

MEDIA RELEASE

Citrus Australia Calls for Increased Testing of Imported Juice

Citrus Australia has called for the Australian Government to increase testing procedures on imported citrus juice, and consumers to look for safe, branded local products in the wake of a chemical residue scare in the U.S.

“The fungicide, called Carbendazim, which was identified in some imported fruit juices in the U.S. was withdrawn from use in the Australian citrus industry over two years ago,” said Judith Damiani, CEO of Citrus Australia.

The residue issue came to light when a major juice manufacturer wrote to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) saying that it had detected 35 parts per billion of the fungicide in its own orange juice as well as competitors' juice. Although that level is far below the mandated maximum residue level of 200 parts per billion, the alarm was raised because of the health issues that the fungicide poses. Attention centred on Brazilian juice because it accounts for almost one in every six glasses of orange juice consumed in the U.S.

On January 4 the FDA suspended all imports of foreign orange juice and began stringent testing for traces of Carbendazim.

“In Australia over 300,000 tonnes of oranges are imported every year in the form of cheap Brazilian orange juice concentrate. We call on the Australian Quarantine & Inspection Service to immediately increase testing of all imported citrus juice for chemicals banned in Australia.

“Australian Consumers can be confident about their fresh juice purchases if they buy from the chiller section of their local shop or supermarket, and look for juices that have the *Aussie Grown* logo or *Product of Australia* on their packaging,” said Ms. Damiani

The *Aussie Grown*, supported by *Australian Citrus Growers* logo indicates the endorsement of Citrus Australia, the peak industry body of the citrus sector in Australia. The logo cannot be bought and is designed to help consumers make an informed choice when buying Australian juices. Citrus Australia exists purely for the benefit of Australian farmers so its endorsement is not tarnished by any motive except to provide a retail edge to companies that support locally grown produce.

The following Australian juices proudly use the endorsement logo: Berri Australian Grown, Original Juice Black Label Orange Juice, Curlwaa Fresh Orange Juice and Nippy's Orange Juice.

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