

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (2016_7)

John Edmonds (28 February 2016)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Spain gradually switches to Verna lemons

The recent frosts have not taken any significant toll on the Spanish lemon plantations. The campaign continues with higher prices than last season and stable demand, despite the high prices reached by the fruit. "The demand and supply curves intersect at a higher price level than last season," explains Enrique Fuentes, Export Manager of the Murcian company Hijos de Alberto del Cerro S.L...According to the expert, an important varietal change is currently underway. Although until now the supply was largely dominated by Fino lemons, growers are increasingly planting more and more Verna lemons and, to a lesser extent, new varieties recently introduced in Spain. There are two reasons driving this change: "competition with overseas producers is not as strong, as European distribution chains demand fruit with lower pesticide residues and this is increasingly difficult for exporters in the southern hemisphere, given that they require strict minimal treatments for such long transit shipments," affirms Enrique Fuentes. "Another key factor is the fact that Verna lemons, which are harvested mainly between April and July, hardly overlap with Turkey, Argentina, Chile or South Africa." It is also worth noting that, in recent years, Verna campaigns have yielded really positive results, while the Fino campaigns have been more irregular...Hijos de Alberto del Cerro was present at the latest edition of iFresh, in Shanghai. Enrique says that China is a very interesting market because of the concentration of the population in very small areas. However, he stressed that the protocol agreed between the EU and the Chinese authorities makes lemon exports very difficult. "The cool treatment needed to export to China is too aggressive for the fruit and cannot ensure that the goods will arrive in optimal conditions. With this protocol, it will be very difficult for Europe to increase its lemon exports to the Asian giant. Either the protocol is changed, or we will have to make some progress in preservation technology."

[Freshplaza.com; 26 February 2016]

Clementines from Israel slightly more expensive than the Spanish

"In the beginning of the year we had a lot of produce from Spain. However the Spanish season is almost at its end so we changed to the ORRI variety from Israel," states Benjamin Becker, manager of the company Hans Becker at the wholesalers market in Düsseldorf. "The demand for clementines, especially those from Israel, continues to be high. Another reason for us to change our offer." The expert from Düsseldorf is very satisfied with the quality. "The clementines from Israel are better than the Spanish. That is why they are slightly more expensive," tells Becker. Currently Becker sells a 2.5 kg crate for 32 Euro. "The taste of the ORRI is excellent, and it can be peeled easily," continues the wholesaler...The expectation is that the ORRI from Israel will be available for two or three months," tells the manager...

[Freshplaza.com; 26 February 2016]

Grapefruit interest improving in France

Movement of grapefruit is usually slow around the end of the year, so it was not unexpected when the grapefruit market slowed down in France in December. But January brought better sales as well as better prices.

"Citrus starts up in January, when people look to cleanse themselves," said Olivier Fakhri of Georges Helfer. "Arrivals were lighter because of a previous bad market, but now the market is more active." There were some quality issues with fruit coming from Florida, and some of the smaller sizes were scarce. Prices, however, for that fruit remain the highest of all the fruit that's available, with a carton from Florida going for about 25 Euro per box. "Arrivals from Florida will last until mid-April," said Oliver, "and that will transit well into South African supplies that will start in late-April or early-May." While citrus greening is affecting supplies coming out of Florida, Olivier believes declining consumption is a larger issue. While Texas fruit continues making inroads in Europe, especially because of its increasing quality and slightly lower price, Florida fruit is still prized as the premier grapefruit. Israeli and Turkish fruit is also available, with the former selling for about 14 Euro per carton and the latter for about nine Euro per carton. Spanish fruit is selling for about 10-12 Euro per carton. The market should remain stable to slightly higher in prices as March is usually one of the best consuming months of the year.

[Freshplaza.com; 23 February 2016]

Citrus smuggling between Colombia and Ecuador increases

Colombia's Customs Police Force in Ipiales has seized about 100 tons of smuggled citrus to date. The smugglers are smuggling the merchandise mainly through trails or illegal routes, such as Yaramal and La Pintada...Ecuador banned different varieties of Colombian citrus, such as oranges and limes, because of the presence of the Huanglongbig or Yellow Dragon disease...

[Freshplaza.com; 25 February 2016]

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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