GLOBAL CITRUS SCAN (2017_10)

John Edmonds (24 March 2017)
Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

ALG Estates celebrates its 250th anniversary

ALG Estates celebrated its 250th anniversary at a dinner and award ceremony on 23 March 2017 in their packhouse, next to their new Greefa sorting line. They celebrated the Van der Merwe family's farming activities in Citrusdal since 1776, when it was still the northernmost outpost of the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (the Dutch East India Company). The family has been in South Africa for thirteen generations. Citrus was introduced to the valley between the Ceres and Olifants River mountains more than a century ago, and the Van der Merwe family's farming activities became centred on citrus. In 1974 the three brothers, Alwyn, Lieben and Gerrit (hence ALG), formed ALG Estates, a brand which brought together the production of the three farms, for more bargaining power. In 1998, with the deregulation of fresh produce marketing in South Africa, the company started doing its own marketing…"The greatest thing we can do, is to create hope for our people in South Africa," says Gerrit van der Merwe Sr. "We're totally reliant on the quality of our people." The company is particularly human resources-focused and its black empowerment initiative, Cedar Citrus, started in 2002, is a social as well as a business success. "Cedar Citrus has been the most successful farm in our stable for the past four years," says Gerrit van der Merwe Jr…Charl Senekal, one of the largest sugarcane farmers in Africa, mentioned that ALG grows 41 varieties, a figure probably not surpassed by many citrus growers in the world, nor is its capacity to deliver during every single month of the year. They produce, pack and market approximately 18 000t of citrus annually and seek to specialise within the citrus sector…The company is also unusual in its large amount of local marketing (it only exports 60 to 65% of its production)…
[Freshplaza.com; 24 March 2017]

Delays expected for Australian citrus crops in 2017

An industry body head says the Australian citrus season is running slower and later than normal this year, largely due to a mild spring in 2016. Citrus Australia CEO Judith Damiani said the crop forecast was yet to be finalized, but on the back of record exports in 2016 overall production volume was set to rise. Total exports grew 7% year-on-year in 2016 to reach 220,000 metric tons (MT), including 166,000MT of oranges and 49,000MT of soft citrus…In southern Australia, where the majority of orange production is based, Damiani said it seemed the harvesting of the early Navels would kick off in mid to late-May, with exports starting in June…Up to 60-70% of Australia's Navel crop is typically exported, depending on sizing and quality, and Damiani expected the figure to be at the higher end this year due to strong demand across Asia. "Mainland China became our biggest market for Navel oranges in 2017 [overtaking Hong Kong]," she said…"A lower proportion of the country's soft citrus is exported due to the strong domestic demand, though Damiani noted high volumes were shipped to Thailand and China. The U.S. has been a declining market for Australian citrus shippers over recent years due to increased competition with Chile, which is closer to the market and has lower production costs…Australia's free trade agreements with China, Japan and South Korea had led to increasingly strong performances in those countries, which would only continue to improve as tariffs were incrementally lowered…"She added it was not just Northeast Asian economies in Asia where the citrus industry was seeing growth, but a host of other markets too. "We're seeing growth in Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines…
[Freshfruitportal.com; 21 March 2017]

Spain: Lemons generated 710 million Euro in 2016

Last season, lemons generated a turnover of 710 million Euro, of which 80% corresponded to Murcia, according to…Ailimpo…The current Fino lemon harvest, which is in its final stages, will come to an end with a production totalling 762,000 tonnes, to which we have to add another 230,000 tonnes of the Verna variety, whose harvest is about to start. Such volumes, 60% of which come from Murcia's plantations, will make it possible to repeat or even improve the results of the 2015/2016 campaign, given the scarce competition on the part of Turkey and Argentina. Current prices range from 30 to 40 cents per kilo, while the cost of production amounts to 14 cents. In the European Union, the acreage devoted to the cultivation of lemons stands at 62,855 hectares. Spain is the Member State with the largest acreage (60.6% of the total)…Of the 710 million Euro invoiced last season, 635 correspond to fresh sales; 40.8 million to concentrated juice and 34.2 million to essential oils. Spain ranks first in the world in terms of fresh lemon marketing, with a 22% market share, and second in terms of citrus juice production, with a 15% share…
[Freshplaza.com; 24 March 2017]

Florida lawmakers consider easing hemp regulations amid citrus losses

As citrus growers across Florida continue to suffer from citrus greening which is hurting the viability of the crop, advocates are hailing industrial hemp as a miracle crop which could help ease the losses which the citrus sector is suffering. Some Floridians even think the plant could surpass oranges as an agricultural powerhouse. But lawmakers in the capitol are urging caution…
[Freshplaza.com; 24 March 2017]