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AgEnt

HELPING SRI LANKA TO GROW!

AgEnt is a dynamic USAID funded private sector agro-enterprise development initiative successfully assisting companies and entrepreneurs with viable business/marketing plans to expand existing operations or start-up new ventures targeted at both domestic and export markets.

Issue No. 15 from AgEnt's business, production, processing and marketing information center.

POTENTIAL "HILL COUNTRY" HIGH VALUE EXPORT CROPS PRODUCTION TRIALLING AND TEST MARKETING WORKSHOP

30TH MARCH 1994, GRAND HOTEL NUWARA ELIYA

AgEnt's marketing/agro-processing division and Business Information Center has prepared this selected range of "up to date" trade magazine articles/price illustrations in support of the above workshop.

Prepared by:

Anthony Dalgleish - AgEnt
International Marketing/
Agro-Processing Advisor

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Potential "Hill Country" High Value Export Crops Production Trialling and Test Marketing Workshop

GRAND HOTEL, NUWARA ELIYA
9:30am : 4pm
Wednesday 30th March 1994

Background

AgEnt is a dynamic USAID funded private sector agro-enterprise initiative assisting many clients with viable business/marketing plans to expand existing operations or start-up new ventures targeted at both domestic and export markets.

In addition to the above advice/assistance program offered to clients at an individual level, AgEnt currently has in hand a large number of pro-active potential export crops trialling/test marketing programs throughout the country.

As AgEnt has now commenced crop trialling a number of high value export vegetable crops in the Nuwara Eliya region, this workshop represents the ideal opportunity for AgEnt to explain to growers/plantation companies/exporters the level of advice/ assistance which the project can offer the private agro-enterprise sector if the inhand crops trialling/export test marketing program proves successful.

The Workshop Will Be Led by a Leading International Specialist in High Value Export Vegetables

The key workshop speaker will be David Brandon who has spent 39 years in crop production, with the last 16 years devoted in the main to the "planning/ growing/harvesting/handling/cooling/packing/shipping/marketing" of fruit and vegetables targeted at selected European markets.

David Brandon will be supported by a line-up of other key speakers from the Sri Lankan exporter, horticulture research and development etc. sectors.

5th Floor, Deutsche Bank, P O Box 389, 86 Galle Road,
Colombo 3, Sri Lanka. Tel: 94-1-446447, 446420 Fax: 94-1-446428

Workshop Registration

Identities wishing to attend this important export production trialling/test marketing development workshop should notify in writing -

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AgEnt Project
5th Floor, Deutsche Bank
86 Galle Road, Colombo 3
Fax: 446428 Tel: 446447, 446420

by not later than Wednesday 23rd March 1994, and if they are a farmer/grower to indicate in their letter the size of their existing production unit and range of vegetables presently grown. If registration numbers exceed the seating capacity for this workshop, AgEnt will arrange to run this selfsame workshop again at a later date. Refreshments and light luncheon snack will be provided throughout the day.

INDEX

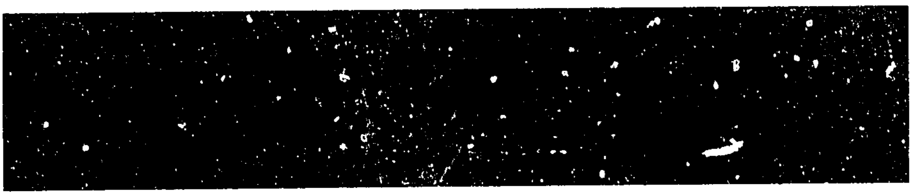
INTRODUCTION

AgEnt has selected/reproduced the material in this document for the following key reasons i.e. It illustrates to existing and potential Sri Lankan fresh and processed food product exporters -

A. How other countries with a similar integrated growing climate are "making it happen" with a wide range of high value export crops in particular; and the "highly competitive/price sensitive" nature of a number of other crop sectors.

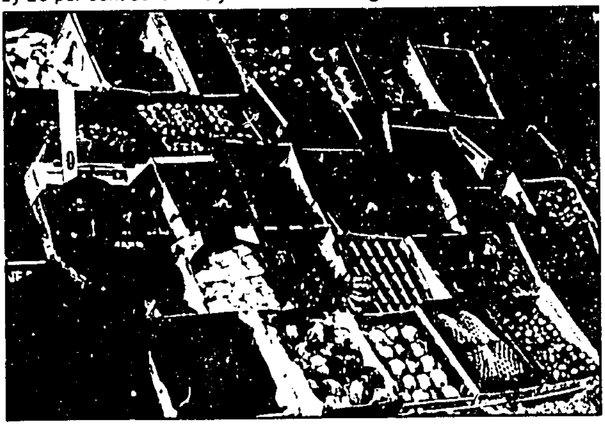
B. The typical information/data resource base which is available for "open review/study" by anyone visiting AgEnt's BIC/Business Information Center.

Agrexco has been one of the prime movers in introducing a host of exotics to the British market scene.



EXOTICS remain the fastest growing sector of the fresh produce market as consumers look to new products and are prepared to pay for them and try them, despite the recession. According to market research by AGB, sales of exotics have improved by 20 per cent so far this year and look set to perform even better once an economic upturn arrives.

Defining what is exotic is still difficult in view of the broader range of all produce on offer throughout the year. At the same time, many of the fruits and vegetables present challenges and risks to producers, importers and traders alike. Opportunities presented have been taken up, however. **Steve Woodhouse**, of Geest Tropical Produce, believes great potential exists to push the fun side of exotic lines: "Really we are talking about tropical lines which have excitement value, good nutritional and health benefits and more accessibility than ever before. As such, they are a growth area in fresh produce."



Ramesh Thakrar, of SMT, Western International, with a selection of up and coming exotics.

The biggest movers have been avocados and kiwifruit which have entered mainstream trading - the avocado still retaining promise but kiwifruit now in over production. Greater availability in these lines has brought volume on offer over 12 months of the year and an increasing number of suppliers. Prices in the High Street are now at very affordable levels and consumers have the opportunity to experiment with the fruit.

For other exotics this position has not yet been achieved, however. Rambutans, lychees and mangosteens are prime examples. While these are now available over a longer period than a decade ago, they are still not on offer throughout the year and, as a result, prices remain relatively high.

The price and novelty factor of exotics continues.

To an extent this can be addressed by new sources of supply coming into play to fill gaps in the supply calender. However, this is only part of the story. A reliance on air freight which is still the norm for many exotics is probably the biggest factor influencing costs at retail level. As Mr Woodhouse points out, transportation of product can account for up to 50 per cent of costs, so prices at point of sale have to justify export in the first place.

Bearing this in mind, sea freight of product has been more closely examined and the last decade has seen tremendous strides on the technology front. Avocados, for example, can now successfully be exported by sea which has increased volumes available, extended seasons, brought prices down and helped boost consumption. With papaya, this position has yet to be reached.

Nevertheless many in the trade question whether this is the answer to greater penetration of the market. Sea freight often means that a product has to be picked immature in order to survive the journey and eating quality is now important. New technology can therefore ensure that the product reaches its destination in good condition but may not be what is wanted.

Exotics often sell because they offer unique flavour and appearance. If these are being sacrificed to ensure availability of volume, greater uptake by the consumer looking for something special will not always follow.

Much research continues to be placed on improving sea freight quality out-turn and there have been many successes but it is not an option for all exotics.

On the plus side, pre-ripened fruit is now offered to consumers on a more frequent basis. Sales of avocados and mangoes, for example, have risen appreciably as a result, while pineapples and other fruit have benefited.

Probably the biggest factor influencing the success or failure of an exotic is promotion, however. As the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Information Bureau explains: "Promoting to the consumer clearly pays dividends as the growth in banana and mushroom consumption illustrates. The Banana Group's long running education campaign to position the banana as a healthy convenient snack has helped it

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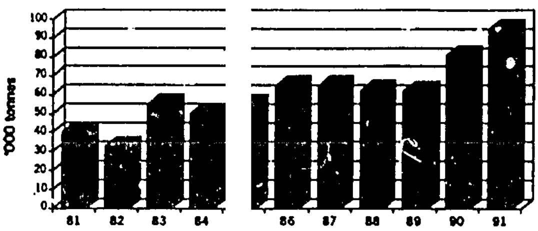
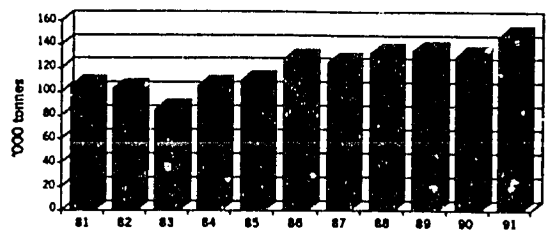
Total domestic consumption of speciality fruit and vegetables

SPE LITY FRUIT

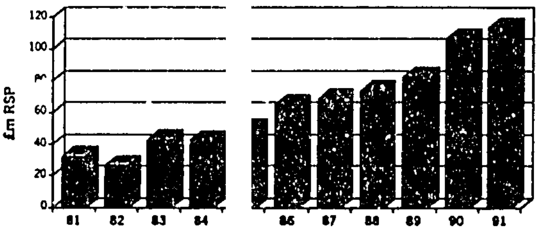


SPECIALITY VEGETABLES

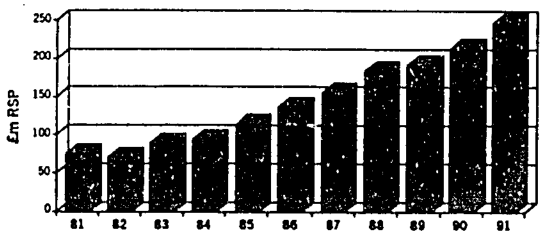


Total dome tic expenditure on speciality fruit and vegetables

SPE LITY FRUIT



SPECIALITY VEGETACLES



SOURCE: National Food Sur /FFVIB Estimates

(continued from page 8)

become Britain's second most popular fruit, after apples. The Mushroom Growers' Association, again with a sustained advertising and promotional campaign, has succeeded in almost doubling the UK's consumption of mushrooms since 1981."

If product promotion can achieve these results for mainstream commodities the opportunity to realise the same for exotics is apparent though the same results may not necessarily be achieved.

Exotics sell because they are seen as being fun and capture the imagination of consumers wishing to try something different - in part brought about by more widespread travel and adventurous eating habits. They can be striking in appearance and offer a new sensation in taste while also offering the possibility of providing novelty to guests at dinner parties. If the consumer doesn't know how to prepare an exotic and how to use it, he/she is unlikely to buy it, however.

Many marketing boards and progressive exporters have addressed this issue by producing recipe leaflets and organising in-store demonstrations and tastings. The result has often been increased sales and the consumer coming back for more.

Information on maturity and at which stage they should be eaten is of paramount importance in exotics which are usually brought to impress and can be a disaster if they fail expectations.

For example, in the early days of carambola's introduction product was all too frequently found on the retail shelf in a green condition which did little for sales. However, once riper and yellower fruit was provided, backed up by recipe leaflets, sales took on a new lease of life and, today, it is certainly one of the more successful exotics.

Speciality fruit and vegetables offer their challenges but can be very rewarding if tackled professionally and with the consumer in mind. Some will succeed and many may fail, but the mood of the fresh produce sector is one of looking 'or change.

'Exotics sell because they are seen as being fun and capture the imagination of consumers wishing to try something different'

MT, a family run business based n Western International and New ovent Garden markets, has grown) become a name synonymous ith exotics.

It has a range extending into undreds - with many falling in to the uly specialist category and, rough specialist importers and lose links with Rungis market, in aris, has been instrumental in troducing lines to the trade which otherwise might not have been seen.

It has not always been easy, however, as **Rodney Thakrar**, of SMT, Covent Garden, explains: "One of the biggest difficulties continues to be educating the buyer on what is available, how to prepare a product and then what to do with it. It is a slow and ongoing process which needs to be addressed time and time again and, in the early days, can cost money."

dney Thakrar, of SMT, Covent Garden, has seen mainstream exotic sales crease year on year.

While there can be no doubt that avocados, mangetout, passionfruit and the like have caught the imagination of the UK trade and have seen their sales performance improve year on year, for smaller volume lines market penetration has been a much slower business, he says. "Take guavas as a prime example. Interest over recent years has become keener but it is still a long way off being classed as a mainstream exotic. Lychees, mangosteen and rambutan are also growth areas but much still needs to be done on the promotion of these lines to boost consumption even further."

Another drawback lies in the maturity of product offered. He cites carambola: "In its early days it was frequently found on the retail shelf in its green form which, apart from being immature, did nothing to engender sales. However, once greater attention was placed on the provision of the right article with optimum eating quality, sales took off and it is now one of the up and coming exotics."

Its striking appearance has obviously helped sales potential along with greater availability from a number of sources of supply which have been supported by the introduction of recipe leaflets and the like. It is these factors combined which can determine the success or failure of a line, he says.

Pitahaya, for example, while intimidating yet interesting in appearance is only available on a sporadic basis, he adds. As a result, it is unlikely to experience significant market growth in the foreseeable future. He is more optimistic about others: "Pink pineapples are exceptionally sweet and offer promise for the future, while various passionfruit types are slowly but surely building market share. However, at the end of the day it comes down to promotion. Education on exotics can be likened to teaching a young child to read and write. If it doesn't take place a child grows up illiterate and in the case of exotics, if consumers are not told what to do with them or how to prepare them they seldom take up the taste challenge."

FOR SPECIALIST handler Peter Haddad Trading Ltd the market has seen many changes over the years, most notably the movement of product from the realms of the 'exotic' into mainstream trading. This has come about through greater availability and more sources of supply which, combined, have brought prices down to more affordable levels.

As a result lines such as mangetout, fine beans, babycorn and, on the fruit side, avocados, kiwifruit and mangoes, have now become a regular item on the more adventurous consumer's shopping list.

Nonetheless, managing director **Peter Haddad** believes further growth in the marketplace in being inhibited, in part, by the retail sector which, he says, pays far too much attention to price and shelf life rather than taste.

He explains: "Take mangoes as an example. Tremendous strides have been made with the sea freight of this fruit in recent years which in turn has increased volumes available, brought prices down and increased consumption. However, this has not necessarily resulted in mangoes with optimum eating quality finding their way onto the retail shelf. Repeat purchases may not therefore be forthcoming. Air freight, in comparison, is expensive but provides fruit with better sugar content because it has been allowed to mature longer on the tree.

"In time, with new technology coming forward in the sea freight sector, this issue will be addressed in full but we have not reached that position yet."

One of the reasons why exotics sell is because they are out of the ordinary - and frequently part of this is taste.

With this in mind, Peter Haddad Trading has extended its portfolio over the years ensuring its many new lines fit this requirement for flavour.

"We have had notable success with Charlotte potatoes which have a texture, firmness and taste of their own. More recently, we have looked at white asparagus which while traditionally preferred by the Continental consumer is increasingly being sought in Britain which is dominated by green."

Interest north of the Border

FOR GLASGOW based J Carmichael & Co Ltd exotics have grown from a sideline to the core of the company's business.

A family concern, run by **John Carmichael** and his two sons, **Stuart** and **Euan**, it has been one of the pioneers in introducing a full range of speciality lines to the Scottish trade.

John Carmichael explains: "In the early days our business focused on the supply of traditional lines such as cabbage, carrots and swedes. About eight years ago we identified a niche on the market for exotics, however, largely through more adventurous eating habits amongst consumers who have travelled more widely.

"We started in a small way with just a few lines but as business expanded we extended our range accordingly, to the extent that today we stock around 300 exotics and rank as one of the largest handlers in Scotland."

This growth in exotic sales, while increasing year on year, has not necessarily been easy, he adds: "Credit must be given to marketing boards and the like which have worked hard to promote specific exotics at retail level through in-store tastings and recipe leaflets while greater coverage on television has also helped to improve their position."

Nevertheless, he still believes more could be done by the trade as a whole. "It comes down to education at all levels. There is a need for greater awareness on the preparation and culinary usage of these exotic lines. Part and parcel of this is ensuring that the product is sold at the right stage of maturity in the first place, since an unripe product puts consumers off."

At J Carmichael & Co Ltd it is common practice to break packages of new lines down to allow buyers to purchase small quantities to enable them to assess their potential - a policy which has been very successful over the years.

Apart from growth in mainstream exotics, the company has also seen much interest in specialist lines over the last year or two. For example, the catering sector appears to be taking up salsify, mooli, celeriac, sweet potatoes, kohlrabi, ginger and flowering courgettes in a bigger way than ever before, reflecting more adventurous eating habits amongst consumers. Not all have been successful, however. "Take tamarillos and kiwano as prime examples", he says. "They may be striking in appearance but do not necessarily have the taste or flavour to make them special or attractive."

Pioneering work by Agrexco

THE SUCCESS of many exotics can in part be attributed to promotion, improved availability and information on preparation and culinary usage. The provision of well presented, good quality product on a reliable basis goes without saying.

One of the prime movers in successfully introducing a host of exotics to the British market scene is Agrexco. Much research and development has gone into assessing market requirements and how best to meet them.

Few would dispute that the company provided the initial impetus behind the high performance of avocados over the years. This has been repeated with sharonfruit, fresh herbs and a selection of fresh dates, to name just a few. Now Agrexco is turning its attention to the mango - a line which UK general manager, **Jake Lubinsky** believes has yet to reach its full potential in sales terms.

"Sales in the UK have increased year on year. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement. We need to educate the public on what is available and that the best coloured fruit doesn't necessarily mean the best eating quality.

"For example, mangoes come from all over the world and appear in many different shapes, sizes and colours. For premium quality, juiciness and flavour, however, the green Carmel Keitt takes a lot of beating."

This need for better product education at all levels plus a commitment to meet specific market needs is echoed by **Roger Manning**, of Inter-Trade, who adds that it is up to retailers to find out what the consumer likes and to interpret that into retail sales. "There is a graveyard of good exotics which have not been presented or promoted well in the condition in which the public can buy and enjoy them," he stresses. "It is not enough to operate simply on a point of 'difference.' They must fit into peoples' lifestyles.

"Nevertheless, Agrexco is actively researching into what is clearly required - thus moving toward breaking mystique and bringing product eventually into mainstream usage."

For juiciness and flavour, Agrexco believes the green Keitt variety takes a lot of beating.

Chileans target UK for cherimoya

CHILEAN growers and exporters of exotics look set to target the British market in a bigger way than ever before.

One of the pioneers behind this thrust is Agro-Industrial Peduegua Ltd which is exporting cherimoya to the UK for the first time this year, albeit initially in limited volumes.

The fruit, handled through its marketing arm, Troydene Ltd, is expected to fill a niche on the marketplace between July and late November.

Tony Churton, managing director of Troydene explains: "Chilean cherimoya used to be mainly grown in the Quillota region which traditionally comes on stream from October onwards, immediately before the start of Spanish supplies. However, in recent years a new area of production has come into the picture, in La Ligua, further north. Here, the microclimate is such that fruit comes into crop as early as July offering export opportunities for progressive growers, which, for the European market, is about eight weeks before the Spanish fruit is available.

"Peduegua, as an example of one of these, has invested around US$2m in new plantations and packhouse facilities to ensure that it is able to meet stringent UK requirements while, at the same time, is undertaking extensive market research."

Initial findings suggest that the Chilean product is larger than many UK multiples prefer, making the unit price quite high compared with cherimoya from other sources. Nonetheless, Mr Churton adds that in comparison the catering sector would rather go for larger individual fruit size since it is aware that a more mature product has better flavour - an aspect which is viewed by hoteliers as more important than shelf life. "If people are trying out these exotic lines for the first time it is important that the fruit is at the right stage of maturity. If not, repeat sales are threatened," he says.

While volume in this line is unlikely to be available in the foreseeable future, prospects still appear bright. There's a niche to be filled and a specialist interest amongst discerning sections of the population. To capitalise on this, Troydene anticipates launching a recipe leaflet next season with other promotional activity currently under discussion.

THE ADVENT of more sophisticated post harvest technology, particularly on the sea freight front, has been an important issue in the growth of exotics. It has enabled greater volumes to be moved, lowered prices across the board and has put the product within the reach of most consumers.

For Fruit Importers and Distributors International (Fidi) the use of new post harvest techniques has been an integral part in the development of the speciality market. This includes close monitoring of picking and maturity dates, packaging and presentation.

Development manager **Alistair Phillipson** explains: "Successful penetration of any product comes back to good market research and marketing. This means providing the right variety in the right size presented in the right format."

He cites the success of pre-ripened fruit at multiple level. Avocados and, more recently, mangoes have both enjoyed improved sales performance as a result of their introduction in this condition.

Fidi, meanwhile, has been instrumental in identifying and developing a niche for baby Queen pineapples and at the same time has seen significant growth in a host of 'exotic' melons - including sweeter and tastier strains which fit in better with today's tastes.

"Britain's consumers are far more demanding today then ever before when it comes to flavour and eating quality and our continuing work to provide top class fruit which matches their expectations is of great importance to us," he adds. "It is our aim to provide this type of quality at as competitive a price as possible - hence the great investment being made in improving the performance of sea freight for exotic type fruit."

The price of success?

MALET Azoulay has built its business on the reliable supply of mainstream exotics. Formed four years ago as the UK subsidiary of Malet Azoulay, Paris - well known for its extensive trade in large volume exotics such as avocados, mangoes and lychees - it has experienced growth annually through careful planning and programming.

Richard Wells explains: "Our success has come about through identifying volume exotics which show the most potential in the long term. It means finding the right product from the right supplier and supplying it in the right condition and package tailored to specific market requirements. This mirrors the way the trade has gone in recent years - with the multiples, for example, reducing their range to enable them to pay greater attention to each and every line offered. It is no longer their aim to provide the biggest selection but to do fewer and do them well."

A key part in this lies in the provision of exotics at the right stage of maturity - with more attention paid to eatability and flavour than shelf life. However, he adds that this must be backed by promotion to ensure that better knowledge of the product and culinary usage is gained

There are obstacles, however: "The problem with a product such as mangoes, for example is that the business is too fragmented. With the fruit coming from so many sources of supply there is little likelihood of a generic promotion, yet this is what is required to boost consumption," he says.

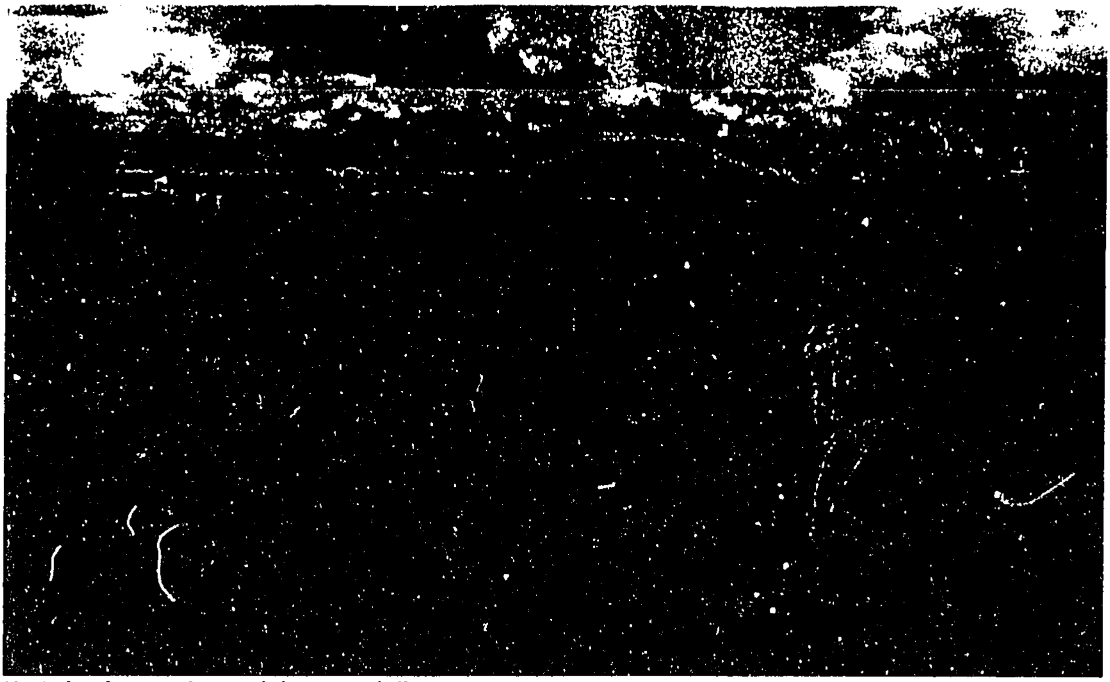
"On the other hand there have been occasions where former exotic lines have not just been successful in entering mainstream volume but have been followed at production level to the extent that they are now commodities.

"Probably the best example is kiwifruit, virtually unknown in Britain until the mid 1970s. Today its world output is massive and consumption increases have not matched output."

Perhaps the biggest challenge lies in bringing exotics in more cost effectively to ensure competitiveness. Mr Wells believes improving technology on the sea freight side - with better reefers and improved controlled atmosphere technology - will help substantially in coming years.

Africa's green shoots grow stronger

Vegetable exports have strengthened their export position



Horticultural exports from Zimbabwe rose to well over Z$200m in 1992

ESTABLISHED fresh produce importers in Europe are confident the boom in demand for a range of fresh fruit and vegetables from southern Africa is set to continue even in the face of a general downturn in economic activity across major markets in northern Europe. The combination of a wider availability of high quality produce at lower prices is helping to sustain growing levels of demand, they say.

"Import volumes and sales can increase", Bud Holland BV managing director Paul van Pelt told Eurofruit Magazine. "It is clear that there is a future on major European markets for produce of the correct quality and price. And since many of the products that are now sold in Europe are already well known, this relationship between price and quality is likely to be the best boost for an increase in sales and consumption".

Clear

If only on the basis of the number of leading fresh produce importers now involved, it is clear that the availability of high quality produce in southern Africa has increased significantly since the late 1980s. Eurostat figures bear out the anecdotal evidence: African countries have accounted for a large share of the rise in EC fresh vegetable imports from third countries as a whole, up from some 728,000 tonnes in 1988 to over 945,000 tonnes in 1991.

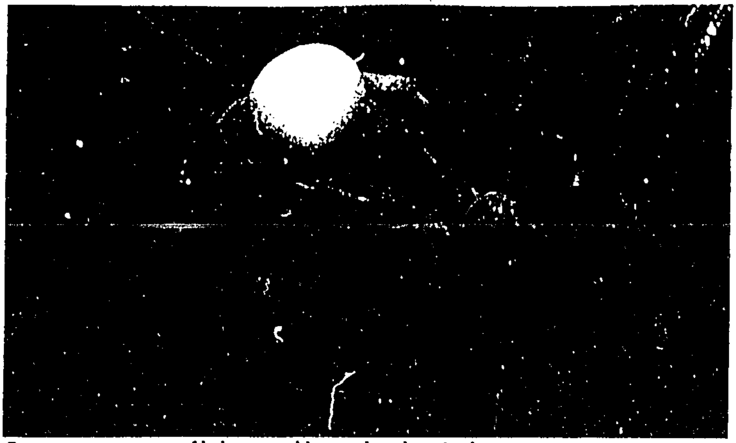
Zimbabwe, already among the top 10 fresh vegetable exporters to the EC in 1991, has seen an explosion in revenues from horticultural exports since development of the sector first started in the mid 1980s. Horticultural exports have grown from Z$3.1m in 1985 to well over Z$200m in 1992, according to ZimTrade, Zimbabwe's national trade development organisation.

Profit

Meanwhile, figures from the COLEACP, the European Liaison Committee for promotion of produce from ACP countries, show how ACP countries have profited from the increase in EC imports. For example, although total EC imports of French beans moved ahead only marginally, up from 34,600 tonnes in 1987 to 37,900 tonnes in 1991, the total share of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries increased sharply, up from 48 per cent (16,594 tonnes) in 1987 to just under 60 per cent (22,458 tonnes) in 1991.

"The market for French beans in the off-season between November and May is developing fast and the quality of the produce supplied has been a central factor in this development", says the Paris-based COLEACP. That these improvements in general product quality have been particularly focussed in southern Africa is a reflection of the far-reaching developments in production.

Indeed, expansion of production into new areas of southern Africa has helped the region consolidate and even expand upon existing marketing opportunities in Europe. New growing areas across southern Africa have been developed to push availability of fresh vegetables through December and January, largely at the expense of Central America which is likely to see its market position dented as a result, distributors say. UK importer Frumar told Eurofruit Magazine that it is now securing year-round supplies of mange-tout from Kenya. "Suppliers are becoming more successful at growing



Consumer awareness of baby vegetables needs to be raised

this product", senior marketing manager Simon Smith told Eurofruit Magazine.

Reputation

Fresh fruit and vegetable producers in southern Africa are enjoying a reputation for high quality produce which has given them a major competitive advantage in EC markets. "The success of African vegetables has a lot do with their high quality", confirmed Norbert Timme of Hamburg-based Trofi Tropenfruchtimport GmbH. "They have benefited from proper post-harvest handling, installation of new coldstores and refrigerated trucks for transportation as well as long-term planning of production". For example, substantial investment has been made in Zambia where large coldstorage facilities financed by the Zambian Export Growers Association (ZEGA) were completed at Lusaka airport earlier this year. Exporters already report quality improvements.

Yet the availability of air-freight is likely to be as much a determining factor in the development of exports from southern Africa as improvements in production techniques. "Availability of air-freight space is a major problem", Starfruit NV managing director Christian Decannière told Eurofruit Magazine. The Belgian importer, which generates 30 per cent its BFr1bn turnover from imports of produce from Africa, is only hopeful of increased availability in Belgium via Sabena. But freight rates in general seem disproportionately higher in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Kenya than from other parts of Africa.

Pace

More worryingly still, availability of air-freight space is unlikely to keep pace with expansion in production. Some are already warning of sudden expansion in mange-tout production in Zimbabwe in particular, where tobacco growers are continuing to diversify into cash-generating horticultural exports. Flowers, which tends to achieve higher returns than vegetables per cubic foot of air-freight space, have enjoyed a more rapid expansion in exports: Zimbabwe's Horticulture Promotion Council (HPC) is estimating flower exports of 6,000 tonnes in 1992-93, more than twice volumes shipped in 1989-90.

The prospects for an improvement in the availability of more air-freight space seem patchy. "Airlines are working very hard to offer sufficient space throughout the year", said Mr Timme, "and they are doing their best to charge rates which vegetables can stand". Indeed, air-freight rates from southern Africa can account for more than 50 per cent of the total product cost. Not surprisingly, some say it is likely that any new marketing opportunities could be determined by new airline links. And in these circumstances it seems that the continued emergence from isolation of South Africa leaves it perhaps best placed to profit.

Expand

The potential to expand demand in Europe is high, say leading European importers. Certainly, the year-round trade in high quality added-value products from Africa and a range of other sources has transfixed British supermarket chains in particular. In these circumstances, the European market is relatively underdeveloped. "There are opportunities to push up demand for products of this kind all over Europe", said Otto Reimers of FTK Holland BV. Some Continental European fresh produce importers are hoping to record large increases in sales: Dutch importer Hagé International BV is confident it can achieve "incredible" sales volumes this season to cope with new production from a number of projects it has in hand in Africa. Fresh produce imports from Africa already account for over 10 per cent of total turnover, Hagé said.

There is a general perception among importers that it will not require much effort to increase sales of a number of core products from Africa. The taste and quality of the produce guarantees them a future, they say. "There is tremendous potential", Nigel Pell of Geest Tropical Produce told Eurofruit Magazine. "But there is a need to increase consumer awareness for certain baby vegetables and légumes".

Opened

Parts of southern Europe would appear especially ripe for expansion where there is likely to be an opportunity to "piggy-back" new products into a market which has opened itself rapidly to imports. Italy, for example, has seen a more than threefold increase in its total vegetable imports in six years, up from 67,300 tonnes in 1987 to 211,600 in 1991. Sabrosa Italia, the Milan-based exotic fruit and vegetable importer, reports sharply increased activity since it was set up in 1990. "There is still space to market exotics", Roberto Merkowicz told Eurofruit Magazine. Although it is predominantly in fruit, Africa already accounts for 15 per cent of it total imports. ■

Fresh vegetable imports into the EC (in tonnes)

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Zambia	302	803	1,174	1,875	1,649
Zimbabwe	640	810	1,003	1,886	2,642
South Africa	7,479	6,239	4,903	7,234	12,229
Kenya	14,258	15,444	17,023	18,293	17,862

Source: Eurostat

Gerber's growth based in Southern Africa

Zambia, Zimbabwe and Kenya supply increasing volumes

York Farms first exported from Zambia five years ago

ONE of the world's largest marketers of processed food and drink is set to import increasing volumes of fresh fruit and vegetables from southern Africa and other major sources worldwide in the second year of a significant diversification from its core business.

Complement

Gerber Fresh Produce Ltd was set up two years ago to exploit sourcing opportunities for fresh fruit and vegetables which complement the existing operations of the parent company. Gerber Foods International already generates multi-million dollar sales from its food and drink manufacturing interests worldwide. It markets fruit drinks, canned and frozen foods and other products under private labels and its own brands "Sun Pride" and "Gerber Pride".

"Gerber Fresh Produce now has a handful of excellent supply sources in southern Africa", said Barry Fine, joint managing director with former Fyffes Group colleague Ken O'Sullivan. "The region is now the cornerstone of our supply base". The UK-based importer expects this year to import some 800 tonnes of fresh vegetables from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Kenya to distribute to major supermarket customers in Britain.

Increasing

Gerber Fresh Produce is also importing increasing volumes of citrus fruit from North Africa and South America as well as melons and other produce from France, Spain and many other sources worldwide. It is also looking closely at extending its supply base in Turkey and other parts of the eastern Mediterranean. It finished its first season of cherry imports from Turkey earlier this summer which were procured, packed and supplied from within their own facilities in Turkey.

Gerber Fresh Produce says it is in a position to take advantage of some of the existing market contacts that the parent company has via its network of offices abroad. Gerber Foods has food and drink manufacturing subsidiaries in France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey and Israel.

Success

"We have had some successes with imports of high quality fine vegetables from southern Africa", Mr Fine told Eurofruit Magazine. Gerber Fresh Produce imports a range of airfreighted produce from established producers in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Kenya. The spread of supply across three major countries allows it to extend the marketing season, vary the range of products and guarantee continuity of supplies. Although drought hit export volumes from Zimbabwe last season, its contacts in Zambia allowed it to maintain supplies at the right levels.

Capture

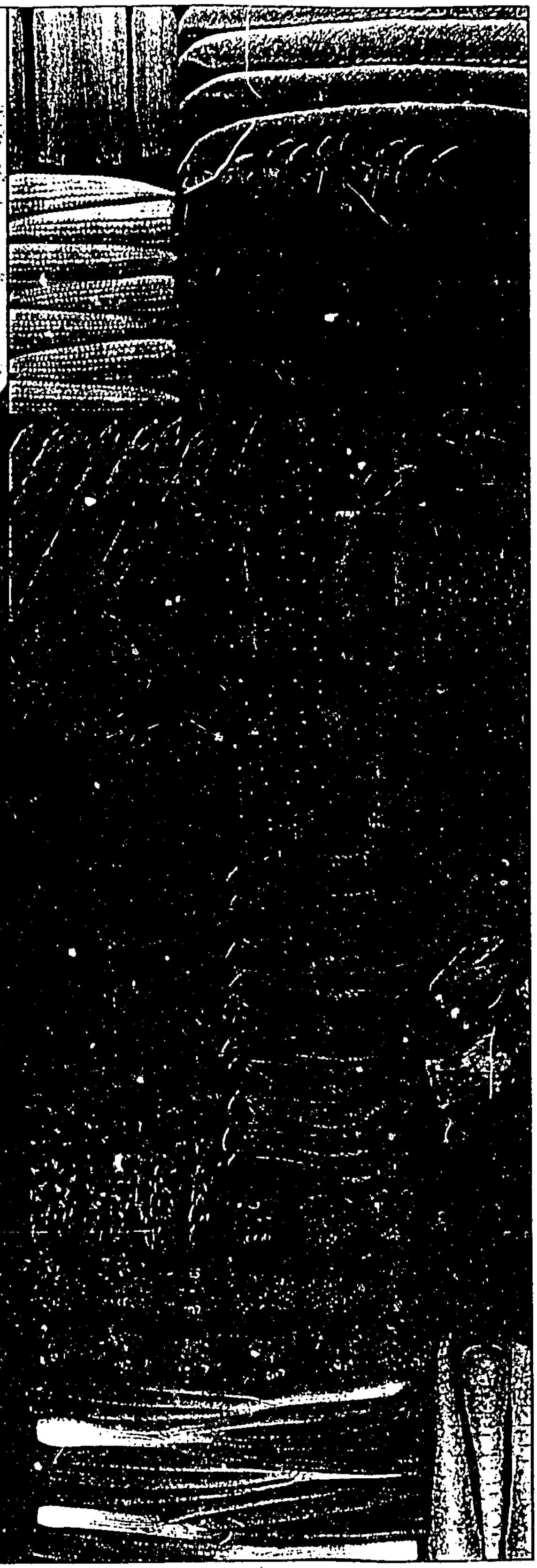
Last year's collapse of leading Zambian horticultural produce supplier Launa Farms let Gerber's supplier, Lusaka-based York Farms, capture a larger share of fresh produce exports. York Farms, set up over a decade ago, grows mange-tout, sugar snaps, babycorn, sweetcorn and roses over 4,800 acres on two farms. First exports to Europe were made five years ago.

Last year the company erected a new packing house with coldstores and rapid-cooling facilties while a new annexe was added for hand-trimming of sweetcorn and mange-tout. York Farms is starting to grow Jalapeno and Fresno chillies too. Pre-packing at source was also undertaken for the first time last season, Gerber Fresh Produce food technologist Duncan Roscoe told Eurofruit Magazine. Zambian fresh vegetable exports have been greatly assisted by the completion of new coldstorage facilities at Lusaka airport, financed by the Zambian Export Growers Association (ZEGA) of which York Farms is a member.

Position

Gerber Fresh Produce is seeking to increase volumes of vegetables from Zimbabwe and Kenya. In Zimbabwe, its supplier Sungro is expected to be in a position to provide first quantities of a new variety of fine bean to match UK supermarkets' exacting trim specifications. "In general Zimbabwe has not been able to match the size and quality of fine beans produced in Kenya", explained Mr Roscoe. "We are hopeful that the introduction of this new variety will change that".

In Kenya, Gerber Fresh Produce's sourcing operations are altogether on a larger scale, with several farms in the Nairobi area providing large volumes of fine beans in particular. ■



Packhouse grading of mangetout.

The African agenda

Straddled across the equator and with varying agro-ecological zones, Kenya has some of the most ideal conditions for year-round production of horticultural crops. But it also has more than its fair share of difficulties - transport, packaging and quality assurance systems all need urgent attention if lucrative European markets are to be kept sweet. Dr Henry Wainwright, senior lecturer in horticulture at Writtle College in Chelmsford, reports from Kenya while the Journal spoke to some of the UK's main importers.

WESTERN Europe is valuable to Kenya. In a country where the export of fresh horticultural produce is considered to be of national importance, it is perhaps not surprising to see that products and cropping programmes are being co-ordinated in such a way as to cash in on potentially lucrative marketing oppotunities in Europe.

Horticultural exports represent a source of valuable foreign exchange earnings and a means of enabling the economy to diversify away from traditional agricultural exports such as tea and coffee, the world prices of which have been depressed in recent years. In addition, in the local economy horticultural crops tend to be labour intensive - a thriving industry, therefore, is an important way of creating employment and generating income in the rural areas.

Kenya has successfully expanded its exports of fresh fruit and vegetables over recent years. Volumes have increased from 20,205 tonnes in 1982 to 38,155t in 1992. However, this has not been without some disappointments. Progress in the development of export markets was slowed down by the Gulf war which depressed exports in 1990-91 and a surge of exports of fresh pineapples in 1988 proved not to be sustainable in subsequent years. The export growth of cut flowers represents the most significant success story as exports over the last 10 years grew from just under 4,000t to over 19,000t.

Export crops range from fruits (avocados, passion fruit, mangoes) to French and Bobi beans and Asian vegetables such as okra, karella and chillies. Mangoes and avocados are only produced in sufficient quantities in limited seasons - between November and April for mangoes and April to September for avocados - and thi[illegible]s some opportunities for exporting into European markets when prices can be adventurous. However, for crops like French beans and okra, exports are year round with only minor seasonal fluctuations.

The UK has traditionally been the largest importer in the world of fresh horticultural produce from Kenya. In 1992, this represented just over 26 per cent of Kenya's exports by weight. However, the UK is of declining importance - as recently as 1986, the UK imported nigh on 45 per cent of all fresh horticultural exports from Kenya. The level of imports by the UK in weight terms has in fact remained relatively static over the last six years, but the increased level of imports by other countries, notably Holland and France, has led to the decline in the relative importance of the UK.

The growth in exports to Holland has been as a consequence of the dramatic rise in the production and air freight of cut flowers, whilst the rise in exports to France has been as a result of the adoption of sea transport technology which has allowed the export of large volumes of avocados.

To expand and even maintain its current market share is clearly the challenge of the next decade for Kenya. Competition from the rest of Africa (Zimbabwe and the Gambia, for example) and other world producers such as central and southern American countries represent a potentially serious threat to its market share. To complicate matters further, the market in Europe is becoming more competitive, the legislative requirements of the EU are changing and the specification for fresh produce and the quality assurances required by the multiples are becoming more demanding. Meeting these requirements is a huge challenge, particularly accessing the relevant information regarding EU standards, permitted pesticides, maximum residue levels and so on. Initially, this does not sound that complex, but when producers may be dealing with 10 commodities, exporting to 10 different European destinations all with different regulations and a mixture of languages, then the problem of information and current rules is magnified.

The ability to establish and maintain quality assurance procedures with such a wide producer base as Kenya's (there are as many as 20,000 small scale growers of French beans, for example) with differing production techniques and in areas with no immediate access to pre-cooling facilities, has presented real challenges to exporters and the Horticultural Crops Development Authority (HCDA). A series of training courses has been run to improve the technical knowledge of personnel in both the public and private sector on post-harvest handling and seminars on sea transport have also been organised, funded by the Ministry of Overseas Development (UK) and implemented by the Natural Resources Institute (NRI) and more recently by Writtle College in Chelmsford. The introduction of sea transport technology has been the key to the success in expanding avocado exports and having established sea transport technology for one crop, the extension of this technology to other crops is more realistic.

Again in a bid to keep Kenya's industry competitive, the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya (FPEAK) has been reviewed (with USAID assistance) and is now an active organisation in promoting general awareness of the need for quality assurance and channelling information to exporters and producers.

Furthermore, a quality assurance procedures manual is currently being prepared by the NRI in collaboration with the Kenyan produce industry with the requirements of the European markets in mind.

A group of Kenyans being trained in the different types of packaging available.

Kenya: what the importers say

DURING his recent visit to the UK, the **Hon Simeon Nyache MP**, Kenya's minister of agriculture, spoke of the urgent need for improvements to be made to his country's transport and produce packaging sectors. His views are echoed by the UK importers the *Journal* interviewed.

The cost of air freight is the real drawback and, say importers, it is vital that rates drop if Kenya is to remain competitive. Agricultural attaché at the Kenya High Commission, **Joshua Kiptoon** commented: "Kenya faces stiff competition from countries which produce similar produce as ourselves, from those who are nearer to European markets and from those served by a larger number of airlines and ships whose total cost of freighting is definitely lower than ours."

Martin Hudson of Geest Tropical believes the best way of compensating to a degree for the high cost of air freight (it can account for more than 60 per cent of the value of the produce) and making Kenyan produce more competitive, is to add value at source. But, although Geest's suppliers, Home Grown Kenya, prepack and label product, Mr Hudson is adamant that rates will have to come down eventually as exports rely on air freight: "A lot of the lines are too perishable to send by ship," he said. **Verity Broad** of Constantia believes shipping to be the only viable option for heavy produce like avocados and mangoes, however, and forecasts a better service by sea this season.

The Kenya High Commission says that the price of jet fuel was reduced by nearly seven per cent in the middle of 1993 in order to make Kenyan imports cheaper, but, as Mr Nyache pointed out, this fall has yet to be seen in the form of lower freight rates.

As if the expense were not enough, Nairobi airport can be somewhat chaotic - there are no facilities for cold storage there and delays are commonplace, said one trade source. Home Grown Kenya is one of the few export companies to have its own airport facilities: "It was the first to invest in a purpose-built cold store for produce at the airport, so even if there are delays it is not a problem. Geest Tropical has also just invested in facilities at Heathrow so that produce is back in the cold chain very soon after arrival in the UK.'

Access to the airport is getting better. According to Mr Kiptoon, 'all-weather' roads linking the producing areas with the airport and the port at Mombasa have either been built or improved in the last few years and most exporters now use refrigerated trucks: "There are advanced plans to increase their number, coupled with cold storage improvements which will help maintain and improve the quality of produce for export," he said.

Also on the upside is the fact that major airlines fly in and out of Kenya on a daily basis to serve the tourist trade. The ability to offer a daily supply of produce to the UK multiples is a key advantage which Kenya has over many other African states, says Mr Hudson.

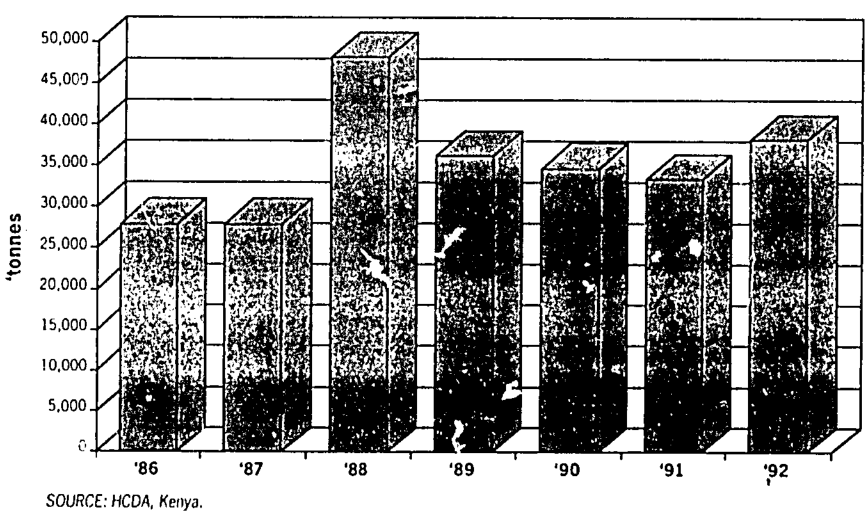
Packaging, at least of product for the wholesale markets, comes in for criticism. Mr Kiptoon's comments reflect the views of many: "At the moment, Kenya's fresh produce is exported and displayed in not too attractive packaging materials." **Avnish Malde** of Wealmoor is more forthright - it is no better than it was 20 years ago, he says. Kinder words come from Constantia, however - Ms Broad praises developments in the packaging of passion fruit which is now exported in an all-white flat tray and of avocados where stronger boxes are now used.

However attractively packaged and well transported, though, Kenyan produce is still changing hands for low money in the UK. This, many believe, is the reason behind the drop-off in sendings to this country reported by the HCDA: "Prices are particularly low for fine beans. On the continent, prices are far better and sendings there are probably on the up. Nobody can make money on four pounds a box, can they?" says Ms Broad.

Mr Malde sees Kenya's problems on a more general scale: "Kenyan growers and exporters need a more collective voice. In Zimbabwe they have come together and have a united front to present to the government. Kenya should be ahead of the rest of Africa by a long way, but Zimbabwe and the Gambia are catching up.

"I think that the industry has woken up over the past two or three years, though, and it is taking note of legislation in the UK and Europe. Things are changing rapidly, but unless they continue to do so, the Kenyans will find they will lose out even more to the competition."

Exports of fruit and vegetables (tonnes) from Kenya 1986-92



SOURCE: HCDA, Kenya.

Exports of fruit and vegetables have risen from 20,205t in 1982 to over 38,000t in 1992. The increase in 1988 was due to a surge in pineapple exports, but this later proved to be unsustainable.

Principal destinations of Kenyan produce (including cut flowers) in 1992 (tonnes) was as follows:

UK	-	**15,299**
Holland	-	**14,479**
France	-	**11,336**
Germany	-	**4,920**

Exports to the UK represent 26.7 per cent of Kenya's total, Holland 25.4 per cent and France 19.8 per cent.

French beans are the principal line. In 1992, Kenya exported just under 4,900t to the UK. This compares with 1,200t of okra, 460t of avocados, 176t of mangoes and 235t of passion fruit.

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The produce revolution continues

ZIMBABWE'S independence in 1980 left the legacy of a relatively poor horticultural export industry. In former years tobacco, sugar, tea, coffee and cattle were the main breadwinners, for the former Rhodesia. But the last decade has seen a revolution in the fresh produce sector, which is now the fastest growing industry in Zimbabwe.

Commercial growers have come into their own and, through links with established importers in the UK and the rest of Europe, have invested heavily in top notch post harvest facilities to meet the needs of the 90s at every level. This has been tied to the provision of high value lines, targeted at specific windows in the supply calendar.

On the distribution side, Zimbabwe boasts a good infrastructure of multi-lane highways - which many believe to be the best in Africa. Air freight availability, once the biggest constraint to export development, has now been addressed with more airlines than ever before serving Harare, Zimbabwe's main airport.

Zimbabwe's produce export situation has moved into another gear following the completion of efficiently run cold room facilities at Harare airport - a major change from the single store in operation prior to independence.

Physically, the country is landlocked by Botswana to the west, South Africa to the south, Mozambique to the east and Zambia to the north - so the need to develop a thriving air freight trade (with prepacks very much to the fore to offset the high costs involved), has been of paramount importance.

So how has this been achieved and which crops have been identified as potential winners on the markets of Europe?

Zimbabwe, like its neighbour, South Africa, is well placed to provide a wide range of fruit, vegetables and exotics over an extended period of supply so, in theory, export potential is huge. In practice, this has not come about, however, largely since air freight costs have frequently been prohibitive - meaning only high value products are a feasible proposition, and only those targeted at specific windows in the supply calendar.

For example, nectarines, peaches and plums, available during the October to November period, have been hugely successful, filling niches on the market prior to the start of South African supplies.

Passionfruit is also seen as potentially appealing and the last decade has seen extensive plantings going in. However, the mid to late 80s saw a temporary setback to growth. Heavy competition from Kenya, combined with a collapse in market prices, resulted in some growers grubbing the crop and moving back to tobacco. Since then more cohesive marketing, an identified need for the product at specific times of the year plus the growth of the processing sector for product which isn't of exportable quality, has seen a resurgence of interest and plantings.

Growers aren't resting on their laurels, however. Keen to expand their fruit basket even further, other high value lines are currently being assessed for their export potential.

Frank Millar of MVM Zimbabwe (for which Sunfresh Produce acts as UK marketing agent) explains: "Our aim is to develop a wider range of produce for the markets of Europe, and in particular the UK, riding on the back of successes we have achieved to date. For example, much experimental work is being carried out on the feasibility of air freight provision for raspberries and blueberries - these crops identified as offering opportunities for the future."

Alan Crockford of Sunfresh Producebelieves Zimbabwe is moving in the right direction and MVM now represents a very high quality supplier backed by the infrastructure needed to ensure placement within outlets of every type within the current UK retailing framework.

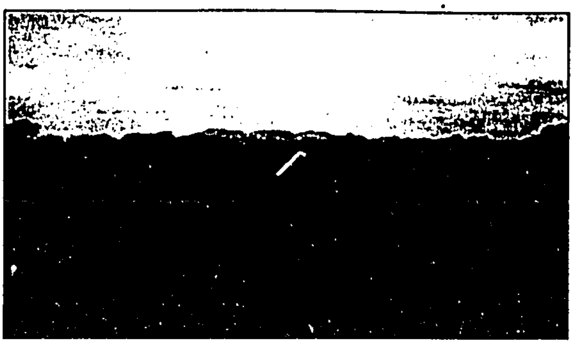
One of the most successful lines to have carved out a place for itself, so far, is mangetout - based on availability during the March to November period.

Gordon Burr, of Fruit and Vegetable Growers Co-op Ltd (FAVCO), one of the largest fresh produce set-ups in Zimbabwe, comprising 70 grower members, explains: "Zimbabwean mangetout exports have risen year on year and have increasingly attracted a following, despite widespread competition from Kenya and Guatemala.

"At FAVCO, for example, we expect to export in excess of 1,000t of produce this year, of which mangetout will form an important component of the total marketing mix."

More recently sugarsnap peas have been showing a similar growth pattern. Mr Burr suggests this line could eventually parallel mangetout

(continued overleaf)



While the 1992 drought adversely affected exports of mangetout, the current season looks promising. According to Sunfresh, growing conditions have been good, including plenty of rainfall, and, as a result, good availability throughout the season is expected.

Untapped export potential

MALET Azoulay, the Spalding based importer specialising in a comprehensive range of tropical products, believes Zimbabwe has considerable potential to further expand its exports of high quality fruit and vegetables to Britain and Europe, based on the expertise in growing, grading, packing and shipping which has evolved there over the years.

Quality provision from Malet Azoulay has come about through its close links with Chris Kay of Chiparawe Farms, one of the largest independent growers/exporters based at Marondera in central Zimbabwe.

"We first started developing our Zimbabwean portfolio in 1988 and, over the years, we have seen significant growth in mainstream lines. Seasons are getting longer and this has been backed by improvements on the quality front, strengthened further by heavy investment by our supplier in the right facilities, including hydro cooling, chilled loading areas, etc," explains Malet Azoulay's Phil Smith.

As such, the company is now able to provide its discerning customer base with quality product over an extended season - mangetout, sugarsnap peas, chillies, passionfruit and, more recently, babycorn - all having carved out niches for themselves on British retail shelves.

"A high percentage of our product is required to be selected and prepacked at source for the multiple sector. Quality requirements are very high indeed," he explains. "Nonetheless Chiparawe Farms has risen to this challenge," he says.

"Prepacking at source has led to better control on quality and costs and has seen much expansion over the years, while the adoption of due diligence procedures at Chiparawe Farms, made easier as a single producer/exporter, provides good opportunities for further growth.

"This attention to detail and the meeting of specific market requirements have led to Malet Azoulay being the base for [illegible] company [illegible] clients."

Malet Azoulay is also [illegible] longer term projects for certain tropical tree crops, with sea freighting from Beira looking more of a reality for the future.

As Mr Smith adds: "Zimbabwe has come a long way in recent years and both volume on offer and quality provision have increased 10 fold on that of a decade ago. The potential is there for Zimbabwe to become a major player in the supply of fresh produce and, through our strong links with Chris Kay, I believe we will [illegible] part of this expansion."

Innovative pa[illegible] continues...

[illegible]

[illegible] exports, having clearly identified specific niches on the marketplace.

The story started back in 1984 when growers Jeffrey Perlman and Peter Howson, the prime movers behind Hortico's development, visited the UK to assess its potential for Zimbabwean produce. A working relationship with Saphir was set up - particularly on the technical side - a move which proved beneficial to both organisations.

Initially mangetout formed the backbone of exports but, following rapid expansion of packhouse and cold storage facilities there, Hortico expanded its portfolio on its 1,000 hectares of prime land [illegible] take up to [illegible] from first trials to produce being shipped abroad.

"Hortico's stated aim and ultimate goal is to dominate the fine vegetable range in the flagship stores of major supermarkets and this policy has enabled it to penetrate the toughest markets and achieve a continuous demand for its products while at the same time maximising the resources available."

With this background, it comes as no surprise to find that there have been many successes on the British market.

Runner beans are a case in point. As Mr Melneck points [illegible] around 20 tonnes of the product weekly.

Baby vegetables, including leeks, carrots, courgettes and parsnips, have also made impressive progress and, more recently, so have roses on the flower front.

Full potential has yet to be reached, however. "There is still a lot of room for further development out of Zimbabwe," says Mr Melneck. "If we achieve the right technical back up and combine this with the co-operation of growers I believe we can successfully target specific windows in the marketplace with more high quality lines in the future."

(continued from overleaf)

volume - particularly with the multiples and caterers taking the product on board in a big way.

Others are waiting in the wings: asparagus, courgettes, beans - both French and runner - and an expanding range of baby vegetables have also seen increases in terms of export levels, a trend which many believe will continue for some time to come.

Not all export initiatives have been successful, however. Three or four years ago growers trialled air freight sweetcorn during the November to April period and, while there was a niche to be filled at that time, the high flight costs didn't make it economically viable for many of the growers involved with the crop. More specialist babycorn is now being trialled and early responses have been very encouraging, however.

Air freight honeydew melons and mangoes couldn't pay their way, either. But as Mr Burr adds, both products still offer opportunities if a successful sea freight trade can be developed. While this is still very much in its infancy, the potential is certainly there and Zimbabwe, through improved sea freight links,

(continued on page 16)

[illegible]

[illegible] Survey [illegible] Zimbabwe [illegible] exotic and out of season lines.

Constantia first became involved with Zimbabwe three years ago and since then has seen its sales of mangetout from this source increase year on year – the season complementing Guatemalan availability and providing the company with quality product on a year round basis.

Managing director Verity Broad explains: "We identified Zimbabwe as a potential supplier back in 1990 and, through close links with our suppliers, have built up a steady following for the product in the markets of Britain and elsewhere."

This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that this season Constantia expects to market in excess of 150,000 cartons of Zimbabwean mangetout in the UK and on the Continent – a significant increase on 1990's 29,000 carton figure and almost double last year's sales of 72,000. Of this around 80 per cent is marketed under the Sun Valley marque [illegible]

Mangetout is not the only line to have been identified as filling an important niche however. [illegible] have also [illegible] a high degree [illegible] volumes having [illegible] 8,400 cartons in 1990 to around 11,500 last season and similar levels [illegible] year.

[illegible] from Sun Valley, a group of experienced growers situated predominantly in the Enterprise Valley comprising prime agricultural land some 20/30 kilometres east of Harare. Links with growers further afield have also been established.

"Our growers, and in particular those involved with Sun Valley, are intent on supplying only a top grade product and their consistency in this respect has earned the brand name an excellent reputation and a loyal client base among wholesalers and [illegible]

[illegible] facilities by the country's progressive growers and [illegible] European [illegible] problems.

(continued from page 14)

via Beira, could yet enjoy the sort of growth that South Africa has displayed in recent years.

One of the most significant developments in Zimbabwe lies with citrus. Many believe there could be great promise for future growth through the opening up of new production areas and the uptake of newer varieties which have the potential to really boost exports.

Citrus production in Zimbabwe is not new. A lot of fruit has traditionally been produced in the hot and dry Lowveld, close to the South African border. The more recent plantings in the Highveld areas appear more promising, however - with satsumas, clementines, Washington Navels, Minneolas, Navels and Valenci[a] Lates identified as potential winner[s].

This year could well see toke[n] quantities of Zimbabwean citru[s] arriving on the British and Europea[n] markets though realistic volume[s] are unlikely to be available unt[il] about 1995. By then, grov[e] establishment programmes ar[e] expected to be well in hand.

Zimbabwe's citrus growers hav[e] one great advantage in their favou[r] which many believe should b[e] capitalised on. Climatic condition[s] there enable them to produce frui[t] as early as April - in effect enablin[g] supplies to fill a niche in the marke[t]place before South Africa[n] availability comes fully on stream, i[n] June, and during the tail end of th[e] Israeli season.

Frank Millar, of MVM, keen to develop a wider range of produce targeted specifically at the markets of Europe.

For London based importer, Janic, citrus has certainly proved to be a growth area though true potential on the export front has yet to be fully realised, believes managing director **Terry Watts**: "We first became involved with Zimbabwean citrus, through an exclusive marketing arrangement with Oceanic Fruits, about six years ago. Since then we have seen sales expansion year on year - 1992 being the exception as a result of the drought and a 30 per cent reduction in sendings. Nonetheless, we believe that further growth is achievable - growers there expanding their varietal portfolio to meet European market needs through the development of newer areas of supply."

This is being backed by heavy investment in new packing and processing facilities by the country's progressive growers which will ultimately mean the total crop can be marketed quickly and effectively.

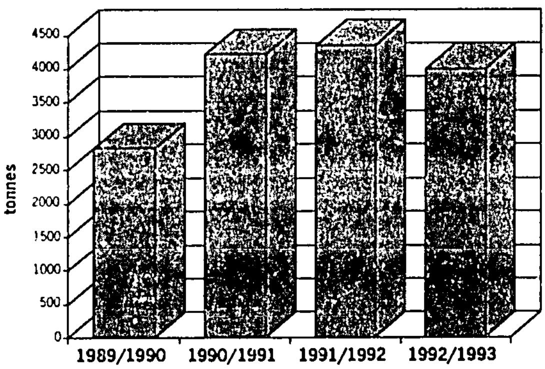
Plans to extend existing facilities at Beira will also help in sea freight developments - particularly since virtually all citrus exported is currently sent via South African ports.

Fruit and vegetables apart, Zimbabwean growers are also developing their flower business. Exports have increased at a dramatic pace over the last couple of years and growers have moved away from traditional crops, such as chrysanthemums and asters, to long stemmed roses - a decision which has certainly proved lucrative to date, especially on the Dutch market.

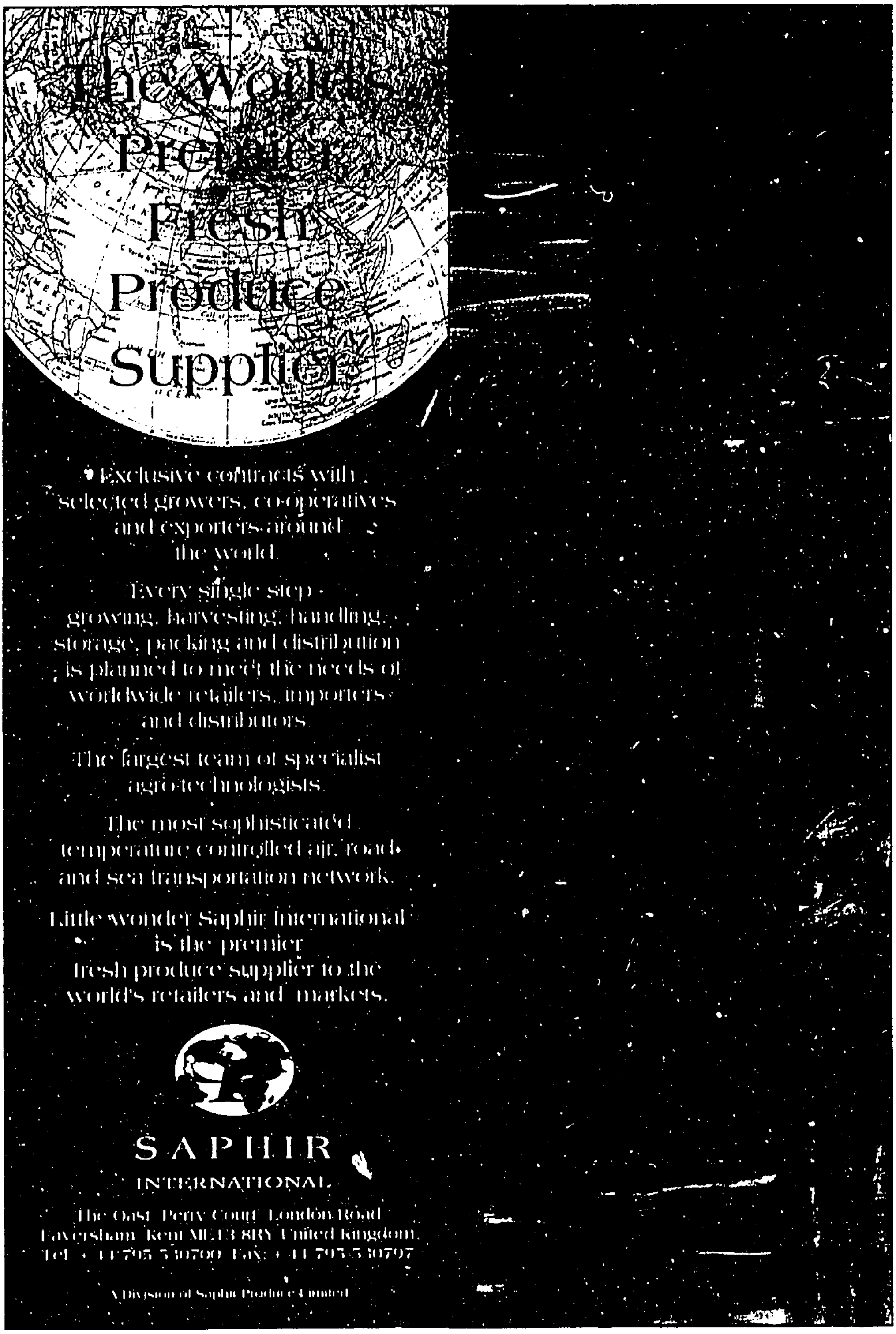
Instrumental in the development of new export markets, whether for fruit, vegetables or flowers, has been the Horticultural Development Council. This is a body funded by levies and membership subscriptions, which was set up in 1989 to promote Zimbabwean produce abroad.

Its role has been highly successful in setting up the export retention scheme and is now looking to increase research into new crops, plus improving facilities at the airport, quality schemes and generally moving to put Zimbabwean produce on the international supply calendar more effectively.

Zimbabwean produce exports 1989-93



Sunfresh product being packed at the MVM packhouse.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India is the largest grape producer in the world, yet its potential to become a regular source of grape is still to be fully realised. However, importers are excited about the possibilities the country offers as its infrastructure gradually improves in order to meet the demands of the UK buyers. Benefiting from a wide range of climates and with grape grown from Rajasthan in the north down to Tamil Nadu in the south, India could extend its season considerably - are we seeing the beginnings of a new Chile? Tessa Fox talked to two importers currently backing the sub-continent.

FOR EUROPEANS who take for granted high technology, a temperate climate, reliable transport systems with relatively short distances to cover and a highly experienced workforce, India must come as a shock. Two companies in particular, however, have ventured onto the sub-continent and taken up the challenge to export India's grape. Although they say it is too early to be certain how the country's production will develop, Frumar Ltd and Three Ways International Ltd both feel India is moving in the right direction to become an important source of supply in the grape calendar and they are both planning to increase their involvement in seasons to come.

Frumar claims to have been the first to develop an export project for table grape and is now in its second year of operation, working an exclusive marketing arrangement with the Pune-based Kalyani Agro Corporation, a subsidiary division of Bharat Forge Ltd. **Mark Bradnum**, marketing director of Frumar, is bullish about the 1993 season. He told the *Journal*: "So far everything has gone to plan. We have laid down rigid quality requirements for the Indians to adhere to and they have fared very well - they are very hard-working and serious about taking on board the demands. Now that we have established that grape can be exported, there has been better preparation by growers and we are confident that our export volume will be up on last year. Nevertheless, it will not be the volume we had hoped for because there was unusually hot weather about two months ago which affected some of the crop. Quality is up to standard, however."

Three Ways, on the other hand, is the exclusive marketing agent in the UK for the Mahagrape brand of Indian grapes exported by Conwood Foods. According to **Nigel Quick**, one of the directors of Three Ways, Mahagrapes has recently made considerable investments in facilities, which have resulted in an improvement in grading and presentation over last year's first trial season when product was field packed and cooled in mobile pre-cooling units: "They have just completed work on 17 pre-cooling and packing stations throughout the state of Maharashtra. This gives them the advantage of being able to export graded, fast-cooled grapes from all the growing areas and not just Nasik and Pune where most of their competitors are situated.

All the facilities are purpose-built brick units. Pre-cooling is carried out by forced air high humidity coolers imported from the USA and Australia which are capable of reducing the temperature of the grapes to between zero and one degree celsius within four hours."

Although grape is grown all over India, belts of production have developed in particular around the two towns of Nasik and Pune, approximately 160 miles north and south of Bombay. The area developed from being a sugar cane production zone because of irrigation constraints - the water required for one acre of sugar cane is enough for 12 acres of grapes and a strong domestic market for grape. Three Ways and Frumar both major in the Thompson variety, though the former will also bring in Saga Gold, Sonaka Seedless and

(continued overleaf)

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harad Seedless. Frumar, meanwhile, is planning to import volumes of Tas A-Ganesh (a white seedless hybrid of Thompson) and Kismiss Chorni, a flat seedless variety as well as Thompson.

Importers say that the Indian grape season has the potential to run from January to the end of May if growers take best advantage of the range of climates in the country. In respect of its climatic ranges, India is similar to Chile and it has been heralded as the Chile of the future by some, although extending its season will depend on the monsoons which normally begin during the middle of June. This possible lengthening of the season is one of the most exciting aspects of India, say importers:

"Although there is still an enormous amount of work to be done, we have been impressed by the willingness of the growers and exporting companies to adapt and change in order to produce grapes which are acceptable to the European market. Together with the considerable investment that has been made in packing and cooling, this will, in future years, enable Conwood/ Mahagrape to compete favourably with grapes from any other source during January to May," Mr Quick told the *Journal*. At the moment, India's main production in the central southern region has a four- to six-week window from mid-April to the end of May when it capitalises on the gap between the end of the Chilean season and the start of the Mexican airfreight arrivals in mid-May.

Despite a common thread of optimism, there are obvious difficulties in dealing with India. Mr Bradnum identified two main hurdles to be overcome: "Firstly, there is a total lack of knowledge of how to export produce - up until last year the issue had never been approached on a commercial scale. Secondly, the infrastructure is not set up to handle produce efficiently - the company we work with, Kalyani, is the only one to have its own packing facilities.

"We see the role of Frumar as one of educating and there is an advantage in starting from scratch in this because we are not battling against preconceived ideas. The people we work with have not been trained to operate according to anyone else's methods. There is still a lot of work to do but progress is very encouraging and a lot of credit must go to Kalyani Agro Corporation which has been able to make considerable investments."

Transport in India is an obvious difficulty, too, as many roads are not tarmacked. Frumar loads containers directly at the packing point and they are then trucked to Bombay, an overnight journey of eight hours, while the sea transit from Bombay to the UK is 19 days.

Importers are wary about predicting India's future position on the grape market, and though positive attitudes reign in general, Mr Bradnum of Frumar offers a word of warning: "The Indians need to be very careful to avoid a situation where the entrepreneurial class in India becomes aware of the country's export potential and too many people jump on the bandwagon with the result that quality standards go out of the window. This could damage India's image in the same way as has happened in other countries."

A passage to India?

The Indian processed food industry is set to expand at an annual growth rate of 9-12%, increasing its value from the equivalent of US$50m (ECU42m) in 1992 to around $100-120m (ECU84-101m) by the year 2000. Growth potential could however be much higher, according to a McKinsey report*, if investment in food processing were to be increased, cheaper alternative packaging materials were used and a proper chill chain were established. Food accounts for just over 50% of household expenditure and although food expenditure as a percentage of GDP generally declines as living standards increase, consumer trends develop towards higher value-added products (ready-made meals, frozen foods). Consumer demand for branded processed food products is also expected to increase. The Indian government's Planning Commission estimates that food consumption rose by 35% between 1980 and 1989 (compared with a 19% rise in population), owing to higher disposable incomes among the middle-class population.

Economic liberalisation

Since the government introduced its radical economic policy of liberalisation in the summer of 1991, foreign investment has rocketed. Direct foreign investment totalled $1.4bn (ECU1.17bn) in 1992 compared with an average of around $100m (ECU84m) in the Eighties. Overseas companies have recognised the untapped potential of an 870 million head consumer base and have been encouraged by fiscal and investment reforms. Foreign investors may now hold a majority 51% stake in a venture, short-term capital gains tax for foreign investors has been cut from 65% to 30%, import tariffs have been reduced and the administrative process for investment is beginning to be simplified.

Foreign investment rising

Already, the difference is clear. McKinsey reports how PepsiCo waited for nearly five years before its proposal to enter the Indian market was accepted in 1990. In contrast, just two years later, Coca Cola waited only three months to have its re-entry application approved. In the twelve months following the launch of the liberalisation policies, the government approved almost 1 000 foreign joint ventures. Last year the US accounted for 30.5% of investment and was followed by Switzerland with 18.5% and Japan with 16.4.

Nestlé & milk products

Nestlé has had links with India since the start of the century, when it began importing condensed milk and infant foods. In the late Fifties, the Indian government's economic policy aimed to reduce the balance of payments deficit, bringing with it a package of protectionist measures to regulate imports. Under the new laws, Nestlé had to abandon its previous business but instead chose to begin local production in order to maintain an interest in India. Lengthy negotiations led to the creation of a milk products company, based in Moga (Punjab State), in which Nestlé held 90% of the capital. By 1992, the 1 671-employee company was producing 58 000t of food products, including instant noodles, soups, tomato-based sauces and Nescafé.

In 1978, Nestlé was permitted to hold only 40% of the share capital owing to increasingly restrictive investment laws. Following the 1991 reforms, Nestlé may, in principle, own 51%, but the company has had to contend with a mass of bureaucratic barriers, which delay the implementation of new laws. At the end of 1992, the Nestlé/India Company had over 47 000 shareholders, but Nestlé was still in the minority.

KitKat reaches India

Nestlé now has three other factories: the Choladi plant, built in 1967, processes tea leaves into soluble instant tea for export, while the Nanjanjud plant manufactures Nescafé and coffee and chicory instant drink products. Opened in April 1993, the Samalkha factory makes a range of soya-based products.

In 1991, Nestlé began to rent a section of the production lines in a manufacturing plant owned by a cooperative of cocoa planters. Under Nestlé supervision, chocolate products are made there, although the arrangement is only temporary. Nestlé plans to build a fifth factory in the north of Tamil Nadu State to manufacture chocolate and confectionery products, including KitKat.

BSN & Britannia

BSN's interest in India dates back to early 1990, when it acquired a 50% stake in the holding company, Associated Biscuits International Ltd, constituting an indirect 21% stake in Britannia Biscuits, the leading biscuits manufacturer in India with a 36% market share. Even then, the group recognised the market's growth potential and the rapid increase in the proportion of the upper-income sectors of the population. A few weeks later, this deal was followed by the acquisition (jointly with the chairman of Britannia, Rajan Pillai) of the former Nabisco companies in SE Asia. In 1990 sales of Britannia Industries (India) were the equivalent of FF890m (ECU132m), rising to FF1bn (ECU149m) in 1991 following the launch of a number of 'LU' brands. Despite severe economic problems in 1992, Britannia's Indian biscuit production increased significantly to 100 000t, giving sales the equivalent of FF764m (ECU114m), up by 3% at constant exchange rates.

Earlier this year, BSN broke links with Rajan Pillai, following allegations that Pillai had misused joint funds (see Eurofood, April 1993, p18). At the beginning of August, BSN bought Pillai's interests in the Britannia Group's biscuit and snack operations, giving it a 43% stake in the group's Indian unit (see September 1993, p24).

Cadbury raises stake

Cadbury is already a well-established brand in India. In March this year, following rights issues, Cadbury Schweppes' shareholding in Cadbury India Ltd increased from 40% to 51%, the maximum currently permitted under local legislation. The cost of the additional investment was £6.3m (ECU8.2m), satisfied in cash.

AL & Jagatjit

Allied Lyons plans to create a JV with Jagatjit Industries of New Delhi, one of India's largest spirits producers, via its alcoholic drinks division, Hiram Walker. The 50-50 JV is to import and bottle Scotch whisky in India and produce a range of spirits for both the home and international markets.

Some legal restrictions are still in place however. Foreign spirits companies may not open manufacturing facilities, but must rely on their partner's existing facilities. Exports are also compulsory, in order to balance out the cost of imports.

GrandMet's drinks division, IDV, recently announced it is to produce and distribute drinks in India via a new joint venture, International Distillers India, with an as yet unnamed partner (Eurofood, September 93, p25).

Bass opts for hotels

Bass, the largest brewing company in the UK, has announced that its Holiday Inn Worldwide division has agreed to set up a joint venture with Inn Realty Hotel Ventures of India, in order to open seventy Holiday Inns, mainly in secondary cities, over the next ten years. It hopes to benefit from growing demand for higher-class accommodation.

Inflation worries emerge

In August, India's inflation rate (year-to-year wholesale price index) rose to 6.2% from 5.8% in July - the first climb after weeks of decline. Economists warn that inflation cannot be allowed to exceed 7%, otherwise economic reforms may be threatened. The increase coincides with inadequate rainfall in August, worries over September precipitation levels and large rises in government loans from the Reserve Bank of India. India's farm sector is extremely dependent on sufficient rainfall and low crops inevitably lead to higher food prices. Food and primary products are a major part of the inflation index. Nevertheless, the government hopes to be able to control food price inflation, thanks to the current high level of stocks. Grain stocks, for example, now stand at around 25 million tonnes.

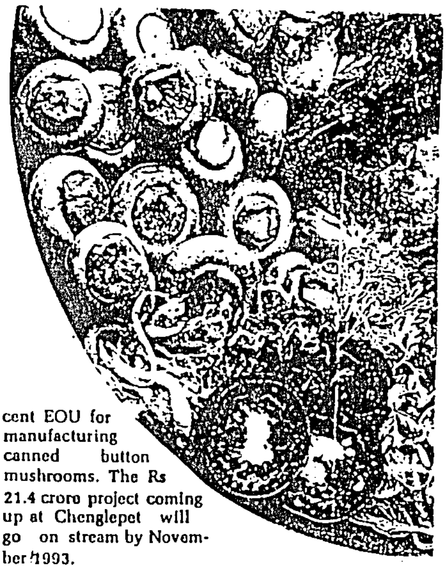
Despite optimism that the reforms are at last bringing benefits in the form of higher exports (+27% in the first four months of the financial year), fear of possible redundancies as a result of the economic liberalisation programme has caused a series of strikes recently. Besides social unrest, investors in the Indian food industry will have to contend with problems such as the recent invasion of north-western Rajasthan state by a swarm of locusts. So far, India has managed to prevent the pest from reaching the fertile areas of Punjab and Haryana, considered to be the granary of India. The FAO has warned that India could face major locust problems over the next two years, if the breeding cycle is not broken.

* *The McKinsey Quarterly 1993, no 2*

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

INDIAN FIRMS EYEING GLOBAL MARKET

While the domestic market for mushrooms might take quite a while to come of age, the potential for export seems to be tremendous, writes *Jaya Menon*.



There has been a sudden spurt of activity in the nascent mushroom industry in India. After chocolates, chips and fizzy soft drinks, now it is the turn of mushrooms. At least ten big industrial houses are now turning towards this high potential high protein mushrooms.

India, in fact, may soon grow to be a major exporter in the world of mushrooms which is a highly labour-intensive industry. Says Mr Bharat Epur, vice-president of Dyna Lamps and Glass Works Ltd., who set up Mushrooms Impex India Limited, "India has all the advantages — cheap labour and large availability of the raw materials". The developed countries are gradually slowing down because of the high labour costs. Several western manufacturers are now shifting their production base to countries like India with cheap labour costs.

Mushroom Impex will set up its farm with technical know how from Gaul Engineering of Israel. The Rs 22-crore, 3000-tonne capacity plant set up in Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh will be commissioned in another one and a half years.

Though mushroom cultivation is fast becoming a high-tech process, harvesting still needs to be done manually, requiring a large workforce which India has in plenty.

"Earlier mushroom production in India had been meagre and seasonal. Today, with foreign collaborations bringing in technology of environmental controlled cultivation there is tremendous potential for mushroom production in India," says Mr Unnikrishnan of Saptharishi Agro Industries. This agro food firm was promoted by Mr R.K. Jajoo in collaboration with the Dutch firm Dalsem Veciap by Agro Industries primarily to set up 100 per cent EOU for manufacturing canned button mushrooms. The Rs 21.4 crore project coming up at Chenglepet will go on stream by November 1993.

The Madras based Ponds was the first of corporate body to export mushrooms. In 1987, it started growing mushrooms as a research operation. In 1989, they expanded it on a commercial scale setting up a large-scale farm producing 3,000 tonnes of mushrooms every year. The 25-acre farm is situated in Ketti in Ooty. With a 100 per cent buy-back arrangement with its American collaborator, Georgio, Ponds exported mushrooms worth Rs 19 crores last year.

The button mushrooms is particularly favoured because it has no fat, no sugar and no cholesterol. It is almost a substitute for non-vegetarian and Americans love it. In fact, the per capita consumption of mushrooms in the US is as high as two pounds annually.

Market watchers are extremely hopeful. With foreign collaborators tying up with Indian firms and helping set up hi-tech farms with environment controlled cultivation and the strong boost being given to this sector by the government the mushroom industry is indeed mushrooming.

One of the other players in the field is Tata Tea. Though their pr started off as an innov method of recycling from their tea factorie is at present small pared to the others, ju tonnes, it is slated f pansion. About 22 panies have in fact issued licences — Tat RP Goenka group hav istered their proposal the commerce minist setting up two mush projects.

India, now has mushroom farms — of Ponds (India) Ltd Dehra-Dun-based Foods, TEGS in Patia the Tata Tea farm —

Contd on

access to modern technology and having a combined capacity of about 6,000 metric tonnes of mushrooms.

In fact, in 1991-92, India exported about 50 metric tonnes of dry mushrooms and about 1,200 metric tonnes of processed mushrooms. The total foreign exchange earning during the period was around Rs 16 crores. With four more farms with total capacity of 10,600 mt. per year coming up and about 20 more baving registered themselves India will soon take a prominent position in the world export market of mushrooms.

There is a large market for button mushrooms, mostly used for soups and pizzas in the world today. The qualifying factor is that button mushrooms have high protein and low cholesterol content. Though button mushrooms, oyster mushrooms and paddy straw mushrooms are cultivated in India. The global consumption of mushroom has grown on an average by over 24 per cent over the last five years from 10 lakh tonnes per annum in 1987 to 21 lakh tonnes in 1992. This is expected to grow further to over 30 lakh tonnes in two years' time.

There is also a fear among Indian producers that in the long run the industry may not be all that viable. Says a Ponds (India) official "There has been over production by countries like China and Indonesia. This year the prices crashed by over 50 per cent thanks to large-scale dumping by China. Last year, China accounted for 25 per cent of the world trade and India's share was less than one per cent. Units now coming up are taking up the higher price for project viability". This was corroborated by reports in certain section of the press in India.

However, Bharat Epur dismissed reports about prices slumping as misleading. 'Food News' is a highly credible American newsletter which publishes prices of mushrooms in the world market. And the last six months, trend in prices has been very encouraging. "I can find no supporting evidence for the low price quoted by magazines in India. The only explanation could be that the particular company which sold it for such a low price must have sold low quality products. Mushrooms are either sold whole or without the stem. Value goes down when it is sold in bits and pieces. This is a well-established commodity trade and the prices cannot be arbitarily fixed."

On its part, the Indian government, in an attempt to boost agricultural exports, liberalised the import of mushroom culture (spawn) in June this year. Mushroom export oriented units can now procure mushroom culture at their convenience from identified suppliers without an import permit.

With Indian firms setting up mushroom farms with a full buy-back arrangement with their collaborators, the real competition is from ourside, especially from countries like China and Indonesia. Says an industry source, "The only waty to survive is to be cost-effective".

However, Mushroom Impex Limited has set its sights on more high-value and high-cost projects in future. Says Bharat Epur, "After perhaps five years, we will go into production of exotic mushrooms. The cost of production will be much higher but these mushrooms have very high value".

In fact, India is known for its exotic mushrooms. Certain varieties of such mushrooms are collected from forests in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh, for exports.

There are several local and small-time manufacturers in certain pockets of the country. A company in Madras, for instance, trains housewives in setting up small farms in their terraces. Though, these are only for oyster mushrooms, which are tasty with no protein-value and are produced only for local consumption.

In North Himachal Pradesh, the collection of mushrooms from small farms constitute about 2,000 metric tonnes of button mushrooms. Though, presently the domestic market is not very substantial, manufacturers may well test it out in future.

Says Mr Unnikrishnan of the Madras-based Saptharshi, "With more awareness and availability, the domestic market may pick up". Confirms Mr Bharat Epur, "We will be selling a small percentage, about five to ten per cent of our rejects in the domestic market. The Indian market prices for mushrooms are quite affordable, there is a lack of awareness among consumers and hence there is little or no demand".

The cultivation of mushrooms is as follows: First, compost is prepared out of agrowaste products like rice paddy, wheat straw, leaves and sugarcane bagasse. These are treated at different temperatures to get rid of unwanted organisms. The treated compost is then pasteurised and spawned. Later, the spawned plants are transformed to cropping rooms where they are kept for 74 days to mature. The harvested crop is then processed and canned for marketing.

Industrial houses like Tatas and Ponds who were the first to manufacture mushrooms selected sites in Munnar and Ooty, respectively, since hilly and cold areas were considered for more suitable for mushroom cultivation.

This no longer seems to be the trend. According to Mr Bharat Epur, whose farm will come up near Hyderabad, "It is easier near the towns because we can tailor our needs to the availability of raw materials. If the farm is in a remote hill station, it is difficult to truck all the material there. Also, there may be a lack of infrastructural facilities".

However, while the domestic market for mushrooms might take quite a while to come of age, things seem bright on the export scene. The potential for exports seem to be tremendous. With players big and small setting up farms with imported or superior indigenous technology, it seems that the Indian mushroom industry is poised for a take off and will soon emerge as a major contender in the world mushroom market.

India

Grapes from India – a Co-Operative Venture

Among the many problems faced by India, immediately after independence was how to increase its food production substantially to feed its teeming population now estimated at 900 million. Having achieved this objective in terms of 'Green Revolution' some decades back the government geared its attention towards horticultural development. The current 8th Five Year Plan has earmarked a massive financial engagement to bring about an allround development of this important sub-sector.

India presently produces about 30 million t of fruits and 51 million t of vegetables excluding 15 million t of potatoes and 3.5 million t of onions. Among the important fruits grown are mangoes, bananas, apples, litchies, citrus fruit, pineapples, kinnoos (type of tangerine), grapes and guavas besides a number of other tropical fruit. In the vegetable group potatoes, onions, garlic, okra,eggplant, gourds and cabbage are worth to be mentioned. Along with that goes a line of 'luxury vegetable' like asparagus, broccoli, celery and mushrooms.

Total cultivated area under fruit and vegetables in the country cover about 12 million ha, which is about 7% of the total area designed for agricultural purposes. This group contributes about 18% to the gross agricultural output. With this massive production the country now ranks second in world fruit production after Brazil and similarly in vegetable production after China. Its contribution in the world trade, however, is negligible because it has first to meet its domestic requirements to feed the Indian population. With the rising standard of living the consumption of fresh fruit and vetables in the country is on the rise. There are wide regional and climatic contrasts within the country suitable for both temperate and tropical crops including off-season products.

Unlike mango, the commercial cultivation of grapes in India is some three decades old. It is still regarded as fruit for the upper class of the society. Grapes are produced mainly in the western and southern regions occupying about 1% of the cultivated area there with an estimated production of about 350,000 t. 90% of production belongs to the Thompson Seedless and 10% to seeded varieties. Although comparatively more perishable, grapes are still being transported by non-refrigerated or air-cooled trucks travelling as much as 2000 km under tropical conditions to serve the distant markets.

Some three decades back the stock of Thompson Seedless grapes was imported into Maharashtra from California. Some new varities, such as Sonaka, Saga, Gold, Tasa Ganesh, Shard Seedless have been developed. These varieties are the refinements of Thompson Seedless. Maharashtra, a western state bordering the Arabian Sea is the leading state with an area of about 15,000 ha with an annual production of 25,000 t. The co-operative movement there is very strong and active. It is mainly involved in the production of grapes.

Due to concerted efforts made with excellent extension support a yield of 8 to 10 t/acres of seedless and 15 to 18

India

t/acres for seeded varieties has been achieved. The berry size varies from 2 to 4 cm with up to 24° Brix.
The entire export trade continued to be in the hands of commission agents who were not giving a fair deal to the grower. The air freight costs "penalized" Indian grapes for exports. The quality and the shelf life were poor as there were no packinghouses, no pre-cooling facilities with practically no grading or selecting facilities available nationwide. The whole industry was virtually at the verge of collapse. Traditionally the Indian farmer is merely a farmer and therefore more prone to exploitation both within the country and abroad. What has been a very encouraging feature in Indian agriculture is the fact that the farmer has learned that quality, reliability and regularity of supplies, in other words, discipline, are the basics of the business.
To encourage production and exports a good institutional base has been set up and institution like the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Apeda), the National Cooperative Development Corporation, the National Horticulture Board as well as the Horticultural Research Stations have been formed.
The Maharashtra State took the initiative to organize the exports. A team of professional growers and a few dedicated officers were sent abroad to study the marketing of grapes and the infrastructure requirements. Soon after that the project was prepared and the farmers' cooperatives covering some 4000 families was formed. Mahagrapes is a registered organization with the aim of marketing produce on the domestic and the export markets. The holdings being small, mobile pre-cooling units were the only answer. They were locally designed and put into operation. The cold storage in India is hundred years old and all the machinery is manufactured locally at competitive prices. For Mahagrapes very colourful card board boxes for 2 kgs of fresh grapes were designed. A humble beginning was made to ship grapes by reefers containers. In the 1992 season 6,600 t were shipped to Europe on behalf of Mahagrapes. From Bombay it takes two to three weeks for the consignments to reach the European market. This new export venture gave a lot of confidence to people involved and opened up export avenues for other fruit. Many private companies like Godrej, Kalyani Agros, ITC, Freshtrop and G.M. are to enter in a big way offering a variety of products.
According to *Gokul Patnaik*, chairman of Apeda, India has the potential of exporting 100,000 t of fresh fruit and 50,000 t of vegetables annually in the course of the coming years. With shipments by reefer containers getting very popular many new items and products spread over a larger part of the world should be possible.

Vine grower at Ozar in the state of Maharashtra inspects his vineyards.

Jamaica expects jump in tropical fruit production

Papaya and mango output to leap forward

New corporate investment in Jamaica

TROPICAL fruit growers in Jamaica are increasing production of papayas and mangoes in the expectation of capturing one fifth of the total European market for these two fruits within two years. And much of this new expansion in production on the Caribbean island comes from corporate investors keen to take up the opportunities that are appearing in the export of these non-traditional fruits to the EC.

"Papayas and mangoes are already among the leading tropical fruits consumed in major EC markets", said Diane Edwards, senior trade commissioner at the Jamaica Trade Commission in Brussels. "We believe there is still great potential to grow sales". Jamaica's fruit sector is braced for a massive increase in production of a range of mainstream commercial varieties in the next half-decade: papaya production is set to climb by 70 per cent as 200 hectares of new farming land is planted with papayas to add to the 350 hectares already in full production, while mango production should jump by 200 per cent over the next four years.

Indeed, Jamaica's fruit export sector has already been quick to profit from the steady expansion in year-round demand for tropical fruits in Europe. The Jamaica Trade Commission reports that Jamaica doubled to 12 per cent its share of total EC sales in just three years while European demand for papayas and mangoes expanded by 20 per cent in the five years to 1992.

Solo, the commercial American variety, constitutes the large majority of papaya production in Jamaica while mango plantings are made up of Tommy Atkins and Keitt rather than local Jamaican varieties, said Ms Edwards.

The Jamaican government has sponsored initiatives to diversify the country's agricultural sector into new export products. It has not had difficulty in finding buyers for its substantial holdings in the country's farming sector. The business and banking sectors in Jamaica have been attracted by the new opportunities in development of papaya and mango exports in particular. For example, NCB Investments Ltd, part of the National Commercial Bank Group, one of Jamaica's leading financial institutions, is funding tropical fruit production on part of 400 hectares of prime farming land close to Kingston, Jamaica's capital city. Clarendon Park Orchards has already turned over 50 acres of land to papaya production.

Meanwhile, Jamaican fruit growers have been able to take advantage of improvements in high quality freight links with Europe. While the availability of air-freight poses few problems, the high costs involved have not helped them compete effectively against sea-freighted arrivals from Central America. However, successful trials of sea-freighted shipments of papayas and mangoes, brought in reefer containers on board modern reefer vessels carrying bananas to Western Europe, are expected to give Jamaican tropical fruit producers a greater competitive edge. Not surprisingly, Jamaica Producers Ltd, the UK-based company which has recently extended its holding in the island's banana production, is also involved in the new production of papayas and mangoes. The company has recently acquired some 2,000 acres in production in the Belvedere region of Jamaica, Ms Edwards told Eurofruit Magazine.

Exporters are hopeful of marketing larger volumes of papayas and mangoes in established tropical fruit eating markets like Germany and the Benelux countries. To date, Jamaican fruit sales have been concentrated in the UK, where their share of total papaya and mango sales is already strong. Fruit has been exported into major Continental European markets for some years. They will have been boosted by recent developments: well-placed trade sources told Eurofruit Magazine that two leading Jamaican papaya growers have now concluded a lucrative, first-time contract with the leading supermarket chain in the Netherlands. ■

Exporter sees higher exotic fruit sales

EXOTIC fruit sales in Europe show great potential for growth because general levels of per capita consumption of a range of exotic fruits are still comparatively low, says one of Colombia's leading exporters of exotic fruit and vegetables.

"European consumption of apples is one hundred times higher than demand for some exotic fruit types", Néstor Gutiérrez of Bogotá-based exporter Frutierrez Ltda told a MOFEL trade seminar. "And increased demand for high quality, higher value exotic fruits and vegetable could help to dispel some of the recessionary impact in other parts of the fresh produce sector".

The value of exotic fruit exports from Colombia has grown from $150,000 in 1988 to an expected $5m in 1993, Mr Gutiérrez said. Further large increases are expected, with mangoes the best placed to record new sales. Three thousand hectares of mangoes have been planted in Colombia in the last five years.

New possibilities to sea-freight fruit in reefer containers could halve transport costs, said Mr Gutiérrez. These lower costs should help increase shipments.

But leading Swiss food retailer Migros, whose sales of exotic fruit and vegetable sales account for seven per cent of SFr1.1bn turnover on fresh produce, reckons further growth in exotic sales is unlikely. "The boom is over for some exotic items", said fresh produce trading director Hans-Rudolf Möri. Migros does not expect future sales of exotic fruits to enjoy the same rates of rapid growth as in the 1980s.

The exotic fruit sector needs to concentrate on higher quality to allow better producers to prosper and to encourage higher rate of purchase at the point of sale.

Ivory Coast pins hopes on pineapples

New European "panel" system in the pipeline

THE LEADING pineapple exporters in the Ivory Coast are planning a series of wide-ranging changes to their sales and distribution network in Europe in an effort to recover market share lost to major competitors in recent years.

"The Ivory Coast pineapple sector is looking for the best way in which to market its fruit in Europe", OCAB executive director Emmanuel Dolly told Eurofruit Magazine. "Last season we had over 50 European importers handling our fruit. To achieve the best results, we should have not more to 12 to 15". Eurofruit Magazine understands that a small number of receivers of Ivory Coast pineapples is planned for each major export market in Europe. The Ivory Coast believes these changes are vital if it is to grow exports to Europe to 200,000 tonnes by 1995, a sharp rise on the 130,000 tonnes of pineapples expected from the Ivory Coast this year.

OCAB, the Ivory Coast pineapple and banana producers' association, was created in 1991 by the West African country's 20 leading tropical fruit exporters to promote pineapples and bananas.

The 12 largest exporters represent over 85 per cent of fruit sold in Europe, says OCAB. Since then, the association says it has helped to introduce a number of far-reaching changes to the pineapple sector in particular which are intended to improve its competitive position in Europe.

Ivory Coast pineapple exports have been hit by cheaper, higher quality fruit from Central America in particular. For example, pineapple exports from the Ivory Coast to Germany dropped from 16,820 tonnes in 1989 to just 9,280 tonnes in 1991 against an increase in supplies from Costa Rica and Honduras from 15,400 tonnes in 1989 to 20,500 tonnes in 1991.

OCAB believes this reduction in the number of receivers of Ivory Coast fruit in Europe will help increase returns to producers. It should help to reduce some of the fierce market competition which has hit high-cost African pineapple growers in particular, it says. But the association's plans have already been criticised by some established importers in Europe, while others question whether Ivory Coast pineapple producers will ever be able to overcome the cost advantages of their counterparts in Central America.

OCAB executive director Emmanuel Dolly

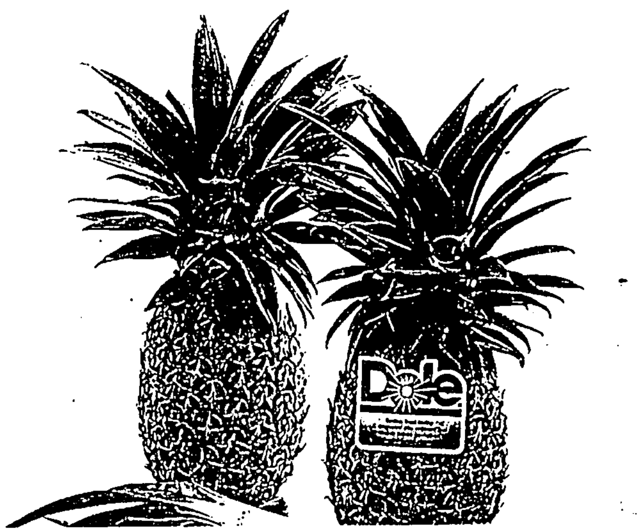
OCAB is confident the efforts of its members to improve the quality of pineapples exported to Europe will improve their market position. Veritas, an independent company, was hired two years ago to enforce more rigorous quality control procedures in the field, packing station and at the port. OCAB has also put together a system to collate important statistical data on production, exports and market sales which it says allows it to improve the programming of the season.

At the same time, the Ivory Coast pineapple sector has moved to rationalise its pineapple discharge operations in Europe.

Twice-weekly, year-round sailings to Europe are planned, with discharge operations concentrated in France, at the port of Dieppe for northern Europe and in Marseilles for southern European markets. OCAB told Eurofruit Magazine that the transfer earlier this year of discharge operations from Antwerp to Dieppe will help pineapple exporters to reduce discharge costs by almost 30 per cent and arrival times will allow them to get fruit to market one day earlier. Dieppe and Marseilles are also closer to main markets, says OCAB: last season 60 per cent of the 52,000 tonnes of Ivory Coast pineapples discharged in Antwerp in 1992 were redirected to markets in southern Europe. ■

New boost to Dole pineapple programme

European shipments set to grow 20 per cent in 1993



Shipments in 1993 will be up 20 per cent

DOLE FRESH FRUIT EUROPE has imported pineapples into Europe on a continual basis since 1988. Its parent company can trace its involvement back much further: founder James Dole began growing pineapples in Hawaii in 1901. Exports to Europe have rocketed in recent years, up from 4,600 tonnes in 1988 to 35,600 tonnes in 1992. According to Charles Pratt-Yule of Dole Fresh Fruit Europe, shipments to Europe are forecast to rise to 3.6m (12kg) boxes this year, up 20 per cent on 1992 figures.

Mr Pratt-Yule told Eurofruit Magaine that market demand for pineapples still varies enormously across Europe. The fruit is best known in southern Europe, while per capita consumption is highest in Switzerland and France. To some extent this is said to reflect the activities of specific importers and retailers who have played a strong role in promoting pineapples by giving them good shelf space, running in-store sampling and providing consumers with product information on origins, ripeness and usage.

"As a result there is a higher rate of penetration in countries where there are a greater number of consumers buying pineapples on a regular basis", commented Mr Pratt-Yule. "This higher consumption is also a reflection of longer experience with the product. The activities described above are expensive and not really all that common."

Dole believes that there are in fact few customers able to differentiate between the different pineapple shell colours. Like many other fruits, it is the product itself which is its own best advertisement, Dole claims. Nevertheless, if the quality and taste of the fruit is good enough to bring consumers back on a more regular basis, then specific preferences in this respect will undoubtedly develop.

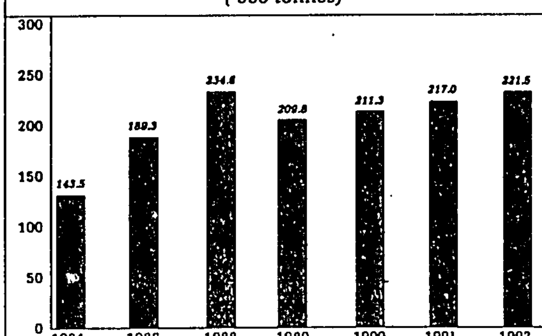
Varieties

Dole says it is continuing work on the research of new varieties and growing methods in order to improve consumer acceptance of pineapples. Trials have been conducted with new varieties like Champaka, but further development work is called for if a viable alternative is to be created to Smooth Cayenne, according to Mr Pratt-Yule.

Dole cools and packs all of its pineapples at its own plantations in Honduras and the Dominican Republic. Fruit is also purchased from six independent growers in Costa Rica who work to the company's quality specifications. Dole says it is now equipped to transport all pineapples to Europe either on pallets or in containers. Approximately 70 per cent of all shipments are containerised. ■

The European Pineapple Market

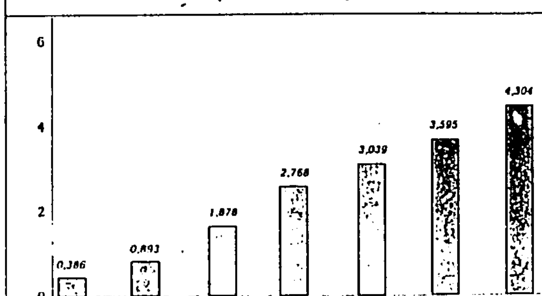
('000 tonnes)



Source: FAO, Eurostat, national statistics, estimates

Dole pineapples: European sales development

(million boxes)



Volume in 12kg box equivalent

Source: Dole Fresh Fruit Europe statistics

Pineapple crowned by production growth

New variety can replace Smooth Cayenne, says Costa Rican pineapple grower

Rolando Vargas, production manager at Cabo Marzo, cuts open a pineapple for the importers to taste

CABO MARZO, a supplier to Dole, has been producing pineapples in the northern region of Pital since 1991. The company currently has 250 hectares under commercial production, with a further 500 hectares earmarked for future plantings. Production manager Rolando Vargas estimates this year's export crop at 800,000 (20lb) boxes, with shipments forecast to rise to 2.4m boxes in 1994. "Supplies to Dole will account for approximately half of next year's crop", he told Eurofruit Magazine. "We're now looking for other clients in Europe who would be interested in importing the 1.2m box surplus."

Land is expensive in Pital — around US$4,000 to $5,000 per hectare — so high density production methods are used. Indeed, the pineapple plantations have to be seen to be believed. In some areas, up to 75,000 pineapple plants grow alongside each other in a single hectare. Pickers are equipped with special protective clothing to make their way between the plants, with picking and planting taking place every day of the year.

Champaka

The second factor that makes the Cabo Marzo operation rather unique is its decision to make a varietal changeover from Smooth Cayenne to Champaka, a Smooth Cayenne clone brought in from Hawaii. Carlos Alvarez, managing director of Cabo Marzo, told Eurofruit Magazine that Champaka offers improved yields, better quality and a sweeter taste, in addition to having a more compact shape and an immaculate crown. "Champaka seeds are expensive", he commented, "but we believe the final fruit makes the extra investment worthwhile. We selected Champaka quite simply because it is the best variety in the world for fresh consumption. It has beautiful pale, creamy flesh and very high brix levels."

Mr Alvarez believes Pital offers the best growing conditions for pineapples to be found in Costa Rica. The climate ranges from 18°C to 33°C and the soil pH factor at 5.4 is considered ideal for pineapples.

Costa Rican pineapple production is forecast to rise to 16m (20lb) boxes over 4,800 hectares next year. Of this total, approximately half will be produced by Del Monte growers and the rest by independent companies like Cabo Marzo. Around 70 per cent of the export crop is currently destined for Europe and the remainder for the USA. "We're very confident that we can find new buyers for our crop", commented Mr Alvarez.

Cabo Marzo currently ships pineapples to Europe from the Caribbean ports of Puerto Limón or Moín to Hamburg, a journey which takes 12 to 14 days. It has a large packhouse at its Pital farm, with a modern packing line. ■

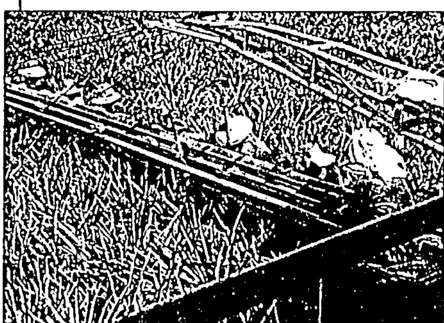
Fresas del Llano looks to 100,000 flat export crop

ALVARO FIGUEROA follows the US market prices for berries every day. His family-run company Fresas del Llano S.A. is a major berry producer in Costa Rica, exporting over 100,000 flats to the USA and Europe every year. Based in Cartago at an altitude of 2,200m, Fresas del Llano lies in the folds of the Irazu volcano. Its farms produce strawberries over 40 acres and blackberries over five acres. Chandler, Oso Grande and Parker — a Californian variety — are the main strawberry varieties grown. "We began business seven years ago when the Costa Rican government first began promoting the development of non-traditional exports", said Mr Figueroa. "We've been shipping to Europe for the past five years and we believe that we have a good understanding of the market. In that time, we have had to make several adjustments to our packaging." Fresas del Llano is now looking for new clients in Holland, Belgium, Germany and the UK. The company says it can airfreight berries from November to February, with the programme stopping at the start of the Spanish season. Shipments are presently carried out in LD3s via Miami.

Pineapple canning, a long established trade in Thailand's food industry, has had modest growth in the past few years. Award-winning Siam Food Products' experience demonstrates that amidst intense competition, saturated export markets and rising costs of production, pineapple canners can still make a profit.

Consolidation through integration

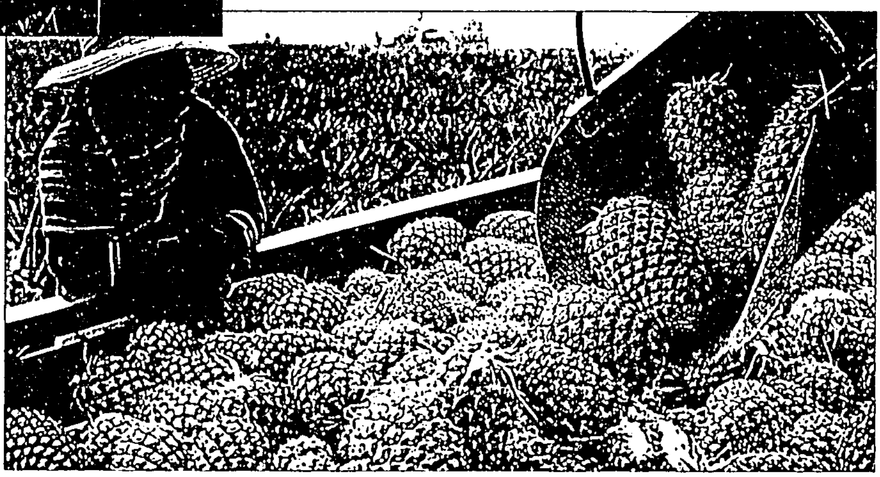
VISITING one of Thailand's largest pineapple processors, one would expect to see a high level of automation with minimal human intervention on the factory floor. Instead, what greets the eye at Siam Food Products is an imposing sight of 3,000 workers, with their nimble fingers, busily carving the freshly peeled and cored pineapples. Mechanisation is obviously not sufficient to boost a profit. In fact, according to the company's president, Adul Pinsuvana, the human eye is still the best instrument for such tasks as pruning, selecting and checking the appearance, colour consistency and quality of the fruits. Such highly skilled manual labour, together with an integrated production concept from farming to packaging, has ensured close monitoring of product quality, allowing Siam Food Products to achieve success in its export markets for over 20 years.



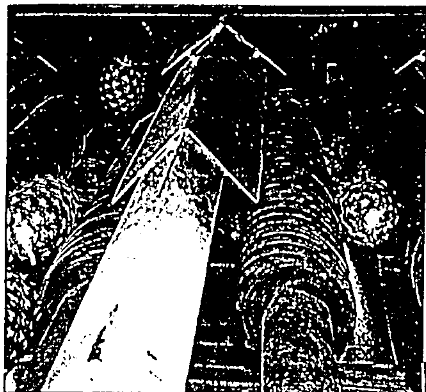
A fully integrated operation

For Siam Food Products, a vertically integrated production concept has resulted in high quality products, economies of scale and lower costs of production. From farming and cultivating its own pineapple crops to manufacturing and fabricating its own processing machines and cans, Siam Food Products has integrated these challenging processes, not conventionally undertaken by other smaller canners, successfully into the entire operation. Recently, the company completed the process of extending the use of its five month old cleaning-in-place (CIP) system from the steriliser, juice evaporator and aroma recovery plant to other critical areas of the production.

At the plantation Beginning at the



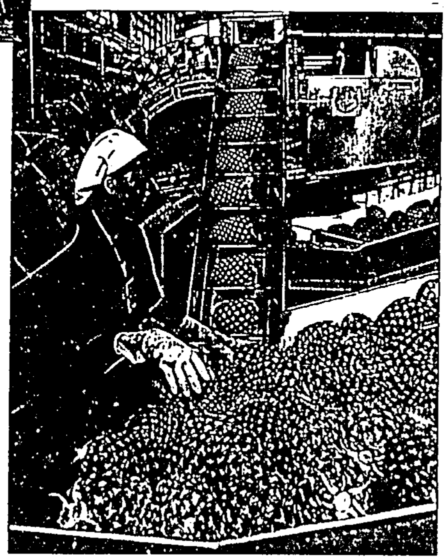
170,000 tonnes of pineapples are harvested daily with a combination of manual and mechanical assistance.



Pineapples are graded according to size in this screw grader.

farming stage, Siam Food Products made bold steps by opting to cultivate and grow its own pineapple crops even though contract farming appeared a more prudent solution to the problem of raw material sourcing. In 1972, it invested in its own 8,000 acre plantation and pioneered pineapple growing and processing in the eastern region, where the so called "Sriracha" pineapple, well known for its better taste than the original "Pran" pineapple grown in the west coast, was grown. Today, this same plantation has grown into a 50,400 acre plain, where 170,000 tonnes of pineapples are harvested daily. Together with its contract farmers who take care of 75 percent of their production needs, the plantation can supply the pineapples for the cannery's own processing activities and even fresh unprocessed varieties for exports. To complement its pineapple canning operations, a whole host of other fruits such as papaya, banana, guava and asparagus are grown and processed, either together with the canned pineapples or on their own during the off peak seasons.

Raw material handling From the plantation, harvested pineapples, with their crowns and suckers removed, are loaded onto lorries and trucks according to sizes to facilitate further grading. At the cannery, they are directly unloaded onto three dumping stations. Continuous conveyors which run from the dumping stations transport the pineapples to the washing area to be cleaned by overhead jets of warm and cold water before being transferred to the graders. Sizing is done in two main graders via pre-set screw mechanism which uses the distance between two screws to grade the fruits into large: 13cm and small: 10.5cm to 13cm.

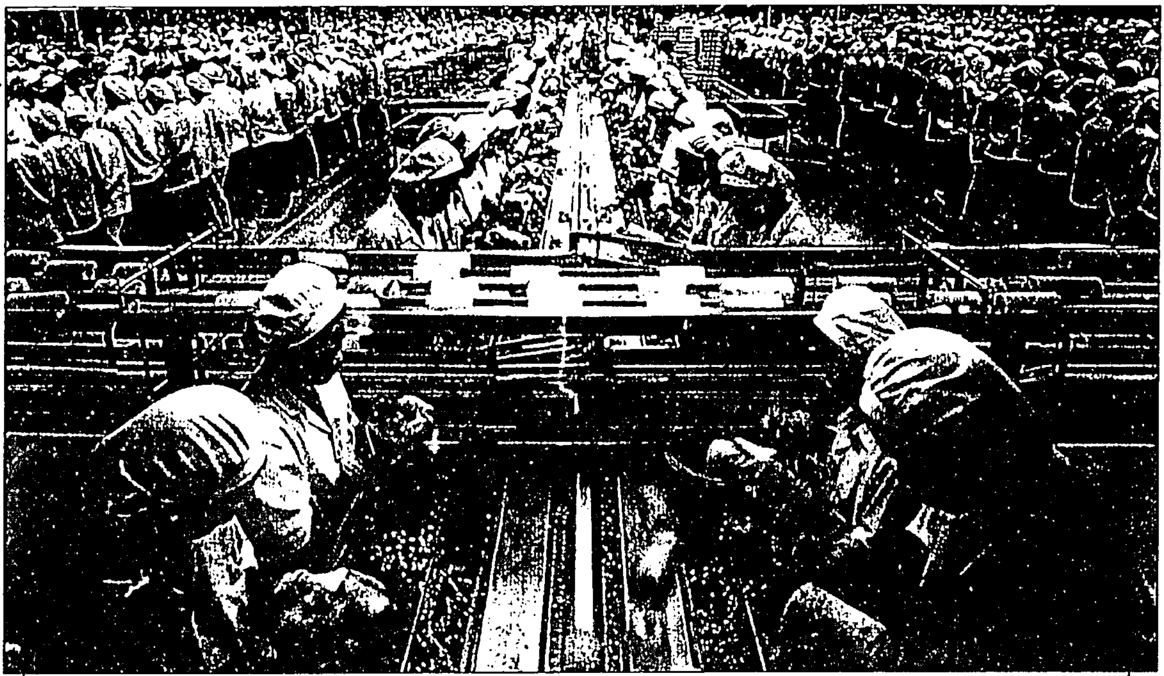


Even though the peeling and coring operation has been automated, two workers are still required to manually load the fruits.

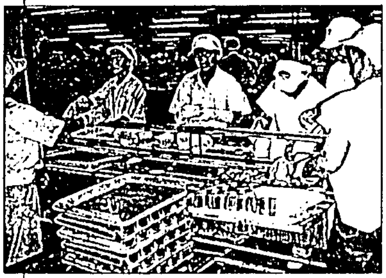
Graded fruits are dropped onto a second set of conveyors and sent to the 20 Ginancas: two-in-one peeling and coring machines with a combined capacity of 80,000 tonnes an hour, designed and manufactured by the company's own engineering department. This expertise arose mainly from experience in repairing its first few Ginacas bought from suppliers. "We were buying and repairing so many Ginacas that we subsequently learnt the mechanics of the machines and found a more cost effective way of dealing with them: manufacturing them ourselves." Pinsuvana said.

Each Ginaca is manned by two workers who load the fruits onto elevated conveyors leading to the machine. Here, a curved knife blade and chopper mechanically removes the skins, heads and tails. These rejects are transferred to the screw press via a belt conveyor running adjacent the machine. The cores, on the other hand, are removed by centrifugal forces and sent to the juice extractor via another conveyor parallel to the machine. The pared and cored pineapples are dropped via slideways onto belt conveyors leading to the trimming/slicing/dicing operations.

Slice, dice and bite size The most labour intensive part of the processing operation, the trimming, slicing and packing tasks are manned by 1,200 workers lining 20 conveyor tables. There are approximately 4 lines for each of the different cutting and packing styles: slices, cubes, tid bits or crushed and each line is in turn divided into three stations:



This imposing sight of 3,000 workers demonstrates that the human eye is still the best instrument for such tasks as carving the pineapple eyes and improving the appearance and texture of the fruit.



Workers stack the pineapple slices neatly and fill them into cans of various sizes.

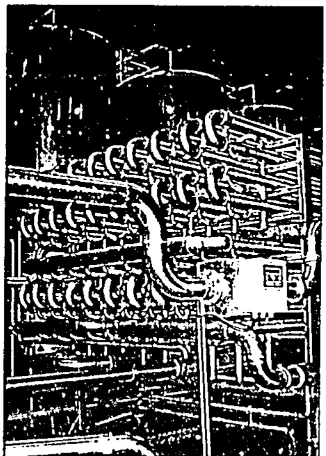
A careful selection process based on texture, colour and size is required prior to packing to ensure that only the best pieces reach the consumer.

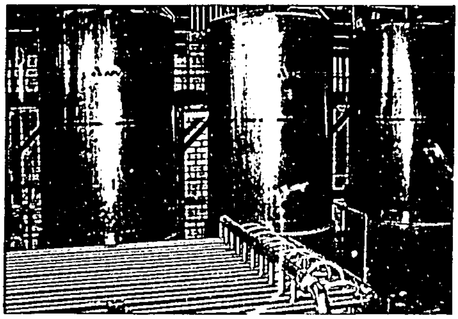
trimming, cutting and packing.

At the head of the conveyors, 45 workers carve out the pineapple "eyes" and in general, improve the appearance and texture of the fruit before placing them onto the central groove to be conveyed directly to the cutter. At the canning lines for sliced pineapples, single knife slicers cut the pineapples into rings of equal thickness and channel them to the packing station to be visually selected and manually filled into 8, 15, 20, 30 or 108 ounce cans. Urshel dicers, with 3 tonne-per-hour capacity, perform the task of cutting the pineapple into cubes at the cube canning lines while multi-plate cutters reduce the pineapples from slices to small tid bits.

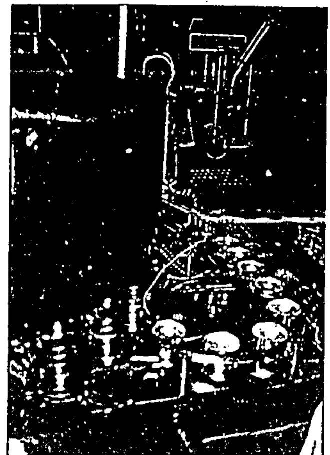
Manual labour assists in the operation by pushing the fruits into the slicers and visually inspecting for any discoloured or bruised pieces occured during cutting before they are conveyed to the filling stations.

Juice extraction The juice material obtained from the extracted pulp of the whole fruit is passed through a screw finisher, for coarse pulp reduction. This juice is then passed through an APV rising and falling film ("high pulp") plate evaporator where aromas are extracted under controlled conditions and subsequently recovered in the APV essence recovery system for eventual introduction to finished product, or for separate sale.





APV equipment complements manual labour on Siam Food's production floor.



Juice is used as a packing media for the sliced, diced and crushed pineapples.

Aromas would otherwise be lost during the subsequent evaporation process.

To reduce handling volumes during transportation, water is removed from the juice by evaporation in two 20,000 kg-per-hour APV failing film plate evaporators. Final concentration of juice may vary according to the end buyer's requirements but will vary from 60°Bx to 72° Bx. Finally, concentrate may be either frozen or processed aseptically in the APV aseptic plant for aseptic packaging on an Intasept bulk filler. A new product which Siam Foods have recently introduced is milled juice, which is obtained from peels that are chopped and pressed in a screw press and then clarified by means of ultrafiltration at low temperature through a 14,000 kg-per-hour APV mill juice evaporator. This product is popular with international blenders who require a relatively bland fruit based syrup to use as a base for some of the more exotic tropical juice blends. Thereafter, the juice is sterilised in APV sterilisers at about 100°C for 30 seconds and cooled to 45°C and chilled to 18°C.

"Pineapple canning is a difficult business and this being a labour intensive industry, our prices are very sensitive to labour costs. Our strategy now is to lower the costs of production." –

Adul Pinsuvana, Siam Food Products' president.

Canning Due to the delicate nature of the fruit, pineapple slices, cubes and tid bits are filled manually into oncoming metal cans transported via a newly acquired US$1.2 million can handling system. The system transfers the cans directly from the warehouse to the packing station via chain conveyors. Cans are manufactured at the company's own canmaking plant which houses a batch of Can-o-mat machines from Krupp, the first of its kind in Thailand. Each Can-o-mat is capable of producing 38,000 20 ounce cans per hour.

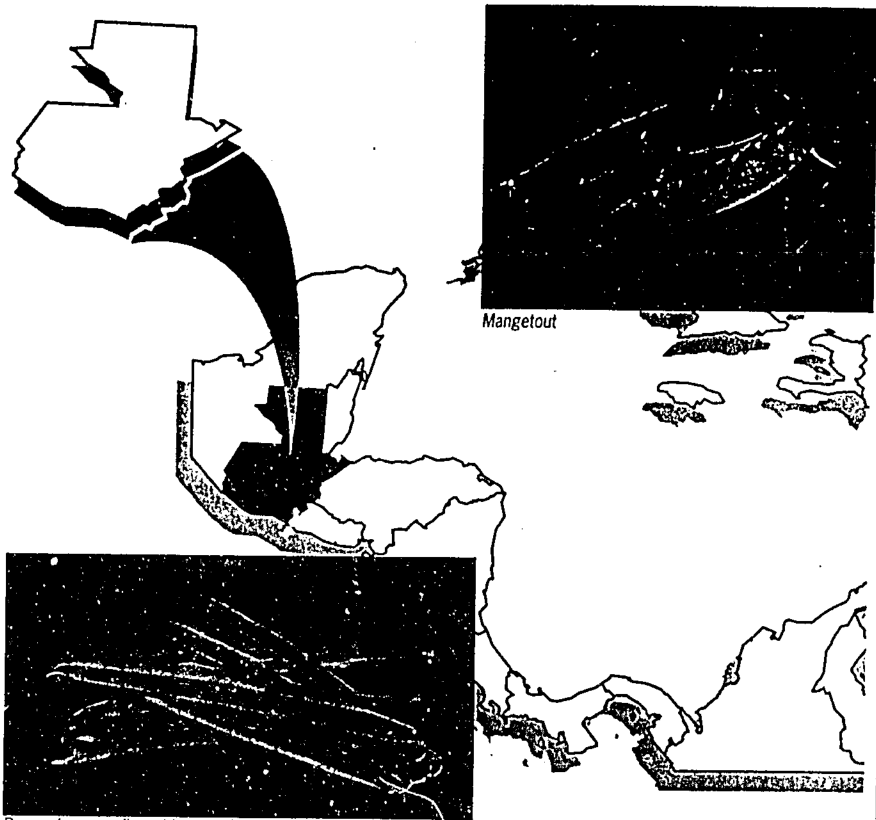
After manual filling, juice is injected into the cans. The final products after seaming, are transfered into a series of retort cages before batch-sterilisation in 17 atmospheric cookers at 95°C to 97°C for 18 minutes. Sterilised products are cooled in a water bath filled by overhead jets of cool water. A Sanco dryer removes any remaining moisture from the cans. Manual palletising of cans follows this operation, afterwhich the cans are set aside for labelling the following day.

When labelling has been done, the aseptically packed juices and concentrates are sent to the 90,000 gallon cold room for storage at 5°C while canned fruits are stored at the dry warehouse.

A competitive market Although Siam Food Products has achieved considerable success in its export enterprise over the past 20 years, the company is faced with shrinking markets for its products. "The market is getting smaller and smaller, especially during the past two years. The demand is always there but the supply is aplenty. Price's are not increasing, yet labour costs are escalating," Pinsuvana lamented. As a survival strategy, Siam Food is exploring new markets such as the eastern Europe and South America. Currently, the company exports 99 percent of its production, its main markets being Europe (45 percent), the United States (35 percent) and Japan (10 percent). Also under way are tests on extending its aseptically processed pineapple crush to tidbits and chunts, for which there will be considerable demand. To further improve its competitive edge, the company is making concerted efforts to maintain, if not, lower its costs of production. "Pineapple canning is a difficult business and this being a labour intensive industry, our prices are very sensitive to labour costs. Our strategy now is to lower the costs of production."

An abundance of resources As revealed on the factory floor, the human element is an important component in all its production stages from farming to packaging. Tasks such as removing the pineapple 'eyes', inspecting their colour and texture, sorting them for the various juice extraction and canning procedures as well as trimming, dressing and filling the fruits are still handled by the company's well-trained team of workers. As Pinsuvana indicated, depending on the time at which the fruit is cultivated, the colour consistency differs from one pineapple to another, and at times, even within the same fruit. Due to such phenomenon, the human eye is the most effective instrument for sorting the good and bad parts of the pineapple based on the colour intensity and sending them to the relevant channels for processing into either canned fruits or juices. After the pineapples are cut and diced by mechanical slicers and dicers, 1,500 workers are again utilised to help trim away the raw edges before filling them into cans. Even at the automated production stages such as that of peeling and coring, which is performed by Ginacas, 30 workers are needed to manually load the fruits onto inclined conveyors leading to the rotary peeler. Such labour-intensive operations has made human resource a current preoccupation with the company. "Pineapple is a commodity. Because it has been in the market for a long time, it is not exotic anymore and demand is not as high as it was years ago. The only way to remain competitive now is to lower your production cost." In line with Thailand's rapid economic development, the level of minimum wage has increased substantially, thus making labour more expensive. Automation can save these costs but as Pinsuvana explained, machines can only replace the human element for certain stages of the production such as peeling and coring.

Having realised the importance of human resources, Siam Food has executed some concrete incentives and previleges for their 3,000 strong staff. "People are one of our most valuable resource. If you want them to stay, you have to keep them happy," Pinsuvana said. For this reason, the company provides lodgings for all its employees within its plantation compound and various other welfare benefits to boost their morale. Nevertheless, the company will continue its efforts to automate in tandem with the latest developments in pineapple processing and packaging technology. APFI



Mangetout

Runner beans: a line with potential

Investing in the future

'Saphir and SIESA's investment in exclusive cooling facilities brings with it a new dimension to trade and offers greater opportunities for the future'

GUATEMALA has the potential to become an even greater supplier of high quality, out of season speciality fruit and vegetables to the UK and European markets and, if the development of the industry continues along its present lines, backed by heavy investment in new facilities amongst progressive producers, this opportunity will be taken.

Many in the UK trade have become familiar with Guatemalan mangetout, which has been arriving in Britain for a decade or so but a broader range of produce is beginning to appear. Producers and exporters there are becoming better equipped and organised to meet the needs of demanding markets in Europe and some believe prospects look very bright indeed.

Agriculture in Guatemala, which is situated in Central America, to the south of Mexico, is based on three distinct areas of production. The dry lowlands along the Caribbean coastline are the hub of banana and melon output and here a full range of varieties, in particular Cantaloupe, can be produced in volume over an extended season. The Pacific Coast, on the other hand, represents the main growing area for sugar cane, cotton, arable crops, mangoes and coffee, the latter being Guatemala's biggest export line.

The most important area, however, is the Highlands - a Volcanic band which runs through the middle of the country, with altitudes between 5,000 and 8,000 feet above sea level, enabling the production of a host of temperate fresh fruit and vegetables. Here avocados and berry fruits and high value vegetables have been identified as having significant export potential reflected in increases on this front over the last couple of years.

Currently much of this produce is channelled to the USA though Europe and, in particular the UK, are increasingly being viewed as potentially appealing markets. Growth in the short term is being held back by exchange rate differentials, however, which will only improve when the recession lifts.

In terms of infrastructure, the industry is based to a great extent on small farmers, each with units of around one hectare. Recent years have seen the formation of co-operatives plus larger groupings comprising several of these, which have been successful up to a point.

While these developments have brought about more cohesive marketing in some lines, the infrastructure of small growers does lead to uncertainty over the control of pesticide usage, however. The Guatemalans, aware of changing market needs, have tried to address this issue and, for the first time, the Association of Non-Traditional Product Exporters is considering a voluntary ban on exports to the USA during the mid July to mid October period - the rainy season when the need for pest and disease control is at its highest.

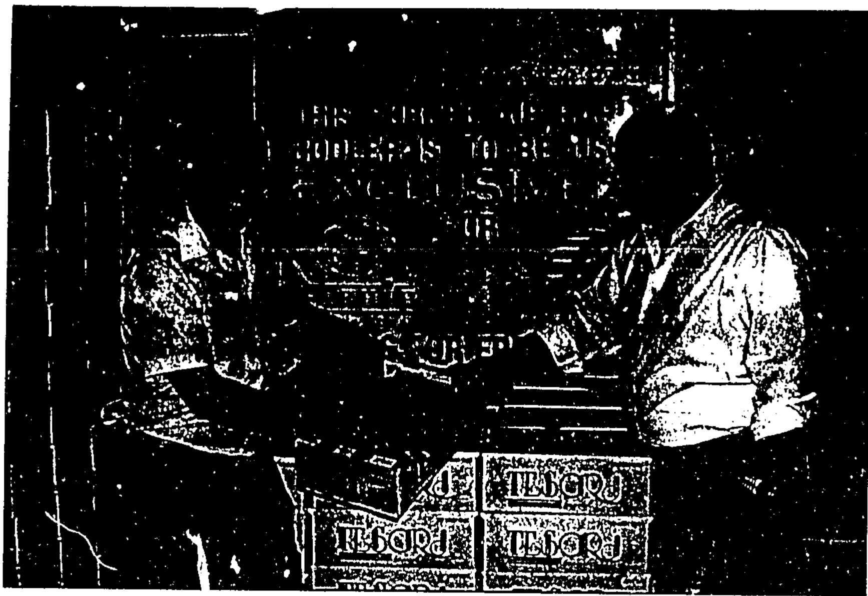
Another difficulty faced by growers is the problem of air freight. Currently there is no direct air route to Europe with any capacity and, as a result, product has to be directed to the US and then be transshipped adding one day's journey onto travel time. Sea freight is being trialled for some lines, but this initiative is still very much in its infancy.

Despite this background, Guatemala still has much to offer and a number of progressive UK importers are steadily cultivating relationships with growing groups there.

The most successful development of this type has been the collaboration between Saphir International and SIESA, the Guatemalan growing and exporting organisation which, through the efforts of brothers **Carlos** and **Willy Springmuhl**, has increased exports of its premium quality vegetables to more than 2,200 tonnes annually.

As **Philip West**, Saphir International's general manager,

(continued on page 20)



Above: From left to right, Peter Austin, managing director of Saphir Produce and Bill Khoury, managing director of freight forwarder Carinter, celebrate the opening of Saphir International's exclusive new cooling facility in Miami.

Left: Sugar snap peas - a line which shows tremendous promise for the future.

'What is most impressive about SIESA's set up and operations is its high level of professionalism and the will to provide exactly what customers want, when they want it'

explains: "We have been dealing with SIESA, one of the largest Central American export organisations, for around nine seasons and during this time have successfully sourced a comprehensive range of produce to fill distinct windows in the UK calendar."

Today, the portfolio includes runner, Helda and round beans, mangetout, sugar snaps, baby courgettes and a number of squashes - all of which have been well received on the British market. Several other lines are currently being trialled from raspberries and blackberries to leeks and salad onions. According to **Edgar Garcia**, SIESA's technologist based in Guatemala, jointly funded by Saphir: "The full potential of the volumes we could supply has yet to be reached if demand continues to rise at the pace shown in recent years."

SIESA, based in the Highlands, has around 328 acres of land devoted to these crops, organised on three farms, and also acts as the marketing agent, with Saphir, for 146 growers involved with the Magdalene Co-operative.

Mr West adds: "Apart from providing a wealth of year round growing opportunities, the micro-climates of the Highlands spread the risk of losses caused by adverse weather."

Much of the produce is grown on the sides of extinct volcanoes with mangetout and sugar snaps very much to the fore - supplies peaking at around 30t and 25t a week, respectively, during their respective seasons spanning November to May and October to June.

In addition to traditionally packed loose product, produce is also packed and labelled at source and then flown to Miami on daily chartered freighters where it is cooled overnight before being flown to Europe on scheduled airlines the following day.

SIESA, backed by Saphir International, in an exclusive arrangement, has recently installed a new forced air rapid cooler capable of handling up to 12 tonnes of loose and prepacked vegetables every three hours.

As **David Conway** of Saphir International comments: "This is just one of a series of investments which are putting SIESA's Guatemalan vegetables onto the shelves of Europe's major supermarkets."

This is backed up by stringent checks on the quality control front including tight monitoring of pesticide applications to ensure compliance with the Food Safety Act.

"What is most impressive about SIESA's set up and operations is its high level of professionalism and the will to provide exactly what customers want, when they want it," he says.

Fine vegetable exports maintain growth

Pre-packs our speciality, says Tropical Splendor

Verónica Barillas, managing director of Tropical Splendor

ALTHOUGH Tropical Splendor has only been in business for five years, it has already developed a strong client base in Europe with special pre-packing orders carried out for German importer Weichert and Dutch importer Hispafruit. It is also a regular supplier to other well-known European importers like Wealmoor, Exotimex and Trofi. "We know that very special quality is required for Europe", managing director Verónica Barillas told Eurofruit Magazine. "Demands are very specific. We make sure we meet these requirements by giving the correct seeds to our growers, the right information on pesticide use, handling and so on. Quality, consistent supplies and special service lie behind our success. We're now ready to enlarge our business with Europe."

The main lines Tropical Splendor exports to Europe include mangetout, sugar snaps, French beans, mini vegetables (courgettes, green and yellow squash) and green asparagus. Weekly availability currently stands at 12 tonnes for mangetout, eight tonnes for sugar snaps, two tonnes for baby vegetables and four tonnes for French beans. "Although all of the vegetables can be produced throughout the year, peak shipments are from October to May, prior to the start of Guatemala's rainy season. Tropical Splendor packs its vegetables in 2.2kg net cartons. Mangetout and sugar snaps can also be packed in 150g plastic trays covered with plastic film. "We pack these 27 to a tray and they're very popular in Holland and Germany", said Ms Barillas. "We're very careful to ensure that we choose only the very best vegetables from each crop, then pre-cool and pack them carefully in order to preserve their natural characteristics." ■

Guatemala's largest cooperative invests in new facilities

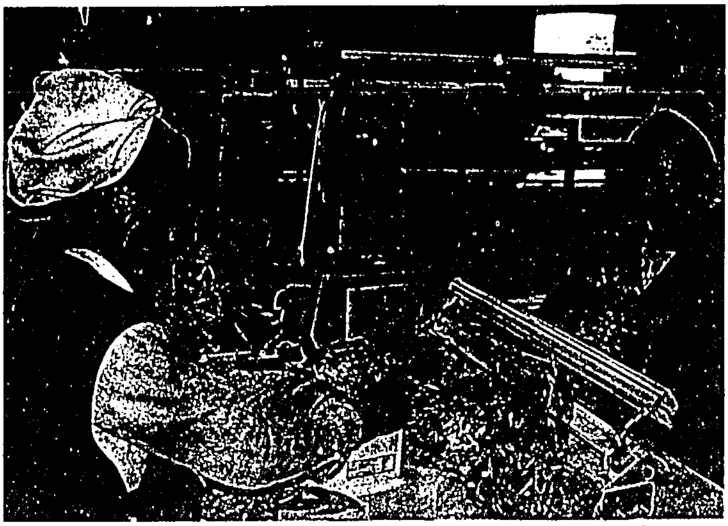
CUATRO PINOS, Guatemala's largest cooperative, brings together some 1,650 growers from the central highland regions, with an average annual production total of 5m lbs. Miguel Angel Socop, president of Cuatro Pinos, told Eurofruit Magazine that production is forecast to double over the next couple of years as the cooperative invests in new infrastructure to cope with additional volumes.

Established in 1970 with financial and technical support from Swiss organization Heks, Cuatro Pinos has exported fresh vegetables since 1981. Its product range includes mangetout, sugar snaps, French beans, courgettes, bunched onions, blackberries, runner beans, raddichio, leeks, broccoli and raspberries. Eighty per cent of its exports are destined for the USA and 20 per cent for Europe. "We're now the largest producer of mangetout in Guatemala", said Mr Socop. "We pack 5,000 (10lb) boxes of mangetout each day and anything up to 30,000 boxes per day in full season."

Cuatro Pinos says its current headquarters and facilities cover 14,500m². Its packhouse can handle up to 300,000 lbs of produce per week, with cooling and storage facilities available for a further 150,000 lbs.

Saphir plans larger programme with Siesa

Guatemala complements our business, says David Conway



Saphir is now looking at the possibility of extending its business with Guatemala

UK importer Saphir International plans to airfreight 1,500 tonnes of fine vegetables by air this season from its Guatemalan supplier Siesa. Now the UK's leading importer from Guatemala, the Albert Fisher-owned company sells most of its vegetables from this source to the supermarkets, with considerable quantities pre-packed at source. David Conway of Saphir Produce told Eurofruit Magazine that Guatemala fits in very well with the company's supply programme. Zimbabwe is Saphir's leading vegetable supplier from May to November and Guatemala from November to May. "The two countries complement each other perfectly", commented Mr Conway. "Over the past five years, Guatemala has become an increasingly important source of supply for us. There is constant dialogue between Siesa's technologists and our own to ensure the products attain the increasingly high standards and volumes required."

Based in the highlands just outside Guatemala City, Siesa's farms are owned and run by Carlos Springmuhl and his brother Guillermo. The Springmuhl family's own farms are complemented by those of approximately 180 outside growers, some of whom are members of the Magdalena cooperative. Mangetout, sugar snaps, runner beans and asparagus form the bulk of Saphir's programme, together with a large project of mini-vegetables. "Over the past year we've seen a steady rise in demand for mangetout and sugar snaps", said Mr Conway. "In fact, the UK is now the leading market in Europe for sugar snaps. We've tried selling them into other European markets and we're confident that they will eventualy follow the same trends as the UK market."

Saphir has exclusive international marketing rights for Siesa's vegetable production. Last year it even carried out four shipments of Guatemalan produce to Australia, a venture that was relatively successful in spite of the high costs.

All produce destined for the UK is airfreighted through Miami, using scheduled daily flights and Saphir's forced air cooling facility which is based on the premises of freight forwarder Carinter. New improved handling systems with Saphir's main carriers British Airways and American Airlines are also under development.

"The use of Miami has evolved since the demise of Pan Am when direct flights from Guatemala to the UK stopped", said Mr Conway. "Guatemala's national airline Aviateca offers two daily flights from Guatemala City to Miami on five days of the week and one flight per day the rest of the week."

Saphir is now looking at the possibility of extending its business with Guatemala to include fruit. Mr Conway told Eurofruit Magazine that pitahayas and berries could be first on the list. "Siesa is very receptive to our needs", Mr Conway commented. "The Springmuhls have made every effort to ensure that their produce is of the right standards for the supermarkets, including full knowledge of pesticide use. We're now looking to develop our programme with them further." ■

San Juan turns to Europe as production climbs

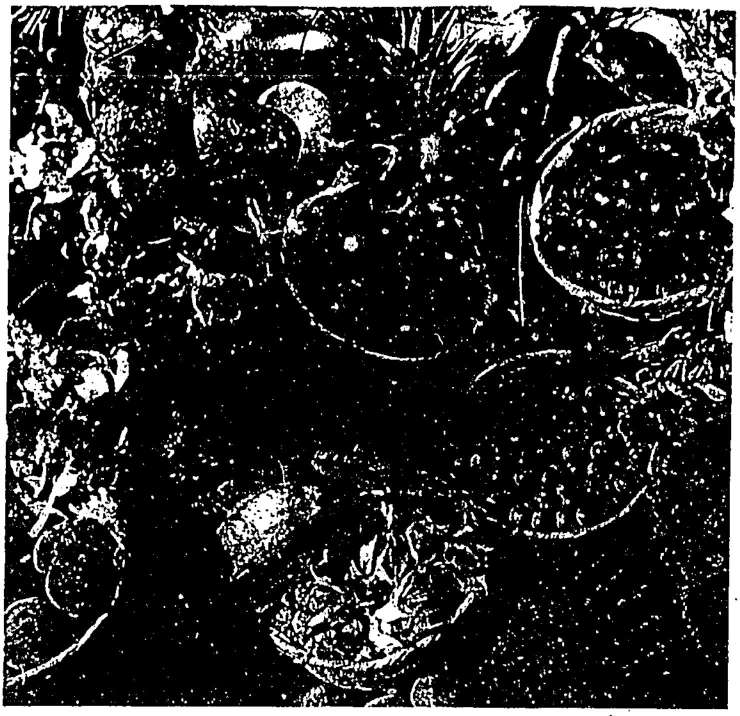
SAN JUAN AGRO EXPORT is a medium-sized family company run by two brothers, Tulio and Victor García Morales. Situated in the hills to the north-west of Guatemala City in San Juan Sacatepequez, the company has been in business now for 17 years. Up until last year San Juan devoted most of its energy to producing mangetout for export to the USA. Annual volumes stood at around 0.5m lbs. Plans are now afoot for a steady increase in exports to a projected level of 6m lbs. Europe is the prime target.

"We have worked with J. O. Sims in the UK and we're now keen to develop sales to other European countries", commented Tulio García. "We are aware of the importance of continuity and quality and the need for a professional approach to business. We have to face tough competition, so we try to add value to our products", he said.

San Juan has a 20 hectare farm of its own and special arrangements with growers possessing a further 80 hectares of land. Runner beans and blackberries are the main items the company handles. This season 160 tonnes of vegetables — mainly sugar snaps and mangetout — will be airfreighted by San Juan to the UK.

Colombia pushes for further growth

THERE are 19 major exporters of fruit in Colombia, eight of which account for 65 per cent of total exports. Eurofruit Magazine spoke to some of the newer exporters about developments in fruit exports from Colombia.



Colombian exotics have sold particularly well in the UK

New Colombian mango association formed

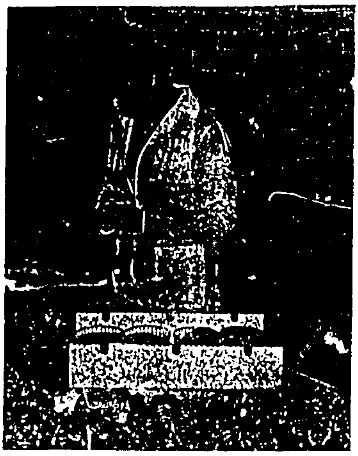
❑ OVER the next few years Colombia aims to become a significant exporter of mangoes to Europe, according to Johann Garbrecht, agroindustrial director of C. I. Pizano Trading SA, a Colombian import-export group recently appointed by new mango association Expofrut S.A. to develop export sales.

Mr Garbrecht told Eurofruit Magazine that the production of mangoes for export is a relatively new phenomenon in Colombia. Most of the mangoes are produced on the Atlantic coast and in the regions of Antioquia, Tolima and Cundinamarca. Tolima is said to have the most advanced production techniques, with over 3,000 ha under mangoes and a varietal range which includes Tommy Atkins, Kent, Keitt and Van Dyke. "Most of the trees are between two and six years old, so the industry is still in its infancy", commented Mr Garbrecht.

Expofrut has 75 members who produce mangoes in Tolima and Cundinamarca. They decided to set up an organization to consolidate supplies available for export. C. I. Pizano Trading is responsible for overseas marketing. Mr Garbrecht believes that over 60,000 tonnes of mangoes will be available annually for sale on the domestic and overseas markets. Export trials to Europe have already been carried out.

The Colombians believe there are good opportunities to develop sales overseas because they are closer to Europe than some of the other supply markets and because they can harvest mangoes twice a year. Picking takes place from October to mid-February and again from June to mid-August.

Mr Garbrecht told Eurofruit Magazine that C.I. Pizano Trading also intends to develop its own fresh fruit export project from 1994. The company already exports significant quantities of canned exotic fruits, canned vegetables, jams, coffee and fruit pulps to Canada, Mexico and the USA. Its parent company is the leading Colombian manufacturer of plywood and particle boards



Physalis is one of the most popular items in the range

Ambrosia completes first export year

❑ BOGOTA based exporter Ambrosia of Colombia Ltda has just completed its first year of exports to Europe.

William E. Cavan Jr of Ambrosia told Eurofruit Magazine that the company had been particularly successful with sales of exotic fruit to the UK market and of strawberries to the UK, Germany and Italy.

"We believe economic recession in Europe reduced our potential growth", said Mr Cavan. "On several occasions, the key issue was price for items that historically moved at higher levels. However, we believe the future is still bright as the items we offer are not widely available elsewhere."

Ambrosia currently has strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, asparagus, mangoes, papayas and seven types of exotic fruit available for export. This year the company plans to export approximately 550 tonnes of fruit overseas. Strawberries will account for 250 tonnes of total exports, exotic fruit 200 tonnes, mangoes and papayas 80 tonnes and asparagus and other items 20 tonnes.

Ambrosia has two farms of its own, one which produces oriental vegetables for the domestic market and another with five hectares of artichokes. The company is also involved in joint ventures with other local growers.

Mr Cavan told Eurofruit Magazine he is sceptical about the development of seafreight for exotic and tropical produce due to the time involved and the lack of frequency. He added that air transport also presents some problems in that all of the major European carriers make a stop in the Caribbean on their way to Europe. "This makes things especially difficult for asparagus and berries", he said.

Grajales consolidates grape output

❑ CREATED in 1948, Grajales Hermanos was the first company to introduce grapes to the Cauca Valley. Today the town of La Unión where Grajales Hermanos has its headquarters is widely considered the leading grape producing region in the country.

Oscar Larrota of Grajales Hermanos told Eurofruit Magazine that the company currently has 402 hectares of its own for table grape production. The company is responsible for marketing 80 per cent of Colombia's total grape crop. The grapes are sold in Colombia's leading supermarket chains, in addition to being exported to Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Panama, Canada and Guadeloupe.

Located to the south-west of the country, the Cauca Valley is situated 980 metres above sea level, with an average temperature of 24°C. Over 1,300 hectares are used for grape production, 70 per cent of which are table grapes. Mr Larrota told Eurofruit Magazine that the main varieties produced include Italia, Queen, Ribier and Siria. The grapes can be picked twice a year, with an average yield of 12 kgs per vine. Around 1,500 vines are planted per hectare, said Mr Larrota.

Dried tropical fruits now available

❑ MANUEL Julián Dávila, manager M of Industria de Frutas La Samaria, has developed a range of new products which are already being exported to Europe. The relatively new company is shipping dried tropical fruits either in bulk or pre-packed to clients in Germany, Switzerland and France.

The range includes dried bananas, pineapples, mangoes, coconuts and golden berries. "Our proximity to the fruit plantations ensures year-round availability of the fruit", said Mr Dávila. "We're located in Santa Marta, which as a Caribbean port offers a range of advantages for overseas marketing."

Paraíso Andino promotes exotics

❑ PARAISO ANDINO-TALAN-QUERAS SA decided to promote its range of exotic fruit in Europe this year by participating with other Colombian exporters at three trade fairs: AGF Totaal in Holland, the Thessaloniki Trade Fair in Greece and ANUGA in Germany.

Managing director Victoria Lucía de Schorr told Eurofruit Magazine that the company plans to export 60 tonnes of exotic fruit this year, including baby bananas, papayas, maracuyas and physalis grown on its own plantations.

"We have successfully exported a range of exotic and tropical fruit to France, Germany and Austria over the past two years", commented Mrs de Schorr. "Although sales are still not at the level we expected to reach by now, they have increased." Mrs de Schorr added that prices have been relatively stable in Europe for exotics.

Prices for exotics in Europe are said to be relatively stable

Colombia should assist airfreight, say EC importers

"WE are very pleased with our supplier Caribbean Exotics. In general the market for exotic fruit is still increasing, although some items from Colombia are simply not developing. Apart from physalis which reports a steady increase in sales, we believe that sales of the so-called "super-exotics" like tamarillo, granadilla, maracuyá and even pitahaya are just not growing as they should. The biggest handicap for these items is price. Unless we find a way to reduce costs we shall not be able to increase sales easily. I do not believe we can lower the price at grower level, but perhaps we can on logistics. Colombia has very high airfreight and limited capacity. There are virtually no regular fast container transport possibilities unless one is "allowed" to put a container on board a banana vessel. The Colombian government should take action on this. Look at countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Venezuela and even Mexico with their favourable or subsidised airfreight rates. These have resulted in lower CIF rates, lower consumer prices and new possibilities. Unless the government acts on this, the exporters will not see the increases they are hoping for in the coming years. In the future other countries with better logistics will arrive in Europe with tamarillos and physalis, making it even harder if not impossible for the Colombian exporters to compete. In my opinion, the Colombians deserve to be given a better chance."

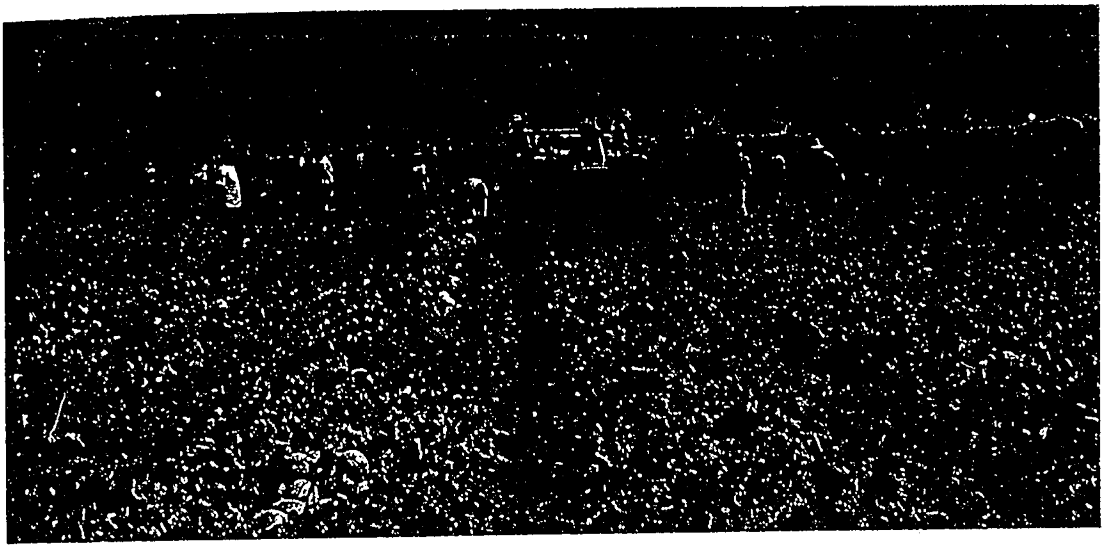
Peter Kooi
TFC Holland BV, the Netherlands

"SALES of exotics are still increasing, but as most of the items are only available in very small volumes prices tend to collapse as soon as there is an oversupply. We receive between 35 and 40 tonnes of plantains each week, in addition to one to three tonnes of exotic fruit such as pitahayas, tamarillos, maracuyas, granadillas, physalis and baby bananas. Mangoes seem to offer good potential from Colombia. Many of the large projects are now entering commercial production. We expect seafreight to become more important in the future as the Carol Service is now calling weekly at the ports of Santa Marta and Cartagena. This is particularly good for mangoes. We import our plantains from Banacol and our exotic fruit from Ocati. So far our experience with Colombia has been very positive. They're nice people to deal with and they take their business very seriously."

Wim van Reeken
Exotimex, Holland

Brazil strikes gold with melons

Fresh produce cultivation in the interior of north-east Brazil is expanding at a pace. Exports to Europe of melons, mangoes and grapes are set to flourish as new investment is made into state infrastructure and individual export operations



With a wider range of melons, the exporters hope to open up new markets in Europe

FOR many years the north-east of Brazil was something of a no-go area. Traditionally the most underdeveloped region in Brazil, the nine states of the north-east are notorious for the so-called sertão, the arid lands of the interior where starvation kills humans and animals due to region's susceptibility to lengthy bouts of drought which can sometimes last year-round.

But things are changing. Over the last decade the interior of the north-east has made a more positive image for itself. The introduction of extensive federal and private irrigation projects has given rise to the development of competitive export "pockets", sizeable tracts of private and state-owned land dedicated to the production of fresh produce for export and the provision of vital supplies of food for the domestic market.

Thought by some to be one of the very last places on earth still to offer massive potential for new development in fruit, the north-east is undoubtedly entering a new phase of growth. Eurofruit Magazine travelled to the north-eastern states of Rio Grande do Norte and Paraíba last month to speak to key exporters about this new stage in the industry's growth.

Scale

José Agripino Maia, governor of the state of Rio Grande do Norte, estimates that 600,000 of his state's total population of 2.4m are directly employed in agriculture, 30,000 of them in fruit production alone. The state is one of the fastest growing production areas in Brazil, producing over 85 per cent of the country's total melon export crop and considerable quantities of mangoes, papayas, grapes and acerola cherries.

It takes two to three hours to drive from Rio do Grande's beach capital Natal to the key fruit growing areas of Assu and Mossoró. Here, in the parched landscape of the interior, lie some of Brazil's leading melon export groups, including Maisa, Frunorte, Agro Knoll and Fazenda São João, each different from the other in terms of size, focus and outlook. Competition between the groups is fierce. All of them are keen to maintain and expand their lucrative share of the fast growing European market for Brazilian produce. And to a certain extent the competition is no bad thing. It has created a dedication to quality and productivity as high as you could hope to find anywhere in the world. And the level of investment by individual companies into new facilities is considerable. Laboratories, state-of-the-art packhouses, refrigeration and labelling equipment are becoming commonplace as more and more cash is ploughed into creating the ultimate export operation.

Port

But the investment would be all be worthless without the improvements that have been made to the ports of Natal in Rio Grande do Norte and Cabedelo in Paraíba. Shut down for many years due to a lack of business, the port of Natal re-opened three years ago at the instigation of Brazilian chartering operation TransOcean Reefers and with assistance of the federal government. Now responsible for 90 per cent of fresh produce shipments from the region, the port operators at Natal hope to gain government approval for investment into proper coldstore facilities. Direct shipments to the ports of Dover and Rotterdam already take place on a weekly basis using TransOcean Reefers and Lauritzen Reefers vessels, but produce for the time being is stored in reefer containers lined up along the quayside. While improvements to the ports' infrastructure are certainly required, it appears quite likely that they will be made in the short to medium-term.

Exports

Exporters in the north-east are predicting anything from a five to 50 per cent increase in individual melon shipments to Europe this season, although export volumes to date have been in line with last year. Some importers consider this to be quite an achievement in view of drought conditions this season.

According to Tradstat, quantities shipped to Europe in 1992 totalled 34,000 tonnes, up from 29,000 tonnes the previous season. Sales to the UK, traditionally Brazil's leading market for melons, rose by 10 per cent and to the Netherlands, its second largest market and gateway to the rest of Continental Europe, by 71 per cent. An average increase of 15 per cent is predicted for melons this season, with a considerable hike in shipments to the UK, the Netherlands and Argentina, Brazil's fourth largest declared market after Finland.

Many of the exporters have found success in Spain and Italy over the past year and a number of them are now looking for new contacts in Continental Europe and in France in particular.

Mango shipments are forecast to be up by five per cent this year. Table grape exports will also rise as a number of exporters enter their second export season.

Investment

Oil, salt, tourism and fruit are the main export activities of the north-east. According to the governor of Rio Grande do Norte, strong emphasis will be placed on developing infrastructure for the fruit business over the next few years.

Projects in hand include the construction of a new dam in Mossoró which will enable the irrigation of a further 15,000 hectares of land and a new 3,000 hectare fruit project under which small companies will work alongside larger enterprises on areas such as seed provision, technology and marketing.

Mr Agripino Maia told Eurofruit Magazine that favourable terms also exist for overseas investors keen to participate in new projects in the state. "I would be glad to receive foreign investors", he said. "We are particularly keen to attract large companies with overseas branches as we want to open up new markets for our products."

Diversification appears to be the key issue of the moment. Many of the exporters Eurofruit Magazine visited are now trialing new melon varieties in addition to other items that they consider offer export potential such as asparagus, papayas, blueberries, passionfruit and acerola cherries.

With a wider range of melons, the exporters hope to open up a number of new markets in Europe in line with varying European requirements on taste, appearance, size and so on. Melon shipments already run from September right through to May, with strong prices achieved at the start of the season when the Spanish melon season draws to a close and again from February to April when the supply of quality Brazilian melons is lower due to rainfall in the north-east.

Over the pages that follow Eurofruit Magazine talks to a number of melon exporters and importers from the north-east and visits Brasfrutas, one of the world's leading producers of pineapples. ■

Janic trials new melon varieties

Europe's largest melon importer pleased with first arrivals

JANIC (Import-Export) Ltd, a UK leading importer of Brazilian melons, has handled Maisa melons on an exclusive basis for the past 14 years. Now considered to be one of the largest melon importers in Europe, Janic plans to concentrate this season on Yellow Honeydew melons from Brazil, followed by Piel de Sapo, Tendral, Galia and orange-fleshed Canterlines. Trials will also run with a new hybrid of long-life Canteloupes.

"So far we have received only limited quantities of Galia but the fruit arrived in excellent condition with superb brix levels", director Terry Watts told Eurofruit Magazine. "We plan to continue trials with this new long-life hybrid and we're very excited about the potential market for seafreighted Galias. Piel de Sapo experiences no problems during the journey by sea as it has a naturally long shelf life."

Janic plans to import in excess of 800,000 cartons of melons this season. Mr Watts believes that growing conditions at Maisa's farms in Mossoró have been perfect, but is wary of being too optimistic because the north-east is highly susceptible to rain at certain points in the season. "I can honestly say that so far this season we have received excellent quality melons with full colour and high brix levels", said Mr Watts. "Maisa knows that quality is of the utmost importance in order to establish an early market position."

Janic will also be importing a full programme of mangoes and grapes from Maisa. The company supplies leading UK supermarket chains like J. Sainsbury, Asda, Morrisons and Waitrose, as well as many of the large catering organizations.

The company's main customer base is with the wholesale markets. "The difference between us and other importers is that we really do work with the wholesalers", said Mr Watts. "We don't use them as a dumping ground. We consider them to be a very important sector of the industry and respect the job that they do."

Mr Watts told Eurofruit Magazine that six importers had received melons on the first five vessels from Brazil. He said that the market had been easier to manage as a result, because last season at one point there were as many as 21 importers receiving fruit from one vessel and always at least 15.

"It is sometimes difficult when some of the less experienced companies start, but we are confident that with our product knowledge, strong customer base and top quality melons we shall have another successful season," he said. ■

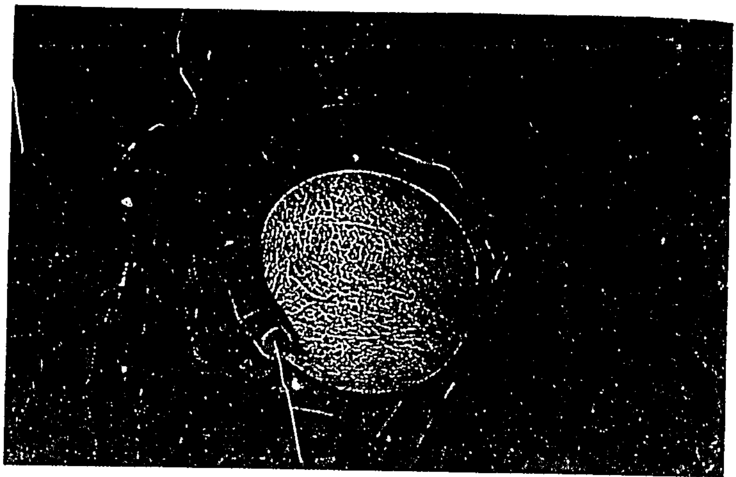
Frunorte steps up investment programme

New facilities planned, new varieties on trial

FRUNORTE (Frutas do Nordeste Ltda), Brazil's second largest exporter of melons and largest grower of mangoes, estimates that it has made savings of $500 per hectare on melon production since it introduced its Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system in August 1990. At $1,000 per hectare, the savings on acerola cherry production have been even higher.

Frunorte president Manoel Dantas Barreto believes the essence of his company lies in working with nature, not against it. "Ecology, productivity and technology are our main aims", he claims. "Environmental protection is an important part of our Quality Management Programme".

Frunorte plants its fruit in layered rows alongside plants that are chosen precisely to attract harmful pests. It uses selected pesticides as and when required and biological methods of control for caterpillars and destruction of crop remains. Vegetation belts are maintained between each field. The company also distributes information on environmentally-friendly production methods to other growers in the Assu Valley where Frunorte's headquarters and farms are situated.



Commercial trials are taking place with a number of newer melon varieties

Investment

Frunorte has invested heavily in its operation. In 1992 around $700,000 were spent on the construction of coldstores covering 800m². These include tunnels, freezing chambers and pre-cooling stores. The company also purchased two 22 tonne refrigerated trucks in order to maintain the cool chain between the farms and the port of Natal, a two and a half hour drive away from Assu. Further investment is being made this year into two new pre-cooling units.

The company has also invested $300,000 in its own laboratory. In addition to carrying out routine analysis checks on areas including tissue and soil analysis, the laboratory is also responsible for monitoring the fruit throughout the production stages to the final point-of-sale. Fruit samples are taken when the vessel is loaded and then again on the fruit's arrival in Europe by Luis Kmentt, Frunorte's permanent representative at exclusive UK importer and partner Red Rose International Ltd.

Frunorte also has a nursery where most of its seedlings are grown and a sister company Tanor (Tecnologia do Nordeste) which manufactures irrigation polyethylene pipes.

Production

With 1,200 hectares planted with melons this season, Frunorte is confident of an export total in excess of one million cartons. Yellow Honeydew melons form the bulk of Frunorte's programme, although a number of other melon varieties are now also available for export including orange-fleshed Canteloupes and Piel de Sapo. Commercial trials are now taking place with less common varieties such as Bonus, a Japanese melon type which is green and tastes like a Galia. Fifty hectares have been planted with Bonus this season and a further 50 are in line to be planted for the 1994-95 season. Other trials include tests with newer types of orange-fleshed varieties.

Frunorte agronomist Breno Lacourt Rodrigues told Eurofruit Magazine that the company yields on average 40 tonnes of melons per hectare. Around 25,000 to 30,000 plants are sown per hectare depending on the variety. "This season we have excellent quality melons despite one of the worst droughts in Assu in 100 years", he told Eurofruit Magazine.

The climate in Assu is reportedly ideal for melon production: 550mm of rainfall per year, relative humidity between 30 and 60 per cent and an estimated 3,000 hours of sunshine. The intense photosynthesis process contributes to a short crop cycle. Melons are ripe for picking within 60 days, a fact which Frunorte claims is something of a world record. Water is sourced from a dam on Frunorte's premises as well as from the Assu river. A self-balancing irrigation system of Israeli design is also in operation.

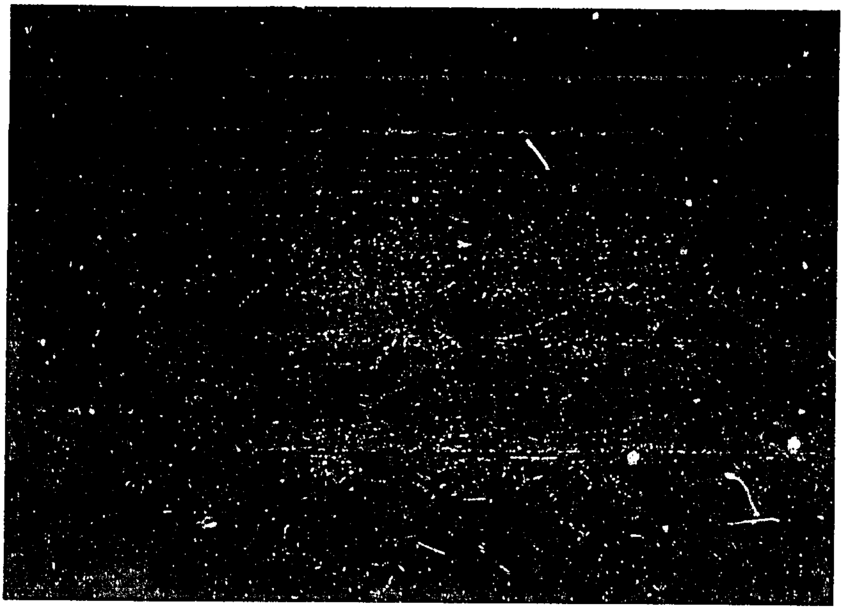
Diversification

In addition to melons, Frunorte has 30 hectares of mangoes and 48 hectares of grapes under production. The mango export crop is estimated at 50,000 cartons for this season and the grape crop at 20,000 cartons. The mangoes produce two crops from October to January. Tommy Atkins, Van Dyke and Sensation are the main varieties grown. The grapes also crop twice, averaging 40 tonnes per hectare each year with a programme which includes Italia, Ribier, Red Globe, Christmas Rose and Ruby Seedless.

Spaghetti squash, grapefruit and acerola cherries complete the company's product range. Frunorte claims to be the sole producer of spaghetti squash in Brazil. The company has carried out mailings and promotional activities to develop sales of the produce on the domestic market and is now examining its potential as an export crop. ■

Geest tops million carton mark with Brazil

Improved quality from Brazil presents Europe with a number of challenges, says Geest



Geest plans to concentrate on the Yellow Honeydew and Piel de Sapo melon varieties

THE start of the Brazilian melon season has given the fruit trade a much needed boost after a relatively lacklustre summer trading period, with strong interest reported in the first European arrivals. Despite one of the worst droughts on record in the north-east of Brazil, melon growing conditions under irrigation have been good, with some exporters predicting a 15 per cent increase in shipments over the 1992-93 season.

Geest plans to import over 1m cartons of Brazilian melons, mangoes, grapes and limes through to May 1994. According to Geest-Sure development director Alan Forrester, over 50 per cent of Geest's melon imports will be sold in Continental Europe this year, to markets stretching from Spain to Scandinavia. Geest plans to concentrate primarily on the Yellow Honeydew and Piel de Sapo melon varieties.

"The quality of the fruit on arrival has been much better than we would normally expect so early on in the season", said Mr Forrester. "The growing conditions have been better than usual. The Piel de Sapo in particular is achieving a stronger following as its higher sugars and fuller flavour become more fully appreciated." Geest says its customers have responded favourably to the first arrivals. The Spanish melon season finished four weeks earlier than usual, which contributed to a higher level of interest.

Mangoes

Brazilian products face relatively low levels of competition from other source countries. This is particularly true for mangoes. Mr Forrester believes that the expansion in production, combined with improved technical standards, will allow Brazil to capitalise on this opportunity.

Geest plans to import approximately 300,000 cartons of mangoes from key producers in the São Francisco Valley and São Paulo production regions this season. Mr Forrester told Eurofruit Magazine that the attractiveness of the US market, combined with the creation of the São Francisco Valley Fruit Board, have increased mango prices this year. "We are already seeing a 75 per cent increase in farm gate prices for export quality fruit", he commented.

Exports to Europe this season from the São Francisco Valley are unlikely to exceed 1m cartons. Drought conditions during July and August have limited crop projections to just a five per cent increase in volume. Exports from the São Paulo region are set to start towards the beginning of November. Climatic conditions there are reported to have been excellent. Mr Forrester believes that there is every indication that the fruit will be much stronger than last year.

Grapes

Geest plans to import Italia and Ruby grapes from Brazil's São Francisco Valley through to Christmas. Grape production is said to be expanding rapidly, although first volumes this season are slightly lower than normal.

Demand has been strong from Argentina, the fourth largest importer of melons from Brazil, with Argentine importers already paying double the value anticipated in Europe for grapes. "This will be a tough nut to crack until Argentine production starts", said Mr Forrester. "However, it is still our intention to import reasonable volumes before moving into other Southern Hemisphere sources.".

Geest believes Brazil offers massive future potential as a supplier of fresh fruit to Europe. "The development of the necessary infrastructure to ship fruit across this huge country and thereafter to Europe is the key consideration", concluded Mr Forrester. "Emphasis on the needs of the European consumer will be the final determinant as to the success or failure of the producers." ■

Brasfrutas refines pineapple production

Brazil's largest pineapple grow-er set to export 9,000 tonnes to Europe this year

At the packhouse, 120 people pack up to 500 boxes of pineapples per hour

PINEAPPLE experts will tell you that it takes 10 years to fine tune agricultural practices on a new pineapple project. Near João Pessoa in the state of Paraíba some 100km due south of Natal, one company is busy doing just that. Now entering its fourth year, Brasfrutas already claims to be the fifth or sixth largest pineapple producer in the world for fresh consumption and, unquestionably, the largest pineapple producer in South America.

"Producing pineapples for fresh consumption is far more demanding than growing pineapples for juice or canning", general manager Enrique Soler told Eurofruit Magazine. "It takes more time to get the production techniques right. At Brasfrutas, we've now reached the end of our first three-year fruiting cycle, having fully planted the farm once. We're now concentrating on refining our production techniques."

Size

The Brasfrutas farm stretches as far as the eye can see. It covers 2.250 hectares, of which 1,500 hectares have already been planted with 70m pineapple plants.

The company also has a 100 hectare nursery which operates on a two-year cycle. Seeds are harvested as required, with 35 hectares planted every month. Mr Soler told Eurofruit Magazine that only 310 hectares remain to be planted for the current phase of development to be completed.

Some 70,000 plants are planted per hectare, with yields of approximately 110 tonnes per hectare of planted crop. "In a three-year cycle we would expect to obtain 170 tonnes of pineapples from each hectare", said Mr Soler. The fruit development period takes 150 days.

Site

Developed in stages since 1990, the Brasfrutas farm is managed by Enrique Soler and Brasfrutas president David Anderson, both of whom have worked previously on pineapple operations in Costa Rica. The project is Brazilian-owned, making it one of just two independently-owned pineapple farms of any size in the world.

Mr Soler told Eurofruit Magazine that Brasfrutas parent company Brasagrícolas approached him in 1990 with the aim of managing an expanding pineapple project. The first task was to find the right area.

Brazil's leading pineapple producing state, Paraíba, was chosen as the ideal location due to its topography, climate and soils. Unlike the clay of Costa Rica, Paraíba's soils are sandy, which makes them easier to work, according to Brasfrutas.

At 40 inches per year, the rainfall levels in Paraíba are also much lower than the annual 135 inches of rainfall recorded on average in Costa Rica. "The Costa Rican soils are hard to work in the rainy season", said Mr Soler. "We don't have that problem here."

Nevertheless, investment in the Brasfrutas project was initially higher than expected due to the need to irrigate. Pineapples cannot withstand drought, so Brasfrutas purchased three pumping systems all of which are linked to each other. The company is now working on the completion of an 11,000 cubic metre reservoir. When the irrigation system is completed in 1994, the entire farm will be irrigated.

Research

Further investment has been made into a research laboratory where all aspects of pineapple production are analysed. "Our aim is to get the highest percentage possible of exportable fruit", commented Mr Anderson. "We're looking for plants which display excellent characteristics both in the fruit and the plant itself." Brasfrutas has already developed the Brasfrutas Emerald, a Smooth Cayenne clone with a strong green crown, good shape and size. The company plans to open an automatic seed selection and treatment centre in 1994.

A total of 550 people work for Brasfrutas. All receive training for their particular line of work. At the packhouse, 120 people pack up to 500 boxes of pineapples per hour. A new packing line is now being installed with the aim of packing a minimum of 1,500 boxes per hour.

Exports this season are set to total 9,000 tonnes and will all be channelled through Belgian Fruit Importers (BFI) in Belgium. Brasfrutas is confident that exports will exceed 20,000 tonnes next year. The fruit is shipped from the port of Cabedelo, located near to the Brasfrutas farm, to the port of Rotterdam.

Over the next few years Brasfrutas also plans to diversify into other fruits. Trials are already underway with mangoes, papayas, melons, blueberries, acerola cherries and a number of leguminous plants, the latter used to enrich the soil in the intermediate pineapple planting stage. ■

Mango Mania

Mangoes are slowly making inroads into the world of mainstream fruit, but high prices are still holding back potential business. Tessa Fox reports on the South African product.

Talk to anyone in the trade about their business and discussion is guaranteed to turn to money before too long. Mention mangoes to mango men and conversation seems to revolve around money. High prices, it appears, are a real problem in the mission to achieve a rising sales curve.

Consumption, to judge by figures from fresh produce market analysts, AGB, is at a pitiably low level. Just two per cent of the British population eat mangoes at all - and they are most likely to be regular buyers. Surprisingly, that two per cent is responsible for putting the UK way ahead of its European partners in mango consumption· back in 1991, Britain imported 12,800 tonnes, France 10,600t and Germany, which traditionally tops the charts in fruit eating, just 9,100t. (Holland's 14,000t total is misleading as it includes re-export.)

And there are positive sounds coming from South Africa. Ian Waller, director of Frusal, the organisation which handles about 35 per cent of South Africa's subtropical fruit exports, is confident that demand is increasing. This demand, he adds, will be met by the new plantings reaching maturity over the next few years and a hoped-for return to better climatic conditions. "South Africa as a whole has been experiencing a period of severe drought which has resulted in a stagnation in the volumes of export fruit, but increased plantings of fibreless cultivars will result in a rapid expansion of the South African mango industry with the return of more favourable climatic conditions," says Mr Waller.

As it stands now, India dominates the mango production map; the subcontinent grows way over half of the world's total mango output which stands at around 16m tonnes. This huge volume leaves South Africa without even so much as a mention on the official production tables, but the country has a significant role to play in the import game. Of total EU imports in 1991 of 53,200t, South Africa supplied 4,100t; it may not seem a great deal, but given the very fragmented nature of the beast, this tonnage puts the RSA in the number three slot after Brazil and the USA. All told, South Africa's mango exports hover around the 5,000t mark, just 10 per cent of the country's total production - it is, says Alastair Philipson of FIDI, which markets the Bella Nova brand, a case of 'could do better'.

The mango message is fighting to be heard in Britain and, predictably, the multiple sector is playing a prominent role in trying to steer the fruit away from the shady realm of exotica to the high volume, rapid turnover and relatively low cost kingdom of mainstream fruit. Already, says Mr Philipson, supermarkets are doing an excellent job in ripening product and putting it on shelves in that crucial ready-to-eat condition that will tempt the first time buyer. Greater emphasis on a good blushed appearance is also helping turn things around.

But price remains the real stumbling block. Occasional supermarket price promotions may well up sales of the fruit for the period of the push, but the normal 89p-99p tag is standing in the way of the fruit rubbing shoulders in any meaningful way with apples and oranges. Mike Desai, Sainsbury's deputy manager of fruit buying, would like to see the retail price drop by almost half: "It should be under 50p," he says. "The retail value of mangoes is too high and this is putting people off." Sudhir Mehta of importers Minor, Weir and Willis agrees: "The price has come down to around £5-£5.50 from £7 just recently. It is heading in the right direction, but it needs to drop further if the fruit is to sell in the same volumes as peaches and nectarines." Alastair Philipson adds: "I would like

(continued on page 14

Mike Otty, assistant general manager of Lisbon Estates.

:ontinued from page 12)

ıangoes to be accepted as a ,eneral item on the produce helves, but it is not going to appen overnight and price is a najor reason for this."

Nevertheless, Sainsbury's cur- ent push on South African Zill nd Tommy Atkins mangoes down to 79p each) has been uccessful: "This is the third week of the promotion and the signs are very encouraging, though it is too early to say what rise in sales there has been," says Mike Desai. Sainsbury has also been the force behind educational drives such as the recent 'Magic of Mangoes' leaflets.

In the wholesale sector, the surge in demand for mangoes before Christmas saw prices rise sharply on Glasgow market at that time. 'Mr Mango' of the wholesale trade - at least he is known as such in Glasgow - is Stuart Carmichael, director of exotics specialist, J Carmichael & Co Ltd: "I'd normally get £7 for Venezuelan 12s, but before Christmas I was getting £12 no bother for Peruvian. The South African fruit is likely to come in at the £6 mark," he says. He does not rate the South African fruit as highly as the Venezuelan or Brazilian product he is working at the moment, however: "The taste and smell are not the same. Keitt and Haden are definitely better from South America."

Sales of mangoes in Glasgow are not huge, he adds, because the ethnic population is small, but he believes that more labelling of fruit would improve matters: "It's the same old story - more education is needed." For Sudhir Mehta, education on varietal differences is crucial: "Consumers must learn that there are some very good green varieties around such as Julie and Kent. The green varieties tend to be less fibrous too.

"I believe that Haden combines all the best characteristics of smell, colour and texture, but it does not have such a long shelf life. Sensation has a good future, but Tommy Atkins tends to be a bit fibrous."

Price and consumer ignorance aside, the short length of the South African mango season is also preventing them from becoming a core product. There is reasonable continuity from December through to March but, Mike Desai says: "I don't envisage a kiwifruit-style explosion with mangoes. There has to be continuity of supply and good quality all year round. If that happens and the price comes down, then maybe it could happen, but I think there are great benefits in mangoes retaining their exotic connotations. It's something different, isn't it."

But, as worldwide production increases, market forces dictate that price will drop and, even if mangoes never compare to bananas in volume sales, they will start to muscle in more on the mainstream commodities. As Sudhir Mehta puts it: "In five years' time there will be a lot more product and prices will be lower. Growers will not be happy, but the consumer will."

Packhouse work.

Checking fruit in the Lisbon Estates packhouse.

Packing in Lisbon

TEMPERATURES have soared to the high 30s, there is a sweet, heavy smell of mango on the air and the humidity levels are energy-sapping. Conditions in the packhouse, with its backdrop noise of crashing machinery, are far from easy.

But the set up at Lisbon Estates in South Africa's eastern Transvaal, is one of the most important in the country. In volume terms it is certainly the largest producer, handling 60 tonnes of the fruit a day in the height of the brief December to February packing season from an annual crop of 200,000 cartons.

Activity at the time of the *Journal's* visit was at its peak - fruit is vigorously hosed down on arrival, dipped for five minutes in warm water, dried, waxed and buffed before the quality control, grading, packing and cooling stages take over. Any fruit which doesn't make the grade either for export or the local market is channelled into Lisbon's processing wing where fruit is dried, juiced, pulped, or made into chutney or sweets. "There is a total onslaught on mangoes here. Nothing is wasted," says assistant general manager Mike Otty.

Out in the orchards, 45 000 trees aged between three and 45 years, seemingly drip mangoes, but volumes are lower than usual because of the lack of rain. It is not entirely a bad thing, though - less fruit on the branches has led to bigger individual fruit sizes and better colour, says Mr Otty.

The early Tommy Atkins variety is still the flagship variety, though the likes of Heidi and Sensation are fast becoming popular fruit in the latter part of the season and plantings of these are increasing.

On the export front, however (about 75 per cent of exports are done through Frusal under the Lisbon Estates brand name) Tommy Atkins outperforms the rest - it makes an export rate of nigh on 70 per cent, compared to an average of 50 per cent and just 30 per cent for Sensation.

The Tommy Atkins Mango

Mangoes, the most popular fruit of the tropics, are capturing the imagination of consumers in Europe, where sales have increased to the point where they now rival any exotic.
Bella Nova supplies mangoes all year round, whose attractive appearance is matched by their beguilingly aromatic flavour - and easy eating qualities.
They always meet the same high standards, as do all our varieties of fruit, from the four corners of the earth.
For Bella Nova, the world is our orchard. For you, Bella Nova is your guarantee of freshness and quality.

The World is our Orchard

Bella Nova

Banana regime under attack from big guns

The EU banana market looks for a safe haven six months after the introduction of new import rules

THE EUROPEAN Commission is putting the finishing touches to an in-depth review of the balance of supply and demand in the banana market in the European Union six months after the introduction of new banana import rules.

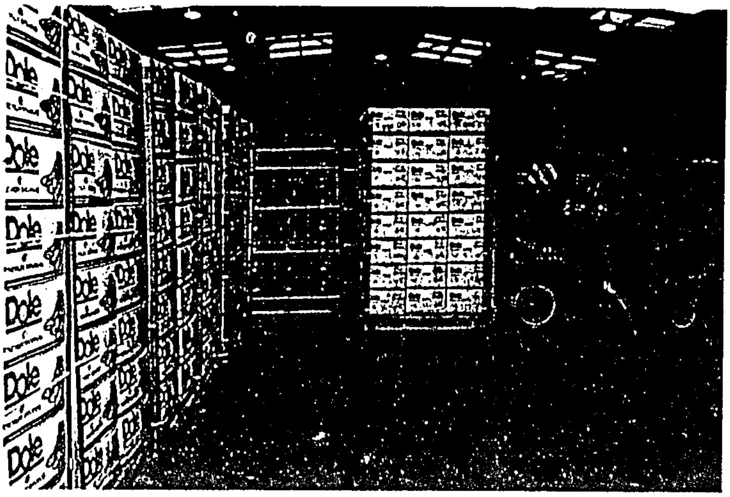
The so-called supply balance forecast report, a legal requirement under the terms of the new regime and referred to by Alexandre Tilgenkamp, the head of the Commission's DGVI agriculture directorate, during his round-up of EU policy at the CIMO congress in Brussels last October, is likely to make frightening reading, say insiders. The European banana market has been in deep trouble since the introduction of new common European import rules last July.

Europe's difficulty in meeting the demands of these new rules so soon after their introduction was almost inevitable. Ironically, it is perhaps the only thing which has secured almost unanimous agreement in the banana trade for some time. They all knew the new banana regime was going to be tough. It seems it has lived up to its expectations.

It remains to be seen whether the European Commission's plans to apply a 2m tonne quota have to be revised after the report has been filed. European importers are hoping that the early allocation of bananas will at least defeat the uncertainty in the market which prevailed for several months after the beginning of July.

Observers say the European banana market has been divided down the middle between north and south rather than east and west. Markets in the "north", the traditional dollar banana markets, have seen a shortage of both bananas and import licences as well as higher prices and higher quality, while banana markets in the "south" — this includes the UK — have seen large volumes of new arrivals of bananas due to the high availability of licences, which have brought a steady decline in market prices.

Inevitably, a broad-brush analysis of this kind is open to interpretation.



Now ACP bananas have made in-roads in the UK through regular arrivals to the port of Dover

But it serves as a useful shorthand to understand what has been going on.

It is under these conditions that the European Commission has continued to be the target of intense sniper fire which, repeatedly, has failed to hit its target properly. But the European Commission seems likely to face much heavier artillery now being manoeuvred into position.

First, indications are expected soon of what is almost certain to be a damning report against the new regime from a special GATT panel which, although its full effect may be blunted by a wider GATT agreement, is likely to box the European Commission into a corner. It is going to be a mighty political problem to overcome.

Second, German banana importers, again led by Atlanta AG's troublesome chairman and chief executive Bernd-Artin Wessels operating under new foreign ownership, claim to have forced a breakthrough on the issue of quotas. A mortal blow to the new regime was struck, they say, by the German High Court in early December when it granted a temporary injunction to both Atlanta and Weichert & Co, Del Monte's distributor in northern Germany, giving short-term access to additional dollar banana licence.

The judges in Frankfurt have secured for Atlanta an extra 12,000 tonnes or 600,000 boxes of bananas for the month of December at ECU100 per tonne while Weichert has been allocated an extra 640 tonnes under the same conditions. It sets an important precedent, Mr Wessels told Eurofruit Magazine, for other banana importers to apply for similar temporary injunctions. 'This is the beginning of the end", he warned.

It may all be wishful thinking on the part of Mr Wessels. If it does go ahead, it sets the German courts, and therefore by implication the German government, on a collision course with the European Commission and with EU law because the quantities exceed the 2m tonne tariff. Importantly, the argument will focus debate once again on Germany, where the struggles against the new regime before and after July 1 dominated the headlines.

In Germany, banana operators say the banana regime has had just the reaction they were predicting. Consumption is dropping, according to data collected on behalf of Dole Fresh Fruit Europe Ltd & Co, on the back of rising prices. Importers have been unable to access the volumes of bananas they want for the market and their attempts to source volumes of ACP fruit have been unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, some have still managed to grab newspaper headlines by trumpeting what they say are the more absurd consequences of the new banana regime: Frankfurt-based importer Anton Dürbeck GmbH has succeeded in getting newcomer licence for his grandchildren and household pets, while Atlanta AG is taking part in a bananas-for-trucks barter deal between Daimler Benz and the government of Ecuador.

Elsewhere, in the former protected markets of the new European Union, established banana importers and distributors are having to come to terms with market conditions which have also changed.

These changes have been perhaps at their most dramatic in Spain and France, formerly Europe's two most protected banana markets. Here, established importers say banana prices have dropped as a result of new volumes of dollar bananas in particular making their way onto the market. Although interestingly, consumer demand has reportedly held up strongly for European and ACP bananas.

Spain is seeing new entrants to the market, many of them traditional dollar players. Chiquita Brands, now managed in Europe from the Geneva office of Chiquita International SA, has been discharging full loads of bananas into the Spanish port of Sagunto since September. One Madrid-based importer is already constructing a 40-room pressurised ripening complex to accommodate some 50,000 boxes of bananas from Chiquita every week, according to *Valencia Fruits*.

"Spain is an important market at both consumer and commercial levels in Europe", Tony Freire, Chiquita Brands' development director for Southern Europe told the Spanish trade newspaper. "We are hoping to develop it as best we can so that we can market Chiquita bananas from all the different origins as well as a wide range of other fresh fruits". Chiquita has set up offices in both Spain and Portugal.

In France and the UK, bananas from traditional sources, the DOM-TOM territories and the Windward Islands, Jamaica and others respectively, have come under intense pressure from new ACP sources. While the predicted invasion of dollar bananas has just not happened, this relentless pressure from ACP producers in Africa does not look at if it is going to ease. Reportedly one senior French banana importer was even predicting arrivals into France from French sources (old-EC and ACP) of 77,000 tonnes of bananas in the month of December alone, over 90 per cent higher than arrivals for the same period in 1992.

Meanwhile, banana producers in the Ivory Coast and the Cameroons are in danger of exceeding their quotas, industry experts say. Both countries have been claiming these were already too low and are likely to be lobbying hard for greater access to the EU or for more substantial aid to tide them over. Notwithstanding significant improvements in fruit quality, banana producers in Martinique and Guadeloupe are likely to have have seen their market share in France eroded by banana imports from Ivory Coast and the Cameroons in particular.

Volumes from the Cameroons are also turning around the banana market in the UK. Direct fortnightly arrivals of some 60,000 boxes of bananas from the African banana producing countries have attracted new business from the supermarkets in particular. While Del Monte Fresh Produce (UK) Ltd has been importing and ripening bananas from these sources for several years, the lack of dedicated ripening capacity for Dole and minority partner Compagnie Fruitière would suggest that significant new moves may come.

Indeed, Dole Food Co chairman and chief executive David Murdock told US analysts as recently as last November that the company is "heavily engaged" in the acquisition of ripeners and distributors in Europe. Five countries were visited by him recently and negotiations with "several eager sellers" were expected to continue and to be completed in 1994.

Rising competition at a slow time of the year for the banana trade has had a unsurprising knock-on effect on traditional market supplies: analysis of UK green boat prices reveals a 20 per cent drop in the price of a tonne of Windward Island bananas between the first week in July and the first week in December. Eurofruit Magazine understands that established banana importers have demanded more moderation from new suppliers to the market.

In these conditions, established UK banana companies have come under pressure. Geest, for example, has seen its share price continue to fall from the spectacular heights achieved at the start of the year when the new banana regime was brokered. In its defence, Geest points out that current market conditions are in line with its predictions earlier this year and are not surprising given the historic decline in demand in Europe in the last quarter of the year.

At the same time, Geest and Fyffes, its UK rival, have been involved in a complicated argument over banana licences which, in spite of an interim injunction going against Fyffes, is likely to come before the High Court in early 1994. ■

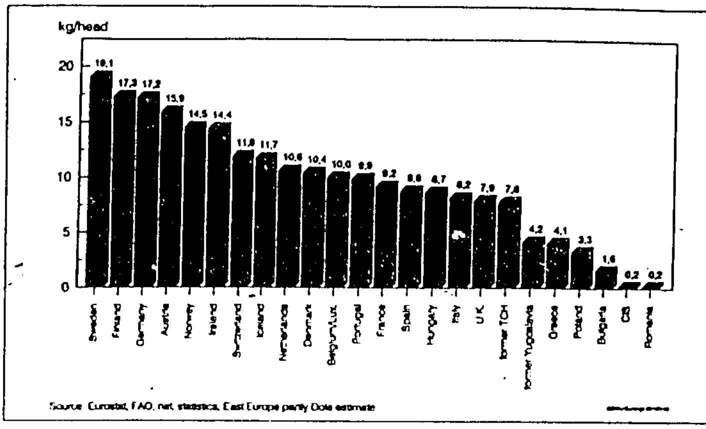
Fewer households are buying bananas

Negative effect of Brussels banana policy in Germany, says Dole Fresh Fruit Europe

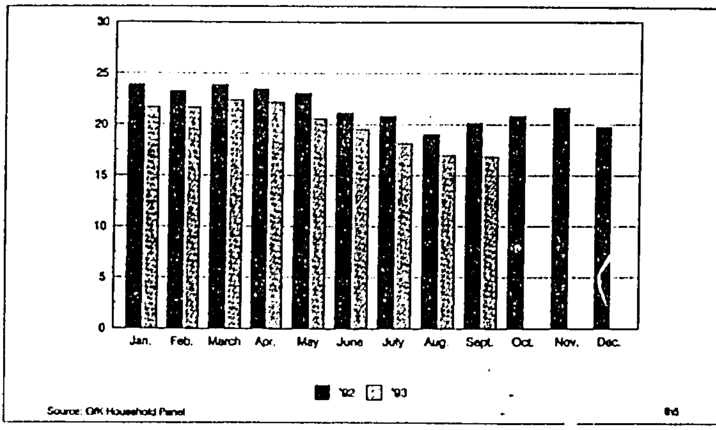
MANY OF the articles and speeches covering the effect of the EC's new banana regime tend to deal more with overriding "issues" such as protectionism versus free trade, or the effect upon employment in the producing or distributing countries. One aspect that sometimes tends to be a little overlooked is the effect upon purchasing behaviour.

All the different shades of opinion in the fruit trade are at least united on the one objective of promoting the consumption of fruit. The aim of the EC banana regime should therefore not be to reduce per capita consumption in the single EC market to the levels of the hitherto protected markets such as the UK or France, but to increase it to the levels in Germany, for example. (See graph 1)

Unfortunately consumer research data now available for Germany indicates that the effect of the EC's regulations has been a significant reduction in banana consumption. Dole Fresh Fruit Europe monitors consumer trends in the fresh fruit market through a panel of 5,000 households, which is a representative sample of the German population. In each household each day's purchases are recorded in a special diary detailing where the merchandise was bought, how much it cost, etc. This information is sent to the GFK research institute in Nuremberg at the end of every week. The combined monthly and quarterly reports provide a reliable basis for an unbiased assessment of recent market developments. Graph 2 shows that right from the beginning of 1993 fewer German households have been buying bananas every month than in the previous year. To some extent this is a reflection of the general recession, reduced import volumes, and also perhaps the negative prepublicity about the proposed banana regime.



Graph1: per capita consumption of bananas in Europe in 1992



Graph 2: household purchasing of bananas (in millions)

Since July 1993, however, this negative trend has accelerated dramatically. Not only are fewer households buying bananas, but the quantities purchased have also decreased overproportionally in the months since the new regime came into effect - see graph 3. In September for example 16 per cent fewer households purchased 27 per cent less bananas. That means that the 17m German households who did buy bananas bought on average 11 per cent less than a year ago.

The ostensible reason would appear to be the sharp increases in retail prices since July. (See graph 4) In the five new federal states in eastern Germany, where unemployment in high and disposable income low, banana consumption has declined particularly sharply. However, average prices still appear relatively reasonable at DM 2.34/kg in September.

Perhaps the decline in consumption is less a result of high prices than of other factors such as promotional support and quality. In this context it is significant that the share of unlabelled and other brands increased from 38 per cent in the third quarter of 1992 to 44 per cent in 1993. Bananas are one of the staples of the fresh produce department. Well-merchandised banana displays attract customers who then spontaneously buy other (fresh) products. Certainly demand for bananas decreases commensurate with price increases. However, the recent decline in consumption since July is probably also a reflection of a decline in promotions for bananas since July.

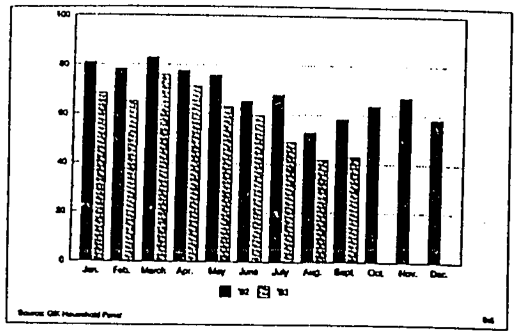
Perhaps retailers are ignoring the "sales-generator" effect of the banana and enjoying the short term benefits of increased turnover at lower volume levels. Each month since July has seen a higher level of consumer retail expenditure than last year. (See graph 5) However, the banana's share of the average shopper's fruit basket has dropped from 25 per cent in September 1992 to 20 per cent in 1993.

It is also significant that the proportion of bananas bought at discounters has increased sharply since July 1993. In western Germany, for example, the discounters' market share was up from 42 per cent in the third quarter of 1992 to 47 per cent in 1993.

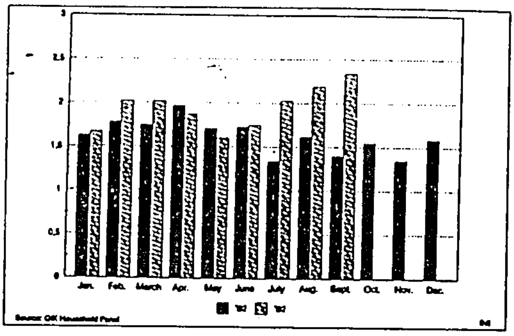
German per capita consumption of bananas certainly increased dramatically following the discount chains' decision to sell a limited range of fresh produce in the mid-1980s. Wide distribution was one factor in making the banana Germany's most popular fruit at retail level. High quality, strong promotional support, and professional merchandising were also essential to achieve penetration levels of 96 per cent, and per capita consumption of over 17kg per year.

Mr Tilgenkamp's concept of "organised free trade" is perhaps perfectly viable if the organisation works. Alas, the new EC regime is more characterised by inefficiency. The process is one of permanent litigation, of recurring delays in determining quota volumes, and of increased administration and bureaucracy. All this, together with reduced promotional support by retailers, seems to be resulting in an alarmingly rapid decline of the banana's consumer acceptance in Germany.

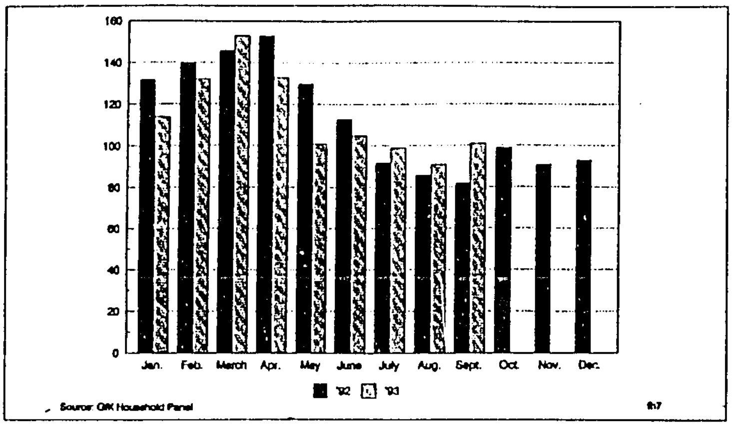
It is certainly true that the regime is not yet properly established. That is precisely the point. The banana is one of the major "sales-generators" of the fresh produce department. The trend in Germany, since July, is increasingly negative. The effect might therefore be to depress the overall level of fruit consumption – see



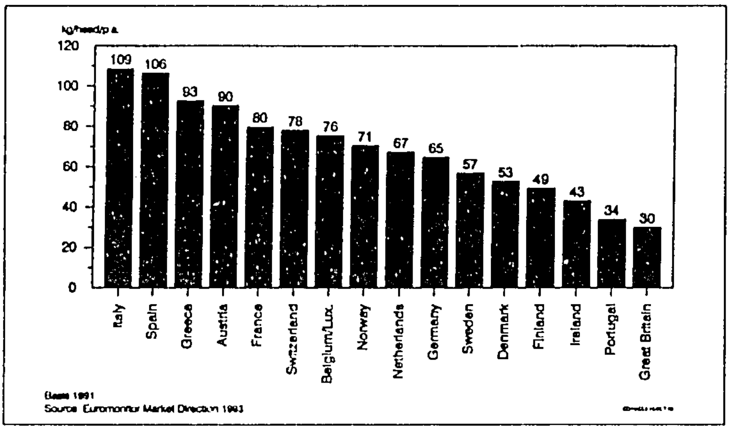
Graph 3: retail sales volume (in 1,000 tonnes)



Graph 4: consumer prices (in DM/kg)



Graph 5: retail sales turnover (in million DM)



Graph 6: per capita consumption of fresh fruit per country (in kgs)

graph 6 for the international per capita comparison.

The basic principles of the EC's agricultural policy need to be reviewed in the light of such statistical analysis of the effects of the new banana regime. Is it sensible to put so much financial emphasis on "organising" the production, rather than on promoting consumption? Surely the first evidence of the effects of the EC's new banana regime, together with the accumulated evidence regarding the inefficiencies of the Common Agricultural Policy, indicates that it is high time for some fresh thinking in how best to "organise" the produce business.■

Country Focus
Thailand

Thailand's food processing industry, propelled by a more export-oriented economy, has been moving in the direction of value added processing. APFI outlines the dominant and growing sectors, which are set to drive the industry to greater heights.

Veering towards value added processing

THE availability of relatively inexpensive skilled labour and the favourable investment policies on the opening up of the Indochina region has helped Thailand develop into a newly industrialised country. Although the economy in general has moved into areas such as textile production, manufacturing of electronic components, automotive parts, tin and steel, household products, agriculturally-related industries remains the mainstay of the economy, representing almost 20 percent of the country total annual exports. The abundance of agricultural produce and the large coastal territory have been reasons for the country remaining as one of the major producers of agricultural products. The total export earnings reaped by the nation from this sector reached nearly US$35.1 billion in 1992, with a large portion of this earning consisting of tapioca flour, frozen chicken, canned fruits and vegetables.

Table 1 Thailand canned food exports in 1992

Canned food items	Volume (tonnes)	Value (US$million)
Canned seafood		
Canned tuna	243,488	523.0
Other canned fishes	7,565	8.7
Canned sardine	25,824	31.1
Canned mackeral	15,004	17.9
Canned salmon	1,132	3.2
Canned crab meat	9,687	51.8
Canned prawn, shrimps	39,194	304.4
Canned baby clam	5,026	12.3
Canned squid	2,454	6.6
Frozen tuna loin	35,482	82.4
Canned pet food	109,967	123.1
		1164.1
Canned fruits		
Canned pineapple	491,367	322.7
Canned rambutan with pine	3,294	4.2
Other canned mixed fruits	50,435	35.7
Canned rambutan	1,558	2.0
Canned lychee	9,789	13.7
Canned longan	7,973	11.3
Canned mango	6,716	5.7
Canned papaya	1,710	1.4
Canned guava	230	0.2
Canned banana	357	0.3
Other canned fruits	16,120	16.0
Pineapple juice concentrate	65,130	66.0
Canned pineapple juice	14,148	12.2
		491.4
Canned vegetables		
Canned baby corn	36,766	32.2
Canned mushroom	7,277	9.8
Canned asparagus	1,394	2.2
Canned bamboo shoots	48,681	37.3
		81.5
Grand total		1,737.0

(Source : Thai Food Processors Association 1993)

Towards value-added processing

With the rapid industrialisation of the economy and the surplus in agricultural produce, value-added agricultural processing industry has become the backbone of Thailand's agricultural industry over the years. Following the increased demand for Thai products, more and more farmers have found a market for their produce in the food processing industry. The recent years have seen more farmers producing raw materials for this important export-oriented sector, greatly boosting the value-added sectors. From a country dependent on selling commodities in bulk on the world market, Thailand has now switched to selling high quality processed foods to international markets.

Among the main components of this value-added industry are canned, frozen and dehydrated products. Between the three processes, canning is by far the most important and most widely used method to add value to agricultural produce, while dehydration is still in its early stages and growing at a slow pace, as both overseas markets and domestic markets are still relatively small. This method is used to some degree for virtually all products produced in Thailand, ranging from fruits and vegetables to seafood. The canned food industry and in particular, those of seafood, tuna, fruits and vegetables and pineapple, have been showing some dynamic growth over and above all other processed food sectors, contributing substantially to the economy's foreign exchange earnings. The combined export value for these four groups for 1991 was well over US$1.75 million, more than 25 percent of all agricultural exports.

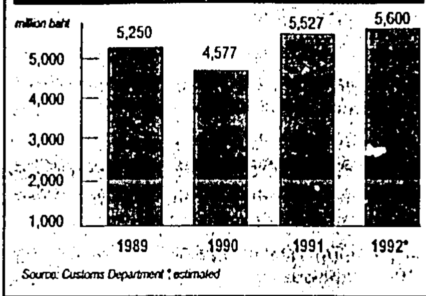
Growth sectors

Canned seafood Since the establishment of the canning industry, Thailand has become the world's largest manufacturer and exporter of canned seafood. Its well known reputation remains untainted for the past decades. In the top ten export ranking for Thai products in 1992, canned seafood was the 9th highest exporter, accounting for almost US$910 million in export earnings, an equivalent of 20 percent of the total food exports in 1992. Growth prospects for this sector remain upbeat. Export earnings is projected to increase by 9 percent, reaching US$992 million in 1993.

Of the huge volume of canned seafood exported annually, canned tuna took up the largest portion, accounting for nearly US$400 million to US$600 million worth of exports. The country dominates the world market with a more than 50-percent share. Greater health and nutritional awareness amongst consumers worldwide have resulted in an increase in the consumption of and demand for white meat. As a result, tuna fishing and processing have expanded rapidly. To date, there are approximately 20 tuna canneries located in Thailand, producing nearly US$500 million worth of products for exports every year.

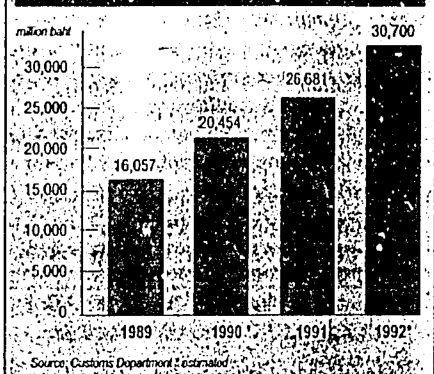
Although Thailand has maintained its position as a quality tuna packer, competition has intensified in its major export markets such as the US and Europe with the stricter Food and Drug regulations. Tuna processors, in the strive to improve their competitive edge, are improving production processes to ensure that all tuna products meet international health standards, as well as the demands of consumers. Additionally, they are also placing greater emphasis on the environment in the production and processing of their products. The Thai government, in response to this, has recently promulgated

Exports of frozen squid, cuttlefish and octopus



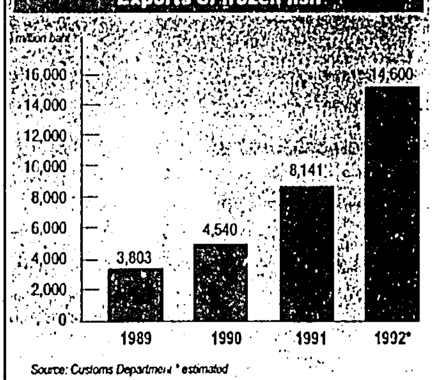
Source: Customs Department * estimated

Exports of frozen prawn



Source: Customs Department * estimated

Exports of frozen fish



Source: Customs Department * estimated

Table 2 : Exports of canned pineapple in Thailand

Year	Volume (Tonnes)	Value (US$million)
1987	259,807	145.4
1988	341,414	182.3
1989	345,248	171.6
1990	398,337	215.4
1991	417,669	283.2
1992	491,367	322.7

(Source : Thai Food Processors Association 1993)

Table 3 : Exports of pineapple juice concentrate in Thailand

Year	Volume (Tonnes)	Value (US$million)
1987	28,220	17.4
1988	40,167	26.1
1989	58,636	34.4
1990	73,680	62.1
1991	79,960	103.1
1992	65,130	65.9

(Source : Thai Food Processors Association 1993) laws curbing the use of certain fishing methods to protect dolphins, sea turtles and other marine life. Relevant authorities have also been invited to enter Thailand and monitor the production process of canned tuna to reconfirm the country's emphasis on environment-friendly fishing methods.

Besides canned tuna and fish, a variety of other products from the sea are also processed and sold successfully on the world market. Thai squid, crab and baby clams have earned a good reputation for quality on the world market, and sales of these products are soaring. For 1992, exports of squid totalled well over US$6.5 million, crab over US$50 million and baby clams over US$12.2 million.

Frozen seafood Thailand enjoys similar success with its frozen seafood sectors, exporting about 75 percent of its output. Exports in 1991 reached a total of 332,638 tonnes valued at US$1.35 billion, representing a growth of 23 percent in volume and about 25 percent in value. Furthermore, a steady increase in freezing was noted for the marine catch from 12.8 percent in 1986 to 18.8 percent in 1990. This is evident in the number of freezing plants and cold storage facilities, which increased from 94 units in 1989 to 108 units in 1990. Among the species used for freezing, the most important are shrimp, crab and cephalopods, most of which are exported. The exports of frozen shrimp in 1992 reached 133,892 tonnes valued at US$1.2 billion, an amount which exceeds that of the previous year by 16 percent. Similarly, export of frozen cephalopods rose to 62,575 tonnes in 1992 from 48,208 tonnes in 1990. Exports for frozen fish, excluding fillets, in 1992 also recorded an increase of more than 60 percent over the previous year, registering some 84,000 tonnes in 1992.

With rising demand for both canned and frozen seafood comes the increasing need for raw material. However, as most varieties of seafood cannot be farmed, the processing industry is dependent on Thailand's fishing fleet for raw material supply. This is the greatest challenge for the seafood processing industry now as new ways of ensuring that the present supply of raw material be maintained have to be found and if possible, increased. Aquaculture production has since been intensified and fishing joint ventures with neighbouring countries were set up to complement the imported raw materials.

Canned pineapple Pineapple, second to tuna, is Thailand's largest exported canned commodity. Currently, Thailand ranks as the world's largest exporter of canned pineapple, with exports reaching 490,000 tonnes in 1992. Constant research to improve plant species has resulted in higher yield produce. Even though land base has shrunk, overall production has remained steady, and in most cases grown. Innovative new farming techniques which make use of more intensive yet environmentally less damaging methods have resulted in higher quality products.

While the market for canned pineapple has been considered saturated, pineapple juice and concentrate on the other hand, is fast becoming a growing sector, with the sector's output reaching 80,000 tonnes in 1992. The two products in particular, have experienced a two-fold increase over the past four years, increasing in volumes from 40,200 tonnes in 1988 to 80,000 tonnes in 1992. These developments have attracted new players such as K T Pineapple and Produce Co to venture into pineapple juice processing. The company recently invested some US$3.9 million to produce 3,600 tonnes of concentrated pineapple juice. To further boost the industry's performance, the Agriculture Ministry of Thailand has recently appointed a new committee to monitor the production, processing and marketing of pineapple and its by-products. It was formed to cope with the expected global economic downturn which will in turn reduce the demand for Thai canned pineapple pieces and juice.

Government incentives

With the increasing importance of the canning industry in particular, and the food export sector as a whole to Thailand's economy, the government has placed greater emphasis on these sectors since its Sixth National Economic Development Plan. This is especially so in view of the increasing labour costs, costs of production of these goods as well as competition for export from countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, China and other emerging developing nations. These countries are a threat to Thailand's competitive edge.

To ensure that Thailand's food processors and farmers will continue to benefit from this highly lucrative export sector, the Thai government, through the Department of Export Promotion and the Department of Economics and Commerce, is formulating policies and implementing plans to make Thailand's value-added products more competitive and attractive to foreign buyers and consumers. These policies and plans include reduction of import taxes on raw materials used in the production of packaging materials, packaging equipment and processing machinery. In addition, promotions of Thai food products stressing quality are organised regularly in many countries around the world through commercial offices based in the Thai embassies located there. Most importantly however, government departments are becoming more involved in the promotion of Thailand's products as well as the monitoring of production practices to ensure that the products actually meet and exceed the standards set globally for such products. APFI

Thailand's Charoen Pokphand Group is a name well known in the food industry. APFI finds out how its relatively new fruit and vegetable division, C P Natural Produce which specialises in Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) fruits and vegetables, has managed to continue its success in the midst of competition from up and coming China and Vietnam.

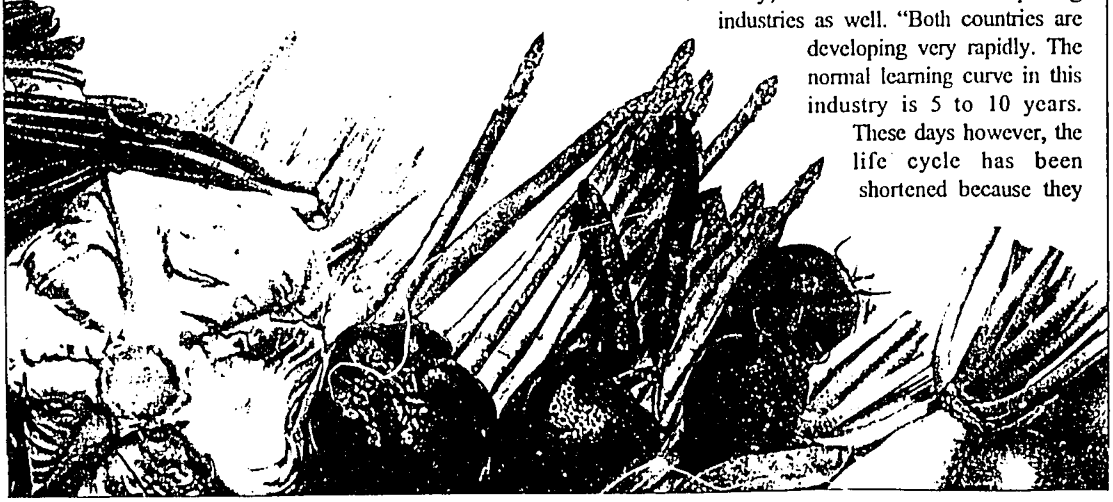
Frozen produce gets a fresh approach

OVER the past two years, C P Natural Produce has become considerably export-oriented, with 95 percent of its products worth US$3.9 million, going to markets as far as Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, United States and even Europe. Japan leads the pack of importers of fruits and vegetables, absorbing 80 percent of the company's exports. The other 20 percent of its exports is shipped to Europe and the US, and a small percentage to Singapore and Taiwan. The prospects for growth opportunities in these areas remain optimistic, with the Japanese market expected to grow at 50 percent, the European market at 20 percent and Asia at a modest rate of 10 to 15 percent in the next two years.

The success of C P's export trade can be attributed to the rapid development and expansion of Thailand's food processing industry. The country's abundant supply of raw materials has enabled the company to develop and improve the quality of products to international standards. Moreover, being a subsidiary of its trading arm, C P Intertrade, the distribution of its freshly packed products has been made faster and more efficient — an important aspect for highly perishable goods like fruits and vegetables. "We have an advantage over others because we have so many trading representatives in the different countries. Such network has made us more competitive." said Prasert Chiarakul, section manager (fruits and vegetables division).

Staying competitive

Although C P's growth path has been fairly smooth in the past two years, its competitive edge in the fruit and vegetable exports may soon be eroded. Since the liberalisation of China and Vietnam, both countries have been developing its various industries, not only that of frozen fruit and vegetable industry, but in all other competing industries as well. "Both countries are developing very rapidly. The normal learning curve in this industry is 5 to 10 years. These days however, the life cycle has been shortened because they



learn from other's experience and are able to benefit from it," Chiarakul said.

Chiarakul explained that the investment for fresh fruits and vegetables is not very high as growth opportunities in this area is projected at a mere 5 percent. Nevertheless, new players continue to flood the market due to the absence of barriers to entry. This growing supply of fresh produce manufacturers in a stable growth industry has prompted Japan, its major importer, to seek out new and cheaper suppliers, such as those in China and Vietnam. C P has expressed a willingness to lower prices so as to maintain its competitiveness, but stiff competition from the Chinese, Vietnamese as well as new industry players have rendered a price cut an ineffective option.

"The vegetable business is unlike the poultry or seafood business, where specialisation is the key to success. When supply meets demand, manufacturers have to shift to another product in order to remain competitive."

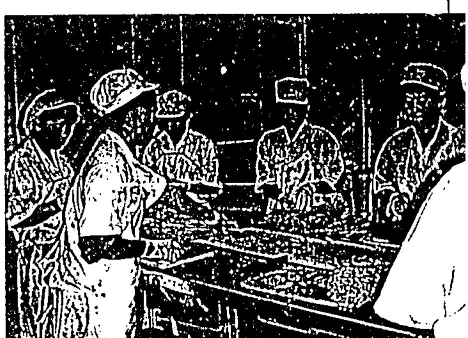
— Prasert Chiarakul, section manager (fruits and vegetable division)

A team of six workers prepares the cooled asparagus for blast freezing by stacking them neatly into square trays lined with metal gauze.

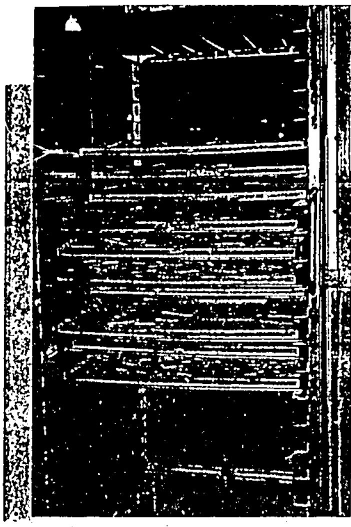
Minimal processing, maximum quality

A glimpse into the processing and packaging operations on its 3,500 sq m factory floor in Pathumthani reveals the strict sanitary standards imposed on the production. 3,000 tonnes of individually quick Frozen (IQF) produce and 2,000 tonnes of fresh produce are processed annually. Among the produce processed are baby corn, asparagus, bamboo shoots, okra, onions, spring onions, leeks, tomatoes, carrots, lettuce and cabbage and fruits such as strawberries, lychees, longans, rambutans, pomelo, guava, durian, mangosteen, passion fruit and young coconut.

To ensure a high quality end product, all fruits and vegetables are processed within hours of picking from the many contract farms located nearby. Each day, a total of 45 tonnes of raw material is transported via trucks to its plant. Before processing treatment, these materials are stored in a 10 tonne capacity cold room at a temperature of 5°C. On the day of APFI's visit, vegetable processing was in operation, lending an insight into the asparagus and baby corn processing — staple products for the company.

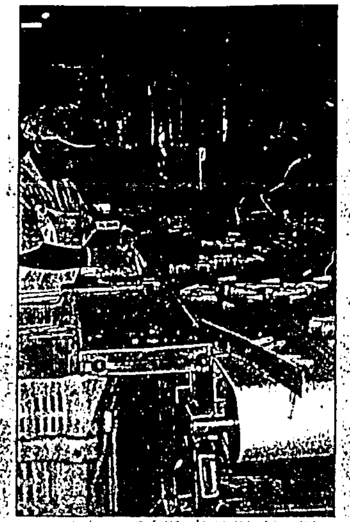


Lightly blanched vegetables go through a cutting and selection process where the vegetables are selected, pruned, cut and separated according to size.



Advanced blast freezing equipment lowers the temperature of these vegetables to -30 deg C.

Getting the frozen asparagus ready for the packaging operation remains a largely manual operation to allow for the last visual checks before packing.



Workers selecting the baby corn for packing.

From the blanching tank Fresh vegetables are lightly blanched in a huge hot water tank with the assistance of five workers. Herein lies the most critical point of the entire processing line as this process has to be kept minimal to retain the crunchy mouthfeel of the vegetables — a top priority in the Japanese market. The blanched vegetables are then subjected to a cutting and selection process where the vegetables are selected, pruned, cut and graded according to size. A team of 35 workers perform the task of selecting only the green and blooming varieties for processing and rejecting the yellow parts, while a second team of 20 workers assist in the selection for baby corn. Both these tasks are carried out on the five selection tables lined with square metal trays and metal gauze to drain excess water from the freshly blanched vegetables. The products are graded according to the diameter and length. Asparagus is sorted according to four different diameter sizes: 3 to 5 mm, 5 to 8 mm, 8 to 12mm as well as 12mm and above and lengths of 8, 11 and 15 mm for the various export markets.

Into the freezer Sorted vegetables arranged neatly onto metal trays are left to cool under ambient temperature. This is followed by a pre-cooling process, which reduces the temperature of the vegetables gradually to 0°C to retain the original texture and appearance of the product. When the temperature reaches 0°C, the trays of asparagus are slotted manually into the racks which lines a 500 kg capacity blast freezer to be frozen at a temperature of -30°C. Cool air within the freezer blasts freeze the vegetables to prolong the shelf life of the product. Depending on the type of vegetables or fruits processed, a vapour heat treatment is carried out following blast freezing for fruits like mango to kill the fruit flies.

To the consumer At the packaging station, frozen vegetables are packed manually into clear flexible bags and stored in a 150 tonne capacity coldroom for approximately 5 days. The final products are tested for appearance, brix level, bacteria count and weight by a small team of five workers before delivery to shipping containers to its various export markets.

Rewarding strategies

Commenting on the challenges in the fruit and vegetable industry, Chiarakul said, "One problem with this industry is that your future rests on natural phenomena such as the climate. As a result, the price fluctuates very often and this affects your revenue. You have to be really sensitive to the changes in order to sustain the business." For this reason, the company chose to employ contract farmers even though it has its own plantation, preferring to specialise in downstream processing as it has too many companies under its CP umbrella group. At present, C P Natural Produce has just started on its mango plantation, in which some mangoes are beginning to grow and some freshly harvested and processed.

As an added precaution to safeguard itself from risks, diversification has proven to be a good strategy. The company has since diversified its crop cultivation by growing some of its staple fruits and vegetables in different parts of Thailand. For example, mango, traditionally a crop grown and harvested in Cantaburi, is now grown on a large scale in Chiangmai and Chunpah. According to Chiarakul, China and Vietnam, hoping to accelerate the development of their respective fruit and vegetable industries, are also experimenting with this concept. However, the uncertainty over its commercial viability and the lack of relevant support technology, proper storage and handling methods, imply that their competitiveness are yet to reach international levels.

Currently, the compatibility between the demand and supply of fresh and frozen asparagus has also prompted C P to diversify and seek out a cheaper product with similar fibre content as asparagus to be promoted jointly. Justifying this move, Chiarakul said, "The vegetable business is unlike the poultry or seafood business, where specialisation is the key to success. Considering the vast varieties of vegetables, when the supply matches the demand for one, manufacturers have to shift to another product in order to remain competitive." APFI

Food and drink opportunities in SE Asia

Over the last five years, the countries of South East Asia have experienced higher economic growth rates that any other parts of the world. At the same time, greater changes have taken place in the region's food and drink consumption habits than at any other time in history. Consequently, the foodstuffs markets in the ASEAN countries can offer significant opportunities for growth for those companies able to build their positions now. Nevertheless, this is not a region for the faint-hearted nor for those, whose primary aim is to make short-term gains.

Food manufacturing in SE Asia

Expenditure on food as a percentage of total household spending ranges from 19% in Singapore to 51% in the Philippines, compared with 12% in the UK and Germany. A study of the region by Promar International finds that:

- competition in processed foods is currently underdeveloped,
- market entry costs are relatively low,
- there is a trend towards 'western' style food consumption patterns and lifestyles and,
- organised distribution systems are emerging.

Food manufacturing success will depend on targeting local markets (each nation has very different demands), understanding the power of local cuisine and the region's indigenous fast food culture and responding to taste preferences and dietary restrictions. Foreign companies must be ready to invest heavily and to be patient while waiting for returns. Barriers to entry are being reduced, but are still significant:

- high import duties in all countries except Singapore and Brunei
- protectionist attitudes of governments and local businesses
- intense price competition in the more affluent markets
- strength of existing players with established distribution and strong marketing support
- low average earnings in the larger countries.

Most governments see their food processing industries as important because they supply food to the local population, thus saving valuable foreign currency, they provide much needed employment, can earn foreign currency and can expand the agricultural and fisheries sectors beyond mere commodity production.

SE Asia has a large number of firms operating in the food processing sector, most of which are small companies acting as traditional or basic processors of foodstuffs. These include farmers, fishermen or middlemen, using traditional techniques to dry or preserve produce or to produce such products as soya bean curd, spice mixes or prawn crackers. A far smaller number of medium to large firms control the bulk of the region's food processing (see table).

In 1992/93, there are less than 250 large local firms, 20% of which are listed on local stock exchanges. Many are diverse conglomerates with food chain interests. The largest local food chain firm in the region is probably Chareon Pokphand, Thailand's family controlled fragmented commodity food group with estimated turnover for all businesses (including China) of around US$3bn in 1991. Other large food groups include the diversified San Miguel and Salim Group and the plantation firm, Kumpulan Guthrie. When added together, the large nationally-orientated subsidiaries and associates for Nestlé, Ajinomoto and McDonald's would also count as major players in the region.

Protection of local firms has lead to stagnated management styles and distinctly protectionist business strategies. Soon after the ASEAN Heads of Government signed the ASEAN Free Trade Area Accord in early 1992, it was reported that senior managers of many food and drink companies were lobbying their governments to delay implementation of new free trade measures for their products, even though the Accord specified that many food and drink products were not fast track items for tariff cuts.

Key player types in SE Asian food processing industry

		Dominant firms
Indonesia	1.	Privately held and locally quoted conglomerates having JVs with foreign producers
	2.	Government owned and controlled commodity producers
Malaysia	1.	Large local, privately held and locally quoted firms
	2.	Plantation companies
	3.	Consumer product trading companies with long established links with Malaysia
	4.	JV companies or locally quoted subsidiaries of multinationals
Philippines		Import substitution industries dominated by:
	1.	Locally quoted firms with close links to US or European food producers via JVs or licence
	2.	Large locals with independent brands
Singapore	1.	Large locals quoted or privately held
	2.	Subsidiaries of multinationals, some quoted on the local Stock Exchange
Thailand	1.	Large locals operating in the role of: - food commodity trader - contract food processor for foreign brands
	2.	JV companies or locally quoted subsidiaries/ associates of multinationals
	3.	Consumer product trading companies with established links with Thailand
Vietnam		State-run vertically integrated industries controlled at Ministry, provincial or city government level

Fragmented food service sector

The food service sector is highly fragmented and consists of four main types of outlet: hotel restaurants, full service restaurants, western-style fast food outlets and local food shops/food stalls.

Hotel restaurants are targeted mainly at tourists and higher-income groups and rely mainly on imported fresh food, even in countries where tariffs are very high. Most hotel restaurants will be able to recover import duties via high prices for their meals, an option not available to other types of food service outlets. Full service restaurants are generally individual businesses with only a few established chains in urban areas (Aristocrat - Manila, Jack's Place - Singapore, Noodle Garden - Singapore). They serve mainly locally-produced food and aim their meals at locals with prices, standards of presentation and service set accordingly. Both western-style and indigenous cuisine are found here. Western-style fast food outlets operate as single entities, as part of a local chain or under the name of a multinational via a franchising or licensing agreement. The multinationals with the widest spread of outlets are McDonald's, KFC, Pizza Hut, A&W Family Restaurants and Burger King.

Philippines lead fast food sector

Under American influence, the Philippines have the largest fast food market in the area with sales estimated at over US$350m in 1992. It is followed by Malaysia (US$180m), Singapore (US$150m) and Thailand (US$130m). The Philippines are an exception in that they have a local chain, Jolibee, which is a serious competitor for McDonald's. Created in 1978, Jolibee now has around 100 outlets, some of which are in other Asian countries, and controls over 40% of the Filipino fast food market. Jolibee has an estimated annual turnover of US$100m and is continuing to expand its chain. Management attributes its success to a unique combination of Filipino favourites and American-style standards.

Carbonated drinks dominate in Hong Kong

The Hong Kong soft drinks market is dominated by the **carbonated drinks** sector, which accounts for over 43% of sales. Swire Bottlers are the franchised bottlers for Coca-Cola, Sprite and Fanta and the Schweppes range and held 79% of the value of the carbonated drinks market in 1992. They are followed by United Soft Drinks (a subsidiary of Hutchison Whampoa), which has a joint venture with PepsiCo to distribute Pepsi, Seven-Up and Sunkist. USD held 15% of this market segment last year, according to a Euromonitor report.

Mineral water holds a 23% share of the overall soft drinks market and this sector is led by AS Watson & Co with its Watson Distilled Water brand (75% market share). Watson is followed by Vita Company with a 15% market share. The remaining 10% is made up of local generic brands such as 7-Eleven and No Frills.

Coca Cola, produced and distributed by Swire Bottlers, also manufactures a range of Hi-C tetrapak drinks exclusively for the local market. This is now the leading **fruit juice** brand, although supermarket sales for home consumption are dominated by imported brands. The tetrapak juice market is evenly divided between Yeo Hiap Seng, Swire Bottlers and Vita (which leads the bottled milk and ethnic drinks sector). Mr Juicy (United Soft Drinks) dominates the fresh fruit juice litre pack market, followed by Big Squeeze (Dairy Farm) and Sunfil (Swire Bottlers).

Leading soft drinks companies in Hong Kong, 1990

	Turnover (HK$million)
AS Watson*	9 095
Swire Bottlers*	4 626
Yeo Hiap Seng	475
Vitasoy International	100

* Consolidated sales for Industries Division; Sources: Annual reports, Euromonitor

'Prestige' league determines Indonesian consumption

Indonesia had 26 carbonated drink factories in 1990 with a total production capacity of 348 million litres. Six of these factories were in Jakarta and accounted for 37% of total output, while the remaining 20 companies were spread throughout Indonesia. Coca Cola dominates the sector with 21 producing companies, the largest of which, Djaya Beverages, has a 24% share of the Coke market. It is followed by Tirtaline Bottling, Pan Java Bottling, Polari Limunusa and Mirza with around 8% market share each. The Pepsi Group, which also produces 7-Up under licence, has seven producers. Miraza is the largest with 31% of Pepsi production followed by Pancaran Citra with 22%.

Consumption growth is relatively modest in Indonesia, but as western fast food and beverages gain in popularity, soft drinks sales should grow. Soft drinks have a 'prestige league table' with Green Sands shandy seen as the most 'adult' drink, followed by Coca Cola, Sprite and Fanta. Cold tea consumption is likely to rise only marginally, as tastes adjust to carbonated drinks. But other drinks, which are far more affordable than fizzy drinks, should also expand and take market share, especially milk drinks. Sports drinks are not expected to have an impact on the market for some time.

Leading soft drinks companies in Indonesia in 1990

	Output ('000 litres)	Sales (Rp m)
Aqua Mississippi	190 500	30 056
Sinar Sosro	179 791	150 100
Alfindo Putra	76 200	n/a
Henson Makmur	63 000	n/a
Djaya (Coke)	61 038	87 165
ABC Central	50 620	n/a
Moya Zamzami Utama	45 720	n/a
Ultra Jaya	30 000	n/a
Tirtalina (Coke)	21 793	n/a
Pan Java (Coke)	20 426	n/a
Bank Maramu	n/a	72 000
Caputra	n/a	138 000
Delta Djakarta	n/a	42 470
Multi Bingtang	n/a	143 721
Suiba Indah	n/a	26 000

Note: Consolidated accounts for all operations. Sources: Trade sources, Euromonitor

Distribution difficulties in the Philippines

Low purchasing power in the Philippines means that soft drinks are an expensive luxury. A further bar on sales is the cheaper availability of beer. Distribution is a problem as 70% of the population lives in rural areas and the major companies control the existing channels, with the prevalence of returnable bottles adding to the difficulties.

Three companies dominate the carbonated drinks sector: Coca Cola Bottlers Philippines (San Miguel) with 68.3% of the market, Pepsi Cola Products Philippines with 20.5% and Cosmos Bottling with 7.8%. Total consumption is estimated to have exceeded 270m litres in 1992, up by 48% on 1987 and the market grew by 5% in 1992 alone. In the last two years, the **bottled mineral water market** has seen growth of around 40% per annum. Currently, 23 brands of mineral water are sold in the Philippines, seven of which are imported. While reports indicate that consumption is rising quickly, growth will probably be restricted to the wealthier inhabitants of urban areas, as bottled water is more expensive than beer. The Philippines have sixteen fruit juice manufacturers: eight have production capacities of over 4.5m litres a year and several focus on contract manufacturing for foreign brands. Domestic sales of packaged juice are minimal, owing to the high cost of packaging and distribution and the ready availability of fresh tropical fruit. Although the market has growth potential, demand would have to rise considerably before market entry could be justified.

Coca Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc (CCBPI), part of the San Miguel Corporation, dominates the entire soft drinks industry with a 68% share and a leading position in most sectors. Apart from the main producers, there are some 100 small manufacturers with total value output (including alcoholic beverages) of Ps25 189m.

Philippines: soft drink companies, 1990

	Sales (m cases)	Turnover (Ps m)
Coca Cola Bottlers	239	9 590.7
Pepsi Cola	62	2 868.3
Cosmos	25	588.7
Royal Crown	9	n/a
Paranaque	n/a	13.6

Sources: Asia Pacific Food Industry, Euromonitor

Health trends in Singapore

The Singapore carbonated drinks sector is led by Fraser & Neave (Coca Cola, Sprite, Fanta, Sarsi, Zappel) and Yeo Hiap Seng (Pepsi, 7-Up, Miranda, Schweppes), which control around 90% of the market. Output has been falling as new plants outside Singapore, especially Malaysia, have been brought into production. Sales have also declined as consumer tastes mature and move towards healthier drinks such as fruit juices, mineral water and sports drinks. There is only one mineral water producer, Wanin, and imports account for 32m litres (Malaysia 22%, Hong Kong 18%, France 15% and ASEAN countries 24%) of total consumption of 46.9m litres (1992). Market growth from 1988-1992 is estimated to have been 56%, as bottled water replaces tap water and steals share from carbonated drinks. Despite the duopoly of F&N and Yeo Hiap Seng in the fruit juice market, there is scope for entry as almost all fruit juice is imported. Per capita consumption of fruit juice has risen since 1988, although by 1992, it had not returned to its recent high of 15.9 litres in 1990. It is expected to continue rising as consumers switch from carbonated drinks to healthier alternatives.

S. Korean soft drinks sector heads industrial growth

In South Korea, the beverage industry is one of the fastest-growing domestic industries with rapid expansion in fruit juice and mineral water, while the carbonated drinks sector has slowed considerably. As the market develops, there are more opportunities for product diversification, especially into new craze drinks and luxury image drinks. Nevertheless, the market is still highly restrictive to foreign companies, owing to the complex and expensive distribution system.

Top soft drinks companies in S. Korea in 1990 (Won million)

	Sales*	US$m
Chosun Brewery	395 884	492
Lotte Chilsung	368 359	458
Jinro	179 374	223
Haitai Beverages	165 823	206
Doosan beverages	145 986	181
Bum Yang	59 093	73
Ho Nam	35 563	44
Dong-A	33 866	42

* Consolidated sales for all operations; Source: Euromonitor

S. Korean consumption of carbonated drinks is forecast to rise from 1.137bn litres in 1993 to 1.17bn litres by 1997, while consumption of fruit juices is expected to increase from 751m litres this year to 1.103bn litres by 1997. Despite a government ban on the sale of **bottled water** to S. Koreans, consumption is expected to double from 259m litres this year to 517.6m litres in 1997. If the ban were to be lifted, these estimates would be far too low. Sports drinks have seen extraordinary growth since 1988, when Seoul hosted the Olympic Games. Carbonic acid drinks such as fibroid soft drinks and ion beverages are becoming more popular and are expected to increase their share of the sports drinks sector. Consumption of all sports drinks is forecast to rise from 87.8m litres in 1993 to 131.7m litres in 1997.

Rising spending power in Malaysia

Malaysian expenditure on soft drinks is rising owing to real income growth. Further market expansion is expected due to urban growth and rural migration and higher urbanisation should lead to more homogeneous tastes and a wider acceptance of western drinks. As Malaysia has a high number of Moslems, soft drinks are consumed as an alternative to alcohol and consequently demand is higher than elsewhere in the region, especially in the on-trade.

Leading soft drinks companies in Malaysia, 1990 (M$ million)

	Turnover
Fraser & Neave	1 230
- drinks division	80
Antha (Pepsi, 7-Up)	508
Cerebos	497
Yeo Hiap Seng	230
Permanis	68
Beecham	51

Note: Consolidated sales; Sources: Annual reports, Euromonitor

Taiwan's industry threatened by imports

Imports of soft drinks into Taiwan have risen sharply, following recent import liberalisation and continued tariff cuts. Imports are now threatening the local industry, especially in the fruit juice sector, as agricultural land is at a premium. Uncompetitive labour prices and outdated equipment are also making it difficult for domestic manufacturers to keep pace with cheaper imports.

Taiwanese soft drinks market, 1992 (m litres)

	Sales volume	%
Carbonated drinks	473.1	36.4
Fruit juice	365.0	28.1
Cold tea	234.1	18.0
Sports drinks	153.6	11.8
Mineral water	77.4	5.7
Total	1 300.2	100

Source: Euromonitor

Unlike many SE Asian soft drinks markets, Taiwan has no single dominant company. Most of the major manufacturers are also active in food production and control much of the food distribution network, making penetration difficult for smaller players.

. The major market trends, says Euromonitor, are towards variety, youth and image. Taiwanese consumers have become very health conscious. Natural, healthy and nutritious beverages such as vegetable juice, health drinks and tonics will be the driving force of the soft drinks market over the next few years. Fibre and organic drinks are already selling well and low-caloric drinks are likely to receive high consumer acceptance.

High growth expected in Thailand

An improved political climate and greater government stability in Thailand combined with the strengthening economy are expected to support and sustain considerable growth in all soft drinks sectors with particular emphasis on mineral waters.

Thai market for soft drinks (million litres)

	1988	1992
Carbonated drinks	953.8	1 347.3
Energy drinks	83.7	157.1
Mineral water	33.5	43.6
Fruit juices	7.6	33.4
Total	1 078.6	1 581.4

Sources: Department of Statistics, Euromonitor

Thailand is a net importer of mineral water (1992: imports 1 351 900 litres, exports 778 500 litres), with 80% coming from France, largely to satisfy the tourist trade. All other imports are from the SE Asian region. Exports are primarily to ASEAN neighbours. Thailand has around 475 bottled-water manufacturers, the largest of which is North Star ('Polaris' brand) with an estimated 60% market share. The only other company with a significant share is Boon Rawd Brewery ('Singha' brand) with 25%.

The three major soft drinks companies are Serm Suk (PepsiCo's exclusive bottler) with 41% of the market, Thai Pure Drinks (largest producer of Coca Cola range) with 50% and Haad Thip (Coca Cola) with 4%. The continuing cola war dominates the market and conflicting information makes it difficult to establish the market leader. Although Coca Cola is thought to hold 57% of the carbonated drinks market and PepsiCo 40%, Thailand is one of the few countries where Pepsi has a noticeably higher profile than Coca Cola.

Political turmoil in May 1992 has had a negative impact on the tourist industry. This in turn has adversely affected the soft drinks industry (especially carbonated drinks and mineral water), reducing growth to 3-5% for 1993, but increasing to around 8% thereafter.

£1 =

HK$	11.9	S.Kor. Won	1235
Taiwan $	41.23	Thai. Baht	38.4
Viet. Dong	16384	Sing. $	2.45
Phil. Peso	42.2	Indo. Rup.	3221.7
Malay. Ringgit	3.99		

Wholesale Market Prices

All prices quoted relate to stated pack weight and reflect the range of prices for class one produce prevailing on the day of collation as quoted by our market sources. All prices listed in pence.

As at Tuesday, February 1, 1994

Apple Bananas

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Colombia, 3kg			
New Covent Garden	1000		

Apples

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Braeburn			
France, 40lb			
New Spitalfields	1150		
Liverpool	1050		
Bramley			
UK, lb			
Sheffield	20		
Western International	20	8	
Birmingham	20	16	
Liverpool	20	11	
New Spitalfields	19	8	
Manchester	18	7	
Glasgow	18	7	
New Covent Garden	18	9	
Belfast	17	2	
Cox			
Holland, 12kg			
Liverpool	450		
UK, 28lb			
Manchester	500	100	
UK, lb			
Glasgow	32	5	
Belfast	31	2	
Sheffield	30		
Birmingham	25	14	
Liverpool	24	12	
New Spitalfields	22		
New Covent Garden	18	12	
Western International	15	10	
Cox class II			
UK, lb			
New Spitalfields	12		
Empire			
USA, 20kg			
Liverpool	1125	250	
Glasgow	975	50	
New Spitalfields	1150		
Fiesta			
UK, lb			
Liverpool	16		
Golden Delicious			
France, 40lb			
New Spitalfields	1050		
Birmingham	975	250	
Belfast	930	100	
New Covent Garden	880	20	
Glasgow	875	50	
Manchester	875	150	
Western International	850	100	
Sheffield	850	300	
Liverpool	825	250	
Granny Smith			
France, 10kg			
Glasgow	575	50	
France, 40lb			
Birmingham	1025	250	
New Spitalfields	1070		
Sheffield	915	130	
Manchester	900	100	
Belfast	880		
Western International	850	100	
New Covent Garden	825	50	
Liverpool	825	250	
Idared			
UK, lb			
Liverpool	16	1	
Jonagold			
Belgium, 12kg			
Glasgow	400		
McIntosh Red			
Canada, 18kg			
Belfast	1165	230	
USA, 20kg			
Belfast	1165	230	
Red Chief			
France, 40lb			
New Spitalfields	950		
New Covent Garden	925	50	
Glasgow	930	10	
Western International	890	80	
Liverpool	875	250	
Red Delicious			
Canada, 18kg			
Belfast	1450		
France, 40lb			
Manchester	915	70	
New Spitalfields	900		
USA, 20kg			
Belfast	1450		
Birmingham	1375	50	
Liverpool	1275	50	
New Spitalfields	1250		
Royal Gala			
France, 40lb			
Belfast	1380		
Liverpool	1300		

Avocados

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Canary Islands, 4kg			
New Covent Garden	700		
New Spitalfields	650		
Israel, 4kg			
Birmingham	625	50	
Leeds	550	100	
Kenya, 4kg			
Belfast	690		
Manchester	650		
Spain, 4kg			
Belfast	690		
New Spitalfields	600		
Liverpool	565	170	
Glasgow	550	100	
Western International	525	50	
Sheffield	475	50	
New Covent Garden	450	100	

Babaco

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Ecuador, 4			
New Covent Garden	1000		

Bananas

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Dollar, 30lb			
Belfast	1350		
Dollar, 40lb			
New Covent Garden	1800		
Western International	1800		
Birmingham	1800	200	
New Spitalfields	1750		
Glasgow	1700		
Liverpool	1650	100	
Dollar, lb			
Leeds	38	5	
Jamaica, 15kg			
Manchester	1425	50	
Jamaica, 28lb			
Liverpool	1225	50	
Jamaica, lb			
Leeds	38	5	
Windward Islands, 28lb			
New Covent Garden	1280	40	
Liverpool	1275	50	
Birmingham	1225	150	
Sheffield	1100	100	
Windward Islands, lb			
Leeds	38	5	

Blueberries

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
South Africa, pun			
Western International	90	10	

Carambola

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Brazil, 24			
Belfast	1480		
Brazil, 3kg			
New Spitalfields	1500		
Western International	1200		
Malaysia, 1.5kg			
Glasgow	700	100	
Malaysia, 20			
New Covent Garden	1500		
Malaysia, 3.5kg			
Liverpool	1300	200	

Cherimoya

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Spain, 12			
New Covent Garden	1000		

Clementines

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Corsica			
New Spitalfields	450		
Morocco, 10kg			
Belfast	690	120	
Glasgow	675	150	
Birmingham	660	80	
New Spitalfields	650		
Leeds	650	100	
Liverpool	625	50	
Sheffield	600	100	
Spain, 10kg			
Belfast	710	20	
New Spitalfields	700		
Western International	675	50	
Glasgow	675	50	
Liverpool	650	200	
New Covent Garden	605	150	
Spain, 168			
Manchester	725	50	

Coconuts

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Malaysia, 25			
Belfast	690		
Sheffield	550		
New Covent Garden	550		
Santo Domingo, 10kg			
New Spitalfields	500		
Liverpool	475	50	
Sri Lanka			
Western International	550		

Currants black/red

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Chile, pun			
Western International	210	20	

Dates

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Egypt, 4kg			
New Covent Garden	950		
Israel, 5kg			
Manchester	900		
New Spitalfields	900		
Morocco, glovebox			
Liverpool	40		
Tunisia, glovebox			
Glasgow	80		
New Spitalfields	60		
Liverpool	60		
Eat Me			
various, 30			
Belfast	2870		
various, glovebox			
New Spitalfields	85		

Durian

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Thailand, 3lb			
New Covent Garden	900		

Feijoa

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Colombia, 30			
New Covent Garden	900		

Figs

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Brazil, 2/3kg			
Liverpool	650	100	
New Spitalfields	600		

Granadilla

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Colombia, 18			
New Covent Garden	900		

Grapes

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Almeria			
Spain, 5kg			
Manchester	325	50	
Liverpool	325	50	
New Spitalfields	300		
Alphonse			
South Africa, 5kg			
New Spitalfields	750		
Bien Donne			
South Africa, 5kg			
New Covent Garden	800		
black			
Chile, 5kg			
Belfast	890		
Black Amber			
Chile, 6/7kg			
Liverpool	550		
Dan Ben Hannah			
South Africa, 5kg			
New Spitalfields	750		
Western International	725		
New Covent Garden	675		
Festival			
South Africa, 5kg			
New Spitalfields	950		
Flame Seedless			
Chile, 5kg			
Glasgow	950	100	
Belfast	890		
Liverpool	890	20	
New Spitalfields	750		
New Covent Garden	725	50	
South Africa, 5kg			
New Spitalfields	1100		
Birmingham	1000	100	
La Rochelle			
South Africa, 5kg			
Glasgow	875	50	
New Covent Garden	680		
Napoleon			
Spain, 5kg			
Liverpool	350		
New Covent Garden	325	50	
New Spitalfields	300		
Perlette			
Chile, 5kg			
Liverpool	890	70	
New Covent Garden	800		
seedless			
Chile, 5kg			
Manchester	975	50	
South Africa, 5kg			
Manchester	975	50	
Sultana			
South Africa, 5kg			
Glasgow	950	100	
New Spitalfields	900		
Thompson Seedless			
Chile, 5kg			
Glasgow	950	100	
Belfast	890		
Liverpool	850	20	
New Spitalfields	800		
New Covent Garden	800	100	
Cyprus, 5kg			
Belfast	1050		
Sheffield	950	100	
South Africa, 5kg			
Birmingham	1100	100	
New Spitalfields	1000		
New Covent Garden	900		

Grapefruit

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
pomelo			
Israel			
Glasgow	400		
red			
Israel			
Glasgow	500		
Turkey, 15kg			
New Spitalfields	500		
New Covent Garden	450	100	
Western International	425	50	
USA, 15kg			
Liverpool	1000		
Sheffield	975	50	
New Spitalfields	900		
New Covent Garden	900	200	
Glasgow	800		
Belfast	720	160	
white			
Cuba, 15kg			
Liverpool	500	200	
Birmingham	475	250	
Cyprus, 16kg			
Belfast	675	150	
Leeds	575	50	
New Covent Garden	525	50	
Sheffield	500	100	
Liverpool	500	200	
Western International	475	50	
New Spitalfields	450		
Dominica, 17kg			
Liverpool	500	200	
Israel			
Glasgow	525	50	
Leeds	460	40	
Turkey, 15kg			
New Covent Garden	400		
New Spitalfields	400		
Glasgow	350	100	
Leeds	275	50	
Turkey, 56			
Manchester	425	50	

Kiwano

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
France, 10			
New Covent Garden	1500		

Kiwifruit

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Italy, 27			
Belfast	280		
Italy, 3.6kg			
Glasgow	265	30	
Birmingham	250	100	
Western International	240		
Sheffield	240	20	
New Spitalfields	225		
Liverpool	220	80	
New Covent Garden	215	30	
Leeds	205	50	

Kumquats

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
South Africa, 2kg			
New Covent Garden	680		

Lemons

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Cyprus, 9kg			
Glasgow	525	50	
Leeds	500	40	
New Covent Garden	500	100	
Belfast	475	50	
New Spitalfields	450		
Western International	450		
Sheffield	425	50	
Liverpool	425	150	
Israel			
New Spitalfields	700		
Spain, 5kg			
Liverpool	300		
Glasgow	290	20	
Western International	240		
Leeds	240	40	
New Spitalfields	225		
New Covent Garden	200	100	
Spain, 6kg			
Belfast	300		
Turkey, 10kg			
New Spitalfields	500		
Birmingham	500	40	
Glasgow	475	50	
Sheffield	450		
Liverpool	300		
Turkey, 66			
Manchester	525	50	
15kg			
Spain			
New Spitalfields	600		
New Covent Garden	575	150	

Limes

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Brazil, 4kg			
Birmingham	675	50	
Liverpool	650	100	
New Covent Garden	600		
Western International	575	50	
Glasgow	575	50	
Brazil, 53			
Belfast	900		
France, 4kg			
Leeds	675	50	
Venezuela			
Liverpool	650	100	

Lychees

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
India, 2kg			
Belfast	400		
Israel, 2kg			
Leeds	220	40	
Madagascar, 2kg			
Western International	500	100	
New Spitalfields	250		
Liverpool	250		
Birmingham	250	100	
Madagascar, 4kg			
New Covent Garden	650		
South Africa, 2kg			
New Covent Garden	350		

Mangoes

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Brazil, 14			
Belfast	790		
Brazil, 4kg			
Birmingham	775	50	
Sheffield	650		
Liverpool	650	300	
New Spitalfields	600		
Western International	500	100	
Kenya, 4kg			
New Covent Garden	600		
Malaysia, 5lb			
Leeds	470	20	
South Africa, 4kg			
Liverpool	625	50	
New Covent Garden	600		
Venezuela			
Western International	675	50	
Glasgow	675	50	

Mangosteens

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Malaysia, 2kg			
New Covent Garden	1200		
Thailand, 2kg			
New Covent Garden	1200		

Melons

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Cantaloupe			
Brazil, 6			
Belfast	980		
Galia			
France, 4			
Western International	725	50	
Gambia, 5			
Glasgow	900		
South Africa, 10kg			
New Covent Garden	1100	200	
Honeydew			
Brazil, 10kg			
Birmingham	600	100	
Liverpool	575	150	
New Spitalfields	550		
Sheffield	525	50	
Glasgow	515	70	
New Covent Garden	500	100	
Brazil, 8			
Manchester	535	70	
Piel de Sapo			
Brazil, 10kg			
Western International	250	100	
Brazil, 8			
Belfast	470		
water			
Honduras, 35lb			
New Covent Garden	1200		

Nectarines

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Chile, 5kg			
New Covent Garden	750		
New Spitalfields	700		
Liverpool	650		
Birmingham	650	100	
South Africa, 2.5kg			
Western International	470		

Oranges

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Israel, 15kg			
Sheffield	565	30	
Liverpool	650	100	
Israel, 48			
Glasgow	680		
Israel, 48/60			
New Covent Garden	735	30	
Morocco, 15kg			
New Covent Garden	650	100	
Belfast	650	200	
New Spitalfields	600		
Leeds	575	150	
Liverpool	575	150	
Spain, 15kg			
Birmingham	675	150	
Belfast	625	20	
Glasgow	600	100	
Sheffield	575	150	
Liverpool	575	150	
New Spitalfields	550		
New Covent Garden	550	100	
Leeds	550	100	
Western International	550	100	
Turkey, 15kg			
Belfast	600		
Sevilles			
Spain, 15kg			
New Covent Garden	775	50	
New Spitalfields	750		
Glasgow	700		

Papaya

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Brazil, 12			
Belfast	890		
Brazil, 4kg			
New Covent Garden	800		
New Spitalfields	750		
Liverpool	725	50	
Western International	650	100	
Malaysia, 3.5kg			
Western International	475	50	

Passionfruit

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Kenya, 2kg			
Liverpool	600		
Belfast	500		
New Spitalfields	400		
Glasgow	400		
Western International	350	100	
Kenya, 48			
New Covent Garden	600		

Peaches

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
South Africa, 25			
Glasgow	400		

Pears

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Anjou			
USA, 20kg			
Liverpool	800		
New Spitalfields	1200		
Comice			
Belgium, 12kg			
Glasgow	540	120	
UK, lb			
Liverpool	25	10	
New Covent Garden	22	5	
New Spitalfields	22		
Conference			
Belgium, 12kg			
Sheffield	700		
New Covent Garden	690	20	
New Spitalfields	680		
Western International	635	70	
Glasgow	540	120	
Liverpool	570		
Holland, 12kg			
New Covent Garden	700		
Sheffield	680		
Birmingham	650	100	
Liverpool	625	150	
Manchester	540	80	
Holland, lb			
Belfast	2?	3	
UK, lb			
Liverpool	18	5	
New Covent Garden	18	9	
New Spitalfields	15		
Belfast	12	2	
Packham			
France, 15kg			
Western International	620		
Italy, 20lb			
Belfast	550		
Glasgow	500	40	
Liverpool	450	100	
Western International	450	100	
New Spitalfields	400		
New Covent Garden	400	100	
Passacrassana			
Italy, 20lb			
Belfast	590		
Williams			
South Africa, 12.5kg			
New Spitalfields	1100		
Western International	1050		
New Covent Garden	1038	25	

Persimmon

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Israel, 2.5kg			
New Spitalfields	300		
Israel, 21			
New Covent Garden	400		
Spain, 5kg			
Liverpool	300	100	

Physalis

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Colombia, 12			
Belfast	1150		
Colombia, 5lb			
Glasgow	950	100	
Western International	850		
Colombia, 8 x 25			
New Covent Garden	800		
Colombia, pun			
Liverpool	100		

Pineapples

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Costa Rica, 12			
Manchester	575	50	
Costa Rica, carton			
Liverpool	575	250	
Costa Rica, each			
Birmingham	100	40	
New Covent Garden	82	75	
Sheffield	75	50	
Leeds	60		
New Spitalfields	50		
Ivory Coast, each			
Belfast	72	55	

Pitahaya

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Colombia, 12			
New Covent Garden	1200		

Plums

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Angeline			
Chile, 6/7kg			
Glasgow	625	50	
Casselman			
South Africa, 5.25kg			
New Covent Garden	700	300	
Gaviota			
South Africa, 5.25kg			
New Spitalfields	700		
Harry Pickstone			
South Africa, 5.25kg			
Belfast	650		
New Covent Garden	535	330	
New Spitalfields	425		
Laetitia			
South Africa, 5.25kg			
New Spitalfields	750		
New Covent Garden	535	330	

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
ted			
h Africa, 5.25kg			
asgow	575	50	
w Spitalfields	420		
Rosa			
, small 13lb			
w Covent Garden	450		
h Africa, 5.25kg			
stern International	555	210	
mingham	550	100	
w Covent Garden	535	330	
effield	525	150	
nchester	475	50	
w Spitalfields	400		

negranates

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
4kg			
w Spitalfields	400		

ckly pears

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
mbia, 20			
w Covent Garden	1000		
h Africa			
w Spitalfields	450		

mbutans

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
and, 2kg			
w Covent Garden	1200		
and, prepacked			
stern International	1000		

pberries

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
, pun			
sgow	190	20	
stern International	135	30	

barb

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
14lb			
effield	520	40	
b			
eds	42	5	
erpool	42	5	
sgow	40		
mingham	40	10	
w Covent Garden	38	5	
stern International	35	10	
rks, Yorks lb			
w Spitalfields	35	10	

odilla

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
and 2kg			
w Covent Garden	1200		

sumas

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
h Africa, 10kg			
eds	375	50	
, 11kg			
mingham	500	100	
sgow	465	30	
erpool	450	100	
w Covent Garden	440	20	
w Spitalfields	425		
fast	410	20	
effield	340	200	

awberries

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
mbia, pun			
stern International	145	10	
, 8			
fast	1180		
, pun			
erpool	115	10	
sgow	95	10	
w Covent Garden	70		
, pun			
effield	150		
mingham	130	20	
sgow	125	10	
eds	110	20	
w Covent Garden	100		
w Spitalfields	100		
erpool	100		
, pun			
erpool	100		
sgow	95	10	
w Covent Garden	80	20	
w Spitalfields	75		
pun			
w Spitalfields	150		
w Covent Garden	140		
stern International	155	10	

ar cane

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
ica 5kg			
w Covent Garden	1800		

marillos

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
mbia, 30			
w Covent Garden	900		

matoes

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
ry Islands, 6kg			
mingham	400	100	
fast	390	20	
sgow	355	50	
w Covent Garden	350		
effield	325	10	
eds	325	50	
erpool	325	50	
stern International	325	50	
nchester	305	110	
w Spitalfields	300		
n, 6kg			
sgow	310	100	
eds	290	20	
stern International	265	70	
effield	250	100	
w Spitalfields	190		
ry Islands 6kg			
erpool	550	100	
stern International	525	50	
cco, 7kg			
fast	640		
w Spitalfields	300		
n, 6kg			
effield	600		
mingham	600	100	
sgow	600	100	
eds	550		
w Covent Garden	500	100	
stern International	450		
, 8 x 250g			
fast	600		
, carton			
eds	480		
, pun			
effield	50		
cco 6kg			
stern International	600		
n, 6kg			
w Covent Garden	600		

Artichokes

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Egypt, 6kg			
Western International	625	50	
Leeds	600		
New Spitalfields	500		
Spain, 24			
New Covent Garden	600		
Jerusalem			
UK, 12lb			
New Spitalfields	360		

Asparagus

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Argentina, lb			
Glasgow	270	20	
Chile, 12 x 250g			
Belfast	1170		
Mexico, lb			
Western International	220	40	
Peru, lb			
Liverpool	300		
Manchester	[illegible]	45	
USA, lb			
Leeds	270	20	
Birmingham	265	30	
Sheffield	250		

Aubergines

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Canary Islands, 5kg			
Western International	800		
New Covent Garden	550		
Gambia, 5kg			
Western International	725	50	
Israel, 6kg			
Leeds	800		
Italy, 4kg			
New Spitalfields	600		
Italy, 6kg			
New Covent Garden	700		
Spain, 3kg			
Belfast	900		
Spain, 5kg			
Glasgow	850	100	
Leeds	825	50	
Liverpool	825	50	
Western International	800		
Birmingham	800	100	
New Covent Garden	700		
New Spitalfields	700		

Babycorn

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Thailand, 12 x 100g			
New Covent Garden	600		

Beans

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Kenya, 6lb			
Belfast	700		
Birmingham	675	50	
Glasgow	675	50	
Liverpool	650		
Western International	565	30	
New Spitalfields	500		
Spain, 9lb			
Liverpool	720		
Bobi			
Egypt, 6lb			
Leeds	1050	100	
Manchester	675	50	

Beansprouts

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, 10 x lb			
Western International	280		
Manchester	250	20	
Glasgow	240		
Liverpool	200		
New Spitalfields	180		
UK, 12 x lb			
Belfast	400		
Leeds	240		

Beetroot

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, 28lb			
Liverpool	225	50	
Leeds	200		
Birmingham	190	60	
New Spitalfields	180		
Glasgow	165	30	
New Covent Garden	150		
Longlife			
UK, 18			
Belfast	540		
Glasgow	515	70	
New Covent Garden	500		
Manchester	500		
Sheffield	450		
Liverpool	450		
New Spitalfields	420		
Western International	420		
Leeds	415	30	
Prepacked			
UK, 12			
Manchester	250	20	
New Spitalfields	240		
Sheffield	230		
Leeds	230	20	
New Covent Garden	200		
Liverpool	200		

Brussels sprouts

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, 10lb			
Manchester	195	50	
UK, 20lb			
Belfast	475	50	
Liverpool	380		
Sheffield	325	50	
Birmingham	300	100	
Glasgow	285	70	
Leeds	250		

Cabbage

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Celtic			
UK, 26/28lb			
Belfast	275	50	
Western International	275	50	
Sheffield	240		
Leeds	220	40	
New Spitalfields	200		
Drumhead			
UK, 26/28lb			
New Spitalfields	200		
UK, 28lb			
Liverpool	230		
Dunkham			
UK, 26/28lb			
New Covent Garden	225	50	
New Spitalfields	200		
January King			
UK, 26/28lb			
Sheffield	300		
Manchester	295	50	
New Spitalfields	200		
UK, 6			
Liverpool	120		
red			
Holland, 24kg			
Belfast	650		
New Covent Garden	600		
UK, 26/28lb			
Sheffield	350	100	
Leeds	340	20	
Glasgow	320	40	
New Spitalfields	220		
UK, 28lb			
Liverpool	280		
Savoy			
UK, 26/28lb			
Glasgow	290	20	
Belfast	275	50	
Birmingham	250	100	
Sheffield	240		
New Spitalfields	240		
Leeds	220	40	
UK, 6			
Liverpool	100		
Spring greens			
UK, 10			
Liverpool	350		
UK, Cornwall, 40lb			
Leeds	800		
New Covent Garden	800		
New Spitalfields	850		
Sheffield	825	50	
UK, Kent 30lb			
Western International	400		
UK, lb			
Birmingham	22	5	
white			
Holland, 25kg			
New Covent Garden	500		
Belfast	450		
Western International	380		
Glasgow	335	30	
UK, 26lb			
Manchester	220	40	
UK, 30lb			
Sheffield	300	40	
Birmingham	260	80	
Western International	230		

Calabrese

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Spain, 24			
Liverpool	480		
Spain, 6kg			
Glasgow	600		
Leeds	540	120	
Spain, prepacked			
Birmingham	615	70	
New Covent Garden	525	50	
Sheffield	480		
New Spitalfields	450		
Prepacked			
Italy, 24			
Manchester	475	50	

Capsicum

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
green			
Canary Islands, 5kg			
Liverpool	700		
Spain, 6kg			
Leeds	1000		
New Covent Garden	775	150	
Belfast	750		
New Spitalfields	750		
Birmingham	750	100	
Sheffield	725	150	
Western International	700		
Glasgow	550	100	
mixed			
Holland, 5kg			
Belfast	980		
red			
Canary Islands, 5kg			
Liverpool	900		
Spain, 6kg			
Leeds	1000		
Sheffield	800		
Birmingham	800	100	
Belfast	790		
New Covent Garden	750	100	
Glasgow	725	50	
New Spitalfields	700		
Western International	700		
yellow			
Spain, 6kg			
Leeds	1100		
Belfast	850		
Sheffield	800		
New Covent Garden	750		
Western International	700		

Carrots

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Holland, 10kg			
Belfast	300		
UK, 28lb			
Belfast	300	100	
Birmingham	280	80	
Glasgow	220	120	
Sheffield	200		
New Spitalfields	180		
Manchester	180	120	
New Covent Garden	175	50	
Liverpool	160	120	
Western International	150	100	

Cassava

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
West Indies, 20kg			
New Covent Garden	2000		

Cauliflower

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
France, 6			
Western International	340	120	
Birmingham	330	60	
New Spitalfields	300		
France, 6/8			
Belfast	360	80	
France, 9/11			
Glasgow	380	40	
New Covent Garden	350		
Sheffield	330		
Liverpool	300		
Jersey, 24			
Manchester	740	80	
New Spitalfields	720		
Liverpool	720		
New Covent Garden	660		
Sheffield	600		
UK, 12			
New Spitalfields	350		
Belfast	325	50	
Cornwall			
UK, 12			
Leeds	390	60	
UK, each			
Sheffield	38	5	

Celeriac

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, 5kg			
New Spitalfields	400		
Glasgow	400		
Liverpool	350		
Western International	340	20	
Leeds	275	50	

Celery

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Israel, 10kg			
New Spitalfields	400		
Leeds	350	100	
Spain, 10kg			
Glasgow	515	70	
Belfast	500		
Birmingham	485	70	
Liverpool	425	50	
New Spitalfields	400		
Leeds	400		
Sheffield	375	50	
New Covent Garden	375	150	
Western International	360	120	
Spain, 20			
Manchester	425		
UK, 12/15/18			
Belfast	475	50	

Chayote

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Costa Rica, 17kg			
New Covent Garden	750		

Chicory

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Belgium, 5kg			
Leeds	480		
New Covent Garden	450		
Belgium, 5lb			
Western International	360		
Holland, 10 prepacks			
Belfast	690		
UK, 5lb			
New Spitalfields	300		
white			
Holland, 5kg			
New Spitalfields	450		

Chillies

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Gambia, 11lb			
Western International	1020	60	
Holland, 3kg			
New Spitalfields	650		
Kenya, 2kg			
New Covent Garden	550		
Leeds	475	50	
Western International	450		
New Spitalfields	400		
Kenya, green 4lb			
Belfast	400		
South Africa, 2kg			
Sheffield	550		
Leeds	450		

Chinese leaves

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Austria, 10/15kg			
Liverpool	850		
Leeds	840	40	
Western International	825	50	
New Spitalfields	750		
Holland, 7kg			
New Covent Garden	800		
Israel, 10kg			
Sheffield	450		
Israel, 15kg			
Belfast	950		

Courgettes

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Israel, 3kg			
Sheffield	425	50	
Israel, 4kg			
Leeds	500		
Spain, 5kg			
Belfast	600		
Leeds	600		
Birmingham	600	100	
Manchester	550	100	
Glasgow	550	100	
New Spitalfields	500		
Liverpool	500		
New Covent Garden	425	50	
Western International	425	50	

Cucumbers

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Canary Islands, 10/12/14			
Belfast	525	50	
New Covent Garden	475	50	
Sheffield	450	100	
New Spitalfields	425		
Liverpool	425	50	
Glasgow	380	40	
Holland, 10/12/14			
Sheffield	625	150	
Spain, 10/12/14			
Belfast	525	50	
Birmingham	480	80	
New Covent Garden	475	50	
Leeds	450	100	
Western International	450	100	
New Spitalfields	400		
UK, 10/12/14			
New Spitalfields	360		
UK, 14			
Leeds	400		
UK, 14/16			
Manchester	395	90	

Curly kale

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, 20lb			
New Spitalfields	250		

Curry leaves

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
India, 2kg			
New Covent Garden	1200		

Dasheen

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Jamaica, 20kg			
New Covent Garden	2000		

Eddoes

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
West Indies, 20kg			
New Covent Garden	2000		

Fennel

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Belgium, 5kg			
Belfast	600		
Italy, 5kg			
Liverpool	450		
Sheffield	400		
Leeds	400		
Glasgow	400		
New Spitalfields	350		
New Covent Garden	325	50	
Western International	275	50	

Garlic

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
China, 9kg			
Liverpool	1100		
France, 11lb			
Western International	800		
France, bags			
Glasgow	775	50	
France, nets			
Leeds	1100		
New Spitalfields	850		
Spain, 10kg			
New Covent Garden	675	50	
UK, 4.5kg			
Belfast	690		
strings			
UK, kg			
Manchester	370	20	
Liverpool	350	100	
Sheffield	280		
Western International	275	10	
New Spitalfields	260		

Ginger

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Brazil, 10kg			
New Covent Garden	1500		
Brazil, 10lb			
Sheffield	750		
Brazil, 15kg			
New Spitalfields	1500		
Glasgow	1450	100	
Brazil, 22lb			
Western International	1100		
Brazil, 5kg			
Liverpool	900		
Indonesia, 30lb			
Belfast	2000		
Leeds	1800		

Horseradish

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Germany, 5kg			
New Covent Garden	2500		

Kohlrabi

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, 5kg			
Liverpool	400		
Western International	350		
New Spitalfields	300		

Leeks

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Holland, 5kg			
Belfast	900		
New Spitalfields	440		
UK, 10lb			
New Spitalfields	300		
Birmingham	270	60	
Glasgow	265	30	
Sheffield	240		
New Covent Garden	225	50	
Manchester	225	50	
Liverpool	200		
Western International	200	100	
Leeds	150		

Lemon grass

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Zambia, 2kg			
New Covent Garden	800		

Lettuce

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Cos			
Italy, 12			
New Spitalfields	600		
Italy, 24			
Western International	400		
Endive			
France, 12			
Belfast	1080		
France, 9/12			
Western International	880		
Iceberg			
France, 9/12			
Belfast	475	50	
Spain, 9/12			
Birmingham	450	100	
Western International	430	100	
Manchester	405	90	
Sheffield	400	100	
New Spitalfields	360		
New Covent Garden	350	100	
Liverpool	350	100	
UK, 12			
Glasgow	425	50	
Lollo Rosso			
France, 9/12			
Liverpool	675	50	
Spain, 9/12			
Liverpool	675	50	
Western International	400		
UK, 12			
Western International	650		
Radicchio			
Italy, 12			
New Spitalfields	400		
Italy, 24			
Western International	330		
New Covent Garden	310	20	
Glasgow	300		
UK, 12			
Western International	350		
New Covent Garden	300		
round			
Morocco, 6kg			
Leeds	275	50	
UK, 12			
Belfast	260		
Liverpool	240		
Birmingham	240	120	
Sheffield	200		
Manchester	200	40	
Leeds	190	20	
Glasgow	190	20	
Western International	185	70	
New Spitalfields	180		
New Covent Garden	175	50	

Mangetout

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Guatemala, 5lb			
Birmingham	650	100	
Leeds	625	50	
Sheffield	600		
Liverpool	600		
New Covent Garden	600		
Western International	550		
Kenya, 2kg			
Liverpool	600		
Morocco, 10 x 150g			
Belfast	830		
Morocco, 3kg			
New Spitalfields	350		

Mooli

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Italy, 20lb			
New Covent Garden	800		

Mushrooms

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Belgium, lb			
New Covent Garden	75	10	
Holland, lb			
New Spitalfields	90		
Irish Republic, 6lb			
Sheffield	510	60	
Irish Republic, lb			
Liverpool	70	20	
cups/buttons			
UK, 3lb			
Birmingham	300	60	
Glasgow	240		
Belfast	180		
UK, lb			
New Spitalfields	80		
New Covent Garden	72	5	
Manchester	70	20	
Western International	65	10	
Liverpool	60		
opens/flats			
UK, 3lb			
Birmingham	210	60	
Glasgow	130		
Belfast	100		
UK, lb			
New Covent Garden	65	10	
Liverpool	40		

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
oyster			
UK, lb			
Western International	580		

Okra

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Kenya, 2kg			
New Spitalfields	500		
New Covent Garden	500		
Leeds	475	50	
Western International	450		

Onions

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Holland, 20kg			
Liverpool	320		
Italy, 20kg			
Western International	625	50	
Poland, 20kg			
New Spitalfields	480		
Glasgow	475	50	
Birmingham	430	100	
Leeds	410	20	
Poland, 25kg			
Manchester	530	60	
New Covent Garden	500	100	
Sheffield	480		
Spain, 20kg			
Sheffield	880		
Glasgow	875	50	
Belfast	850		
Birmingham	850	100	
Western International	825	50	
New Spitalfields	820		
New Covent Garden	800		
Liverpool	800		
40/60mm			
UK, 25kg			
Belfast	480		
Glasgow	310	20	
New Covent Garden	280	40	
New Spitalfields	260		
UK, 28lb			
Western International	115	10	
UK, 55lb			
Liverpool	330		
60/80mm			
UK, 25kg			
Belfast	480		
Glasgow	330	20	
New Spitalfields	300		
Leeds	300		
Manchester	275	50	
UK, 28lb			
Western International	270	20	
picklers			
UK, 22lb			
Belfast	400		

Parsley

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Italy, 5lb			
Glasgow	475	50	
Jersey, 20 bun			
Leeds	600		
Birmingham	600	100	
New Spitalfields	500		
Western International	500		
New Covent Garden	450	100	
Jersey, bun			
Manchester	55	10	
UK, 5lb			
New Covent Garden	325	50	
New Spitalfields	300		
UK, 6 bun			
Liverpool	100		

Parsnips

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, 14lb			
Manchester	290	20	
UK, 20lb boxes			
Birmingham	350	100	
Liverpool	325	50	
Leeds	265	30	
Sheffield	250		
New Spitalfields	250		
New Covent Garden	225	50	
Western International	225	50	
UK, 28lb			
Belfast	375	50	
Glasgow	265	30	
Western International	225	50	

Plantains

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Colombia, 20kg			
New Covent Garden	2000		

Potatoes

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Cyprus, 20kg			
Leeds	1000		
Glasgow	965	30	
New Spitalfields	960		
New Covent Garden	950		
Egypt, 20kg			
Belfast	790		
Leeds	725	50	
Western International	710	20	
New Spitalfields	660		
Egypt, 20kg med			
Glasgow	600		
Italy, 12kg			
New Spitalfields	400		
Morocco, 15kg			
New Covent Garden	925	50	
bakers			
UK, 16kg			
New Spitalfields	375		
Sheffield	350		
New Covent Garden	350	100	
Glasgow	340	40	
Western International	330	60	
Leeds	315	70	
reds			
UK, 25kg			
Glasgow	375	50	
Western International	300		
New Covent Garden	270	60	
Sheffield	265	30	
Leeds	260	40	
New Spitalfields	225		
whites			
UK, 25kg			
Belfast	325	50	
Glasgow	300	200	
Western International	260	120	
New Covent Garden	250	60	
Sheffield	240		
Leeds	240		
New Spitalfields	200		

Radish

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Holland, 20 bun			
Belfast	690		
Western International	600		
New Covent Garden	550		
Liverpool	500		
UK, 20 bun			
Liverpool	350		
USA, bun			
Glasgow	60		
Prepacked			
Holland, 20 bun			
Birmingham	600	100	
UK, 12			
Leeds	345	30	
UK, bun			
Manchester	28	5	

Salad Cress

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, 12 pun			
Belfast	160		
Sheffield	120		
Glasgow	115	10	
New Covent Garden	110		
Liverpool	110		
Manchester	110	20	
UK, 12/16 pun			
Birmingham	130	40	
16 pun			
UK			
New Spitalfields	160		
Leeds	155	10	
Western International	150		

Salsify

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Belgium, 5lb			
New Covent Garden	500		

Spinach

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Cyprus, 20 bun			
Western International	800		
Italy, 5kg			
Western International	650		
Birmingham	625	50	

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Liverpool	625	50	
Glasgow	550	100	
New Covent Garden	500		
Spain			
Liverpool	500		
UK, 10lb			
New Spitalfields	360		
New Covent Garden	350		
UK, 6lb			
Liverpool	240		

Spring Onions

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Egypt, 20 bun			
Manchester	540	80	
Liverpool	475	50	
New Covent Garden	400		
New Spitalfields	400		
Western International	400		
Egypt, bun			
Leeds	25		
Italy, bun			
Leeds	30		
Mexico, 48 bun			
Glasgow	1440		
Belfast	1390		
Mexico, bun			
Birmingham	32	5	
Leeds	30		
Liverpool	28	5	
UK, 20 bun			
Leeds	300		

Swedes

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, 28lb			
Glasgow	190	60	
Leeds	185	10	
Birmingham	185	70	
Sheffield	180		
New Covent Garden	180	40	
Western International	175	50	
New Spitalfields	150		
Liverpool	150		

Sweet potatoes

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Barbados, 33lb			
New Spitalfields	1400		
Brazil, 22lb			
New Spitalfields	650		
Israel, 10kg			
New Covent Garden	700		
Israel, 9lb			
New Spitalfields	450		
South Africa, 22lb			
New Spitalfields	600		

Sweetcorn

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, twinpack			
Manchester	195	90	
baby			
Thailand, 2kg			
New Covent Garden	650		
New Spitalfields	600		
Leeds	580		
Liverpool	575	50	
Sheffield	550		
Western International	550		
twinpack			
Holland, 12			
Belfast	1180		

Turnips

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
UK, 10lb			
Manchester	250		
UK, 28lb			
New Covent Garden	265	30	
Western International	265	30	
New Spitalfields	250		
Leeds	250		

Watercress

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
icepack			
UK, 15 bun			
Belfast	1050		
UK, 20 bun			
Birmingham	475	50	
Leeds	450		
Manchester	475	50	
Western International	420		
Sheffield	400		
New Spitalfields	400		
Liverpool	400		
ordinary			
UK, 20 bun			
New Covent Garden	490	20	
New Spitalfields	300		

Yams

	Median Price	Range	Price Change +/-
Brazil, 20kg			
New Covent Garden	3000		
Brazil, 25kg			
New Spitalfields	3000		

Detailed Potato Prices

BIRMINGHAM		
UK 25kg		
Cara, Scotland	250	280
Cara, Lincs	240	320
Romano/Desiree, Scotland	260	300
Romano, Lincs	150	160
Romano, W Mids	250	300
Piper, W Mids	250	
Dell, Scotland	320	
Dell, Yorks	280	
Nadine, Scotland	330	
Nadine, W Mids	300	
Estima, Scotland	350	
Estima, W Mids	300	
Saxon, Scotland	250	
Saxon, W Mids	160	220
Wilja, Scotland	280	
Marfona, Lincs	330	
Marfona, W Mids	200	
Nadine/Estima, W Mids 10kg	300	
Estima/Cara, E Counties/ Lancs 15/16kg	340	370
Cara/Desiree/Romano, E Counties/Lancs/W Mids 10 x 5lb	330	400
Saxon/Nadine/Marfona/ Estima, E Counties/Lancs/ W Mids 10 x 5lb 310	400	
Nadine/Dell, N Ireland	360	380
Dell, N Ireland	400	
Spunta, Cyprus 20kg	950	1000
Kidney, Jersey 6kg	1300	
Elvira, Italy 20lb	200	450
Cara, Egypt 20kg	650	740
Cara, Egypt 20kg	850	880
Diamont, Egypt 20kg	700	730
Nicola, Egypt 20kg	700	740
LIVERPOOL		
UK 25kg		
Edward, Lincs	500	550
Edward, Lincs	450	480
Romano/Desiree, Lincs/ Yorks	380	420
Romano, Lancs	350	
Desiree, Hereford	300	
Cara, Lincs/Yorks	350	
Piper, Lincs/Yorks	250	350
Piper, Lancs/Cheshire	180	250
Saxon, Lancs/Lincs	200	300
Saxon/Crown/Santa/Morene, Lincs	250	280
Saxon/Santa/Morene, Lancs/ Cheshire	200	230
Estima/Nadine, Lincs/Lancs	220	250
Estima/Wilja, Lincs	200	300
Estima/Wilja/Marfona Lancs/ Cheshire	150	200
Cara/Romano, Lincs/Hereford 5lb	300	320
Estima/Nadine, Lincs/Lancs 5 x 10lb	300	
Cara/Estima, Lincs/Hereford 15kg	350	400
Cara, Lincs	180	
Whites, N Ireland	380	
Whites, N Ireland 5 x 10lb	400	
Spunta, Cyprus 20kg	950	
Cara, Egypt 20kg	700	
MANCHESTER		
UK 25kg		
Edward, Lincs	550	
Edward, Lincs	450	550
Romano/Desiree, Lincs	390	420
Romano, Lancs	380	
Cara, Lincs	380	420
Piper, Lincs/Cambs	300	380
Dell, Scotland	350	
Dell, Yorks	280	
Santa/Crown, Cheshire/ Lancs	220	
Marfona, Lincs	400	450
Estima/Wilja, Lincs	300	400
Estima, Lincs	440	
Nadine, Lancs	400	
Wilja/Estima, Scotland	300	350
Estima/Wilja/Marfona, Lancs/ Cheshire	200	220
Romano/Desiree, Lincs/Yorks 10 x 5lb	350	400
Estima/Nadine, Lincs/Yorks/ Lancs 10 x 5lb	340	400
Nadine/Estima, Lincs/Yorks/ Lancs 15kg	400	450
Nadine, Lancs 28lb	250	
Whites/Dell, N Ireland	350	380
Spunta, Cyprus 20kg	980	1000
Diamont/Cara, Egypt 20kg	770	800

RETAIL PRICE GUIDE

The following are the prices prevailing throughout the UK at retail level. Collated and supplied by the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Information Bureau, they include both independent and supermarket outlets. Variations in price may be evident however in specific parts of the country. (Applicable: February 2-8).

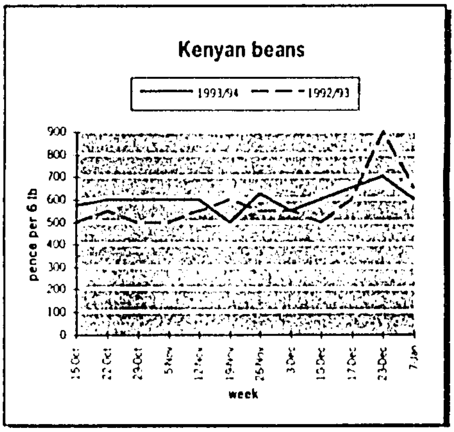
FRUIT

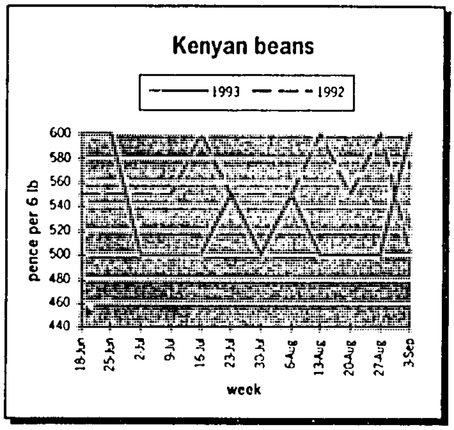
APPLES: lb		
UK		
Bramley	25	50
Cox	40	55
Russet	35	65
Gala	40	59
France		
Braeburn	40	65
Golden Delicious	39	48
Granny Smith	39	48
Royal Gala	35	59
USA		
Macintosh Red	55	69
Red Delicious	50	65
Empire	39	55
APRICOTS: lb		
South Africa	75	99
AVOCADOS: each		
Israel	35	85
BANANAS: lb		
all sources	40	75
CARAMBOLA: each		
Malaysia	70	85
COCONUTS: each		
Malaysia	25	50
CLEMENTINES: each		
Spain	5	12
GRAPE: lb		
Spain		
Almeria	35	90
white seeded	59	100
black seeded	59	120
South Africa		
Sultana	135	180
Thompson seedless	110	195
GRAPEFRUIT: each		
Cyprus		
white	14	36
Turkey		
pink	15	40
USA		
white	35	40
pink	35	40
KIWIFRUIT: each		
New Zealand	9	12
KUMQUATS: lb		
Israel	200	250
LEMONS: each		
Spain	15	20
LIMES: each		
Brazil	20	35
LYCHEES: lb		
Madagascar	120	150
MANGOES: each		
Central America	45	125
MELONS: each		
Brazil		
honeydew	85	195
Israel		
Galia	150	180
NECTARINES: each		
South Africa	20	35
ORANGES: each		
Spain		
Navels	12	32
Morocco		
Navels	12	32
Israel		
Shamouti	10	25
PASSIONFRUIT: each		
Kenya	20	35
PAPAYA: each		
Brazil/Jamaica	90	120
PEACHES: each		
South Africa	20	35
PEARS: lb		
UK		
Conference	30	50
Comice	30	65
Italy		
Williams	30	55
PINEAPPLES: each		
Ivory Coast	99	250
PLUMS: lb		
South Africa		
Santa Rosa	59	160
Ruby Nel	65	98
SWEETIES: each		
Israel	25	40
SATSUMAS: each		
Spain	8	14

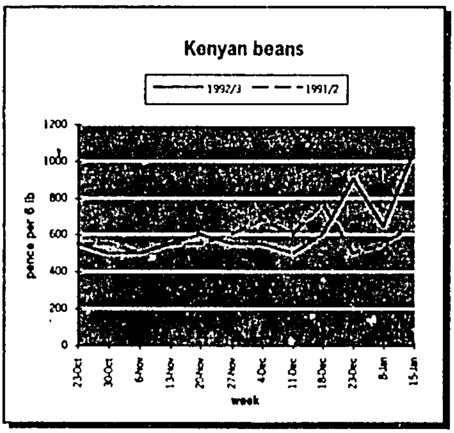
VEGETABLES

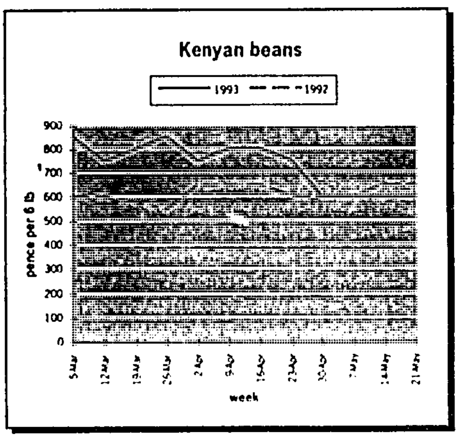
AUBERGINES: lb		
Holland	99	165
BABY SWEETCORN: 8oz pkt		
Thailand	69	120
BEANS: lb		
Kenya		
fine	140	220
BEANSPROUTS: pun		
UK	40	70
BEETROOT: lb		
UK		
cooked	40	45
prepacked 6oz	30	40
vacpacked, 8oz	40	50
BROCCOLI: lb		
UK	55	90
BRUSSELS SPROUTS:		
UK	20	45
CABBAGE: lb		
UK		
white	18	28
red	18	28
Spring greens	40	50
Savoy	18	39
Celtic	18	39
CAPSICUM: lb		
Spain/Holland		
red	120	180
green	120	180
yellow	120	180
CARROTS: lb		
UK	18	32
CAULIFLOWERS: each		
UK	45	90
CELERY: head		
Spain	39	55
CELERIAC: lb		
UK/Holland	35	75
COURGETTES: lb		
UK	79	99
CUCUMBERS: each		
Spain	35	80
FENNEL: lb		
UK	75	100
GARLIC: 3 heads		
France/Spain	45	70
GINGER: lb		
Brazil	150	180
KOHLRABI: lb		
Holland	70	95
LEEKS: lb		
UK	39	75
LETTUCE: each		
UK		
round	35	40
Little Gem prepack	60	75
France/Italy		
Radicchio	60	150
Oak Leaf	125	280
Lollo Rosso	60	120
Endive	195	250
MANGETOUT: lb		
Guatemala	99	300
MUSHROOMS: lb		
UK		
open/flats	75	100
cups	100	140
buttons	80	100
ONIONS: lb		
UK	15	30
Spain	25	35
Holland		
red salad	60	95
PARSNIPS: lb		
UK	25	40
PARSLEY: bun		
UK	20	50
POTATOES: lb		
UK		
bakers	20	32
maincrop	10	20
France		
salad	21	50
RADISH: prepack/bun		
UK	35	45
SALAD CRESS: pun		
UK	15	20
SPINACH: lb		
Italy/Cyprus	35	45
SPRING ONIONS: bun		
UK	40	55
SWEDES: lb		
UK	15	39
TURNIPS: lb		
UK	18	49
TOMATOES: lb		
Spain/Canary	39	75
beef	79	110
cherry, 10oz	99	150
WATERCRESS: bun/prepacked		
UK	35	45

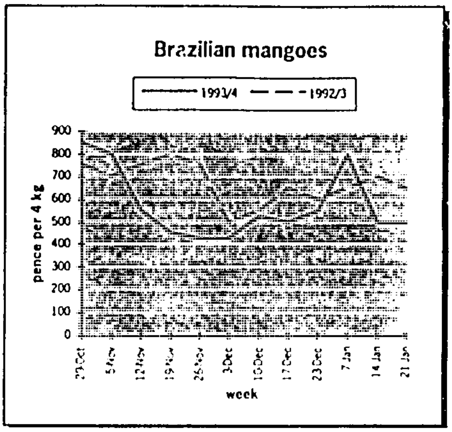
FPJ Wholesale Price Comparisons

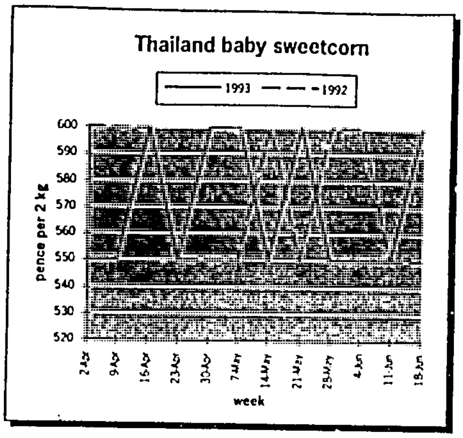


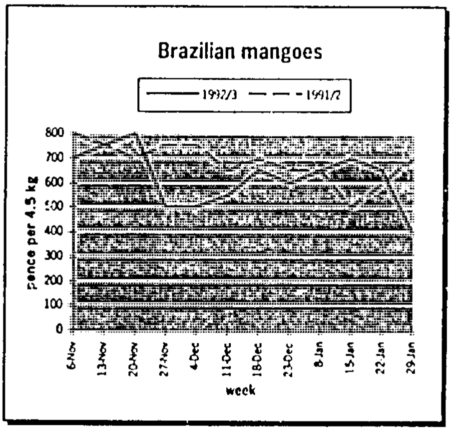


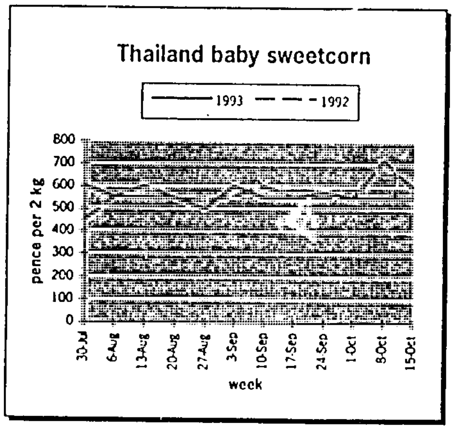


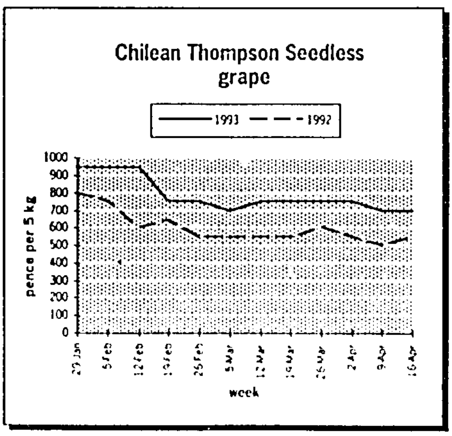


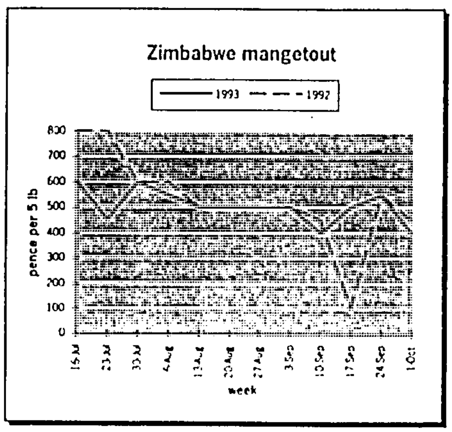

Brazilian mangoes
1993/4
1992/3
pence per 4 kg
week

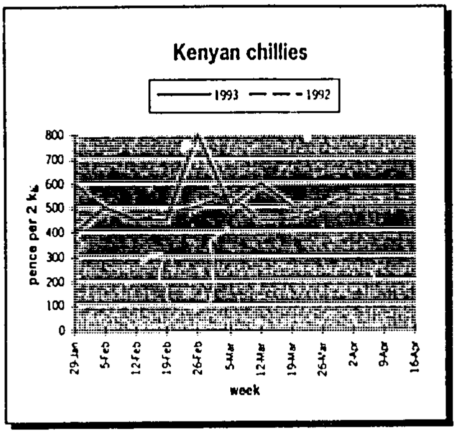

Thailand baby sweetcorn
1993
1992
pence per 2 kg
week

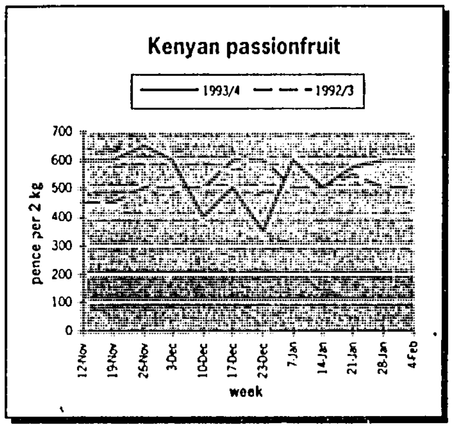

Brazilian mangoes
1992/3
1991/2
pence per 4.5 kg
week

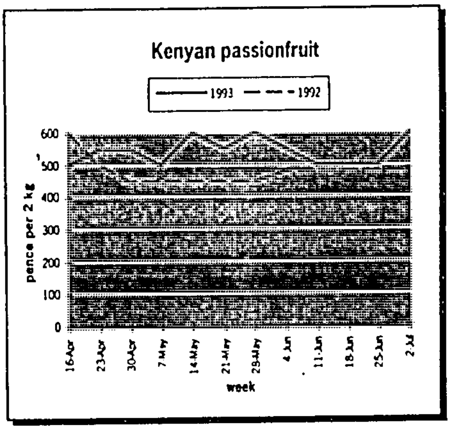

Thailand baby sweetcorn
1993
1992
pence per 2 kg
week

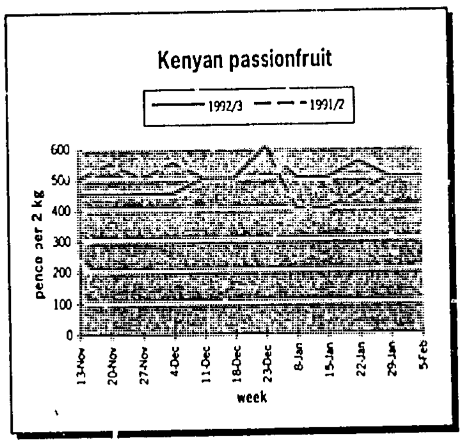

Chilean Thompson Seedless grape
1993
1992
pence per 5 kg
week

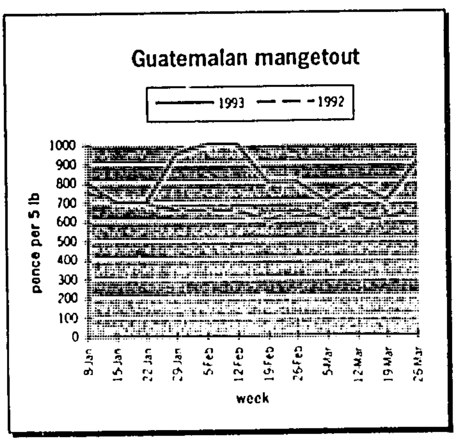

Zimbabwe mangetout
1993
1992
pence per 5 lb
week

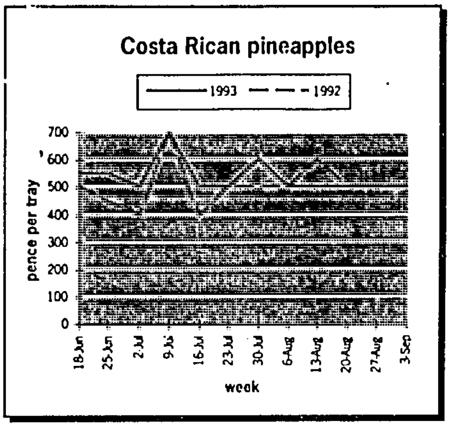

Kenyan chillies
1993
1992
pence per 2 kg
week

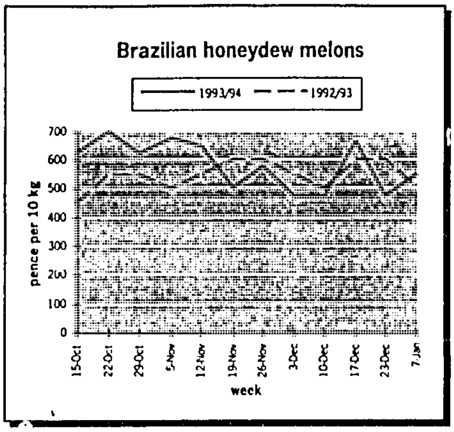

Kenyan passionfruit
1993/4
1992/3
pence per 2 kg
week

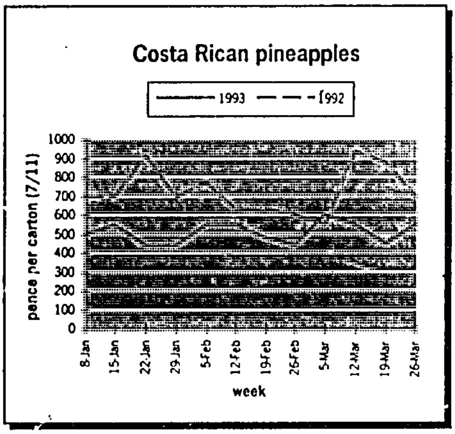

Kenyan passionfruit
1993
1992
pence per 2 kg
week

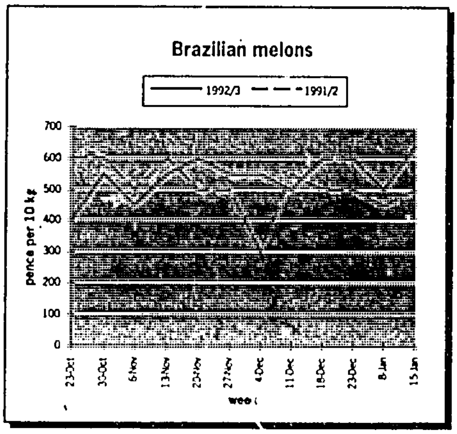

Kenyan passionfruit
1992/3
1991/2
pence per 2 kg
week

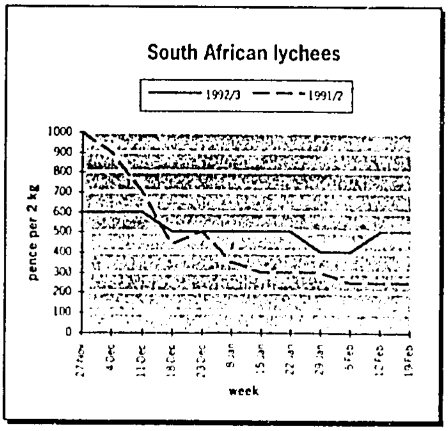

Guatemalan mangetout
1993
1992
pence per 5 lb
week

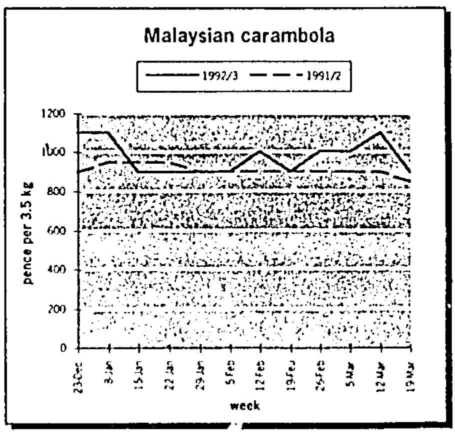

Costa Rican pineapples
1993
1992
pence per tray
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
18-Jun
25-Jun
2-Jul
9-Jul
16-Jul
23-Jul
30-Jul
6-Aug
13-Aug
20-Aug
27-Aug
3-Sep
week


Brazilian honeydew melons
1993/94
1992/93
pence per 10 kg
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
15-Oct
22-Oct
29-Oct
5-Nov
12-Nov
19-Nov
26-Nov
3-Dec
10-Dec
17-Dec
23-Dec
7-Jan
week


Costa Rican pineapples
1993
1992
pence per carton (7/11)
1000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
8-Jan
15-Jan
22-Jan
29-Jan
5-Feb
12-Feb
19-Feb
26-Feb
5-Mar
12-Mar
19-Mar
26-Mar
week


Brazilian melons
1992/3
1991/2
pence per 10 kg
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
23-Oct
30-Oct
6-Nov
13-Nov
20-Nov
27-Nov
4-Dec
11-Dec
18-Dec
23-Dec
8-Jan
15-Jan


South African lychees
1992/3
1991/2
pence per 2 kg
1000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
week


Malaysian carambola
1992/3
1991/2
pence per 3.5 kg
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
week

Monitor of the produce trade

ıATURITY and stability typify the curənt state of the international marketlace for fresh produce, although it is till at the mercy of climatic changes, uctuations in import/export volumes nd seasonality of produce.

With reference to the 1988-92 perid in seven key countries (the UK, rance, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan nd the USA), the latest Euromonitor larket Direction report says that iere has been constant growth in alue over the last five years despite ie economic situation - the reason ır this, according to Euromonitor, is ie increasing popularity of higher uality products and premium-priced cotics.

Exotics are winning in the market iare stakes against traditional fruit ıd vegetables following promotional ampaigns to develop niche markets. ther winning lines, thanks to conımer concern about healthy eating, re leaf vegetables, salad products ıd all fruit.

Potato consumption has fallen in everal markets as consumers turn ı other carbohydrate providers - the ector has contracted by almost 10 er cent in the UK during the years in uestion, by 8.6 per cent in France nd by 4.3 per cent in Japan. owever, Germany has bucked this end: the aftermath of reunification as meant a surge in demand for otatoes from the former east German states where low-priced, harder cooking varieties are favoured. The market there has leapt forward by almost 40 per cent.

Organic produce has failed to attract the market share hoped for - Euromonitor's research suggests that low-input production techniques will replace organic produce eventually.

The rise in popularity of prepacked fruit and vegetables has been tempered by media coverage, particularly in the USA, regarding the possible risk of contamination of food during the packing process - irradiation (to lengthen shelf life) and biotechnology (to create the "perfect" product) are currently the issues most discussed.

On the marketing front, Euromonitor describes the produce trade as fragmented, despite the recent trend for producers to work together in marketing plans aimed at improving product image.

Taking a closer look at particular lines, the study places apples firmly in the lead in terms of market share in all countries except Spain and Japan. In Spain citrus leads the way, while in Japan investment in banana plantations and modern storage and distribution methods has resulted in bananas being the most popular fruit. Sales of bananas have increased during 1988-92, however, in Germany (by 88 per cent), the UK (by 43.5 per cent) and the USA (by 54.4 per cent).

Bananas: first choice for Japanese consumers.

On the vegetable front, tomatoes are top of the list in all countries bar the UK and Japan, the only two not to have recorded a growth in this product during 1988-92. In the UK, the tradition for root vegetables holds firm. Carrots and onions accounting for more than a quarter of volume sales.

The full report is available from Euromonitor on 071-251 8024 priced at £1,375.

Exports as a percentage of domestic output of fruit* 1987-1991

% volume	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
France	29.0	26.4	27.1	26.8	37.8
Italy	16.7	14.0	14.6	16.3	18.3
Germany	3.4	1.8	2.9	3.7	na
Spain	na	33.2	30.1	32.5	35.2
UK	na	12.0	10.8	12.9	19.4

Exports as a percentage of domestic output of vegetables* 1987-1991

% volume	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
France	na	na	na	11.0	13.0
Italy	6.2	6.3	5.9	5.5	5.7
Germany	7.8	7.8	4.4	6.6	na
Spain	na	13.7	11.9	10.6	15.1
UK	na	1.2	1.7	1.6	2.1

Source: Euromonitor Market Direction
Note: *comparable data for the US and Japan are not available

High levels of domestic consumption mean that exports of vegetables from Europe are relatively limited. There are high levels of fruit export from countries such as France, Italy and Spain which benefit from favourable climatic conditions. Euromonitor research indicates a steady increase in exports of both fruit and vegetables from the UK, even though the volumes as a percentage of domestic output remain low.

A look to the future for world markets

TAKING a look into its crystal ball, Euromonitor comes up with a somewhat blurred image - predicting the future is an uncertain art at the best of times. A few trends are identified during the 1992-97 period, however.

Decline is forecast in France and Japan and long-term stagnation is predicted in Spain and in Germany where the stimulus of reunification has faded and recession set in. The UK and USA are expected to show a more positive trend with the industry growing at a rate of two per cent (up to a value of £5.2bn in 1997) and 27 per cent respectively.

Euromonitor emphasises that consumer concern over healthy eating and the environment will continue to have a positive effect on sales of produce. Exotics will remain popular as consumers become more adventurous in their tastes and modern lifestyles will add weight to the argument in favour of prepacked convenience foods. The attempt to create a niche market for organic produce has proved unsuccessful, according to Euromonitor, because of "high prices, lack of variety and poor supply".

A conclusion to the GATT talks and the proposed reforms of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) are identified as providing a degree of stability in the future trading climate. A GATT solution would eliminate the fear of protectionist attitudes from certain countries, while the EU banana regime could be revised under forthcoming changes to the CAP. Japan, meanwhile, is being seen less and less as a protectionist country as its system of tariffs and quotas becomes more liberal.

Volume consumption of fruit and vegetables in major markets* 1988-1992

'000 tonnes	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
France	9,016	8,801	8,682	8,723	8,770
Italy	13,829	14,335	14,507	14,843	15,298
Germany	7,085	7,033	7,303	9,446	9,756
Spain	9,142	8,919	8,986	8,951	9,000
UK	6,568	6,547	6,477	6,458	6,492
Japan	14,149	13,767	13,496	13,264	13,826

Source: Euromonitor Market Direction
Note: *there are no equivalent data available for the US

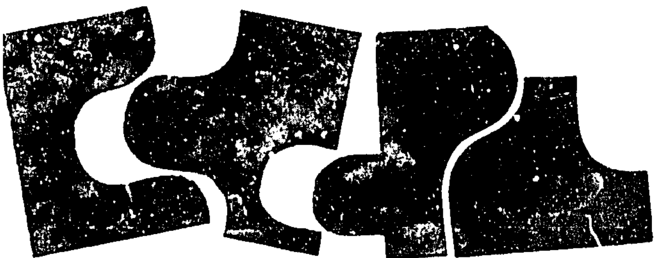
The stability of the key markets reviewed by Euromonitor is reflected in the constant or just marginally declining consumption of produce during the years in question. Consumption in Italy rises as meat consumption there drops, while the German market is boosted after reunification. The UK has the lowest consumption of all markets considered at just under 6.5m tonnes. Market value growth has been healthy - rates vary from 28 per cent in the UK to 43 per cent in the USA. While this can in part be explained by the concern with healthy eating, produce price inflation, especially in the USA, must also be considered. Slight value decline in France and Japan is explained by big harvests, oversupply and subsequent price pressure. In real growth terms, the UK was alone to decline between 1988 and 1992 as recession and fruit price inflation hit the market. Germany recorded the greatest growth as a result of reunifcation, while the USA market reaped the benefits of the 'Five-a-day' programme.

අපනයන අවස්ථා ඇගැයීම, අලෙවි හා දූත මෙහෙයුම්, වෙළඳ ප්‍රදර්ශණ

කෘෂි ආයතන හා නිෂ්පාදකයින් හට අපනයන අවස්ථා පිළිබඳ තොරතුරු කෙලින්ම ලබා ගැනීම සඳහා මං සැලසෙන දූත මෙහෙයුම් සහ වෙළෙඳ ප්‍රදර්ශණ සංවිධානය කිරීමද 'ඇගෙන්ට්' සේවාවකි.

ප්‍රචාරක සහාය

එතෙර වෙළඳ පොළේ නිෂ්පාදන සඳහා ඉල්ලුමක් ඇතිකිරීමට හා වර්ධනය කිරීමට ඉතාමත් උචිත ප්‍රචාරක දැන්වීම්, සැලසුම් කොට ලබා දීමට 'ඇගෙන්ට්' ඉදිරිපත්ව සිටී.



* හවුල් ව්‍යාපාර යදහා සුදුස්සන් තෝරා ගැනීම් සහ ඒවා වර්ධනය

හවුල් ව්‍යාපාර සඳහා සුදුස්සන් තෝරා ගැනීමට හා ඒවා හි වර්ධනය උදෙසා කෘෂි ආයතන හා නිෂ්පාදකයින්ට උපදෙස් හා ආධාර සැපයීමටද 'ඇගෙන්ට්' බලාපොරොත්තුවේ.

නවීන නිෂ්පාදන තාක්‍ෂණික ක්‍රම

නව තාක්‍ෂණික ක්‍රම හා ප්‍රභේද මගින් නිෂ්පාදනය වැඩිකිරීම, නිෂ්පාදන වල තත්වය වැඩි දියුණු කිරීම සහ නිෂ්පාදන වියදම අඩු කිරීම සඳහා අවශ්‍ය ආධාර වාණිජමය වගා-කරුවන්ට හා අනෙකුත් වගාකරුවන්ට ලබාදීමද මෙම ආයතනයේ සේවාවකි.

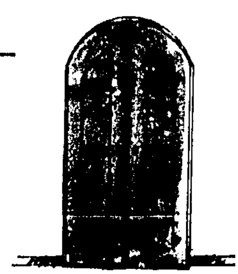
'පසු අස්වනු' නිෂ්පාදන

වැවිලි කරුවන්, තොග ගැනුම්කරුවන් හා අපනයනය කරන්නන් නිතර මුහුණ දෙන 'පසු අස්වනු' පාඩු මග හරවා අලෙවි ක්‍රියාවලියේ සෑම අදියරයකදීම වඩා හොඳ ප්‍රතිඵල අත්කර දීම සඳහා නවීන 'පසු අස්වනු' නිෂ්පාදන ක්‍රම ඉදිරිපත් කිරීම මගින් ඔවුන්ට සහාය දීමටද 'ඇගෙන්ට්' බලාපොරොත්තුව සිටී.

පුහුණු කිරීමේ කටයුතු

නිෂ්පාදනය, සැකසුම හා අලෙවි කිරීම පිළිබඳ විශේෂ දේශනමාලා, වැඩ මුළු, පුහුණු වැඩ සටහන් හා එතෙර පුහුණු චාරිකා සඳහා අනුග්‍රහය දැක්වීමද 'ඇගෙන්ට්' හි බලාපොරොත්තුවයි.

* **කෘෂි ද්‍රව්‍ය නිෂ්පාදනය, සැකසුම සහ අලෙවිකරණය පිළිබඳ තොරතුරු මධ්‍යස්ථානය**



කෘෂි නිෂ්පාදනය, සැකසුම හා විකුණුම පිළිබඳව කෘෂි ආශ්‍රිත නිෂ්පාදනයන්හි නියැලුනු ආයතන හා පුද්ගලයින් හට කාලීන තොරතුරු සහ දත්තයන් සැපයීම උදෙසාම තොරතුරු මධ්‍යස්ථානයක් පවත්වාගෙන යාමට 'ඇගෙන්ට්' පියවර ගෙන ඇත.

* **කෘෂි ව්‍යාපාර සංවර්ධන ආධාර**

අනාගතයේදී සාර්ථක හා ඵලදායී කෘෂි ව්‍යාපාර බිහිකිරීමේ අරමුණු ඇතිව, ව්‍යාපාරික මට්ටමෙන් කෘෂි කර්මාන්තයේ නියැලුනවුන්ට නවීන නිෂ්පාදන සහ සැකසුම් ක්‍රම හඳුන්වාදී නිෂ්පාදන සඳහා එතෙර වෙළඳ පොළ වර්ධනය කිරීමට (ආයෝජන ආධාර බෙදා ගැනීමේ පදනම යටතේ) ඇගෙන්ට් පියවර ගනු ඇත

* **කෘෂි ව්‍යාපාර සඳහා මූල්‍ය/ආයෝජන සැලසුම්**

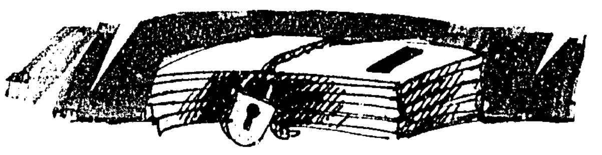
ඵලදායී ව්‍යාපාර ආයෝජන සැලසුම් සකස් කිරීම සඳහා තම පාරිභෝගිකයන් හට සහාය වීමේ අරමුණු ඇතිව, මූල්‍යමය අංශය පිළිබඳව විශේෂ උපදෙස් සේවයක් 'ඇගෙන්ට්' ක්‍රියාත්මක කරගෙන යයි.

* **විශේෂ සැලසුම් හා ඵලදායීත්වය පිළිබඳ අධ්‍යයනය**

එතෙර හා මෙතෙර වෙළඳ පොළ වැඩි දියුණු කිරීමේ අදහස් ඇතිව නිෂ්පාදනය, සැකසීම, බෙදාහැරීම හා විකුණුම පිළිබඳව ලාංකික කෘෂි ක්ෂේත්‍රයේ අවශ්‍යතාවය පරිදි උචිත කරුණු පිළිබඳ අධ්‍යයන කටයුතු කිරීමද 'ඇගෙන්ට්' හි එක් බලාපොරොත්තුවකි.

* **රහස්‍යභාවය සුරැකීම**

සෑම පාරිභෝගික කටයුත්තක් පිළිබඳව අතිශය රහස්‍යභාවය සුරැකීම 'ඇගෙන්ට්' සහතිකයයි.



* **'ඇගෙන්ට්' උපදෙස් සහ ආධාර කණ්ඩායම**

'ඇගෙන්ට්' උපදේශක කණ්ඩායම, දේශීය හා විදේශීය කෘෂි ව්‍යාපාර පිළිබඳ දීර්ඝ කාලීන අත්දැකීම් සහිත, තරඟකාරී කෘෂි ආර්ථික තත්වයන් යටතේදී ව්‍යාපාර, හවුල් ව්‍යාපාර වර්ධනය, අලෙවි ක්‍රියාවලිය, නිෂ්පාදනය, සැකසීම හා මූල්‍යමය අංශයන් පිළිබඳ හසළ දැනුමක් සහිත උපදේශක කණ්ඩායමකි.

ලාංකික කෘෂි ව්‍යාපාරී හා කෘෂි කර්මාන්තයේ නියැළුනුවන්ට එම දැනුම බෙදා දීමට දැන් 'ඇගෙන්ට්' සූදානමින් සිටී.

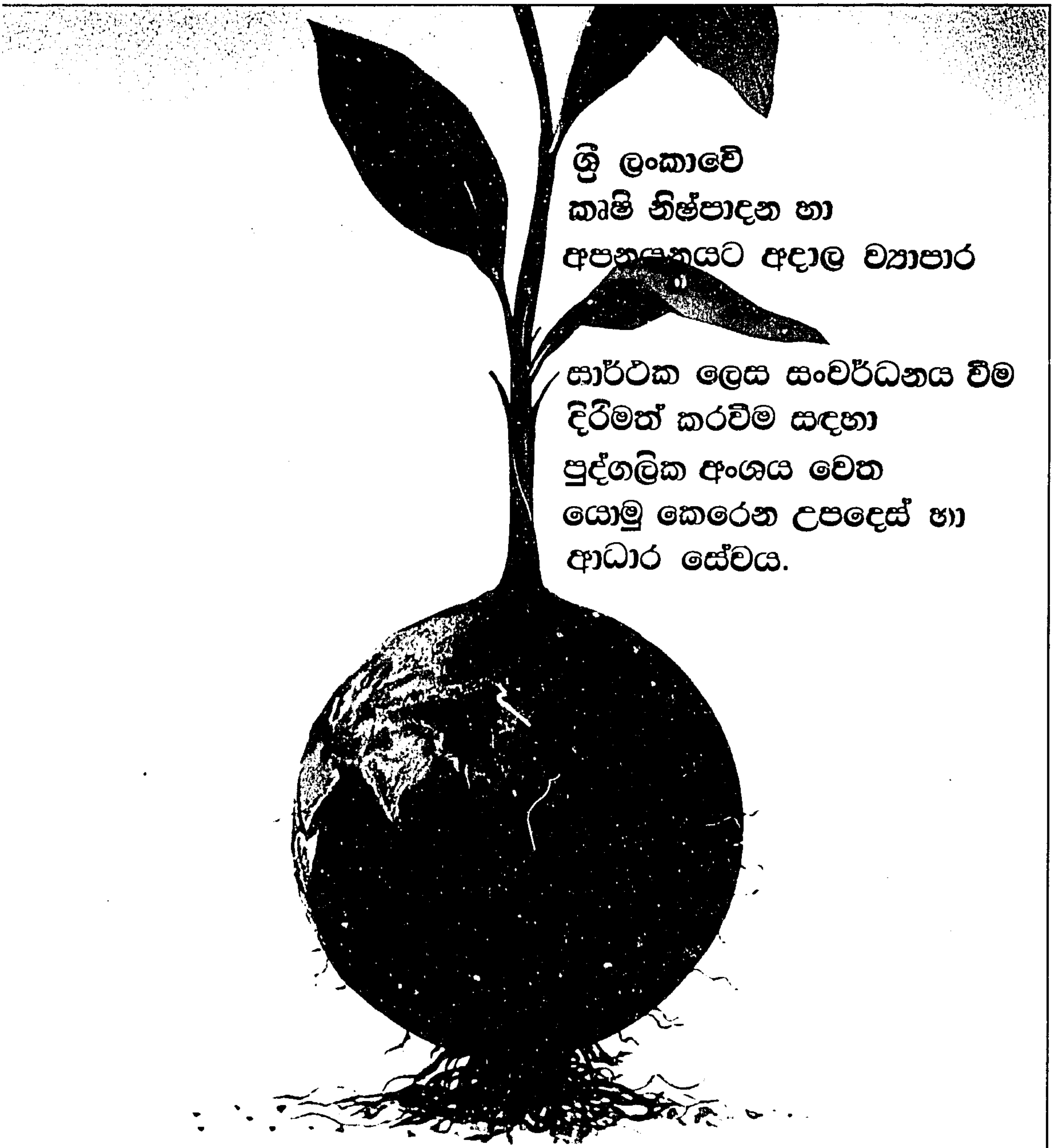
වැඩි විස්තර සඳහා විමසන්න.

කොළඹ කාර්යාලය

5 වන මහල,
ඩොයිෂ් බැංකු ගොඩනැගිල්ල,
86, ගාලු පාර,
කොළඹ 3.

අමතන්න: රිචඩ් හර්ල්බ්‍රිත්ක්
කණ්ඩායම් නායක
දුරකථන: 94-1-446447, 446420
ෆැක්ස්: 94-1-446428

AgEnt



ඇගෙන්ට් සේවයට මූල්‍ය ආධාර සපයනු ලබන්නේ ඇමෙරිකා එක්සත් ජනපදයේ
ජාත්‍යන්තර සංවර්ධන ආයතනයයි. (යූ.එස්.ඒඩ්)

USAID

ඇගෙන්ට්
(AgEnt)
ශ්‍රී ලාංකික කෘෂි ව්‍යාපාරයන්ට ආධාර සහ සහයෝගය දීමේ ඇගෙන්ට් සැලසුම.

අනාගතයේදී සාර්ථක ප්‍රතිඵල අත්කරදෙන වාසිදායක නව ව්‍යාපාර අරඹන්නන්ට හා විවිධ ආයතනයන්ට, තම ව්‍යාපාර හා වෙළඳ පොළ පුළුල් කර ගැනීමට 'ඇගෙන්ට්' මගින් උපදෙස් සලසයි.

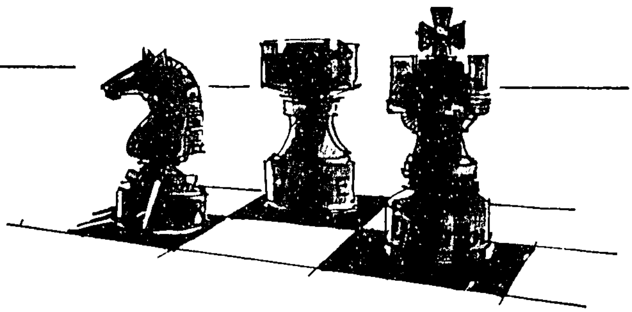
කෘෂි භාණ්ඩ නිෂ්පාදනය, සැකසුම, බෙදා හැරීම, අලෙවි කිරීම, මූල්‍යය, පුහුණු කිරීම්, හා පුළුල් ව්‍යාපාර සංවර්ධනය ආදි සෑම අංශයක්ම ඇතුළත් වන අයුරින් උපදෙස් හා ආධාර රැසක් ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමට 'ඇගෙන්ට්' උපදෙස් සේවයට හැකියාව ඇත.

'ඇගෙන්ට්' ආධාර අපේක්ෂා කරන, අපේක්ෂකයන් සතු වූ සම්පත් කැපකිරීම/යෙදවීම ඇතුළුව අනෙකුත් සුදුසුකම් මත එම උපදෙස් හා ආධාර සඳහා තෝරා ගැනෙනු ඇත.

'ඇගෙන්ට්' උපදෙස් හා ආධාර රැසකි.

* ව්‍යාපාර හා අලෙවිකරණය සැලසුම් කිරීම

ව්‍යාපාර සංවර්ධනය අලෙවිකරණය සැලසුම් කිරීම පිළිබඳ උපදෙස් 'ඇගෙන්ට්' වෙතින්.

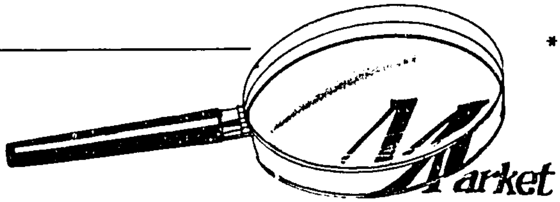


* භාණ්ඩයන්හි තත්වය වර්ධනය කිරීම සහ වෙළඳපොළ නිරීක්ෂණය කිරීම

භාණ්ඩයන්හි තත්වය වර්ධනය කිරීම, ඇසුර කිරීම, සැලසුම් කිරීම හා අත්හදා බැලි පදනමක් මත නැව් බඩු අපනයනය කිරීම 'ඇගෙන්ට්' ඉදිරිපත් වී සිටී.

* තත්වයෙන් වඩා උසස්වූ නිෂ්පාදන වට්ටෝරු සහ සැකසීමේ තාක්ෂණයන්

'ඇගෙන්ට්' විසින්, නිෂ්පාදකයින්ට තම නිෂ්පාදන වට්ටෝරුවල තත්වය උසස් කර ගැනීමට, නව වට්ටෝරු සකස් ක ගැනීමට හෝ නවීන සකස් කිරීමේ තාක්ෂණයන් හඳුන්වා දීමට පියවර ගනු ඇත.



* වෙළඳ පොළ අධීක්ෂණය

අළුතින් හඳුන්වාදෙන නිෂ්පාදන සඳහා, එතෙර වෙළඳපොළ අධීක්ෂණය කො එම නිෂ්පාදන සඳහා ඇති ඉල්ලුම හෝ ඊ සමාන කරුණු පිළිබඳව නිෂ්පාදකයින් දැනුව කිරීමද 'ඇගෙන්ට්' හි අරමුණු අතර වේ.

* නව වෙළඳ පොළවල් හා පාරිභෝගිකයින් තෝරා ගැන්ම

නිෂ්පාදන සඳහා එතෙර වෙළඳ පොළවල් සහ පාරිභෝගිකයින් තෝරා ගැන්ම හා අදාල නිෂ්පාදන එම වෙළඳ පොළවල් සඳහා ඉදිරිපත් කිරීම, ප්‍රචලිත කිරීම හා අලෙවි උපක්‍රම පිළිබඳව නිෂ්පාදකයින්ට අවබෝධයක් ලබා දීමද 'ඇගෙන්ට්' හි සේවා අතරින් එකකි.