



Clarification on the declaration of post-harvest treatments of citrus fruit for the UK

Rural Payments Agency (RPA) in the United Kingdom conduct inspections of imported citrus to evaluate compliance with the EU Citrus Marketing Regulation (EC/1221/2008). In letters dated 5th March 2015 and 15th June 2015 RPA indicated that greater emphasis would be placed on citrus entering the UK in 2015. Cutting Edge 195 in March 2015 addressed this notice. Furthermore RPA indicated the post-harvest declaration on Southern African citrus cartons needed to be more specific.

Citrus Growers Association (CGA) have engaged with RPA to learn about the concerns, resolve this matter and avoid the possibility of fruit being rejected on account of incorrect post-harvest labelling. The following considerations were presented to RPA:

- The large quantity of cartons that have already been printed with the standardized post-harvest treatment indications.
- That it is extremely difficult to amend the approach to labelling during the peak season.
- There are problems (logistics and operation) and significant costs associated if additional stickers are now required.

Regulation EC/1221/2008 itself has not changed since its adoption in 2008 so this is a new interpretation of the requirements. It was also confirmed that this issue is not a food safety or plant health matter, given that post-harvest treatments are indeed permitted.

CGA then made a request for RPA to permit cartons to be placed on the market that carry the existing post-harvest declarations to allow South Africa time to adjust to their new requirements.

RPA confirmed on 22nd June 2015 that they “... **are content that the South African industry can continue to use existing pre-printed packages without further alteration until the end of the South African citrus export season to the UK.**”

In the engagement CGA also undertook to investigate and to provide RPA with suitable alternative wording for their consideration, which if found to be acceptable would then become applicable in 2016.

Post-harvest labelling workshop

To this end CGA will be holding a workshop in July for citrus growers and exporters to determine the appropriate changes to the wording. This workshop will also consider the post-harvest declarations of all other markets given the impact any changes to the standard declaration might have for fruit destined for those markets. The dates of the meeting must still be determined but please RSVP to CGA (ph@cga.co.za) should you be interested in participating in this post-harvest labelling workshop. Further details of the workshop will be sent out when available.

Compiled by
Paul Hardman
Industry Affairs Manager: CGA