

Mexican bug hits Texas citrus

Battle of the fruit fly continues

United Press International
AUSTIN — Texas citrus growers will lose the bulk of

their sales to California because of the discovery of three Mexican fruit flies in the Lower Rio

Grande Valley. Agriculture Commissioner Reagan Brown said Texas growers must fumigate citrus begin-

ning Saturday before it can be shipped to California, Florida or other citrus-growing states. "Having to treat citrus going

to California will certainly decrease sales in that state," Brown said.

He said California occupational safety and health requirements have placed supermarkets in an uneasy position for potential lawsuits, and several major store chains have said they will not carry fumigated fruit.

The Texas citrus must be treated with ethylene dibromide in order to prevent the spread of the Mexican fruit fly.

Brown said health food stores had increased their purchases of unfumigated Texas fruit significantly this season, but those sales also will stop with the new fumigation order.

Texas ordinarily sells about 20 percent of its citrus to California buyers, but Brown said shipments to California will be very low for the remainder of the season.

"With the freeze in Florida, there have been some new markets opening up for Texas growers, and these sales should take up some of the slack, but this is a hard blow to the growers in the valley," he said. "They have an exceptionally good crop this year."

Lack of equipment cause of crash?

United Press International
DALLAS — The Air Florida jet that crashed last week was among nearly 2,000 aircraft in which economic considerations have compromised safety, the Airline Passenger Association says.

David O. Stamey, managing director of the 110,000-member association based in Dallas, said Wednesday safety is being compromised on the jets through non-use of Airborne Vibration Monitor systems.

He said the systems alert flight crews to conditions that may precede engine failure.

The systems were required by a 1974 law, but almost all of the nation's 2,000 jets have avoided compliance because type certificate applications pre-date the regulation.

Aircraft pre-dating the law included the Air Florida Boeing 737 that crashed on

takeoff in the Potomac on Jan. 13, killing 79 people, Stamey said.

An FAA spokesman said late Wednesday he had not seen the association complaint.

Amid speculation about cause of last week's accident during a winter storm in Washington, D.C., Stamey said ice congestion is a cause of engine failure.

He said an AVM system alert flight crews to monitor engine failure and enable pilots to take precautionary measures.

Citing an alarming number of recent engine failures, particularly on wide-body jets, Stamey said the FAA is asking the FAA to take immediate action by issuing airworthiness directives quiring the use of AVM jet transport aircraft.

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