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FLORIDA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

PACKINGHOUSE NEWSLETTER

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"UNWASHABLE" GRAPEFRUIT

An increasing number of complaints of difficulty in washing off "sooty mold" led to a check of what might be causing the problem. Sharp differences between crops indicated that differences in grove practices were probably involved.

The "unwashable" dirt turned out to be, not one of the sooty mold fungi, but sooty blotch (*Gloedes pomigena* (Schw.) Colby). This is a very common fungus that does not require insect exudates (honey dew) for its development and which lodges deep within the waxy platelets on the surface of the fruit. It is fairly easily controlled by a thorough coverage with a summer oil spray containing copper or Benlate.

Sooty blotch can be bleached out with various chlorine solutions as is being done in Australia and South Africa. However, this involves submersion in long soak tanks for about two minutes for which Florida packinghouses are not equipped. About all most houses can do is to apply a spray containing a wetting agent or approved fruit cleaner as soon after the dumper as possible. (The longer the wetted time, the better the washing job).

For the remainder of this season, packers able to choose which crops to run are advised to seek out suitably sprayed crops when they are packing for particularly exacting markets. Improved coordination between production and packinghouse managers should certainly minimize this problem in future.

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MARKETING OF FLORIDA GRAPEFRUIT IN JAPAN

Abstract. The present situation on grapefruit trade and marketing in Japan are described. Competition, problems for Florida grapefruit exports to Japan, as well as ways to increase exports to Japan are discussed. The Japanese consumed as much as 700,000 metric tons (36.3 million 4/5 bu. Fla. cartons) of fresh citrus fruits in December alone, which is the peak of the Unshu-mikan (Satsuma) season. The delicate taste of Florida grapefruit suits the Japanese. Accordingly, if high quality grapefruit can be supplied constantly, exports of Florida grapefruit can be greatly increased.

Total quality control would be one of the keypoints for the successful future of grapefruit trade to Japan.

Current grapefruit imports into Japan. Seasonal changes in grapefruit imports into Japan for this decade are shown in Fig. 1. After trade liberalization in July 1971, imports increased rapidly. Importation from Florida was suspended from June 1974 to March 1975 due to the Caribbean fruit fly. Freeze-damaged grapefruit imported from Florida in 1977 weakened the market. Due to this "frozen fruit shock," imports from Florida decreased by 2.5 million cartons in the next season, 1977-78. Nevertheless, Japan imported a record 168,000 metric tons total, of which 7.06 million cartons were from Florida last season, 1978-79.

Decay of grapefruit imports into Japan. There are no data on the amounts of decayed grapefruit, however the amount of fruit abandoned by the order of the Plant Quarantine, mostly due to decay, is shown in Fig. 2. Dealers are required by Plant Quarantine to sort out and abandon decayed fruit when they find more than 3% decay in a shipping load. The greatest amounts are abandoned in June and July. For example, 100,755 cartons (8.9% of the total imports) in June 1976, 355,906 cartons (5.7% of imports) in July 1977 were abandoned. Fortunately, it was only 2,988 cartons in May and 5,734 cartons in July 1979, mainly because SOPP (sodium o-phenylphenate) and TBZ (thiabendazole) were approved in April 1977 and August 1978, respectively. Decay after importation is much greater than during transport to Japan. Much more careful harvesting and handling are needed.

Other problems. EDB burn, fruit deformation, chilling injury and excess weight (moisture) loss remain to be resolved.

Good news. Custom duties will be decreased from 40% to 25% in December to May, and from 20% to 12% in June through November within 8 years, starting in April 1980.

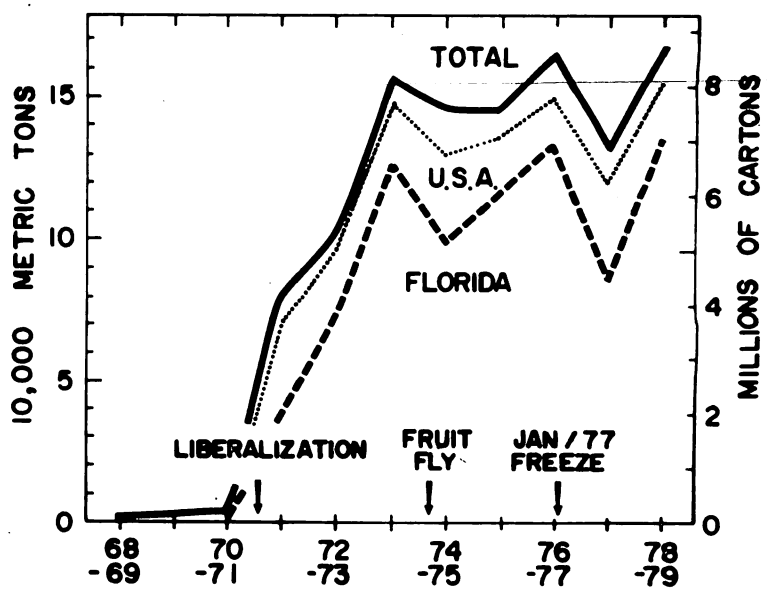

Fig. 1. Seasonal changes in Japanese imports of fresh grapefruit from Florida, USA and total world. Season August through July.

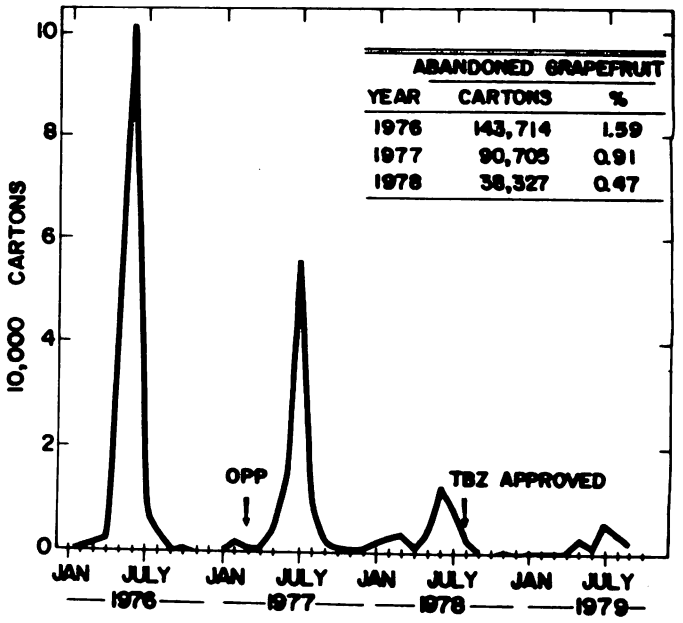

Fig. 2. Monthly grapefruit abandonment by the Plant Quarantine in Japan, 1976-1979.

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The above article and figures are a small part of a paper presented by Dr. Kitagawa in November 1979 at the Florida State Horticultural Society. The paper will be part of the Society Proceedings available next summer. The quickest and surest way to obtain the paper is to join the Society and receive the Proceedings (see available publications). Editor.

PRODUCE LABELING ACT OF 1979 PASSES IN FLORIDA

The "Produce Labeling Act of 1979" passed both the Florida Senate and House and was signed by the Governor of Florida. This Act which becomes effective in January 1980 permits growers and shippers to label fresh fruits and vegetables produced in Florida as products of Florida. It requires country of origin labeling on fresh fruits and vegetables grown outside the United States and sold in Florida. It prohibits retail vendors from willfully and knowingly removing such labels. It provides that the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services enforce the act and provides for penalties.

The PMA Report
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AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS

Available from Dr. W. Wardowski, AREC, P. O. Box 1088, Lake Alfred, FL 33850

"Florida citrus quality tests" and "Appendix I" by W. Wardowski, J. Soule, W. Grierson and G. Westbrook. Univ. of Fla. Ext. Bull. 188. June 1979.

"*International* pesticide tolerances for citrus" by S. Nagy and W. Wardowski. Florida Grower and Rancher 73(1):18-19. January 1980.

"Florida State Horticultural Society brochure and membership application".

Available from National Economics Division, Economics, Statistics and Cooperatives Service, U.S. Dept. of Agr., Washington, DC 20250

"Transportation fuel requirements in the food and fiber system" by J. A. Barton. U.S. Dept. of Agr., Agr. Econ. Rpt. No. 444. 1980.

Available from Mr. R. Clegg Hooks, Food & Resource Economics Dept., G-104 McCarty Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611

"Estimated costs of packing and selling fresh Florida citrus, 1977-78 season" by R. C. Hooks and R. L. Kilmer. Economic Information Rpt. 118. August 1979.

"Estimated costs of picking and hauling fresh Florida citrus, 1977-78 season" by R. C. Hooks, A. H. Spurlock and R. L. Kilmer. Economic Information Rpt. 109. March 1979.

"Estimated costs of processing, warehousing and selling Florida citrus products, 1977-78 season" by R. C. Hooks and R. L. Kilmer. Economic Information Rpt. 123. November 1979.

Available from Dr. Tom Camp, USDA-SEA, P. O. Box ED, College Station, TX 78596

"Evaluation of a refrigerated barge-on-ship system and loading patterns for postharvest quality of exported Texas grapefruit" by T. H. Camp and W. W. Carter. Journal Amer. Soc. Hort. Sci. 104(5):678-681. 1979.

Available from Dr. J. K. Dow, Food and Resource Economics Department, IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611

"Transportation of Florida perishables — problems and research needs" by J. K. Dow. Economic Information Rpt. 106. February 1979. 47 pages.

Available from Dr. Tom Kucharek, Plant Pathology Dept., HS & PP Bldg., University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611

"Greasy spot of citrus" by T. Kucharek and J. Whiteside. Plant Path. Fact Sheet 9 (undated).

This newsletter is published at a cost of $77.70 or 6 cents per copy, to give the latest news to the packinghouse industry.

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