

Title Horticultural crop quality characteristics important in international trade
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Abstract

Significant increases have occurred in the volume and value of horticultural crops involved in international trade. Many lesser-developed countries have prioritized high-valued non-traditional crops (i.e. fruits, vegetables, and floricultural crops) as an integral part of their nationwide economic development plan. Buyers and consumers in the principal importing nations require consistent supplies of high quality products. Proper external and internal quality characteristics must be met, which may vary depending on the market destination. Color, texture, size, and flavor continue to be the predominant quality characteristics important for successful international marketing of horticultural crops. Product nutraceutical value is also a quality characteristic playing a significantly more important role among consumers in making purchasing decisions. Significant shifts in fruit and vegetable crop demand have recently occurred based on product quality characteristics. Examples include the shift in demand from Smooth Cayenne pineapple to the sweeter, more attractively colored MD-2 cultivar, easy-peel seedless citrus fruit, high skin blush low fiber mangoes, higher internal colored papayas and grapefruit, uniquely-flavored apples, high antioxidant containing berries, sweet onions, and fresh-cut pre-packaged shelf-ready fruits and vegetables. Innovations in product presentation and convenience will continue to play a significant role in export marketing of horticultural crops. New and unique product colors, flavors, and textures will continue to attract consumer interest and create international market opportunities.