



Organic Citrus Update March 2018

European sources

Italy seem to have good conditions for citrus in the South and across to Sicily. So we can expect them to be in the market at least until the end of May. There are some signs that the lemons are beginning to get a bit thicker skinned and bordering on the ugly side which will only naturally develop further. First Valencia Lates are ready and they look very good.

Spain has had a lot of rain in Andalucía and Huelva for the last 10 days and forecast is for more rain to continue. If the trees are standing in water for any length of time the fruit gets starved of oxygen. The sap and nutrients do not get to the fruit as there is no transpiration taking place. To the North around Valencia it has remained dry and this is where we are sourcing our oranges at present. Chislett Navel Lates which we are sourcing from there will be exceptionally good. Nadarcotts are sold out from the North and are going to show damage when they can resume harvesting.

The conventional sector is already complaining that they have too many Primafiori lemons still on the trees. The fruit is sizing up too quickly after a warm winter generally and now heavy rainfall. In my view they are their own worst enemy as prices have been too high since December, allowing Turkey to undercut them across the EU. They are now saying that the Verna crop which is 40% down due to cold weather during blossom time spring 2017 the fruit is now also sizing up and starting to get forward in colour.

South Africa – Eastern Cape

Will it be tempting fate to say that we have had almost ideal conditions last spring and summer? We have adequate water (unlike the drought torn Western Cape) due to our investment in reservoirs and the irrigation system from the national canals that flow through the Sundays River Valley.

Day time temperatures are still warm but the nights are chilly enough to let the fruit start some break in colour. There was a small Navel oranges crop last year due to have heatwave that caused fruit splitting and 60% of the fruit had to pick off the floor or was so damaged that it had to go to industry. This season the trees have good energy and we have a good volume and good spread of sizing. The Valencia orange crop also looks good. Rather an early stage to comment at present but we see a small crop in delta seedless but plenty of midnight and standard Valencia lates.

The lemon crop will also be good and increased volumes due to new plantings ($\frac{3}{4}$ years ago) starting to bear fruit. We have some blocks of lemons starting to show good colour. We will harvest these but probably send to Canada or the Middle East to save trying to compete with European stocks.

Easy Peel looks good. Never really know at this stage as they grow in sudden late bursts much later than other citrus varieties. We expect a normal crop. Nules to start with and followed up with Nadarcotts later. We are going to plant Valley Gold this September which will fill in the gap between Nules and Nadarcotts in another $\frac{3}{4}$ years' time.

We usually start our season with arrivals in the first week of June. We are not going to chase early EU/UK markets that may not be there anyway. We will market our fruit when Nature tells us it is ready.

The £ is weak against the ZAR but that will not influence our pricing policy. This will be attached on a separate document.

Nicest when fresh.....

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