Global Citrus Scan (2018_33)

John Edmonds (7 August 2018) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

'Disaster' looms for farmers and workers as Eastern Cape dam could run dry in 3 months

Water levels in dams in the Kouga district in the Eastern Cape are critically low and water could run out completely within two to three months.According to Kouga municipal manager Charl du Plessis, the effect of the water shortage could be "disastrous" for local citrus farmers and workers who are dependent on this industry…"The Kouga Dam, which is the critical one, is currently at 6.84%." Other dams in the area are the Churchill Dam (15.87%) and Impofu Dam (28.82%). The current expectation is that these dams will provide water to the district for about six months. "With current usage, the Kouga Dam's level falls by 0.7% every day. At this rate, and with no rain being expected any time soon, the dam will soon be completely dry," Du Plessis said…Du Plessis says the water shortage could seriously affect the local economy. "Many people are dependent on the citrus industry for jobs, not only on the farms but also at businesses in the towns, such as packers. A lot of seasonal workers' jobs could also be affected." Du Plessis says the municipality has applied for financial aid from the government and expects to receive the money soon…Many provinces, in particular the Western Cape, had experienced water shortages in recent months, leading to the implementation of severe water restrictions. In July this year, that province experienced some relief with dam levels rising significantly owing to increased rainfall. The Eastern Cape has the lowest dam levels in the country, News24 reported last month.
[News24.com; 6 August 2018]

Chilean lemon export value down a third in H1

The value of Chilean lemon exports in the first half of this year was significantly lower, with U.S. market prices only having rising above last year's levels in recent weeks. Odepa data shows that from January through June Chilean lemon export volumes were 13% down on 2017 at 17,200 metric tons (MT), but the total FOB value of the period was US$20.9 million – a whole 36% lower…While U.S. market conditions have been very strong this year over the summer – on the back of rising demand, low California volumes and limited imports from Chile and Mexico – last year prices were higher between March and June…Chile also focused more on the Japanese market than the U.S. in the first half of this year. Despite the 13% drop in exports to all markets, to Japan they actually rose by 24% to 8,900MT, while to the U.S. they fell by 27% to 6,800MT. Exports also fell dramatically to the number-three and four markets – South Korea and the Netherlands respectively – although these countries receive far less…
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 30 July 2018]

U.S.: Florida researchers use fungus to manage Asian citrus psyllid.

U.S. researchers have begun testing an insect-killing fungus in a Florida citrus grove, targeting the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) which vectors citrus greening disease…"Applied biological control is an integral and sustainable component of managing all insect pests in citrus groves," said Ronald Cave, director of the UF/IFAS Indian River Research and Education Center (IRREC). The fungus, Isaria fumosorosea, occurs naturally in citrus groves…A biological scientist at IRREC, Pasco Avery, tested the fungus against the ACP under laboratory conditions, using leaf disk bioassays in Petri dishes. He said the fungus could be an effective biological control agent against the pest…"The fungus kills the psyllid but is compatible with beneficial insects like lady beetles, lacewings and parasitic wasps, which also control the psyllid."…Bob Adair, executive director at the Florida Research Center for Agricultural Sustainability in Vero Beach, heard about Avery's work with the fungus and approached him about using commercial sprayers to distribute the fungus in his groves…"Our work now is to add mass quantities of the fungus with horticultural oils that have been used in groves for decades and apply it to groves."…The fungus needs to be tested in outdoor groves to determine whether it can suppress the ACP population to the point where trees will be protected and that it will not become resistant to the sprays…The first field trial was conducted to confirm what the scientists had determined in the laboratory…A second field trial is scheduled for September…"We tested the fungus for psyllid control, the effect on beneficial insects and resistance management. Now we need to conduct more tests to determine its effectiveness on a wider scale and time range."
[www.freshfruitportal.com; 3 August 2018]

Sun Pacific and Eurosemillas team up in China

US grower-exporter Sun Pacific has forged an alliance with Spanish seed company Eurosemillas in order to supply the Chinese market with premium citrus and table grape varieties from the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.
The companies are putting together a team of local Chinese representatives with a view to opening an office in Shenzhen. "Eurosemillas already has a branch in Beijing, which it set up ten years ago, and although China is no longer a new market for us, it is still very complicated to gain a foothold in the country – and even more so due to the recent trade war between the US and China," said Victor Hao Wu. The companies supply wholesalers, supermarkets and the e-commerce sector. In the near future Hao believes that in the future, the supermarkets will increasingly dominate Chinese distribution to the detriment of the wholesale sector.
[fruitnet.com/americafruit; 27 July 2018]