Global Citrus Scan (2018_6)

John Edmonds (26 February 2018)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

South Africa in line for record citrus crop

…During Fruit Logistica in Berlin last week, we caught up with industry leader Justin Chadwick to discuss the upcoming season... “In the Western Cape it’s no secret that there’s a drought,” says Chadwick, CEO of the Citrus Growers Association (CGA) of Southern Africa. But unlike his peers in table grapes and stonefruit, Chadwick’s sector is not so heavily concentrated in that province. He estimates only 10% of the country’s citrus crop is in the drought-hit areas of the Western Cape, while a further 4% is subject to dry conditions in the southern part of the Eastern Cape…“In the Western Cape the biggest citrus-growing area is Citrusdal and they had enough water to set the crop last year, but the issue now will be to get sizing out of the crop; they’re a winter rainfall area so you wouldn’t expect rain in the summer,” he says. “There will be some negative impact on the drought in the Western Cape and in the southern part of the Eastern Cape, in the Gamtoos Valley in an area called Patensie near Port Elizabeth. “They’re also suffering from the drought…”With a situation such as this, we ask the executive whether this means supermarket buyers might need to start downsizing shelf space for the deal, but actually the opposite is true. “No. In fact last year was a record crop and this year will be even more, because the other factor that’s happened in South Africa is there have been significant plantings of lemons and soft citrus over the last 10 years and that fruit is starting to come into maturity now,” he says. Chadwick pointed out the lemon industry had gone from 15 million cartons to 19 million in the space of one year last season…Likewise with soft citrus, even though the Western Cape has had the drought there’s soft citrus being grown in the north a lot now. ”Last year the citrus sector achieved exports of 121 million cartons, which could have been higher if five million cartons of Navel oranges weren’t lost to an unusual case of fruit drop…“If we had those five million in Navels – although we can’t say exactly as I think some Valencias replaced some of the Navels perhaps – we could have been up to 126 million cartons.” “We’re staring down 130 million but we’ll know better in March…”

[www.freshfruitportal.com; 15 February 2018]

Late-season freeze for Central Valley

Citrus growers in California’s Central Valley are counting the cost of an unusual late-season freeze. According to California Citrus Mutual (CCM), the weather event swept through the region on Monday night and Tuesday morning, causing temperatures to dip below 25oF (-3oC) for up to 5 hours in the coldest locations. Citrus growers in the Central Valley are approximately 45-50 per cent through harvesting this year’s crop. Given the timing of the freeze and the good size and sugar content at this point in the season, growers do not anticipate any damage to the current crop.However, Spring-like conditions over the past several weeks have caused trees to start blooming two to four weeks earlier than usual. The quality and quantity of the bloom is a direct indication of the size of next year's crop and the quality of the fruit.

[www.fruitnet.com/americafruit; 20 February 2018]

"Quick sales of easy peelers but orange market more difficult"

The Spanish are high on prices for oranges at the moment. This was noted by Henk Vlaeminck of Van Dijk Foods…"…It isn't easy to make 11.50/12.50 Euro for Salustianas (15 kilo) when the Egyptians are being sold for 7.50/8 Euro (15 kilo). Yet the price of Spanish oranges on the trees remains high. They have the benefit of a good local market and also have wide sales in other countries," says the importer. Unlike the oranges, the sales of easy peelers are going well. "The price of Nadorcott is around 1.40 - 1.50 Euro per kilo. Afourer is being sold for a kilo price of 1.10 - 1.20 and Clemengold is going for 1.40 - 1.50 Euro depending on the calibre," Henk sums up. "The demand for citrus is generally good and the supply is sufficient. There aren't any shortages and everything finds its way. All the citrus being offered for the right prices is being sold quickly, but it's more difficult for the expensive oranges at the moment."…

[www.freshplaza.com; 22 February 2018]

AMT Fruit hits 1m meal mark in FareShare donations

Over 1,700 charities have benefitted from Tesco supplier’s citrus since partnership with FareShare began in 2015 AMT Fruit has hit the milestone of providing more than one million meals worth of surplus fruit to food redistribution charity FareShare. The company is part of the Munoz group and the core supplier of citrus to Tesco. Following an introduction brokered by Tesco in 2015, AMT Fruit has regularly supplied FareShare with any citrus fruit they cannot sell as originally intended due to variations in forecast or the produce being out of specification or packaged incorrectly…

[www.fruitnet.com/fpj; 22 February 2018]