
Introduction

These guidelines are designed to address the basic questions which exporters of avocados, mangoes, pineapples, papayas and passion fruit need answered before they try to venture into the UK market: WHAT, HOW, WHERE and WHEN?

Entrepreneurs should have the answers to these four questions before they invest money in an enterprise which relies on selling in an export market. It is essential that they have detailed information and are sure that conditions on all aspects of market requirements are satisfied prior to despatching any exports.

This booklet aims to provide the hard facts in an easy-reference format, to help anyone in the business, or wishing to enter it, research the market and make those important contacts. The changing nature of the UK market has made it even more vital for the exporter to have the hard facts. The increasing importance of the larger supermarkets (often referred to as multiples), with their strict specifications for all fresh produce, means that exporters have to be prepared to meet these requirements if they are to succeed.

The Export Market Development Division (EMD) 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 exotic produce market are constantly received. EMD has assisted a number of the enquirers, either through market research or, in some cases, through test marketing produce. The information in this booklet should help exporters reach the stage where they are ready to ship produce to the market, saving them time and money.

The choice of fruits for the publication was made on the basis that they are grown in a number of Commonwealth countries, where there is a great deal of interest in exporting them. They are also products on which EMD has already carried out marketing work. Most importantly, however, the "exotics" segment of the fresh produce market is expanding very rapidly in the UK: an increasing number of outlets stock a wide range of exotics, and a greater section of the population are aware of the availability of non-traditional fruits and are buying them. Consumption of exotics more than doubled in the UK between 1980 and 1986; estimates suggest consumption of some fruits has doubled again since then and the trade considers there is still potential for enormous growth in this sector.