Global Citrus Scan (2018_50)

Portia Gasa 7 December 2018) Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

Rigid EU stance on CBS overburdens South African citrus industry

The scientific dispute between the EU and the South African citrus industry has again resulted in stalemate as the latter's three proposals to manage citrus black spot (CBS) in a more financially and environmentally sustainable manner were summarily rejected. This season there were two interceptions of CBS among the 800,000 tonnes of South African fruit landing in the EU, and neither of them contained viable spores capable of disease transmission. At the seasonal review meeting between the EU Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG Santé) and the South African delegation in Brussels on 27 November, South Africa proposed that viable spores must be detected for a notification of non-compliance (NONC), a principle that has in the past been supported by DG Santé, along with its corollary that only leaves carry viable spores, but the Standing Committee for Plant Health has since rejected the scientific principle.

The second proposal of the South African delegation concerned reviving the option of allowing CBS-infected fruit through a closed and audited supply chain to juice factories where the peel is destroyed (juicing derogation), as proposed by the European Commission itself in 2016 but vetoed by the Standing Committee on Plant Health. The third proposal entails placing the matter before the International Plant Protection Convention for arbitration, but the EU has repeatedly vetoed independently selected IPPC scientific panels while South Africa has not offered objections to any of the panels. These days, the entire pest management strategy of South African citrus farmers in the summer rainfall areas – CBS has never taken hold in the Mediterranean climate of the Western Cape…Detections have never been as low as this season. However, complete eradication of the fungus is close to a physical impossibility (there were 17 interceptions from Argentina and 12 from Brazil this past season). The constant vigilance against what is regarded by the rest of the world as a cosmetic disease, is coming at a very high price: R1,86 billion (more than 119 million euros). Currently the industry is able to shoulder the financial cost, but the implications are spilling over to employment opportunities and the consumer…

[Freshplaza; 5 December 2018]

Spain: Ag organizations call for protest amid citrus industry 'crisis'

Multiple Spanish agricultural organizations have called for a protest on Dec. 14 to demand solutions for what they say is a crisis affecting citrus growers…The Valencian Farmers' Association, AVA-ASAJA, has urged farmers to protest outside the Ministry of Agriculture amid the "challenging price crisis that is ruining thousands of Valencian producers during the current campaign"…"Various negative circumstances – caused both by the situation of the markets and by climate behavior – have ended up leading to a tremendously adverse situation that is resulting in millions of losses for orange farmers," AVA-ASAJA said…AVA-ASAJA said the government has only so far committed to providing subsidized loans, offering tax rebates and preparing a plan for varietal reconversion…It is requesting the withdrawal of 250,000 metric tons (MT) of fresh fruit from the market and greater support for farms hit by flooding. It also urged trade agreements to be renegotiated, saying they give other supplies competitive advantages.

[Freshfruitportal; 6 December 2018]

Zimbabwe: Citrus producers urge government to remove trade barriers

Citrus producers in the southern part of Zimbabwe have asked policymakers and authorities to fast track the implementation of export measures. Their main focus is on removing non-tariff trade barriers. Farmers in Beitbridge revealed this during a visit conducted by ZimTrade, the country's export promotion body…Key findings included the need for policy support for citrus producers, especially in terms of negotiating for trade protocols with key target markets to allow Zimbabwean producers to compete with increased production from countries such as Morocco, Egypt, and some South American countries…The factor 'delays at the borders' was also identified as affecting citrus exports. Stressing this point, one farmer highlighted that they pay on average R8,000 more for transportation than farmers just across the river in Limpopo Province, South Africa…

[Freshplaza; 6 December 2018]

French protests hamper Italian and Spanish exports

Protests in France against a proposed increase in fuel taxes next month have reportedly caused significant problems for the fresh produce business in Italy and Spain. As Italiafruit News reported citing information from the Italian produce traders' association Fruitimprese, some exporters supplying the French market said they had seen their sales fall by as much as 30 per cent as a direct result of the disruption, which followed weeks of protests by the so-called gilets jaunes (yellow vests)... In Turin, however, some wholesalers with import-export interests in France said the worst effects of the protests appeared to be over. In Spain, meanwhile, citrus exporters in Valencia reportedly described the episode as "traumatic" ... Export association Fepex called on the European Commission to demand that France adhere to EU regulations on free movement between member states.

[Fruitnet.com/Eurofruit; 5 December 2018]