

### AUSTRIA

#### Tomatoes most popular vegetable

Tomatoes have become the most popular vegetable in Austria with a consumption of 28 kg per capita per year. This means that the Austrians buy 32,676 tonnes of tomatoes annually, with a value of around € 130 million. In principle, every family in Austria buys tomatoes. The tomato consumption per capita has doubled in the last 20 years.



Quantitatively, onions take the second spot. Value-wise, bell peppers come in second. Together, tomatoes comprise nearly 41% of the entire fruit and vegetable sector in Austria. Places three to ten are carrots, cucumbers, bell peppers, iceberg lettuce, green lettuce, Chinese cabbage, courgette and herbs. Value-wise, cucumbers come out ahead of onions and carrots. A good sales result is also achieved by cut lettuce, mushrooms, and asparagus.

### CHILE

#### Table grape starts late but bigger volumes

The 2014-2015 table grape season began and the first shipments were made, one week later than in the 2013-2014 season but with a higher volume than last season, i.e. 3,277 tons versus 2,964 tons. The main target market was the U.S. (East Coast) with 3,216 tons, followed by Latin America with 46 tons and the Far East with 18 tons.



88% of this volume came from the III Region and the rest from the IV and V Region. This area began its harvest timidly during week 47 and expectations are that this season will be good in terms of quality and volume. According to estimates, Chile will produce 12.2 million boxes of table grapes this season, i.e. 4% more than in the 2013-2014 campaign, when they produced 11.8 million boxes. This increase is mainly due to the good weather in the region during winter and spring, which has favoured the development of the fruit.

### INDIA

#### Rain and hail cause havoc in grape producing area

The Indian grape growing area of Nashik was recently hit by rain and the full extent of the damage will not be known for a few days but sources say around 30% of the crop could be damaged. Officials have begun assessing the damage to the produce, which could be almost 100% in some cases. Six talukas of the district were hit by 1,202mm rainfall accompanied by hailstorms resulting in a loss of crops on about 38,500 hectares, according to district officials.

After destroying 18,000 hectares of grapes, rain continued to cause more destruction. Mango and cashew crops in northern parts of Maharashtra had to bear the maximum brunt of such unseasonal rains. Heavy showers on Friday damaged mango flowers in Konkan. Famous Alphonso mangoes in Ratnagiri have also been severely affected. According to Skymet, with a wind speed

of 30 kmph, rains were witnessed in several parts of the Nashik District. The devastating rain causing damage was 9.5 mm in Wadnair, 11.2 mm in Umrane, 6.8 mm in Nandgaon, 5.3 mm in Deola, 3.05 mm in Pathardi.

#### Automatic harvesting machine for potato farmers

The advanced technology of automatic potato harvesting machines could be a viable option for the progressive potato farmers of Doaba region of Punjab, in order to deal with issues such as migrant labour shortage, need for standardization and minimizing the damage to yield.

Demonstrations of the imported machines are already on and foreign companies are open to making changes in design and operations to suit local conditions. In Punjab, 200,000 acres of land is presently under seed potato cultivation.

Given the high cost of machines, it is a group of potato farmers who are contemplating to buy these machines. But they are still in the process of studying it, to ensure that there is no scope for mechanical bruising. J B S Sangha, chairman of Confederation of Potato Seed Farmers (POSCON), said that the machines came with standardization that had become significant these days. "It is a very advanced equipment where investment is high, time of usage is less. Simplification in use of these machines is one issue that has been taken up with the companies that approached us recently." "There are already 2-3 harvesting machines in use in Gujarat, but it is yet to be introduced in Punjab.

### MALAWI

#### Eliminate illiteracy to improve farming

The National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) says farmers' literacy is a catalyst for agricultural development. According to the Operations Manager for NASFAM, Snowden Mbalafana, 748 local farmers have completed a six months adult literacy course.



Mbalafana observed that in most cases farmers lost a lot of profit due to illiteracy as they are not able to read figures on the scales and or to calculate their tentative profits before taking their produce to the buyer. The farmers attained adult literacy lessons that also included topics on HIV/AIDS and farming business among others. The local farmers were drawn from Mulanje, Thyolo and Phalombe.

National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM) is focusing on the improvement of farming business with an aim of transforming lives of local people whose huge percentage consists of farmers.

## NEW ZEALAND

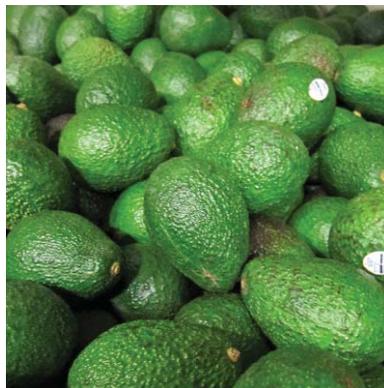
### Avocado industry waits for China clearance

As New Zealand expands its trade into Asian markets for avocado industry, it is still waiting for clearance to export to China. The Ministry for Primary Industries was negotiating an access agreement for China and avocados are at the top of its priority list for horticultural products. Chief executive of New Zealand Avocado Jen Scouler said only Chile and Mexico had access to China for the fruit. She was of the view that avocado industry representatives attended a fruit and vegetable fair in Beijing last month, where Chinese officials indicated they saw no technical reasons why New Zealand should not be granted access as well.

"We participated in an education swapping and information sharing seminar with the Chinese officials, which really raised the visibility for avocados in China and the feedback we got from the Chinese officials was that they couldn't see that there would be technical reasons not to allow avocados from New Zealand into China, that said, there are always political parts of these sorts of negotiations and obviously MPI need to very carefully negotiate, both countries always need to get value out of these sort of negotiations.

"South Korea is one of our top three Asian markets and it's one of our markets within our Primary Growth Partnership Programme and as a result of the FTA, that all goes through in March 2015, our 30 % tariff will be stepped down on an annual basis over ten years, which is very good news for us."

She said another bit of good news had been a lower than forecast harvest in New Zealand's biggest overseas avocado market Australia, which took about 70%



of the exports. She was of the view that these avocado exports would have gone by Christmas.

## THE NETHERLAND

### Optical sorting machine for washed potatoes

During Fruit Logistica in Berlin, machine builder Miedema was approached by Swiss Müller Azmoos from Weite. The consumption packer of carrots and washed potatoes was searching for the latest sorting technology in potatoes, ultimately ending up at Miedema's stand. The latter, although not usually very active on this market, took on the project. The result was a customized optical sorting machine for washed potatoes.



Marcel Mulder: "As it turned out, Miedema's knowledge of 'dirty' potato sorting could well be used for an optical sorting machine for washed potatoes." According to Marcel, it even serves as somewhat of an advantage. "Sorting unwashed potatoes is much more difficult, especially so because with seedlings, quality is more important than quantity. This is why we developed our Smart Grader. Now, we have 'translated' this design to the washed potatoes in the consumer market. Volumes are a bit down, but the quality of our sorting is many times higher than with existing competitors."

Two companies in Liege and Heerenveen are using a machine by Miedema to sort washed potatoes, However, that is a different machine with only three outfeeds; this new machine has ten outfeeds. The machine now running in Switzerland is based on the sorter for the unwashed potato, the Smart Grader, and bears the name Industrial Line.

The basis of the machine and the built-in techniques are the same. The biggest changes are in the other requirements that apply to crops products relative to the seed. "We have replaced some parts with components made out of stainless steel, the frame was galvanized, and sheet metal has now been treated with an additional coating. The conveyor belts are now blue. These adjustments are necessary because you work with food in a safe environment, but the basis of the machine is the same."

### SPAIN

#### Over 1,500 tonnes of Lodosa Piquillo peppers

The harvest campaign for Piquillo Peppers from Lodosa, has already finished with a "very positive" balance. This year, over 1.7 million kilos of fresh red peppers have been produced. The campaign has ended earlier than other years and, according to the Regulatory Board, the ripening has been "really good." Additionally, in some areas production has been very high, especially Mendavia, where last year about 50% was lost due to the effects of a hailstorm.

Similarly, the number of producers and the acreage adhered to the designation are greater than last year. A total of 168 farms have joined, with an area of 137 hectares; about 60 more than last season.

The number of professional growers cultivating Piquillo Peppers from Lodosa has reached 92, compared with 68 in 2013. It is also worth noting that 13 companies have produced canned Piquillo Peppers; two more than last season.

### TURKEY

#### Turkish citrus exports up, shift east

Good opportunities for short lemon crops in South America and South Africa has been generated for Turkish citrus exporters this season. Total lemon exports have increased this year, and prices have been good – though decreasing demand from Europe means more of Turkey's



exports are going to the Middle East and Asia.

According to Ayse Ozler of Ozler "Our lemons have enjoyed high demand and good prices all over the global market". He further added "Demand from the Middle East, Europe and Asia has been quite good, higher than in previous seasons, in fact." Turkish lemon suppliers typically start exporting their fruit during September, about a month and a half before Spanish lemons edged them out of Europe.

"Volumes from the Southern Hemisphere were low this year because of a frost in Argentina that cut their volumes by about 40 %," explained Ayse. "South African supplies of lemons also ran out early, so the gap in supplies was big, and prices for Turkish lemons were the highest we've seen." Last year's Turkish lemon crop was also affected by frost, so local demand was already strong when the export window came around, further driving up prices. The early boon resulted in 30 % more lemon export volume out of Turkey, when compared to the previous season.

"Demand from Europe is reducing, which could be due to prices and the promotion that Spanish fruit gets," said Ayse. "But the Middle East and Asia have been accepting of this and are curious about our citrus, so the demand there has been

increasing as they are happy with the quality of our fruit."

### UNITED STATES

#### Larger orange production expected in 2014-2015

Predictions according to latest forecast of 2014-2015, orange crop will be slightly bigger than the 2013-2014 one. Last season's orange production in the United States reached 156.4 million boxes, and, if the latest USDA forecast works out; the upcoming season's production will be 2.5 % larger than that. Production for the 2014-2015 orange season is expected to reach 160.4 million boxes, with gains in both Valencia and non-Valencia orange production. Florida, the state with the largest production of oranges in the country, is expected to have 108.0 million boxes of oranges for the upcoming season.



### UKRAINE

#### Most organic products are imported

In spite of Organic fruit and vegetable production in Ukraine on rising growth most of the organic products on supermarket shelves are currently imported.

During the eleventh international conference "Fruits and Vegetables of Ukraine 2014", Eugene Milovanov, President of the Federation of Organic Producers of Ukraine, announced that "the domestic market for organic fruits and vegetables in Ukraine has increased for the seventh consecutive season; however, Ukrainian retailers still prefer imported products and locally produced organic fruit and vegetables are harder to find on the shelves."

"The fact that Ukraine's organic fruits and vegetables are predominantly produced in small farms means it is harder for them to ensure a year-round supply.

Under these circumstances, the best sales channel for Ukrainian organic products can be on-line shopping. The expert also highlights the rapid development of the market dealing with organic produce for processing an industry that currently concentrates in the Transcarpathian region.

### KENYA

#### Producers must stick to 50kg packaging

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Authority (AFFA) has warned all farmers and traders involved in selling produce against flouting the new regulations of 50 kilogram bags packaging or face tough penalties.

The authority's Interim Director General Alfred Busolo said, "Despite the introduction of the regulations last month, a majority of traders are still exceeding the 50kg bags".

"The implementation is immediate and we went to the media notifying the people that anybody who is packaging agricultural produce should be at 50kg bags; be it Irish potatoes, coffee or maize," Busolo warned.

The penalty for those convicted of breaking the law will a Sh500,000 fine or a jail term not exceeding one year.

The move has created several reactions with farmers welcoming the move while traders lamenting that it will oppress their business.

Busolo says the new law covers over 20 farm products, ranging from cereals, roots and legumes. He said that the law has been in existence since 2005 but has been revised to include penalties which were not there.

### VIETNAM

#### Sieving machine sorts litchis, controls dried fruit quality

As Consumers do not have litchis to eat all year round and the litchi harvest lasts one month only in early summer. After the month, farmers have to throw tons of fresh litchis away, because only a small percentage of litchis can be dried and stored.

Dried litchis are not favored by consumers due to the low quality of the products. The drying is done by manual methods.

Tinh, a teacher in Luc Ngan District in Bac Giang Province, who understands the problem of the farmers in his homeland, decided to make a machine which can

mechanize all the phases of litchi sorting and processing, which can help reduce the manual work and upgrade the quality of dried fruits. According to Tinh, the quality of the dried fruits can be improved by 10-25 %, while the time needed for every litchi drying batch has been shortened significantly.

Tinh's machine has a chassis, three screens with different sizes, a funnel for fruit and another funnel for output of dried fruits. It is run by a 1.5 KW motor attached to the hard-axis motion with soft joints. The machines sort's fruits based on the vibration principle, and are capable of selecting four groups of products. These include first-class products (big, round fruits), the second-class (smaller products), the third-class (the smallest ones with lower quality) and the fourth-class (the waste products litchi stem, leaf and broken fruits).

Tinh's machine is useful for farmers in the litchi growing area of Bac Giang. As the machine runs by electricity, the sorting and drying of litchis does not cost them much time and effort anymore. Meanwhile, the capacity is high and quality very good. The machine can help classifying fruits as well as can help farmers put litchis into a drying room and turn litchis over. It also assists in packaging and some other phases of the production process. ♦

