Indicators
December 2003

The main fruits	In shares by total volume and expenditure on fruits for the month in France	
%	Volumes	Expenditure
Apple	23	19
Easy peelers	21	23
Orange	13	10

The trends for the main produce of the month significantly influence the overall situation of the fruit market. A column entitled 'Indicators' discussing these fruits precedes the pages devoted to a selection of exotic and citrus fruits.

Pages

Dec. 2003 / Dec. 2002			
Price	↗	Vol.	↗

Apple

The apple market was disappointing during the first part of the month. The surplus of small grades and the sometimes uneven quality of certain batches limited export outlets. However, the situation recovered in the second half of the month thanks to active local demand. Stocks at the end of December were thus smaller than in 2002 and the prices observed were distinctly higher, especially for bi-colour apples.

Dec. 2003 / Dec. 2002			
Price	=↗	Vol.	↗

Easy peelers

Performance was comparatively satisfactory although the market was difficult for certain categories of produce that had suffered from heavy rain in the preceding months. The average monthly price and the volumes sold were distinctly higher than average.

Dec. 2003 / Dec. 2002			
Price	↗	Vol.	↗

Orange

Supplied mainly with Naveline from Spain, the market behaved fairly well. The quantities marketed and prices were slightly up on the average for the last few years. Quality problems in a significant proportion of easy peeler supplies may have resulted in a transfer of demand to oranges.

Notes concerning market appraisal methodology

The statistics on the following pages are estimates of quantities put on the market in France. They are only calculated for the main supplier countries and are drawn up using information on weekly arrivals or market release statements by representative operators. The past figures are kindly provided from the POMONA data base and processed by CIRAD. The figures in the 'Main fruits' section above are provided by the CTIFL, with SECODIP being the source. The data published in the French market pages is provided solely as a guide and CIRAD accepts no responsibility for their accuracy. The illustrations are reproduced with the kind permission of Fabrice Le Bellec (CIRAD-FLHOR).

Banana

DECEMBER 2003

Monthly comparison: Dec. 2003 / Nov. 2003

Price	Volumes
↗ + 10%	↗ + 14%

Annual comparison: Dec. 2003 / Dec. 2002

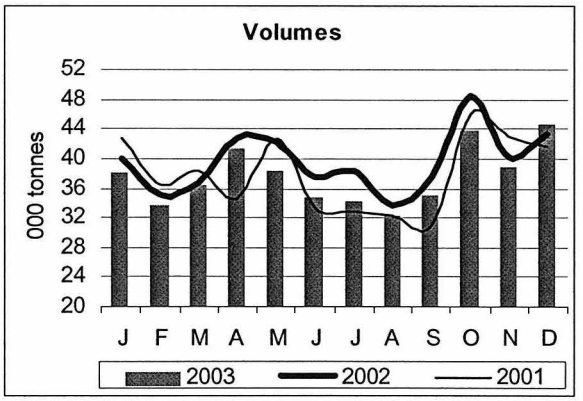
Price	Volumes
↘ – 17%	= ↗ + 3%

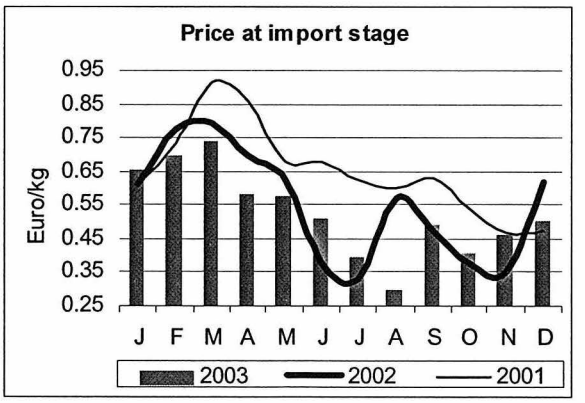
The balance for December is the same as that for the year as a whole: bad. Supplies from the main origins were distinctly more abundant than in preceding years, especially at the end of the month. Furthermore, the usual slowing of demand for bananas in December seems to have been more marked than in other years, in particular in France where retail sales indicators were very poor for the fourth month running.

The large volumes received partly account for the poor performance. Arrivals from the West Indies and Africa were distinctly greater than average. Likewise, after a shortage during the first half of the month, arrivals of dollar bananas were substantial as some operators had used their remaining licences. This increase in supplies caused a distinct decrease in shipments by French operators to the north of the EU. In parallel, the slowing of local demand resulting from the change in range to festive produce seems to have been more marked than usual. Fewer promotion operations were run than in previous years, as in the preceding months. Furthermore, retail prices remained very strong in spite of the fall in on-quay prices in the middle of the month.

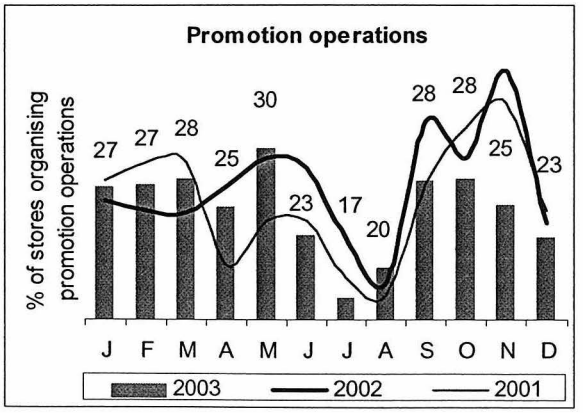
Estimated market releases in France

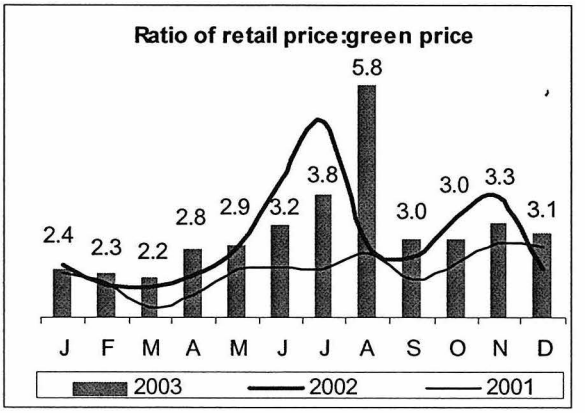
Tonnes	December 2003	Comparisons (%)		Season total 2003	Season comparisons (%)	
		2003/2002	2003/2001		2003/2002	2003/2001
Côte d'Ivoire	9 360	- 10	- 6	90 591	- 11	- 12
Cameroon	11 510	+ 2	+ 9	115 143	+ 7	+ 3
Martinique	16 630	+ 11	+ 7	172 988	- 7	+ 4
Guadeloupe	7 024	+ 9	+ 24	72 562	- 10	- 1
Total	**44 524**	**+ 3**	**+ 7**	**451 284**	**- 5**	**- 1**





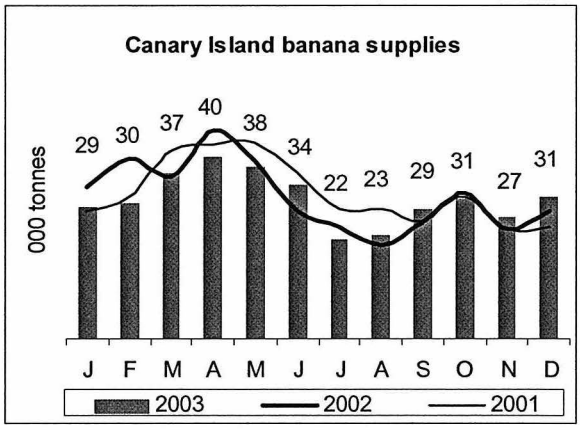
Retail market in France

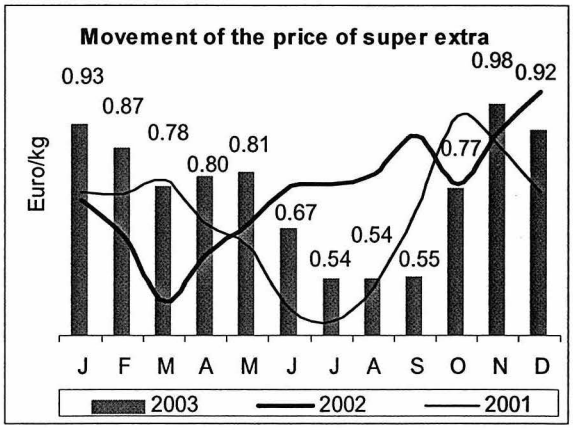




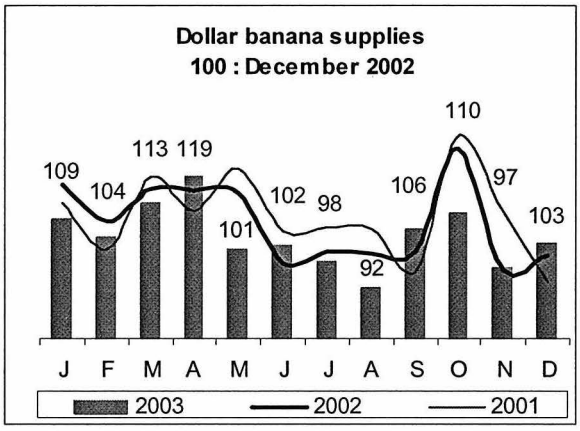
Banana — Indicators for French export markets

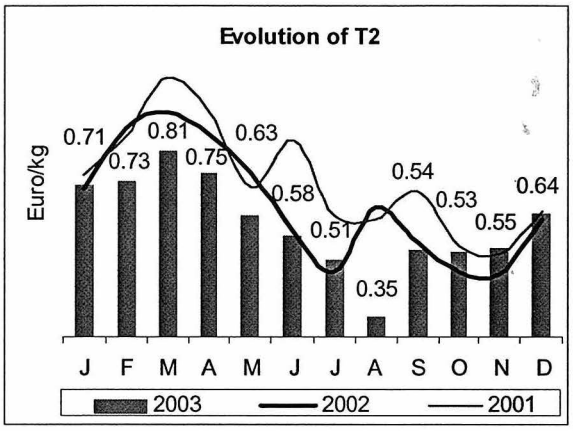
Spain



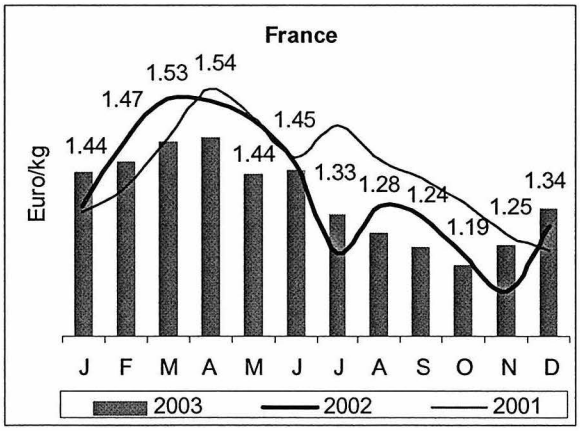


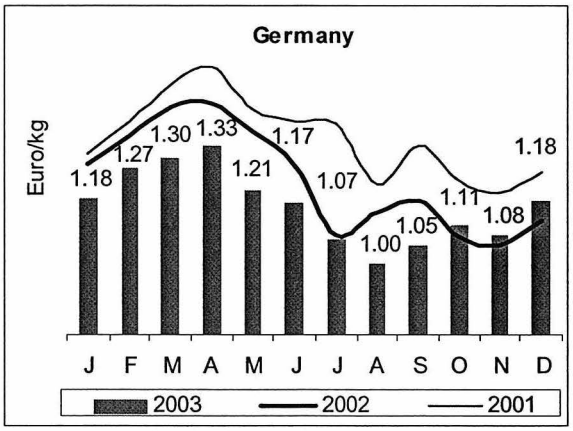
Northern Europe

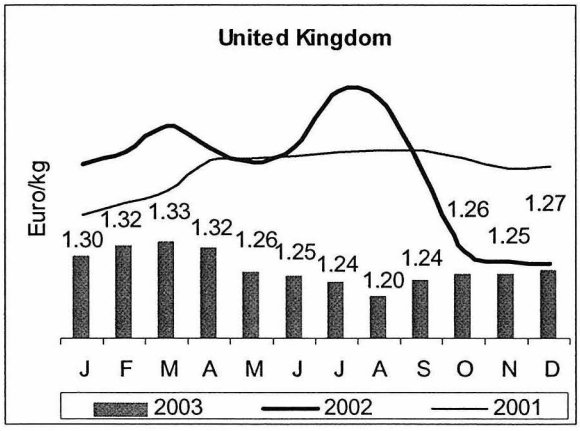


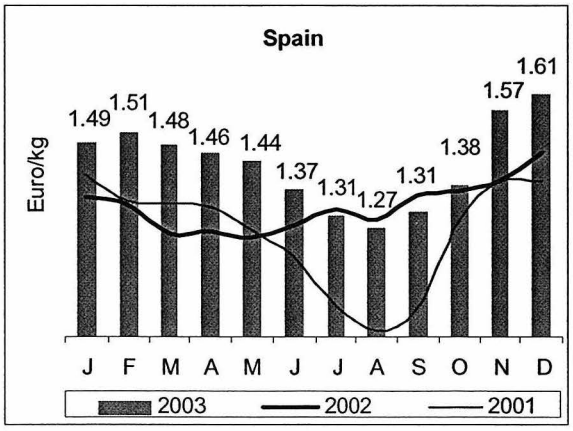


Retail price in Europe







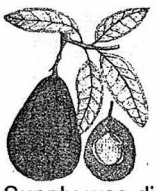


Sources: CIRAD-FLHOR, SNM, TW Marketing Consulting

Avocado

DECEMBER 2003

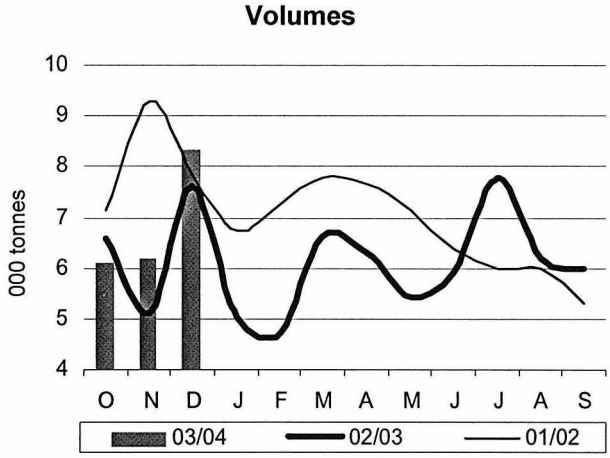
Monthly comparison: Dec. 2003 / Nov. 2003	
Price	Volumes
=↗ + 13%	↗↗ + 35%
Annual comparison: Dec. 2003 / Dec. 2002	
Price	Volumes
↘↘ – 36%	↗ + 10%

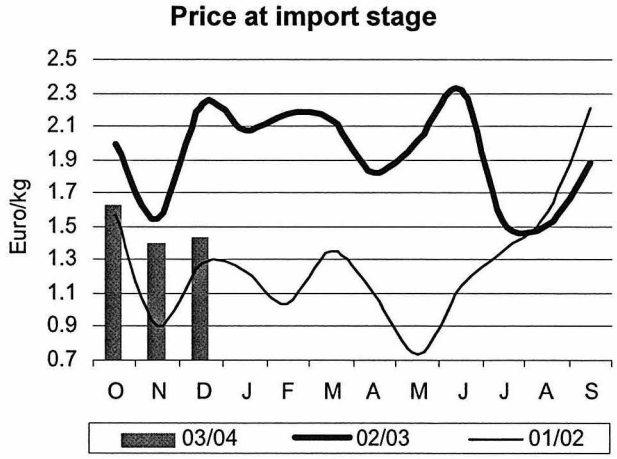


Results for December, a very important month economically for operators handling avocado, were more than mixed. As has been the case since the beginning of the season, supermarket chains remained focused on the variety Hass. However, as retail prices were not sufficiently attractive, promotion operations in weeks 51 and 52 were not as successful as expected, causing a fall in prices at the end of the month. For lack of demand, the market for green varieties remained extremely difficult.

Supply was distinctly more varied than during the two preceding seasons. Indeed, the determination of certain retail chains since the beginning of the season to reference Hass in priority as a replacement for green varieties in the Christmas schedules resulted in a marked increase in Mexican produce. However, the month's results are mixed for this origin because sales suffered from high retail prices and sometimes uneven quality. The market worsened noticeably at the end of the month as stocks accumulated. In this context, the green varieties remained faced with a serious positioning problem. Although supplies from Israel were very measured, the market was often over-supplied, ruling out any possibility of a rise in price.

Estimated market releases in France





Estimated market releases in France by origin

Tonnes	December 2003	Comparisons (%)		Season total	Season comparisons (%)	
		2003/2002	2003/2001	2003/2004	03-04/02-03	03-04/01-02
Spain	3 573	+ 34	- 5	7 416	+ 37	- 34
Mexico	2 125	+ 15	+ 355	9 186	+ 39	+ 26
Israel	2 623	- 15	- 27	5 371	- 30	- 41
Kenya	15	0	0	10 238	+ 67	0
Total	**8 336**	**+ 10**	**+ 6**	**32 211**	**+ 25**	**- 15**

Orange

DECEMBER 2003

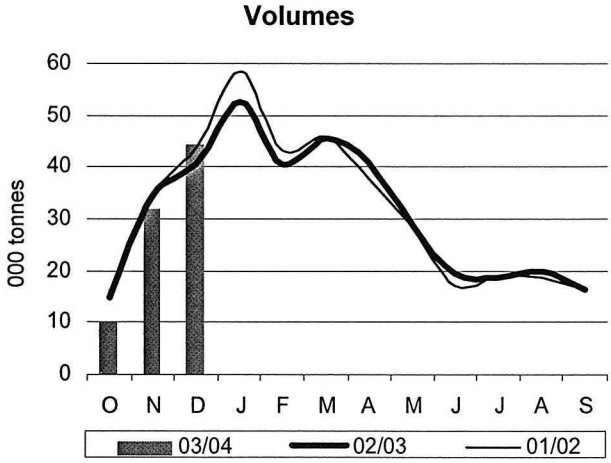
Monthly comparison: Dec. 2003 / Nov. 2003	
Price	Volumes
↘ – 16%	↗↗ + 40%

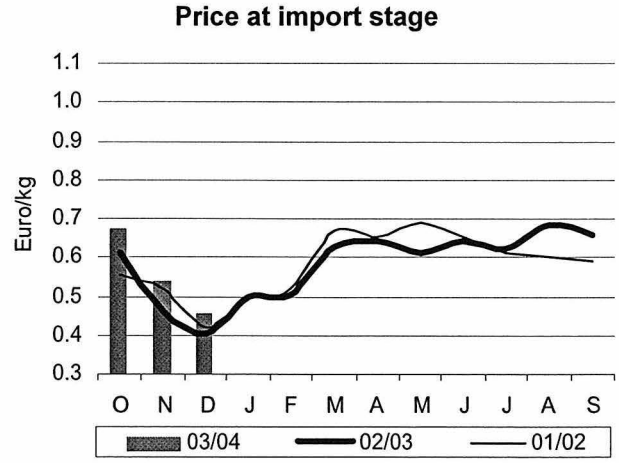
Annual comparison: Dec. 2003 / Dec. 2002	
Price	Volumes
↗ + 12%	↗ + 10%

Supplied mainly with Naveline from Spain, the market behaved fairly well. The quantities marketed and prices were slightly up on the average for the last few years. Quality problems in a significant proportion of easy peeler supplies may have resulted in a transfer of demand to oranges.

Larger quantities of Naveline were marketed than last year and than the average of recent years. However, Spain's export potential for this variety is smaller than the last season and smaller than average. Demand was satisfactory overall. Quality problems in a significant proportion of easy peeler supplies may have caused a transfer of demand to orange. However, although sales of packaged fruits (grades 5/6/7) were fairly fluid, the situation was more difficult for large grade 2/3/4 fruits. Supplies of Spanish Salustiana increased gradually but remained marginal. As has been the case since the beginning of the season, the average price remained slightly above the average for the previous seasons.

Estimated market releases in France





Estimated market releases in France by origin

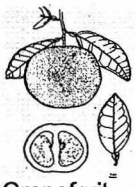
Tonnes	December 2003	Comparisons (%)		Season total	Season comparisons (%)	
		2003/2002	2003/2001	2003/2004	03-04/02-03	03-04/01-02
Spain	44 452	+ 10	+ 2	82 333	- 3	- 5
Total	**44 452**	**+ 10**	**+ 2**	**82 333**	**- 3**	**- 5**

Grapefruit

DECEMBER 2003

Monthly comparison: Dec. 2003 / Nov. 2003	
Price	Volumes
↘ – 14%	= ↘ – 2%

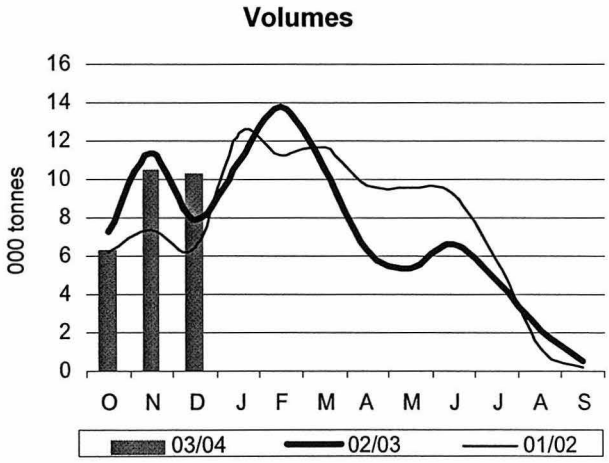
Annual comparison: Dec. 2003 / Dec. 2002	
Price	Volumes
↘ – 10%	↗↗ + 29%

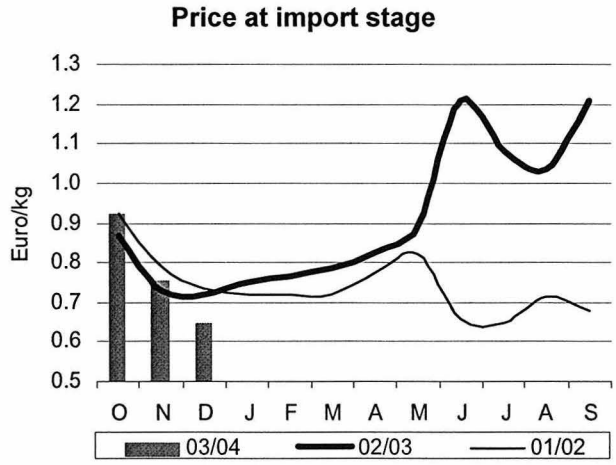


2003 will go down as a year of extremes. After reaching a historically high average price during the summer, the grapefruit market hit the bottom in December. Supplies were particularly abundant, especially because of large quantities arriving from North America. Furthermore, the strong decrease in activity common in December because of a change in range in favour of exotic fruits seems to have been particularly marked in 2003.

Grapefruit supplies were distinctly greater than in previous seasons. Shipments from Turkey to European markets were distinctly down (half the number of shipments in comparison with the average for the past three years). However, Israeli supplies were more in view and shipments from Florida were markedly up on those of preceding years (45 percent up on those of December 2002). Indeed, the particularly favourable euro:dollar exchange rate seems to have encouraged operators—who had lagged at the beginning of the season—to handle more fruits from Florida. Meanwhile, the decrease in demand that is usual at this time of year seems to have been more marked than in previous seasons (drift in retail prices?). Sales were thus extremely slow, even for the best Florida brands and in spite of the programmes undertaken with retail chains. Large stocks formed and prices deteriorated strongly, especially for fruits from the United States.

Estimated market releases in France





Estimated market releases in France by origin

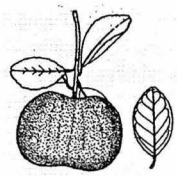
Tonnes	December 2003	Comparisons (%)		Season total	Season comparisons (%)	
		2003/2002	2003/2001	2003/2004	03-04/02-03	03-04/01-02
Florida	9 389	+ 65	+ 65	21 733	+ 4	+ 40
Turkey	349	- 64	+ 16	2 795	- 24	- 2
Israel	533	+ 8	+ 14	2 600	+ 37	+ 54
Total	**10 271**	**+ 29**	**+ 59**	**27 128**	**+ 2**	**+ 35**

Easy peelers

DECEMBER 2003

Monthly comparison: Dec. 2003 / Nov. 2003	
Price	Volumes
↗ + 5%	↗↗ + 40%

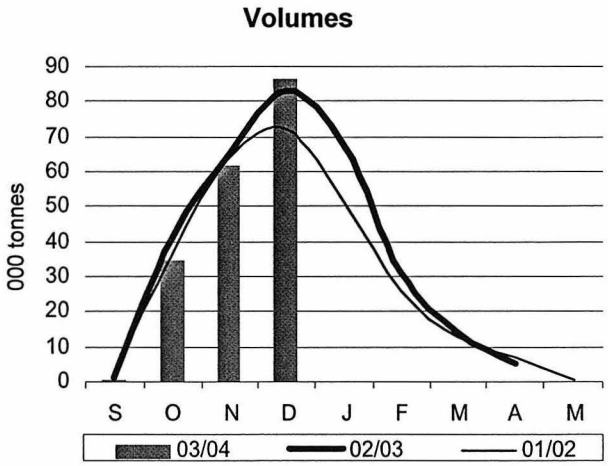
Annual comparison: Dec. 2003 / Dec. 2002	
Price	Volumes
= ↗ + 1%	↗ + 4%

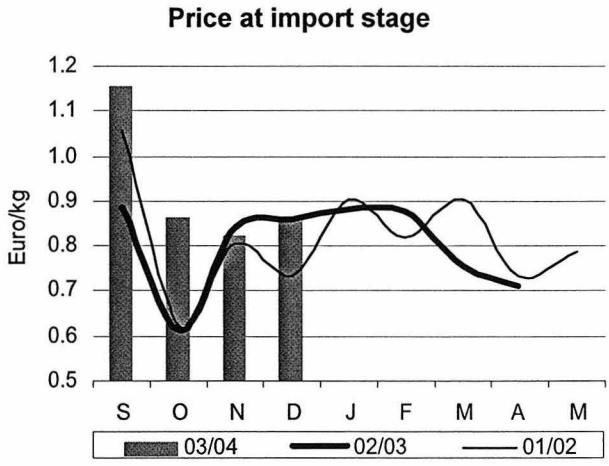


Performance was comparatively satisfactory although the market was difficult for certain categories of produce that had suffered from heavy rain in the preceding months. The average monthly price and the volumes sold were distinctly higher than average.

Sales of easy peelers were difficult at the beginning of the month but improved at the end of the year thanks to the marketing programmes organised for the Christmas period. Demand was nevertheless very selective. Indeed, frequent rainfall in the various production zones affected the quality (both keeping qualities and taste) of a large proportion of supplies. Some Spanish growers therefore hurried to market fruits that could no longer be stocked. Likewise, large volumes of clementines from Morocco were shipped to the French market because their condition meant that they could not be shipped to distant destinations. As a result, the price range was broad. The quality problems of a large proportion of supplies weighed on the sales of selected produce. Even Clemenvilla, with limited potential this season (13 percent down on 2002), suffered from the situation. The position was more favourable for Corsican clementines; these were less affected by rain and, with the protected geographical indication (PGI) obtained in 2003, stood out because of their quality.

Estimated market releases in France





Estimated market releases in France by origin

Tonnes	December 2003	Comparisons (%)		Season total	Season comparisons (%)	
		2003/2002	2003/2001	2003/2004	03-04/02-03	03-04/01-02
Spain	63 949	- 4	- 6	146 910	- 10	+ 2
Morocco	11 768	+ 102	+ 34	19 884	+ 130	+ 44
Corsica	10 701	+ 2	- 14	16 769	- 8	+ 3
Total	**86 418**	**+ 4**	**- 4**	**183 563**	**- 4**	**+ 5**

Litchi

DECEMBER 2003 — Volumes imported in Europe by air (estimates in tonnes)		
Weeks 2003	49	50
Mauritius	45	25
Réunion	60	40
South Africa	50	150
Madagascar	110	80

The litchi market was divided into two phases in December. During the first half of the month, the exports by air started in November continued from Mauritius, Réunion, South Africa and Madagascar. In mid-December, the first conventional vessel from Madagascar docked in Marseilles. Six ships were planned, carrying a total of 18 850 palettes, that is to say nearly 15 500 tonnes of fruit. This impressive quantity for marketing during the Christmas period was a record for the origin and exceeded the total amount shipped during the 2002/2003 season.

The downward price trend in litchis shipped by air observed since the beginning of the season continued during the first half of the month. A combination of several factors accounts for this gradual weakening of prices. The start of the Madagascan season and the increase in shipments from South Africa and Réunion doubled the quantities available on the market from week 49 onwards, while demand for festive produce like litchi was still lukewarm. Although the produce was sound, it consisted (excepting fruits from South Africa) of small fruits with uneven taste qualities. Under these conditions, the high prices put off part of the clientele or limited orders. The situation was further worsened by logistic problems in Madagascar causing the unloading of certain batches that were then shipped sporadically, resulting in decreased quality. Some operators sold their goods by re-shipping in small quantities to the other European markets for supplying retailers specialising in high-quality products. Shipments by air from practically all origins ceased in the middle of the month with the arrival of the first conventional ship from Madagascar. Only Réunion continued to ship fresh litchi (on the branch or destemmed) with prices slipping because of the very uneven quality of the batches.

Given the tonnage of fruits shipped by sea announced for a short period of time (about two weeks), the starting prices for the season were distinctly lower than last year. It is true that the marketing period for operators was a good week less than in 2002/2003 because harvesting started later. The commercial pressure caused by the massive flow of produce sent the market into a downward price movement even before the first conventional ship arrived. As a result, buyers played the waiting game, with lower prices proposed to them each day. The cargo of the *Colombian Star* was sold fairly quickly for the first supermarket displays. The fruits shipped on the *Thorunn* were of satisfactory quality and were sold on the heels of those of the first ship. The character of the season changed with the arrival and unloading of the *Cape Town Star* on 17 December. Indeed, a quality problem was observed in this ship, seemingly resulting from the hold temperature decreasing too slowly. The goods were held until 19 December as a legal investigation was instigated, depriving one of the importers' groups of goods on the eve of an important weekend for sales. The marketing of the sound fruits on this ship caused considerable disturbance and weighed heavily on transactions. The problem on the *Cape Town Star* formed a further difficulty on a market that was over-supplied as a whole. The marketing of Madagascan litchi was in two categories in the last week of the month—with goods of satisfactory quality on the one hand and doubtful fruits on the other. The sale of the cargoes of the next ships was thus faced with a difficult situation. In this context, operators sold their goods as best they could according to quality but were unable to halt an overall downward trend. 2003/2004 already has the mark of a very difficult year after three seasons that were considered to be satisfactory.

The Madagascan litchi season was monitored by Pierre Gerbaud for CTHT thanks to European Union funding (STABEX resources).

Litchi — Price in euros per kg — Import stage in France				
Weeks 2003	49	50	51	52
By air				
Madagascar (sulphur)	5.00 - 6.00	3.50 - 4.00		
Mauritius (sulphur)	5.00 - 5.50	3.50 - 4.00		
Réunion (on the branch)	7.00 - 8.00	6.00 - 6.50	5.00 - 6.00	5.00
South Africa	5.50 - 6.50	3.50 - 4.50		
By sea				
Madagascar			1.20 - 1.80	0.80 - 1.50

Madagascan litchi - Shipments by sea		
Boat	Port and arrival	Number of palettes
Colombian	Marseilles - 15/12/03	4 963
Thorunn	Marseilles - 16/12/03	2 077
Cape Town Star	Marseilles - 17/12/03	4 481
Forte Laurette	Marseilles - 18/12/03	1 914
Glorius Harvest	Vado - 20/12/03	3 529
Suruga	Vlissingen - 29/12/03	1 886