

European market environment for selected Latin American tropical fruit species

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Abstract

Numerous tropical fruit species are commercially restricted to their production areas and only sold on local, regional and national markets. They are virtually unknown to temperate area consumers. However, growing demand in Europe for natural, nutritious and healthy products and new flavours offers interesting perspectives for creating new and international market outlets for novel tropical fruit juices. Five tropical fruit species from Latin America (i.e., açai (*Euterpe oleracea* Mart.), camu camu (*Myrciaria dubia* (Kunth) McVaugh), cashew apple (*Anacardium occidentale* L.) from Brazil, and naranjilla (*Solanum quitoense* Lam.) and tree tomato (*Solanum betaceum* Cav.) from Ecuador) were selected as case species for a SWOT analysis. Through desk research, field visits and expert interviews, opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses related to the fruits' potential use in the European fruit juice industry were investigated. Findings indicate that tropical fruit species with outstanding nutritional values and proven health benefits have substantial market potential. Lack of advanced knowledge about production and processing issues, inconsistent fruit quality, irregular and insufficient fruit supply, and unfamiliarity with the respective fruits and their sensory characteristics by European consumers are the main challenges that have to be dealt with when envisaging product development for the European market.