



MVCB Weekly News

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www.mvcitrus.org.au

Murray Valley Citrus Board

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Diary Dates:

4 April 2013, 3:00pm
Citrus Pre-season

Maturity Testing and Immature Fruit

Again this season there will be significant market pressure to supply fruit as soon as possible. Due to the rewards of supplying an early market, it can be very tempting to send fruit too early.

MVCB has already been receiving early navels for maturity testing. Below are the results of recent local maturity tests carried out by Board staff.

Variety	% Juice	⁰ Brix	Acid	Brix:Acid Ratio
M7	43	9.9	1.31	7.5:1
M7	42	10.3	1.26	8.2:1
M7	40	10.3	1.16	8.9:1
Navelina	43	10.1	1.15	8.8:1

The results in the table above show that while percentage juice and degrees Brix are above the standard, the Brix Acid Ratio is not quite reaching the 2012 Maturity Standards set by Citrus Australia. The 2012 Maturity Standards require Navels to have a 9:1 Brix Acid Ratio.

Degreening can be used to accelerate external colour development, however, it does not enhance the eating qualities of the fruit.

If early fruit does not live up to consumer expectation then they avoid purchasing again for at least six weeks if not for the whole season, which results in a market full of fruit that is sold at reduced prices. Ultimately this can depress the prices for the rest of the season.

Packers should encourage growers to harvest fruit that have excellent eating qualities as well as meeting industry standards. This way early season prices may be preserved.

MVCB provides free maturity testing to growers and packers within the Board's defined area. Ring Tony Bothroyd on 0407 325 934 if you have any queries in regard to fruit maturity testing.

Importance of Good Harvest Practice

Harvesting of early citrus varieties will be commencing on many properties in Sunraysia in the coming weeks. Therefore, it is important to remind growers that only sound fruit should be harvested.

Instructions to your pickers on harvesting sound fruit only (no split, punctured or fallen fruit) and handling it carefully is paramount to receive the best possible returns.

Continued supervision of pickers while harvesting is therefore essential.

The first step to profitability and access to many markets, depends on harvesting the crop in the best possible way. As a grower this is in your hands and those of your pickers.

Southern Africa Set for Bumper Citrus Crop

Southern Africa may harvest its biggest ever citrus crop this year, with South Africa's Citrus Marketing Forum noting in its final estimate for 2013 that this year's volumes are expected to increase by 4 per cent on last year's record to nearly 107m cartons.

The final figures for 2012 now include volumes from Swaziland, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, making this a Southern African estimate, despite the dominance of South Africa.

South Africa alone will produce more than 100m export cartons of citrus in 2013. If the season pans out as expected, the country will have recorded citrus export growth of around 36 per cent since 2006.

The biggest increase for southern Africa this year is in the grapefruit segment, which will rise by 15 per cent following low volumes in 2012.

Valencia and navel volumes across the region should remain relatively stable, with just a 1 per cent increase in volumes, while lemons will climb by 6 per cent and soft citrus by 7 per cent.

Navel growers also expect larger-sized fruit, with a shift from earlier to later fruit. There have been isolated incidences of hail in the Western Cape and Nelspruit, while the Vaalharts region shows signs of recovery from last year's hail.

For soft citrus, late mandarins are anticipating the highest year-on-year growth at 10 per cent, as young orchards start to mature. (Source: <http://www.fruitnet.com>)