

Global Citrus Scan (2017_35)

John Edmonds (15 September 2017)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Citrus Australia hopes Queensland mandarins can score U.S. market access

...At Fresh Fruit Portal we caught up with Citrus Australia citrus market access manager David Daniels to discuss what is effectively the last main frontier in market access deals for his sector. "When access for Australian citrus was initially granted some decades ago, it was granted on the basis of access for the pest-free areas in the southern states," Daniels said. Since then though there has been huge growth in the Australian mandarin industry, and more than half of the country's production area for that category comes from the north-eastern state of Queensland which wasn't included in the original protocol...He mentions Japan as an example of a market where minor protocol improvements could also be made. "For access to Japan we've actually got limitations on the varieties we can send under cold treatment, so we'd like to expand that list of varieties, particularly to include Afourer mandarins..."

[www.freshfruitportal.com; 11 September 2017]

South Africa: Delays to Valencia harvests in Citrusdal

Despite excellent Brix levels, there have been some delays in Midnight, Valencia and some late mandarin packing in Citrusdal, Western Cape. Acid levels have been slow in dropping to the required levels,...and this year it has caused delays, as much as six weeks in the Valencia harvest in one instance. Citrus growers in this area have access to the USA market, which generally requires a high sugar-to-acid ratio, and growers are keeping the fruit on the trees until levels are safely below the maximum of 1.5. ...Piet Smit of Favourite Fresh Export...singles out soft citrus – clemenules, late mandarins, as well as Nadorcotts – as the outstanding cultivars of the season in their region. Hendrik Warnich, marketing manager of ALG Estates, agrees that the Brix levels are excellent this season. "The markets for Valencias are looking good, we don't have the problems we had for navels," says Smit. "It's strong in the EU, the USA, and the Far East and still relatively strong in the Middle East too and it's a result of sensible and responsible marketing by South African exporters." Hannes de Waal, managing director of the Sundays River Citrus Company in the Eastern Cape, says that their total citrus volumes were the lowest this year that it has been in 10 years due to three very difficult factors: the infamous navel splitting, followed by hot winds in mid-winter damaging the trees and lastly extremely small-sized lemons. At least there is one category that's working out well for the Eastern Cape this year, and that is Valencias. The Valencia harvest is riding high on a buoyant market. In-store juice machines in Europe have been a boon for South African Valencias, especially in the wake of Hurricane Irma in Florida, although South African Valencia exporters note that they saw strong demand even before that. The global orange market was empty, with South Africa sending out almost seven million fewer cartons of navels this year. "A small size on a Valencia is no sin," notes De Waal. "We have a lot of 88s and 105s, medium sizes, which is just right for the Middle East and Europe. Perhaps we have more 144s than we'd like, but we have a good juice market. There's firm demand for South African Valencias, regardless of volumes." Citrusdal is situated along the upper reaches of the Olifants River...Producers are allowed to withdraw water from the river until the end of September, as the region is a winter rainfall area, and growers are currently filling their dams from the river for the coming season... "We're expecting water restrictions going forward, but we're in trouble. It's going to be an incredibly challenging season," warns Piet Smit...There are indications of citrus producers following the example of topfruit and stonefruit producers in the Boland, which is to take the difficult decision to prioritise the water needs of high-value, productive orchards, at the expense of older or less productive ones. Less productive orchards are sometimes cut back, leaving the rootstock and a basic framework of branches, painted white to protect against sunburn, and just kept alive for the coming season, foregoing a harvest from those blocks...The Sundays River Valley has been in a more fortunate position than both the Western Cape and the other large fruit production regions of the Eastern Cape, Patensie and the Langkloof, because of their relative proximity to the giant Gariep Dam, which is a reliable source of irrigation water for them. The dam is currently 66% full, so water isn't such a concern but precipitation isn't the only thing that rain brings. "There's a whole combination of factors that have to be right, among them cooler temperatures during blossoming and fruit set to avoid the problems we had last year with the navels. We're lucky to have sufficient irrigation water but rainwater washes built-up salts from the soil. Thunderstorms release nitrogen to an extent that's difficult to do manually. You can see the trees are greener after a thunderstorm," explains Hannes de Waal of the Sundays River Citrus Company. "We're not complaining, we're still very grateful. Our situation isn't as critical as in other parts of the country but still, we need rain..."

[www.freshplaza.com; 13 September 2017]

Chile's mandarin exports to US nearly double

Since Week 31, Chile has loaded an average weekly volume of almost 6,000 metric tons of late mandarins to the USEC and a weekly average of 2,700 metric tons to the USWC. On a season over season basis, since Week 35 Chile has loaded almost twice the volume of mandarins to USEC than it did over the same period last year. As for South Africa and Peru, loadings of late mandarins and other soft citrus varieties have declined. South Africa is still expected to land a further 115,000 cases of late easy peelers on the USEC to complete its season...In spite of recent heavy weekly arrivals, especially from Chile, the easy peeler market remains stable and robust. ...

[www.freshplaza.com; 11 September 2017]