh beef, which was only recently allowed reentry into the U.S. market after a 14-year absence, according to local media Lagaceta.com. The U.S. banned imports of the citrus fruit in 2001, following alleged phytosanitary concerns. However, Timerman accused the country's lemon industry of having an ulterior motive for pushing for the ban. "We will continue negotiating on the issue of lemons which are still banned in the U.S. due to protectionism," he was quoted as saying at a press conference…Argentina and the U.S. had previously negotiated for six years before market access was granted in 2000. That year 7,400 metric tons (MT) of fruit was shipped, following by more than 20,000MT in 2001…The decision to ban imports in 2001 was heavily criticized by Argentine authorities. In 2012 the country complained to the WTO, and has since been making progress to regain access to the market, partly through a scientific study that reportedly shows Argentine lemons were not hosts of Citrus Variegated Chlorosis (CVC).
[freshfruitportal.com 6July 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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