

European market Victoria pineapple

Starting over with the same deck

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Despite the incursion of an origin like Ghana onto the Victoria market, a popular novelty, it is for the moment the Indian Ocean origins that still hold the cards and the game.

The supplies from Mauritius and Reunion, the leading origins on the Victoria market, were mainly steady over the past campaign (week 40 2018 to week 39 2019). Spared during the cyclones season, and just as steady in terms of volume, they left little room for the competing supplies, although Ghana continued to play a role with still very limited quantities.

By virtue of its volumes and access to the supermarket sector circuits, Mauritius remains a key player. Outside of prices set under supermarket contracts, average rates for Mauritian fruit remained fairly stable, at between 3.10 and 3.35 euros/kg, with peaks of between 3.45 and 3.50 euros/kg. The Mauritian supply was steady in terms of sizing, although it remains at a disadvantage to Reunion in terms of image.

Reunion's supply remains highly rated by consumers, despite its tendency to err in terms of sizing. It often includes a fairly high proportion of small fruit (size 10), which widens the price range, and consequently brings down the average rate. Despite this, the origin continues to earn better value than Mauritius, its main competitor, with average rates fluctuating between 3.30 and 3.50 euros/kg, and some peaks at 3.60 euros/kg.

Ghana remained in place with an increased supply, but too limited to enable it to play a bigger role. This origin, steadier in terms of sizing, was able throughout the campaign to take advantage of moments of weakness in the Indian Ocean supply to improve its position.





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A late show of interest in the fruit

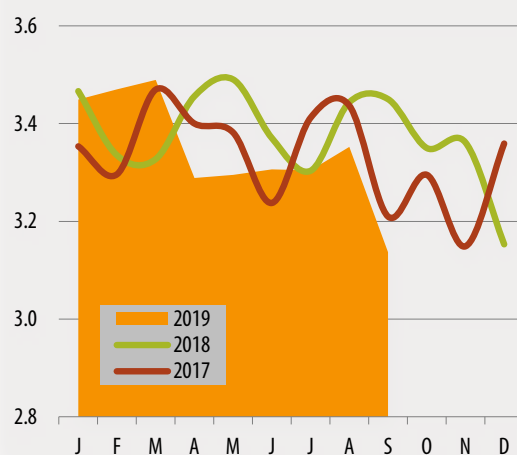
From October to late December, the Victoria market was not very lively, though the fruit usually has better sales during the end-of-year festivities. The overall supply from the Indian Ocean was fairly limited before December, and above all unbalanced, with a high proportion of size 8 fruit, which struggled to sell. The paucity and unbalance of the Indian Ocean supplies helped the Ghanaian fruit (mainly sizes 6 and 7) establish itself on the market. The increase in the overall supply in December weighed down on the market, at least at the beginning of the month, since demand was late in taking an interest in the fruit. For all that, average rates remained fairly stable over the period, at between 3.30 and 3.35 euros/kg, with some peaks of 3.50 euros/kg.

A smaller and better valued overall supply

The usual downturn in demand after the end-of-year festivities soon drove operators to scale back their imports, and in a big way. Despite demand remaining lukewarm, sales were fluid during weeks 1 to 15 2019, which enabled the Ghanaian produce to sell on the same price footing as Mauritian produce. Following a significant production fall on Reunion, the market was under-supplied. Thanks to the paucity of the overall supply, rates strengthened. Unfortunately, Mauritius and Ghana were not really able to make the most of the situation. Overly heterogeneous in terms of quality (often lacking coloration, or too fragile), their supplies did contribute to making up the shortfall, but they did not leave enough of an impression to be able to represent a credible alternative to the Reunion supply, at least for the time being.

The under-supply helped the fruit available sell off at high rates, yet demand remained moderate overall. In this context the increase in the overall supply at Easter resulted in a sales slowdown. Nonetheless average rates were fairly high (3.40 to 3.60 euros/kg for Reunion, and 3.25 to 3.45 for Mauritius and Ghana).

Victoria pineapple - France - Average import price
(in euro/kg / source: Thierry Paqui)



Demand very quickly seized by seasonal fruits

After Easter, volumes from Reunion saw a big increase, with demand already gradually abandoning the fruit. The increase in Reunion's supply, unbalanced with large sizes in the majority, forced Ghana into withdrawing from the market as sales became more difficult. From the arrival of the first summer fruit, the operators all scaled back their Victoria imports to bring them more into line with demand. Over this latter period (weeks 17 to 39), the high temperatures soon switched demand toward a fairly varied seasonal fruits supply, available at attractive prices. Victoria volumes continued to subside, though without sales improving. At the end of the period, despite the end of the school holidays, demand took time to show an interest in the fruit again. Average rates remained fairly stable in view of the lack of interest the fruit attracted (3.30 to 3.40 euros/kg for Reunion, and 3.10 to 3.30 euros/kg for Mauritius) ■