Global Citrus Scan (2017_21)

John Edmonds (9 June May 2017)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

US demand for citrus from South Africa and Chile outstrips supply

Chile continues to dominate easy peeler shipments to the US. Through Week 21, Chile has shipped over 8,000 metric tons of clementines to the US East Coast (USEC) representing a 50 percent increase in tonnage shipped over the same period last year…In total, Chilean clementine loadings to the US through Week 21 were up 29 percent from last year. In that same period, South Africa has loaded 117,000 cases of easy peelers to the USEC down only slightly from the 122,000 cases shipped over the same period last year. Peru started early…the earliest Peruvian clementine varieties struggled in the USEC market as much of that fruit arrived at a time when domestic and Mediterranean mandarins were still widely available. The Peruvian fruit didn't have the legs to wait for a better market and those that tried…have not done well…The domestic California navel season on the USEC has wound down, but respectable supplies of imported fruit will not arrive until the third week of June when the first South African bulk vessel arrives…This fruit will arrive in a navel orange market that will exhibit conditions that are vastly different than those observed one year ago…In Chile, the earliest navel oranges from Coquimbo have been slow to reach the sugar-acid ratio required to meet the standards imposed by the USDA/AMS…Accordingly, we can expect Chilean navel orange arrivals to increase dramatically after July 1…Today on the USEC, on exceedingly light volume, navel oranges are selling at US$ 30 – 34 on large fruit and US$ 26 – 28 on small calibers…But with a pipeline to fill, programs to be supplied, a light start to Chilean navel arrivals, and with almost two weeks until the arrival of the next bulk vessel from South Africa, we can expect navel orange prices to remain firm into early July…Despite the heavier arrival volume from Chile in the aftermath of a protracted California mandarin season, the price of easy peelers has been rising steadily over the last two weeks…domestic navel oranges have virtually vacated the playing field with very light imported navel volumes available to fill the void. The result is that retailers are finding themselves more dependent on easy peelers to fill their citrus needs…
[Freshplaza.com; 2 June 2017]

U.S.: Interest "takes off" for HLB-tolerant mandarin variety

…The LB8-9 cultivar developed by the University Of Florida (UF), more commonly known by its trademark Sugar Belle, is a conventionally bred variety resulting from a cross between a clementine mandarin and a Minneola tangelo. UF citrus geneticist and research foundation professor Fred Gmitter told Fresh Fruit Portal it was a cross made by his predecessor decades ago but had never been picked out from the field as anything special. The Sugar Belle was officially released in 2009, but its resistance to citrus greening, which has devastated the Florida industry, was unknown at that point… However, the Sugar Belle was released at a time when interest among Florida growers in plantings new varieties was waning. "It was the worst possible time in the history of Florida citrus to release a new variety, because it was the time when our industry was hearing about greening disease spreading dramatically in Florida," Gmitter said…"So no one planted it, except for one innovative grower who planted over 100 acres." Two years after planting, the grower's trees had become infected with HLB. However, the grower decided not to remove the trees but rather see what would happen, Gmitter said. "What happened is those trees, that have all been infected with this disease from very early in their lives, continue to be productive and reasonably healthy, demonstrating substantial tolerance to the disease," he said.
… "It's not an industry-saving event per se, but it's something that some growers now are looking at and are planting," he said…Interest in testing the variety has also cropped up in California, South Africa, South America, China and Turkey, although Gmitter highlighted international interest was largely driven by fruit quality and harvest dates rather than disease resistance…
[Freshfruitportal.com; 22 May 2017]

Australian citrus shows surprising growth in Canada & Philippines

…Canada and the Philippines are now in the top 12 export destinations for Australian citrus, each consuming nearly 6,000 tonnes of fruit a year. Market access manager with Citrus Australia, David Daniels, said the growth is exciting, particularly as the Philippines economy continues to grow…"I can't say why that is, but certainly in the Philippines we've put a lot of effort in marketing and working in partnership with the Victorian Government and AusTrade to do point-of-sale material and work with their supermarkets…
[Freshplaza.com; 18 May 2017]

Mexico: Tamaulipas will export more than 30,000 tons of lemons to the US and Europe

The Italian lemon harvest in Tamaulipas starts in 30 days. Tamaulipas is expected to export more than 30 thousand tons of this fruit to different markets, such as the United States and Europe. Humberto Vazquez Ramirez, the head of the Phytozoosanitary, safety, agricultural and aquaculture offices of SENASICA in the state, said…"This product has an excellent quality and a great value because of the importance it generates in the specialized markets where it is sent, mainly to the United States…He also said that Tamaulipas had about 40 thousand hectares devoted to citrus in the municipalities of Llera, Güemez, Padilla, Hidalgo, and Victoria, 4 thousand of which grow Italian lemons.
[Freshplaza.com; 9 June 2017]