

### COSTA RICA

#### Protects avocado against Sun Blotch

According to the director of the National Phytosanitary Service (SFE), the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), has decided to ban imports of avocados from Australia, Spain, Ghana, Guatemala, Israel, Mexico, South Africa, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the U.S. state of Florida, was taken to prevent the entry of the Sun Blotch virus, which is present in these markets. Donald Garcia, import manager for Fruit's from the World, told Nacion.com that, the country imports "nearly 70,000 tons of this fruit per year and Mexico is our main supplier."



"According to Garcia, closing the market to Mexico will result in a shortage, a situation that was not taken into account by the SFE, even though the country has imported the product from abroad for many years. Importers also criticize the way the decision was made, because it was not coordinated with Mexico or with any other supplier and because there wasn't a preliminary study to define what areas, in the avocado exporting countries, are free from the pest and ok to continue buying avocado from them."

### GREECE

#### Rock samphire, a superfood with great prospects

Ikonomou a Greek company, having a history dating back to 1936, is devoted to the production and export of rock samphire. This herb is popular for making fish dishes and its health benefits in countries like Dubai and the UK.

In Dubai, it has been called 'the next superfood' and the demand is increasing every year. The herb is grown both in greenhouses and in the open ground, which ensures its availability all year round. "Greek consumers appreciate it not only for its properties, but also for its salty taste and crispiness, which they like in combination with the Greek drink Ouzo. It is also popular as an ingredient for salads in combination with fish or in omelettes," according to Ms. Noni, Sales Representative of Ikonomou.

While prices remain stable, Ms Noni says that "Sales are better every year, as more consumers are learning about the product. In Greece, it is distributed to retailers and supermarkets, and for the export market we deal with importers directly. The pickled version is intended for export, but countries like Germany, Italy or Bulgaria also buy it fresh."

It remains extremely popular in restaurants and hospitality In the domestic market, which account for around 60% of the total sales, but it is also bound for further expansion overseas. Ikonomou plans to launch it in France and the Netherlands next October. China has also shown its interest in purchasing a test pallet.



### GERMANY

#### German salad varieties are now widely available with

Many varieties of lettuce from German cultivation. With consumers more interested in the lettuce, it is commercially available throughout the whole year.

One of the most popular salads in Germany is the iceberg lettuce. Iceberg lettuce tastes very fresh for a long time long due to its tight and well-hydrated



leaves. However among the customers of Fruchthof it is not easy to see a specific trend. "The taste of our clients is very varied. What is very well liked by one, is not the taste of the other," said the spokesperson.

Currently the Fruchthof has many domestic lettuce varieties in its range. "German lettuce varieties are plentiful. For example there currently are red oak leaf lettuce, iceberg lettuce, a local selection of organic lamb's lettuce, Lollo Biondo and Rosso, radicchio, lettuce hearts and many more." Especially in the warmer months, Germans consume of a lot of salad. This trend also shows among the customers of Fruchthof: "Due to the popularity of Lake Constance as a tourist destination, an increase can be seen, especially from spring to fall. In those months more salad is consumed than in the cooler months."

### JAPAN

#### Strawberry break 32 year record

Mr. Koji Nakao a farmer from Fukuoka, Japan contacted Guinness World Records when he found an unusually large strawberry during harvest. It weighs at a whopping 250 g (8.82 oz) with an approximate height of 8 cm (3.15 in), length of 12 cm (4.72 in) and circumference of 25 to 30 cm (9.84 to 11.81 in), evidence of the mutated fruit was submit-



ted to the GWR team in Tokyo. Mutations can occur for a variety of reasons, for example, when frost damage affects to the flowers of the strawberry plant. In this case, multiple berries have grown and fused together to form one single large strawberry. A similar natural phenomena can occur in giant sized tomatoes, resulting from a mutated blossom that growers refer to as a megabloom.

Finding fame for his strawberry in local news and TV Mr Koji's extraordinary and unusual fruit, a Japanese variety called Amaou, now holds the Guinness World Records title for heaviest strawberry. Perhaps most impressive of all is the fact that the fruit has broken a long standing record held for over 30 years. The previous record holding strawberry weighed 231 g (8.14 oz) and was grown by G. Andersen of Folkstone, Kent, UK in 1983.

### **MEXICO**

#### **Colima expands with organic bananas and Fresh-Cut**

The Mexican company Colima being in market for more than 52 years, is currently going through an intense period of innovation.

The company was certified in December 2014, by Fairtrade International to produce and export organic bananas, recognising it as one of the country's most reliable and environmentally-conscious producers. Sources pointed out that their plantations in the



state of Colima have very favourable conditions for the production of the highest quality crop. In 2015 Colima started a new project called COLIMAN FRESH CUT. The idea is to offer added value to its customers with convenient, ready-to-eat products that are also a healthy option.

A high-end processing plant with high sanitary standards was constructed for the processing of various fruits and vegetables in multiple presentations, according to the needs of each client. These new products will soon be launched both in Mexico and the United States. Coliman products are exported to different countries. Demand for Coliman bananas has increased since 2012 in a number of European countries, especially Germany, the UK, Poland, Italy, Greece and the Netherlands, as well as in New Zealand, the United States and Canada.

Similarly, the demand and export of avocados is still rising in Asia, in countries like Japan, Singapore and China. Moreover, the company is expanding its operations to Nogales, Arizona; a strategic location to better serve its customers in the United States and Canada.

### **SPAIN**

#### **Seedless Fashion is currently the king of watermelons**

A few weeks ago, the Almería company Vegacañada kicked off the 2015 melon and watermelon campaign, in which it expects to grow by about 20% more in volume compared to the previous year, when it marketed approximately 3,500 tonnes of watermelons and 1,500 of melons.

According to Andrés Soler, commercial and marketing director of Vegacañada "Last year, the overall results were positive, with good volumes for both seasonal fruits". "This year we expect a larger production, but especially higher quality," he added.

Most of this increased volume corresponds to watermelons, since, according to Andrés Soler, "watermelons are normally more demanded and have a broader international market than melons,". "We try to respond to what the market demands every season, always trying to anticipate and plan according to the information we receive from our customers."



Among all watermelons, the black seedless Fashion is becoming more popular at the expense of watermelons with seeds, which are on the verge of extinction. Vegacañada is also part of Grupo AGF, which participates in the Fashion project.

"The cultivation of watermelons with seeds is being gradually abandoned and it is clear that the seedless is trendy and increasingly more demanded. The reality is that Fashion is the king of seedless watermelons at this time. It has a great taste, consistency and quality. It is already fully consolidated in the market and also greatly demanded," he points out.

### URUGUAY

#### Enables imports of grape and mango Peru

The Directorate General of Agricultural Services of the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Paraguay has decided to enable the entry of fresh mango and grapes from Peru into the country, certain phytosanitary requirements must be met. This aims to prevent risks, regardless of the applicable customs procedure (importation, temporary admission, free zone transit or bonded warehouses).

To import mango -*Mangifera indica*- the goods shall have a phytosanitary certificate or a re-export certificate, if applicable, that includes the following additional declarations: the fruit must come from a production site registered for export by the National Agrarian Health

Service of Peru (SENASA) that is incorporated into the Integrated Information System of Fruit Fly, and it must be free of diseases like *Anastrepha distincta*, *A. obliqua* and *Selena Sapidus articulatus*.

Furthermore the shipments should indicate if they have been subjected to hydrothermal treatment, which consists of immersing the fruits in water at 46.1 ° C for 75 to 90 minutes, and will be subject to official phytosanitary inspection and analysis when they enter the country.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### Farmers pick new potato slogan

The potato industry has chosen its newest "One Voice" promotional message, to help encourage fresh potato consumption a campaign of the UK Potato Council.

The slogan "Potatoes not just taste, naturally salt free, fat free and low in sugar too" will be rolled out across a range of FREE materials for the industry to use to promote the health and nutritional benefits of fresh potatoes.

The message was one of five short-listed concepts put forward to an industry poll via the Potato Council website. The eye-catching design secured over a third of votes and now features on car stickers,



A2 posters and larger farm field banners, available to order on the website.

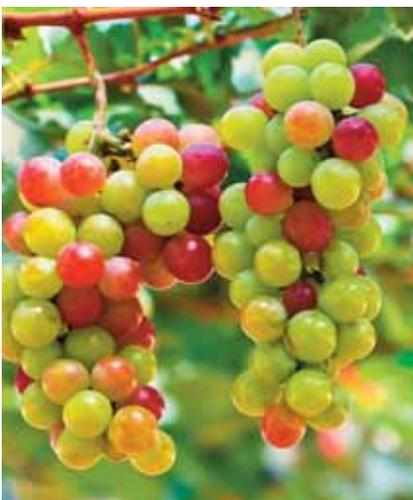
Nick White, Potato Council head of marketing and corporate affairs, said, "Potatoes have had a tough time recently and we need to pull together to demonstrate that not only do they taste great, they have some impressive health credentials too.

He further said, "We had a fantastic response to our range of promotional ideas, as well as general marketing activity feedback. The natural goodness of potatoes is seen as a particularly strong and impactful message, which we hope everyone in the supply chain – from farmers to retailers – will adopt and put on prominent display so consumers recognise the benefit of potatoes; they're a great, healthy, nutritious food."

### UAE

#### Mango crop on the rise

Locally grown mangoes could help to fill the supply gap caused by storm



damage in the Indian subcontinent according to UAE agricultural experts . As reported last month, Pakistan and India supply the UAE with 70% of its mangoes, but heavy rain has severely affected production this year.

Fatma Al Kalbani, director of agricultural development at the Ministry of Environment and Water, said local mango farming was booming as the country's hot climate which will encourage growth.

"Sandy soil, high humidity and warm temperatures in the UAE actually help the growth of the crop if watered," she said. Mango farms were started in the 1970s and are now particularly prevalent in the country's east and north. Ms Al Kalbani said there were more than 109,000 trees across the country, spread over 1,600 hectares. Pests and disease prevention are the most important challenges to the industry. The ministry had introduced pest control programmes in which disease-resistant varieties were introduced. The ministry was also applying modern irrigation and fertilization methods to increase the productivity of mango trees.

### USA

#### **Fruit farmers dealing with extreme temperatures**

After a second consecutive abnormally cold winter, Ohioans who are looking to buy peaches from orchards and farmers markets may find that difficult. Officials from the Fruit Growers Marketing Association say that many Ohio growers lost their peaches after winter temperatures dropped below zero.

They say most growers use peaches only as a supplemental crop though, and most primarily grow apples. Temperatures as of late have swung the other way and most fruit trees in the state are accelerating past their blooming stage following a week of unusually warm weather. According to the officials, the conditions are ideal for pollination and pushed ripening dates up, counteracting some of winter's effects. Ohio ranks 10th among the 32 states that produce apples.



### TASMANIA

#### **Tasmanian Pink Lady apples head to China**

Pink Lady apples are a highly popular variety amongst consumers in Australia, but one grower is about to find out whether Chinese tastes will appreciate the tart, juicy and acidic flavor they are known for. Tasmanian grower, and licensed exporter of Pink Lady brand apples, Hansen Orchards, is expected to send four lots of 60 cartons via airfreight to China. The first two cartons will go to two direct retailers and the remaining two will go to e-commerce companies. The hope is that the first cartons are liked well enough to encourage the Chinese to make annual orders for sea container shipments. The current economic climate

favours the exporter, while the Australian dollar remains low and the domestic crops are large.

The apples are destined for the premium market, and Mr Ribbon says that Hansen does have a price in mind that would be 'sustainable' long term. He also says that exports in general for apples are not very competitive because of comparatively high labour costs and freight costs. Getting the right balance, and sea freight container orders is a definite possibility though, according to him. There is also an existing relationship between Hansen Orchards and the Chinese buyers, who know the quality of the Hansen Orchard Tasmanian cherries that they also export. That has given the Chinese buyers enough encouragement to trial Pink Lady apples. ♦

