GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (2016_36)

John Edmonds (16 September 2016)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

New bill could drive Florida citrus growth

The Florida Citrus Mutual has applauded the House Ways and Means Committee for passing a measure that would provide growers with an incentive to plant more trees and bolster the ailing industry…the bill called The Emergency Citrus Disease Response Act which allows growers to immediately expense the cost of planting new citrus instead of the standard 14-year depreciation period under the current IRS rules. The tweak to the IRS code is designed to increase slumping production…“We are one step closer to protecting the livelihoods of the 62,000 hardworking Floridians who form the backbone of the Sunshine State’s iconic citrus industry.” Florida Citrus Mutual CEO Michael W. Sparks said the committee approval was a ‘huge first step’ in getting the bill passed by both the House and the Senate…“By some estimates our industry needs to put more than 20 million trees in the ground over the next 10 years to support existing infrastructure and get our production back to where it was before HLB [also known as citrus greening disease]…
[Freshfruitportal.com; 16 September 2016]

Spain: Citrus sector asks for tariffs on South African oranges to stay

On the eve of the EU Parliament and Council's decision regarding the Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Southern African Development Community, the organisations representing the Spanish citrus sector have approached the European Parliament and the Government of Spain to ask for the tariffs on oranges imported from South Africa not to be lifted…they have warned of the situation on the Community market, which is very saturated and has already received more than 400,000 tonnes of South African oranges in 2015 and was further affected by the impact of the Russian veto on EU imports…On 10 June, the European Commission signed an Economic Partnership Agreement with the Southern African Development Community, which involves, in the case of oranges, an extension (up to November) of the period in which South Africa can export oranges to the EU without tariffs. This decision must now be ratified by the countries of the Southern African Development Community and, in parallel, by the EU Council and the European Parliament. Depending on how long the ratification process takes, the gradual removal of tariffs could start as early as 2016. This would thus open the door to larger volumes of oranges from South Africa (the world's second largest exporter of citrus, behind Spain) into the EU market, precisely at the period of maximum activity of Spanish oranges…In the letter sent today, they have also criticised the lack of transparency and the absence of an impact study and compensatory measures for the damage that the agreement would cause. They finally expressed their categorical opposition to the agreement, pending ratification, and have requested the Government of Spain and the European Parliament to vote against its approval...
[Freshplaza.com; 12 September 2016]

Scientists make oranges taste like grapefruit

Scientists have found a way of making oranges taste like grapefruit; using a form of fruit alchemy, researchers at the University of Oxford have developed a way of modifying naturally occurring compounds in oranges to alter their smell and taste. They say this could provide a new cheap and plentiful source of grapefruit aroma and flavouring for drinks, food and the perfume industry. The technology uses a modified enzyme to convert a compound called valencene found in oranges into the complex molecule responsible for the distinctive taste and smell of grapefruit. Known as nootkatone, this molecule is large and complex, meaning it is difficult to synthesis artificially. Instead industry relies upon it being purified from grapefruit – an expensive and time consuming process. It takes around 400 tons of grapefruit to produce just 2lbs of the flavouring. Yet grapefruit is one of the most commonly used essential oils in the perfume industry and is also widely used to flavour confectionary, soft drinks and other foods. Dr Luet Wong, a chemist at the University of Oxford who developed the new technology, said: ‘The process requires little energy and generates almost no waste in contrast to conventional chemical processes. ‘The real benefit is that the end product is completely natural. 'A spin-off company called Oxford Biotrans is now developing the technology so it can be used to create flavours on an industrial scale. As the orange industry is much larger than that of the grapefruit, there is far more of the compound valencene available. The company are now working with flavour and scent firm De Monchy Aromatics to manufacture the grapefruit compound from oranges. It is unlikely the technology could be used produce whole oranges that taste like grapefruit as there is not likely to be much market for it. However, it could be used to create new types of orange juice that smell and taste like grapefruit.
[www.dailymail.co.uk; 12 September 2016]

China: Record peak expected for citrus production

…the production volume of citrus fruits in Yichang has increased. A production volume of 3.5 million tons is predicted. This signifies an increase of 20% compared to last year…It is reported that the export volume of fresh Yichang citrus fruits in 2015 exceeded 200.000 tons and is growing every year. Russia, South-East Asia and other neighbouring countries and regions are the main export market for Yichang citrus fruits and the Russian ban on Turkish fruit imports, has helped to boost the Yichang citrus sales volume.
[Freshplaza.com; 15 September 2016]