

FRUITROP

English edition

Rambutan

The hairy cousin
from the tropics

Southern Hemisphere kiwi

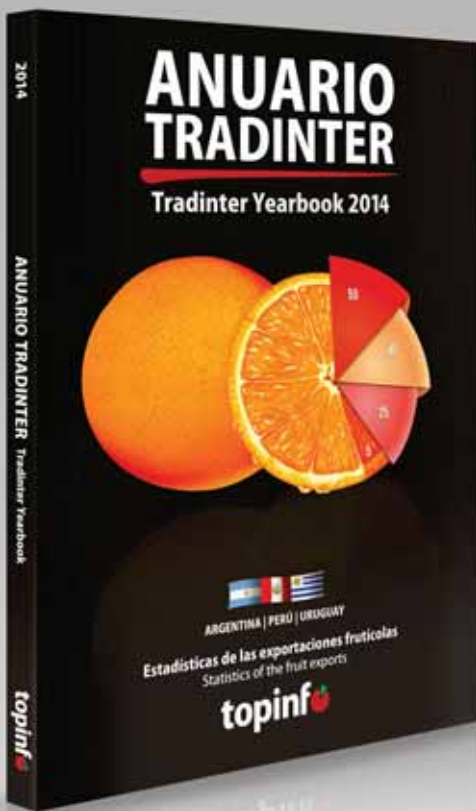
Already brighter in
New Zealand

Banana in Europe

A structural or
cyclical increase?

Sea freight

Reefer charter
market saved
by squid



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**The Rebellious Slave
by Michelangelo**

After the slaves in the Mexican horticultural sector, hundreds of workers in Bangladesh crushed to death in their textile factory, the illegal African labour in the Italian tomato sector, here comes a media storm about the prawn slaves in Thailand. The Guardian's report was chilling, and the estimated figures for this human trafficking activity, in Thailand alone, are staggering: 300 000 people. According to international organisations and NGOs, there are tens of millions of people affected by this scourge worldwide. But let's go back to these prawns, tainted with the foul smell of human sweat and flesh. The big distribution groups immediately pointed the finger elsewhere, declaring in their defence that they are working to build supply chains with an improving social and environmental content, but that they cannot keep their eye on the entire production chain for each product, so complex has it become. Their reaction is reasonable, and no-one can blame companies seeking to improve. Moreover, it would be unfair to see in these atrocities the hand of the distribution sector alone; since it is above all the first link upstream which should be condemned and eradicated. At the other end of this "devalue" chain, we must also blame the consumer, who lives in symbiosis with the entire chain, and through their behaviour drives its quest for ever cheaper goods, regardless of the place, the working conditions or the environmental impact. True, there are certifications which are, at worst, a marketing gimmick, and at best ineffective, so diffuse are the responsibilities thanks to acutely developed global Taylorism. Furthermore, it would be no surprise if the prawns in question had a "sustainable fishing" label, since if there is a concept that is poorly shared, it is definitely sustainability.

Denis Loeillet



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cover photograph © Guy Bréhinier

Banana

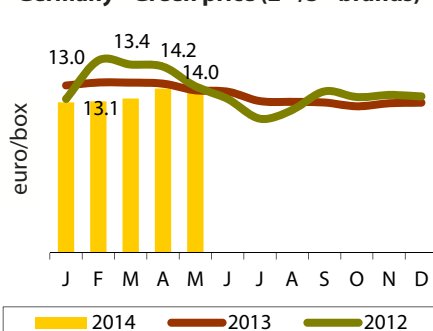
May 2014

Most of the European markets recovered a better balance in May. However, the banana supply maintained above-average levels, though to a lesser degree than in April. The Côte d'Ivoire production peak actually remained very high throughout the month, though the supply from the French West Indies began its seasonal fall, with volumes returning to a slightly short level. Similarly, the dollar banana supply is closer to average again, following the incoming shipments peak observed in April: the Colombian shortfall intensified, and Costa Rican imports shrank, though these were still mitigated by the ongoing surplus volumes from Ecuador. Finally, the absence of dollar banana spot supplies contributed to the balance of the markets. Furthermore, demand remained highly focused on the banana in Northern and Southern Europe, thanks to the still gloomy weather and to the presence of promotions. In addition, despite a bigger presence, seasonal fruits remained uncompetitive against the banana. Finally, re-exports to the East European markets remained lively, continuing to help sell off the supply surplus from the West. Hence there were no stocks available, and green banana prices remained stable, although a slight seasonal drop was noted toward the end of the month. In Spain, the market swelled throughout the month because of the fall in demand (competition from large volumes of seasonal fruits on the local market) and above-average volumes from the Canaries. Finally, the Russian market began to tumble around mid-May, due to a very distinct temperature rise and to the presence of stocks that had built up over the holiday period at the start of the month.

NORTHERN EUROPE — IMPORT PRICE

May 2014 euro/box	Comparison	
	previous month	average for last 2 years
14.03	- 1 %	- 2 %

Germany - Green price (2nd/3rd brands)



■ **Fair trade banana: highs and lows.** + 50 % in a year! This was the growth rate of the fair trade banana market in Germany between 2012 and 2013, according to figures published recently in "Fruchthandel". The volumes sold reportedly reached 32 000 t in 2013, making the German market the third biggest in Europe by volume, behind the United Kingdom and Switzerland. This success is due largely to the product entering most big German discount chains (Lidl, Penny, Netto and more recently Aldi Nord and Süd), visited by 90 % of Germans at least once a week; a trend that should make British distributors go green with envy, since unlike in Germany, the number one European market for fair trade produce is tending to lose its lustre, according to "The Grocer". The fair trade banana is apparently no longer a viable business in a context of an increasingly fierce price war between distributors because of the economic crisis. According to this same source, the price of a banana went from 18 to 11 pence in ten years despite the increase in production costs.

Sources: Fruchthandel, The Grocer

■ **Jamaican banana back on European market stalls.** The first incoming shipment, incidental in

quantity, was unloaded in the United Kingdom in mid-June. The industry, flattened by five major hurricanes in five years, had to put an end to its exports in 2008. Production, now back to a level of a 50 000 t, thanks in particular to European assistance lent under the BAM programme, could reach 100 000 t by 2017, if the projections of the Ministry of Agriculture are confirmed. Jamaica exported 40 000 to 45 000 t per year during its last years of trading, in the early 2000s.

Source: jamaicaobserver.com

■ **Gift wrapped, but not for free!**

This will be the enduring memory from the "world's best bananas" sales event, recently held in a Japanese supermarket. Each of the 59 fruits available, produced by Dole on the best Philippine land, was sold numbered in an individual presentation pack for 590 yen (i.e. approx. 4 euros). This is not the first initiative of this type on this market where premium fruits are highly valued, and often offered as prized gifts. A Japanese ripening centre previously offered bananas ripened to the sound of Mozart's finest concertos, a process apparently giving them unrivalled sweetness.

Source: eater.com



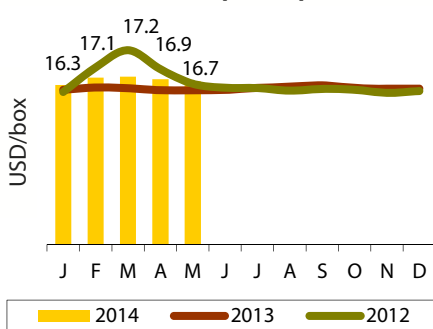
EUROPE — RETAIL PRICE

Country	type	Comparison		
		May 2014 euro/kg	April 2014	average for last 3 years
France	normal	1.57	- 1 %	0 %
	special offer	1.31	- 2 %	- 4 %
Germany	normal	1.32	- 1 %	0 %
	discount	1.20	- 1 %	+ 1 %
UK (£/kg)	packed	1.12	- 2 %	- 8 %
	loose	0.72	0 %	0 %
Spain	plátano	1.84	- 5 %	- 3 %
	banano	1.31	- 5 %	- 5 %

Banana

UNITED STATES

USA - Green price (spot)

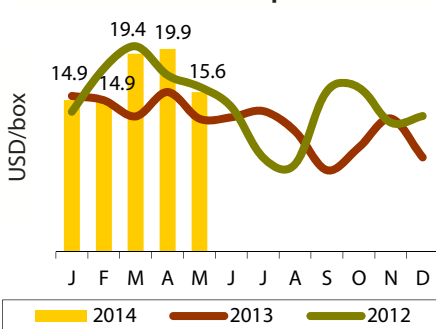


USA — IMPORT PRICE

May 2014 USD/box	Comparison	
	previous month	average for last 2 years
16.70	- 1 %	+ 4 %

RUSSIA

Russia - Green price

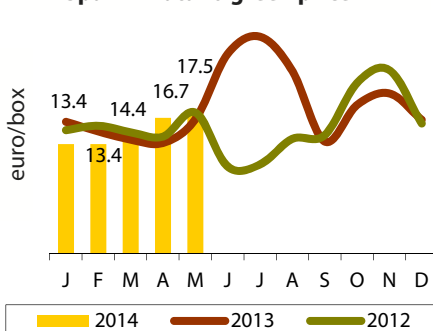


RUSSIA — IMPORT PRICE

May 2014 USD/box	Comparison	
	previous month	average for last 2 years
15.60	- 21 %	+ 7 %

CANARIES

Spain - Platano green price*



CANARIES — IMPORT PRICE*

May 2014 euro/box	Comparison	
	previous month	average for last 2 years
17.50	+ 5 %	+ 4 %

* 18.5-kg box equivalent

■ **Banana: world demand set fair.** In April the European Union market once again confirmed its excellent trend of recent months. Imports increased by nearly 7 %, and European production increased by 5 %. In total, over the first four months of the year the market consumed nearly 2 million tonnes of bananas, making 120 000 tonnes more than in 2013 over the same period. Over twelve months (May to April), this makes an increase of more than 340 000 tonnes! If we extend the trend, we could reach a projected peak figure for 2014 verging on 5.7 million tonnes. This projection is enabled by the very similar nature of the annual supply tempos. The first four months of the year systematically represent between 34 and 36 % of the annual supply. All the source types are on the rise on the European market, but it is the African ACP states (especially Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana) which are achieving the best performance in terms of percentage (+ 10 %). The dollar sources are of course leading the way in terms of volume:

+ 87 000 tonnes. With the exception of Peru, down slightly since the beginning of 2014, all the dollar sources are on the rise. On the European production side, the French West Indies have returned to levels unheard of for nearly ten years (87 000 tonnes). Meanwhile, Canaries production is down slightly.

The United States was not left behind over the first four months of 2014. Imports were up 3 %, and re-exports by 6 %, with a surplus of approximately 28 000 tonnes (+ 2 %) remaining on the market. The three big suppliers to the US market, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Ecuador are on the rise.



Banana - January to April 2014 (provisional)

000 tonnes	2012	2013	2014	Difference 2014/2013
EU-27 — Supply	1 784	1 855	1 975	+ 7 %
Total import, of which	1 573	1 643	1 753	+ 7 %
MFN	1 260	1 309	1 396	+ 7 %
ACP Africa	161	181	198	+ 10 %
ACP others	152	153	159	+ 3 %
Total EU, of which	211	211	222	+ 5 %
Martinique	56	58	65	+ 13 %
Guadeloupe	18	18	22	+ 22 %
Canaries	130	131	128	- 2 %
USA — Import	1 443	1 496	1 534	+ 3 %
Re-exports	166	175	185	+ 6 %
Net supply	1 277	1 322	1 350	+ 2 %

Sources EU: CIRAD, EUROSTAT (excl. EU domestic production) / Source USA: US Customs

EUROPE — IMPORTED VOLUMES — MAY 2014

Source	Comparison		
	April 2014	May 2013	2014 cumulative total compared to 2013
French West Indies	↘	- 7 %	+ 8 %
Cameroon/Ghana/Côte d'Ivoire	↗	+ 24 %	+ 10 %
Surinam	↗	- 9 %	- 4 %
Canaries	=	+ 8 %	0 %
Dollar:			
Ecuador	↗	+ 28 %	+ 36 %
Colombia*	↘	- 9 %	- 8 %
Costa Rica	↘	+ 64 %	+ 64 %

Estimated thanks to professional sources / * total all destinations

Orange

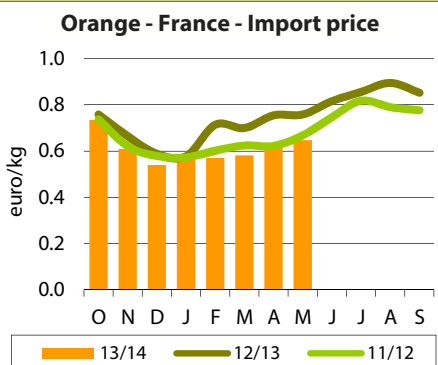
May 2014

Large volumes were sold, though to the detriment of prices. Operators maintained an aggressive price policy for the Navelate, in order to sell off the large volumes still available at the production stage. This strategy helped maintain a good trade flow during the first twenty days, though prices paid to producers reached one of their worst levels ever recorded. In this deteriorated context, the Valencia harvest maintained a slow tempo, while the other suppliers (especially Morocco) had a particularly low profile on the European market. A few initial batches of South African Navel were offered at the end of the month.

■ **The worst Spanish orange season for 20 years!** That is how Spanish producers will remember the 2013-14 season. The quantity, the sheer bulk, of Naveline production is not the only factor involved. Climate conditions during autumn and winter, which turned out very mild and with very low precipitations, also played a major role in this crisis, and did not impede only demand. Sorting rejects reached levels rarely observed (sometimes nearly 50 %) because of a small size range and physiological problems such as creasing ("clareta") and splitting ("rajado") of the fruits, typical of very dry years. Hence the prices obtained by most producers registered a level often less than half that of the previous season, and well below cost price. Hence 80 % of late oranges were still on the tree in Andalusia in early June. The bank Cajamar opened a 100 million euros line of credit under preferential conditions to support the cash flow of struggling farmers.

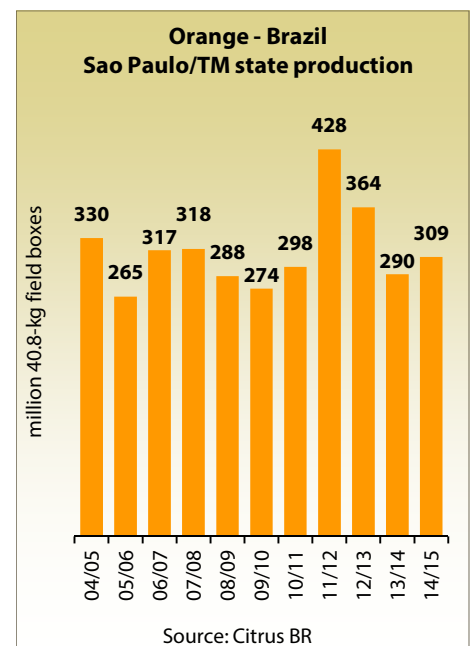
and small producers continuing to close down in large numbers due to lack of profitability. With just over 4 million trees reportedly lost in 2013, the cultivation stock now amounts to just under 153 million trees. In this context, Citrus BR predicts that the shrinking trend of stocks should continue. The stock level, in excess of 765 000 t in June 2013, was estimated at 517 000 t in June 2014. It could decrease to 350 000 t in June 2015; which could ease the pressure on prices a bit. While the actual market remains relatively volatile, with basic import prices of between 2 100 and 2 200 USD/t into Rotterdam, the futures market took an upturn, exceeding the 160 cents per pound mark in early June.

Sources: Citrus BR, FoodNews



Source: Reefer Trends

■ **Brazilian orange production predicted to bounce back slightly in 2014-15.** With a total of 309 million field crates (12.6 million tonnes), the harvest forecast for the State of Sao Paulo and "Triangulo Mineiro" is set to record a rise of 6 % from last season. Nonetheless, this level is still low, 10 % below the four-year average, and the trends are hardly bright. While the yield should climb in 2014-15, the cultivation stock will continue to decrease because of increasingly significant greening,



Source: Citrus BR

PRICE	Type	Average monthly price euro/15-kg box	Comparison with average for last 2 years
	Dessert oranges	10.20	- 11 %
Juice oranges	9.00	- 15 %	

VOLUMES	Type	Comparison	
		previous month	average for last 2 years
Dessert oranges	= ↘	+ 34 %	
Juice oranges	= ↗	- 42 %	

VOLUMES	Varieties by source	Comparison		Observations	Cumulative total / cumulative average for last 2 years
		previous month	average for last 2 years		
Spanish Navelate	= ↘	+ 34 %	Imports well above average. Season extended, with large volumes until the end of the month.	+ 12 %	
Spanish Valencia	↗	- 42 %	Very limited growth of imports throughout the month. Total shipments well below average.	- 48 %	

Grapefruit

May 2014

The summer season started as badly as the winter season finished. The last volumes from the Northern Hemisphere struggled to sell. Floridian sales remained slow, especially as the quality of certain batches was often disappointing. There was a small spurt in prices for the top-end brands only. The situation remained critical for Mediterranean fruits, with the marked presence of Turkish batches available at highly aggressive prices continuing to impede an already very swollen market. Hence despite its late entry and restrained volumes, the situation for South Africa quickly deteriorated. Prices, though set at an attractive level at the beginning of the season, fell to reach a level more than 20 % below average at the end of the month.



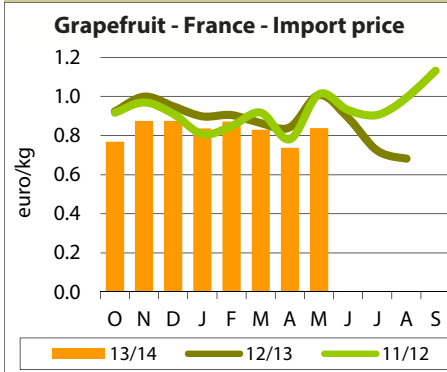
■ **South African citrus imports into the EU: inspections stepped up, but no automatic border closures.** South African exporters avoided the worst. The measures adopted at the meeting of 27 May of the European Commission Standing Committee on Plant Health have forestalled the looming threat of automatic border closures, if more than five positive batches are intercepted. However, inspection procedures have been significantly reinforced: inspection of orchards, registration of packing stations, monitoring of pre and post-harvest treatments, testing an increased number of fruits, particularly for late oranges such as Valencia. Furthermore, fruits sent for processing will now be subject to the same requirements as those aimed at the fresh market. The relief among South African producers is obvious, though tinged with reservations: the attitude of the European authorities is regarded as discriminatory by many of them, and this raft of new measures is costing them dear. Comments are much less ambivalent from European

producers: professional organisations are lamenting the “laxity of the Commission, which is not implementing a regulatory arsenal proportional to the severity of the threat.”

Sources: Freshfruitportal, Reefer Trends

■ **Peru testing a new export quality label.** Consumers will soon find the “Quality certified for export” sticker on the skin of a selection of Peruvian small citruses. Six of the country’s main citrus exporters, which represent three-quarters of the supply, have decided to team up to launch this initiative aimed at differentiating their supply from bottom-end products sold at low prices on the European or North American markets. The selection criteria relate mainly to maturity (specifications imposing at least Brix 8° and a maximum acidity of between 0.85 and 1.7 g/kg). The concept will be tested this season on Minneola, the variety most subject to problems of heterogeneous quality. It could then be expanded to all varieties.

Source: ProCitrus



PRICE	Type	Average monthly price euro/box 17-kg box eq.	Comparison with average for last 2 years
	Tropical (Florida)	15.00-17.00	- 5 %
Mediterranean	9.00-10.00	- 26 %	

VOLUMES	Type	Comparison	
		previous month	average for last 2 years
Tropical (Florida)	↗	- 17 %	
Mediterranean	⇒↘	+ 12 %	

VOLUMES	Sources	Comparison		Observations	Cumulative total / cumulative average for last 2 years
		previous month	average for last 2 years		
	South Africa	↗↗	- 17 %	Very gradual start to the season, with overall imports well below average.	- 17 %
	Florida	↘↘	insignificant	Incoming shipments finished, though big stocks available at the beginning of the month. Quality level varying greatly between brands.	- 9 %
	Israel	↘↘	-30 %	Very limited imports, below average level.	- 4 %

Pineapple

May 2014

In May, the situation on the pineapple market tightened up considerably. Volumes of Sweet, which were relatively small throughout the month, increasingly struggled to sell. Indeed, the gradual increase in the supply of seasonal fruits, at constantly falling prices, attracted most of the demand, leading to lack of interest in pineapple. To tackle these poor sales, operators cut their prices, though this did not see sales improve. Hence the downward spiral in rates continued, and from the second half-month, batches of Sweet were observed on the market trading at post-sale prices. The established brands too were forced to lower their prices, which further complicated the sale of small brands. The Cayenne supply, although limited and reserved for a niche market, also had more difficulty establishing itself.

Overall, the situation on the air-freight pineapple market was rather good. The numerous batches left over after Easter were absorbed over the first half-month, which helped relaunch demand, although sales remained a bit slow. The reduction of the supply from Benin and Cameroon, due to the rains, contributed to holding up demand. However, the availability of many seasonal fruits at low prices prevented better valuation of those batches on the market. The smaller Sugarloaf supply sold well throughout the month, at between 1.80 and 2.00 euros/kg.

With the gradual increase in the supply of seasonal fruits, operators bit by bit switched to Victoria. So volumes fell steeply throughout the month to adapt to demand.



PINEAPPLE — IMPORT PRICE

Weeks 19 to 22	Min	Max
Smooth Cayenne	1.70	1.95
Victoria	2.80	4.00
Sea-freight (euro/box)		
Smooth Cayenne	6.00	8.00
Sweet	5.00	8.50

Mango

May 2014

The mango supply to the European market altered from late April-early May. The last small Peruvian batches were sold at a big loss due to the surge in incoming shipments from West Africa. Hence the particularly massive shipments from Côte d'Ivoire, combined with smaller demand after Easter and the progress of seasonal fruits, rapidly set the market falling. In mid-May, many Ivorian companies stopped their shipments because of heavy rain in the production zones, raising the risk of quality deterioration of the fruits. The fairly heterogeneous coloration and maturity of Ivorian mangoes did aggravate the sales difficulties. The Malian season began later, in the second half-month, with prices more or less aligned with the Ivorian produce dominating the European supply. Taking advantage of the relative trough between Peru and West Africa, sources such as Brazil stepped up their shipments to the European market at the beginning of the month, with Tommy Atkins and Keitt mainly sold in Northern Europe at fairly stable prices of between 5.00 and 6.00 euros/box. In the second

half-month Puerto Rican exports started up, followed by the Dominican Republic, with Keitts which, as an alternative to the African mangoes, more or less easily found a commercial slot.

The air-freight mango market proved fairly difficult throughout the month, because of the large quantities of fruit available in this period of falling demand. Incoming shipments from various African sources were in fierce competition against each other. Their disparity in coloration and maturity stage often caused fairly wide price ranges.

MANGO — INCOMING SHIPMENTS (estimates in tonnes)

Weeks 2014	18	19	20	21	22
Air-freight					
Peru	10	-	-	-	-
Mali	25	25	25	20	-
Burkina F.	15	15	15	5	-
RCI	100	80	80	120	-
Sea-freight					
Brazil	1 740	1 280	960	880	1 320
Peru	370	-	-	-	-
RCI	2 640	3 300	3 300	3 300	1 760

MANGO — IMPORT PRICE ON THE FRENCH MARKET

Weeks 2014		18	19	20	21	22	Average May 2014	Average May 2013
Air-freight (euro/kg)								
Peru	Kent	4.00-4.50	4.00-5.00	-	-	-	4.00-4.75	5.00-5.50
Mali	Amélie	2.80	2.80	2.60-2.80	2.80	2.00-2.40	2.60-2.70	2.80-2.85
Mali	Valencia	-	3.00-3.50	2.80-3.00	-	-	2.90-3.25	2.90-3.70
Mali	Kent	3.80-4.00	3.00-4.00	3.00-3.80	3.00-3.80	2.50-3.80	3.05-3.85	3.60-4.20
Burkina	Amélie	2.60	2.80	2.60	-	-	2.65	2.65-2.75
Burkina	Kent	3.50-4.00	3.00-3.50	3.00-3.20	2.80-3.50	2.50-3.70	2.95-3.60	3.40-4.00
RCI	Kent	3.80-4.50	3.50-4.50	3.20-4.00	3.50-4.20	3.50-4.50	3.50-4.35	4.35-5.10
Sea-freight (euro/box)								
Peru	Kent	4.00	4.00-5.00	4.00	-	-	4.00-4.30	6.00-8.00
Brazil	T. Atkins	4.50-5.00	4.50-5.00	-	-	-	4.50-5.00	-
Brazil	Keitt	5.50-6.00	-	-	-	-	5.50-6.00	-
RCI	Kent	5.50-7.50	5.00-7.00	4.00-6.50	4.50-5.50	4.00-5.00	4.60-6.30	6.90-8.00
Mali	Kent	-	-	4.50-5.50	4.50-5.50	4.00-5.00	4.30-5.30	6.80-7.50
Puerto Rico	Keitt	-	-	5.00-5.50	5.00-5.50	5.00-5.50	5.00-5.50	7.10-7.80
Dom. Rep.	Keitt	-	-	-	-	4.00-5.00	4.00-5.00	-

PINEAPPLE — IMPORT PRICE IN FRANCE — MAIN SOURCES

Weeks 2014		19	20	21	22
Air-freight (euro/kg)					
Smooth Cayenne	Benin	1.70-1.90	1.80-1.90	1.80-1.90	1.80-1.90
	Cameroon	1.70-1.90	1.80-1.90	1.70-1.90	1.70-1.90
	Ghana	1.75-1.90	1.85-1.95	1.85-1.95	1.85-1.95
Victoria	Réunion	3.00-3.80	3.00-4.00	3.00-4.00	3.00-4.00
	Mauritius	2.80-3.00	3.00-3.50	3.00-3.50	3.00-3.50
Sea-freight (euro/box)					
Smooth Cayenne	Côte d'Ivoire	7.00-8.00		7.00-7.50	6.00-7.00
Sweet	Côte d'Ivoire	7.50-8.50	7.50-8.50	7.00-8.00	5.00-8.00
	Ghana	7.50-8.50	7.50-8.50	7.00-8.00	5.00-8.00
	Costa Rica	6.00-7.50	6.00-7.50	6.00-7.00	5.00-6.50



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Avocado

May 2014

The Hass market coped well with an extremely big supply throughout the month. Imports from South Africa and above all Peru were well above average, and as big as last season. Furthermore, the additional Kenyan volumes were bigger than in previous seasons, while the latest imports from Spain and Chile were heavier too. However, demand registered a good level, both in France and in the rest of Europe. Hence the average monthly rate exhibited a slightly above-average level, despite a considerable fall from April, especially for the extreme sizes. The green varieties market was also heavily supplied. The price slide was greater than for Hass, with the average rate registering a below-average level.



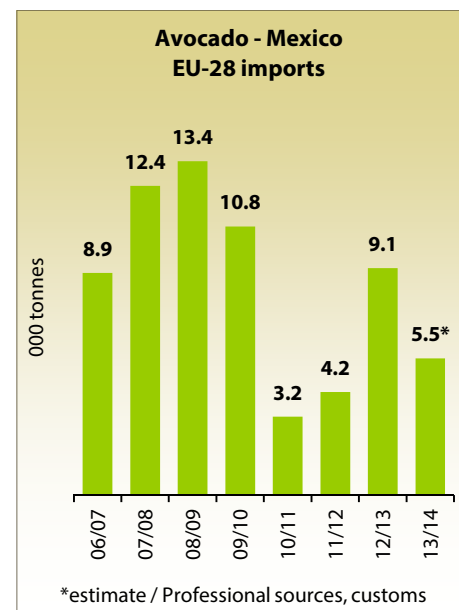
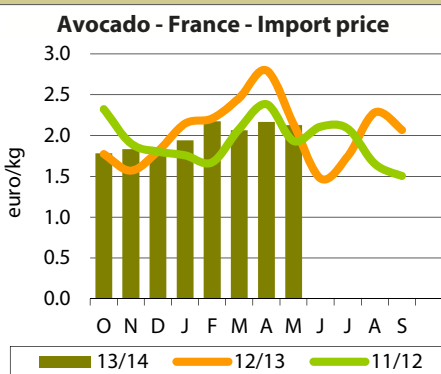
■ **Chilean avocado: drought hitting the Coquimbo region hard.** This was the observation made by Juan Enrique Lazo, new Managing Director of the "Comité de Palta". The recurrent lack of precipitations, which is becoming a structural feature of the central-southern part of the country, has reportedly led to massive uprooting operations in region 4 (Coquimbo region): 25 % of the cultivation stock has reportedly been eliminated, with this figure quite possibly rising to 50 % over the coming years. The Coquimbo region packs in approximately 17 % of the Chilean cultivation area, i.e. just under 6 300 ha. Orchards were already uprooted or "put into hibernation" in previous years in region V (Valparaiso region), where the drought is hitting the Ligua and Petorca valleys hard.

Source: El Mercurio

■ **2013-14 Mexican avocado export season: as strong as in 2012-13!** Mexican exports to the United States should again exceed

500 000 t in 2013-14, approaching the absolute record of 518 000 t achieved in 2012-13. A particularly fine performance since the market was less open than last season, because of bigger Chilean volumes (more than 50 000 t as opposed to less than 15 000 t last season), and a booming start to the Peruvian season. The sales stimulation system set up by the Hass Avocado Board once more proved its effectiveness this season, with volumes consumed in the United States from July 2013 to June 2014 marking a rise of 5 % from last season to approach 800 000 t, according to professional sources. In this context it is no surprise to see the Mexican season once more record a very mediocre result in Europe: volumes exported to the Old Continent should barely exceed 5 000 t, as opposed to more than 9 000 t in 2012-13.

Professional sources, HAB



PRICE	Varieties	Average monthly price euro/box	Comparison with the last 2 years
	Green	4.50-5.50	- 14 %
Hass	7.50-9.00	+ 3 %	

VOLUMES	Varieties	Comparison	
		previous month	average for last 2 years
Green		↗	+ 34 %
Hass		↗	+ 22 %

VOLUMES	Sources	Comparison		Observations	Cumulative total / cumulative average for last 2 years
		previous month	average for last 2 years		
	South Africa	↗	+ 16 %	Hass imports following a normal schedule, and at an average level. Conversely, Fuerte volumes much greater than in previous years.	+ 24 %
	Peru	↗	+ 23 %	Hass volumes at a very high level, similar to last season, from the beginning of the month. Green variety imports also very large.	+ 31 %
	Kenya	↗	+ 30 %	Hass imports growing, similar to last season's levels.	- 18 %

Sea freight

May 2014

The month of May marks the transition from the southern hemisphere deciduous season to citrus, a trade that is dominated by South Africa, which has an approximate 65% share of all shipments. With so much more reefer cargo now shipped either in reefer containers or on regular seasonal liner services, there is a lot less activity in the charter market. It could be a long, dreary summer.

Despite a similar sized citrus crop to last year's record, there was a slow start to shipments from South Africa to N Cont and Russia, largely because stocks of late season Egyptian and Turkish fruit had not been cleared. Argentinean citrus shipments were delayed and also lower, the result of a combination of drought and frosts but made worse by the advent of heavy rains. Argentinean charterer the Lemon Alliance fixed its six charters into the western Mediterranean to NYKCool at a similar rate to last year. However the charter party includes time counting and demurrage clauses for the first time, which should lead to an improved return for the operator.

Even at 59c/cbft the May average is the highest for the month since 2008, with the market on course to deliver a similar H1 result to last year, despite the absence this year of the traditional seasonal peak. This is either a reflection of just how much the structure of the charter market has changed over the past 12 months, or the result of record squid volumes in the South Atlantic. Without the squid, operators would now be contemplating yields similar to 2012 and not favourably comparing their performance with a resurgent market in 2013!



■ **Giant oranges in the scrubland of Gard.** This summer, enjoy the Aigues-Vives 17th short film festival (25 and 26 July 2014).
www.cine-aiguesvives.fr

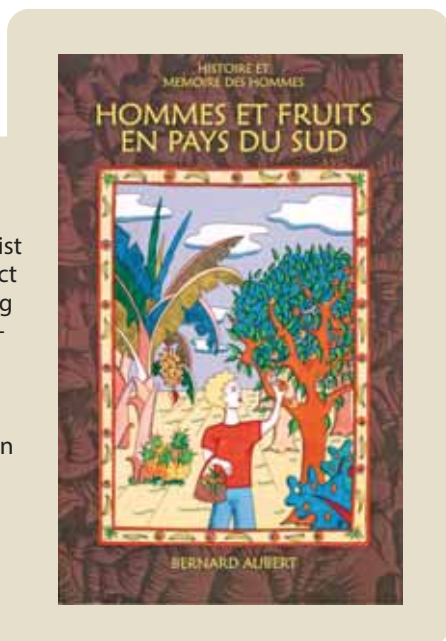
■ **"People and fruit in Southern countries"** by Bernard Aubert. The author, through his career as a crop scientist at CIRAD which brought him into contact with both smallholding orchards and big industrial plantations, relates several examples of fruit operations conducted in the main production areas of Southern countries, and brings to life several episodes of tropical crop science research in the context of East-West tensions from the second half of the 20th Century.

ADAC and CIRAD, "History and human memory", 263 pages
ISBN 978-2-9546591-0-7

■ **KISSAO joins NOSIBÉ.** POMONA group sold to ELH, the holding company owning NOSIBÉ, its business KISSAO, an exotic fruit importer and distributor based in Marseille. This operation took effect on 1 June 2014. KISSAO will continue to operate independently from NOSIBÉ. The synergies, especially in logistics, will contribute to the development of each of the entities with their respective customers. ELH is bringing together the complementary know-how of the NOSIBÉ and KISSAO teams, to pursue the expansion of both businesses.




Source: NOSIBÉ

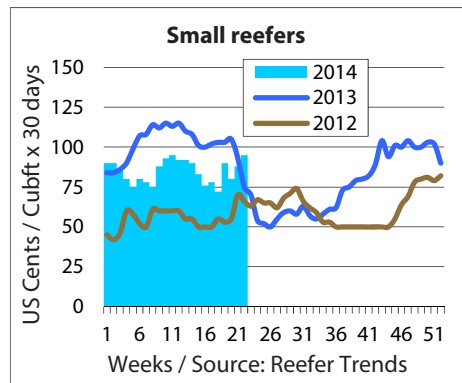
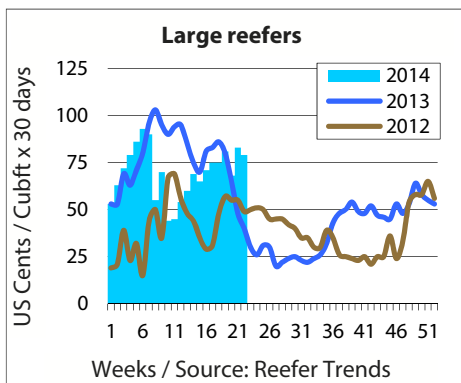


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The independent news and information service for the reefer and reefer logistics businesses

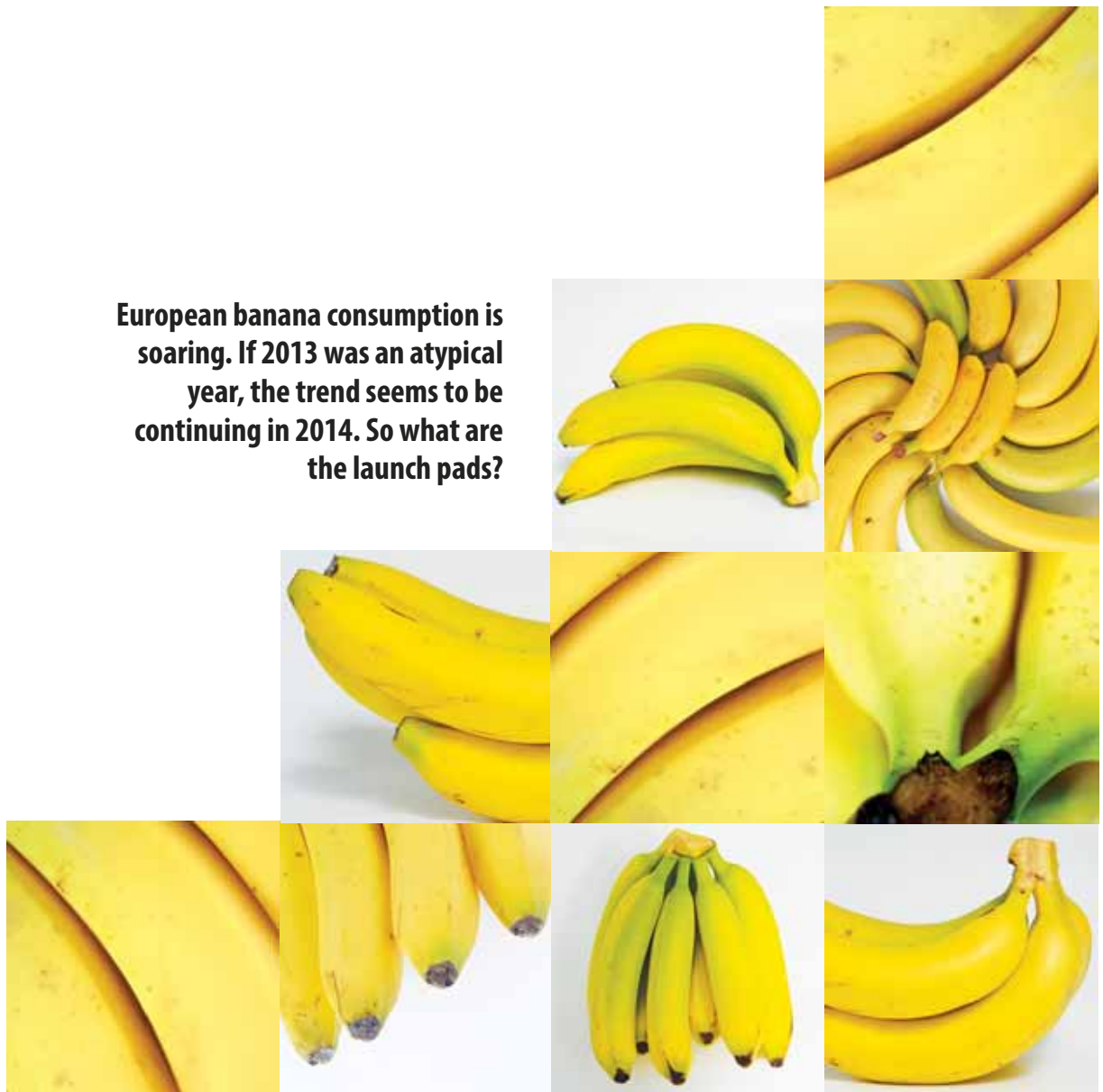
MONTHLY SPOT AVERAGE			
USD cents/cubic foot x 30 days	Large reefers	Small reefers	
May 2014	59	90	
May 2013	52	95	
May 2012	49	60	



Banana consumption in Europe

A structural or cyclical increase?

European banana consumption is soaring. If 2013 was an atypical year, the trend seems to be continuing in 2014. So what are the launch pads?



photos © Régis Domergue



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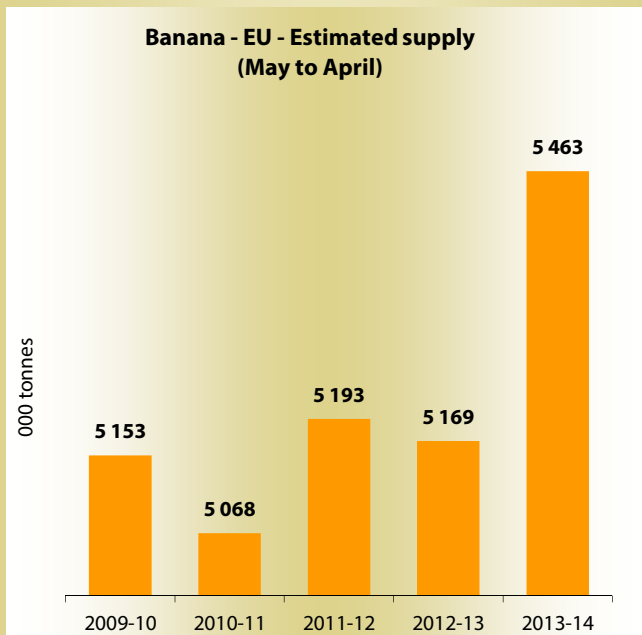


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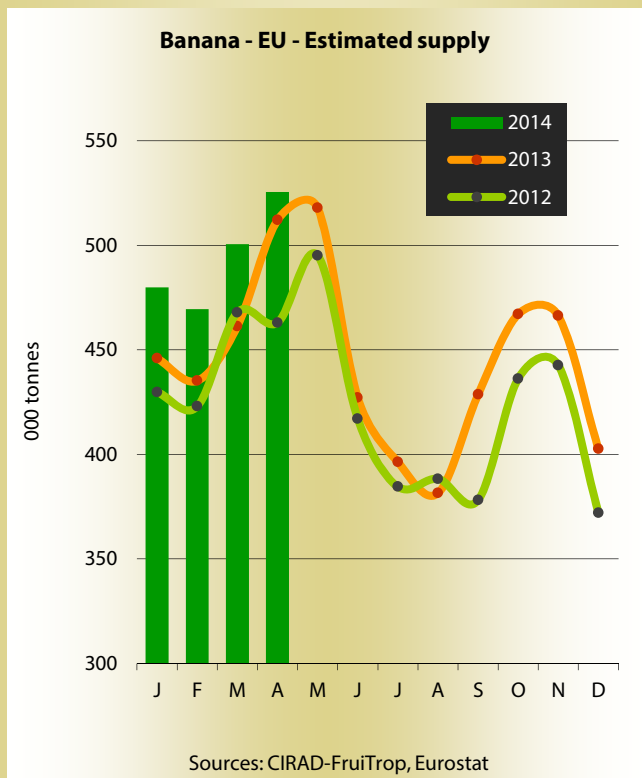
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Sources: CIRAD-FruiTrop, Eurostat
Attention: excluding Community bananas marketed in the production zones



Sources: CIRAD-FruiTrop, Eurostat

Such is the record-breaking surge of the European banana market, we are running out of superlatives. We should specify that this performance is restricted to volumes alone, as the situation is more delicate on the import price side. On a market that had been said to have reached maturity, this is no less a great feat. The proof is that at the last count, over the first four months of 2014, consumption had leapt up by 9 % from the 2011-12-13 three-year average, and by 7 % from 2013, which was already an exceptional year (see FruiTrop no.221, April 2014, pages 34 et seq.). Our consumption estimates reveal a surplus of between 120 000 and 170 000 tonnes, depending on the reference period. The statistical error affecting Peru at the end of 2013, which Eurostat has still not rectified by the way, would actually lead us to believe that it had exceeded 200 000 tonnes! And it is not the accession to the EU of Croatia, the 28th Member State, which has inflated the results to reverse the trend. This country actually only imports direct from third countries just under 50 000 tonnes per year. So the increase observed leaves no room for discussion.

The analysis for the last twelve months is even more optimistic. The surge in volumes is relatively recent, and so the greatest effects are manifested in the 2013 and 2014 figures. And in no small way... Over the past twelve months, the surplus climbed to 300 000 tonnes (comparison between 2012-2013 and 2013-2014). To drive home the point a little more, let's try a forecast, always a very risky matter in the food sector. The hypothesis is as follows: over the past five years, the first four months represented between 34 and 36 % of annual consumption. Knowing that we consumed 1.97 million tonnes in early 2014, a simple rule of three leads us to believe that the year could give us a total volume of nearly 5.7 million tonnes, i.e. more than 330 000 tonnes better than in 2013! If the hypothesis is confirmed, the EU would have consumed more than 580 000 extra tonnes of bananas in the space of



© Régis Domezge



two years, the equivalent of France's annual banana consumption.

Of course, projections are there to be proven wrong. Yet this time everything is pointing in the same direction. The European market still has potential, regardless of the time reference considered, and that is all to the good. In these columns we have lamented the sight of a lifeless market, lacking any spring and close to suffocating, enough to be able to enjoy this extraordinary situation. After eight months of uninterrupted growth, we now have to question the very nature of this trend. Is it cyclical or structural? Of course, this is difficult to judge. We can only set out some avenues for discussion.

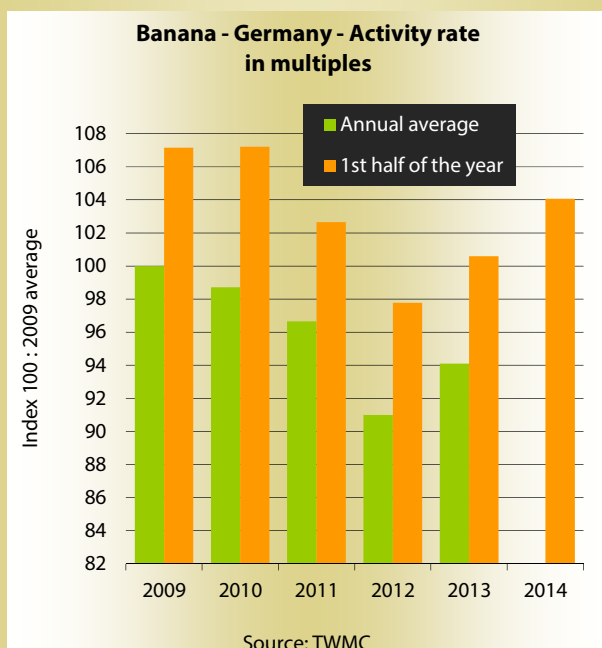
Hypothesis time

To answer this question, we first of all have to sort between one-off events that have influenced the banana market and the groundswell, if there is one. Clearly, late 2012 and the majority of 2013 were marked by a historic reduction in the European seeded fruits harvest, which opened up the way for the banana. Competition between the main benchmarks of the fruit market (apple, banana and citrus) is a reality, and every change in the supply or price of one of these products affects the sales of the others. The weather too, gave tropical fruits a boost, with a very average spring and summer, and a summer fruits season that was small-scale, late and with mediocre quality. In short, all the stars were aligned to make the banana the top dog in the fruits section. There can be no doubt that we are in a cyclical-defined sequence.

Unstoppable momentum

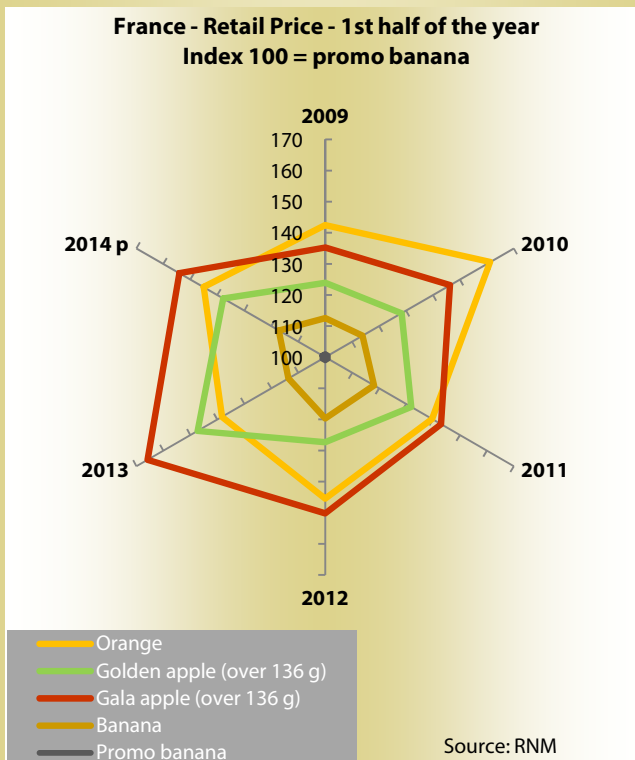
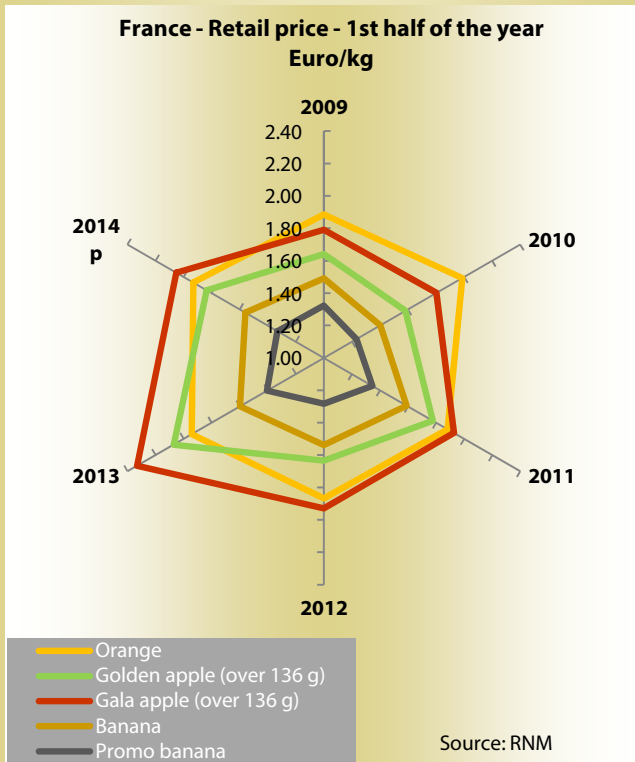
What happens next is less clear, since the appeal of the banana has increased constantly month after month, even with competing fruits returning to the market. Indeed, when the 2013 European apple and pear harvest was abundant and the Mediterranean orange season registered historically high volumes, the European supermarket sector purchasers continued to favour the banana. The "banana" activity figures from the German distribution sector, produced by TWMC, are incontrovertible. They show an average 3 to 4 % increase in the first half of 2014 from the average for the first halves of 2012 and 2013.

Since the average European stomach is non-expandable (despite the growing obesity epidemic!), there has to be a system of communicating vessels between competing fruits, or with other food products.



Banana — France — Consumption (kg/capita)			
12 months (May to April)		Full year	
2010-2011	7.91	2010	7.49
2011-2012	8.48	2011	8.75
2012-2013	8.56	2012	8.18
2013-2014	9.06	2013	8.83
Diff. 2012-13/ 2013-14	0.50	Difference 2012/2013	0.65
By percentage	+ 6 %	By percentage	+ 8 %

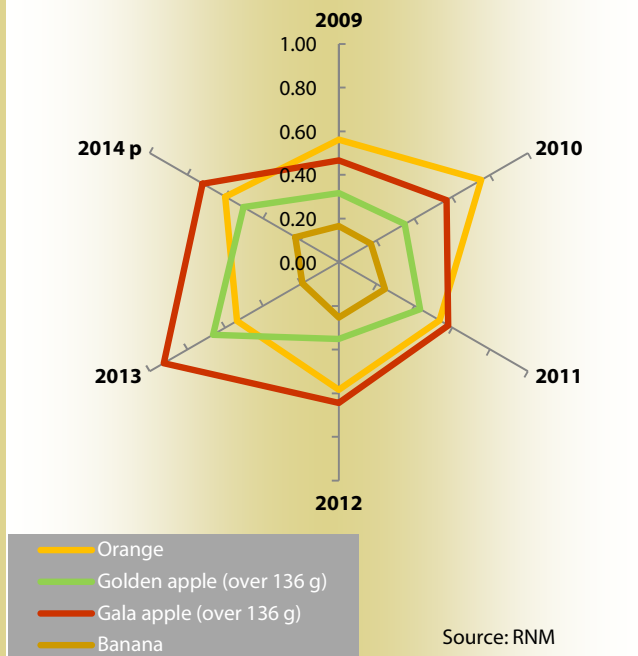
Source: CIRAD-Fruitrop



In France, the data from a consumption panel sheds some light on a possible transfer. Apple consumption apparently fell by practically 1 kg per household between the last two seasons (2013-14 and 2012-13), and by more than 2 kg over a longer historical period (average since 2008). This same panel also taught us that orange consumption is down slightly. It is hard to be sure of the transfer rate toward the banana. The phenomenon is definitely there, but its intensity is difficult to determine. The panel revealed a long-term increase of 400 g per household. The supply balance calculated every month by CIRAD is more optimistic. The figure determined in April 2014 reveals a 6 to 8 % increase in consumption per capita, depending on whether we compare on a rolling annual basis (May 2013 to April 2014 compared to the previous twelve months) or on a calendar year basis (2013 compared to 2012). By absolute value, the French apparently consumed 500 to 650 g more banana per capita in the space of a year.

It is tricky to compare figures not estimated in the same way. So we will stick to the trends, and conclude that the banana seems to be in large part absorbing the fall in apple and orange consumption.

France - Retail price - 1st half of the year
Difference in euro/kg compared to promo banana price



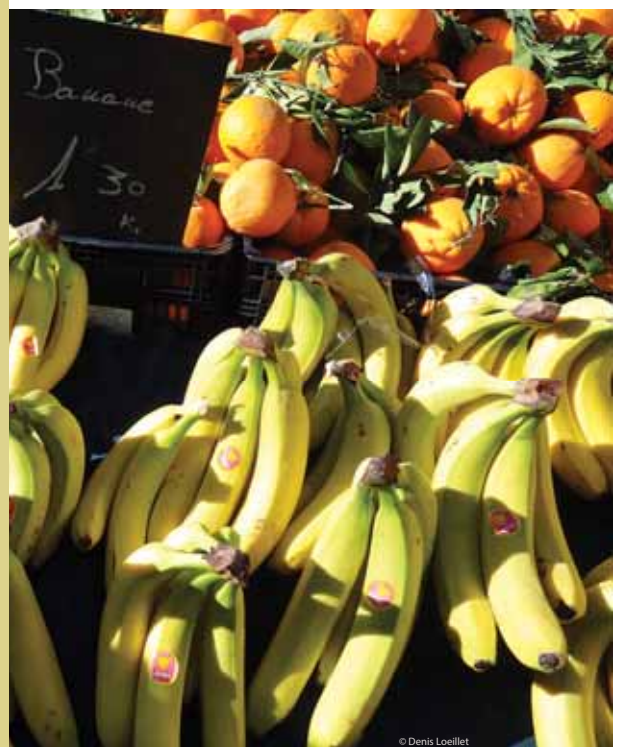
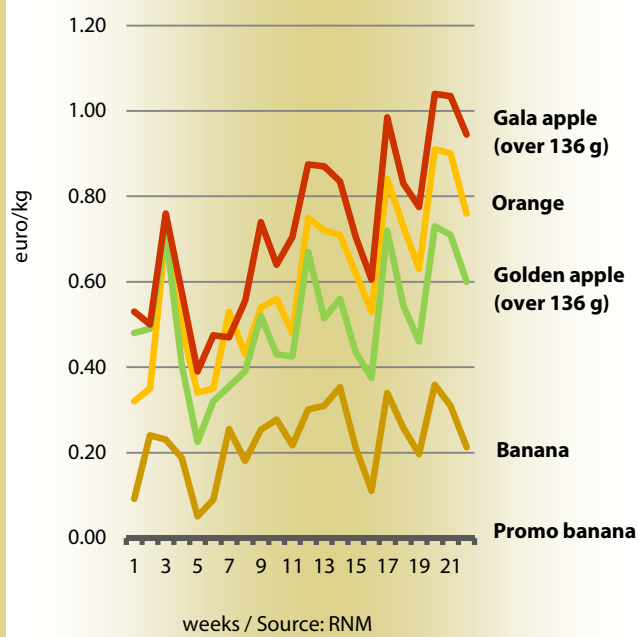
The deep-rooted inertia of the banana price

In the absence of any certainty as to the actual causes of this fine performance, we can only hypothesise.

The leading hypothesis is focused on retail prices, and more precisely the difference between the banana and its competitors. Based on the French example, and thanks to the comprehensive data provided by the RNM (market news network), the situation seems relatively clear. In 2013, the effect of the reduction in the seeded fruits supply really made its mark, manifested by a very wide price difference between the banana (average or promo price) on the one hand, and the apple, whether Gala (top-end) or Golden (bottom-end). As proof of this, with the average retail price index of the promo banana in 2013 fixed at 100, the apple index reached 163 for Gala and 161 for Golden. As a reminder, the 2009 to 2012 averages were respectively 150 and 137, again in relation to the promotion banana. Note that only the orange registered a fall in prices, with an index of 157 in 2013, i.e. the lowest since at least 2009.

By absolute value, these differences from the banana amounted to 0.89 euro for Gala and only, if that is the right word, 0.61 euro for the orange. So the price appeal played in favour of the banana. Since its supply was not restricted by serious climate vagaries, both distributors and consumers switched toward this product.

France - Retail price differences in the "Fruits" category - 2014





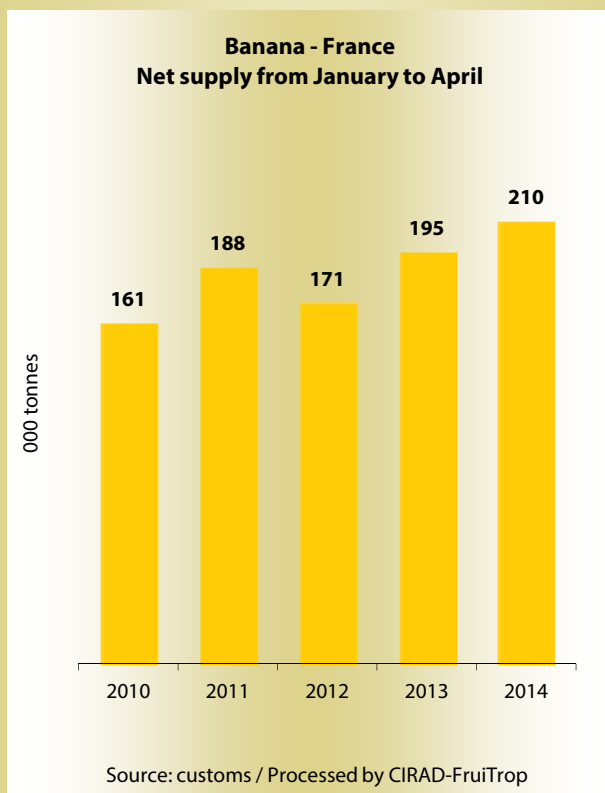
The “price difference” hypothesis is even more powerful if it is verified when the situation in terms of supply of competing products is considered to be normal, or even surplus. This was the case during the 1st half of 2014, with a situation largely identical to that of the highly eccentric year 2013. The difference held up between the promotion banana and the orange (0.60 euro), as well as with Golden (0.50 euro), though it dropped with Gala (0.72 euro).

It should be said in passing, given the massive price differences, that it is reasonable to doubt that we are talking about the same consumption worlds: the apple and orange at practically 2 euros/kg, while the banana remains inexorably stuck at 1.33 euro/kg (1st half of 2014). Since, while there is a large difference, the actual retail price level of the banana is low, and nothing seems to affect it; its stability is the absolute rule. We are in a system very much, or even completely, disconnected from the balance between supply and demand, where the position of the banana is not equivalent to that of the other fruit section benchmarks. It is a sort of staple, whose price no-one would dare touch for fear of causing riots.

Banana versus toothpaste

Two recent events lend credence to this theory. The first shook the banana sector in France. In May, the Auchan group launched a highly aggressive banana promotion, at 0.75 euro/kg. Besides the fact that the French West Indies source was needlessly associated with this action (see inset), it devalued the product a bit more, from an already basement price, with the shockwave predictably spreading to other chains. In every case, if we remain focused on the “banana” product, this destructive fall in added value throughout the industry is incomprehensible. In fact, the banana has left the fruit section once and for all, to become the brand image standard bearer of the chains, which are all committed to appearing cheaper than their competitors. The financial crisis of 2008 had this effect on marketing policies: a general trend of the stores repositioning themselves on low prices. The banana serves this policy remarkably well.

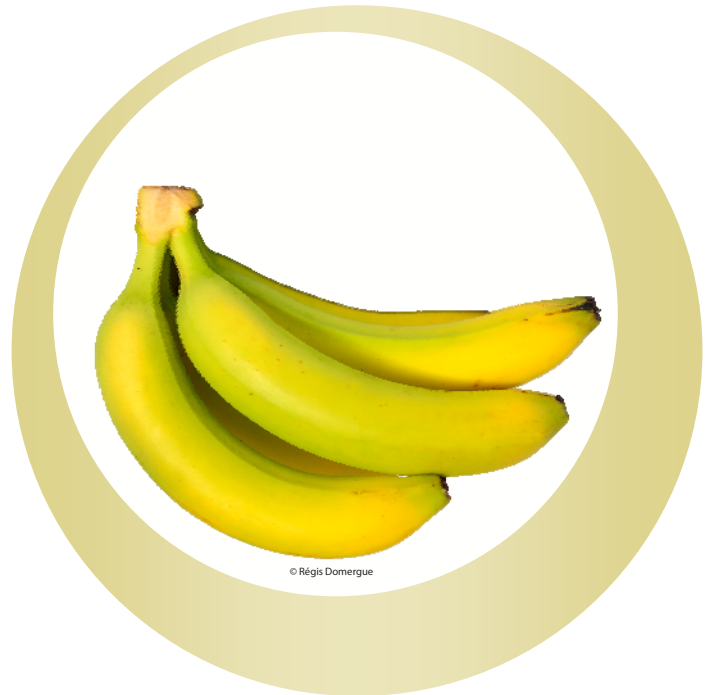
Tesco, recently brought into question for the price war raging in the United Kingdom, ended the discussion by declaring at a colloquium in Costa Rica in February that its in-store price policy did not have any relationship with its purchasing policy from producers. QED: the banana is perfect for selling toothpaste or cans of beer too.



The second event is along the same lines as the first. From 17 to 22 June 2014, in a great number of Netto stores (an Intermarché group discount chain), the banana was at 0.99 euros per kilo (American or African sources). Nothing extravagant if we compare this price to the Auchan promo, on a market which deteriorated even further in June. Yet the biggest surprise lay in the messages supporting this promotion: "For more than a year" and "Banana prices frozen." Damn! So our Market News Service slipped up by failing to observe this great price stability at all the industry's other trading stages.

To recap, the case of the banana confirms that the act of purchasing is governed by two decisive factors: the price level and the difference from competing products. So the price hypothesis seems to be the correct one for explaining the historic rise in banana consumption, at least in France.

There are also other vague factors - definitely of secondary importance whose intensity is not measured - affecting the purchasing decision. They sometimes even reinforce the dominant theory. For example, there is the perception that it is the European economic crisis, to which no one sees an end, which has dedicated the banana to being the anti-crisis fruit par excellence. Others believe that the poor quality of the competing supply at certain periods is also playing its part. On this subject, there has been a lot of talk



© Régis Domergue

about the small sizes and poor durability of this season's apples and oranges.

We might also believe that over recent years, thanks to organic and organic-fair trade segmentation, the banana has gained in appeal, or at least space, in stores. In many hypermarkets, these products have additional shelf metres in-store alongside the conventional banana. Hence this expanded presence would encourage purchases. Furthermore, an American study recently showed that setting up more points of presence helped increase sales very significantly.

This article has not kept to all its commitments. We are still unable to conclude whether the increase in banana consumption throughout Europe is due to cyclical or structural factors. The most optimistic believe that we have entered a new era, sliding bit by bit towards a long-term groundswell. Although such promises are binding only on those who listen to them, I will studiously refrain from picking sides.

The fact is that consumption is increasing at a practically frenetic tempo. As in many sectors, where sheep-like behaviour is the rule, we hope that it will not generate too many production and export incentives. The new planting creation or extension programmes have already been filled out enough that way. Unless El Niño, said to be weak this year, puts everyone on the same page ■

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© Régis Domergue

Banana: how to stop haemorrhaging added value?

In this period of remembrance in Europe, some terms have added resonance: "Since 19 May 2014, the French West Indian banana has been in conflict with the Auchan chain". These are the words employed in the press release distributed by UGPBAN, the company which markets all FWI bananas. Associated against its will with a highly aggressive promotion campaign (0.75 euro/kg), the source reacted by declaring to all and sundry that it was suspending all business relations with the chain. This is a strong action from a supplier - and it is not the first time. Back in September 2010, UGPBAN refused to serve Intermarché, for an in-store promotion at 0.69 euro/kg. Then, the whole food industry hailed the decision. Besides the tension between two links in the industry, an important game is being played.

Since the issue is about deciding how much added value this industry is to generate, and about its distribution. According to our information, Auchan did not make any loss on the deal. Its purchase prices could easily withstand this sale price in-store. Yet that is not the point; this discussion is not that im-



portant, since the stakes are elsewhere. Ultimately, it is more interesting to ask whether such a promotion is reasonable. It is from the viewpoint of the chain, which regards the banana as a foil for the rest of its range, thereby showing its customers how good its price positioning is. But it is unreasonable from the viewpoint of the other industry players, who consider that it generates downward benchmarks, with all the other distributors hurling themselves into the breach. The downward effect spreads to the whole market, and over the long term.

Yet why destroy value in this way, with the price already very low and consumption highly dynamic? The dialogue between Tesco and a banana producer, at the recent Corbana seminar in Costa Rica, is a good illustration of the game being played. The producer noted the desire of the world's number distributor to strengthen its upstream presence in the industry via extensive contractualisation, but also recalled: "You have rights as the strongest operator in the chain; now accept your duties to the other links in the chain." This is in substance what UGPBAN wanted to reiterate, in an action not lacking in panache. We can bet - true in a burst of optimism - that these crises will help establish a dialogue between the members of the industry, both to co-develop sales and generate and distribute added value. After all, that is one of the definitions of sustainability, on which they all supposedly pride themselves. Or better still, we challenge them to do it!



Sea freight

Reefer charter market saved by record South Atlantic squid catch

After a good year for reefer shipping in 2013 there were expectations for a stronger 2014 from operators. With an equilibrium of sorts established between the supply of tonnage and demand from charterers and no great increase in the production of reefer equipment, the stage was set for a revival in the fortunes of the mode. However it was not to be...



© Pauline Feschet



Weak demand from Chilean table grape and Argentinean deciduous fruit charterers and a change in the modus operandi of the Ecuadorian banana business on the one hand, added to a slight oversupply of tonnage relative to demand on the other, resulted in a disappointing start to the year and a low TCE average for the first quarter. Indeed had it not been for record second quarter squid volumes in the South Atlantic between March and June, operators would now be contemplating first half yields similar to 2012, which was a disastrous year for the industry.

While the loss of Chilean cargo can be explained by adverse weather conditions prior to fruit setting and a subsequent drop in harvest, the charter market was also affected by the decision by Argentinean apple and pear charterers to switch into third party liner services despite the negative impact of the political dispute with Uruguay, which resulted in shipments having to transship in the Brazilian port of Rio Grande instead of Montevideo. The number of specialized reefer voyages from San Antonio Este to St Petersburg fell from 18 back in 2011 to as few as 3 this year.

In Ecuador, once the mainstay of the charter market, the container lines have abandoned any thought of imposing a General Rate Increase and have instead lowered pricing in an attempt

to build market share. However there are two significant differences this year with regard to modal choice: firstly Med charterer Rastoder has switched a high percentage of fruit away from the specialized reefer, reducing its dependence on the mode and effectively pulling the rug from underneath the charter market.

Secondly Ecuador's second largest banana exporter Grupo Noboa has switched from loading fruit on its own tonnage to a third party liner service operated by MSC. In order to secure the business MSC adapted its scheduling to accommodate the Bonita Europe requirements of a two-week transit time and volume of up to 300 000 boxes of fruit per week. The direct service provided by MSC also ensured that the Bonita Europe schedule would be respected, which was a pre-requisite of the shipping arrangement.

In light of the decision it will be interesting to monitor Bonita brand developments, both from a logistical and banana marketing perspective. The switch to a third party liner service is a move onto the lowest common denominator for banana shippers. This is because in the longer term there will be little to differentiate the Bonita brand from other banana brands — a Bonita banana box will become just another box of bananas in just another reefer box with perhaps a slight transportation cost advantage.

And what of the 5-vessel, Island Class Bonita fleet? Realistically the company has few options: it is highly unlikely, for example, that the units will be used to service Noboa's existing Med business, as this would involve exiting the existing arrangement with MSC mid-way through the year. Historically Alvaro Noboa has not been enthusiastic about committing to a 'best-efforts' pool arrangement, while Star Reefers and NYKCool do not need the extra ships. A long-term charter to Baltic Shipping is unlikely given that the units are not Ice Class. The Ecuadorian Line would obviously prefer a TC term deal to the end of the year and possibly beyond, but the units are too big for the banana traders who would anyway favour more flexible Contracts Of Affreightment or to play the market.

More importantly, is this the beginning of the end for Bonita? Abdicating control of such a significant link in its supply chain is akin to admitting defeat in the value-adding argument. Perhaps the long-term future for Noboa bananas similar to that of Reybanpac and, as is likely, vertically integrated shipper Banacol? i.e. selling at source.

Corporate

The reefer trade may be in run-off mode, but it's a 'slow, profitable run-off', thanks in large part to Antarctica's billions of tons of plankton, according to Thanassis Laskaridis president and chief executive of Laskaridis Shipping and Lavinia. The family-controlled Lavinia Corporation has a 37-year history in the reefer sector and still owns 27 vessels. In addition to its own fleet, Laskaridis owns and manages the Hamburg-based Alpha Reefer Transport pool, which consists of 42 reefers belonging to various owners. Under the management of Unimed Glory, the group also has two factory fishing trawlers operating in the South Pacific and the Mauritanian fishing grounds.

Mr Laskaridis says that its recent major investment in dry bulk does not mean that the company has abandoned its reefer involvement, despite that market shrinking. "We have a view, which we have consistently held for the last 20 years, that eventually everything that can be containerised will be containerised," Mr Laskaridis says. The group has not tried to fight the trend because it would have been a losing battle. Instead it has concentrated on a niche market — transporting frozen fish from fishing grounds worldwide to their destination.



© Pierre Gerbaud

Record squid catches in the Falklands in the first quarter this year led to a sudden revival of the breakbulk reefer trades — a reminder, Laskaridis adds, that shipping can be terribly exciting just when everyone believes it is about to die a peaceful death. "As things seem today we may have to re-invest in a few ships to continue servicing very specific trades," he concluded.

There have been no reefer newbuildings for several years, so such a move would only be for a specific purpose with a long-term perspective and on a non-speculative basis, with industrial users that would charter the ships or provide long-term contracts.

It's fair to say that the view held by Mr Laskaridis mirrors the opinion held by the majority in the reefer industry. While a modern, fuel-efficient specialized reefer can happily compete on cost with a competitive third party liner service, if a particular liner service is run at a loss and cross-subsidised from other trade lanes or by dry business, it cannot. A loss for the reefer mode is not sustainable in the long term because it does not have the luxury of those options enjoyed by the container lines.

Almost two years ago the specialized reefer was handed some respite when the lines collectively said that the then-current rate structure for reefers was unsustainable and that a General Rate Increase (GRI) was required. Two years down the track and rates on core reefer trades are stuck at levels similar to or lower than they were when the GRI was 'imposed' - and yet the services continue. Perhaps the lines have an alternative definition of the term 'sustainable'..?

For Mr Laskaridis, newbuild specialized reefers are a necessity for own business, principally because there is no more existing tonnage he could buy that would fit into the vertically integrated Lavinia model. It should not be a surprise therefore, nor necessarily a cause for widespread celebration, when more reefer ships are commissioned. The same can be said for the banana majors that prefer to maintain control of their supply chains, although in these cases it will likely be Star or Seatrade that takes the newbuilding risk on the back of a long-term charter.

Will these same owners be prepared to make the same judgment call on behalf of the seasonal and spot charterers? On current evidence, unquestionably not! Neither the TCE yields, nor the confidence levels nor the hostile competitive environment would justify a newbuild programme based on the industry structure today.

The problem is that unless there is some speculative newbuilding there will be negative consequences for those shippers in the Southern Hemisphere who currently prefer the reefer mode, although perhaps not for 5-10 years. In the unlikely event that the same shippers can somehow come together to form some sort of corporate chartering entity to fix a multi-year deal, they will have no choice but to switch modes.

Fruit industries are already struggling to come to terms with the dominance of their customers in the Northern Hemisphere. But it may be changes in supply chain logistics that act as a catalyst for the fundamental change required in most Southern Hemisphere fruit industries to ensure their long-term sustainability.

Elsewhere it was a mildly disappointing first three months of 2014 for Siem Shipping (Star Reefers). The specialized reefer owner/operator posted a net loss for Q1, but on the other hand says it now has a contract backlog worth USD 522m. The net loss of USD 1.5m in Q1 2014 compared to net income of USD 1.5m in the corresponding period last year. Gross revenue was USD 58.2m (USD 66.9m) while the capacity decreased by 6 % to 52.3m cbft (55.8m cbft). The company said the first quarter was affected by two of the C-Class vessels (Cote D'Ivoirian and Colombian Star) not being operational for the whole quarter due to the lengthening project. All four vessels are contracted-out on 7-year time charters to Africa Express Line. Star also confirmed it had chartered out four Star First

Class vessels to Chiquita for 4.5 years at 'a profitable rate' from June this year. Star said that as of 31 March 2014, about 72 % of the company's fleet capacity for the balance of the year had been fixed.

Future

Other than the possibility of a 'monster' El Niño this autumn, the focus of attention going forward is a significant rise in the cost of fuel. New sulphur requirements for ships' fuel in the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, and the English Channel come into force on 1 January 2015. The additional cost of the new requirements will have an impact on the shipment of perishables into the EU and, most particularly the Russian entry port of St Petersburg, the port that is furthest from the new zone's entry point. Both specialized reefer and container line modes will be affected.

The three companies in Maersk Liner Business, Maersk Line, Seago Line, and Safmarine, will have a combined, annual extra cost of around USD 200m when the new sulphur regulations come into force on January 1 2015, it estimates. Maersk plans to wait until later in 2014 before deciding upon the coming bunker surcharge — the USD 200m estimate is based on a projected additional purchase of low sulphur fuel for 650 000 MT and an expected extra price of USD 300 per ton.

Hapag-Lloyd has already announced that the company expects additional costs totaling EUR 150-200m annually, or up to EUR 270m based on the current oil price — a much greater figure than the one estimated by Maersk Line, though the latter carrier is far bigger than its German rival. Hamburg Süd has said that the sulphur regulations will cost the carrier an extra USD 40m per year, a bill that will also be sent directly on to the customers. Analysts Drewry estimate that the cost of complying with new sulphur regulations will amount to an additional expense of USD 120 per TEU, or USD 240 per 40' reefer high-cube.

An estimated additional per-voyage cost of USD 150-170K for a reefer vessel shipping bananas into St Petersburg adds as much as USD 0.50c per box to every journey — alternatively on a 55-day round voyage the USD 150-170K works out at an equivalent USD 0.16c/cbft impact in TCE terms on a modern unit the operator will have to swallow if the cost cannot be passed to charterers.



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It will be interesting to see whether this is enough to persuade the major importer stakeholders to switch volumes into the Black Sea, where the exhaust emissions compliance regulations are not in force. Depending on how much shipping services charge customers there is also an argument to re-draw the EU distribution hubs map: as well as the Baltic ports the Belgian, Dutch, German and UK South Coast ports will be liable for the charge. On the other hand, the UK West Coast and all points and ports south of Brest around the coast of Spain and the Mediterranean are excluded from the new regulations.

Assuming that Bunker Adjustment Factors rise to cover the additional cost, the measure by which each mode will be affected will be determined by load factor and the number of port calls, especially for those service strings into St Petersburg. It will be especially interesting to see how MSC and Maersk cost their banana services from South and Central America to Russia. With an extra 7 days steaming into the Baltic to and from Rotterdam, will it cost Ecuadorian cargo interests the same to ship bananas into the Dutch port as it does into the Russian port in 2015, as it does today? Or will the rate to Rotterdam continue to subsidise the rate to St Petersburg? ■

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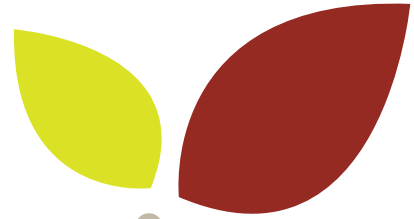
Southern Hemisphere kiwi

Yet to warm up in Chile,
but already brighter in New Zealand



Producers are now putting the last few seasons, marked by the lightning spread of *Psa* (*Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *actinidiae*), behind them. They know that for the moment there is no genuinely effective treatment for eradicating the disease, so they have to manage it pending new technical solutions. Nonetheless, the renewal is already in place, particularly in the yellow varieties, heavily affected by the bacterium, after the entire Hort 16 stock was uprooted in both New Zealand and Chile.

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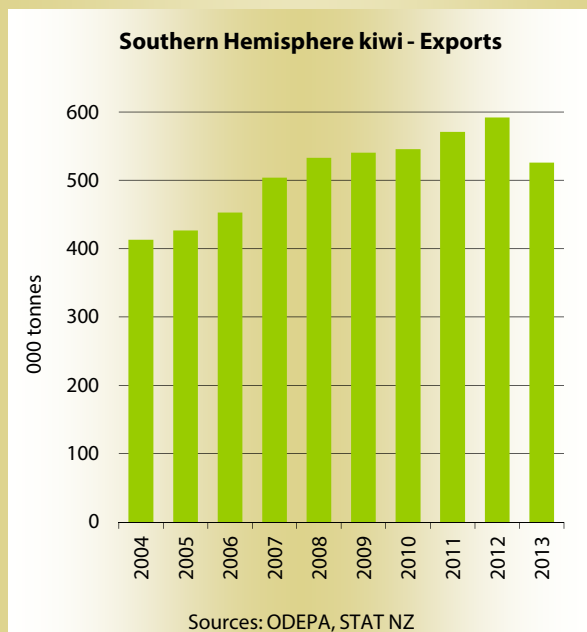


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Southern Hemisphere kiwi — Exports in 2013

in tonnes	Total	New Zealand	Chile
Total, of which	526 049	312 971	213 078
EU-27*	214 333	129 423	84 910
Asia	160 488	137 921	22 567
Latin America	43 046	43 046	-
USA	38 676	6 602	32 074
Russia	19 591	969	18 622
Middle East	10 844	2 992	7 852

Sources: STAT NZ, ODEPA/ASOEX, *Eurostat



Export tempo held back by Psa in 2013

The 2013 season went smoothly, but the Southern Hemisphere sources registered their lowest export level due to the invasion of the orchards by Psa, especially in New Zealand. Hence export volumes fell to 312 000 t last year (- 16 % on 2012), as opposed to as much as 392 000 t in 2011. There was a very marked downturn in yellow-flesh varieties: - 57 % out of New Zealand, i.e. just 37 900 t in 2013, as opposed to 97 100 t in 2011. Conversely, the potential of Hayward, considerably more resistant to the disease, was down by just 4 % (273 400 t). However, volumes out of Chile fell less, with 213 000 t exported in 2013 (- 2 % on 2012).

Europe remains by far the main destination for both these sources, with a total of 214 000 t. Volumes imported from New Zealand fell by only 11 % from 2013. Conversely, they were down by 45 % to the USA and by 54 % to Russia, though the import level there has been partly compensated for by Chile. Indeed, this source is consolidating its market share to these destinations (+ 12 % to the USA and + 18 % to Russia), though Chilean exporters have had to apply trade-offs, by limiting export shipments to Latin American and Asian countries. However, both these sources are continuing to expand in the Middle East (+ 10 % for New Zealand and + 5 % for Chile), which now represents an outlet of 10 000 t.

New Zealand industry already glimpsing the light again

New Zealand production was heavily affected by Psa, which appeared in the country in 2010. The spread of the disease was very quick. It had affected 69 % of orchards in 2012, and has now reached 80 % of surface areas (11 156 ha as at 10 April 2014). However, the fall in potential has been reduced overall, thanks to the resistance of the Hayward variety (green-flesh kiwi), which still formed the bulk of plantations at this time, as well as the responsiveness of the New Zealand industry, which very early on took preventive measures, initiating the uprooting and top-grafting of Hort 16 plants (Zespri Gold), particularly sensitive to *Pseudomonas*. Hence the 2 600 ha of Zespri Gold were rapidly grafted, with in particular the new Zespri Sungold (G3) variety, which should help restore the initial potential very quickly. It could even reach 85 million boxes this year, according to Zespri, i.e. a slightly lower level than the one before Psa, when the tonnage was flirting with the 100-million box mark. Yet it should see a significant increase for Gold, to approach 16 million boxes, as opposed to 11 million last year, of which 9 million Sun-Gold. So the yellow variety potential should rapidly start growing again, to satisfy the many demanding markets, in Europe but above all in Asia. Indeed Zespri is forecasting a potential of 50 million boxes by 2018,



having authorised last year additional licences for 1 130 ha, expanding the total SunGold plantations to 4 000 ha. Nonetheless, producers know that they will not get rid of the disease in the short term, but they have learned to live with it, and are managing the symptoms meticulously, which is helping them recover yields comparable to those before Psa. New varieties are still under trial, in particular a green variety and a red-flesh variety, though they will still need to demonstrate their performance in terms of logistics and resistance to Psa.

Chilean industry working hard to reduce the spread of the disease

Similarly, Psa heavily affected Hort 16 production in Chile, destroying the entire stock, and rapidly spread in the zones concerned, especially the south of the country where the colder and wetter climate has boosted its dispersion. So strict measures have been taken since the first diagnostic in 2011, particularly at orchard entrances (information, boot washes, hand disinfection, exclusivity of equipment used in affected zones) to limit the spread of the disease. However, the latest report published by the Kiwi Committee revealed a very rapid spread in the zones concerned (primarily Maule province, which produces 50 % of the potential, and Bio-Bio province, though this represents no more than 5 % of the potential), but fairly similar to that recorded in New Zealand. Hence while only six orchards were infected in the Maule region (region VII) in 2011, 82 % of the surface areas had been infected by 2013.

Nonetheless, not all the production zones are affected at the moment. No authenticated cases have yet been described in zone V, in which 37 % of the potential is packed. Furthermore, the Chilean Kiwi Committee unveiled a new early detection system for Psa. It was developed by the Foundation for Agricultural Innovation (FIA), in collaboration with the Committee, and should help producers better identify the development conditions of the disease, in order to apply the appropriate preventive measures very early on. The impact on production was previously limited, with the Hayward variety still forming 84 % of surface areas in 2013, though they fell slightly due to the uprooting (11 086 ha in 2013, i.e. - 7 % from 2012), but also because of the low yields. Psa has also slowed the diversification of the stock, though without completely stopping it. It is based primarily on the Jintao (1 000 ha) and Kiss varieties (less than 200 ha).

2014 season to be marked above all by the cold spell in Chilean production

The 2014 season should be marked above all by the heavy shortfall affecting Chile this year. Indeed, production was decimated by the intense cold spell of September, which greatly affected flowering. Also, according to the latest estimates of the Chilean Kiwi Commission, the volumes available for export should not exceed 100 000 t, as opposed to 215 000 t last year, with a medium or even small size profile. So Chilean operators have prioritised the US market, waiting for the end of the European season to earn value from their produce, and stagger their season. However, this finished early, enabling the European season to start in May at price levels rarely reached (2.40 euros/kg, French import prices).

Conversely, New Zealand production should exhibit a good level, with the yellow-flesh kiwi back to a significant potential. The first ship bound for Zeebrugge was received in week 20, and no fewer than 20 ships should come into the Belgian port throughout the 32-week season. However, the very start of the season was a bit sluggish. The season should nonetheless quickly get going, helped by a big promotional campaign orchestrated by Zespri to position the new SunGold variety. TV adverts have been scheduled, as well as activities in-store and at the big wholesale markets from June. For their part, Chilean operators have strengthened their links with their Italian counterparts by signing an agreement between KiwiFruit of Italy and the Chilean Kiwifruit Committee at the Fruit Logistica show, in order to consolidate the foreign markets and provide promotional support to the operators ■

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Rambutan

The hairy cousin from the tropics



It certainly is hairy! And thanks to this trait it is easily distinguished from its smooth cousin the litchi. In the fields, the rambutan does not fear the competition from its relative, since it flourishes in hot wet climates, where the litchi will bear only leaves and not the smallest fruits! Conversely, the litchi barely leaves it any room on the market, which is a great pity...



fruits or syrup (probably less than 10 000 t in total).

The rambutan is a fine-looking tree with a fairly straight trunk, which can reach a height of 10 to 15 metres. Its leaves comprise 2 to 4 leaflets, with a dark green shiny topside, and a paler underside. The inflorescences bear abundant green-red coloured flowers.

Two types of trees can be found: males (inflorescences bearing only male flowers, and so not producing any fruits) and hermaphrodites. The inflorescences of the latter bear two types of flower: functionally female hermaphrodite flowers (well-developed pistil, non-functional short-filament stamens), and functionally male hermaphrodite flowers (developed but non-functional pistil, and functional, well-developed long-filament stamens). Certain varieties bear both these types of hermaphrodite flowers, but not simultaneously on the same inflorescence. Thus rambutans require cross-pollination to ensure a good harvest. Ultimately, it is an abundant flowering, but low-producing species. It takes thirteen to sixteen weeks between fruit-setting and harvest.

It is a non-climacteric fruit, which must be harvested fully mature (when the fruit changes from green to yellow or red, depending on the variety). If picked green, it will not continue to

The tree, its ecology and cultivation

The rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum* L.) is a tree of the Sapindaceae family, just like the litchi or longan. Probably native to Malaysia, it is exploited throughout the wet Asian tropics. Recently introduced everywhere else, it is cultivated in particular in the American tropics, but also in Africa, Australia as well as Madagascar. While it is uncommon in the French West Indies and very rare on Reunion, in French Guyana, it is cultivated in the village of Cacao by a community originating from Laos, supplying the markets right across the region. Worldwide production is difficult to evaluate, since nearly all of it is for self-consumption. Thailand is without question the biggest producer, with its production reportedly approaching 450 000 t. Then come Malaysia and Indonesia, which reportedly produce 60 000 and 100 000 t respectively. The Philippines, Australia, Sri Lanka, Central America, South Africa and the United States (Hawaii and Porto Rico) are also producers, but on a smaller scale. Finally, the international trade involves only a few thousand tonnes of fresh



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mature, and will be acidic and flavourless. The fruits come in bunches of 10 to 20, each weighing between 20 and 50 g. They are oval to globular in shape. The outer colour varies from yellow to red, and to deep crimson when mature. The skin is covered with sorts of soft curved spines, hence it is also known as the "hairy litchi". This tough skin conceals an abundant translucent white flesh, which adheres to the brown stone to a greater or lesser extent. There are a host of rambutan varieties, distinguished by the shape of the fruits, their colour, the length of their "hair", stone adhesion, their flavour, etc.

The rambutan is a species for purely tropical climates. It can be cultivated from sea level to 500 m in altitude, but not above. An annual rainfall of between 2 000 and 3 500 mm is required, which limits its cultivation to hot and wet tropical ecological zones. However, a short drier period is essential for ensuring good production because, without this hydric stress (of approximately one month), it has erratic flowering. However, in the fruit swelling stage, the tree must not suffer any water shortage. It can adapt to numerous soil types in the pH range 4.5 to 6.5. However, it is averse to asphyxiating soils and is sensitive to iron and zinc deficiency (highly marked chlorosis, yellow foliage).

The traditional (and easy) method of reproducing the rambutan is by sowing its seeds. However, this technique must be reserved for



producing rootstocks. In fact, given the highly particular floral characteristics of the species, the quality of the plants obtained from seeds varies greatly. So vegetative reproduction is preferable. Overhead layering is possible, but separating the plants, which root together fairly easily, is a tricky job. Approach grafting is a good technique, but is a lot of work. So this is reserved for reproducing delicate varieties.

The "Modified Forket" grafting technique seems to give very good results. It is no more or less than a bud graft, in which the rootstock bark strips are retained: two parallel vertical incisions are made in the rootstock bark, 3 cm in length and spaced 1 cm apart (15-20 cm from the crown). A horizontal incision in the middle of these 2 vertical incisions is used to carefully lift the bark in 2 strips, and create a window. The graft is housed in this window, with the two strips then folded back onto the graft before tying. The graft is taken from young branches (approx. 9 months old), stripped 15 days before being cut, in order to stimulate budding. After 20 to 25 days, the tie is removed and the rootstock cut down if the graft is successful.

The planting densities vary between 100 (10 x 10 m) and 285 (5 x 7 m) trees per ha. The species is rather hardy, and requires no specific

Packing and sizing

Rambutans are generally packed in 2 kg net weight boxes. They are either packed in two layers in a telescopic or flap box measuring some 300 x 400 mm or pre-packaged in 1 kg punnets covered with film, like the produce from Thailand. The punnets are then packed in the shipping box in pairs.

There are no specific size categories. Reference is made to the Codex standard.

Regulations

Rambutan is covered by Codex Alimentarius Standard 246/2005.

Nutrition

Rambutan is less rich in potassium than litchi but contains more vitamin C.

Rambutan — Nutritive value (pulp/100 g)	
Energy	63 Kcal
Carbohydrate	14.5 g
Vitamin C	17 to 32 mg

maintenance, except for annual maintenance pruning (removing dead branches). Seed-grown rambutans produce at an age of around 5-6 years, while grafted or layered trees produce from 3 years.

To ensure good productivity, it is preferable to mix several varieties within the orchard and even plant some male trees to facilitate entomophilous cross-pollination. Despite these precautions, in Asia, yields observed are low, varying from 2 to 20 tonnes of fruits per ha. That is why, in certain countries such as Thailand, growth regulator sprays are used to boost production of functionally male flowers within the inflorescences.

Rambutan is prone to various bio-aggressors. It is attacked by powdery mildew in particular during flowering and fruit-setting. The fruits are colonised by scale insects, mites, thrips and even ants, which cause often irreversible damage to the fruit skin. Rambutans also host various fruit fly species (*Ceratitis capitata* and *Bactrocera dorsalis*), and so require specific treatments due to the quarantine organism status of these insects, when exporting fruits from a contaminated region to an uncontaminated region.

Pre and post-harvesting, and some factors affecting quality

In cultivation, high hydric stress conditions, particularly during the fruit swelling phase, directly affect the quality (flesh development). Once picked, the rambutan does not keep well. At ambient temperature (25°C), the visual quality of rambutans declines very quickly after 2 to 3 days. This is manifested by browning of the skin hairs. Conservation temperatures of around 8 to 12°C and a high relative humidity of around 90-95 % can slow this deterioration. Under these conditions, rambutans can be kept for around two weeks.

However, after 7 days' conservation, they can be affected by more than ten different pathogens, leading to fruit rot, such as anthracnose (*Colletotrichum gloeosporioides*). The contamination phase by these pathogens generally occurs in the orchard, but the disease is expressed during this prolonged conservation. There are various possible control measures for these pathogens: chemical treatments, hot water treatments, essential oils, biopesticides, etc. Furthermore, the shelf life of rambutans (and their visual quality) can be increased by means of conservation techniques in a modified and/or controlled atmosphere.



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Use

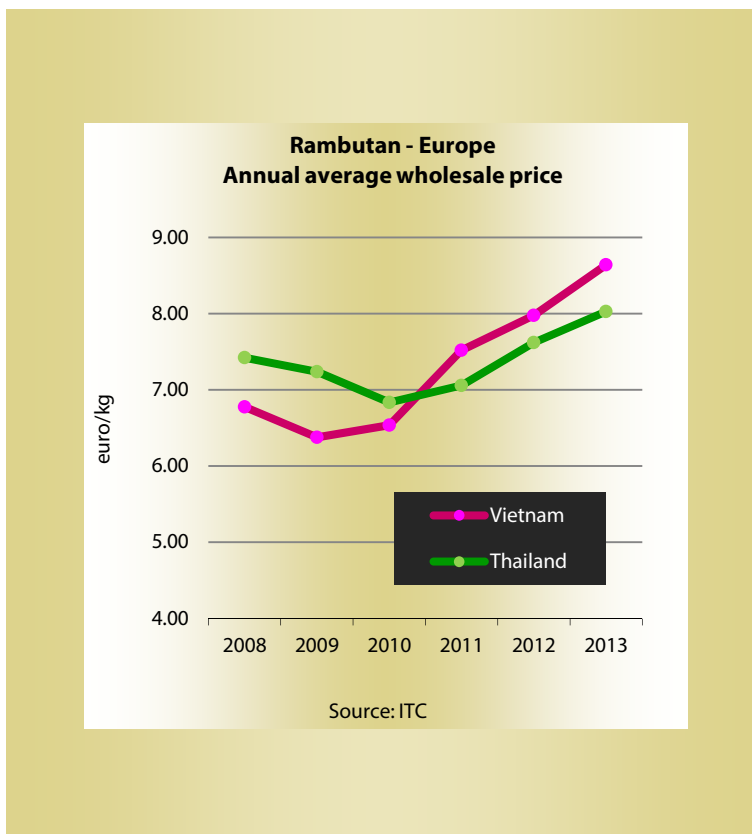
Rambutans are mainly consumed fresh, as they are. They are sold whole, and rarely fresh-cut, since the stone, which is hard to detach from the flesh, does not lend itself to this operation. In Asia, the rambutan is extremely popular. It can also be prepared in tinned fruit and jam form, but the pulp loses its flavour. Fruits of the more acidic varieties are stewed. Infusions of the roots, leaves and bark are used in traditional medicine, particularly for treating fever. The seeds are edible grilled, but are bitter and narcotic. Finally, the wood is also used in construction.

A restricted market, emblematic of the small exotic fruit trade

The rambutan volumes sold in Europe are not known, due to lack of sufficiently precise customs nomenclature. Nonetheless, exotic fruit trade specialists confirm the restricted nature of the market. Although attractive for its originality, especially because of its "hair", the fruit remains little known among the general public. Furthermore, it has an elitist retail stage price, with its air-freight only transport weighing heavily on its cost (import stage price practically constant, at around 7.50 to 8.50 euros/kg). Finally, the product is difficult to handle, and has a short shelf life (of around ten days maximum). Hence sales are limited practically year-round, with the fruit sold mainly through ethnic networks and by some small traders. Two activity peaks help boost sales, the end-of-year holidays and the Chinese New Year, when the rambutan is seen more widely in the supermarket sector.

Supply practically exclusively from South-East Asia

South-East Asia, the cradle of the crop, provides the majority of the supply to the European market. Thailand, the world's number one producer, remains one of the mainstays of the international rambutan trade, thanks to its orchards situated mainly in the east (Chanthaburi region, the main production area) and in the south (Chumphon, Surat Thani). However, this source no longer dominates the market as clearly as in the past. Small producers, who make up most of the production base, seem to be having difficulties adapting to increasingly strict phytosanitary



regulations, involving costly inspections, especially as the rambutan is not one of the high-production fruits such as the longan, durian or mangosteen. Vietnam has been following a reverse trend, becoming the market's other benchmark source since the late 2000s. As is the case for many other small exotic fruits, rambutan exports are surging, and this fruit has become one of the country's export specialities, though well behind the pitahaya. Indonesia rounds off the supply from South-East Asia, with its production located mainly in west Java. Some batches from Malaysia, from where the fruit originates, are available sporadically.

Latin America practically absent from the EU, with Madagascar providing a minor top-up

The Latin American producer countries, still present until the middle of the last decade, have practically abandoned the Community market. They have a natural outlet in the United States, where demand is growing, with logistics much less expensive than shipping to the Old Continent. Mexico, which can export its produce by road from Chiapas, reigns supreme on this market, alongside "local" Hawaiian produce. Batches from Honduras, Guatemala and other countries (mainly Central American) round off the supply.



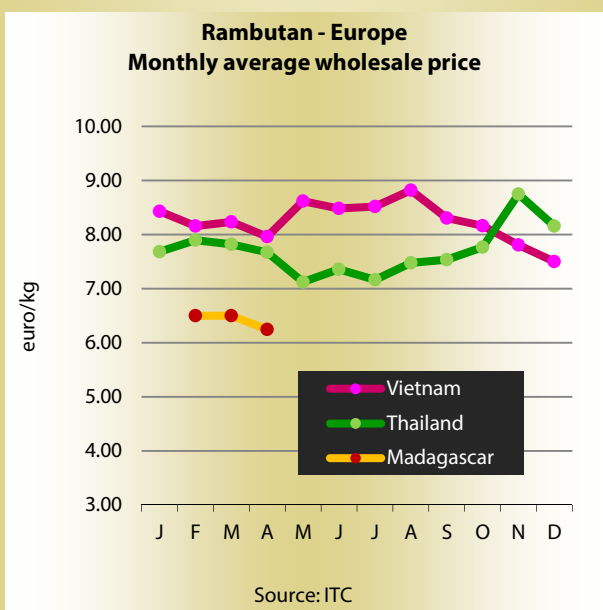
Australia reserves volumes of its small-scale production from Northern Territory and Queensland for its local market. The only non-Asian source to offer significant volumes in Europe is Madagascar. Most of its production is packed into the east of the country, especially around Tamatave.

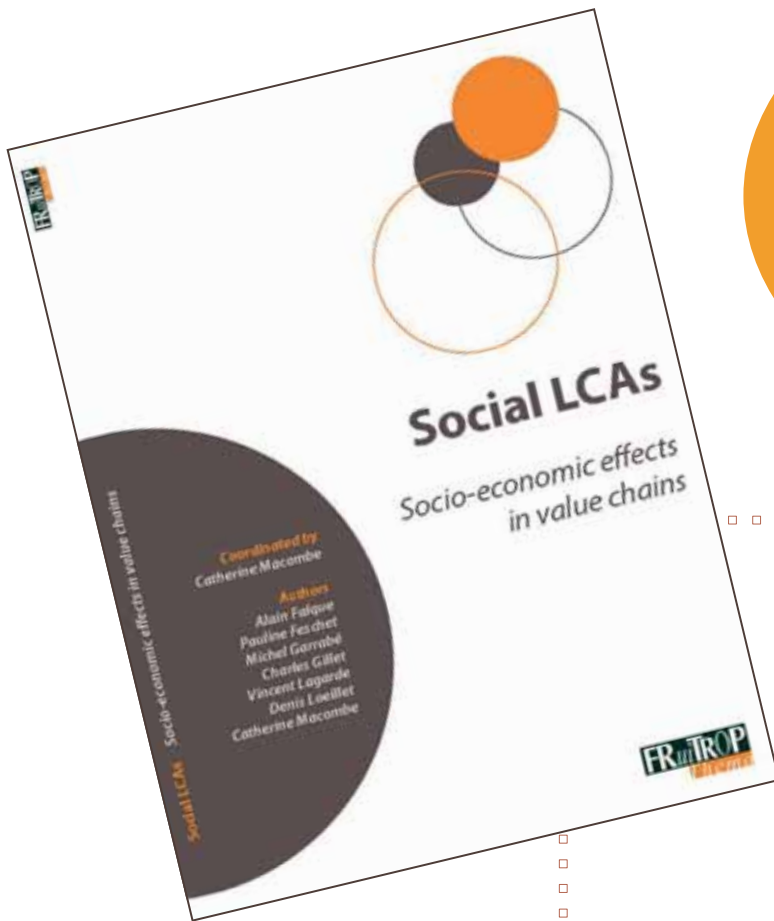
Present year-round, with red-peel predominating over yellow-peel

The main production season for South-East Asia runs from April to October, with another more limited harvest period running from December to February. Nonetheless, by switching between sources and microclimates, importers are able to offer a rambutan supply from South-East Asia twelve months a year. It is on the red-peel and green-fibre variety that most of the supply is based, with in particular the Rongrian cultivar very common in Thailand and now in Vietnam. The Si Chomphu variety, with its highly iconic yellow-peel and red-fibre fruits, produced abundantly in Indonesia, is fairly rare in Europe. The shorter Madagascan season takes over from the litchi season, and lasts from late February/early March to late May/early June. The bulk of the supply comprises red-peel varieties, which take over from the first batches delivered, primarily comprising yellow-peel fruit. The 2-kg box, comprising two 1-kg trays, has become the benchmark packaging for all the sources ■

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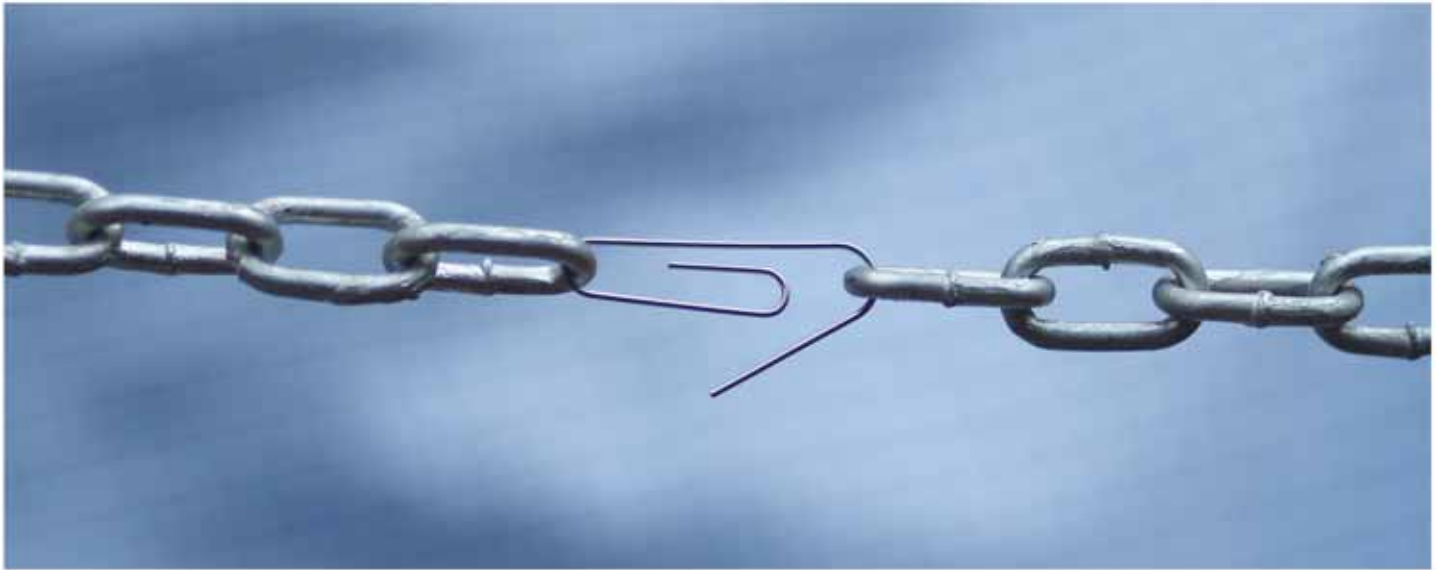
					EUROPEAN UNION — EURO					
					Germany	Belgium	France	Holland	UK	
AVOCADO	Air	TROPICAL	BRAZIL	Box			14.00	16.73	14.81	
			ETTINGER	PERU	Box	3.25				
	Sea	FUERTE	KENYA	Box					6.17	
			PERU	Box		6.50	4.25	4.00		
		HASS	SOUTH AFRICA	Box	5.50	6.50	5.25	6.70		
			BRAZIL	Box				7.68	7.65	
			COLOMBIA	Box			8.50			
			ISRAEL	Box					11.11	
			KENYA	Box			6.65	8.00		
			PERU	Box	8.75	8.00	7.43	9.65		
		NOT DETERMINED	SOUTH AFRICA	Box	8.75	8.00	7.59			
			PERU	Box					4.79	
		PINKERTON	SOUTH AFRICA	Box					7.56	
			KENYA	Box				7.40		
			PERU	Box				7.65		
			SOUTH AFRICA	Box				7.50		
	RINTON	SOUTH AFRICA	Box				7.40			
BANANA	Air	RED	ECUADOR	kg				4.88		
		SMALL	COLOMBIA	kg			6.70	5.17		
	Sea	RED	ECUADOR	kg					2.29	
		SMALL	ECUADOR	kg			1.70	2.65		
CARAMBOLA	Air		MALAYSIA	kg		5.33	5.43	5.36		
	Sea		MALAYSIA	kg					3.53	
COCONUT	Sea		COSTA RICA	Bag		18.00				
			COTE D'IVOIRE	Bag	10.00		12.00	11.40	12.96	
			DOMINICA	Bag					12.34	
			SRI LANKA	Bag				20.00	11.41	
DATE	Sea	DEGLET	ALGERIA	kg				2.29		
			KENTA	TUNISIA	kg				2.08	
			MEDJOOOL	ISRAEL	kg				7.85	6.17
		NOT DETERMINED	MEXICO	kg					10.00	
			IRAN	kg		3.00				
			TUNISIA	kg						1.80
GINGER	Sea		CHINA	kg	1.88		2.80	2.20	2.32	
			THAILAND	kg			2.80	2.31		
GUAVA	Air	NOT DETERMINED	BRAZIL	kg				6.21		
		PINK	ECUADOR	kg				7.00		
	Sea	NOT DETERMINED	BRAZIL	kg					2.26	
KUMQUAT	Air		SOUTH AFRICA	kg				6.08		
LIME	Sea		BRAZIL	kg	2.33	3.11	4.00	3.29		
			MEXICO	kg		3.11		3.57		
MANGO	Air	AMELIE	MALI	kg			2.80			
			KENT	BURKINA FASO	kg			3.00		
				COTE D'IVOIRE	kg			4.20	3.50	
				MALI	kg			3.50		
	Sea	NAM DOK MAI	THAILAND	kg				7.60		
			ATKINS	BRAZIL	kg	1.32	1.63		1.32	1.50
				COSTA RICA	kg				1.00	
				GUATEMALA	kg	1.32				
		KEITT		COSTA RICA	kg				1.13	
			KENT	COTE D'IVOIRE	kg		1.73	1.37	1.31	
		NOT DETERMINED		COSTA RICA	kg					1.39
				COTE D'IVOIRE	kg					1.31
				KENYA	kg					1.54
			PALMER	BRAZIL	kg				1.50	

					EUROPEAN UNION — EURO					
					Germany	Belgium	France	Holland	UK	
MANGOSTEEN	Air	INDONESIA		kg				7.72		
		THAILAND		kg				8.20		
MELON	Air	CHARENTAIS GREEN		DOMINICAN REP.	kg		3.50			
		CANTALOUPE		COSTA RICA	kg			0.90	1.33	
	Sea			HONDURAS	kg			0.70	2.22	
		CHARENTAIS		COSTA RICA	kg			1.15	1.11	
	GALIA			HONDURAS	kg				0.86	
				BRAZIL	kg				1.60	
				COSTA RICA	kg			1.35	1.48	
				HONDURAS	kg			1.16	1.05	
	HONEY DEW			MOROCCO	kg				1.33	
				BRAZIL	kg				1.17	
				COSTA RICA	kg			0.73	0.68	
				HONDURAS	kg			0.73	0.99	
	PIEL DE SAPO			PANAMA	kg				0.99	
				COSTA RICA	kg			0.63		
		PANAMA	kg			0.80	1.11			
	WATERMELON			BRAZIL	kg			0.75		
PAPAYA	Air	FORMOSA		BRAZIL	kg		2.86		3.78	
		NOT DETERMINED		BRAZIL	kg		3.28	3.60	3.57	
				THAILAND	kg				4.81	
	Sea	FORMOSA		BRAZIL	kg	2.00				
		NOT DETERMINED		ECUADOR	kg		2.43		2.57	
PASSION FRUIT	Air	NOT DETERMINED PURPLE		COLOMBIA	kg	5.50	5.00	6.00	5.85	4.94
				ECUADOR	kg				7.00	
				ISRAEL	kg					5.50
				KENYA	kg		4.75			
				VIETNAM	kg			6.00		
				ZIMBABWE	kg		4.75	5.80		5.59
				COLOMBIA	kg					9.10
				YELLOW						
PHYSALIS	Air	PREPACKED		COLOMBIA	kg			9.00	9.19	
	Sea			COLOMBIA	kg	4.58			5.80	5.15
				ECUADOR	kg				5.00	
PINEAPPLE	Air	VICTORIA		MAURITIUS	Box				13.88	
	Sea	MD-2		SOUTH AFRICA	Box					12.15
				COSTA RICA	Box	6.50	7.00		6.00	
				COSTA RICA	kg			0.95		
				COSTA RICA	Piece					1.02
				COTE D'IVOIRE	kg			0.95		
				PANAMA	Piece					0.62
PITAHAYA	Air	RED		VIETNAM	kg				7.00	
		YELLOW		COLOMBIA	kg				9.33	
PLANTAIN	Sea			COLOMBIA	kg			1.05	0.91	
				ECUADOR	kg			0.90	0.89	
				WINWARD ISL.	kg				1.37	
RAMBUTAN	Air			THAILAND	kg				7.60	
SWEET POTATO	Sea	NOT DETERMINED		EGYPT	kg			1.00		
				ISRAEL	kg				1.25	
				PERU	kg			1.50		
				SOUTH AFRICA	kg			1.60		
				WHITE	BRAZIL	kg				1.85
TAMARILLO	Air			COLOMBIA	kg				7.00	
YAM	Sea			GHANA	kg			1.30	1.31	

Note: according to grade

These prices are based on monthly information from the Market News Service, International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC), Geneva.
MNS - International Trade Centre, UNCTAD/WTO (ITC), Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland — T. 41 (22) 730 01 11 / F. 41 (22) 730 09 06

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