

Indicators

April 2005

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.

The main fruits	In shares by total volume and expenditure on fruits for the month in France		
	%	Volumes	Expenditure
	Apple	28	23
	Orange	19	14
	Banana	14	12
	Strawberry	8	17

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Banana	18
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Grapefruit.....	22
Litchi	23
Mango.....	24

April 2005 / April 2004			
Price	↓	Vol.	↓

Apple

The market has weakened. Domestic sales have slowed and releases for export are also less active (especially for Braeburn) because of increased competition (especially in northern Europe) resulting from the harvest in the southern hemisphere. Significant stocks were still available at the end of the month.

April 2005 / April 2004			
Price	↗↗	Vol.	↘↘

Orange

The performance of orange was extremely disappointing. Demand reached historically low levels, probably as a result of the quality problems in preceding months, and was unable to take the nevertheless extremely limited quantities available. Only top of the range 'Navelate' and 'Valencia' from Spain and 'Maltese' from Tunisia experienced some success. The situation was particularly difficult for 'Maroc late' and standard quality 'Navelate' from Spain.

April 2005 / April 2004			
Price	↗↗	Vol.	↓

Banana

The market performed very well for the fourth month in succession, even though it generally loses ground in April. It even strengthened at the end of the month. The slight supply deficit of March became more marked. Furthermore, the presence of competing fruits remained moderate for the season. Finally, in spite of a poor score for Poland, the rate of export sales continued to be particularly lively. Prices remained high and very stable.

April 2005 / April 2004			
Price	↗	Vol.	↓

Strawberry

The season has started satisfactorily with a well-balanced market. Quantities have been fairly limited because of the moderate temperatures and above all the frosts in Spain in January and February (with very significant losses of the early variety 'Ventana'). Supplies only really developed at the end of the month with the arrival of 'Camarosa', 'round' strawberries from south-west France and 'Gariguette'. The average monthly price has been up in comparison with last year, in particular because of a rise in prices in mid-April.

Information on the situation and prices of sea freight

Sea freight 25

Sea freight

Despite owners and operators' best efforts to maintain the TCE levels achieved in March throughout April, the charter market fell away at a similar speed to previous years. However while the fall last year was attributable to a relative shortage of bananas in Ecuador, the cause this year was predominantly weak Med banana markets, which continued to be inundated with fruit into May.

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

Monthly comparison: April 2005 / March 2005

Price	Volumes
= ⬇ - 2%	⬇ - 4%

Annual comparison: April 2005 / April 2004

Price	Volumes
⬆ + 37%	⬇ - 9%

APRIL 2005

The market performed very well for the fourth month in succession, even though it generally loses ground in April. It even strengthened at the end of the month. The slight supply deficit of March became more marked. Furthermore, the presence of competing fruits remained moderate for the season. Finally, in spite of a poor score for Poland, the rate of export sales continued to be particularly lively. Prices remained high and very stable.



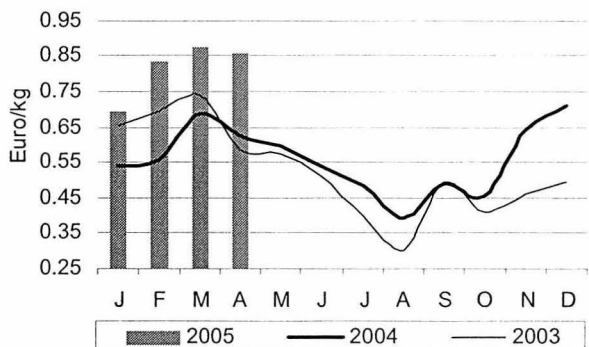
Average supplies became short again after being more plentiful in March. As a result of the early cutting performed in March, mainly in Côte d'Ivoire, arrivals from Africa gradually dwindled and the deficit was marked (- 13% in comparison with the three-year average). Furthermore, the quantities shipped from the West Indies remained significantly smaller than average even though a fairly slight

increase was observed during the last two weeks of the month. The seasonal slowing of business was very slight even though retail prices were still higher than average (+ 16% in comparison with 2004). The presence of competing fruits remained very discreet, with the exception of strawberries from Spain and Morocco. No early stone fruits were being shipped (as a result of frost in

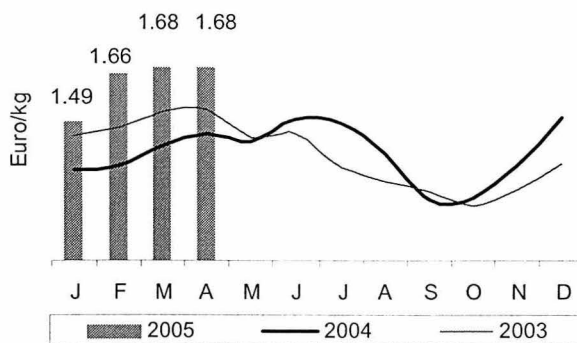
February in Spain) and consumers are tired of citrus. Finally, export releases remained dynamic, especially for shipment to Spain because of the shortage of bananas from the Canary Islands and to Germany. Only exports to Poland slowed (inflow of dollar bananas). Prices remained very stable and even firmed at the end of the month.

French banana market — Indicators

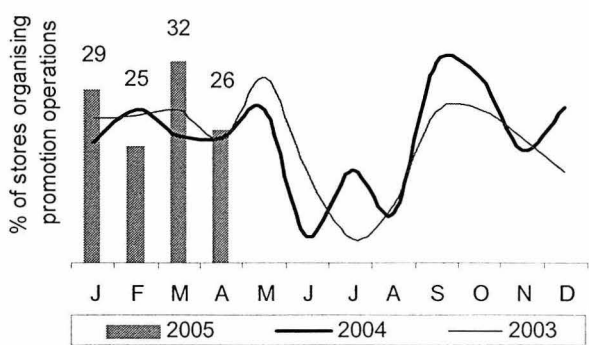
Price at import stage



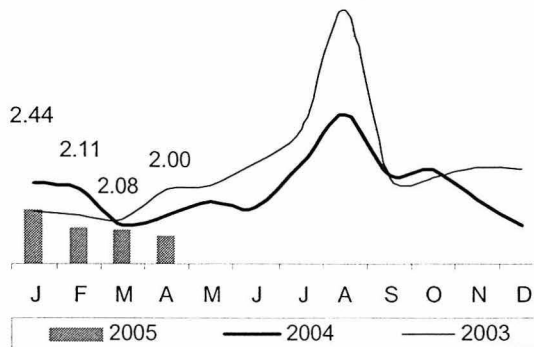
France - Retail price



Promotion operations



Ratio retail price : green price



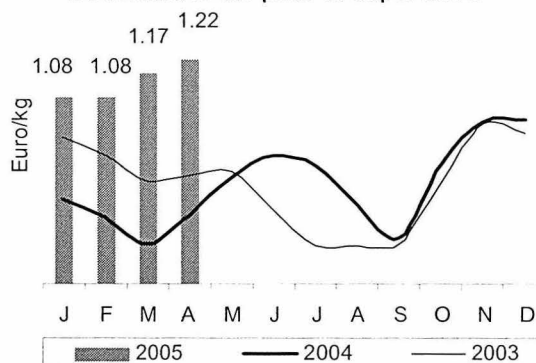
European banana market — Indicators

Tonnes	April 2005	Comparisons (%)		Total season 2005	Season comparisons (%)	
		2005/2004	2005/2003		2005/2004	2005/2003
Martinique	19 598	+ 8	- 13	67 049	- 16	- 14
Guadeloupe	4 166	- 33	- 45	16 838	- 35	- 46
Canaries	32 327	- 15	- 20	118 307	- 19	- 21
Côte d'Ivoire	17 081	- 20	- 15	69 585	- 10	+ 20
Cameroon	21 980	- 16	- 16	78 667	- 20	+ 10

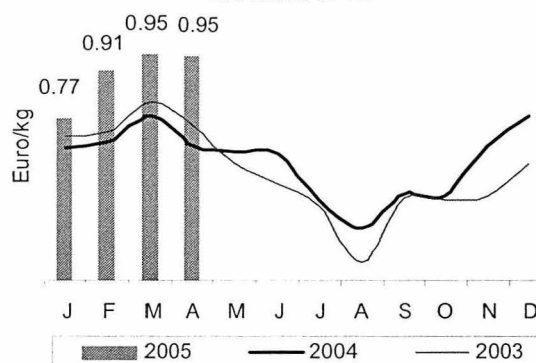
Index (base 100 in April 2004)

Dollar	115	+ 17	+ 15	ND	+ 19	+ 17
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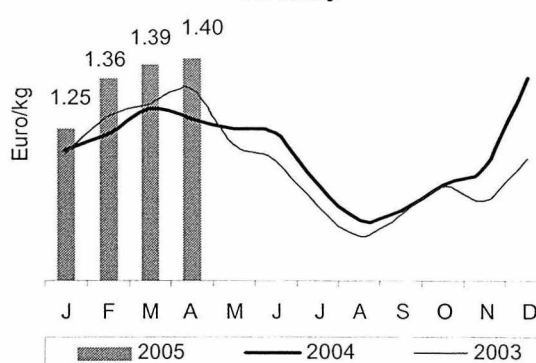
Movement of the price of super extra



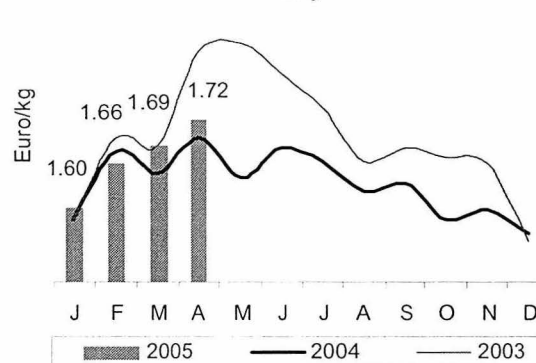
Evolution of T2



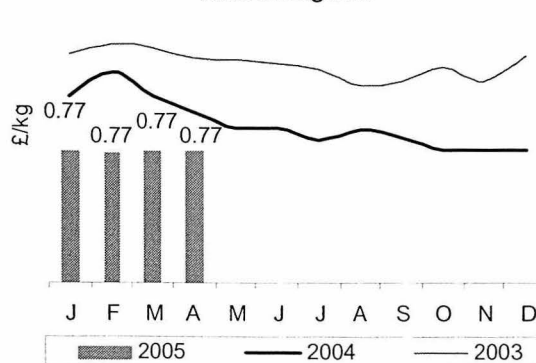
Germany



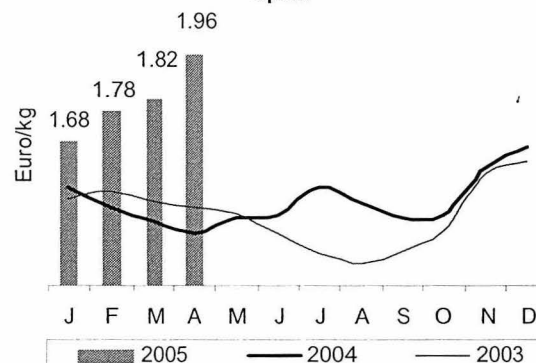
Italy



United Kingdom



Spain



Sources: CIRAD, SNM, TW Marketing Consulting

Avocado

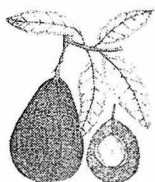
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Monthly comparison: April 2005 / March 2005

Price	Volumes
↘ - 10%	↘ - 25%

Annual comparison: April 2005 / April 2004

Price	Volumes
↘ - 14%	↘ - 17%



Poor performance. Average prices and volumes sold were markedly down on the average. The market for green varieties was over-supplied for much of the month and became catastrophic. This difficult context weighed strongly on the situation for 'Hass', which nonetheless performed better as shipments were limited.

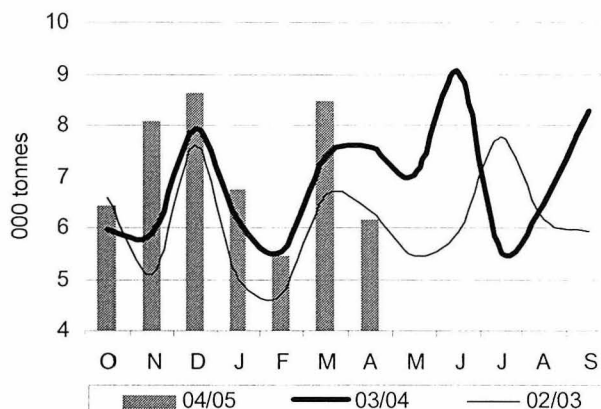
Green varieties performed very badly. The market was disastrous at the beginning of the month because of the large quantities shipped (large arrivals from Israel, large stocks of Kenyan fruits and an early start to 'Fuerte' from South Africa). Quantities returned to normal little by little. Arrivals from Kenya were less frequent, the Israeli season started to tail off in the middle of the month and the quantities

shipped from South Africa gradually returned to more normal levels. The market thus gradually regained balance, especially as demand increased (numerous promotion operations were organised). Nevertheless, prices were rock-bottom for the whole month. The situation weighed strongly on demand for 'Hass'. However, the market was supplied very lightly. Mexican

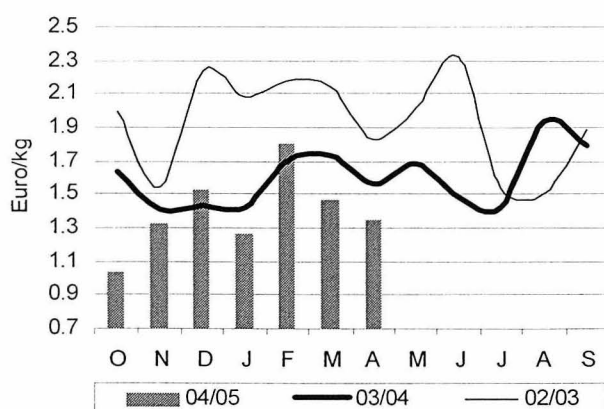
shipments fell to distinctly lower than average quantities and were in the hands of a very small number of operators. Spain remained very discreet and shipments from Israel were focused on the British market. The average price thus reached a fairly high level but after losing much ground at the beginning of the month.

Estimated market releases in France

Volumes



Price at import stage



Estimated market releases in France by origin

Tonnes	April 2005	Comparisons (%)		Total season 2004/2005	Season comparisons (%)	
		2005/2004	2005/2003		04-05/03-04	04-05/02-03
Spain	1 673	- 54	+ 12	14 877	- 20	+ 16
Mexico	710	- 19	- 5	13 459	- 2	+ 2
Israel	2 068	+ 1 152	+ 1 445	18 823	+ 81	+ 60
Kenya	894	- 59	- 52	2 520	- 40	- 35
South Africa	933	26	- 55	933	- 26	- 55
Total	6 278	- 17	- 1	50 612	+ 6	+ 20

Orange

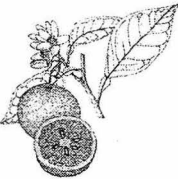
APRIL 2005

Monthly comparison: April 2005 / March 2005

Price \uparrow + 8% Volumes \downarrow - 38%

Annual comparison: April 2005 / April 2004

Price \uparrow + 27% Volumes \downarrow - 43%



The performance of orange was extremely disappointing. Demand reached historically low levels, probably as a result of the quality problems in preceding months, and was unable to take the nevertheless extremely limited quantities available. Only top of the range 'Navelate' and 'Valencia' from Spain and 'Maltese' from Tunisia experienced some success. The situation was particularly difficult for 'Maroc late' and standard quality 'Navelate' from Spain.

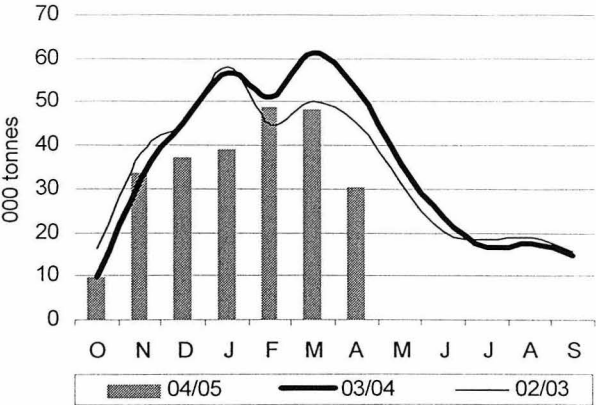
Orange sales were exceptionally small. The numerous problems of quality observed since the western Mediterranean area was hit by frost in February seem to have cooled demand for this fruit. Releases of 'Navelate' from Spain were particularly slow. It was not possible to pass on the price increase at production for

standard brands. Operators limited releases to 'Valencia late'—available in limited quantities. The Spanish production deficit did not benefit most of the other origins in such a difficult context. 'Maroc late' also suffered because the fruits were small and had a very bad month both on the EU market and in Russia. The

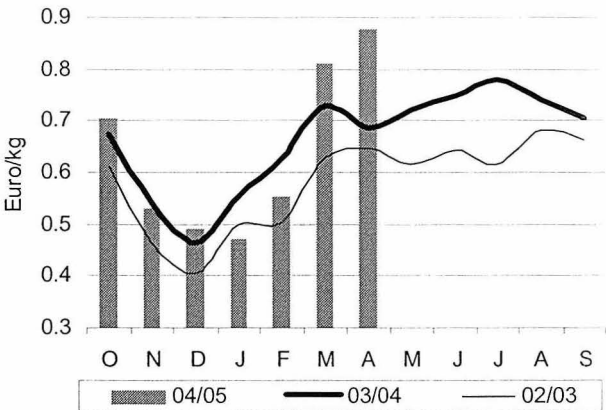
complementary origins (Egypt and a few batches from Turkey) also suffered from sluggish demand even though fruit quality was satisfactory. 'Maltese' from Tunisia were the only category to do well, with the volumes sold being distinctly greater than average.

Estimated market releases in France

Volumes



Price at import stage



Estimated market releases in France by origin

Tonnes	April 2005	Comparisons (%)		Total season 2004/2005	Season comparisons (%)	
		2005/2004	2005/2003		04-05/03-04	04-05/02-03
Spain	24 713	- 46	- 37	216 611	- 21	- 19
Tunisia	3 172	+ 353	+ 256	18 719	+ 1	+ 10
Morocco	2 340	+ 33	+ 36	7 408	+ 32	+ 18
Total	30 225	- 43	- 33	242 738	- 21	- 17

Grapefruit

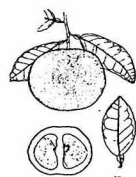
APRIL 2005

Monthly comparison: April 2005 / March 2005

Price	Volumes
↘ - 12%	↘ - 48%

Annual comparison: April 2005 / April 2004

Price	Volumes
↗ + 37%	↘ - 58%



April was a little disappointing even though the market remained balanced. However, in spite of substantial shipments from Israel, the overall shortage was more marked than in March because of rapidly dwindling shipments from Florida and Turkey. However, demand was sluggish as a whole (high retail prices) in spite of a degree of improvement in the second half of the month for origins with guaranteed quality (Florida/Israel). The average price was distinctly higher than average but down in comparison with the preceding months.

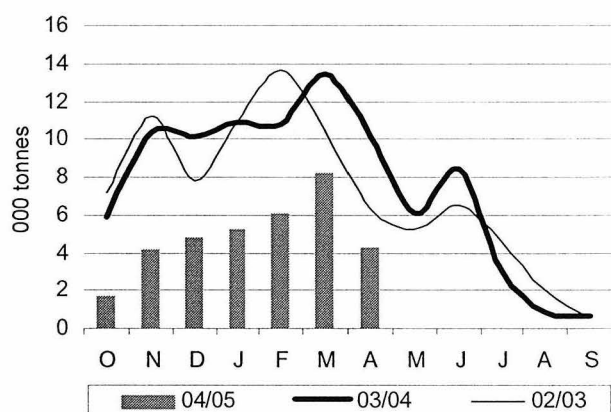
The import deficit increased significantly to 50 to 60% lower than average because of the very early end of shipments from Florida and, to a lesser degree, from Turkey (about one month early). However, Israel was able to go into extra time and was very present on the market (70% up on the three-year average). Furthermore, the

season in the southern hemisphere (Argentina and South Africa) started a week or two earlier than in previous years. Demand was nevertheless very slow, mainly because of the passing on of very high production prices to the retail stage. Sales of fruits from Florida and Israel were thus disappointing until the middle of the month, when the

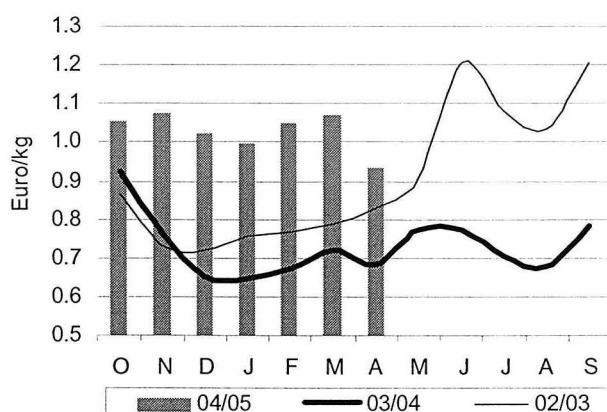
market cleared (with the end of the season for some major operators in Florida and difficult sales for the last batches from Turkey and Cuba). The Corsican season started with some difficulty (fruits sometimes not ripe enough, shipping strike).

Estimated market releases in France

Volumes



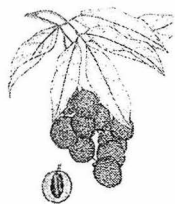
Price at import stage



Estimated market releases in France by origin

Tonnes	April 2005	Comparisons (%)		Total season 2004/2005	Season comparisons (%)	
		2005/2004	2005/2003		04-05/03-04	04-05/02-03
Florida	1 652	- 79	- 55	20 744	- 65	- 62
Israel	2 071	+ 53	- 9	8 207	+ 30	+ 29
Turkey	144	- 86	- 11	5 082	- 7	- 16
Argentina	405	+ 382	+ 140	405	+ 382	- 16
Total	4 272	- 58	- 32	34 438	- 52	- 49

Litchi



Whereas there was no interruption in the supply of litchis to Europe in 2004, the break between the end of the seasons in the southern hemisphere and the start of shipments by northern hemisphere suppliers has been much more marked in 2005. March was particularly short of fruits and only a few small shipments from Australia arrived before the first litchis from Thailand reached Europe in April.

The first batches of Thai litchis arrived in the Netherlands at the beginning of the month. The **Dutch** market was then regularly supplied with fruits shipped by air only. The novelty effect of the first Thai litchis resulted in very high prices of around EUR 8.00 per kg, but the level stabilised at between EUR 6.75 and 7.25 per kg after the first sales. Price swung downwards in the second week of April, with fruits fetching some EUR 6.75-7.25 per kg after the first sales. Prices fell to EUR 5.50 to 6.50 per kg in the second half of the month. Thai supplies consisted mainly of small but well-coloured fruits. In contrast, their taste quality was judged to be fairly mediocre. The first litchis shipped from Thailand in sea containers reached the Dutch market at the end of the month. The increase in the volumes delivered obviously affected the price of goods shipped by air. The latter settled at around EUR 5.50-6.00 per kg while fruits shipped by sea were sold on the basis of EUR 4.50 per kg.

The **Belgian** market was also regularly supplied with small quantities of Thai litchi shipped by air. Selling prices were between EUR 6.00 and 7.00 per kg during the first half of the month. They then weakened and stabilised at between EUR 5.50 and 6.00 per kg. The arrival of the first litchis by sea did not really cause a substantial decrease in the price of fruits shipped by air. Price rapidly centred on EUR 5.50 per kg for air fruits and around EUR 4.50 per kg for goods shipped by sea. The small tonnages and the small qualitative difference between the fruits shipped by sea and by air did not lead to clear differentiation.

In **France**, very small quantities of litchis were sold in April, although it is difficult to assess the real flows of this fruit. Wholesalers reached their sales capacity with several tens of boxes per week. The very high prices probably contributed to this. At EUR 7.00-8.00 per kg throughout the month, litchi joined the top of the range exotic fruits while customers still remembered the

prices of fruits from Madagascar and South Africa a month and a half before. The first batches of Thai litchis shipped by air sold regularly from the second week in April onwards. In contrast with the other European markets mentioned above, the French market does not seem to have received any fruits by sea. It is very probable that professionals holding goods preferred to finish selling the last batches to have arrived by air before starting sales of goods shipped by sea. There will no doubt be a lag of a week to 10 days before the fruits shipped by sea are released on the market.

In parallel with sales of Thai litchis, the usual substitutes (rambutan and longan) sold steadily in small quantities. Rambutans shipped by air were sold at about EUR 6.00 per kg. The Thai longan price trend was less regular and prices decreased steadily to EUR 2.30 per kg and to EUR 1.90 per kg at the end of the month for goods shipped in sea containers.

APRIL 2005	Litchi by air from Thailand Price at import stage		
	Euros/kg	Min	Max
	France	7.0	8.0
	Belgium	5.5	7.0
	Netherlands	5.5	8.0

Weekly monitoring of the European mango market is available during the West African season.

Import prices, estimation of releases, trends, etc.



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Mango



In April, the gradual end of the Peruvian export season and the slow starting of the West African origins kept the market under-supplied, encouraging firm prices. The situation suddenly worsened at the end of the month with the arrivals of larger quantities of Côte d'Ivoire mangoes on the French market and also the coinciding with fruits from Latin America on northern European markets. The junction between April and May was thus characterised by the formation of a trade front opposing the two main supply zones.

Peru continued its shipments by sea until a fairly late date this year. Not at all on the same scale as the very large quantities delivered at the beginning of the year, the last 'Kent' from Peru sold at EUR 5.00 to 6.00 per box, enabling shippers to make up at least partially for the poor performance in preceding weeks. Deliveries from Côte d'Ivoire increased simultaneously, gradually replacing Peruvian supplies first by 'Amélie' and then by 'Kent'. The price of 'Amélie' fell as soon as the first 'Kent' arrived. The former is an early variety, green but with good organoleptic qualities but its position shrinks year after year. It is marketed for want of other varieties rather than because operators want to sell it. The market dipped strongly in the last week of April after a period of high, firm prices. Regular arrivals of significant quantities of fruits from Côte d'Ivoire rapidly exceeded the capacity of the French market, encouraging professionals to seek outlets abroad. The large arrivals from Latin America in northern European countries compromised this approach. The plethoric quantities of 'Tommy Atkins' from Brazil, Guatemala and Costa

Rica available on these markets led to the formation of a trade front preventing two-way movement of goods. Tension suddenly increased, causing a fall in prices ('Tommy Atkins' at EUR 3.50-4.50 per box) whereas levels had increased with difficulty in March. The scale of the fall in the price of fruits from Côte d'Ivoire (a dip of EUR 0.50 to 1.00 per box) is more difficult to understand insofar as this origin is the only one at this time of year to ship 'Kent', a variety usually sought after by consumers. The predominance of small fruits and the increasing number of importers of fruit of this origin may also be factors in the trend. In the middle of the month, a container from Côte d'Ivoire was intercepted by the French Plant Protection Service because fruit fly larvae were found. Fruit fly is a harmful organism and its introduction in the EU is forbidden. The fruits were destroyed.

The development of the air mango market was also somewhat disturbed. Deliveries from Mali were the most regular and the largest. They first consisted of the variety 'Amélie' and subsequently 'Valencia' and 'Kent'. To

make up for a shortage of production, exporters also shipped minor varieties ('Smith', 'Palmer', 'Irwin', etc.) that were difficult to sell because of the limited volume and the one-off basis of the shipments. The price of 'Amélie' mangoes dipped in the face of the more sought after 'Kent'. Deliveries from Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire were less regular, causing some fits and starts in supply. The air mango supply displayed great unevenness throughout the month, accounting for the price differences and variations. Although 'Kent' from Côte d'Ivoire is the top of the range, brands from other origins displayed clear qualitative variations. Grading, skin blemishes, colour and stage of ripeness were all uneven. The quality of the mangoes shipped by air was sometimes similar to that of fruits exported by sea and no longer justified the difference in asking price.

Complementary, very small batches of mangoes (yellow variety) from Thailand were sold at high prices (EUR 5.00 to 6.00 per kg).

Mango arrivals — Estimates				
Tonnes				
Weeks	14	15	16	17
By air				
Peru	10	8	-	-
Mali	40	50	70	40
Burkina Faso	20	25	25	15
Côte d'Ivoire	15	60	45	10
By sea				
Côte d'Ivoire	500-600	600-650	750-800	600-650

Mango — Price in euros — Import stage					
Weeks 2005		14	15	16	17
By air (kg)					
Peru	Kent	4.00-4.50	-	-	-
Burkina Faso	Amélie	2.50-2.80	2.50	2.20-2.30	2.10-2.30
Burkina Faso	Kent	3.40-3.80	3.00-3.50	2.80-3.30	2.70-3.50
Mali	Amélie	2.50-2.80	2.00-2.60	2.10-2.30	2.10-2.30
Mali	Valencia	2.80-3.50	2.50-3.00	2.50-3.00	2.50-3.00
Mali	Kent	3.00-3.80	3.00-3.50	2.80-3.50	2.70-3.50
Côte d'Ivoire	Kent	4.50-5.00	4.00-4.50	4.00-4.80	4.00-4.80
By sea (colis)					
Peru	Kent	6.00	5.50-6.00	6.00-6.50	5.00
Côte d'Ivoire	Amélie	4.50-5.50	4.50-5.20	3.50-4.50	3.50-4.00
Côte d'Ivoire	Kent	-	6.00-6.50	5.00-6.50	4.50-5.50
Brazil	Tommy Atkins	5.50-6.00	4.50-5.00	5.00-6.00	-

Sea freight



Despite owners and operators' best efforts to maintain the TCE levels achieved in March throughout April, the charter market fell away at a similar speed to previous years. However while the fall last year was attributable to a relative shortage of bananas in Ecuador, the cause this year was predominantly weak Med banana markets, which continued to be inundated with fruit into May.

Although there was a slight spike at the beginning of the month caused partly by delays in the Panama Canal and tonnage being diverted to the Plate for the start of the S American citrus season, as more tonnage opened up, a rates slide became inevitable. Nevertheless, the average rate for April 2005 was 69% up on the equivalent figure for 2004.

While Seatrade stole the lead story by purchasing United Reefers for an estimated US\$205m, Star Reefers was making its own headlines: it fixed its

H2/off-season South Africa to Japan citrus programme at a reported average 80c/cbft, it captured 2 vessels from under the noses of Seatrade and LauritzenCool and it chartered back tonnage from its CSAV Chilean programme – all this after posting a spectacular rise in Q1 profits.

While the immediate outcome of Seatrade's purchase of United Reefers is still unknown, the reduction in numbers of major operators to 3 will shape the development of the reefer market over the next decade. While

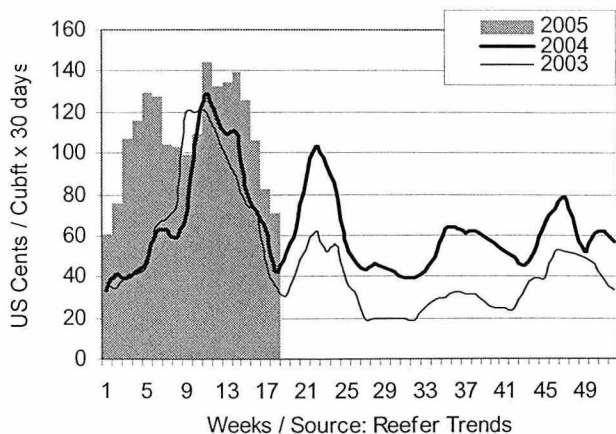
the short-term outlook for the reefer business is positive, by the end of 2007 the container fleet will have increased in size by almost 30%. Even though the majority of these newbuilds will be trading in the Pacific there will inevitably be a cascade effect into the transatlantic banana and non-banana reefer trades. The depth and breadth of Seatrade's enlarged fleet will put the operator in an unrivalled position to gauge the changes in the market and steer the sector through what is likely to be an awkward period.

Monthly spot averages

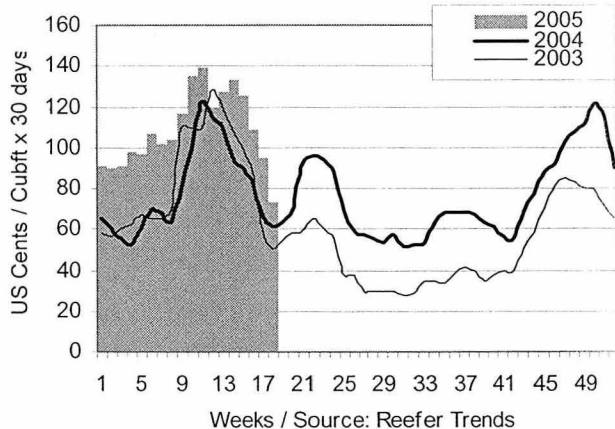
US\$cents/cubic foot x 30 days	Large reefers	Small reefers
April 2005	60	79
April 2004	69	74
April 2003	117	117

Weekly market movement

Large reefers (450 000 cuft)



Small reefers (330 000 cuft)



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