

18 December, 2008

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from Directors and Staff at Citrus Australia Ltd.

The Citrus Australia office will close from
25/12/08 until 9/1/09 inclusive.



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Dear CWN Readers

I appreciated the feedback from those of you who responded when we discontinued this service back in August.

We reinstated CWN in October due to popular demand and have continued to provide this service through the changeover to Citrus Australia Ltd.

The Citrus Australia Board is currently reviewing its products and services and I hope to keep you informed of any changes early in 2009.

Thank you for your support in 2008.

I wish you and your family a wonderful festive season and look forward to more exciting changes in 2009!

Regards

Judith Damiani
CEO

DOMESTIC

FoodNews, 28 November

Weak Australian dollar will help to curb FCOJ imports next year

Australia's orange juice industry may be starting to recover from the country's long-running drought. Orange production for 2009/10 is forecast at 480,000 tonnes, 30,000 tonnes more than in the previous season, according to the latest USDA report, and orange juice output for the same period is put at 12,700 tonnes (65 brix equivalent).

Sunraysia Daily, 2 December

30% water allocation looks out of reach

Goulburn-Murray water dribbled out a further 3% allocation to Murray irrigators with high-security water share holdings yesterday, but conceded for the first time the seasonal total might not reach 30%. Yesterday's allocation took the total so far this season to 24%, while a 3% allocation to Goulburn Valley irrigators took their season total to 21%. Allocations to other northern Victoria systems remained at zero.

Sunraysia Daily, 2 December

Finding the sweet spot in drought stress

If it was an Australian red wine, it might be ranked with Grange's legendary 1951 Hermitage. But it's the 2008 Valencia, an orange-hued, child-friendly nectar of surprising flavour and sweetness. Buronga citrus growers and orange juice aficionado Kevin Cock advises us to quaff it while we can, for all too soon it will be gone. We may not taste its like for another decade. It comes from drought-stressed orange trees, grown the traditional way. With synthetic nitrogen fertilisers costing so much because of record oil prices, Mr Cock, who chairs the growers' association Citrus Australia, says many growers reverted this season to nourishing their trees with organic fertilisers.

The Weekly Times, 3 December

MIS in crisis as losses mount

Managed investment schemes have gone into melt-down as the financial crisis, drought and poor returns bite. MIS giant Timbercorp is looking to sell 40,000ha of plantation timber, 2,700ha of olive groves, and 380ha of almond plantations, along with 18,000 megalitres of water. The sale follows a \$19 million loss the company sustained on table grapes earlier this year. Timbercorp intends to withdraw from MIS projects next year, but has left its options open for 2010. Timbercorp shares are just one cent above their all-time low, while MIS rival Great Southern's shares have slumped from \$1.50 in May to 19c.

Asiafruit Newswire, 3 December

Key water bill gets nod in Australia

Australia's 'fruitbowl', the Murray-Darling river basin, will come under federal government control with a bill likely to pass through parliament this week, following a supporting vote from the country's opposition party. The drought-ravaged Murray-Darling has until now been managed by a number of the state and territory governments the river system passes through, leading to inconsistent water allocations. Meanwhile, the Australian government has released a National Fruit Fly Strategy proposal outlining how it plans to control the pest considered a major threat to the country's A\$6.9bn horticultural sector. The government also pledged A\$1m to help farmers protect their crops from fruit fly.

The River News, 3 December

Water to carry-over

River Murray irrigators will be able to carry-over water into the 2009-10 water year according to Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald. Minister Maywald says that while the final details of the 2009-10 carry-over scheme are yet to be finalised, it is likely to be similar to the 2008-09 scheme. "The carry-over scheme has assisted irrigators in the past two years, because it helps them to better manage the limited water available. For example, in 2007-08 more than 700 irrigators carried over 98.5 gigalitres of water for use this water year. I am currently working with the River Murray Advisory Committee of the SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board to finalise the final details of the scheme but this advance notice allows irrigators to continue planning for 2009-10. Minister Maywald said further details about the 2009-10 carry-over scheme will be announced in the coming River Murray allocation update on December 15, 2008.

Murray Pioneer, 5 December

CIT opens exit door

More Riverland growers will be able to exit the irrigation industry or consolidate their management plans, following a landmark decision by the Central Irrigation Trust (CIT). To access the Federal Government's \$150,000 exit grant package irrigators must sell their permanent water entitlement out of the region, which was previously hindered by CIT's annual 4% cap on trade. However, CIT chairman Robert Smyth said this week the cap would be extended to 12% until June 20, 2010, effective immediately.

Murray Pioneer, 5 December

Citrus industry farewells Trevor

Riverland citrus industry stalwart Trevor Warren has retired after spending 27 years working with two of the region's largest companies. Operations manager for citrus exporter Riversun, Mr Warren has been at the company ever since it was formed in 1992 by a group of Riverland citrus exporters and packers and the Mildura Fruit Company. Looking ahead, Mr Warren said the level of bureaucracy in the citrus industry had to be cut to increase international competitiveness, especially in the lucrative US market. "I'd like to see a more co-ordinated approach (to export) throughout the industry," he said.

freshplaza.com, 9 December

Irrigators angry over golf course water use

Riverland irrigators are angered that millions of litres of River Murray water have been bought to irrigate a new golf course in the Yorke Peninsula in South Australia. The developer of The Dunes golf course in Port Hughes has bought a 21 megalitre licence. Waikerie citrus and grape grower Noel McPherson let 12 acres of his property die last year because he could not afford the water licence. He says he does not think it is morally right to irrigate a

new golf course while Riverland irrigators are struggling to keep their fruit crops alive. "With my trees dying around me and the crop looking dreadful and shrivelled up, small oranges and so forth, no it doesn't turn me on that that is indeed happening," he said. "When you see water being taken more and more and more from the river, it just hurts, because it hurts the Riverland."

Sunraysia Daily, 10 December

Mealybug pests in citrus

Mealybugs are soft bodied insects covered with a coating of fine, white, mealy, wax secretions which helps retard the loss of moisture from their bodies. It is critically important to monitor fortnightly for mealybugs during the summer months. In navel oranges and grapefruit, action should be taken when the percentage of fruit with mealybug reaches 10% or more. Their cryptic habit and waxy filaments also make mealybugs hard to target with contact pesticides, however, as they are sap sucking pests they can be managed with systemic pesticides. But orchards that have been sprayed regularly with broad spectrum pesticides targeted at other pests, often have a mealybug flare up due to the absence of natural enemies. Mealybug natural enemies are available from a number of companies in Australia. For your nearest supplier, phone Australasian Biological Control Association on the freecall number 1800 000 160.

sl.farmonline.com, 10 December

Why a fertiliser monopoly exists

There are plenty of reasons to believe a monopoly exists in the Australian fertiliser industry, a report into pricing and supply arrangements has revealed, accusing it of being "a law unto itself" in the setting of fertiliser prices. A special Senate committee investigating price rises in the Australian and global fertiliser market has released a draft report highlighting preliminary evidence which points to monopoly and anti-competitive behaviour in the market. It said market domination, by Incitec Pivot in particular, was compromising serious competition.

Weekly Times, 10 December

Company comes clean on breaking code

A Queensland horticulture trader has admitted to breaching the industry's code of conduct. Atkinson Produce Pty Ltd, trading as Murray Brothers, told the ACCC that it traded under agreements and terms of trade that did not comply with the Horticulture Code of Conduct. It also admitted it had failed to agree on prices in writing with growers and "may have inadvertently misled some growers about the compliance of the documents", according to a media release from the ACCC.

sl.farmonline.com, 10 December

Cubbie desperately seeking investors

The country's largest irrigator, Queensland's Cubbie Group, is seeking new capital to clear a short-term loan of \$63 million due for repayment at the end of this month as it struggles to retain the support of its bankers, according to The Australian Financial Review. The paper reports that investment bank ABN Amro is understood to be leading a \$150m capital raising but there are doubts about its prospects given falling commodity prices, the group's increasing operating costs, and \$380m in liabilities.

The Land, 11 December

Overseas pickers to be paid upfront

Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area citrus growers want the Federal Government to pay the airfares of Pacific Islander workers set to start picking fruit in the Griffith district early next year. Initially it was thought growers would need to pay for half the cost of each worker's return airfares upfront but the Federal Government determined the labour hire company recruiting the Pacific Islanders will cover the initial costs of relocating the workers including airfares. Under the pre-pilot scheme, the Pacific Island workers will effectively be employed by the labour hire companies (LHC) who will manage their recruitment and placement and be responsible for their pastoral care while in Australia. This includes paying the full upfront cost of the workers' airfare and recouping half from the workers during the period of the visa grant. Griffith and District Citrus Growers are still fully supporting the plan but orchardists are cautious about how the LHCs will pass on the costs.

Murray Pioneer, 12 December

Water up as summer hits

Prices of temporary water available to SA irrigators have started to increase, according to Riverland water broker AgriExchange Water. AgriExchange Water's senior agronomist Trevor Sluggett said lease prices for temporary water have eased up into a range of \$340 to \$360 per megalitre. "Over the past couple of weeks we have sold water for as low as \$310 a megalitre, but the price is slowly climbing," he said. Mr Sluggett said that recent confirmation from the State Government that temporary water purchased in 2008/09 can be carried over into the 2009/10 irrigation season was also likely to be a contributing factor in the increased market activity.

Sunraysia Daily, 16 December

Water 'gift'

Irrigators on the Victorian side of the Murray received an early Christmas present yesterday when Goulburn-Murray Water announced an unexpected 4% increase in the seasonal allocation. High-security water share owners along the Murray have now reached a 28% allocation, with a real chance the next allocation could take the figure to 30% - a figure that seemed unlikely when the total stood at just 21% a month ago. The combination of seasonal conditions and yesterday's increased allocation saw the price of temporary water trades fall from around \$380 to only \$300.

freshplaza.com, 16 December

Demand growing for Queensland citrus

More overseas countries want Queensland citrus. Central Burnett growers have been sending fruit direct into China over the past few seasons, but the Middle East is now emerging as a lucrative market. Mundubbera grower Alan Jenkin says orders to the region have increased by 40 to 50 per cent. "It's really a little problematic with our soft mandarins, we do have issues if they get held up in Singapore or any of the trans-shipping areas," he says. "But the murcotts are our main game and they had a great season to those markets."

Sunraysia Daily, 17 December

The future of water

The Murray-Darling Basin is under new management and the basin's new water supremo promises science – not politics – will determine how its waters are used in future. Rob Freeman, chief executive of the new Murray-Darling Basin Authority which took over from Monday, said yesterday the authority's most urgent challenge was to do something none of its predecessors had done – determine how much water can be sustainably extracted from the system and how best to divide it between economic and environmental uses.

Weekly Times, 17 December

Kiwis beat us hands down in trade war - pushover

New Zealand's superior trade negotiation skills are costing Australian farmers and exporters millions of dollars in lost trade. Aussie horticultural, sheep meat and egg producers have all found themselves at serious disadvantages in export markets as NZ has brokered much better deals for its farmers than Australian negotiators. This year the Kiwis beat Australia to a free trade agreement with China, with tariffs on major horticultural exports reducing to zero within eight years. Australia is yet to broker a deal with China, but currently has access only for mangoes and citrus at a tariff of almost 40%. The Weekly Times also understands just last week China insisted on higher tariffs for Australian produce than it did for NZ produce.

Weekly Times, 17 December

Farmers to cop carbon costs despite not joining scheme – all pain, no gain

Farmers will be forced to pay for measures to cut their greenhouse gases even if they're not part of an emissions trading scheme. The Rudd Government said farming – which will not be part of the scheme until at least 2015 and may never be included – would still have to make an "equivalent contribution" to those industries in the scheme. This would mean mitigation measures costing at least \$25 a tonne of carbon being imposed on farmers, it said.

Weekly Times, 17 December

Growers' lack of access to global markets is holding back horticulture

Horticulture remains the second largest agricultural industry in Australia, based on farm-gate value, and one in seven rural jobs in Australia is associated with the sector. Given these facts, you might have thought politicians would be a little more interested in horticulture and how well it is travelling. As an exporter of fresh fruit and vegetables, I can assure you growers and traders are doing it very tough. You only have to travel to the Riverland and Sunraysia and see the neglected vines, or the large number of citrus and stonefruit trees removed because the price of water is beyond what growers can justify or afford.

SACIDB Newsletter, 19 December

SA Valencia crop down on initial projections

The 2008/09 Valencia harvest now looks set to be slightly down on the initial estimate of 52,000 tonnes. It is now more likely to be around the 46,000 tonne mark. As per normal at this time of the year there are many factors which influence the estimate with none greater than the availability of water. Fruit size at this stage is very small which is also helping to drag the figure down. A lack of significant rainfall over the Spring period has meant that fruit has sized at slower than average rates and some growers have fruit too small to harvest at the moment and therefore many are waiting until fruit begins to size into January and later. According to the Citrus Board data the current navel harvest is very nearly complete and the revised estimate of 50,000 tonnes has been reached, with the final figure likely to be between 52,000 and 53,000 tonnes.

SACIDB Newsletter, 19 December

SA River Murray allocations to stay at 15%

River Murray irrigation allocations will remain at 15% as the current extreme drought continues in the Murray-Darling Basin. Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald says only 140GL flowed into the system during November, well below the long-term November average of 771 GL. "There was a very small improvement of 35 GL allocated to South Australia, which has been reserved for critical human needs in 2009-10. In the six months to November 30, only 1415 GL has flowed into the River Murray system compared with the long-term average for that period of 7201 GL. However, with last week's good rains throughout the catchment, an update will be provided to irrigators on how allocations may be impacted as soon as inflow data is available." Minister Maywald said. For more information about conditions in the River Murray or wider Murray-Darling Basin visit www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html

INTERNATIONAL

guardian.co.uk, 23 December

Brazil, Thailand challenge US import measures

Brazil and Thailand have both launched trade disputes over a controversial US method of tackling unfairly priced imports, documents on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) website show. The moves mark a further challenge to Washington's use of "zeroing" in assessing duties on goods that are "dumped" or imported for less than they cost at home -- an approach which has been repeatedly condemned by the WTO's top court. Brazil, the world's biggest orange juice exporter, is seeking consultations with the United States over US anti-dumping measures on orange juice, it said in a filing to the WTO. Brazil's foreign ministry said the US authorities had calculated that Brazilian companies had dumped orange juice between August 2005 and February 2007 at margins of up to 4.81 percent below the fair price.

FoodNews, 21 November

Orange juice producers fear continued consumption fall

Orange juice market prices follow the same classic supply and demand pattern as other agricultural commodities. For many years, supply has depended on the groves in Florida and in Sao Paulo, the main producing region in Brazil. Together they produce more than 90% of the orange juice traded on the world market. A historical analysis of production and price statistics shows that when Florida and Sao Paulo, together, produce more than 500 million boxes, the price of FCOJ falls on the New York market.

FoodNews, 21 November

Argentine lemon juice ought to be more plentiful in 2009

Argentine citrus production for 2009 is estimated to increase to 3.04 million tonnes, according to the USDA, as larger production of all four types of citrus is expected, due to better weather conditions than for the 2008 crop. Lemon exports are forecast to decrease as production and exports in major competing countries are expected to increase: this will go some way to correcting the shortage of lemons that resulted from the Californian freeze of 2007. Argentine lemon production is expected to increase to 1.3 million tonnes compared with the previous year, due to higher yields and additional plants entering production, after production this year of just 1.1 million tonnes, due to lower yields.

FoodNews, 21 November

Economic slowdown seen in OJ exports

The lacklustre global orange juice market is clearly reflected in Brazil's FCOJ statistics. Despite a recent uplift in exports during the month of September, total shipments for the year to date (January – September) are running some 3,500 tonnes lower than they were in January - September 2007.

FoodNews, 28 November

New season lemon juice will be less costly than last year

Prices for new season lemon juice from Europe are expected to open high, albeit slightly lower than the record levels hit in 2008. The Spanish industry and growers have not yet reached agreement on fruit prices.

freshplaza.com, 4 December

Ukraine fresh produce business is lowering import volume

The Ukrainian fresh produce business, which was growing step by step is suffering a slow down in trade at present. From different sources we received serious signs that the volume of the trade is lower than expected and also lower than the same period last year. According to Egyptian exporter EGCT the amount of oranges and lemons is shrinking with about 50 percent when it comes to oranges. "Fortunately we have good alternatives in Dubai, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia but prices are still under pressure compared with last year. Oleg Aleksandrov spokesman of the Ukrainian Fruit Company in Kiev explains that the imports are reduced indeed. "Not all commodities but some of them." He added: "Bananas are still steady but citrus and exotics are down in volume and that is not only our company but all the companies I know in the Ukraine."

freshplaza.com, 5 December

Review of the Russian market - week 49: Southern Hemisphere citrus imports come to an end

In week 49 the US dollar was the main player on the market as the trend of the local currency towards it became clear – up. At the end of the week the rate went to the 28,09 value against 27,35 a week ago. Citrus was the leader in sales all over the country. Nevertheless prices both in Saint-Petersburg and in Novorossiysk were lower than inside the country. Moreover due to the lack of finance and, as a result, trust the Turkish production was not available in Saint-Petersburg, the same – for Moroccan in the south of the country. Among arrivals Morocco kept the absolute leadership – 18,700 pallets in week 49. The season of Southern Hemisphere citrus fruit comes to an end. The last Argentine and Uruguayan fruits appeared on the market – 5,700 pallets. The sales of Chinese products stopped all over the country. Saint-Petersburg started to receive the consequences of PMA exhibition - fruits from USA in larger quantities.

freshplaza.com, 8 December

UK: Suspected orange thieves charged

Seventeen persons were arrested and charged in Clarendon Thursday morning for suspected praedial larceny. RJR News understands that at about 2 o'clock, members of the Island Special Constabulary Force were on duty along the Bustamante Highway when they spotted a vehicle with several occupants heading towards Kingston. The vehicle was stopped and a large quantity of oranges was found inside. The passengers were questioned about the origins of the fruit. When they could not produce receipts for the oranges, they were taken into custody and later charged. They were each later granted \$20,000 bail.

earthtimes.org, 9 December

China to buy 1,200 tons of Taiwan's surplus oranges

Taipei - China will help Taiwan tackle the problem of glut production of fruit by buying 1,200 tons of Taiwanese oranges next week, a newspaper said Wednesday. The Fujian Chaoda Group has agreed to buy 1,200 tons of Taiwan's surplus oranges. Taiwan will send five shipments of the oranges to Fujian Province starting Monday, the China Times said. This is the fourth time China has helped Taiwan tackle glut production of fruit since 2006, when bilateral ties began to warm through contacts between Taiwan's Chinese Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party. The 1,200 tons of oranges will be shipped directly from Taiwan to China, as Taiwan and China are scheduled to launch direct shipping on December 15, the paper said. Taiwan produces about 210,000 tons of oranges every year between November and March. The glut this year has sent orange prices tumbling.

Asiafruit Newslines, 10 December

Chinese citrus production to climb by 10 per cent

A new USDA report on the state of China's citrus industry has forecast that total production for the 2008 marketing year will rise by 10 per cent over 2007. The Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) report pegged the citrus harvest at 21m tonnes, credited to good weather across the major growing regions. Orange production is forecast to hit 6m tonnes, up 10 per cent on the previous year, as trees planted a few years ago begin to reach full production. Orange quality is lower than hoped for this year as warmer summer and autumn temperatures have resulted in smaller fruit with some blemish. The harvest was delayed two weeks by a cold winter.

freshplaza.com, 11 December

Peru: Production of lime suffers drastically

Lime producers are in a heap of trouble as job loss and failing demand of goods are taking effect. Because of the less demand of exporting limes, many producers are seeing prices drop. What use to cost S/.120 for a thousand limes is now just S/.20. Mayor Juan Feijoo Navarrete says the situation is a direct result from the global economic crisis that is affecting trade in Peru. Lay offs in agricultural sector are rising because of less money to pay the workmen their S/.20-25 daily. The financial burden causes a strain for lime producers who must provide transportation, deposits and guarantees when selling their goods. On top of that, many lime producers do not have the means to find international markets for export.

freshplaza.com, 11 December

Israel: citrus production forecast shows slight increase

Despite the cold spell that hit Israel in mid-January 2008, which destroyed about 30,000 tons of citrus, citrus production in Israel is forecast at 570,000-590,000 tons in 2008/09, a 2-5 percent increase from the previous year. The expected slight increase in production is due to an increase in local orange (mainly Shamouti) and red grapefruit production. Citrus exports are expected to increase about 3 percent from the previous year, and delivery to processing plants is expected to increase about 10-15 percent.

freshplaza.com, 11 December

Ukraine: economic crisis has no impact on citrus shipments

According to Mikhail Shaposhnikov, head of the Department of development and foreign affairs of Odessa trade seaport, world economic crisis does not influence the volumes of citrus shipments to Odessa port, reported RIA "GLAS". Also, he noted that for the past 11 months, 255 tonnes of citrus were accepted by Odessa port. As usual,

the main importers of oranges, lemons, tangerines are Turkey, Cyprus, Israel, Argentina and South African Republic, at the same time, bananas are imported only by Ecuador. The monthly capacity of Odessa trade port is nearly 25-26 tonnes of citrus.

freshplaza.com, 12 December

Off-season citrus fruit developed in Pakistan

Scientists at Pakistan's department of Civil Works Organisation (CWO) at Kahuta Research Laboratories (KRL), in a landmark achievement, have developed a new organic, off-season citrus plant, which will produce up to two tonnes of citrus fruit in the month of July – the middle of summer. KRL's research officer Liaquat Ali said Thursday the research project was started in 1999 and the results have been obtained in 2008. Talking about the significance of the variety he informed that there is no variety in the world, which offers citrus fruit in the month of June. It has an average yield potential of up to two tonnes of citrus per plant, which is many times higher than average per plant production of citrus grown in different parts of the country. Normally citrus tree is planted for giving 90 to 99 citrus plants per acre, respectively; but this variety can give 267 plants per acre, and multiple crops could be obtained from the farm until the plant did not start bearing the fruit.

fruitnet.com, 12 December

Spanish growers protest rising costs

A demonstration in Madrid will be followed later this month by a 'citrus strike' to protest against soaring input costs and poor returns. Over a thousand members of Spanish agricultural union La Unión are reportedly expected to stage a demonstration in Madrid today (12 December) to protest against the significant rise in production costs that the sector has faced over the past year. In a statement, the Valencia-based organisation said the event was being held to call for effective solutions from the Spanish government to deal with the "profound crisis" that was affecting growers and farmers.

heraldtribune.com, 13 December

A juicing machine

Behind a pair of black, metal gates, tall concrete walls and pistola-armed guards lies the headquarters of Sucocitrico Cutrale, the largest citrus company in a country that has become the world's giant. Cutrale, which provides one in four glasses of orange juice to a thirsty world, has at least 10 million trees planted in the red-clay soil of Sao Paulo state, Brazil's major citrus growing region. It spends tens of millions of dollars just replanting groves, placing trees closer together for even more oranges per acre. At its 3,200-foot-long processing plant, Cutrale can crush 45 million oranges a day, moving the concentrate to more than 90 countries. The fortunes of José Luis Cutrale's family have been pegged by the Brazilian press at \$5 billion, leading many to call the 62-year-old patriarch the richest man in Brazil.

freshplaza.com, 15 December

Mexico: Lower FCOJ production levels due to low international prices

MY 2008/09 production of fresh oranges is forecast to be 10 percent lower due to dry weather conditions in the northern states of Mexico. However, production for Key limes and Persian limes is forecast to increase due to overall better weather conditions. Grapefruit production for MY 2008/09 is forecast to be marginally higher than MY 2007/08, although less grapefruit is expected from the northern parts of Mexico (especially Nuevo Leon) due to dryer weather conditions. Lower FCOJ production levels for MY 2009 (January-December) are forecast due to low international prices.

freshplaza.com, 16 December

China a sleeping citrus giant

China could dominate the world citrus industry if it meets market requirements and continues to increase production, says Gisborne citrus grower Tony Cornelius, New Zealand Citrus Growers Inc navel and tangelo group chairman. He has recently returned from the International Citrus Congress, held in Wuhan, the city of 1000 lakes and capital of the Hubei province. "If they can get their act together in terms of meeting the market requirements with the rest of the trading world and the production increases as it has done in the last 20 years, they are going to dominate the world citrus industry - they would be huge." They are the second biggest producers in the world of citrus now. "That is only supplying the local market. If they ended up with a 10 percent surplus and they meet the market requirements, the rules would change." The Chinese industry is putting much effort into research and development but the steep hill country land where they grow citrus does not lend itself to mechanisation, so labour could be a limiting factor.

freshplaza.com, 16 December

Pakistan: Metro launches kinnow export programme

Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture Nazar Gondal performed the launching ceremony of Metro Cash & Carry Pakistan's export programme of Kinnows to its international network in 8 countries, During the season, Pakistan's Kinnow's will be exported for the first time to China, Belgium, Germany, Poland, and The Netherlands, besides traditional markets of Ukraine and Russia. The export event,



organized by METRO in collaboration with Mateela Kino Factory, focuses to introduce Pakistani Kfnos in new international markets, besides the existing ones. Last year, Mateela Kino Factory was instrumental in opening the German market, due to its excellent quality. Also present at the event were Mr. Qamar Zaman Kaira, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas, Provincial Agriculture Minister, Mr. Ahmed AH Aulakh.

stuff.co.nz, 17 December

Toxic spray under review

A toxic insecticide banned in 55 countries was used at a Taipa orchard last month. But it is unlikely to have posed a high risk to the community, says the Northland District Health Board. Citrus grower Kerifresh sprayed 8.4 hectares of mandarin trees near Taipa Area School with Thionex from 7am to 2pm on November 12 to control an infestation of Australian citrus whitefly. The board is investigating the incident after the school's teachers and students reportedly suffered headaches, tiredness, eye irritation, skin reactions and respiratory problems.

UNITED STATES

tcpalm.com, 3 December

Indian River grapefruit growers credit Tropical Storm Fay for best crop in years

Indian River citrus growers say they have produced a sizable crop of grapefruit for the first time since the 2004-2005 hurricane season, largely due to Tropical Storm Fay. Doug Bournique, executive vice president of the Indian River Citrus League, said that the rains of Fay that swept through the region in late August brought the moisture needed to round out this year's crop that is estimated to produce 23 million boxes of fruit this year – a \$200 million harvest. Crop averages prior to the 2004-2005 hurricane season were at 28 million boxes, but only 4 million boxes were produced in 2005, Bournique said. Indian River grapefruit is shipped to 24 countries, he said.

marketwatch.com, 4 December

Southern Gardens Citrus finalizing plans to begin field testing of citrus trees resistant to Canker and Greening

As part of its proactive program to deal with disease, Southern Gardens Citrus announced its plans to plant and field test canker and greening disease-resistant citrus trees in its groves starting in early 2009. Southern Gardens Citrus (SGC), one of the largest citrus producers in the state, has three groves in southwest Florida, all of which are infected to some extent with HLB. As a result, SGC Citrus has been and continues to be very proactive in addressing and dealing with this very serious disease. Rick Kress, president of Southern Gardens Citrus, stated that "since this disease was first detected in the company's groves in 2005, the immediate decision was to become as proactive as possible to learn about the disease and at the same time, develop methods and procedures to deal with the disease on a day to day basis." As a part of this total research portfolio, SGC is participating in and sponsoring multiple projects to develop disease-resistant citrus trees. These ongoing projects were initiated in early 2007.

thepacker.com, 4 December

Outlook dims for US agricultural exports

The US Department of Agriculture projects overall US agricultural exports will drop sharply in fiscal year 2009 because of a global recession, but fresh fruit and vegetable exports and fresh produce imports should gain slightly or remain flat. The USDA reported fiscal year 2009 exports are now forecast at \$98.5 billion, down \$14.5 billion from the August forecast and \$17 billion below record 2008 sales. Still, US exports for fiscal year 2009 are well above the five-year average of \$78 billion. Fresh fruit and vegetable exports are expected to total \$6 billion in 2009, unchanged from the August estimate. The USDA said the US enjoys a significant market presence in both Canada and Mexico, and those two countries account for two-thirds of total fresh fruit and vegetable exports. Growth of US fresh fruit and vegetable imports is expected to slow in fiscal year 2009 and overall values are projected about even with fiscal year 2008, according to the report. The fiscal year began Oct. 1 and ends Sept. 30.

freshplaza.com, 5 December

Mixon fruit farms

Part citrus business, part tourist attraction, Mixon Fruit Farms has applied creative strategies to remain competitive in the citrus industry. Its adaptability and the family atmosphere it creates for its employees has earned Mixon Fruit Farms the Manatee Economic Development Council's Workforce Initiatives award, sponsored by the Suncoast Workforce Board. The company at 2712 26th Ave. E. in Bradenton, was started in 1939 by the Mixon family, who washed oranges by hand in a washtub on their back porch and operated out of a wooden lean-to. Today, the company has more than 60,000 mail-order customers in 49 states, Canada and Europe. In its gift baskets, Mixon Fruit Farms ships oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, tangelos and lemons, as well as other types of fruit and fudge. The packing house on 26th Avenue East is surrounded by more than 175 acres of citrus groves. Visitors can even take a tram tour of the operation. Mixon Fruit Farms also gives free juice to visitors inside its store. "The family-owned business has applied creative strategies to prosper in the citrus industry by not only growing, packing and shipping citrus," EDC officials said, "but also providing a tourism experience and events venue."

palmbeachpost.com, 5 December

Greening a huge citrus threat

More than 400 scientists, citrus growers and agriculture officials from 26 countries adjourned an international conference on citrus "greening" in Orlando on Friday with no silver bullet and one grim prognosis: "The citrus industry in Florida is facing collapse," said Peter McClure, chairman of the Florida Citrus Producers Research Advisory Council. "We only have one shot at fixing it. We have to do it aggressively, and be real smart about it." The conference drew attendees from California, Texas and Arizona as well as researchers from nations such as China, India, Thailand and Brazil. All are working to unlock the secrets of the bacterial disease that attacks the vascular system of plants; something McClure compares to completing a giant jigsaw puzzle with no borders or pictures. Scientists are attacking the problem every possible way, from studying the details of the psyllid's life cycle to greening detection methods to sequencing the genome of both the psyllid and the bacterium that causes greening.

fxstreet.com, 8 December

ICE FCOJ review: rises with commodities, equities support

January juice settled up 65 points at 73.75 cents a pound and the March contract also settled 65 points higher at 75.60. FCOJ opened modestly higher but dipped to the downside in early trade while holding above January support at 71 cents. Futures caught some wind from outside rallies in equities and commodities that, along with the weaker US dollar, encouraged buying across the board. Crude, metals softs and grains were higher on the day. January jumped to the session high of 77 cents in late trade and profit taking kicked in, leaving futures modestly up at the settlement. "Orange juice is purely along for the ride," said Jack Scoville, vice president at Price Futures Group in Chicago. Frozen concentrated orange juice continues to face strong competition from other beverage choices like energy drinks, an FCOJ floor broker said. A mere turn in consumer sentiment will not likely ramp up FCOJ demand, the broker said.

fructidor.com, 8 December

Tropical storm Fay helps produce best grapefruit crop

Indian River citrus growers say they have produced a sizable crop of grapefruit for the first time since the 2004-2005 hurricane season, largely due to Tropical Storm Fay. Doug Bournique, executive vice president of the Indian River Citrus League, said that the rains of Fay that swept through the region in late August brought the moisture needed to round out this year's crop that is estimated to produce 23 million boxes of fruit this year – a US\$200 million harvest. Crop averages prior to the 2004-2005 hurricane season were at 28 million boxes, but only 4 million boxes were produced in 2005, Bournique said. Indian River grapefruit is shipped to 24 countries, he said.

freshplaza.com, 9 December

Hurricanes crush some Plaquemines orange growers

Citrus farmer Ben Becnel Jr. has some ugly navel oranges. The nasty black scars and deep pockmarks along the sides of some of his fruit look like the results of a brutal bar fight or a severe case of acne. "It tastes fine, but you can't sell that," Becnel said. Not all of his crop looks bad, though. In fact, the ones he sells at full price are plump and vividly coloured. But the marred skin on some of Becnel's oranges, which are sold at a reduced price, isn't his fault but rather a testament to the power of hurricane-force winds. Roughly 30 percent of his navel orange crop was damaged or destroyed during Hurricane Gustav, derailing what initially appeared to be a bumper harvest for 2008. Hurricanes Gustav and Ike damaged groves in Plaquemines, Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes. The LSU AgCenter estimates that Gustav caused 50 percent to 70 percent of the fruit on trees to drop, and damaged 10 percent to 20 percent of trees in Lafourche and Terrebonne.

miamiherald.com, 9 December

Florida official: 'yellow dragon' disease threatens citrus industry

Florida's \$9.3 billion citrus industry could be wiped out in just a decade if a virulent Chinese disease known as "yellow dragon" is left unchecked, the executive director of the state's citrus department told lawmakers Tuesday. "If a cure is not found, production of citrus will fall off the map," warned Ken Keck, the Florida citrus department chief. Keck told the Senate's agriculture committee that the citrus industry decided last year to divert about \$20 million in advertising money to fund research into the disease, also known as "citrus greening." But, he said, the industry needs more help from the state this coming budget year.

naturalnews.com, 9 December

Lemons protect against kidney stones

Lemons and other citrus fruits contain chemicals that can help prevent against the development of kidney stones, says John Milner, a urology expert from the Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine. "Lemons are very high in citrates, which inhibit the growth of kidney stones," Milner said.

thepacker.com, 10 December

Paramount Citrus buys Fresno County acreage

The largest independent citrus grower-packer-shipper in California is getting bigger, with plans to expand clementine production. Delano-based Paramount Citrus Association has acquired 1,000 acres of stone fruit from

the George family, owners of George Bros. Inc., Sultana, Calif., said David Krause, president of Paramount Citrus. The purchase is part of the company's long-range strategic plan, he said, the first leg of which was the decision in 2006 to leave Sunkist Growers Inc., Sherman Oaks, Calif. "Our departure from Sunkist was largely driven by our desire to get closer to the customer, to not have any filters between us and the customer," Krause said. "It's very important for us to be close to the customer and the consumer, so we know how and where to grow our business."

Orlandosentinel.com, 11 December

Orlando-area citrus co-op is on a roll

Forget the doom and gloom in Florida's citrus groves: Florida's Natural Growers, a citrus-juice cooperative in Polk County, is doing better than at any time in the grower-owned company's 75-year history. A combination of decent juice prices and a balanced supply of oranges -- not too huge of a harvest to swamp demand, not too meagre to spark an upward price spiral -- as well as productivity increases and successful promotions, have helped boost the company's revenue and balance sheet during the past two years. President and Chairman Dick Fort Jr. declared during the company's recent annual meeting that "it is no exaggeration to say that 2007 and 2008 have been the best back-to-back seasons in the history of Florida's Natural Growers." Total revenue for the two years: a record \$1.1 billion.

newschief.com, 11 December

USDA lowers orange crop estimate by 1 million boxes

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) released its December orange crop forecast for the 2008-09 growing season today, reducing its earlier estimate by 1 million boxes to 165 million boxes. "Florida citrus growers need higher returns to handle increased production costs due, in part, to unprecedented disease pressures and high input prices," Michael W. Sparks, executive vice president and chief executive officer of Florida Citrus Mutual, said in a news release. "Hopefully, the reduced crop will spur higher prices to growers. "At the same time," Sparks said, "the industry is sitting on historically large inventories of juice and we need to move some of that product out of the pipeline. Despite these and other challenges facing Florida citrus, I'm optimistic this is going to be a good year for growers." The USDA makes its initial citrus production forecast in October and then revises it monthly until the end of the season in July. The USDA maintained its prediction that 23 million boxes of grapefruit will be produced in 2008-09.

freshplaza.com, 16 December

Frosty conditions worry citrus growers

Temperatures are expected to drop far below normal next week and that spells trouble for citrus growers. Citrus trees can be damaged by frost which impacts next year's harvest. Citrus growers are preparing for the cold snap by making sure the watering systems are working well, which are turned on during frosty conditions to keep the trees warm. Weather forecasts predict frosty conditions all week.

fxstreet.com, 16 December

ICE FCOJ Review: Falls back as Florida freeze prospects fade

Deflated weather concerns dragged ICE Futures US frozen concentrated orange juice deeper into its downtrend Tuesday, though futures held support. January juice settled down 290 points at 73.85 cents a pound and the March contract settled 260 points lower at 73.90 cents. January futures opened higher and slipped progressively lower on the day. Futures pared some losses after scraping the 75.35c level, but fell back into the end of the session. The contract broke through 74-cent support but held the 71.25c range bottom. Thoughts that frigid temperatures would slip into Florida orange groves faded this week, kicking FCOJ back into its range-bound holding pattern, analysts said. "December is still a little early for frost," said Rob Kurzatkowski, futures analyst at optionsXpress in Chicago. FCOJ prices typically build weather premium into January, the coldest part of the year for orange-growing regions.

Asiafruit Newslines, 17 December

Crops

California's Murcott mandarin production could hit the 50m-carton mark within the next three years, according to citrus growers, as new acreage comes into commercial bearing. This season, later-bearing W Murcott varieties are set to produce a record crop, with 30m-32m 2.27kg cartons expected from January. A heatwave affected California's Clemenule crop.

freshplaza.com, 17 December

Citrus growers optimistic about slow-yet-solid season

Despite competition from overseas, upstart operations in China and a slow growing season here in the Valley, local citrus growers may be in for a good year. Absent so far this season: labour shortages or tree damage from extreme summer heat. Freezing temperatures are possible this week, and fog and rain have slowed harvesting, growers and packers say, but the industry remains optimistic. Oranges picked to date are large with great flavour, said Marilyn Kinoshita of the Tulare County Ag Commissioners Office. "The quality's good," Kinoshita said. "The maturity has been great -- at levels that are unheard of for this part of the season."