Twelve-Year Evaluation of Citrus Tristeza Virus Tolerant Rootstocks Budded With Washington Navel Orange


ABSTRACT. Four citrus tristeza virus tolerant rootstocks budded with Washington navel orange were evaluated in Aguirre, Carabobo State, Venezuela. Yield results of 12 yr and development and quality parameters are presented. Volkamer lemon and Taiwanica orange showed the best results, but Swingle citrumelo and Troyer citrange should be considered as alternatives under these conditions.

Index words. Yield, fruit quality, elevation.

Currently the Venezuelan citrus culture is recuperating rapidly, from the great loss caused by the citrus tristeza virus (CTV). The need for CTV tolerant rootstocks made research on the behaviour of such rootstocks under our conditions necessary. Washington navel orange, is the second (most) important variety in Venezuela after Valencia orange. Navel orange represents approximately 15% of all citrus plants, in the country or approximately two million trees.

Since 1976, FUSAGRI has been evaluating the new rootstocks budded with the variety indicated for production behaviour, vegetative growth and fruit quality (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

Results are presented which show the most recent evaluations (7).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Characteristics of the location and climatic conditions were described previously (7).

The plants were 12 yr old with a spacing of 7m x 7m in a triangular pattern. A randomized complete block design with 3 replications and 6 plants per replication was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the average fruit yield of Washington navel between 1980 and 1988 on different rootstocks. Volkamer lemon and Taiwanica orange showed the highest average yield. However, Swingle citrumelo and Carrizo citrange had acceptable yields. These results were more evident based on number of fruits per plant in the last year. Taiwanica orange and Volkamer lemon induced the biggest canopy and they were the most efficient rootstocks. Assuming a price fruit of 1.25 Bs. (1 US$ = 40.00 Bs.) the income range was between 85,000 and 170,000 Bs./ha/yr. The cost of production was around 40,000 Bs./ha/yr.

Plants on Swingle citrumelo and Carrizo citrange had the lowest canopy volume, which suggests the possibility of reducing their spacing in the field.

The fruit quality was good on all the evaluated rootstocks (Table 2), and best on Taiwanica orange and Carrizo citrange.

The external fruit quality and the fruit diameter was acceptable on Volkamer lemon and Taiwanica orange (Table 2), but the latter had the thickest peel.

Volkamer lemon produced the largest fruit yield per plant (Table 2). The value of the fruit yield per hectare was excellent on all the different rootstocks.

In conclusion, Volkamer lemon and Taiwanica orange, were the best rootstock relative to production. Swingle citrumelo and Troyer citrange could be planted in higher density to prove the productivity per area. The fruit quality was acceptable.
TABLE 1
EVALUATION OF 12-YR-OLD WASHINGTON NAVEL ORANGES BUDDED TO TRISTEZA-TOLERANT ROOTSTOCKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rootstocks</th>
<th>Fruit yield (kg/plant)</th>
<th>No. of fruits/plant</th>
<th>Canopy volume (m^3)</th>
<th>kg fruit/m^3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volkamer lemon</td>
<td>113 a</td>
<td>800 a</td>
<td>37 bc</td>
<td>3 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwanica orange</td>
<td>93 ab</td>
<td>557 a</td>
<td>44 a</td>
<td>3 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swingle citrumelo</td>
<td>78 b</td>
<td>290 b</td>
<td>28 ed</td>
<td>2 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troyer citrange</td>
<td>71 b</td>
<td>292 b</td>
<td>23 d</td>
<td>3 a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Average 1980-88 (235 plants/ha)

Acknowledgments

We thank the Federación Nacional de Citricultores (FEDENACIT), Asociación de Industrias Procesadoras de Citricas (ASOIN-PROCI) and the Ministerio de Agricultura y Cria (M.A.C.), for the financial support which made this work possible.

LITERATURE CITED