

FR*ui*TROP

English version

CLOSE-UP:
GRAPEFRUIT

Mediterranean citrus:
HLB, a new threat

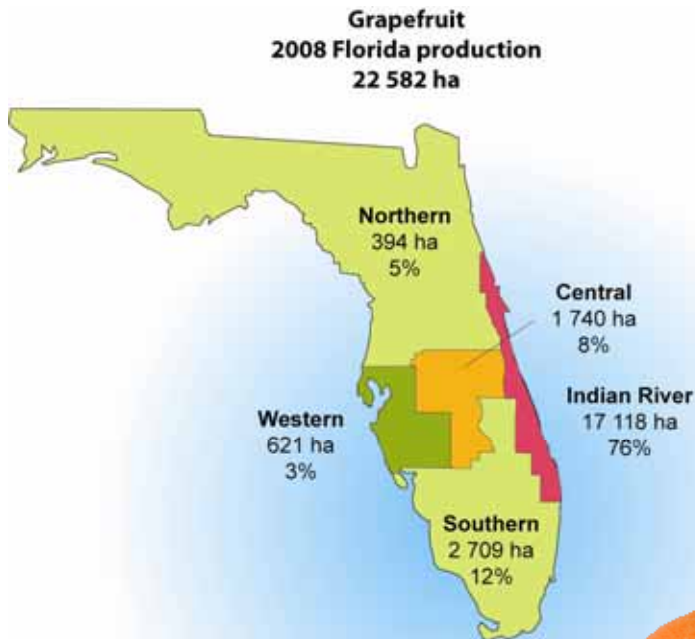
Sea freight: reefer market
heads for the rocks

<http://passionfruit.cirad.fr>



Florida grapefruit

No miracle

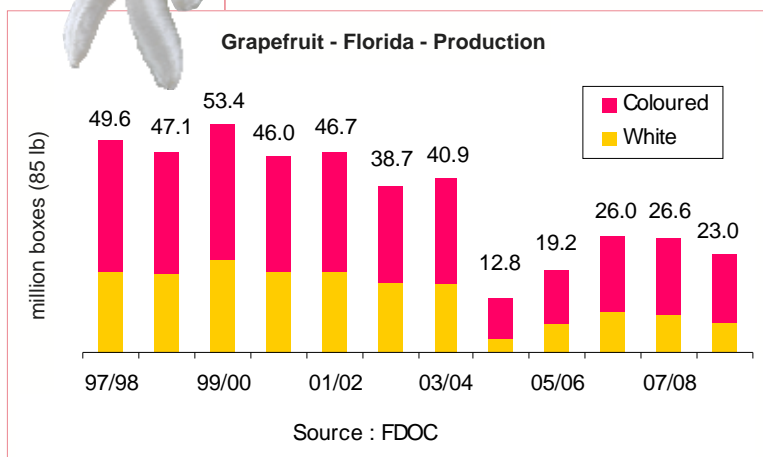


by decreasing profitability and citrus canker, the sector has a new, mortal, enemy with the appearance of greening (HLB), detected in 2005 in the south-east tip of Florida. This bacterial disease spreads very rapidly and is now present in all 38 counties of the state. It is an extremely serious threat as the symptoms are very serious for both trees and fruits. Loss of orchard profitability and then the death of the trees take place in a short, five-year period (see article below). In addition, monitoring of the disease is very difficult and its eradication even harder. The structure of Florida production does not help. Indeed, although plantations are of the commercial type, making monitoring easier, their closeness to or mingling with built-up areas expose the trees to contamination by domestic citrus plants and ornamental species (such as *Murraya* for example) that potentially harbour bacteria that are very difficult to control.

**Dwindling profitability—
not only
for growers**

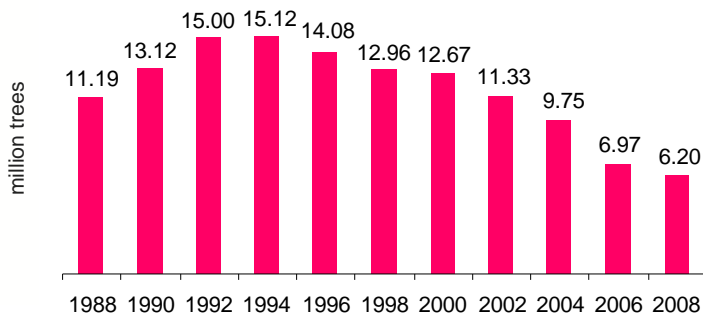
It is clear that there has been no miracle and Florida production has only very partially recovered from the hurricanes of 2004 and 2005. Previously some 1.5 million tonnes, the harvest has been less than a million tonnes in recent seasons when there has been no hurricane damage. This is a fall from 40 million to 25 million field boxes measured in the units used by professionals. However, FDOC forecasts indicate that the worst is to come and some analysts say that the survival of the sector is at risk. Already weakened

In addition, the economic aspects of control of the disease worsen a technical situation that is already very bad. Controlling greening is expensive, very expensive. In a recent



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Grapefruit - Florida - Planted areas

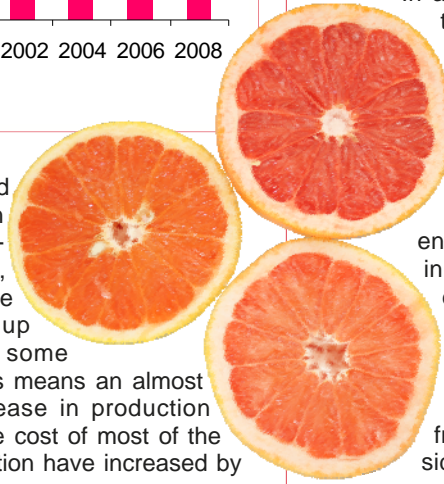


Source : FDOC

study, FDOC estimated extra costs involved in the bimonthly monitoring of plantations, chemical control of the vector and grubbing up and replanting to be some USD450 per acre. This means an almost unbearable 50% increase in production costs, especially as the cost of most of the other factors of production have increased by

30 to 50% and fertiliser prices have rocketed. According to a recent study, the prices of the four main fertilisers used in citrus growing have increased from USD 300-400 USD per tonne to USD550-650 and triple superphosphate costs more than USD1000. It is difficult for growers to believe in the future in a context of such a decrease in profitability while there is a risk of more hurricanes and real estate is still an interesting economic alternative.

In addition, profitability is dwindling in the downstream part of the sector, as passing the entire increase in cost prices further on down the line is increasingly difficult. This was demonstrated in the current season. Although the average selling price at the import stage was excellent, it was often not high enough to cover increased purchasing prices, especially as the euro-dollar exchange rate is less favourable than in preceding years. As a result, a number of importers wonder more than ever about the economic interest of trading in Florida fruits, especially as the risk is considerable as firm prices are paid. A



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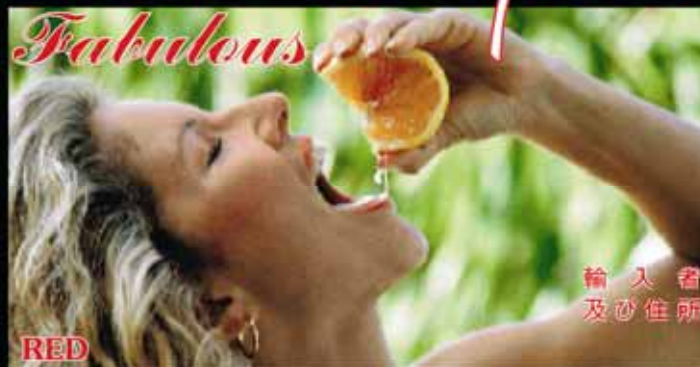
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Miles Import



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Votre partenaire en pomelos de Floride

FLORIDA



GRAPEFRUIT

