

Global Citrus Scan (2020_14)

(John Edmonds 19 May 2020)



Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

South African grapefruit estimate down

Predictions of a record South African grapefruit export crop have made way for lower forecasts one month after the start of the season. The country's Grapefruit Focus Group, which regularly reviews events during the season, has announced that the country is now expected to ship 14.6m cartons compared with last year's 16.1m cartons. The original estimate predicted an export volume of 16.7m cartons, meaning the estimate has dropped by more than 2m cartons, or around 12 per cent. Logistics service providers have said that in general shipments of citrus to Western Europe have been up so far this year, due to high demand as well as an earlier season which allowed growers to ship earlier...Operations in the East coast ports are also now much improved, although the port of Cape Town remains a problem...There is still much uncertainty in shipping from South African ports, with logistics service providers saying that due to delays in Cape Town, vessels often pass the port to maintain their schedules...In some circles, greater use of conventional reefers has been promoted as a solution to current problems. People with much experience in the shipping business have said, however, that there is not enough capacity in conventional reefer shipping to become a realistic alternative for container vessels. "One may be able to use conventional reefers to certain limited destinations, but one container vessel in one week can carry five to six times more pallets than four of five reefers," explained one source. "What is more, is that these containers can be delivered door to door and this really put the matter into perspective."

[fruitnet.com/eurofruit; 18 May 2020]

Turkey eases restrictions on lemon exports

In early April, Turkey decided to subject lemon exports to restraints until August 31. Now these restrictions are eased, exporters are allowed to export lemons again. In an announcement yesterday, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry allowed exporters to export 10,000 tons of lemons. The news was well received by producers and exporters...Kemal Kacmaz, chairman of the National Citrus Council emphasised that the sector is content with this decision. "The lemons that we harvested at the end of the season have a short shelf life. Now that we can export these, we will not make a loss. There was a break in between, however we do not expect to lose markets. Our exporters are ready to start exporting again. We have enough capacity both for exports and for domestic needs," said Kacmaz..

[Freshplaza.com; 15 May 2020]

OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Excellent soft citrus & navel crops amid a slew of uncertainties

At the Sundays River Citrus Company, apart from their mainstay of lemons, they've started packing navels and Novas, crops formed under the most favourable growing conditions the district has had in years. If it weren't for the giant unknowns of the season, this might have been a tremendous citrus campaign, but as it is, says Hannes de Waal, managing director of the Sundays River Citrus Company, the only position to take is one of optimistic uncertainty...The South African lemon season started earlier and at a heady pace, filling the gap left by Spain's lighter crop... "The big question is what South Africa and Argentina are going to do with their large volumes. The juice and oil markets are not strong but the fresh markets aren't bad...If consumption drops, we could have a problem, but at the moment there's no indication of a drop in consumption". In Europe it seems like lemon consumption is normal, perhaps a bit stronger than usual, but the industry is so fragmented, he says, there's an absence of good market reports... "In the Middle East lemon demand wasn't very strong, just as we expected, because of the huge amount of early South African lemons from the north of the country, particularly small counts, sent to Saudi Arabia and Iraq and Dubai, but the market has been absorbing the fruit. Middle Eastern lemon shipments are decreasing, which should stabilise the market." China emerges as a lemon exporter South East Asia has been rather disappointing, he says...Russia was tremendously high a while back, but it has been normalising. "The economies of oil-producing countries is another worry." ...Citrus sales might fare better this Northern summer holiday "The whole world is different. Will the familiar Northern Hemisphere holiday pattern kick off as usual... "We're taking it day by day but the level of uncertainty is enormous. You're sitting with an immensely complex set of variables..."

[Freshplaza.com; 15 May 2020]

Chile to begin exporting citrus to China

In what will prove to be a boost to Chile's citrus producers, China's general administration of customs (GAC) has issued the protocol on phytosanitary requirements for Chilean fresh citrus exports to China. Fresh citrus, including lemons, oranges, clementine and grapefruit, grown in the key production regions of Coquimbo, Valparaíso and Metropolitana, will make up the bulk of fruit sent to China...According to reports, Chile exported a total 336,000 tonnes of citrus in 2019, the majority of it going to the US.

[fruitnet.com/asiafruit; 19 May 2020]