
Introduction

These guidelines are designed to provide banana exporters with practical, market oriented information on how to place their product into selected markets in the European Community (EC). Eight principal European markets are detailed within these guidelines:

- The United Kingdom (UK)
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Greece
- Denmark
- The Netherlands
- Belgium

The guidelines also provide banana producers considering entering export markets with sufficient information and references to enable them to determine whether it is feasible to pursue their plans. The information answers basic questions about **WHERE** the markets are, **WHAT** the markets want, **WHO** to contact in each market, and **HOW** to grow, present and export fruit which meets market needs profitably. Entrepreneurs should have answers to these questions before investing money in an enterprise which relies on selling in an export market. It is essential that exporters have detailed information and are sure that conditions on all aspects of market requirements are satisfied before shipping fruit to export markets.

The information presented in this booklet provides hard facts in an easy-reference format, to help anyone in the banana export business, or wishing to enter it, to research the markets and make contact with potential buyers. The changing nature of the EC markets and Europe as a whole means that existing and potential exporters must have access to hard facts to be competitive. The increasing importance placed on detailed produce specifications by large wholesalers and chain retailers (multiples and supermarkets) in most EC markets considered in this booklet means that exporters have to be prepared to meet these requirements if they are to succeed.

The Export and Industrial Development Division (EIDD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat decided to prepare these guidelines for a number of reasons. Requests from potential exporters, or existing exporting countries, for information on the changing European banana market are frequently received. EIDD provides market research or, in some cases, test marketing of new products in response to a number of enquiries. The information in this booklet should help exporters reach the stage where they are able to conclude a profitable contract with European buyers for the export of fresh bananas to selected European markets.

Bananas are an important export commodity for many Commonwealth countries and a significant source of livelihood for many Commonwealth smallholders. Banana consumption in several EC markets has expanded significantly in the last ten years and there are opportunities for Commonwealth banana producers to take advantage of this if they are able to meet the standards and supplies demanded by selected markets. The creation of a Single European Market presents Commonwealth banana exporters with opportunities and threats. This booklet aims to help them take advantage of the opportunities and overcome the threats.