CBI Product Fact Sheet: Fresh Exotic Tropical Fruit in the European Market

‘Practical market insights into your product’

Fresh exotic tropical fruits are still niche products in Europe. In general prices are high, often due to the necessary air transport, but quantities are limited. Communicating the health benefits of tropical fruit can help increase demand. Purple passion fruit is a tropical fruit that is becoming more popular.

Product description

This product factsheet covers a number of exotic tropical fruits, mainly tamarinds, cashew apples, lychees, jackfruit, sapodillo plums, passion fruit, carambola and pitahaya.

Source: Shutterstock, 2013, selection of exotic tropical fruit.

Product Definition

All fruits described below can be grown in tropical or subtropical climates. They are considered exotic to European countries in the sense that they are not produced in Europe and consumption volumes are limited (niche products). The range of products in this product category is not limited to the ones listed below; other exotic (sub)tropical fruits include pomegranates, kaki fruit, cherimoya, durian, physalis, longan, and many others.
Lychee (*Litchi chinensis*) is an evergreen tree which can grow up to 28 metres high. The fruit is up to 5 cm long and 4 cm wide. The white flesh is edible; the pink-red skin is inedible.

Pitahaya (*Hylocereus*) is a fruit growing on a cactus plant. Three varieties are grown commercially: *Hylocereus undatus* white flesh with pink-red skin, *Hylocereus polyrhizus* red flesh with pink-red skin, and *Selenicereus megalanthus* white flesh with yellow skin. It is also known as pitaya, dragon fruit or cactus fruit.

Passion fruit (*Passiflora edulis*) is a fruit from passion flowers. There are several different species which differ in shape and colour. Passion fruit is also known as purple granadilla in South Africa.

Carambola (*Averrhoa carambola*) is also known as starfruit, named after the star-shape form of the cross-section. The fruit is green to dark yellow and can be up to 15cm long.

Rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum*) is a tree which bears fruit. The fruit is a round to oval 3–6 cm tall and 3–4 cm wide. The skin is reddish and covered with fleshy pliable spines. The fruit is fragile and is ripened on the tree. The fresh fruit bruise easily and have limited shelf life.

The cashew apple (*Anacardium occidentale*) is a tree which can reach heights of 15 metres. The fruit is an accessory fruit or false fruit. The apple is pear-shaped and yellow and red when ripe. The fruit is perishable and has a fragile skin which makes transportation difficult.

**Table 1: CN commodity code for fresh tropical fruit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08109020</td>
<td>Fresh tamarinds, cashew apples, lychees, jackfruit, sapodillo plums, passion fruit, carambola and pitahaya</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Product Specification**

**Quality:**

- All exotic tropical fruits in this factsheet are classified in three classes: Extra Class, Class I and Class II. Information on quality requirements for each class can be found in the Codex Alimentarius (‘Food code’ of WHO and FAO), the UNECE standards, and in the General Marketing Standards of Regulation (EU) 543/2011. Most quality requirements are the same for the different fruits. The product should, at the very least be intact, clean and sound, (practically) free from pests, damage, free from bruising, fresh in appearance and in a condition to withstand transport and handling. There are additional requirements for some fruits (see Codex).
- EU quality standards in Regulation (EC) No. 1580/2007 explain that imports of fresh fruit and vegetables from third countries must comply with marketing or equivalent standards. Checks on conformity must be carried out before these goods enter Community customs territory, except in the case of small lots which the inspection authorities/bodies consider to be low...
In certain third countries which provide satisfactory guarantees of conformity, pre-export checks may be carried out by the inspection bodies of these third countries.

**Size and packaging:**
- Size classes are different for the various tropical fruits. See Codex Alimentarius Standard for lychee, carambola, mangosteen, rambutan for details.
- Packaging requirements differ between customers and market segments. They must at least be packed to protect the produce properly, in new, clean and quality packaging to prevent damage to the product. Discuss your customers’ packaging requirements with them. Some general characteristics are:
  - Wholesale packaging in cardboard boxes or crates. These boxes can vary in size.
- See also the Recommended International Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Tropical Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 44-1995).

**Labelling:**
- Consumer package labelling must be in accordance with the rules and regulations applying in the EU and EFTA market. Labels cannot contain any toxic ink or glue. See the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods or EU Directive 2000/13/EC, which lays down the general rules on labelling of pre-packaged food sold on the EU market. This regulation will be replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, as from 13 December 2014. If the nature of the produce is not visible from the outside, the package must be labelled with the name of the product, and the (optional) name of the variety and/or commercial name.

Source: LEI Wageningen UR, 2013.
The following items should be on the label of (pre-packed) fresh fruits:
- the name under which the product is sold,
- the commercial identification: class, size (code), number of units, net weight,
- name and address of the producer,
- place/country of origin.

In addition, any certification logo or retailer logo, in the case of private label products, should be on the label. Listing ingredients is not mandatory for fresh fruit unless a container holds several different products, in which case a list of ingredients and quantities of each product is on the label.

See: EU Marketing standards for fresh fruit and vegetables. The marketing standards set out rules to identify several quality classes, which must be indicated on the packaging (Extra Class, Class I, Class II).

The new Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 establishes the general principles, requirements and responsibilities governing food information, and in particular food labelling. It lays down the methods for guaranteeing the right of consumers to access information, and procedures for the provision of food information, taking into account the need to provide sufficient flexibility to respond to future developments and new information requirements.

For more information on labelling, packaging and quality see also: Codex Alimentarius and the CBI Market Intelligence Platform for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.
Buyer Requirements for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Buyer requirements can be divided into (1) **musts**, requirements you must meet in order to enter the market, such as legal requirements, (2) **common** requirements, which are those most of your competitors have already implemented, in other words, the ones you need to comply with in order to keep up with the market, and (3) **niche** market requirements for specific segments.

### Requirements you must meet

**Pesticides**

Pesticide residues are one of the most important points of attention for fruit and vegetable suppliers. To avoid damage to health and the environment, the EU has restricted the use of certain chemicals in several Regulations and Directives. The EU has set maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides in and on food products. Products containing more pesticides than allowed will be withdrawn from the EU market. Note that buyers in several Members States (including but not limited to the UK, Germany, The Netherlands and Austria) use MRLs which are stricter than the MRLs laid down in EU legislation.

**Considerations for action**

- To find out the MRLs that are relevant for your products, you can use the EU MRL database in which all harmonised MRLs can be found. You can search on your product or pesticide used and the database shows the list of the MRLs associated to your product or pesticide.
- Read more about MRLs in the EU Export Helpdesk.
- Check with your buyers if they require additional requirements on MRLs and pesticide use.
- A good way to reduce the amount of pesticides is to apply integrated pest management (IPM) in production. IPM is an agricultural pest control strategy that uses complementary strategies including growing practices and chemical management. IPM is a general requirement in most standards for
**Good Agricultural Practices like GlobalG.A.P.**

- Check which standards are applicable to you and make sure your products and the necessary documentation are in order. Read more about marketing standards in the EU Export Helpdesk.

- Make sure that all mandatory information is mentioned, but also think of other useful information e.g. logos of importers or certificates.

- Read more about food labelling in the EU Export Helpdesk.

**Plant Health**

Fruit and vegetables exported to the EU, must comply with the EU legislation on plant health. The EU has laid down phytosanitary requirements to prevent introduction and spread of organisms harmful to plants and plant products in the EU. The requirements mainly imply that:

- Certain listed organisms are not allowed to be imported into the EU, unless specific circumstances apply.

- Check with the relevant National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) or your EU importer what the requirements are for your product. Click [here](#) for a list of NPPOs.

- If a phytosanitary certificate is needed (click [here](#) for a list) to be allowed EU entry and arrange one with your NPPO or ask your EU importer to arrange one. A model phytosanitary certificate can be found through Annex VII of the Plant Health Directive. At the moment, a phytosanitary certificate is not required for tropical fruit to be allowed entry in the EU. Read more about [plant health](#) in the EU Export Helpdesk.

**Contaminants**

Contaminants are substances that have not been intentionally added to food, but which may be present as a result of the various stages of its production, packaging, transport or holding. To avoid negative impact on the quality of food and risks to human health, the EU has set limits for several contaminants. Especially the limits for Nitrate (in spinach and lettuce) and metals (cadmium, lead, mercury, inorganic tin), are relevant for fresh fruit and vegetables.

- Find the relevant contaminant levels in the annex of Regulation (EC) 1881/2006. All contaminants are presented and maximum levels are provided per product or groups of products. Check if your food product is included in one of the product groups. Be aware that the particular product may not be mentioned specifically but can be included in a product group. For instance, while exotic tropical fruit may not, fruit can be found.

- Find out more about prevention and reduction of lead Contamination in the Code of Practice published by the Codex Alimentarius.

- Check the European Commission’s factsheet on food contaminants “Managing food contaminants: how the EU ensures that our food is safe”. Read more about contaminants in the EU Export Helpdesk.

- Familiarise yourself with the procedures. Failure to follow the right procedures could cause decrease and delay of orders, increase...
ensures that all food marketed in the EU market is safe, i.e. in compliance with the requirements applicable to them. There are three types of checks:

a) Documentary checks
b) Identity checks
c) Physical checks

In the event of repeated non-compliance of specific products originating from particular countries, the EU can decide that controls will be carried out at a higher level or impose emergency measures. Controls can be carried out at all stages of import and marketing in the EU. However, most checks are done at the points of entry in the EU.

**Full overview of requirements for your fresh fruit or vegetables:**
For a full list of requirements, please consult the EU Export Helpdesk where you can select your specific product code under chapter 07 and 08.

**Common buyer requirements:**

**Certification as guarantee**
As food safety is a top priority in all EU food sectors, you can expect many players to request extra guarantees from you in form of certification.

**GlobalG.A.P.**
The most commonly requested food safety certification scheme, essential for exporting FFV to the EU is GlobalG.A.P. GLOBALG.A.P is a pre-farm-gate standard that covers the whole agricultural production process, from before the plant is in the ground to the non-processed product (processing not covered).

Examples of other food safety management systems that can be required are BRC and IFS, FSSC22000 or SOF. These management systems are required additionally to GLOBALG.A.P. and also cover the chain from the farm to the buyer.

Different buyers may have different preferences for a certain management system, so before considering certification against one of these standards, it is advised to check which one is preferred. (British retailers often require BRC and IFS is more commonly required on the mainland. All the mentioned management systems are recognised by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), which means that any of them should be accepted by several major retailers. However, in practice some buyers still have preferences for one specific management system

**Quality standards**

- **EU market entry preparation is more likely to include GlobalG.A.P certification than not, and it is therefore important to familiarise yourself with GLOBALG.A.P.**
- **Check which Food safety management systems are most commonly requested in your target market.**
- **Read more on the different Food Safety Management Systems at the Standards Map.**

Considerations for action
EU buyers often require compliance with a UNECE or Codex Alimentarius standards. It should be noted that quality refers to both food safety and food quality. In fact, food safety is part of food quality. There is no quality if a food appears to be unhealthy or dangerous for consumers. However, food quality is more than food safety. Food quality also refers to specific characteristics of the food, mostly from the perspective of the consumer, including internal and external characteristics. The standards that are most widely used by EU importers and traders are those developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). The UNECE standards are often used in the daily practice of trade, whereby they serve as a reference for the product specifications imposed by importers.

**Considerations for action**

- Make sure you supply the quality as agreed in the product specifications.

**Niche markets: Organic and Fair trade**

**Fair Trade**

A small, but growing, niche market is the market for FFV produced with more focus on the social and/or environmental conditions in the producing areas. Examples of relevant standards (and consumer labels) for FFV are Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade.

Furthermore importers may also adopt initiatives which may also impact you as a supplier. For example participating in a retailer initiative, such as the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) in the UK, or the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) in North-Western Europe.

**Rainforest Alliance**

The Rainforest Alliance certification scheme aims to reduce the environmental and social impact of agricultural production. The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and improve livelihoods by promoting and evaluating the implementation of the most globally respected sustainability standards in a variety of fields.

**Organic, a growing niche market**

An increasing number of EU consumers prefer food products that are produced and processed by natural methods. Organic fruits and vegetables are products that can meet both needs, while at the same time they could provide higher prices to producers. To market organic products in the EU, you have to use organic production methods which are laid down in EU legislation. Furthermore, you have to use these production methods for at least two years before you can market the fruits and vegetables as organic. In addition, you (or your EU importer) must apply for an import authorisation from EU

**Considerations for action**

- Consult the Standards Map database for the different labels and their similarities and differences.

Check your company’s current performances. For example by doing a self-assessment on the BSCI website.

- Implementing organic production and becoming certified can be expensive, so it is advised to assess the market potential.
- Check which organic labels are most commonly requested in your target market.
- Consult the Standards Map database for the different labels and their similarities and differences.
- When exporting organic produce to the European market, it is advisable to use a dedicated and specialised importer knowledgeable about the market and with access to select niche markets.
organic control bodies. After being audited by an accredited certifier, you may put the EU organic logo on your products, as well as the logo of the standard holder (e.g. Soil Association (especially relevant in the UK), Naturland (Germany) or Bio Suisse (Switzerland)). Some of these standards are slightly different, but they all comply with the EU legislation on organic production and labelling.

Trade and Macro-Economic Statistics

Imports

Figure 1: Import of fresh exotic tropical fruit in the EU, 2009-2013, in 1,000 tons

![Graph showing import of fresh exotic tropical fruit in the EU, 2009-2013, in 1,000 tons]

Source: Eurostat Comext, calculations LEI.

Analysis and interpretation

- In 2013 European buyers imported almost 30 thousand tons of exotic tropical fruit from outside Europe, 29 thousand tons of which originated in DCs. Between 2009 and 2013, European imports of fresh tropical and exotic fruit increased by 22%. Since 2011, imports appear to be stabilising at around 60 thousand tons.
- Total European imports of exotic tropical fruit from outside Europe were valued at around 85 million euro in 2012, of which 83 million euro came from DCs. The import value of exotic tropical fruit is growing.

Considerations for action

- Importers in the European market favour larger producers because of supply certainty.
- **Fresh Plaza** is a good starting point if you are looking for current relevant information in the market for fresh fruits.

1 Developing countries in this Product Fact Sheet are defined as the countries mentioned on the OECD DAC list 2012/2013.
The main importing countries are the Netherlands, France, Germany and Belgium. Together these countries represent over 80% of total imports. This applies to all products in the exotic tropical fruit group.

Prices for different products vary greatly. Generally, fruit with high wholesale prices are sold in smaller quantities and in smaller boxes.

Exports

- Find a European importer through CBI or by presenting yourself at fairs like Fruit Logistica. For more information: http://www.fruitlogistica.de/en/
- Prices fluctuate during the year. Find information about current fresh fruit prices at French wholesale market at Rungis at the France Agrimer website.

**Analysis and interpretation**

- In 2013, the Netherlands and Belgium were the main (re-)exporting countries with around 60% of total EU exports (20 thousand tonnes). They both export to Germany, France and Sweden.
- The European export value is almost 90 million euros. Between 2009 and 2013 the value of European exotic tropical fruit exports increased by 67%.
- A little over 1,000 tons went to destination countries outside Europe in 2013. The most important final destination is Russia. The value of European exotic tropical fruit exports to countries outside Europe was around 5 million euro in 2013. Between

**Considerations for action**

- The Netherlands and Belgium are major ports of entry and re-exporting countries for tropical and exotic fruit. Finding an importer/distributor in these countries will open up a much larger market.
- More trade statistics for Europe can be found on the Internet. A good starting point is Trade map from the International Trade Centre.
- Visit Eurostat; the statistical office for the EU, to see more statistics on trade between EU and Non EU countries. You can find it here.
2009 and 2013, this value decreased by almost 50%.

Production

Figure 5: Global production of exotic tropical fruit, 2008-2012, in million tons

Source: FAOSTAT.

Analysis and interpretation

- The main producers in the world are India, the Philippines, Indonesia, China and Thailand. Total worldwide production of exotic fruit like rambutan, passion fruit and lychee is gradually increasing. In 2012, production reached 20 million tons.

- The only countries in the EU with reported production of exotic fruits (FAO: Tropical Fruits, nes) are Spain and Cyprus. In Spain, some pomegranates, kaki, and e.g. cherimoya are grown in the coastal region of Granada. Spanish production (80 thousand tons in 2012) increased slightly in the last couple of years.

- Carambola: Mainly produced in South East Asia, with India as the largest producer and exporter to European markets, carambolas (also called star fruit) are part of the lesser known fruits species in Europe.

- Lychee: Madagascar is the main supplier of lychees to the European market. Lychee arrivals are concentrated in December. Exports from Madagascar strongly fluctuated in the period 2008-2012 from 18 million euros to 72 million euros.

- Pitahaya: A fruit variety also referred to as dragon fruit, it is virtually unknown in most European countries. The main supplier to the European market is Vietnam, but during

Considerations for action

- Populations in Asian countries are increasing. Over time more and more Asian production will be needed for domestic markets. Filling in the gap for the European market has great potential.

- Find more information about worldwide production of fresh tropical and exotic fruit at FAOSTAT. You can find it here.

- Being rich in antioxidants and vitamin C; and low in sugar, sodium, and acid, carambola has the potential to grow in the European market if proven health benefits are communicated more effectively.

- Due to specific soil conditions, lychees are difficult to produce outside China. If you can produce them and maybe extend the production season, lychees have huge potential on the European market.

- Pitahaya has market potential, especially in Germany. The biggest challenge is keeping the cost price low in order to compete with production from Israel.
the season it changes to Israel and South America. Israel supplies the Southern Part of Europe by sea which has a lower cost price than Vietnam supplying by air.

- **Rambutan**: Rambutans supplied to Europe mainly originate from Asian countries. Still, some Latin American countries, i.e. Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico, also produce rambutans.

- **Passion fruit**: European imports of Passion fruit are mainly supplied by African countries, e.g. Kenya and South Africa (purple passion fruit), and Colombia and Ecuador (e.g. yellow passion fruit). Other suppliers are e.g. Israel and Vietnam. The expansion of ethnic communities in Europe means the demand for passion fruit is increasing.

**Consumption**

**Figure 6: Apparent consumption** of exotic fruit in the EU, 2007-2011, in thousand tons

**Figure 7: Apparent consumption of tropical fruit in EU-28 and selected countries with highest per capita consumption, 2007-2011, kg per capita**

**Analysis and interpretation**

- In Spain, per capita consumption of exotic fruit is highest, and rising, with almost 2 kg per capita; presumably mostly pomegranates. As a result of cultural habits, Spanish consumers are familiar with a higher level of fruit consumption in general. The majority of fruit consumed in Spain is produced domestically.

- While per capita consumption is the highest in Spain, France and the UK are larger markets, because the number of inhabitants

**Considerations for action**

- There is a growing demand for passion fruit in Europe, based on the perceived health benefits of the fruit. Find an importer to help you with smart promotion based on these benefits.

- Spanish consumers like fruit and are used to eating it. There are market opportunities for fruit varieties that are not grown in Spain.

- The European market for fruit has growing potential. Promote the health benefits or consider a sustainable variety and

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2 Data of UN Comtrade is used to indicate apparent consumption. Apparent consumption is defined as the difference between imports and exports of exotic tropical fruits. Variations in stock are not taken into account. It does not necessarily reflect actual consumption, since importing countries may also export imported product again after an additional processing stage within another product group.
Market Trends

CBI Trend mapping provides you with general trends in the European market for fresh fruits and vegetables. This section provides more details about specific trends in the market for fresh tropical fruit.

Analysis and interpretation

Social:

- **Food safety is a main priority in Europe:** some recent food scares have resulted in a great deal of attention being paid to food safety among policy makers and retailers alike. Food safety certification (GLOBALG.A.P. or another GFSI recognised certification scheme) is a must-have.

- **Growing interest in sustainable fruit:** Consumption of fresh fruit in Europe is moving towards a more sustainable approach to production and handling. Environmental and social issues are gaining in importance. A method for delivering fruit that is produced in a socially and environmentally responsible manner is to apply the organic and/or Fairtrade certification schemes. These labels include procedures for substantially reducing and registering the use of pesticides, improving the safety of employees and/or even including price guarantees.

- **Global Social Compliance Programme:** Labour conditions and the companies’ impact on society will become more important to buyers in the next few years. Alongside environmental impact, this is the main area of attention from a Corporate Social Responsibility point of view.

- **Use proven health benefits:** Tropical fruit is well known for being healthy. Since EU consumers embrace healthy and tasty fruit, health benefits are one of the main drivers for market success.

- **Taste is important:** For European consumers taste is of growing importance. They want the tropical fruit to be ripe when bought, so that the fruit can be eaten immediately after purchase. The taste should be sweet, while the texture of the fruit is firm.

Considerations for action

- **As food safety is a major issue, work proactively with buyers to improve food safety and be transparent and up-to-date with buyers' requirements and regulations.**

- **Check the European Food Safety legislation at the CBI Market Intelligence Platform.**

- **Check the GFSI website for more information on the issue at:** [http://www.mygfsi.com](http://www.mygfsi.com).

- **There is a clear demand for organic and fair-trade tropical fruit, with the UK and Germany as leading countries.**

- **See also the Buyers' Black Box on the CBI Market Intelligence Platform.**

- **See the CBI Market Intelligence Platform for more information on EU legislation on organic production and labelling.**

- **Certification schemes that are assessed and recognised by the Global Social Compliance Program (GSCP) will have a higher chance of being accepted by European supermarkets.**

- **Communicating the health benefits of fruit will help expand the European market. The health claim is related to the high antioxidant content of the produce. Be aware of European Legislation on food health claims.**

- **Product taste is of crucial importance. Make sure that supply chain logistics and transport processes do not affect product taste in any significant way.**

- **Find the right varieties for the destination market of your choice.**
**Economic:**
- By ship or by plane depends on the market: Transport by ship will be much cheaper, however time to market will increase. Most exotic tropical fruit is shipped in small volumes by air, while larger commodities or less perishable produce is shipped by sea when possible.

**Environmental:**
- Sustainability certification: Sustainable certification is not a requirement (yet), but Europe is moving towards a more sustainable future in food consumption. There are significant variations between products. European demand will continue to exist for products that are not produced in Europe. Social issues, working conditions and fair trade are the main non-legal requirements in 2013. Requirements are changing over time.

- Preferably work with specialised importers of exotics.
- Look at the section above about non legal requirements to discover the necessary certification schemes for the European market. Discuss with your buyer how to adopt the right mix of certificates, varieties and ripeness during transport, for your tropical fruit.

**Market Channels and Segments**

For more general information about market channels and segments you can have a look at the [Market Channels and Segments](#) available on the CBI market intelligence platform. This section provides some information about the various marketing channels through which fresh fruits are marketed in Europe.

**Figure 8: Market channels for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables in the European market**

**Analysis and interpretation**
- In Europe there are differences between the compositions of market channels. Northern countries like Germany, the UK, the

**Considerations for action**
- All of the different channels start with a strong relationship with a European partner. Find a European importer through CBI or by
Netherlands and Belgium have a very dominant retail channel. France and Spain go beyond that with large hypermarkets, alongside smaller specialist shops. Countries in the Alpine region, such as Switzerland and Austria, are more favourably disposed towards small local shops.

- Although organic products are sold in retail outlets, there are also wholesale companies that are specialised in organic trade. If you choose the organic production method, find companies that are specialists in organic products.
- Most exotic tropical fruits are sold via the retail channel although, for these types of product, the food service (i.e. restaurants) is also an important market channel.

Market Competitiveness

For general information about market competitiveness for fresh fruit and vegetables you can have a look at the Market Competitiveness information available on the CBI market intelligence platform. This section provides some information about the market competitiveness of the EU market of fresh tropical and exotic fruit.

Analysis and interpretation

- **Buyer power**: The majority of fresh tropical fruit in the North-western European market is sold through large supermarket chains, whereas specialist shops and markets dominate the Southern European market. The buyer power of large supermarkets is very strong and buyer requirements are very important. For tropical and exotic fruits, MRLs, quality during harvest and shipping (ready-to-eat) and CSR (working conditions) are becoming increasingly important, as are supply chain transparency and information sharing. Long term partnerships are sought by EU buyers to ensure product supply and quality.

- **Degree of rivalry**: Worldwide production of tropical fruits is increasing and rivalry is fierce most of the time. Temporary shortfalls in supply (e.g. through harvest problems) have a huge impact on prices. New varieties of fruit need to add innovation and value in order to be successful, i.e. ready-to-eat products or recipes for (elements of) meals.

- **Threat of new entrants**: Certification and meeting both legal and non-legal requirements form a major hurdle for producers and exporters wishing to enter the market. Social issues, working conditions and fair trade are the main non-legal requirements in 2013. Requirements are changing over time.

Considerations for action

- Being part of a long term retail programme creates opportunities for building relationships with buyers and improving your own company’s performance. In many cases, a specialised importer will be appointed by the retailer to organise the supply chain; these importers are your best gateway to the European market.

- Try not to compete on price alone, but build partnerships with buyers and strive for excellent product quality and handling.

- Again, being part of a stable partnership and being a trustworthy supplier can help you to establish and maintain your position on the market. Establish a credible track record including transparent information on your company and product quality.
**Substitute products:** In the last decade the diversity of fruit and vegetables supplied to the European market has increased. Overall fruit and vegetable consumption is nevertheless slightly decreasing. Exotic tropical fruits compete with other fruits. They are distinguished by a higher price and a more exclusive image and perceived health benefits.

**Useful Sources**

**Export and market entry support:**
- CBI - [http://www.cbi.eu/](http://www.cbi.eu/)
- CBI market studies on fresh fruit and vegetables - [http://www.cbi.eu/marketintel_platform/Fresh-Fruit-Vegetables/136122/mar](http://www.cbi.eu/marketintel_platform/Fresh-Fruit-Vegetables/136122/mar)

**Certification schemes:**
- British Retail Consortium (BRC) - [http://www.brcglobalstandards.com/](http://www.brcglobalstandards.com/)
- FAIRTRADE - [http://www.fairtrade.net/](http://www.fairtrade.net/)
- GLOBALG.A.P - [http://www.globalgap.org/uk_en/](http://www.globalgap.org/uk_en/)

**Marketing and trade standards:**

**Statistics and sector information:**

This survey was compiled for CBI by LEI Wageningen UR in collaboration with CBI sector expert Piet Schotel.

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