GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (24)

John Edmonds (23 July 2015) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

S. African citrus specialists to visit EU over black spot row

South African citrus experts are due to visit several European Union (EU) countries this week regarding the dispute over citrus black spot (CBS), which has threatened the country's R10bn citrus industry…Last year EU authorities intercepted 16 shipments with black spot-affected fruit from SA, the world's biggest orange exporter after Spain and Egypt. Earlier this year SA said it would avoid citrus shipments through Spanish ports to avert a possible ban after authorities there refused producers permission to inspect testing facilities for the fungus. Black spot, which affects some South African produce, causes blemishes on the peel of the fruit, which accounts for about 40% of citrus imported by the EU. However, local citrus growers and Department of Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies have disputed this, saying the fungus would not harm EU orchards. Mr Davies has gone as far as accusing the EU of having a protectionist agenda. Local citrus growers have meanwhile sought to save the industry by spending close to R1bn over the past year to comply with EU requirements. This week's trip follows an invitation from the EU directorate-general for health and food safety as well as from agricultural experts in Spain, Italy, France, the UK and Portugal. The delegation includes a number of citrus-growing experts as well as an agricultural specialist from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. The industry's special envoy to the EU, Deon Joubert, said on Wednesday the visiting team expected to shed some light on how SA could potentially improve on its risk management programme. He also said the industry would seek to use the visit to normalise trade between the two regions. Mr Joubert said the industry was also waiting for a formal release of the Food and Veterinary Office of the European Commission report, which further supported scientific evidence the fungus was not harmful to European orchards. He said while the amount of black spot found in SA citrus products was extremely low, it was important that local industry did not threaten its trade partnership with the EU.

[bdlive.co.za; 23 July 2015]

Spanish lemon volumes down, says Ailimpo

Spain's Lemon and Grapefruit Interprofessional Association (Ailimpo) forecasts a drop in lemon production this season with estimates more than 20% lower than last year. Murcia-based Ailimpo expects a harvest of 850,400 metric tons (MT) for the 2015-16 campaign, compared with 1,100,000MT during 2014-15, which was considered exceptionally high. The fall in volume is partly blamed on adverse weather conditions at the flowering stage, leading to a lower number of fruits per tree. In a release, the organization says the expected harvest of Primofiore and Verna varieties is 'normal in terms of tonnage given that it is an almost identical volume to the average figure for the last seven completed campaigns'. For Primofiore, a decline of 17% on last year's volumes is expected whilst Verna will likely decrease by 38%, although this is an early estimate that could change depending on rainfall and will be updated in January 2016. Lemon production is expected to be absorbed by domestic and export fresh markets, as well as the processing and essential oil sectors, as in previous years. The campaign will develop gradually from the end of September and its success will depend on the end of citrus campaigns from competitors in Southern Hemisphere countries such as Argentina, Uruguay and South Africa. However, Spain will be competing against sales of Turkish lemons in European Union markets…

[Freshfruitportal.com; 23 July 2015]

Could Iran nuclear deal bring greater stability to the Middle Eastern fruit market?

Whether it be for Philippine bananas or Pakistani mangoes, South African citrus or Chilean apples, greater challenges have been placed on international fruit exporters trying to reach the Iranian market in recent years. For some it has been a matter of outright prohibition, while for others the issue of sanctions on Iranian financial institutions has made trade unviable. So does the recent nuclear deal with the West spell an end to these problems…?"We have been watching and waiting for a long time, and hoping this day would come," says G.F. Marketing director David Pearce, a shipper of South African and Chilean fruits who focuses on the Middle Eastern market…Pearce highlights that Iranians eat the most fruit out of all the Middle Eastern countries' populations, and to the benefit of suppliers the country is more willing to take larger sized fruit as well…The nuclear deal reached last week between Iran and the P5+1 countries still has to run through the internal political processes of the nations involved, and then Iran would need to change its food import policies, but Pearce is pleased the ball is now rolling…He emphasizes Iran is also a gateway to countries like Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. "The sanctions meant that the shipping lines increased their freight rates to Iran to almost double the normal rate, and that increased rate affected the business which used to go via Iran to the end user, for example Azerbaijan," he says."Oranges and apples were the most popular, due mainly to the good arrival condition of the fruits versus the poorer arrival of the softer fruits," he says…

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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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