

Global Citrus Scan (2018_46)

Portia Gasas 8 November 2018)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

U.S.: Wonderful Halos mandarin brand “translating to year-round success”

California-based Wonderful Company is aiming to provide a year-round supply of its market-leading mandarin brand, Halos, having for the first time this year brought up fruit from the Southern Hemisphere during the summer months. Speaking to Fresh Fruit Portal at last month's PMA Fresh Summit held in Orlando, Florida, Wonderful's vice president of marketing Adam Cooper said the company had received some trial volumes from key counter-seasonal producing countries earlier this year. “We had Halos in the summer for the first time this year as a small test where we brought in fruit from South America, South Africa, and Australia,” he said. The fruit was produced by select third-party growers. “We’re finding the retailers that took advantage of that are seeing really solid growth in their summer mandarin category compared to those stores that are not in the Halos brand. So the brand is translating to year-round success.”

“...Last year we had 10,000 stores, this year we expect to be in at least 20,000 stores.”... “I think we have more support than we’ve ever had before – we’ve got a US\$30million campaign. So we’re really excited about that momentum.”...

[Freshfruitportal; 9 November 2018]

“Turbulent market for limes this year”

“The lime market was turbulent this year. There was a short period of good prices at the start of summer. After that, the market collapsed. This was due to over production in both Mexico and Brazil. That resulted in very low prices”, says Elena Rogojnikova of Hagé International, a Dutch import-export company. “The current market is more stable”, she goes on to say. “This is, in part, due to the shortage of Brazilian limes. The new harvest is expected to arrive later this month” ... “The demand is expected to increase in November and December, leading up to Christmas. This rise in demand will be most welcome after the difficult last few months...”, expects Elena. “For the availability of limes, we also see the emergence of new production countries. These include Colombia, Peru, and Guatemala. This increased availability will, of course, influence the total volume of limes that are sent to Europe. To stabilize lime prices, it is, of course, important to keep available volumes under control. This is to avoid too-low prices”, concludes Elena.

[Freshplaza.com; 5 November 2018]

Problematic year for citrus farmers struck by Chinese tariffs

Small-sized fruit, retaliatory Chinese tariffs and more foreign competition add up to a real worry for Tulare County citrus growers this season. Tulare County is the top citrus county in the state. Regarding the weather, Joel Nelsen, California Citrus Mutual president, says the continuous 34 days of 100-degree temperatures this summer “shut down the trees” for a period of growing. The result is a big crop of small fruit. He added that offshore fruit continues to move into US markets during the traditional California citrus growing months both in the beginning and end of Tulare County's season. That competition will be moving into China, too. Besides the big crop and added competition, farmers feel they are facing “a real negative impact” from the Chinese retaliatory tariffs of more than 50 percent, said Nelsen. “The reality is this will essentially keep our citrus from moving into China for this entire season,” he said. Instead, “we will try to send some of that fruit to other countries.”

Japan may open their market to reduced tariffs in coming months, Nelsen speculates. Nelsen has been working closely with the Trump administration but believes there is “virtually no chance of negotiations happening soon enough to get our citrus into China this season,” and through next spring.”

[Freshplaza.com; 5 November 2018]

US: Grant great for grapefruit growers

Florida's grapefruit industry, which has been devastated by citrus greening disease in recent years, may find hope in four half-acre white-mesh screenhouses in a research field in Fort Pierce. The screens are the result of a US\$3.5m grant from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded to the University of Florida... Trees have recently been grown in screenhouses to shield the crop from the Asian citrus psyllid, an invasive insect that carries the pathogen that causes huanglongbing, or HLB, commonly known as citrus greening...

The project focuses on growing and protecting high-quality fresh grapefruit inside 14ft-high screenhouses, or 'Citrus Under Protective Screen', also known as CUPS... “The primary purpose of growing citrus under screen is to exclude psyllids and therefore block transmission of CLAs, the bacterial agent of HLB disease,” said Arnold Schumann, who is leading the CUPS research as project director... “A major goal of the grant is to develop a sustainable integrated growing system for fresh market citrus, customised for the modified environment in CUPS,” said Schumann.

[Fruitnet.com/asiafruit; 5 November 2018]