

**Title** A strategy to segment the European banana market: label mountain

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### **Abstract**

Banana production is a key economic resource in the French West Indies. It is essential that growers in this region enhance their sales by proposing new products, such as mountain bananas in response to high market competition from other exporting regions where production costs are lower. The quality of mountain banana is officially recognized in Europe on the basis of a real taste difference. All French West Indian bananas grown over 250 masl according to specifications can be sold under the Mountain banana label. Mountain banana features can be assessed via objective data. At harvest, mountain bananas are denser, bulkier and less susceptible to wound anthracnose caused by *Colletotrichum e* than lowland bananas, probably due to their higher mechanical resistance. Sensorial differences have also been documented in ripe bananas. At the same harvest stage and under identical ripening conditions, mountain bananas have a firmer texture, more intense yellowish pulp, and higher sugar and aromatic compound contents. A Jury taste test analysis confirmed the sensorial differences between lowland and mountain bananas. However, mountain bananas presented the poorest contents in Mg, P and Ca, partially due to the nature of soil components. The results of a multi-site study indicated that temperature and rainfall during bunch growth are the main factors that distinguish mountain bananas.