

European banana market supplies

History!

The European Union set an absolute record for banana imports in 2002 for its last year as EU-15. Provisional data provided by Eurostat shows that the four million tonne mark was exceeded with total consumption of 4 063 571 tonnes (after deduction of re-exports). The figure may even be underestimated by nearly 100 000 tonnes to judge by the figures for the use of import certificates (European Commission data). Banana consumption is now nearly 11 kg per person per year.

Banana markets supplies have reached historical levels. According to the very latest and still provisional data supplied by Eurostat, apparent consumption in the European Union was precisely 4 063 571 tonnes in 2002. Reached once before in 2000, the symbolic 4-million tonne mark was amply exceeded in 2002. Per capita consumption increased by 400 g in 2002 to 10.8 kg per year. In all, Europeans ate 127 146 tonnes more bananas than in 2001 (+ 3.2%).

Higher and higher!

Among the three groups of origins supplying the market (EU, ACP and dollar), only the quantities from ACP origins decreased or, rather, stagnated (- 0.3% to 726 452 tonnes). This category is extremely heterogeneous. The Caribbean ACPs lost nearly 4% whereas the African ACPs gained 2%. The market share of the latter in the total ACP figure improved to 61% in comparison with 54% in 2000 and 60% in 2001. A collapse is noted in Surinam for sector restructuring reasons (- 77%) (cf. *Fruitrop* 101, page 3), in Belize (- 26%) for climatic reasons and in Jamaica (- 5%) and Côte d'Ivoire (- 3%). In contrast, St Lucia (+ 42%), the Dominican Republic (+ 13%) and St Vincent (+ 5%) improved their scores.

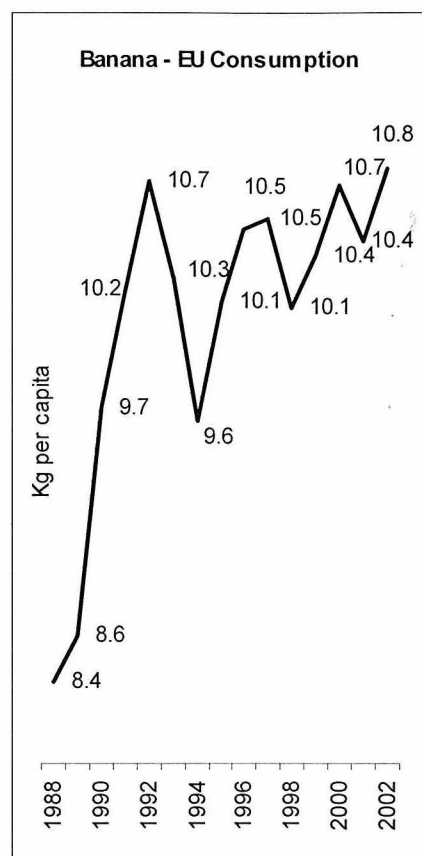
Community producers formed a similar mixed bag with Martinique and Guadeloupe gaining 13% and 7% and the Canary Islands reducing

shipments by 3%. In all, European producers marketed 23 354 tonnes more than in 2001 (+ 3%).

With an increase of 79 843 tonnes (+ 3.2%), the dollar origins made a very strong contribution to increasing market supplies. The three leading exporters—Ecuador (+ 17%), Costa Rica (+ 8%) and Colombia (+ 3%)—increased their shipments to the EU while the quantities from Honduras (- 81%) and Panama (- 12%) plummeted. It can be seen that in 2002 once again Ecuador managed to make up for the weakness of certain dollar origins by putting an extra 120 000 tonnes on the market from one day to the next. This shows the ability to react of the country's entrepreneurs and above all the latent production potential that can be used to supply the international market. The very broad production base (numerous small and medium-sized growers) in Ecuador enables this astonishing flexibility.

Finally, the market shares by type of origin did not change. Community bananas formed 19.4% of EU supplies (in comparison with 19.5% in 2001), ACP bananas formed 17.9% (18.5% in 2001) and dollar bananas 62.7% (62% in 2001).

Re-exports from the EU to third countries decreased very markedly from 34 000 tonnes to only 8 000 tonnes. Is this an effect of the still provisional status of the figures provided or a slowing of re-exports to Libya, Algeria, Bulgaria, former Yugoslavia and Romania, as is seen in the figures?



Might the truth be elsewhere?

Beyond the figures presented this year, a controversy could arise or at least strong doubts. Indeed the balance for the use of certificates for 2002 drawn up by the European Commission in April 2003 reveals a difference between the data presented above (supplied by Eurostat) and the use of certificates. This difference for the year is 93 000 tonnes, with a very large proportion of this (578 000 tonnes) in the fourth quarter. How could a

European operator supply the European market with bananas from third countries (excepting ACP countries in almost all cases) using import certificates without this being recorded by Eurostat?

It is true that banana years do not begin and end on the same dates as calendar years. Dates of validity of certificates straddle two years. Imports that actually took place in 2003 can be entered on 2002 certificates. It is true that the balance of the use of certificates counts as 'used certificates' those not returned to the issuing body; in this case it is not known whether they have been actually used. However, the differences seem too great to experts on the subject. If the final Eurostat figures confirm this doubt, a closer investigation and rectifications will be necessary. A very strong decrease in Honduran exports to the EU (-81%) is observed in particular; the quantities seem to have been transferred to the United States market. It is not enough to say, as is often heard, that 'Eurostat data are inaccurate' as they are used as the basis for a great number of negotiations. Cameroon had unpleasant experience of this when in 1998 Eurostat recorded EU

Banana — EU 15 — Imports			
Tonnes	2001	2002 provisional	Delta 2002/2001 (%)
Total	3 203 441	3 280 960	2
of which ACP	728 776	726 452	0
Ecuador	705 157	824 534	17
Costa Rica	634 970	686 009	8
Colombia	645 745	665 239	3
Panama	347 869	306 342	-12
Cameroon	215 455	229 716	7
Côte d'Ivoire	216 699	210 707	-3
Dominican Rep.	85 886	97 210	13
St Lucia	34 727	49 313	42
Jamaica	42 958	40 600	-5
Belize	51 609	38 178	-26
Brazil	16 624	35 847	116
St Vincent	30 829	32 520	5
Honduras	106 432	20 452	-81
Dominica	17 516	17 467	0
Venezuela	12 113	9 163	-24
Surinam	28 720	6 548	-77
Peru	1 178	5 325	352
Ghana	3 345	3 181	-5
Nicaragua	1 160	849	-27
Grenada	591	557	-6

Source: Eurostat

imports from the country as 115 000 tonnes when Cameroon claimed 155 000 tonnes. Negotiations concerning the common market organisation of banana are far from over and arguments backed by figures will once again be at the centre of the discussions.

The next—imminent—debate concerns the enlargement of the EU to include 10 new members. Given the contrasting balances, it can be feared that Homeric discussions of

the levels of the future quotas will be undertaken using doubtful figures. How can those in favour of the moderation of the amounts of third-country bananas allocated to the future member-states be denied the right to see these discrepancies as the malfunctioning of observation of the flows entering and leaving the community, in particular via the eastern frontiers? ■

Denis Loeillet, CIRAD-FLHOR
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European Union — Evaluation of banana supplies — Tonnes							
Year	Banana type or origin				Sub-total	Exports	Supplies
	Community	ACP		Others (\$)			
		12 ex-traditional ACP	Dom. Rep. & others ACP				
1988	719 270	513 043	344	1 644 100	2 877 431	17 265	2 860 166
1989	698 925	542 628	855	1 716 500	2 959 541	13 415	2 946 126
1990	710 635	617 578	3 829	2 024 248	3 356 758	36 219	3 320 539
1991	695 402	584 516	9 681	2 286 019	3 577 837	53 468	3 524 369
1992	711 191	641 005	38 492	2 365 883	3 757 265	39 689	3 717 576
1993	646 242	683 583	61 662	2 219 721	3 614 083	36 138	3 577 945
1994	584 622	639 742	86 007	2 102 303	3 413 852	58 044	3 355 808
1995	658 206	687 162	75 046	2 405 180	3 827 352	43 082	3 784 270
1996	684 605	733 467	61 184	2 471 263	3 955 942	30 598	3 925 344
1997	810 537	640 532	46 520	2 464 412	3 968 003	16 571	3 951 432
1998	786 232	554 025	55 730	2 426 419	3 828 247	26 448	3 801 799
1999	729 303	631 548	42 125	2 522 455	3 927 751	27 359	3 900 392
2000	782 176	693 952	59 734	2 528 170	4 067 154	35 327	4 031 827
2001	767 268	639 104	89 672	2 474 665	3 970 709	34 284	3 936 425
2002	790 622	625 606	100 846	2 554 508	4 071 582	8 011	4 063 571
	(1)	(2)		(3)		(4)	

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(1) 1988 to 1993 inclusive: Eurostat + European Commission data for Madeira and Greece. From 1994 onwards: supplementary aid data.

(2) Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia, Cape Verde, Madagascar, Belize, St Lucia, Jamaica, Dominica, St Vincent, Grenada, Surinam.

(3) Eurostat data: all imports from non-community and non-ACP countries.

(4) Duty-paid bananas (released for free circulation) in one of the EU member countries and then exported outside EU-15.

General note:

Before 1994: dessert bananas + plantains / From 1994 onwards: dessert bananas. Before 1995: EU-12 / From 1995 onwards: EU-15. The study concerns extra-community import data for ACP and dollar bananas and re-export. The rules of operation of the common market organisation of banana (1993 version) have been applied to the data from 1988 onwards in order to give comparable results. Publication of the results in the supplement to *Info Banane* No. 71 published by CIRAD-FLHOR for ODEADOM.

Source: Eurostat (CD ROM sup 2-1997, sup 2-2002 and 4-2003), European Commission / Processing: CIRAD-FLHOR Market News Service