Avocados

Timing
The market is supplied throughout the year by the major suppliers:

Israel:	September-April
South Africa:	April-October
United States:	November-July
Kenya:	May-September

There is some evidence of price peaks at the changeover period between Israeli and South African supplies, ie March/April and September/ October, but this cannot be relied upon. Demand tends to be higher during the summer months, when more salad foods are eaten, so offers a more secure market than winter months, when prices can fluctuate. This period also offers greater prospects, due to some retailers' preference for fruit from an origin other than South Africa.

Average prices during 1988 for avocados were 540 pence per 4 kg carton, with a low of 390 pence during July and highs of 690 and 730 pence in March and October respectively. (See Appendix 4 for an approximate percentage breakdown of costs incurred before the produce reaches this stage of the market.)

Market Trends
Opinion within the trade is fairly confident as to the prospects for market expansion for avocados. The UK market already stands at around £30 million, representing the highest value market of fruits examined in this publication. At the moment, average consumption in the UK is only one avocado per person per annum and this is after a trebling of imports to around 15,000 tonnes per annum over the last ten years. The indications are that the upward trend will continue. Recent problems with the Israeli crop, as a result of changing weather patterns over the past two seasons, have encouraged importers to diversify their sources, which has expanded the opportunities available to new exporters. However, tropical exporting countries should be aware of competitors, such as Spain, which, as a member of the EEC, is likely to gain most from increased demand during its season.

Mangoes

Timing

Supplies on the market are greatest in the months of April to August, with a number of countries exporting at that time:

Mexico:	February-September (peak May-August)
Brazil:	all year, peaking October-December
Venezuela:	February-August (peak April-June)
India:	February-December (peak April-June)
Pakistan:	October-August (peak June-July)

There is a lull in supplies in October and November, and the period between January and April is not well supplied either. Prices for mangoes appear to peak in October/November, the rest of the year remaining fairly stable. The average price in 1988 was 730 pence per carton (4-4.5 kg), but rose to 920 pence in November.

Market Trends

Imports of mangoes into the UK have risen consistently during the 1980's and are standing at over 9,000 tonnes per annum (this includes guavas and mangosteens, which are grouped with mangoes in the trade statistics). Countries already producing the fibreless varieties and sea freighting have the best prospects of meeting the lower price, which the trade sees as a requirement for expansion in this market. Those currently able to do so are Brazil, Peru and Israel.

Pineapples

Timing

Supplies are available throughout the year, but the Ivory Coast, which has 80% of the market, has low output during the wet season (June-August) and a peak production period during October-January. Prices do not appear to fall during this period, because the Christmas season is also a period of peak demand. In 1988 the average annual price of fruit at New Covent Garden Market was 105 pence per pineapple, with higher prices in September, October and November. Analysis of previous years' prices, however, does not indicate that this increase is a normal trend and is more likely to be a result of the production problems which the Ivory Coast was experiencing. This led to shortages on the market and has opened opportunities in the market for other supplying countries. Averaging the prices also disguises the substantial difference between grades of pineapple: Grade A ranged between 100 and 160 pence, while Grade D ranged from 45 to 100 pence.

Market Trends

Imports have been increasing over the last ten years, though there was a decline during 1984. Imports are now around 20,000 tonnes per annum. This level is expected to continue, at minimum, though many in the trade are very optimistic about expansion. The optimism has been encouraged by the recent upward trend in popularity of the larger (Grade A and B) pineapples for the household. These sizes were previously only in demand by the catering trade.

Papayas

Timing

Brazil supplies all year, dominating imports at about 90% of the total. Although there are not any apparent gaps in the market, the trade is keen to find alternative sources for papayas, in order to reduce reliance on one supplying country. The average price in 1988 was 660 pence per 4 kg box, but this is based on a fairly small sample of papayas, with fluctuating prices, since papayas are still not in regular supply.

Market Trends

Although imports of papaya have grown from virtually nothing over the last ten years, there are still only around 1,000 tonnes per annum imported into the UK. Retailers give the impression that the market is already expanding quite rapidly and they are certainly interested in identifying new sources of supply.

Passion fruit

Timing

Passion fruit are available all year round on the market and there are no visible gaps in supply. The average price per carton (40-48 fruit) was 500 pence during 1988, with no major fluctuations. However, prices have tended to be lower in the months of December-January and June-August.

Market Trends

It is not possible to be specific on the quantities of passion fruit being imported into the UK, as they come under the classification "other fresh berries". Around 300 tonnes are being imported annually under this heading, but as imports of the other categories (cherimoya and physalis) are not very large, this can be considered a reasonable estimate for passion fruit imports. The value of the passion fruit market is estimated at around £1 million. Retailers feel that there are opportunities for expansion, particularly if educational promotion campaigns were to be carried out to help overcome consumer resistance to a 'wrinkled' fruit.