

FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

The EU market for pomelo

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Report summary

This CBI market survey discusses the EU market for fresh pomelo. The highlights are listed below.

- The EU consumption market for pomelo is steadily expanding but consumption is still low compared to other citrus fruit.
- France, Germany and the United Kingdom (UK) are the largest markets. Eastern European countries are becoming interesting markets as demand for pomelo is growing quickly.
- Pomeles are not produced in the EU and EU countries rely completely on imports.
- Between 2003 and 2007, imports of grapefruit (a close relative) and pomelo reached 630 thousand tonnes with a value of €414 million. The largest part consisted of grapefruit, which is far more popular than pomelo.
- Developing countries (DCs) accounted for 39% of the imports of grapefruit and pomelo into the EU. China is the leading pomelo supplier to the EU. Other major developing country supplier is South Africa. They are also main suppliers of grapefruit.
- Israel is the main supplier among the non-DC countries. It also supplies grapefruit.
- The Netherlands is the leading importer and distributor of pomelo in the EU. France and the UK are also large importers and have large consumption markets. Germany mostly depends on the Netherlands for the supply of pomelo.
- Supermarkets are the main outlets for pomelo. The sales of pomelo show a peak during the European winter when its supply is highest. The availability of pomelo differs per EU country but is commonly available in the largest markets.

This survey aims to provide exporters of pomeles from developing countries (hereafter DCs) with product-specific market information about gaining access to the EU market(s). By focusing on the EU market(s) for one product, this document provides additional in-depth information, complementary to the general information and data provided in the CBI's market survey 'The fresh fruit and vegetables market in the EU', which can be downloaded from <http://www.cbi.eu/marketinfo>.

Detailed information about pomelo is given in appendix A. This survey discusses the EU in general and particularly the markets in: the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Spain and Belgium.

1 Market description: consumption and production

Consumption

Pomelo (*Citrus grandis*) is the largest of citrus fruits. Pomelo originates in Indo-China and is a popular fruit in China and other Asian countries. It plays a significant role in the celebration of Chinese New Year.

Consumption data on pomelo are not available. Data on grapefruit can be used as an indicator as the fruits are quite similar and attract the same type of consumer. However, the data must be used with caution as one may not assume a direct correlation between the size of grapefruit consumption and pomelo consumption.

In 2007, the total apparent consumption¹ of grapefruit (including pomelo) in the EU was 457 thousand tonnes (Table 1.1). Average consumption per person was 0.92 kg per year. This is lower than the levels in other main markets such as the USA and Japan. However, the consumption grew 6% annually from 2003 to 2007. Due to the size of its population, the EU is the largest market for pomelo. The EU does not produce pomelo and this makes the EU by far the largest importer of grapefruit and pomelo in the world.

Table 1.1 Apparent consumption of fresh grapefruit (including pomelos), 2003 – 2007, in thousand tonnes.

	2003	2005	2007
EU Total	363	394	457
France	88	85	93
The Netherlands	35	32	66
Germany	60	51	62
United Kingdom	53	57	45
Romania	13	16	32
Poland	n.a.*	28	31
Italy	31	28	26
Cyprus	9	14	15
Belgium	16	13	12
Czech Republic	10	7	11
Greece	7	8	10
Portugal	4	3	10
Sweden	6	7	7

Source: Eurostat, 2007, 2008

* n.a. data not available

Consumers are more familiar with grapefruit than pomelo. Pomelo is still not readily available in all EU countries. Until 5 years ago, it was not available in supermarkets, only in small grocery stores. The market took off five years ago when China started exporting pomelos in substantial volumes to the EU. For instance in 2003, pomelos were first made available to the French public when Carrefour introduced them in their supermarkets. Since this introduction, sales of pomelo in **France** have risen remarkably. Nowadays it is also a common product in German and UK supermarkets.

Germany is also an important market mainly because of its population size. Grapefruits and pomelos are a common product in German supermarkets. The **UK** has been a pioneer market for grapefruit. Though popularity of the fruit decreased a little in the 1990's, it is still a common product in the supermarkets. Though exact data are not available, the UK is most probably the largest market for pomelo after France and Germany. As UK consumers are familiar with grapefruit, they are more open to pomelo.

Italians have a strong favour for domestic product though they do import substantial amounts of exotic and off-season fruit. However, the market for grapefruit and pomelo in **Italy** is decreasing and consumption levels are below the EU average. **The Netherlands** is only a small market for grapefruit and is even negligible for pomelo, but it is a major trader of both types of fruits. **Belgium and Spain** also are very small markets for pomelo. Belgium does play a significant role in the intra-EU trade of pomelo imported from DCs.

Pomelos are available year-round, but the peak in supply is from September until April when China is in season. In the intermediate period, South Africa and Israel are main suppliers. Pomelo is the most stable citrus fruit and can be stored for a long time without loss of quality.

¹ Calculation based on data from Eurostat (2007, 2008) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (2008). Apparent consumption includes industrial and consumer demand, and is calculated as production plus imports minus exports.