

GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (2016_41)

John Edmonds (27 October 2016)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Spanish citrus campaign off to shaky start

A European Union decision to extend tariff reductions for imports of South African citrus has been met with consternation by Spanish producers as they ease into what is shaping up to be a challenging season. Until now, South Africa has enjoyed a tariff free period from July to 16 October. But following the recent signing of the economic partnership agreement with the South African Customs Union, the EU has agreed to a gradual reduction of tariffs for the six-week period to the end of November over the next decade until they reach zero...The 2016/17 campaign has got off to a sluggish start, with warm weather keeping demand in check across northern Europe and the heavier crop slowing sales and putting downward pressure on prices. The most recent forecasts released by the Citrus Management Committee (CGC) point to a **volume of just over 7m tonnes, similar in size to the 2014/15 crop. However, the prolonged drought has resulted in an abundance of smaller sizes and will limit the volume available for the fresh market.** CGC's president Vicente Bordils told Valencia's Levante newspaper that early clementine varieties face growing competition from late-season Southern Hemisphere mandarins and the sizing issue will exacerbate the situation this season. On a more positive note, he points out that excellent quality of this year's crop and that the eventual arrival of cooler temperatures in Europe should stimulate demand. On the supply side, the sharp fall in this year's Italian crop and levelling off of Morocco's clementine production, coupled with the rise in interceptions of Turkish citrus due to concerns over pesticide residues all weigh in Spain's favour.

[www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit; 21 October 2016]

Zimbabwe: Hort exports increased in 2015

According to trade promotion agency Zimtrade, Zimbabwe's horticultural exports amounted to US\$72.1 million in 2015, a significant increase from \$49 million the previous year, but still about half of the country's peak output recorded in the 1999/2000 season. The Netherlands remains the biggest single buyer of Zimbabwe's fresh produce, accounting for \$32.6 million (45 percent) of total horticulture exports, Zimtrade figures show. The European Union consumes the bulk of Zimbabwe's exports, with...a combined \$57.5 million worth of horticultural produce. South Africa imported fresh produce worth \$2.1 million from Zimbabwe last year, according to data presented at a horticulture promotion seminar, hosted by the Dutch Embassy in Harare on Wednesday 19 Oct. **Citrus was Zimbabwe's leading export horticulture product in 2015, making up 32 percent of total volumes...** Zimbabwe's horticulture sector, whose export performance peaked at \$143 million in the 1999/2000 season, took a slump after Zimbabwe's land reform programme, in which white settler farmers had farms seized to resettle landless blacks. Major horticultural producers such as Kondozi Estate in Manicaland and Marondera's Mitchell & Mitchell, which had a combined \$50 million in annual export sales, were taken over, leading to years of lack of productivity and loss of markets.

[southernafrican.news; 19 October 2016]

Researchers on the cusp of finding citrus greening cure

According to research scientists at the University of Florida's Citrus Research and Education Centre, they are on the cusp of finding a cure for greening disease. Citrus greening, a bacterial disease that destroys citrus tree production and eventually kills trees, has had a devastating effect on Florida's citrus crops. Earlier this week, the U.S Department of Agriculture predicted that **Florida will collect just 70 million boxes of oranges, down from 81.6 million in the previous harvest, and down from the all-time peak of 244 million boxes in 1998.** The researchers have been using a gene-editing tool, known as CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats). It's based on a virus-fighting system in bacteria that uses DNA and ribonucleic acid to not only eliminate genes that makes citrus vulnerable to greening, but also replaces them with other genes from the same plant. U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, met with the researchers Tuesday 18 Oct., at the centre to get a first-hand look at CRISPR.

[Freshplaza.com; 20 October 2016]

"Cordero citrus belongs with the better brands"

Next week it's All Saints day in Belgium, as well as the autumn holidays. "This is always noticeable in the trade. It gets quieter, people buy less and makes plan to go away," says Annie Lebleu of wholesaler Verdigro in Heule (Kortrijk)... Verdigro is active on the wholesale market in Kortrijk and Roeselare, and is known for citrus of the brand Cordero..."...At the moment the South African season has ended...The Spanish season doesn't start until the first week of November. **We are very satisfied with the course of the South African season, in particular the Navel Late Cambria was great and our customers were very happy.**" According to Annie the seasons usually overlap and there is usually still South African citrus on the market when the Spanish starts...There is Spanish citrus on the market, but Cordero only starts when it has reached a certain brix level, and at the moment it isn't high enough..."

[Freshplaza.com; 26 October 2016]