



CONSUMER ASSURANCE UPDATE

EU restrictions on the use of Single Use Plastics (SUPs)

From 1st January 2022 some countries in the EU will implement EU policy around the restriction of SUPs. Although citrus product may not be impacted as much by these developments as other commodities, packhouse managers and exporters are encouraged to become aware of these evolving requirements.

The EU regulatory environment on this topic is complex and is made more challenging by the fact that each EU member states could adopt different interpretation of the overall rules. France has initiated the ban of SUPs, with Spain to follow. This issue was raised at the Citrus Sustainability Forum in October, and later a dedicated meeting was called for key role-players in the EU where additional information was provided. The detailed points from these discussions have been summarized in a paper - which is available from CGA for those interested.

EU rules for labels on fruit

Stickers/labels used to brand individual fruit are also under scrutiny due to the associated new restrictions on SUPs. It is clear that stickers used in 2021 are unlikely to be compliant in 2022 in some EU countries. The focus from label suppliers now is to create labels that are home compostable (which biodegrade more rapidly at lower temperatures). CGA is talking to label suppliers but packhouse managers must engage with their label suppliers in this regard.

Potassium Sorbate as a packhouse sanitizer

The use of potassium sorbate as a sanitizer in citrus packing systems was brought to the attention of CGA. It is important to clarify the regulatory status of potassium sorbate used as sanitizer. CGA has engaged with various RSA regulatory bodies on the matter, and can provide the following summary:

- The appropriate authority for registering sanitizers is with the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS). It is understood products have been registered as such.
- Department of Health are aware of the NRCS registration and have confirmed that when used in accordance with that registration, they do not foresee issues.
- In terms of market acceptability there are two considerations:

- Most markets already recognize potassium sorbate as a food grade preservative and therefore the detection of residues is not considered a risk. For instance the EU permits the use of potassium sorbate in Regulation 1333, Codex Alimentarius regulates this preservative in food as part of the sorbate group, and in the United States the FDA have exempted potassium sorbate from requiring an MRL to be set.

The conclusion from this engagement with the regulators is that the use of potassium sorbate as a sanitizer would not contravene South African regulations, and fruit treated with the product will comply with the EU regulations and countries recognizing CODEX.

Italian post-harvest treatment declaration - Imazalil

Exporters have raised a concern about Italy requiring specific declarations where Imazalil has been used as a post-harvest treatment. This is a specific requirement for fruit intended for Italy and arises from Ministerial Decree 27/08/2004. Essentially all cartons must have the declaration "trattato con Imazalil – buccia non edibile". Translated this means "Treated with Imazalil - inedible peel".

CGA believe this requirement is in contradiction to other EU regulations dealing with the authorization of Plant Protection Products and the setting of Maximum Residue Levels and will be engaging with relevant parties to address this. Nevertheless, packhouse managers are advised to follow the requirements to avoid rejections in 2022.

Carbon Heroes

Confronting Climate Change (CCC) has announced the launch of a new carbon footprint label and website where B-graded license holders are recognised for meticulously calculating their carbon footprint. They are the Carbon Heroes of the South African Wine and Fruit Industry! This opportunity is presented free of charge and provides recognition to all farmers and businesses by being awarded with either a one year or three year label. Visit the website to learn more:

www.carbonheroes.co.za