

# Litchi

## Mauritius

### Increasing exports

**W**ith an estimated 235 t of exports in 2016 as opposed to 165 t the previous year, Mauritius confirmed and consolidated its position as a top-up litchi supplier to the European Union. True, this exporter country is not involved in the international litchi market in the same way as Madagascar, with its 18 000 t of exports. However, it is still in the fray of the fierce seasonal competition. More sensitive to weather and market variations, Mauritius is nonetheless there year on year. The earliness of its campaign, with “early produce” fruits, which represented one of the origin’s special features, has faded over the years because of the early calendar across all of the Indian Ocean origins. Mauritian exporters are now playing more readily on the market’s specificities, tailoring their supply to the trends of the moment. The exclusiveness of air-freight exports and the speed of response by the operators support this particular position.

The first Mauritian batches were received in week 44. They comprised fresh on-stem litchis and sulfur-treated/destalked litchis. As the market supply was small, these products obtained considerable success, selling rapidly. The supply expanded from the next week, in a still favourable context, given the moderate shipments from the other Indian Ocean origins. However, the fruits lacked maturity and could not generate enthusiasm among distributors or consumers. In week 46, their rates dropped under pressure from volumes received from across all origins. The supply which hitherto matched a hesitant early-campaign demand, now far outstripped the consumption level of this product highly-priced at the retail stage still a long way before the festive period. Until week 48, competition from other origins was particularly lively, with a big presence of Madagascan products. Mauritian litchis were reaching their peak at the same period, holding up against the competition thanks to more competitive cost prices than in the neighbouring countries, especially its distinctly lower air-freight costs. From week 49, the arrival date of the first ship from Madagascar, Mauritian operators only sent fresh on-stem fruit, to avoid direct competition with this produce cheaper for the distribution sector. The Mauritian campaign continued until the end of the year, with tonnages well down and prices recovering for the end-of-year festivities. Like Reunion’s operators, Mauritian exporters segmented their supply this year, shipping trussed fresh fruits. This niche is of particular interest to retailers wishing to put on a visually appealing promotion on their shelves, thereby creating a more festive look that is closer to the fruit’s production conditions ■

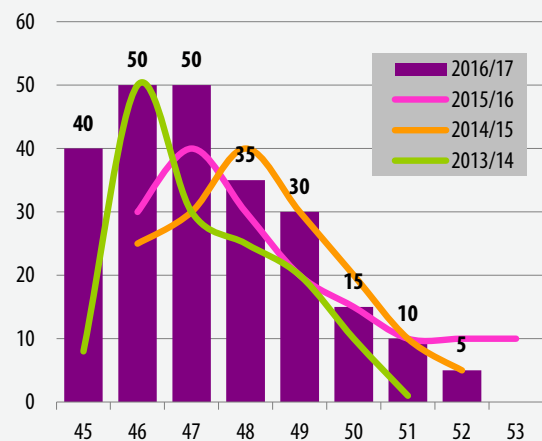
Pierre Gerbaud



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**Mauritian litchi**  
**Evolution of arrivals in Europe**

(in tonnes per week / source: Pierre Gerbaud)



**Mauritian litchi**  
**Evolution of average import price in France**

(in euro/kg per week / source: Pierre Gerbaud)

