

Global Citrus Scan (2018_5)

John Edmonds (18 February 2018)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Barking up the right tree

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been working with a canine training and detection company, Coast to Coast K9, to train over 20 dogs to spot plant diseases in fruit orchards. The development was detailed by Professor Dr Tim Gottwald, research leader at the USDA, during a Future Lab session at Fruit Logistica in Berlin, where he estimated the potential savings to the industry as in the “millions”. Dogs have a sensitivity threshold for odours that ranges from 1,000 to 100 million times more sensitive than humans, and they have been shown to be capable of detecting a single drop of blood in 25 Olympic swimming pools worth of water...The trials showed an extraordinary 99.17 per cent accuracy rate when using dogs to identify HLB, versus a detection rate of 50-70 per cent when using molecular techniques. Results are also instant, rather than waiting hours or days for lab testing. Very few false positives or negatives have been recorded. Perhaps even more remarkably, in a 10,000 tree trial, the dogs were able to detect HLB as soon as the insect had infected it, something that would have been impossible using traditional methods of investigation. Dogs took less than two seconds to investigate each tree and could examine a 10-acre block of trees in 53-103 minutes, depending on the level of disease present...

[www.fruitnet.com fpj; 9 February 2018]

Moroccan tangerine export ‘melts’ due to summer heat

...The high temperatures in the months of July and August turn out to be negative for tangerines. Estimates for the export of tangerines are at 420,000 tonnes, the orange export amounts to 100,000 tonnes and the lemon export remains stuck at 9,000 tonnes, according to a report from the USDA...The cause can be found in the unusually hot summer months, resulting in a smaller harvest. The consequences are mostly noticed in the tangerine sector. Export figures for the small citrus is nearly 100,000 tonnes lower than in the previous season, with only 420,000 tonnes. The orange export decreased from 163,000 tonnes to 100,000 tonnes, and the lemon/limes report a loss of 4,000 tonnes, amounting to 9,000 tonnes... Although nearly 50 different varieties are grown in the country, clementines are good for about half the tangerine production. Hybrids such as Nardocott (Afourer) and Nova are becoming increasingly more popular...

[www.freshplaza.com; 14 February 2018]

Spain: Citrus exports are close to last year's figures

...The Citrus Management Committee has been taking stock of the first part of the campaign, which comes to an end when the Satsumas, the early clementine varieties of September/October, the Clemenules clementines, the Clemenvilla mandarins and other late clementines from January have all been harvested...Taking also into account the data on exports to third countries recorded up until 21 January, when the first part of the campaign comes to an end, "the prospect is for the export figures to be very similar to those of the previous campaign, which then reached 2,032,157 tonnes, with 842,165 tonnes corresponding to clementines," reported the Citrus Management Committee. The Committee also said that, according to the latest statistics available, as of 30 November, "we have exported 516,000 tonnes of Satsumas, Clementines and mandarins, compared to 520,000 tonnes last season. The prices at destination have been better than last year thanks to the fact that, despite the repeated messages about a supposed shortage of Spanish fruit, the quality has been similar or even better and the demand has remained stable...Regarding Navelina/Navel oranges, "there was a significant gap between the prices paid at origin and the sale prices in Europe," stressed the Management Committee. "The frequent messages published in the summer, before the official volume estimates were announced, about an alleged fall in the harvest, especially in the case of the first oranges of the season (the Navelinas) took a toll and resulted in European buyers extending the purchases of Valencia oranges from the southern hemisphere," states the representative from the Management Committee...

[www.freshplaza.com; 16 February 2018]

Spain: Inclement weather could damage 2018-19 citrus crop, claims IGP

After premature flowering for some varieties sparked by “spring conditions” in January, a recent cold snap could have ramifications for the next campaign. This is the expectation of IGP Regulatory Council of Valencian Citrus director general José Enrique Sanz, who said volume reductions of 25-30% may be seen for the 2018-19 crop in affected varieties. “We are a bit worried about production for the coming year. There are varieties that have tended to flower pretty early because of the high temperatures that we had in January and at the start of February,” Sanz told Fresh Fruit Portal during industry event Fruit Logistica in Berlin last week. These varieties include Late Lanes, Chislett, Powell Navels, Barnfield, Midnight Valencias and Delta Valencias...Valencian growers have received a boost this week after agricultural insurer Agroseguro agreed to include citrus fruit splitting as an adverse weather-related category for which producers can claim compensation...Field studies conducted by AVA-ASAJA technicians confirmed citrus splitting had been caused by a series of extraordinary meteorological phenomena, including a lack of rain in summer and fall, high temperatures in winter and sudden rains around harvest time. The association said the problem had mostly been for oranges but was also affecting late mandarins like Ortanique..

[www.freshfruitportal.com; 14 February 2018]