



[8 tips for finding buyers on the European fresh fruit and vegetables market](#)

On average about 75% of all fresh fruit and vegetables in Europe is sold by supermarkets. The supermarket share is even higher in Northern and Western Europe, but lower in Southern European countries.

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The vast majority of these supermarkets belong to retail chains, which buy their produce from a decreasing number of importers. Simultaneously, their demands and requirements continue to increase. This makes your job of finding (and keeping) a buyer, a difficult one. Follow these tips to help you find your potential buyers.

1 . Be professional and well prepared

The European fresh fruit and vegetables sector is a dynamic sector that is full of new opportunities. When looking for potential buyers, you need to be well prepared. Know your strengths and weaknesses. Make sure you know your potential buyers before you contact them. Moreover, doing business in Europe requires a pro-active attitude. You need to be professional and do your best to comply with their demands. Your buyer will expect good communication skills and prompt response. European buyers expect clear and direct communication 24/7. Buyers also want to know more about your business; an informative website can be of help.

Tips:

- Develop good communication and language skills and be proactive.
- Do market research for your products, markets and channels, make use the following CBI sector studies:
 - [Channels and segments](#)
 - [Information about specific products](#)
 - [How to do business in the European fresh fruit and vegetables sector.](#)
 - [Buyer requirements survey for an overview of market standards.](#)

- Use market studies from business support organisations in your country.
- Make sure to have an attractive and up-to-date website. Use your website to communicate about your assortment, certifications, good agricultural practices and international service.

2 . Contact your local business support organisations

Business support organisations in your home country will be able to provide you with relevant information about your sector. Some will also be able to give you information on your target market in Europe.

Examples of business support organisations are export associations or trade promotion agencies such as [Vietrade](#), [ASEPEX](#) (Senegal) [PromPeru](#), [ProColombia](#), [ProEcuador](#), [Agexport](#) (Guatemala)

Tips:

- Contact business support organisations in your home country.
- Request access to databases of buyers in Europe.
- Study relevant sector information published by business support organizations.

3 . Use online catalogues

A good source of information about professional importers in Europe, are online exhibitor catalogues. These are published by trade fairs all over the world. The main trade fairs in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector are: Fruit Logistica in Berlin, Germany, and Fruit Attraction in Madrid, Spain.

These online catalogues have search engines which you can use to find buyers per product or product group. They offer relevant information such as buyers' websites and contact details.

Tips:

- Look for importers participating in major trade fairs. They are generally the bigger and more professional companies worth targetting.
- Look for the online exhibitor catalogues of major trade fairs like: [Fruit Logistica](#) in Berlin, Germany and [Fruit Attraction](#) in Madrid, Spain.
- Search by product or by productgroup.
- Save relevant information such as websites and contact details and build a database with useful buyer contacts.
- Visit the relevant companies at the trade fair or make contact via email or telephone.

4 . Visit trade fairs

Visit trade fairs such as Fruit Logistica in Berlin, and Fruit Attraction in Madrid, or other fairs in Paris, London and Warshaw. This will give you the oportunity to have direct contact with the various importers.

It is also a great opportunity to find background information on your new target market(s) and present your company directly to your potential customers.

This clearly means you will be making costs. However, you will find a large concentration of relevant prospects in one place. This makes it well worth the investment.

Tips:

- Find out if there are trade fairs or match-making events in your country that host international buyers/visitors.
- Visit trade fairs such as [Fruit Logistica](#) in Berlin, and [Fruit Attraction](#) in Madrid, or other fairs such as the [London Produce Show](#).

5 . Use online platforms for information and promotion

Online platforms are good sources of information about buyers, markets as well as other companies in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector. This makes them the ideal place for promoting your own company.

Search for the following platforms online, for example:

[Freshplaza.com](#) (English) and [Freshplaza.es](#) (Spanish) – a news site for fresh produce

[Freshfruitportal.com](#) – a news site for fresh produce in English and Spanish.

[Organic-bio.com](#) – a company database for organic products

[Rungismarket.com](#) – a large wholesale / import market in Paris, France

[Mercamadrid.es](#) – a large wholesale / import market in Madrid, Spain

[Mercabarna.es](#) - a large wholesale / import market in Barcelona, Spain

[Fruitrop.com](#) - Market news site

The sector's news sites are updated daily. They also publish stories about specific companies throughout the sector, producers, exporters, importers, and more. The websites often have search engines and the information is divided into subsectors. This provides easy access to relevant information about importers.

Tips:

- Promote your company with a free publicity article on the mentioned online platforms.
- Source information about buyers, markets and other companies in the sector.
- Keep up to date with sector news.

6 . Participate in European support programmes

There are organisations in Europe that help exporters from overseas with support programmes and or databases. In addition to an extensive range of market studies, the [Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries \(CBI\)](#) in the Netherlands offers export coaching programmes that help you to access the European market. The Swiss Import Promotion Programme ([SIPPO](#)) and the German [Import Promotion Desk](#) (IPD) have similar programmes and can also help you to get in contact with European importers.

Tips:

- Contact export promotion agencies like of [Sippo](#), [IPD](#) and the [CBI](#).
- Apply to join export support programmes in Europe that help companies from overseas.

7 . Comply with buyers' demands and requirements

The number of potential buyers in the European fresh fruit and vegetable sector is diminishing. There is a concentration of buyers who supply fresh fruit and vegetables to European supermarkets. In order to keep them as buyers, you need to comply with their demands.

Tips:

- Have a look at the CBI [buyer requirements study for an overview of market standards](#).
- Read our CBI study on [how to do business in the European fresh fruit and vegetables sector](#).

8 . Be careful who you do business with

Many European companies in the fresh fruits and vegetables sector showed poor results in recent years due to economic decline (numerous economic crises). There is a reduction in the number of relevant distributing importers, and an increasing concentration of large retail chains with strong buying power. This concentration of buying power, combined with the Russian ban on agricultural products imports from the European Union (EU), has affected the rest of the supply chain, putting pressure on both importers and foreign suppliers.

As a result, it is a good idea to find out how financially sound and reliable a buyer is, before doing business with them.

Tips:

- Be careful about who you choose to do business with. Ask around what other people in your sector know about a specific company.
- Choose companies that are reliable and financially sound.
- Study market trends and economic developments at market news platforms such as: [Freshplaza.com](#) (English) and [Freshplaza.es](#) (Spanish) and [Fruitrop Online](#).
- Credit insurance companies and local chambers of commerce may have information, make

use of them.

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).

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