Global Citrus Scan (2018_18)

John Edmonds (4 May 2018) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

South Africa expects India export boost

The Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) said exports to India have been constrained by a requirement that does not allow in-transit cold treatment. "After two successful pilot shipments of both pears and oranges, the final acceptance to allow in-transit cold treatment is imminent," said the CGA…The CGA noted that this should promote an increase in citrus exports to India. Indian mango and table grape access to the South African market is also expected to be concluded in the near future. According to the CGA, the other trade inhibitor is the high tariffs charged on fruit imports into India. "For years now, South Africa (and the SADEC partners) have been in discussions regarding a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). Embassy officials expressed the view that the upcoming BRICS Summit in South Africa in mid-2018 may give some impetus to these ongoing discussions."…According to the CGA the vast majority of South African citrus shipments to India are Valencias…"Given the factors that are beneficial for fruit exports to India, namely a large population, a rising middle class and a vegetarian culture, the volumes are way short of the potential. Many feel that solving the in-transit treatment issue will result in increased volumes."

*[*fruitnet.com/eurofruit*; 27 April 2018]*

Schoonbee Landgoed: citrus starts well after sterling grape season

South Africa's Senwes area is the second largest lemon production region in the country with an estimated 4.5 million 15kg cartons expected this season. The area's increase from 3.67 million cartons last year is illustrative of the increase in lemon plantings here, as elsewhere in the country. Schoonbee Landgoed, between Groblersdal and Marble Hall in the Senwes citrus production region, started their lemon harvest two weeks ago. "The fruits are smaller than last year, with a peak between 113/138, and a good spread of some big fruit and some small fruit," says Gert Upton, Schoonbee marketing manager. "Our first lemon harvest will run until week 22 or 23, and the second will follow at weeks 26, 27, 28. Lemons (and navels) from our area are ovoid, a shape preferred in the Far East because you can cut more slices from an ovoid lemon than a round one." The Senwes lemon harvest follows after the early lemons from Limpopo and comes before the start of the Sundays River Valley, the engine room of South African lemons (whence 8.5 million cartons are estimated for this season). It used to be easier to find a market for small lemons, counts 189 or 216, but markets like the Middle East aren't interested in these counts anymore…Gert Upton expects what could be a difficult lemon season – in fact, he foresees a difficult couple of years ahead. "In South Africa there are more lemon blocks not yet in production than ones that are already producing," he points out. "This year the total for the industry is estimated at almost 21 million cartons. After the intensive planting of the past few years, I think in future there's going to be sifting out on the basis of quality, consistency of supply, window of supply and sizing." "Last year the Russian market, which takes the large counts, was under pressure because of high Argentinian volumes and with news that the local Argentinian juice market is slow and that they are going to export 30% more this season, the big question is: how much of that fruit is going to end up on traditional South African markets and what will the effect be on pricing? Prices in the Far East are currently good but for how long will this be sustained? In Europe the price is picking up because they're finished with Primofiore and busy with Verna. The Verna harvest isn't as large as last year, so there will be a small opportunity for fruit to do well and thereafter it will move over to fixed programmes."… "The big pressure in the lemon market will be in Russia and Europe," he concludes. Apart from lemons, at Schoonbee Landgoed they're currently packing clementine (nules) and Novas, with the mid-season navel harvest due to start this week. Because of the youth of many of their soft citrus blocks, the impact of tree immaturity on fruit quality is still a challenge, albeit year on year a diminishing one. The Satsuma (Miho wase) harvest started well with better sized fruit than last year and improved quality due to older trees. Similarly, older clementine trees registered very good yield and quality, with some granulation on fruit from younger trees…"The Novas look much better than last year, the trees are much larger and the fruit set was good with 300 to 400 more fruit per tree," he says. "With soft citrus the age of the trees is a big factor. In the case of clementine (nules) the trees have to be at least seven or eight years old, which makes it a very expensive tree but it is a much sought-after cultivar because its sugar has to be above 9 brix, otherwise it is marketed as an ordinary clementine, unless it has seeds, in which case it is a tangerine."…Schoonbee Landgoed has 850ha of citrus, of which 580ha is currently in production. The balance is expected to start bearing over the coming three years, which will necessitate a doubling in their current 11,000m2 citrus packing capacity. This season a total of 1.6 million cartons of citrus will be packed on the farm…

[freshplaza.com; 4 May 2018]

"Good prospects for Egyptian grapes, but orange market is outright bad"

The market situation for Egyptian Valencia oranges is disastrous. This is Omar Ehab of the Egyptian producer, Spica's, opinion. They have a warehouse in the Dutch city of Rotterdam. "The first months of the year were very good. But, since April, the demand has all but collapsed. I expect that warmer weather to be particularly detrimental to citrus consumption. Our prices are between EUR5 and EUR 6,50 per 15kg box. This is for category I oranges. It is even more worrying that the demand is completely lacking."…

[freshplaza.com; 4 May 2018]