

AUSTRALIA

Secure barrier to fruit fly

In Adelaide region, Hundreds of thousands of sterile fruit flies will drop from the sky this month kicking off the plan to reduce the numbers of an endemic pest.

Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources David Littleproud said the sterile flies would reduce Queensland fruit fly (Qfly) numbers because the flies they mate with will not be able to reproduce. Minister Littleproud said "The new sterile insect technology (SIT) could be a game changer for Australian horticulture". Less fruit flies equals more fruit with less pesticide leading to great crops and profits for farmers. More profit for farmers means they spend more money in town which creates more regional jobs.

While SIT has been effective in California and Guatemala, this project is breaking new ground with some of Australia's leading fruit fly experts on board. This trial is the first step in the process, trialling the equipment used to deploy the flies from a plane, following the extensive baiting and trapping to ensure its effectiveness.

Two million male sterile fruit flies is planned to be released of for April to combat recent incursions in South Australia. Sustainable management of Qfly is vital to Australia's \$10.3 billion horticultural sector; this pest costs the horticultural sector \$300 million each year in lost markets. It's hoped that Hort Innovation can commercialize production and delivery of sterile male Qfly.

ARGENTINA

Lemons will arrive in the US next month

At the end of April or beginning of May, the US market would once again have lemons from Tucuman, said the governor of Tucuman, Juan Manzur. He said that they had complied all regulations and that this news was "superior, as the products from Tucuman had achieved opening the most demanding market."

After negotiations and meetings with the authorities of the North American



country, the province complied with all phytosanitary requirements and got the green light to export to the US, after two decades. "The first products will be sent by maritime shipments. As they become cheaper, we might send them by air, like our blueberries," stated Manzur.

BRAZIL

Strawberry cultivation sector prefers Italian cultivars

The leading strawberry producers worldwide are China, the US, Spain and Japan, which produce almost 5 million tons of fruit. In Brazil strawberry production has increased a lot over the past decade thanks to the high yields and a transformation in the cultivation process. It produces around 3,500 tons of strawberries in the states of Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, Santa Catarina, San Paolo, Espírito Santo, Distrito Federal, Bahia and Ceará.

Strawberry cultivars show variations in their agronomic performance when they are cultivated in various regions worldwide due to the genotype x environment interaction. Agronomists from the Federal University of Santa Maria (Brazil) assessed the performance of various types of Italian and American cultivars in terms of quality and yield. "We assessed the phyllochron, i.e. the time required for issuing successive leaves on a plant, number as well as commercial and non-commercial yield, titratable acidity and total soluble solid content (°Brix).

11 cultivars were tested - 6 Italian and 5 American. "The American cultivar had the highest phyllochron level while the Italian had the lowest. The cultivars with the higher phyllochron value are the less efficient when it comes to yields. Higher volumes are obtained with the Italians. Italian cultivars had a higher total soluble solid content. According to the study, the yields and quality of Italian cultivars are higher than those of American cultivars."



CHILE

Blueberry shipments surpass last season's record

According to the Crop Report of the Chilean Blueberry Committee, the season continues delivering good news in its end phase.

Chile exported 3,788 tons of fresh blueberries, i.e. 22% more than the volume that had already been re-estimated. So far, the country has exported 104,703 tons this season, surpassing last year's record season of 103,000 tons.

The main destinations for the Chilean blueberries last week were North America (78.2%), Europe (17.4%), and Asia (4.3%). Organic shipments amounted to 471 tons, accounting for 12.4% of the week's shipments and following the expected trend.

The season is in its final phase and, since the good climatic conditions continue; the sector's final export volume could surpass the 106,000 estimated last week for this season. "Therefore, we will not continue estimating the next departures and we'll just observe how many volumes are shipped in the last weeks of this very special season," the entity concluded.

CANADA

Garlic has moved beyond its cottage industry persona

Since 1980's, Ontario's garlic industry has been growing commercially, being held back only by knowledge. A decade later a few but fervent growers, including The Garlic Box, emerged to facilitate full-scale production and growth of this one-time cottage industry. An element for success was to inform consumers about what differentiates local garlic from off-shore.

The Garlic Box Inc. had humble beginnings in 1998 as the marketing arm of a larger farming operation. There were no business models at the time to transition Ontario-grown garlic into a value-added food product. Its vision was to



sustain the garlic industry and bring local garlic to market by adding value and extending the shelf-life and availability of local garlic. This approach to sustainability would benefit growers by creating markets for garlic scapes, a secondary harvest, and bulbs that were too small or split open for fresh market sales.

"It's been an interesting journey. As we've tried to make Ontario garlic a sustainable crop, the consumer and food landscape has changed," says Jackie Rowe, owner of The Garlic Box. "The shift to local was instrumental and dovetailed with our business model. We were positioned in the right place at the right time to catch the shift." Rowe adds this is fueling a demand for fresh market, saying, "this is an exciting time for us and the garlic industry as a whole."

A quick 101 tells that Ontario's garlic is one of the longest soil-bound crops of nine months requiring a four-year plant rotation. Garlic scapes are harvested in June followed by the bulb harvest four - six weeks later. Handling, drying, curing and trimming is slow and requires time and lab hour. Rowe says, "A consistent approach to growth demands a synergy among stakeholders, including buyers to be sustainable. We continue to educate partners in the value chain (buyers, consumers and growers) on what differentiates us from imports." And it's more quality and food safety at the farm gate level. Ontario garlic's naturally high brix value is a quality assurance of optimal freshness & nutrition. Locally grown in fertile soil she says it equates to a nutrient dense, better tasting, and longer storage garlic.

During off-season (December - May), marketing is heavy on the IQF (Individually Quick Frozen) peeled, whole garlic cloves available in 300g or 20# box

packaging. This was Rowe's answer to the consumer driven question of, 'how do we get fresh Ontario garlic year-around?' The IQF cloves are fresher than fresh Rowe says and hold the same nutritional value as a fresh bulb from the field.

The balance of the processed versus fresh market is slowly shifting. At the beginning 75 % of The Garlic Box yield was allocated to the full value-added segment of the business, but the shift through frozen garlic is enabling traction in the fresh market category. Flash frozen garlic also extends Ontario's market share and availability. "Within the last two years, particularly last year, our fresh market category jumped more than 35%," she says, and expecting another jump with the 2018 harvest.

FRANCE

New refrigerated container launched through joint effort

PrimeLINE ONE, a new refrigerated shipping container developed through a joint initiative of Carrier Transicold and Singamas Container Holdings Ltd., a leading manufacturer of shipping containers, was announced this week at Intermodal Asia 2018.

The companies said the PrimeLINE ONE container provides the benefits of the industry's best selling container refrigeration system but assembled on-site in a streamlined assembly process.

The PrimeLINE ONE refrigerated container provides an alternative to the traditional approach of bolting a complete refrigeration system to the front end of an insulated shipping container.

Instead, refrigeration system components are assembled into custom-config-



ured Singamas containers in a new Carrier Transicold factory located adjacent to Singamas' new refrigerated container facility in Qingdao, China.

"With its all-in-one design, the PrimeLINE ONE refrigerated container is the result of a streamlined assembly process, which can provide optimized lead times, based on the location," said Willy Yeo, director of marketing, Global Container Refrigeration, Carrier Transicold. "Ultimately, our objective with this introduction is to provide customers with expanded options for the best refrigerated container solution according to their needs and preferences."

Andy Chan, executive director and chief operating officer, Singamas Container Holdings Ltd. said, "The PrimeLINE ONE program has been a great opportunity for Singamas to combine our container design and manufacturing proficiency with Carrier Transicold's expertise in container refrigeration system engineering. The resulting PrimeLINE ONE container aligns our manufacturing processes to produce a different approach to making a complete refrigerated container."

PERU

Authorities propose an alternative to fumigation for Asparagus exports to the US

In order to increase production costs and shorten the product's shelf life, which reduces the competitiveness of the Peruvian vegetable, fresh asparagus exports to the United States have to be fumigated.

The National Service of Agrarian Health (Senasa) and the Peruvian Institute of Asparagus and Vegetables (IPEH) have been working to eliminate this requirement. This month the health authority will present an alternative plan to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture.

According to the Chief Executive Officer of the IPEH, Carlos Zamorano Macchiavello, the goal is to create a logical system so that the fresh asparagus



industry can send its products to the United States without fumigation. He said the idea was to certify fields and processing plants in the country (which is already done in other agricultural export products) to help formalize and organize the national asparagus industry.

These certifications would prove that producers are conducting integrated pest management in the fields to ensure control of pest populations so that we have healthier fields. It would ensure our productivity and help us have a more orderly industry," he concluded.

GERMANY

Supply situation better than expected for organic potatoes

After the constant rain and the catastrophic harvest conditions in some regions in the autumn of last year, uncertainty existed as to how long organic potatoes will remain stable in the warehouses also contributed to this uncertainty.

This all has now been normalized. The stored lots are more stable and better than expected and the supply situation has relaxed. The initial concerns about an inability to optimally supply the market have been driven out. "This brings us closer to our goal of supplying organic potatoes 300 days a year," says Monika Tietke, Managing Director of the Organic Potato Producers Association. And then she adds: "Ultimately, we are also responsible. If we talk about cooperation in partnerships, then we also have to deliver."

HONDURAS

Banana exports grew by 2.7% in value

According to the Central Bank of Honduras (BCH), in 2017 the country's banana exports amounted to 522.7 million dollars, 2.7 %. 13.7 million dollars more than the 509 million dollars achieved in 2016. Last year, the country exported 32,422 boxes of 18 kilos of bananas abroad, i.e. 4.6 % less than the 33,983 boxes it shipped in 2016.





The decrease in volume is related to the flooding in the plantations and the political conflict that arose at the end of 2017. According to the BCH, due to the floods, the workers and inputs (such as bags, packaging boxes and pallets) had difficulties to access the banana farms.

Fortunately, the average price of a box of banana in 2017 was \$16.12 dollars, 7.6 % more than the \$14.98 achieved in 2016. According to the BCH, the United States and Ireland were the main destinations for Honduran banana exports.

ITALY

First sorter for delicate or ripe fruit

According to Nicola Antonacci from Zetapack, "People always talk about fruit that is ready to eat, however, this requirement clashes with automatic sorting solutions. The machines developed so far do not guarantee the same degree of automation and respect for the produce as our solution, which is innovative and unlike any other on the market."

The device is a round grader. The fruit continues to circulate until it's chosen by operators, just like an airport luggage belt. Loading is manual, so delicate fruits such as Romagna persimmons, pears after they've been stored for months, ripe peaches, large apricots or Asian pears do not get ruined.

The truly innovative aspect regards sorting and unloading, as operators pick

up the fruit from the cup on the conveyor and place it in the packaging. The fruit can be sorted by weight, grade and colour. An LED light indicates which fruits correspond to a certain setting. There's no room for mistakes, as the LEDs have different colours. The speed is almost like that of a traditional sorter, but there is no rolling as it would ruin the fruit.

Nicola further said, "The machine works well with Asian pears at the moment, but we are obtaining good results with delicate fruit as well. It's a revolution: there will be no more excuses when processing delicate fruit. Times and costs will be reduced as well."

NEW ZEALAND

Fijian banana paper maker sees way forward in New Zealand

Last March, Derek Dolence represented his company Green Banana Paper at Pacific Trade Invest, New Zealand's Pasifika Business Market during Auckland's Pasifika Festival. As the company's B2B Sales Manager, he was there to exhibit its range of products.

On show were wallets, purses, small bags and a range of stationery items fashioned out of paper and card made from banana fibre. They were a great hit with visitors to the company's booth at the event. "We were pleased to find that New Zealand's market prioritizes fair trade and investment that caters to new-

to-market businesses from all around the Pacific. This has made the path to the New Zealand market much easier to forge," Dolence said.

He was appreciative of the value New Zealanders place on eco-friendly and sustainable products and processes. "Consumer consciousness on sustainability and social impact is high in New Zealand and products made from natural materials in a sustainable way such as our wallets and purses are clearly preferred over the same type of products made from leather," he said.

USA

Dropcopter pollinator secures \$250,000 investment

DropCopter out of Corning, California, works on the automated pollination of orchard crops via unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). It strives for farming efficiency, the promotion of new technologies and healthy crop yield growth. Every year growers need bees to pollinate their flowers. If there are not enough bees, there's not enough fruit. Dropcopter basically supplements the amount of lost bees by flying over those same flowers and dropping pollen using a drone.

Now the pollination UAS start-up has secured \$250,000 from the Syracuse based GENIUS NY accelerator. Their pollination drone service is the first in the world to use automated multirotors to dust almonds, pistachios and cherries, boosting crop set by as much as a tested 15%!

They're alternative to expensive bee pollination and is much-needed, as the former has risen in price by 100% over 10 years. The recent decline in bee population is cutting into farmers margins and raising the price of food at the grocery store. Dropcopter can alleviate that while delivering a profit to the growers, using minimal resources and manual labour.

Dropcopter is using the funds to reproduce their patent-pending pollinator for planned night time operations over local New York orchards. Night-time doubles the operating window, as cold temperatures prevent bees from flying. ♦