GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (2017_2)

John Edmonds (20 January 2017)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Spain: CGC denies presence of South African citrus on shelves

The Citrus Management Committee (CGC), the association that brings together the country's main private operators, exporters and importers, denied the presence of citrus fruits imported from South Africa, or any other source in the southern hemisphere, on the shelves of Spanish supermarkets or hypermarkets during December and January, other than in residual amounts. The CGC has released this information as a response to the news disseminated for the past few weeks by a Valencian agrarian organization. After investigating all reported cases and checking the situation with retail chain buyers, the CGC has found that such infringements are basically the result of mistakes in the information conveyed to the consumer, and that not everyone has made the same efforts to correct them. After the complaints, some important retailers have been ordered to review the situation, but others have done nothing about it. It is not the first time this has happened; in fact, mistakes about the origin of oranges or mandarins sold in bulk are common in supermarkets and hypermarkets. The situation is observed year after year; the boards with information for the consumer are only updated to change the price, so the product is consequently devalued and mistreated by not reviewing other key issues relevant to the consumer, such as the origin, variety or even commercial category. In this sense, the CGC wanted to stress how nonsensical it would be for Spanish citrus operators to continue supplying foreign fruit once the local campaign had started. In no way would such a thing be possible, or even profitable, especially given how they always try to supply fruit in the best condition, with freshness and quality.

[Citrus Management Committee (CGC); 20 January 2017]

California lemon growers fear Argentine imports could bring "black spot"

California lemon growers are still fighting the USDA's ruling to allow Argentine lemon imports into the U.S. Growers fear that the lemons from Argentina could be carrying an invasive insect, along with a disease not found in California. “It's a big concern,” said Joel Nelsen, President of the California Citrus Mutual based in Exeter. One of the main issues of concern is the citrus black spot and a certain mite that can vector another citrus disease called leprosis. “I'm not too worried about the Huanglongbing disease from Argentina because fruit doesn't vector that, but the mites, they hide under the calix end of a naval orange, and the citrus black spot is on the surface of skin, and there's no known cure for either one of them” Nelsen said. Of course, neither this pest nor disease is yet present in California's agriculture. Nelsen thinks that, “being a fresh-oriented industry, both of those two – pest and disease – could be very detrimental to our fresh production in California. We're very disappointed with the USDA ruling.”

[californiatoday; 18 January 2017]

China is Australia's largest citrus export market

IBIS World released a report several days ago showing that the export volume of Australian fruit is growing. The income from citrus and banana and other fruits is significantly increasing thanks to the China-Australia free trading agreement. The report notes that by the end of 2016, in the past five years, citrus, bananas and other fruit crops grew by an annual growth rate of up to 20%. In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, it is anticipated that fruit exports will rise 4% to be worth 680 million Australian dollars. In 2016, Australian citrus exports hit a record high, with total exports of 220 thousand tons, worth up to $326 million Australian dollars. China is Australia's largest citrus export market, the trade volume of that year was worth up to 70 million Australian dollars.

[www.freshplaza.com; 20 January 2017]

Turkish exporters faced with low demand in Russian market

…According to sales representative Natela Tanyol of Uçak Kardeşler (Turkey), “The Russian sector still has large amounts of citrus fruit in stock. Because of this, demand for imported citrus isn't that high right now, which has led to lower prices.” …In the weeks running up to Christmas and New Year's Eve, demand was high. Oranges and mandarins are traditionally consumed in the Russian holiday season, which lasts until the 9th of January. While export companies are still sending fruit to Russia, most Russian consumers prefer locally produced fruit, of which there is still an abundance. The current market for grapefruit is stable, though this type of fruit has always met with less demand than for oranges…Like grapefruit, the market for lemons is stable…Mandarins on the other hand are faced with a surplus on the market, in a similar way to oranges…Turkish companies are now allowed to export citrus, vegetables and tomatoes to Russia…A main concern for companies like Ucak is the upcoming competition from Egypt. “Egyptian companies work with prices that are lower than ours…

[www.freshplaza.com; 19 January 2017]