

CBI Tailored Market Intelligence: Tropical Flowers and Foliage from Colombia United Arab Emirates and other Middle East markets

Part 4: Challenges and opportunities for Colombian exporters

The Middle East market is relatively small, particularly compared to major flower consumer regions, such as Europe and North America. Flower sales are growing and, although a niche product, consumers are familiar with tropical flowers and foliage.

The main challenge for Colombian exporters to the Middle East is the high logistics costs from Colombia to the Middle East. While production costs of tropical flowers are comparable to those of Asian producers, the much higher airfreight costs for these voluminous products makes it difficult for Colombian exporters to compete. The CIP price is almost double that for products from Asia.

The price factor is paramount for Middle East traders and competing on price with Asian suppliers is difficult. Colombian growers need to put stronger emphasis on assortment and quality. Currently, tropical flower and foliage assortment from Colombia is not distinguished from competitors in Asia who offer more or less the same products. Furthermore, importers seem unaware of or uninterested in different varieties.

Nevertheless, there is opportunity since buyers are interested in true novelties and specialty products. It is difficult to predict whether Middle East importers are willing to pay sufficient premium for specialty products from Colombia. Bottom line: to succeed in the Middle East market, Colombian exporters will need to distinguish themselves from Asian competition.

Useful Sources

Export and market entry support:

- CBI - <http://www.cbi.eu>
- CBI Market Information - <https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/>
- PROCOLOMBIA - <http://www.procolombia.co>
- Asocolflores - <http://www.asocolflores.org>

Statistics and sector information:

- AIPH - <http://www.aiph.org/>
- Eurostat - <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>
- ITC Trade Map - <http://www.trademap.org/>



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This survey was compiled for CBI by ProVerde
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May 2016