

SGF/Meyed technical programme sets framework for Turkish juices

BY NEIL MURRAY

COLLABORATION between SGF, the German-based technical testing and accreditation organization, and Meyed, the Turkish fruit juice association, has resulted in the establishment of a database that will facilitate the testing of Turkish-produced fruit juices and nectars in the future.

The aim is to find out if the fruits growing in Turkey and the products made from them fit properly into the reference structure of the AIJN (the European fruit juice association) Code of Practice.

At a recent SGF technical seminar, which followed the IFU Congress in Istanbul, Dr Wilhelm Rietz outlined progress so far.

SGF and Meyed started the project last year, testing fruit juices at every stage of the production process from the raw material to the finished product. Juices monitored and tested were the most popular Turkish varieties: peach, apricot, sour cherry, apple and pomegranate. Turkish staff were specially trained for the initiative and training was carried out when the fruits were in season. The newly established database will provide a good tool for evaluation, Rietz told attendees.

It was considered important to cover all regions and factories, and equally important



Dr Wilhelm Rietz

to take the raw material samples in the correct way, and to differentiate between 'authentic' and 'non-authentic' samples.

Fruit coming into the production plants was tested, at the same time as the production line was checked to see that it was running in accordance with good manufacturing practice (GMP). Further samples were then taken at clearly defined stages in the production process.

Results so far seem to be very positive. On some fruit, deviations were found from the accepted norms on sodium levels – one sample of peach contained what Rietz described as “a huge amount” – but these were traced to the processing water used. Some minor deviations in potassium levels were detected, but they were not large enough to cause any concern.

There was a slight excess of sorbitol found in some apricot purée. This was a “real deviation” and is being submitted for further discussion. “If we find more high values, then we will have to make a commentary note in the reference guidelines for sorbitol content,” said Rietz.

SGF also checked several products for patulin. A few years ago there was a mycotoxin workshop and patulin was detected in high amounts in Turkish juices, in finished products. SGF naturally took this opportunity to check for patulin, and Rietz seemed satisfied, describing it as “not really such a problem”. SGF found some in pomegranate, though not at critical levels.

SGF intends to come back and see if the values noted are still being adhered to. Based on this authentic data, consumer products now have to be tested. The first tests carried out last year and the results are presently being discussed with Meyed.

USDA orange crop forecast unchanged

THE USDA has left its Florida orange forecast for the 2009-10 season unchanged at 131.6 million boxes. “It has been a good season for Florida citrus growers,” said Michael Sparks, chief executive of the growers organisation, of Florida Citrus Mutual. The all variety FCOJ yield was reduced to 1.55 gallons per box from 1.56 gallons/box. The Valencia yield decreased to 1.63 gallons/box from 1.65 gallons.

The Navel portion of the crop remains at 2.3 million boxes, and the harvest of the earlies, mid-seasons, Navels and Temples is complete. If realised, this crop will be 19% below the 2008/09 harvest but 5% bigger than that of 2006/07.

The Valencia row count survey shows that

the harvest is at 48%, and is approaching some six million boxes per week. Fruit size and droppage is consistent with earlier indications.

The grapefruit estimate has been increased by 800 000 boxes to 19.8 million boxes. Coloured grapefruit accounted for 500 000 boxes of the increase and white grapefruit for the remainder.

The row count survey shows that 96% of the coloured and 93% of the white grapefruit have been harvested. The estimated utilisation is nearly 19.6 million boxes up until 30 April.

The all-tangerine forecast has been raised by 400 000 boxes to 4.5 million boxes, with the increase all of the Honey variety.

Brazilian grape juices sales up

BY VLADIMIR PEKIC

NATURAL grape juice sales in Brazil have exploded in recent years and sizeable investments are now flowing in from the beverages industry.

Garibaldi Cooperative in Rio Grande do Sul announced it would invest BRL6.5 million (2.72 million) to boost grape juice production from 1.4 million to 4 million litres per year in 2010.

“Grape juice is the new big thing,” declared Henrique Benedetti, president of the Brazilian Wine Producers' Association (Uvibra).

Sales of simple (integral) grape juice increased nine-fold between 2002 and 2009 to 25.5 million litres, while sales of table juice retreated 2.3% to 222.1 million litres, reported daily *Valor Econômico*.

“Over the next five to ten years, grape juice sales could exceed table wine sales in Brazil,” said Benedetti.

Germans buy more Fairtrade fruit juices

GERMAN volume sales of Fairtrade fruit juice jumped by 32% last year to 5.875 million litres. Organic juices accounted for 4% of the total. Orange juice is still the dominant variety, but manufacturers are starting to broaden their portfolios to cater for a wider customer base. Austrian firm, Pfanter, for example, is offering a multivitamin juice drink and a mango juice drink in addition to its Fairtrade orange juice. German consumers also bought an additional 110 000 litres of lemonades and other soft drinks containing Fairtrade ingredients in 2009.