

Global Citrus Scan (2017_12)

John Edmonds (6 April 2017)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Lemon research drives Australian sales

With key health research on their side, Australian lemon suppliers look set to increase their presence in Asia over coming seasons. A new study from Tufts University (US), published in The Journal of the American Medical Association, blamed 10 nutrients for 45.4 per cent of cardiometabolic deaths in 2012. The researchers found that the largest number of diet-related cardiometabolic deaths were related to eating too much salt. "Lemon zest and juice has proven to be an effective way to reduce salt in our diets," said peak industry body Citrus Australia in a release. "This in addition to other health benefits associated with increased lemon consumption, including increasing Vitamin C, which helps boost the immune system, and providing antioxidants, which are beneficial for your skin." Consumers in Asian countries are growing increasingly aware of the health properties of lemons, as evident by the recent lemon detox craze that gripped a number of Far East countries, including Japan, South Korea and China. Ensuing demand has seen Australian lemon sales increase from just under A\$1m in 2012 to A\$8.5m in 2016. The greatest demand has come from Indonesia, which absorbs close to 70 per cent of all Australian lemon exports. Singapore (11 per cent) and the Philippines (6 per cent) are also strong markets. Australian lemons are not widely available during summer, with imported lemons, mainly from the US, used to fill a gap in the domestic market.

[Asiafruit, 31 March 2017]

U.S.: Industry welcomes EPA's decision on HLB-fighting insecticide

The California Citrus Mutual (CCM) is "very pleased" by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent decision to deny a petition requesting the agency ban the insecticide chlorpyrifos... "We believe that sound science should prevail in the regulation of crop protection tools," CCM president Joel Nelsen said. Nelsen and members of the CCM executive committee met several times with EPA last year to convey the importance of chlorpyrifos in citrus production... Sheryl Kunickis, director of the Office of Pest Management Policy at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) said this was a "welcome decision grounded in evidence and science". "It means that this important pest management tool will remain available to growers, helping to ensure an abundant and affordable food supply for this nation and the world," she said...

[Freshfruitportal.com; 3 April 2017]

Slow season for imported citrus in the UAE

The import market for citrus in the United Arab Emirates has seen a slow season. As the supply of Spanish oranges was deterred by quality issues and the severe frost in the beginning of the year, some importers opted for Egyptian produce instead. "We've been getting our Valencia oranges from Egypt. We usually also import Navel oranges from Spain, but the quality wasn't too good. The taste was sour, whereas consumers in our region prefer sweet fruit," says Samel Saadedin of the Al Jabali Trading Group. According to Samel, Egyptian Navel and Valencia oranges were a great alternative source. His company also sourced lemons and pomegranates from Turkey and imported kinnow mandarins from Pakistan. "The market for mandarins is quite good," says Samel... "We've finished our season. Our company re-exports the imported citrus to countries like Oman and Qatar. However, as the prices for re-exported fruit were about the same as the ones for imported citrus, there wasn't any profit margin to be had. All in all, the market for citrus has been slow, since January," says Samel...

[Freshplaza.com; 4 April 2017]

South Africa: ZZ2 'Nature Farming' takes compost to new level

...The company's 'Natuurboerdery' (Nature Farming) practices range from composting, plant extract application and using predatory insects all the way through to more standard measures like the choice of rootstocks, growing regions, planting times and varieties... A significant foundation for ZZ2's soil practices is compost, and the grower has a lot of it – 50,000 cubic meters per year in fact... "The four main ingredients we use on this compost are sawdust, woodchips, chicken manure and cattle manure, and... any other organic material that is available at that stage – for example in the citrus season we use a lot of citrus pulp from the juice factories... Van Zyl added that applying mulch over the compost has reduced instances of fungal disease phytophthora by "a lot"... Much in the same way we might drink tea... the soil 'drinks in' a special "compost tea" solution on ZZ2's farms. "What we do is aerate the water to bring in the dissolved oxygen quantity in the water. Then we add biologically-rich compost into it with some food for the biology and that causes an explosion of biology in the mixture," Venter said, adding the mix took about 36 hours to brew. "It only has a six-hour shelf life, so whenever you want to apply compost tea you have to be very close to your point of application... "I'm privileged to say that as of 2003 ZZ2 doesn't use chemical nematicides on any of our crops... nematodes are normally the biggest pest in most crops," Venter said. "We produce a fermented plant extract from the plant Lantana camara – it's an invasive species in South Africa and it's also toxic to mammals... "We also make other fermented plant extracts – we make one from the Neem tree from India combined with wild garlic, also to assist with nematode control... we've made one from aloe vera, we've made one from the lemon tree which repels other pests like thrips...

[Freshfruitportal.com; 7 April 2017]