News in Brief

Grower Tour to Israel
Produsente Toer na Israel

A group of South African growers visited Israel on a tour focusing on the production of mandarins in Israel. The group was impressed with the performance of the Or, Mor and Hadas mandarin and their potential for production in South Africa.

PhD student’s insights help fledgling pomegranate industry

The arrival of this season’s first consignment of pomegranates from the Porterville region on British supermarket shelves serendipitously coincided with Dr Oluwafemi Caleb receiving his doctorate from Stellenbosch University (SU). Advice leading from his studies has helped pomegranate producer Mr Fan Olivier decide on the best possible packaging for his export produce.

Dr Caleb’s research focused on helping fruit producers, suppliers and processors in the emerging South African pomegranate market to find a perfect fit for the packaging material and storage conditions they choose. This helps to ensure the optimal shelf life and best possible quality of ready-to-eat pomegranate products.

“When packaging new products, producers often have a ‘pack-and-pray’ approach, and hope that materials and containers that were used successfully for other types of fruits will also work for theirs,” says Dr Caleb, who hails from Nigeria and came to SU in 2007 to complete his postgraduate studies in microbiology, and ultimately also his PhD degree in food science.

Citrogold participated in the funding and provision of pomegranate fruit for a wider research program into various aspects of pomegranates production at the US Post Harvest Research Unit.

Dr Oluwafemi Caleb
(Photo: Anton Jordaan)
Carninka navel trees, originating from CFB budwood, are bearing fruit for the first time at a number of trial sites this year. The fruit looks true to type and the trees have a good crop load despite the vigour of the trees.

The current field crop of evaluation trees of the recently released new ARCCIT1614 plant material in Citrogold evaluation sites looks excellent. The Nurseries have commenced with the budding of ARCCIT1614 orders.

Alisa Vardi: – Stellar breeder from the ARO in Israel

Dr Aliza Vardi took over the reins from Professor P. Spiegel-Roy in 1989 as the principle breeder of the ARO breeding program in Israel. During a prolific breeding period from 1972 until her retirement in mid 2000, Dr Vardi produced a number of exciting varieties including the Orri (Or), Mor, Winola and many more.

Aliza was able to introduce striking rind color and excellent internal qualities into her breeding progeny such as Odem.

The breeding program pioneered the use of induced mutation and ploidy in citrus breeding. These varieties have been planted worldwide. The Or mandarin now forms the backbone of the Israeli mandarin industry with 4500 ha’s planted to date.

Dr Nir Carmi has assumed the responsibilities of the breeding program from Alisa Vardi since mid 2000. Citrogold has been proud to partner with the ARO in the introduction of these varieties in South Africa.

SUNKIST VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA

A group of Sunkist directors visited the Eastern and Western Cape in April, to see the quality of early ripening navels from South Africa.

The group had the opportunity to see the first production of M7 fruit and visited Patensie, the Sundays River valley and Citrusdal.
Red pigmented navels obtaining premium prices in Northern hemisphere markets

Californian citrus growers have been receiving consistent premiums from the proceeds of sale of red pigmented Cara Cara navels for both domestic and export fruit.

South African producers in the Western Cape have started to benefit from the marketing success in the USA and are also able to secure a price premium on the export of red pigmented navels.

Sunkist report a growth in the demand for red pigmented navels in the Far East where the colour red is associated with luck and well being.

Citrogold has been working on the development of a range of red pigmented navels so as to extend the offering to the market over a longer period of time.

The Kirkwood Red navel is starting to show some excellent potential in trials with precocity, good flavour and high packout percentages.

Kirkwood Red evaluation blocks in Mpumalanga have indicated that the variety is later maturing than the Cara Cara.

Citrogold is excited at the prospect of some new earlier maturing red pigmented candidate varieties that are currently under evaluation that would significantly lengthen the marketing window.

M7 shows superior qualities

Young M7 navel trees are providing exciting results in a number of evaluation trial sites in traditional navel producing regions in South Africa.

The M7 navels show consistent good internal quality results when compared with other standard early navel varieties such as Navellina, Newhall and Fukumoto.

These results have been consistent in trials in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Eastern and Western Cape trial sites.

M7 trees are producing good crop loads despite the vigour of the trees.

The M7 is destined to considerably improve the quality of the early navel season. Please click here for more M7 info or on the pictures for the M7 specifications.

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Performance of M7 navel in Citrusdal, Western Cape
Internal quality results of M7, Fukumoto and Lina, all on Carcio citrange rootstock