GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (2016_12)

John Edmonds (1 April 2016) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

EU to assess Uruguay's progress on black spot

A plant health delegation from the European Union is to travel to Uruguay in April to evaluate the progress made by the citrus industry in combating citrus black spot before deciding whether exports to the EU should be allowed to continue. Shipments to the EU fell sharply in 2015 after heavy rainfall during the spring of 2014 resulted in a high incidence of the disease and seriously affected fruit quality…The EU takes more than 45 per cent of Uruguay's total citrus export volume…ahead of the US on 24 per cent. Shipments to the US rose considerably in 2015, reaching 14,800 tonnes, and the market is set to become increasingly important as demand for summer citrus grows. The past three years has seen a rise in new plantings of seedless varieties such as Marot, Tango, Orr and Orri in response to strong demand from US consumers. According to Marta Bentancur of the Union of Fruit Growers and Exporters of Uruguay (Upefruy), a key part of its attraction is that citrus can be shipped tariff-free, whereas exports to the EU are subject to a tariff of 16 per cent…She added that access to the EU would likely improve once negotiations between the EU and Mercosur are finalised…
[Fruitnet.com; 30 March 2016]

Average Russian consumer not interested in limes

When speaking to one of the major retailers in the Russian market, they confirmed that they don't have any plans to offer the green citrus fruit anytime soon. The company had tried to sell limes in the past, buying one container from Mexico via a forwarder in Holland, but said that their customers just weren't interested…"There might be good demand for limes in luxury supermarkets, but this isn't a product that sees much demand from everyday consumers…The retailer is currently sourcing oranges from Egypt, cheaper mandarins from Pakistan, clementine's from Morocco and grapefruit and lemons from Turkey. These countries are filling in the gap for grapefruit and lemons before the switch to the South African supply in May. This season was reported to be pretty much the same as years before in terms of price and quality for most citrus, with the exception of lemons. Lemon prices are up at the moment because they are only able to buy from Turkey. There is high demand and because they are no longer able to buy from Spain and other countries due to the Russian embargo, this has had an effect on the price of the lemons coming out of Turkey. After a recent ban for many products coming out of Turkey to Russia has meant that in terms of citrus, only grapefruit and lemons are still allowed. …
[Freshplaza.com; 30 March 2016]

New Zealand: Woman sent packing for smuggling lemons

Fruit-sniffing dogs foiled a woman's scheme to smuggle six lemons hidden in her trousers into New Zealand — and sourpuss airport cops sent her packing back to her native Hong Kong. The harsh action by Auckland Airport officials reflects New Zealand's strict biosecurity laws, designed to protect the nation's produce business. The woman claimed she needed the half-dozen lemons for a homemade liver remedy. "Her excuse was that the lemons were good for her liver and other illnesses," Craig Hughes, a rep for New Zealand's Ministry of Primary Industries, which enforces food imports and exports. "That may be true but it doesn't justify endangering New Zealand's horticulture industry by illegally bringing in fruit that could harbour pests or diseases."
[Freshplaza.com; 25 March 2016]

Fino lemons put in fine performance

Spanish grower-exporter Gruventa has summed up the 2015/16 Fino lemon campaign as highly profitable for the sector, with the smaller harvest and high quality resulting in attractive prices and significant progress made in opening up new export markets. Managing director Fermín Sánchez described the season as "an attractive tonic commercially" that had proved "very satisfactory" for growers. The season started strongly following the early end to Southern Hemisphere supplies, with record prices seen throughout September. Although prices fell as the campaign progressed, they remained stable and well above production costs, according to lemon and grapefruit interprofessional Ailimpo. Germany, France and Italy were the three biggest export markets, followed by the UK and Poland. However, despite priority being given to European customers due to the reduced volume, Sánchez noted that companies continue to make inroads in new markets such as Brazil, Hong Kong and UAE. He said it was vital for shippers to persevere with progress made towards the goal of consolidating supply and developing new markets such as Canada, Asia and the Middle East. Sánchez called once again for the creation of a quality label for Murcian lemons, claiming this would provide greater differentiation and allow for the development of an international promotional campaign. Lemons are Murcia's biggest fruit export, with 421,083 tonnes with a value of €415.4m shipped in 2015. The province accounts for approximately four fifths of Spain's total lemon output.
[Fruitnet.com; 29 March 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