Greece

How the Market Works

Following nine years of market closure (designed to conserve foreign exchange and protect the domestic banana growing industry on Crete) the importation of bananas into Greece resumed in 1988.

However, even after the resumption of imports, Greece remained a restricted market sourcing supplies almost exclusively from Somalia and the Windward Isles. In addition to this there were also Value Added and Consumption Taxes which had the effect of raising domestic prices. As a result consumption remained low in the mid 1980's. In order to unify EC taxation policies in preparation for the Single European Market, Greece has removed or reduced taxes on bananas to the point where the only remaining tax is an 8% VAT levy.

As a result of the collapse in production from Somalia, an increase in demand and a general freeing of the market, imports to Greece have increased in the late 1980's and early 1990's. This increase has been met from both EC/ACP producers and Dollar importers who are now well established in the market.

Bananas are shipped to Piraeus, Aigio and, occasionally, Thessiloniki ports where they are generally sold at the portside by the importing company. Buyers include ripeners, small fruit merchants and street vendors who account for more than 90% of imported banana retail sales in Greece. Banana cartons are handled as break bulk cargo and palletised handling systems are not expected in the near future. Most imported bananas are sold in Athens and Thessiloniki where the market can afford the relatively high price of bananas compared to a general abundance of good quality, cheap fresh fruit.

Market Requirements

The Greek market demands bananas of:

- consistent quality,
- proven keeping ability,
- consistent size and weight, and
- long shelf life under street vendor conditions.

Although the taxes on imported bananas have been reduced, it is likely that Greek banana importers, wholesalers and retailers will continue to be very selective about the bananas they import. Suppliers who can gain the trust of importers, as Somalita have done for example, should be able to take advantage of the increased banana consumption expected to result from the liberalisation of the Greek banana market in 1993.

The market wants price competitive, good quality bananas which have a long shelf life, even under street vendor conditions in a hot climate. The significant tourist industry in Greece is a special market for bananas which has not been properly developed yet and offers opportunities to Commonwealth banana exporters, particularly those in East Africa.

Packaging for the Market

- Fruit should be packaged in telescopic, corrugated cardboard cartons of stapled construction.
- The ideal Greek market fill weight for a banana carton is about 13 kilograms.
- Because most fruit is sold by small fruit shops and street vendors, attractive cartons which help promote the fruit are preferred.

Promotion in the Market

- Point of sale promotional material and attractive cartons are important for increasing banana sales and attracting retailers at wholesale markets.
- Merchandising materials, particularly small branded gifts for retailers, are very important in the Greek market because they help to build up loyalty to particular suppliers but this should ideally be associated with a brand image.
- The Greek banana market is not brand conscious at the retail level but branding appears to help at the wholesale level and should be considered as part of a strategy to establish market share as the market becomes increasingly competitive in 1993.

Key Market Contacts

The enterprises included in this list, which is not exhaustive, are key traders in the Greek banana market. However, it should be noted that all exporters should carefully assess the capability of any company with whom they hope to trade, since the Commonwealth Secretariat takes no responsibility for the financial standing of these enterprises.

UNIFRUIT HELLAS LTD
7 Themidos Street
Athens

Phone: +30-1-4820425
Telex: 212415
Fax: +30-1-4827147

AGRIMPEX S.A
49A Stournara St
10682 Athens

Phone: +30-1-3633157
Telex: 215347
Fax: +30-1-3607345

ALEX COSTIS AND CO
39 Sygron Avenue
117-43 Athens

Phone: +30-1-9216482
Telex: 216103
Fax: +30-1-9217775

PAMONA S.A
21A Amerikis St
10672 Athens

Phone: +30-1-3639915
Telex: 215189
Fax: +30-1-3607038

PAPADIMITRIOU-HAVEN
24100 Calamata

Phone: +30-721-329603
Telex: 252126

GREECE
BANANA IMPORTS FROM NON-EC SOURCES
'000 TONNES

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
COLOMBIA	1	1	3	8	3
COSTA RICA	2	1	5	5	8
DOMINICA	1	2	0.3	0	0
ECUADOR	0.2	0.1	16	13	15
PANAMA	1	0.3	5	9	13
SOMALIA	3	22	14	3	0.2
ST LUCIA	4	6	1	0.1	0.1
ST VINCENT	1	2	0.2	0	0
TOTAL	13.2	34.4	44.5	38.1	39.3

SOURCE: EC NIMEX

GREECE
VALUE OF BANANA IMPORTS FROM NON-EC SOURCES
'000 ECU

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
COLOMBIA	418	211	1,168	4,001	1,018
COSTA RICA	734	413	1,832	2,069	3,064
DOMINICA	555	963	204	0	0
ECUADOR	150	7	8,426	6,367	6,842
PANAMA	568	138	1,794	3,860	5,577
SOMALIA	2,163	13,429	7,818	1,665	60
ST LUCIA	na	4,015	620	58	49
ST VINCENT	na	1,368	111	0	0
TOTAL	4,588	20,544	21,973	18,020	16,610

SOURCE: EC NIMEX

GREECE
PRICES OF BANANAS IMPORTED FROM NON-EC SOURCES
ECU/TONNE

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
COLOMBIA	418	211	389	500	339
COSTA RICA	367	413	366	414	383
DOMINICA	555	482	680	na	na
ECUADOR	750	70	527	490	456
PANAMA	568	460	359	429	429
SOMALIA	721	610	558	555	300
ST LUCIA	na	669	620	580	490
ST VINCENT	na	684	555	na	na

SOURCE: EC NIMEX