

Title Marketing of cherimoya in the Andes for the benefit of the rural poor and as a tool for agrobiodiversity conservation

Authors W. Vanhove, P. Van Damme

Citation ISHS Acta Horticulturae 806:497-504. 2008.

Keywords *Annona cherimola*; market development; value chain analysis; geographic indication; Cumbe; diversity conservation

Abstract

Cherimoya (*Annona cherimola* Mill.) is an exquisite subtropical fruit, intensively cultivated in Spain, but generally underutilized in the inter-Andean valleys where the species shows high botanical diversity. Economic use of Andean cherimoyas currently remains far below potential levels. In 2006-2007, a cherimoya value chain analysis was performed through a market survey in which structured interviews were made with 172 cherimoya producers and 346 cherimoya traders in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Two main flows of cherimoya were observed in all markets studied. The first flow pertains to locally produced cherimoya fruits that have irregular quality due to high infestation levels of fruit flies. These fruits are inadequately packed and transported, and consequently have a low economic value to both producers and traders. The other flow consists of cherimoyas produced in the Huarochirí province (Lima Department, Peru), commonly known as 'Cumbe', a collective trademark registered by producers from the Cumbe Valley. This trademark which serves as a geographical indication currently lacks appropriate legal protection. Consequently, illegal application of the 'Cumbe'-label is widespread. 'Cumbe' fruits are intensively selected and graded on wholesaler markets in the Lima metropolis and distributed in wooden crates to main markets both within Peru and to its neighboring countries Ecuador and Bolivia. Fruit characterization data show that 'Cumbe' fruits are partly distinctive from other Andean cherimoyas. The value of the collective trademark 'Cumbe' should thus be attributed not only to elite germplasm and appropriate cultivation practices, but also to the intensive selection, grading, and packaging process. As a result of higher product quality, 'Cumbe' cherimoya market prices are up to twice or more of the prices for local cherimoyas. More denominations of origin, locally managed by producer organizations, are valuable tools for both conserving on-farm cherimoya diversity and additional income generation for the rural Andean poor.