Global Citrus Scan (2018_42)

John Edmonds 15 October 2018) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Morocco set for record citrus production.

Morocco is expecting record citrus production for the 2018-19 season, according to local media La Quotidienne.
The North African country is reportedly set to see volumes rise by 17% year-on-year to around 2.62 million metric tons (MT). Exports are reportedly set to grow by a lower rate of 4%. Citrus orchards now cover over 117,000 hectares of land in Morocco and are this season expected to yield a record average of 22.1 MT per hectare. The Moroccan citrus season typically runs from around mid-October until June. Around 40% of exports are shipped to the EU, with 30-35% going to Russia and a further 15-17% to North America. The local market absorbs 70% of production volumes. Citrus Growers Association chief Ahmed Derrab earlier this year said he was pleased with how national production had grown over the last decade, but noted that exports were lagging behind expectations. He said this was partly because of stiff competition in the EU market, and explained the industry was hoping to develop African and Asian markets. Last season around 2.4 million MT of citrus was produced. Volumes had been forecast higher but were affected by excessive heat.
[freshfruitportal.com; 11 October 2018]

Argentina: Increased lemon exports to Russia

"The season has been similar in terms of total volumes exported compared to last season. However, the weather has made the season quite unsure. We experienced a warm fall, followed by lots of rain and then even light frost in our areas. It didn´t damage the production itself, however it, caused some delays and difficulties to get the lemons from the field for example", states Martijn Hazeu from Citrusvil, Argentina, in this reflection on the season that finished at the beginning of September. He explains that there were some concerns about phytosanitary issues that made the export flows change a little. "As a precaution, to prevent any problems with important markets like the EU, we sent more volumes to non-European countries for this season, with Russia being the main receiver…I have been working in the lemon business for 13 years now, and I can say every export season is completely different."
Martijn is of the opinion that it's noticeable in the market that South Africa has become a real competition. "It is very important to look and try to work on protocols to open alternative markets such as India and China. These are markets that can take big volumes as well." Having the United States open for Argentina's lemons is very positive according Martijn…We have been working really hard to re-open this market, so we have to keep it open this time."…
[Freshplaza.com; 12 October 2018]

Florida shows signs of citrus recovery

In the first forecast of the 2018/19 season, the National Agriculture Statistics Service of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA-NASS) has projected yearly increases in both the Florida orange and grapefruit crops, bringing the industry near pre-Hurricane Irma production levels. The USDA forecast Florida orange production at 79m boxes and Florida grapefruit production at 6.7m boxes, a sharp increase from the previous season, devastated by Hurricane Irma, when production dropped to 44.95m boxes and 3.88m boxes respectively.
The orange estimate marks growth of 76 per cent, and is predicted to consist of 34m boxes of early and mid-season varieties and 45m boxes of Valencias…Reacting to the forecast, Michael Sparks – chairman of Florida's largest citrus trade organisation, Florida Citrus Mutual – said that while the forecast was good news, it was some way from what he would describe as a 'recovery'.
[fruitnet.com/americafruit; 19 October 2018]

U.S.: Larger California citrus crop expected but smaller Navel sizing

The 2018-19 California citrus crop looks like it will be larger than last year, but there will likely be some issues with sizing, according to an industry body. California Citrus Commission president Joel Nelsen told Fresh Fruit Portal that it seems Navel oranges would be most heavily affected by a higher proportion of smaller sizes in the wake of the heat wave this summer…The first harvests will likely start this week, and initial volumes to be available in the market for Halloween in late October…"So that fruit 88s and smaller are going to be more difficult to market – we're going to have plenty of 56s, 72s … but everything is shaping up well…He said the smaller sizing could be across all citrus types this season, but as yet it was unclear…Timing-wise the season is running a little bit later than last year, with a lack of cold nights slowing colour development…The mandarin harvests should start around the same time as the Navel harvests, beginning with Satsumas, then moving onto Clementines and Murcotts. While the U.S. Navel market is reported to be relatively healthy at the moment, a recent market report by Capespan North America noted the easy peeler market was much slower, with an abundance of Chilean mandarins available. "We've seen an explosion of offshore imports into our domestic market and the pricing is chaotic. One could almost argue there has been some dumping in terms of price," Nelsen said…"But we think that with our consistent quality, meaning both flavour and exterior quality our fruit will knock that stuff off the store shelves."
[freshfruitportal.com; 15 October 2018]