Global Citrus Scan (2018_10)

John Edmonds (23 March 2018)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

SA expects record citrus export crop

Southern Africa will export some 131.7 million 15kg cartons of citrus fruit during the coming season, representing a 7.1 per cent increase on last year, when a record volume was exported…The South African Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) says it expects good internal quality, normal sizing and good external appearance due to the warm and dry climatic conditions experienced during the summer months. Soft citrus is expected to increase from 13.4m cartons to 14.7m, grapefruit from 15.6m to 16.8m, lemons from 19m cartons to 20.6m, navels from 21.1 million cartons to 25.6m, while Valencias will remain more or less on the same level as last season when 54m cartons were exported. The CGA says a good grapefruit crop is expected, with the forecast being eight per cent higher than last year. Pigmented varieties account for the bulk of the export with an expected 14.8m carton crop - eight per cent up on last year. White grapefruit volumes are up two per cent to 1.7m cartons. Swaziland has started selected picking and Zimbabwe starts in week 14, which indicates a normal season. Valencias contributed by far the biggest proportion of the total citrus export crop. Growers in Letsitele, which accounts for almost a third of the volume, attributed their region's eight per cent anticipated growth to 15.2m cartons to very good growing conditions and recovery from the drought. Typically, a medium-heavy crop in the past has resulted in medium to small fruit. The second largest player, Sunday's River Valley, sees a recovery to seven million cartons in 2018, approaching 2015 levels after two years in the six million cartons range. The estimated navel export volume represents a return to normal from last year's disastrous 21.1m cartons, says the CGA. The expected exports of 25.58m cartons expected in 2018 is still two per cent down on 2016's volumes…The rise in the lemon forecast to almost 21m cartons is the first indication of rapid future growth as new orchards come into production. The 20.6m carton estimate is eight per cent up on last year's final volume. As in the case of lemons, soft citrus' upward trajectory continues, says the CGA. "Overall growth of ten per cent to 14.75m cartons is expected. Growth is driven by the late mandarin types, increasing 19 per cent to 6.6m cartons, while satsumas (seven per cent), clementines (four per cent) and Novas (three per cent) show more modest gains."
[www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit; 21 March 2018]

U.S.: California citrus volumes set to wind down earlier than normal

…California Citrus Mutual (CCM) president Joel Nelsen said the final stages of the season were looking "really good", noting the 2017-18 campaign had been moving in a consistent manner with good demand for all varieties…"It's probably going to end early because of the shorter crop…This year I would expect us to be pretty much done by a month earlier by the first week of June." The shorter crop is mainly due to lower Navel production, which Nelsen speculated was largely the result of rainfall in spring last year which knocked the blossoms off the trees as well as the effects of the ongoing drought. But he said that fruit size has been much larger this year. "We're peaking on 72s and 56s, which is really positive from a consumer perspective," he said, adding he expected per-acre revenue to be good for growers this year…In mandarins, he said the campaign had been going well, with production levels back to normal after a dip last season. Volumes are expected to wind down in the second-half of April…
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 19 March 2018]

Argentina's lemons will arrive in the US next month

The governor of Tucuman, Juan Manzur, stated that, at the end of April or beginning of May, the US market would once again have lemons from Tucuman. Manzur said that they had complied all regulations and that this news was "transcendent, as the products from Tucuman had achieved opening the most demanding market." After negotiations and meetings with the authorities of the North American country, the province complied with all phytosanitary requirements and got the green light to export to the US, after two decades…
[freshplaza.com; 20 March 2018]

Spain: It is impossible to keep orange prices as high as needed in Europe

The first part of the Spanish citrus season has been marked by the substantially lower production volumes of mandarins and oranges in the Region of Valencia, while in Andalusia, the production has remained similar to that of 2016/2017. Although prices at origin were already very high in the first half of the campaign, speculation about a possible shortage of goods intended for distant markets in the second part has led to prices rising to a level which makes marketing the product in Europe impossible. In fact, the abundant rainfall recorded in Andalusia over the last three weeks, which brought the harvest to a halt, has saved the market from a significant oversupply of oranges, which would have made it impossible to market the fruit at such high prices…"Markets such as China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Australia, Brazil or Canada, among others, are essential for Spanish exporters, as they allow them to take goods to the market while decongesting the European market," explains Alejandro Peiró, manager of the Valencian company Peiró Camaró, to FreshPlaza. "Orange shipments to China have doubled compared to last year, going from about 20,000 tonnes to around 40,000 tonnes," he added.
[freshplaza.com; 22 March 2018]