Market requirements

Varieties: Varietal choice is important, as harvest costs are minimised with multi-noded plant; growing conditions must be suited to the particular variety

Standards: The EEC has set common quality standards for beans, which include mangetout. All beans must be:

- whole
- sound
- fresh in appearance
- clean, in particular free from residues, including traces of chemicals
- free from foreign smell or taste
- free from abnormal external moisture

To qualify as Class I, mangetout must be:

- of good quality
- characteristic of the variety in colour, shape and size
- young and tender such that they can be easily broken in the hand
- seeds must be small and tender and pods must be closed
- stringless
- free from blemish

Traces of wind damage are allowed.

To qualify for Grade II, mangetout must be:

- of marketable quality
- reasonably young and tender

(continued)

- seeds may be larger than in Class I, but the pod must be tender
- free from disease and frost damage

The following are allowed:

- slight wind damage
- minor superficial blemish
- strings

Quality tolerances allowed are 10% by weight: for Class I not satisfying Class requirements, but within Class II; and for Class II not satisfying minimum requirements, but fit for human consumption.

Size: 7-10 cm, 2 cm width

Shape: Flat, with peas just showing. Straight, with very small stem.

Colour: Pale green

Ripeness: Should snap in hand

Taste & Texture: Juicy, crunchy, sweet

Getting to market

Harvesting, Handling and Storage

Mangetout must be hand-picked, leaving a short piece of stem on the pod. They must be picked at the particular size required by the buyer and so pickers usually carry a measuring stick for precision. They must be pre-cooled and are transported at 1-2ºC and at a relative humidity of 95-100%.

Packaging

Mangetout are usually sold to the consumer in PVC overwrapped trays, either packaged at source or on arrival. If they are not pre-packed at source, then waxed 5lb cardboard boxes, well ventilated, are the preferred type of packaging.

Produce information must be presented on the labelling as follows:

- country of origin
- produce indication, if not visible
- class
- net weight

It is also advisable to include:

- packer and/or dispatcher
- grower
- date of packing
- size

Handling information can also be displayed, giving temperature guidance, fragile and side-up symbols.

Branding and Promotion

There is little branding in the mangetout market, but some developing country private sector growers have been promoting their produce in terms of its country of origin. Some multiples are open to considering in-store promotions.

Import Regulations

Mangetout come under tariff heading 0708 90 and tariffs in force are the following:

Full rate:	14%
GSP countries:	Full rate
ACP countries:	Free
Turkey:	Free

In order to receive preferential tariff treatment, produce must be accompanied by the appropriate forms: EUR 1 for ACP countries or Form A for GSP or LDDC. Certain hygiene standards must be met and all fresh produce entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitory certificate (see Appendix 1).

(continued)

When to sell

Timing

Kenya and Zambia, two of the major suppliers to the UK, ship all year round and Guatemala, another dominant supplier, ships outside the UK production months, from January to July and from September to December. Other supplies are available as follows:

Ecuador:	July-August
France:	May-June
Nigeria:	November-February
Peru:	August-September
Spain:	January-April
Zimbabwe:	June-October

There is no significant gap in the market, though more difficulty is experienced in sourcing in winter months.

Wholesale prices have averaged 260 pence per kg during 1989/90, with no marked seasonal variation, though prices were slightly lower in July/August.

Market Trends

The market for mangetout has shown fast development over the last few years and is now estimated to represent about £5 million at retail value. The trade expects growth to continue, but at a slower pace. However, competition from existing market suppliers is strong, making this a difficult market for new entrants.