Global Citrus Scan (2017_36)

John Edmonds (22 September 2017)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

U.S.: South Florida citrus crop loss estimated at 50-70%, says FFVA

As Florida fruit and vegetable growers begin to assess the damage caused by Hurricane Irma, initial signs are that the state's already struggling citrus industry has taken a big hit. The hurricane was a Category 4 when it struck the mainland late last week, passing up through the state's west coast. "The biggest impact from Irma was on our citrus industry," Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association director of public affairs Lisa Lochridge said in a statement sent to Fresh Fruit Portal. "The primary problem is that the excessive winds stripped the trees of fruit. However, she went on to say many groves were flooded and it would take growers a while to get all of that excess water pumped out. In the meantime, standing water in groves can increase the chance of disease to the roots. Harvesting was due to begin in November, and the state's volumes are now set to be much lighter. "The damage estimates vary, depending on the area of the state hit. South Florida damage is more severe. Based on reports from the field, it's estimated that there's a 50 to 70 percent crop loss in South Florida, depending on the region," she said. "Losses are slightly less going north, but Irma cut a powerful swath through the epicenter of Florida's citrus-growing region."
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 13 September 2017]

California navel orange forecast lowest in nine years

The initial 2017-18 Navel orange forecast for California is set at 70 million cartons, the lowest level seen since 2008-9. Of the total Navel orange forecast, 68.0 million cartons are estimated to be in the Central Valley. This forecast is based on the results of the 2017-18 Navel Orange Objective Measurement (O.M.) Survey, which was conducted from July 8 to September 1, 2017. Estimated fruit set per tree, fruit diameter, trees per acre, bearing acreage, and oranges per box were used in the statistical models estimating production. The varieties forecast in this report include conventional, organic, and specialty Navel oranges (including Cara Cara and Blood orange varieties). Survey data indicated a fruit set per tree of 273, below the five-year average of 348. The average September 1 diameter was 2.341 inches, above the five-year average of 2.240 inches. Survey Sample A sample of 576 Navel orange groves was randomly selected proportional to county and variety bearing acreage, and 540 of the groves were utilized in the survey. Once a grove was randomly chosen and grower permission was granted, two trees were randomly selected. The Navel orange sample included organic, Cara Cara, and Blood orange groves. Of the 540 utilized groves, 8 were in Madera County, 89 were in Fresno County, 315 were in Tulare County, and 128 were in Kern County. A Navel Orange Objective Measurement Survey has been conducted in the Central Valley every year since the 1984-85 crop year, except for the 1991-92 season due to a lack of funding. The data from the first two years were used for research purposes in developing crop-stimating models.
[nass.usda.gov; 15 September 2017]

U.S. share of Japanese lemon market decreases

Japan's lemon import volumes rose 6% year-on-year from January through July to 31,945 metric tons (MT), with Chile largely responsible for the growth. The figure, however, only represents a 2% increase compared to the same period in 2015. Numerous Southern Hemisphere countries achieved double-digit growth in shipments to Japan, with the second-largest supplier, Chile, seeing a 16% increase to 8,914MT. New Zealand saw 35% growth to 633MT and South African shipment rose 55% to 493MT. The U.S., which was the leading lemon supplier to Japan by far, saw its volumes remain stable at 21,874MT, marking a 1% year-on-year rise but an 8% decline over 2015. The changing dynamics mean the U.S.'s market share over the seven-month period has reduced from 76% in 2015 to 68% this year. Chile, meanwhile, has seen its share increase from 21% to 28%. Japan was the U.S.'s leading lemon export market over the period, followed by Canada and South Korea. The U.S. was Chile's leading market, receiving double the volumes sent to Japan, its second-biggest market.
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 20 September 2017]

More demand for grapefruits in Asian markets

The citrus season has begun in Israel. According to Oron Ziv, they have already started with red pomelo. They have begun harvesting grapefruit, but expect to only start shipping from 24 September onwards, because of holidays next week. The crop for this year is normal with regards to volume, he says. "We are expecting a good season", Oron continues. "Especially after the effect of Hurricane Irma in Florida. The last South African and Mexican fruit are still on the market, but with low volume, and they are selling at very high levels." He added that the niche available for grapefruit on the Asian markets is growing. "There is higher demand for this citrus fruit from Asian markets, like China, Japan and Korea."…
[www.freshplaza.com; 18 September 2017]