Global Citrus Scan (2018_49)

Portia Gasa 30 November 2018) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

"EU remains aggressively protectionist on Citrus Black Spot"

Despite one of South Africa's best seasons on record in terms of preventing Citrus Black Spot (CBS) symptoms on fruit arriving at EU borders, the European Union seems determined to meet South Africa's best efforts with unflinching bureaucratic coldness. At a meeting in Brussels this Tuesday between the EU's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and a delegation of SA citrus producers, the EU begrudgingly acknowledged this year as a good season. However, it showed no interest in reviewing its position on CBS as a quarantine pest, demanding full compliance and refusing to consider any reasonable requests for relaxation of the excessive and unsustainable protocols governing the pest. SA exported over 800 000 tonnes of citrus to the EU during the 2018 season (up to 40,000 containers), yet only 2 consignments were intercepted with CBS symptoms. None of these tested as viable fungi. SA has shown enormous capacity to mitigate the risk of CBS symptoms over the past 4 years, even though it does not agree with the EU that CBS poses any threat to the EU. A recent independent study by the highly regarded Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy institute found that the SA citrus industry's costs associated with the CBS protocols and proactive measures amount to a staggering R1.86 billion (€118 mln), a number that is clearly not sustainable. Furthermore, the CBS protocols also require intensive chemical spraying programmes, which is in conflict with a global move towards lower residue production. According to farmingportal.co.za¸ the delegation of SA citrus producers were disappointed by the EU officials, apparently bent on increasing intensification of their CBS measures.

[Freshplaza; 28 November 2018]

Citrus growers wave goodbye to 2018

The South African citrus industry set another record as it exceeds all seasonal expectations.

The 2018 South African citrus export season is all but over and has ended in record volumes which are even higher than previously predicted. Now all that remains for exporters is the arduous task of collecting outstanding money before they break for a well-earned Christmas holiday by mid-December. The latest crop figure published by the South African Citrus Growers' Association is 135.7m cartons, up from the early estimate of 131.7m cartons and some 14m cartons higher than last year's export figure. "The season is now over and this is our final figures for 2018," declared the CGA. It was undoubtedly another momentous record breaking season for South African citrus growers, with the export volume growing by some 26m cartons since 2016. The industry is now well on track to reach 161m cartons by 2025, which will mean a further increase in export volumes of 19 per cent over the next seven years. Grapefruit had an excellent year – at 18.7m cartons, exceeding the forecast by around 2m cartons, and 3m cartons more than 2017. The forecast for 2025 shows that grapefruit will be at 15m cartons, fewer than this season. Soft citrus came in at 16.1m cartons compared with last year's 13m cartons. Soft citrus is expected to increase to around 23m cartons by 2025. Lemons will end at 19.8m cartons compared with 18.8m cartons shipped last year – and by 2025 there will be a huge increase to 30m cartons, which is a 51 per cent increase. Valencias were more or less on the same level as last year and at 54m cartons remains the biggest South African citrus category. By 2025 Valencias will rise to 60m cartons.

[Fruitnet.com/Eurofruit; 26 November 2018]

Spain: Citrus demand increases with the arrival of the cold

Despite the bad start of the campaign, marked by the massive entry of clementines from the southern hemisphere and the heavy rainfall that came later, cooperatives and producers of Castellon are still hoping to turn things around. The good news is that in recent days, with the arrival of the cold to many countries in Europe, exporters are already noticing a rebound in the demand that they hope will last for the rest of the campaign. In European countries, which are the main markets for the Clemenules, they are already shivering from the cold. In Paris, the temperature last Thursday did not exceed the five degrees Celsius, while in Berlin it stayed below zero, and Milan expected rain and eight degrees. "When it is really cold, the demand for clementines in Europe increases substantially," say representatives of citrus companies that devote much of their efforts to exporting, and which have already noticed an increase in the number of orders. "After the rains, our work has resumed with great intensity, both in the fields and in the warehouses," say the same sources. But the temperatures are not the only factor giving hope to the sector, since fruit shipments from the southern hemisphere, mainly from South Africa, have also been significantly reduced, even though they can still legally enter the European Union until 30 November. Everyone agrees that we can already talk about a campaign that has been "much shorter than usual" due to the weather conditions and the pressure of foreign competitors. But this also entails that, from now on, there is no other option but to work harder. This is the opinion of the general secretary of the Unió de Llauradors, Carles Peris. What is also true is that the lack of demand and the meteorological instability have slowed down the pace at which deals are signed between traders and producers. According to the estimations of the president of Fepac Asaja in Castellon, Josep Vicente Guinot, "approximately half of the Clemenules from Castellon don't yet have a buyer." The reason is that, according to sources within the sector, the stores are being cautious in order to avoid buying fruit that may be affected by the Pixat.

[Freshplaza; 26 November 2018]