

# **Guidelines for exporters of selected vegetables to the UK market**



Prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat's  
Export Market Development Division and funded by the  
Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation

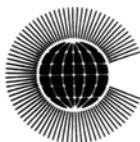


**Commonwealth Secretariat**

# **Guidelines for exporters of selected vegetables to the UK market**

Prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat's Export  
Market Development Division and funded by  
the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation

This is one of a series of publications providing practical  
guidelines on exporting for the benefit of  
Commonwealth producers



**Commonwealth Secretariat**

---

# Contents

---

	<b>Page</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	3-4
<b>ASPARAGUS</b> .....	5-9
<b>AUBERGINE</b> .....	10-14
<b>BABYCORN</b> .....	15-16
<b>CAPSICUM (SWEET PEPPER)</b> .....	17-21
<b>CHERRY TOMATOES</b> .....	22-25
<b>CHILLIES</b> .....	26-28
<b>CHRISTOPHENE (CHO CHO)</b> .....	29-31
<b>COURGETTES (ZUCCHINI)</b> .....	32-36
<b>MANGETOUT</b> .....	37-40
<b>OKRA (LADIES' FINGERS)</b> .....	41-43
<b>MARKET CHANNELS</b> .....	44-47
<b><u>APPENDICES</u></b>	
<b>APPENDIX 1 - IMPORT LEGISLATION</b> .....	48-50
Preferential Tariff Documentation .....	48
ACP Exports .....	48
GSP and LDCC Exports.....	49
Customs Entry .....	49
Reference Price System .....	49
Health and Hygiene Legislation .....	49
<b>APPENDIX 2 - CONTACTS IN THE MARKET</b> .....	51-54
Major Multiples (Supermarkets) .....	51-52
Wholesalers/Importers .....	52-54
Packaging Suppliers .....	54
<b>APPENDIX 3 - TRANSPORTATION AND PACKAGING</b> .....	55-59
Transport .....	55
Packaging .....	56
<b>APPENDIX 4 - MARKETING COSTS</b> .....	60-62
<b>APPENDIX 5 - USEFUL ADDRESSES</b> .....	63-64

---

## Introduction

---

These guidelines are designed to address the basic questions which exporters of asparagus, aubergine, babycorn, capsicum, cherry tomato, chillies, christophene, courgette, mangetout and okra need answered before they try to venture into the UK market: WHAT, HOW, WHERE and WHEN?

Entrepreneurs should have the answers to these four questions before they invest time and money in an enterprise which relies on selling in an export market. It is essential that they have detailed information and are sure that conditions on all aspects of market requirements are satisfied prior to despatching any exports.

This booklet is the second in a series aiming to provide practical information in an easy-reference format to help anyone in the business, or wishing to enter it, research the market and make contacts before developing or investing in an export-oriented enterprise. The changing nature of the UK market has made it even more vital for the exporter to have the hard facts. The increasing importance of the larger supermarkets (often referred to as multiples), with their strict specifications for all fresh produce, means that exporters have to be prepared to meet these requirements if they are to succeed in the market.

The Export Market Development Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat decided to prepare this series of guidelines in view of the many requests received from potential exporters or existing exporting countries for information on the fresh produce market. The first in the series, on exotic fruits, is reported to have proved useful to a number of Commonwealth exporters, and the information in this booklet should similarly help exporters of vegetables to reach the stage where they are ready to ship produce to the market.

The choice of vegetables to be included was made on the basis of a number of criteria. Obviously important is that they are or could be grown in a number of Commonwealth countries with an interest in exporting them. Certain vegetables which could not readily be grown all year round in Europe were selected, as developing countries may have the chance of gaining a niche in the market with off-seasonal vegetables.

Demand is being influenced by the more cosmopolitan tastes of the British consumer, the healthier and more adventurous eating habits being adopted, and the improved access to the market for foreign produce, both logistically and in terms of the gain of the supermarket share of fresh produce sales, and their interest in promoting more "exotic" vegetables. Also being promoted with some success are mini or bite-sized vegetables, again a response to consumer tastes seeking the unusual. Thus two further categories have been included in the analysis: mini-vegetables and exotic vegetables.

(continued)

---

## Introduction

---

Categorisation is always problematic, since growing techniques can be adapted in such a way that it may no longer be correct to term a vegetable off-seasonal, and there is a point at which exotic vegetables become sufficiently well known in the market to be considered as regular vegetables. Using these broad categorisations, however, the following vegetables are included:

- off-seasonal vegetables: asparagus, aubergine, capsicum, courgette, mangetout;
- mini-vegetables: babycorn, cherry tomatoes;
- exotic vegetables: chillies, christophene, okra.

A separate chapter is devoted to each of these vegetables, and within each chapter there are three sections on **Market Requirements**, **Getting to Market** and **When to Sell**. A final chapter details where to send vegetables, since the market channels for all the vegetables are the same.

**Market Requirements** details what the market wants and describes the type and condition of vegetables demanded by the buyers in the market. These guideline specifications, which change over time, are those required at receipt by importer, unless otherwise stated. It is essential that prospective exporters agree precise specifications before shipping, since each buyer can have slightly different requirements.

**Getting to Market** describes how the exporter gets vegetables to the UK market, beginning at the picking stage, the first active phase of the marketing chain. The intention is to concentrate on the marketing of vegetables and not with production details, but the grower, as well as the exporter, should be able to profit from the information in this publication. The market should guide the grower in terms of what crop to grow, in what quantities, and what production techniques to use. Some major buyers are realising this and are working directly with growers to ensure their produce supply matches requirements exactly, rather than relying on intermediaries, such as export agents. In some cases the multiples are also using their UK grower/supplier as an adviser and intermediary working with potential developing country suppliers. The latter then benefit from technical advice in addition to having a more secure market arrangement, since the UK supplier can deal with any difficulties on receipt of produce at the UK port of arrival and with pre-packing and labelling.

**When to Sell** details any market seasonality which can affect prices, so that the exporter can time the arrival of the vegetables on to the market when prices are highest. It also gives a brief synopsis of market trends.

---

## Asparagus

---



### Market requirements

**Varieties:** Most popular - green

Less popular - white or purple

Preferred varieties are Sito, Limbras, UC157, UC72, UC66, Jersey Giant or hybrids derived from these. It is of the utmost importance to select varieties meeting market requirements and the soil type on which they are to be grown.

**Standards:** The EEC has minimum quality standards for asparagus.

Shoots must be:

- whole
- fresh in appearance
- sound
- free from damage by rodents or insects
- practically unbruised
- clean, i.e. practically free from earth or any other dirt
- free from any undue external moisture
- free from foreign smell or taste.

The cut at the base of the shoots must be as clean and as square as possible. Shoots must not be hollow, split, peeled or broken.

Three classes are defined with specifications over and above the minimum standards: Extra, Class I and Class II.

Commercial specifications use these as a basis for further defining the buyers' own requirements. Multiples are unlikely to buy below Class I.

(continued)

---

# Asparagus

---

**Size:** By length- long asparagus: 17-22cm  
- short asparagus:12-17cm  
- Class II, bulk:12-22cm  
- asparagus tips: under 12cm

Green asparagus can be 27 cm, provided at least one third of the length is green. Buyers for the retail market prefer 90% to be green, however.

By diameter: measured at mid-point of length  
Extra Class: minimum 12 mm, average 12-16 mm,  
larger preferred, maximum variation in  
package 8 mm

Class I: minimum 10 mm, average 10-16 mm,  
maximum variation 10 mm

Class II: minimum 10 mm

A size tolerance of 10% is allowed to a maximum deviation of 1 cm in length and 2 mm in diameter

The catering trade demands the largest size of asparagus in terms of length and diameter, whereas retailers buy different categories, as Extra Class Long, Shorter Extra or Class I for chopping and mini asparagus.

Multiples tend to prefer Extra Class diameters.

**Shape:** Well formed with upright stems  
Extra Class: straight  
Class I: slightly curved  
Class II: may be more curved and have less compact tips

Retailers prefer shoots not to be tapering from a wide base.

**Colour:** Green is preferred with minimum white base on shoot

**Ripeness:** Tips compact (seeds tight)

**Taste &  
Texture:** Firm, not stringy; “woodiness” must be minimal

---

# Asparagus

---

## Getting to market

### Harvesting, Handling and Storage

Asparagus is very perishable and needs careful handling. It must be handpicked and cut with a sharp knife horizontally at its base, either at ground level or slightly below. Cutting should be on a daily basis, although some hybrid varieties allow less frequent cutting. The spears can be washed to remove soil and dirt, but this must be in clean, potable water and they must be dried completely before packing. Pre-cooling is essential and the ideal temperature for transport and storage is 2°C.

Asparagus can be kept fresh for a period of 2-3 weeks around this temperature. Below this, chilling damage is likely to occur and will certainly occur at temperatures below freezing, while above 4°C freshness will not be maintained. In addition, the relative humidity should be kept at a minimum of 95%. Asparagus must not be stored with produce which gives off ethylene (such as passion fruit).

### Packaging

Asparagus can be flat packed or upright, which maintains stem straightness and is more popular for importers planning to sell to caterers or to consumer pack on receipt. If flat packed, it should be shipped in corrugated fibreboard boxes or wooden trays, with ventilation, in quantities of 5/6 kg. Flat packed asparagus is normally already consumer packed, in bundles, in plastic, or in overwrapped trays. Upright asparagus is normally sent in bulk in quantities of 5/6 kg in wooden, waxed fibreboard or corrugated fibreboard boxes (the latter must have lining to strengthen the box) of a trapezoidal shape (in the form of the lower half of a pyramid) length 28 cm at the bottom, 23 cm at the top, width 23 cm and height 27 cm. A wet paper layer may be stacked at the bottom of the box in order to keep the stems moist.

EEC standards require that there be uniformity of quality, size and colour in each bundle or package. If bundled, it should be firmly bound in amounts of 500 grams, 1 or 2 kg and be of uniform length. The bundles in one box should be of the same weight and length. Each package must display:

- the identification of the packer or dispatcher
- the nature of the produce
- the origin of produce (at least the country)
- produce indication, if produce not visible, ie:
  - Asparagus - Green
  - Asparagus - White
  - Asparagus - Violet } followed by short or tips, as appropriate
- commercial specifications, ie class, net weight and size

(continued)

---

# Asparagus

---

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

Multiples normally sell asparagus in plastic tray punnets or overwrapped with microperforated PVC film.

## Branding and Promotion

Asparagus is grown in the UK and the Asparagus Growers' Association promotes British asparagus. The USA, as a major supplier to the UK market, also funds promotion, sometimes on an in-store basis. Multiples are willing to carry out in-store promotions, in co-operation with a supplier, even at short notice, if a grower knows that he has good quality and sufficient quantities available for the market in a particular week. As a basic form of promotion it is advisable to use good quality packaging, with name and origin clearly displayed. It is mandatory to display:

- country of origin
- produce indication (if not visible in packaging)
- class

and it is also advisable to include (mandatory for EEC and Mediterranean countries) the following information on the pack:

- net weight
- size
- date of packing
- name of packer and/or dispatcher
- name of grower

## Import regulations

Asparagus comes under tariff heading 0709 20.00 and tariffs are those in force for the EEC:

	<b>1 Mar- 14 Aug</b>	<b>1 Feb- 28 Feb</b>	<b>1 Oct- 31 Jan</b>	<b>1 Oct- 31 Oct</b>	<b>15 Aug- 30 Sept</b>	<b>1 Nov- 28 Feb</b>
<b>Full tariff:</b>	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%
<b>GSP countries:</b>	16%	16%	12%		16%	
<b>Morocco:</b>	16%			16%	16%	8.7%
<b>Cyprus:</b>	16%			16%	16%	11.6%
<b>Turkey:</b>	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
<b>ACP countries:</b>	16%	16%	9.6%		9.6%	
<b>Least developed developing countries (LDDC):</b>	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%

---

# Asparagus

---

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 countries. No other import regulations apply. Certain hygiene standards must be met and all fresh produce entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitary certificate (see Appendix 1).

## When to sell

### Timing

Domestic production is available on the market from April to June and the UK supplies about 30% of estimated total asparagus sales. The USA is the next major supplier (also around 30%), from January to July, followed by Spain (10%) from March to mid-June. Chile is emerging as a strong supplier during September to early December and has overtaken Mexico as the fourth largest supplier in the market. Mexico is able to supply year-round, but imports slacken during the peak UK production. Other non-EEC suppliers of less significance are Australia, Argentina, Canada, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Israel, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa, Thailand, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe. There are two gaps in the market, which the newer entrants are trying to fill, in December/January and from July to the end of August.

The average wholesale price for asparagus during 1989/90 was 448 pence per kg, with a high of over 700 pence in December/January and a low of 230 pence in June. Prices do tend to be low in May/June when UK production is on the market, and are highest when the two seasonal gaps appear. An indication is provided of margins and costs in Appendix 4.

### Market Trends

The UK market for asparagus has grown by over 300% in volume terms over the last decade and shows every sign of continuing to grow. It is a high value crop, with an estimated annual retail sales value of over £10 million. Likely to remain a stable favourite with the catering trade, it is the retail market that is forecast to show strongest growth. Some multiples are also keen to sell the extra fine "mini" asparagus shoots, so this may prove to be a growth market. The USA is trying to expand its share of imports, and is allocating resources to promote this, so other suppliers may see better results in trying to meet the gaps in December and August, outside the US supplying season.

---

## Aubergine

---



### Market requirements

**Varieties:** The main market is for dark purple Florida varieties, two popular ones being Long Purple and Black Beauty.

There is a smaller ethnic market for small, thin purple type (raviya). White and yellow are also being introduced.

**Standards:** EEC minimum standard requirements stipulate all aubergines must be:

- whole
- fresh in appearance
- firm
- sound (produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded)
- clean, and practically free of any visible foreign matter
- provided with calyx and peduncle which may be slightly damaged
- sufficiently developed, without their flesh being fibrous or woody and without overdevelopment of seeds
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste

Three classes are defined for aubergines: Classes I, II and III (though the latter can be suspended under EEC regulations).

---

## Aubergine

---

Class I must be of good quality and practically free of sunburn. They may show slight:

- defect of shape
- discolouration at base
- bruising and/or healed cracks of not more than 3 cm<sup>2</sup>

Class II may show:

- defects of shape
- defects of colouring
- slight sun-scorch or dry superficial defect, but not more than 4 cm<sup>2</sup>

Class III may:

- be slightly fibrous
- show considerable seed development
- show sun-scorch or superficial defects, but not more than 6 cm<sup>2</sup>

- Size:** 175-300 gm per fruit: 200 gm is the most popular  
Long Purple: 25 cm length  
8 cm diameter  
Black Beauty: 12.5 cm length  
9 cm diameter  
EEC minimum diameters are:  
40 mm for long, maximum variation 20 mm  
70 mm for global, maximum variation 25 mm  
EEC minimum weight is 100 grams  
Size tolerance of 10% allowed, providing:  
Class I: still conforms to size immediately above or below that specified  
Class II & III: not conforming to minimum size  
Raviya: 20-30 cm length
- Shape:** Black Beauty regular oval and undamaged, with green calyx intact  
Long Purple can be less ovular
- Colour:** Deep purple or black and shiny, waxy skin  
White should be creamy
- Ripeness:** Developed and firm, without flesh being fibrous or woody or containing developed seeds
- Taste & Texture:** Firm pulp, not woody

(continued)

---

# Aubergine

---

## Getting to market

### Handling and Storage

Aubergines can be stored for up to 10 days, but they must be kept at a temperature of around 8-10°C: the vegetable will deteriorate at temperatures above and below this. Relative humidity should be maintained at between 90 and 95%.

### Packaging

Aubergines, particularly the Long Purple variety, are preferably packed in two layers in 5/6 kg cartons with a full lid. Black Beauties may be jumble packed, providing they are size graded, though the trade tends to prefer layered produce, for better presentation.

Information which must be printed on the package “produce short side” is:

- origin - country is mandatory, more detail is optional
- produce indication is mandatory if the contents are not visible
- trade specifications, class, weight, count and size.

Handling information can also be displayed, giving temperature range, fragile symbol and side-up symbol.

### Branding and Promotion

Branding is not a major feature in the aubergine market, though the Dutch and the Cypriots have carried out some promotion of aubergines. The Netherlands target their promotion of specific crops on an annual basis, according to crop supply, crop innovations, such as the introduction of new colours, and the movement of produce on the market. Aubergines are also included when Dutch vegetables are promoted in general. Multiples are usually willing to consider in-store promotions in co-operation with a supplier. As a minimum for promotion, it is important that produce is clearly labelled, the packaging looks attractive and the origin is clearly displayed, if repeat orders are to be obtained.

It is mandatory to label produce by:

- country of origin
- as aubergine, if not visible
- class
- net weight
- count

## Aubergine

and advisable (mandatory for EEC and Mediterranean countries) to include:

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

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

### Import Regulations

Aubergines come under tariff number 0709 30 00 and tariffs are as follows:

	<b>1 Jan- 14 Jan</b>	<b>15 Jan- 31 Mar</b>	<b>1 Apr- 30 Apr</b>	<b>1 May- 30 Nov</b>	<b>1 Oct- 30 Nov</b>	<b>1 Dec- 31 Dec</b>
<b>Full tariff:</b>	16%	16%	16%	16%		16%
<b>GSP countries:</b>	9%	9%	16%	16%		16%
<b>Canary Islands:</b>	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%		5.6%
<b>Israel:</b>	16%	5.6%	5.6%	16%		16%
<b>Least developed developing countries (LDDC):</b>	Free	Free	Free	Free		Free
<b>ACP countries:</b>	Free	Free	Free	Free		Free
<b>Turkey:</b>	9%	Free	Free	16%		16%
<b>Jordan:</b>	16%	6.4%	6.4%	16%		16%
<b>Algeria, Tunisia Morocco:</b>	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%	16%		16%
<b>Cyprus*:</b>	4.6%	4.6%	4.6%	16%	except 5.2%	4.6%

*\* Subject to quota during 1 October to 30 November*

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 countries or least developed developing countries (LDDC). However, aubergines are also governed by the reference price system from 1 April to 31 October, through which a compensatory tax is levied on produce if CIF prices are below the price set seasonally (or for part of a season) by the EEC. Certain hygiene standards must be met and all fresh produce entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitary certificate (See Appendix 1).

---

# Aubergine

---

## When to sell

### Timing

The market is well supplied in the summer months by European suppliers including France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK itself. However, Cyprus also exports to the UK from May to November. Other suppliers, mainly exporting during the off-season winter months, are:

<b>Canary Islands:</b>	January-June
<b>The Gambia:</b>	November-December
<b>Israel:</b>	October-March
<b>Jamaica:</b>	all year, to fill gaps
<b>Jordan:</b>	December-January
<b>Kenya:</b>	all year

Bangladesh, Ghana, Pakistan and Zambia are other Commonwealth countries which have supplied the market.

The winter months of December-February, outside the Netherlands supplying period, have better prospects for exporters, as buyers are keen to source high quality aubergines in reasonable quantities then. Current winter sources of supply are either of poor quality, or insufficient quantity to satisfy demand. Wholesale prices reflect the seasonality of the market, with higher prices being quoted December/January/February. While the average annual price was 126pence per kg in 1988/89, it went up to 240 pence per kg in February and below 80 pence in August.

### Market Trends

Imports of aubergines have shown a 20% increase in volume over the last ten years, although they fell back slightly from a peak in 1985. Annual market value is estimated at £8 million. Trade opinion is that the upward trend in consumption will continue, but that new exporters would have problems competing with high quality produce coming from the Netherlands in the summer. There is greater opportunity during the winter months, when buyers have been unhappy with the quality of supply received from their traditional sources. There are also year-round opportunities for suppliers of white aubergine and small purple aubergine (raviya), which are gradually being introduced in the mainstream market.

---

## Babycorn

---



### Market requirements

- Varieties:** Not relevant
- Size:** 1 cm diameter, 6-7 cm length
- Shape:** Regular, smooth grains and clean cut
- Colour:** Pale yellow or creamy white
- Ripeness:** Firm not rubbery, easily snapped
- Taste & Texture:** Crunchy texture, sweet

### Getting to market

#### Harvesting, Handling and Storage

Babycorn have to be hand-picked and hand-peeled to remove the husks. They must be picked young and be easily snapped by hand. They should be kept cool throughout transport and storage at between 7 and 10°C and at a relative humidity of 95-100%.

#### Packaging

Babycorn are usually shipped pre-packed in 250 gram PVC overwrapped trays, sent 8 in one 2 kg carton, or in 6 oz packs, 6 to a carton. They must be labelled:

- by origin
- as babycorn, if contents not visible
- by date of packing
- by weight

It is also advisable to display handling information, giving temperature range, fragile and side-up symbols.

(continued)

## **Branding and Promotion**

Thailand is the dominant supplier in the market and has promoted babycorn as Thai produce. Branding is not an important feature of the market. It would be advisable for new suppliers to promote their produce on a national basis, in order to promote the image of babycorn as being available from destinations other than Thailand. Attractive packaging and labelling are essential.

## **Import Regulations**

Babycorn come under tariff number 0709 90 60, which covers sweetcorn, but the tariff of 9%, previously in force for the EEC, has been made obsolete by levies, which can be applied when the market is considered over-supplied. However, they have not been applied to babycorn to date. Certain hygiene standards must be met and all fresh produce entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitary certificate (see Appendix 1).

## **When to sell**

### **Timing**

There is no seasonality to imports of babycorn, with supplies coming from Guatemala, South Africa, Thailand, Zambia and Zimbabwe year-round. Those from Thailand dominate. Demand also appears to be strong year-round, leaving no particular gaps or gluts in the market. Wholesale prices averaged 305 pence per kg, sold either in 2kg packs or 12 x 150 grams pre-packed, with very little price variation over the year 1989/90. Thai babycorn usually commanded a higher price for its quality.

### **Market Trends**

While there are no seasonal gaps, demand is rising rapidly and importers are keen to source new supplies. Currently, it is estimated that around 300 tons are being imported per annum (they are not recorded separately in trade statistics), and forecasters expect this to double within two years. Babycorn are popular in the catering trade and consumers find them easy to prepare, for use in salads, in stir fry cooking, which is growing in popularity, and as a more traditional side vegetable.

---

## Capsicum (sweet pepper)

---



### Market requirements

**Varieties:** Most popular: Californian Wonder  
Also popular: Florida Highbush

**Standards:** EEC regulations stipulate the following standards for sweet peppers of the cultivars grown from *Capsicum annum* L.:

- whole
- fresh in appearance
- sound (produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for human consumption is excluded)
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter
- well-developed
- free of damage caused by frost
- free of unhealed injuries
- free of sun-scorch (Class II allows sun-scorch or healed injuries not exceeding 1 cm<sup>2</sup> or 2 cm in length)
- with their stalk
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of foreign smell and/or taste



Over and above these requirements, Class I must be:

- firm
- of the normal shape, development and colouring for the variety, with due regard to the degree of ripeness
- with their stalk, which may be slightly damaged or cut, provided the calyx is intact
- virtually free of blemishes

(continued)

---

## Capsicum (sweet pepper)

---

Class II may show the following defects:

- shape and development
- sun-scorch and healed injury
- slight dry superficial cracks not exceeding an overall cumulative length of 3cm
- less firmness, without being withered

**Size:** A variety of sizes are sold in the UK, with each buyer defining requirements in detail. The catering trade prefers an average 80mm. The EEC lays down minimum sizes: for Class I the width of sweet peppers may not be less than:

- elongated sweet peppers (tapering): 30mm
- square blunt sweet peppers: 50mm
- square tapering sweet peppers (peg top): 40mm
- flattened sweet peppers (tomato): 55mm

For sized sweet peppers, the difference in diameter between the largest and smallest sweet pepper in the same package may not exceed 20mm. Tolerances of 10% of weight or numbers of peppers not conforming to the sizes within a margin of +/-5mm, including not more than 5% below the minimum size.

For Class II sizing is not compulsory, providing minimum sizes are observed. For sized peppers, tolerances are defined as for Class I, but for unsized peppers, 5% by number or weight are allowed to be up to 5mm smaller than the minimum size laid down.

**Shape:** Variety of shapes acceptable, but must be uniform, with stalk, and intact calyx.

**Colour:** Red, green or yellow, free of blemish.  
Green is the most common but red is becoming increasingly popular

**Ripeness:** Firm with no withering

**Taste &  
Texture:** Firm, crunchy, juicy

---

## **Capsicum (sweet pepper)**

---

### **Getting to market**

#### **Harvesting, Handling and Storage**

If capsicum are to be sold as green sweet peppers, they should be picked at a specific point in their development, when the fruit changes from a matt, wrinkled appearance to being darker green and shiny. If picked prior to this point, they do not travel well. If left beyond this stage, they are best left on the plant until a fairly uniform red, which occurs over a period of up to six weeks. They can then be sold as red sweet peppers. They can be hand-picked, breaking the stalk from the stem, or cut with a knife, scissors or secateurs. Care should be taken not to break the stem, which tends to be more brittle in the early morning, so picking at this time should be avoided. Plants should be picked over once or twice a week, when the weather is cool and dry.

Capsicum should be cooled quickly to reduce field heat, in a situation with good air circulation. They should be transported and stored at temperatures of 7-9°C for green peppers and 4-6°C for red peppers, with relative humidity of 90-95%. In ideal conditions, peppers can be kept for between 10 and 30 days, though this varies between cultivars, with California Wonder having a maximum storage time of 14 days and Danube one of between 20 and 25 days.

#### **Packaging**

For import, the preference is for jumble packed (loose) capsicums in 5/6kg boxes, ventilated and with full lids. They may be retailed overwrapped or in bags, though loose is most common. Packing in contact with the capsicum must be new, clean and, if printing or labelling has been used, inks and glue must be non-toxic. Each package must be marked with:

- country of origin
- the nature of the produce if not visible from outside, including the commercial type (shape)
- colour, if not visible
- class
- weight or numbers

It is also advisable to include:

- the name of the distributor and/or packer
- size
- date of packing

(continued)

---

## **Capsicum (sweet pepper)**

---

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

### **Branding and Promotion**

There is little generic promotion, and brand names, although used, do not appear to be important. Capsicum are, however, promoted under the general banner of Dutch vegetables, which have a reputation for excellence in the market, and the Dutch have also been advertising their development of new colours, eight of which are now available. In order to compete with this produce, exports to the UK must match, and be promoted as matching, the quality of Dutch capsicum. Produce should therefore be clearly and attractively labelled.

### **Import Regulations**

Capsicum come under tariff number 0709 60 10 and tariffs in force are as follows:

<b>Full tariff:</b>	9%
<b>GSP countries:</b>	9%
<b>ACP countries:</b>	Free
<b>Turkey:</b>	Free
<b>Least developed developing countries (LDDC):</b>	Free
<b>Canary Islands, Israel:</b>	3.4% (subject to quota)
<b>Morocco, Tunisia:</b>	3.4%
<b>Cyprus:</b>	3.2% (subject to quota)
<b>Malta:</b>	5.4%
<b>Lebanon:</b>	5.4% (full rate 1 May-14 Nov)
<b>Egypt, Jordan:</b>	3.4% (1 Mar-30 Apr and 15 Nov-31 Dec) Full rate other periods

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

---

## **Capsicum (sweet pepper)**

---

### **When to sell**

#### **Timing**

The summer months of May-October are well provided by the European producers, including the UK. The Netherlands provides supplies for two months either side of this. Cyprus also exports to the UK over this period. The Netherlands and Spain are the dominant suppliers, each providing around 40% of the market. There is less competition in the winter months, despite the following exporting to the UK:

<b>Canary Islands:</b>	October-June
<b>Israel:</b>	October-March
<b>Spain:</b>	October-April

Although Spain is a major supplier in terms of overall volumes, there is currently a significant gap in January and February, when buyers are unable to obtain the quality of capsicum desired in sufficient quantities. This applies to both red and green capsicum, but is particularly the case for red capsicum.

Wholesale prices reflect this seasonality, with average wholesale prices for 1989/90 being 126 pence per kg for green peppers and 158 pence per kg for red peppers. Red pepper prices show greater fluctuation than green pepper prices, but on the whole remain higher than those for green peppers. Both went below 90 pence in June/July and have gone as high as 400 pence per kg for red and 220 pence per kg for green in winter months. Usually January/February are the months showing highest prices, but in 1990 prices continued to rise through March and April.

#### **Market Trends**

Capsicum now represent a very large volume market, with annual imports of over 40,000 tons, having grown over 200% in the last decade. Total annual retail value of capsicum sold in the UK is estimated at around £80 million. Capsicum are a very versatile vegetable, important in the catering market and used by consumers in salads, in stir-fry cooking, or stuffed and baked. Some retailers capitalise on particular markets by selling mixed packed vegetables for specific purposes. The main prospects for growth are in the new colours being introduced to the market and for red capsicum sales in winter months.

---

## Cherry tomatoes

---



### Market requirements

**Varieties:** Gardeners' Delight, Cherita and Evita are the most popular; Cherry Wonder is also bought. Growers need to ensure they obtain the most recent European seed varieties: crop development is still under way

**Standards:** The EEC has minimum quality requirements for tomatoes, which also apply to cherry tomatoes. The sizing provisions do not apply, however. Tomatoes must be:

- intact
- fresh-looking
- sound (produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for human consumption is excluded)
- clean, practically free of visible foreign matter
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of foreign smell and/or taste

Four classes are defined: Extra, Classes I, II and III, with Extra requiring superior quality, with no defects, Class I allowing slight defects, and Class II defects including healed cracks of more than 3 cm. However, cherry tomatoes must be of Extra or Class I quality to be accepted on the market

**Size:** Acceptable size ranges from 10 to 30 mm, depending upon variety. 25 to 30 mm is more popular. Uniformity in punnet is essential

**Shape:** Uniform round

---

## Cherry tomatoes

---

**Colour:** Red, though an element of green is acceptable in some varieties  
Yellow is being sold in the summer months

**Ripeness:** Firm, colour 8/9 on the Dutch colour chart, though green is allowed, providing it reaches the store ready to eat

**Taste &**

**Texture:** Sweet, juicy

### Getting to market

#### Harvesting, Handling and Storage

Cherry tomatoes are susceptible to damage and must be hand-picked and handled carefully. They should be pre-cooled and cool chained to the store at between 7 and 8°C, at a relative humidity of 90%. This can extend shelf-life to 14 days maximum, but this is also dependent upon the stage of ripeness at picking, which has to be assessed according to shipment time and buyers' requirements.

#### Packaging

Cherry tomatoes have to be packed at source in order to minimise handling damage. They are usually packed in plastic punnets (Sharpak) of 227 grams, which are packed 12 to a carton before air-freighting. They must be labelled:

- by origin
- with name of packer and/or dispatcher
- as cherry tomatoes and, optionally, by variety
- date of packing
- by class

It is also advisable to include the following handling information on the carton:

- side-up symbol
- fragile symbol
- temperature guidance

#### Branding and Promotion

The Dutch have carried out targetted promotion of cherry tomatoes, under the umbrella of Dutch vegetable promotion. The Spanish also include them

(continued)

---

## Cherry tomatoes

---

in their promotions of fresh produce. Branding is not a major feature of the market. Multiples are willing to consider in-store promotions of cherry tomatoes at short notice, particularly in winter months, when supplies of good quality can be scarce. They welcome an approach from their supplying growers as to when they will be providing high quality cherry tomatoes in quantity.

### Import Regulations

Cherry tomatoes come under the tariff heading for tomatoes, number 0702 00, but this is further divided, as tariffs in force differ over two periods. Tariff number 0702 00 10 covers 1 Nov-14 May and 0702 00 90 covers 15 May-31 Oct and the tariffs in force are as follows:

#### 0702 00 10

<b>Full tariff:</b>	11%(min 2 ECU/1kg)
<b>GSP countries:</b>	Full tariff
<b>ACP countries:</b>	4.4%(min 0.8 ECU) except: Full (1-14 May and 1-14 Nov)
<b>Turkey:</b>	Free
<b>Canary Islands:</b>	3.8%(min 0.7 ECU) except: 1.9%(min 0.3 ECU) 1 Jan-29 Feb 6.5%(min 1.2 ECU) 16 Apr-14 May
<b>Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria:</b>	4.4%(min 0.8 ECU) except: 2.4% (min 0.4 ECU) 1 Jan-29 Feb Full tariff (1-14 May and 1-14 Nov)
<b>Cyprus:</b>	3.2% (min 0.5 ECU) except 4.4% (min 0.8 ECU) 1-31 Dec Full tariff (1-14 May and 1-14 Nov)
<b>Malta:</b>	4.4% (min 0.8 ECU) except: Full tariff (1-14 May and 1 Nov-14 Dec)
<b>Egypt:</b>	2.4% (min 0.4 ECU) 1 Jan-29 Feb 4% (min 0.7 ECU) 1-31Mar and 15-31 Dec 4.4% (min 0.8 ECU) 1-14 Dec Full tariff other periods
<b>Jordan:</b>	2.4% (min 0.8 ECU) 1 Jan-29 Feb 4.4% (min 0.8 ECU) 1-31 Mar and 1-31 Dec Full tariff other periods

#### 0702 00 90

<b>Full tariff:</b>	18% (min 3.5 ECU)
<b>Canary Islands:</b>	6.5 (min 1.2 ECU)
<b>Turkey:</b>	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 LDDC. There are further complications in obtaining preferential tariffs in

---

## Cherry tomatoes

---

that all entries are subject to quota and to the reference price system, through which a compensatory tax is levied on produce if CIF prices are below the price set seasonally (or for part of a season) by the EEC. Certain hygiene standards must be met and all fresh produce entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitary certificate (see Appendix 1).

### When to sell

#### Timing

There is UK production of cherry tomatoes from March to September and Spain, the Canary Islands and Portugal are the major suppliers during winter months. Other suppliers are:

<b>Kenya:</b>	January-April
<b>Morocco:</b>	January-March
<b>Zambia:</b>	May-August
<b>Zimbabwe:</b>	October-February

There is a gap for high quality suppliers from December to the end of February, when buyers are unable to source the flavour and quality they require. Israel is currently trying to enter the market in this period and obtaining very high prices. There is also a winter gap, though the market is on a rather smaller scale, for yellow cherry tomatoes, which no one is offering during this period.

Prices are not as regularly quoted on the wholesale market as for other vegetables, but on the basis of the limited prices quoted in 1989/90 the average was 115 pence per kg, with a range from 50 to 330 pence. Retail prices in the winter months in 1990 have been as high as 415 pence per kg, indicating that the variation is likely to be even higher than that seen in wholesale market quotations. Multiples are keen to negotiate contracts with forward pricing for six weeks or more, in order to obtain guaranteed supplies from a source over a reasonable period. If prices fluctuate to too great an extent, it is difficult to balance supply and demand on the retail market.

#### Market Trends

Cherry tomatoes are not listed separately from tomatoes in the trade statistics, so it is difficult to estimate the quantities coming on to the market. However, trade sources suggest that it must be a minimum of £4 million at retail value and showing strong growth. Quantities sold increased by at least 20% in 1989 over the previous year and are forecast to continue increasing. Although predominantly a salad crop, the cherry tomato is also likely to increase in popularity owing to its importance in catering and as a mini-vegetable suitable for stir-frying.

---

## Chillies

---



### Market requirements

**Varieties:** Numerous varieties for the different types, which include:  
long thin (Fresno and Jellapino varieties are popular)  
hot bonnet (also called lantern)  
short (also called piment)  
bird's eye

**Size:**

long thin	6-8 cm length
short (piment)	3-6 cm length
lantern	2.5 cm diameter (minimum)
bird's eye	1-3 cm length

**Shape:** All with stalk, straight for long chillies, with pointed end, regular preferred

**Colour:** Green for long thin, short and bird's eye red, green or orange for lanterns

**Ripeness:** Firm, must not be withered, with shiny skin

**Taste &**

**Texture:** Hot, juicy

### Getting to market

#### Harvesting, Handling and Storage

Chillies should be cooled immediately after harvesting and stored and transported at 7-10°C, at a relative humidity of 90-95%. This gives an optimum shelf life of 14-21 days.

---

# Chillies

---

## Packaging

Chillies are normally jumble packed (loose) in a 2, 4 or 5 kg carton. Occasionally, baskets of 12.5 kg are shipped and wholesalers may split these into smaller quantities for retailing. Tissue paper may be used to fill the carton and improve presentation. Chillies are mostly pre-packed for sale by multiples, but repacking is organised in the UK. Lanterns are sold in PVC overlaid packs, with 6 or 8 to a pack, long and thin in 4 oz or 250 gram packs, but shorts are sometimes sold loose. No international standards are in force for the quality of chillies, but it is advisable that packaging be labelled by:

- origin
- as chilli (with variety as an option)
- colour
- weight
- date of packing

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

## Branding and Promotion

There is no generic advertising of chillies and they are not branded. Packaging should be attractive and labelling clear, in order to have an impact on the market.

## Import Regulations

Chillies are classified under tariff number 0709 60 99 and tariffs are those in force for the EEC:

<b>Full tariff:</b>	10%
<b>GSP countries:</b>	5%
<b>Least developed developing countries (LDDC):</b>	Free
<b>ACP countries:</b>	Free
<b>Turkey:</b>	Free
<b>Maghreb:</b>	Free
<b>Israel:</b>	7% (15 Nov-30 Apr) Full rate other periods

(continued)

---

## Chillies

---

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 countries or least developed developing countries (LDDC). No other import regulations apply. Certain hygiene standards must be met and all fresh produce entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitary certificate (see Appendix 1).

### When to sell

#### Timing

Chillies are imported all year round, with two of the major suppliers of long, thin chilli, Kenya and Thailand, shipping throughout the year. Kenya also provides short chilli and Thailand bird's eye chilli. Others currently exporting small quantities are able to supply year-round (The Gambia, Jamaica, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, for example), but the remaining significant suppliers ship seasonally, as follows:

<b>Cyprus:</b>	April-November
<b>Israel:</b>	July-February
<b>Mexico:</b>	September-January
<b>Spain:</b>	June-September
<b>Sri Lanka:</b>	June-September

The UK also supplies small quantities in summer months. There can be winter gaps for lantern chillies and occasional shortages of quality produce on the market.

Prices are quoted for "chillies", often making no distinction between the different types, so these can only be used as a rough guide. During 1989/90 they averaged 205 pence per kg and there was little seasonal variation, though prices have been on an upward trend over the year.

#### Market Trends

Imports of chillies are estimated at around 3,000 tons per annum, and have grown gradually over the last decade. The trade expects growth to continue, albeit at a low rate, because of the relatively small volumes used by consumers in any dish. Lantern peppers appear to be growing in popularity and may provide the best prospects for expansion.

---

## Christophene (cho cho)

---



### Market requirements

**Varieties:** Also known as cho cho, chow chow, chayote, vegetable pear

**Size:** 12-16 cm long

**Shape:** Pear shape, smooth skin

**Colour:** Pale green

**Ripeness:** Firm, not sprouting

**Taste &**

**Texture:** Crisp and juicy

### Getting to market

#### Harvesting, Handling and Storage

Christophene can be cropped twice a year and should be picked when slightly immature. The time can be gauged as just before the seed enlarges and begins to protrude from the apex of the fruit. Christophene should be cooled after harvest and stored and transported at 8-10°C, with a relative humidity of 85-90%. At temperatures of 13°C and over, they can begin to germinate. However, in optimum storage conditions, shelf life can be extended for up to one month.

#### Packaging

Christophene are usually packed in 9/10 kg cartons with dividers and counts of 24-32, individually wrapped. No international

(continued)

---

## Christophene (cho cho)

---

standards are in force for quality of christophene but it is advisable that packaging be labelled by:

- origin
- as christophene
- weight
- date of packing

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

### Branding and Promotion

There has been no generic promotion of christophene, nor supermarket in-store promotion. Since the christophene is a vegetable new to the UK market, the organisation of such a promotion could help market prospects.

### Import Regulations

Christophene come under the tariff heading 0709 90 90 covering “other vegetables” not elsewhere categorised. Tariffs are as follows:

<b>Full tariff:</b>	16%
<b>GSP countries:</b>	9% (1 Jan-31 Mar) Full tariff for other periods
<b>ACP countries:</b>	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 countries or least developed developing countries (LDDC). No other import regulations apply. Certain hygiene standards must be met and all fresh produce entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitary certificate (see Appendix 1).

### When to sell

#### Timing

Costa Rica is the major supplier of christophene to the UK market and can supply year-round. Brazil sometimes exports during March-June and other occasional suppliers are some of the Caribbean countries, China and India. Despite Costa Rica's ability to supply all year round, there are sometimes

---

## **Christophene (cho cho)**

---

shortfalls in January to March.

Prices are quoted for Costa Rica on the wholesale market and have averaged 85 pence per kg during 1989/90, remaining relatively steady over the year.

### **Market Trends**

Total imports are estimated at around 600 tons per annum, and are primarily traded through outlets serving ethnic populations. They have shown slow growth in the market over the last decade and are not generally known by the consuming public. They require preparation prior to cooking, which does not endear them to consumers even if they are willing to try new vegetables. However, the catering trade uses christophenes, which will give them increasing exposure, and they could grow in popularity as a vegetable for use in stir-fry cooking. Thus, although immediate prospects are considered by the trade to be limited to ethnic outlets, they could be a candidate for future growth.

---

## Courgettes (zucchini)

---



### Market requirements

**Varieties:** Ambassador, Diamond and Black Jack popular

**Standards:** The EEC stipulates minimum standard requirements for courgettes, which must be:

- intact, including a stalk which may be slightly damaged
- of fresh appearance
- firm
- sound: (produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for human consumption is excluded)
- free from damage caused by insects or other parasites
- free of cavities
- free of splits
- clean, and practically free of any visible foreign matter
- sufficiently developed without over-development of seeds (except Class III)
- free of abnormal moisture content
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste

Three classes are defined:

Class I may show slight:

- defects of shape
- defects of colouring
- healed cracks of the skin

The courgettes must include a stalk of a maximum length of 3 cm.

Class II may show:

- defects of shape
- defects of colouring
- slight sun-scorch

---

## **Courgettes (zucchini)**

---

- healed cracks of the skin, provided these do not impair conservation

Class III (which can be introduced or withdrawn by the EEC as market conditions demand) should satisfy the requirements for Class II, but may also show:

- a development of seeds
- slight traces of soil

Tolerances are allowed of 10% of weight for Class I, providing they meet the requirements of Class II, 10% for Class II not meeting minimum standards, providing they are fit for human consumption, and 15% for Class III, under the same conditions.

**Size:** Sizing can be by length or weight, with length being measured from the junction of the stalk and the end of the fruit.

Length should fall within the following scale:

- 7-14 cm inclusive
- 14 cm (exclusive) to 21 cm (inclusive)
- 21 cm (exclusive) to 30 cm

14-18 cm is the most popular, with 75 mm diameter

Weight should be according to the following scale:

- 50-100 grams (inclusive)
- 100 grams (exclusive) to 225 grams (inclusive)
- 225 grams (exclusive) to 450 grams

Class III need not conform to the size scale. Tolerances of 10% above or below those specified are allowed

**Shape:** Reasonably straight, not mis-shapen, some ridging towards stem preferred

**Colour:** Medium green preferred, can bespeckled  
Not black green or heavily striped green

**Ripeness:** Fresh, crisp and firm

**Taste & Texture:** Crunchy, juicy; sweet when cooked.

(continued)

---

## **Courgettes (zucchini)**

---

### **Getting to market**

#### **Harvesting, Handling and Storage**

Courgettes must be picked young, when crisp and hard, and cut from the plant, leaving a small stem. They have to be handled carefully from harvesting onwards in order not to damage their skin. They should be cooled quickly after harvesting and kept at a temperature between 8 and 12°C and a relative humidity of 90-95% for an optimum storage life of between 8 and 14 days.

#### **Packaging**

Courgettes must be flat packed in well ventilated cartons of 2, 3, 5 or 6 kg, with smaller packages used in the winter months when air-freighted. They must be well graded and lined up in layers

in the cartons, which can be lined and layered with tissue paper to protect the skins from damage in transit. They can be consumer packed at source, in overlaid trays.

Labelling must include:

- country of origin
- produce indication (if contents not visible)
- class
- net weight

It is advisable to include (and mandatory for EEC and Mediterranean countries) the following information:

- size
- date of packing
- packer
- grower

It is also advisable to include handling information on the carton:

- side-up symbol
- fragile symbol
- temperature guidance

---

## **Courgettes (zucchini)**

---

### **Branding and Promotion**

There is no generic advertising of courgettes, but certain exporters use brand names in order to promote their produce.

### **Import Regulations**

Courgettes come under tariff heading 0709 90 70 and tariffs for courgettes entering the EEC are as follows:

<b>Full tariff:</b>	16%
<b>GSP countries:</b>	9% (1 Jan-28 Feb) Full tariff for other periods
<b>ACP countries:</b>	Free
<b>Cyprus:</b>	4.6% (1 Jan-28 Feb and 1-31 Dec) 11.6% (1 -15 Mar) Full tariff for other periods
<b>Malta, Tunisia, Algeria:</b>	6.4% (1 Jan-28 Feb and 1-31 Dec) Full tariff for other periods
<b>Israel:</b>	5.6% (1 Jan-28 Feb and 1-31 Dec) Full tariff for other periods
<b>Jordan, Morocco:</b>	6.4% (1 Jan-28 Feb and 1-31 Dec) 7.1% (1-15 Mar) Full tariff for other periods
<b>Egypt:</b>	7.1% (1 Jan-15 Mar and 1-31 Dec) Full tariff for other periods

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 countries or least developed developing countries (LDDC). Courgettes are also governed by the reference price system from 21 April to 30 September, through which a compensatory tax is levied on produce if CIF prices are below the price set seasonally (or for part of a season) by the EEC. Certain hygiene standards must be met and all fresh produce entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitary certificate (see Appendix 1).

(continued)

---

## **Courgettes (zucchini)**

---

### **When to sell**

#### **Timing**

The UK produces courgettes through the summer months of June to September, and the French production season extends from March to October, France being the second largest exporter to the UK. Spain is by far the largest supplier, accounting for over 50% of imports, supplying over the winter period of November to May. Italy is the next largest supplier (November-June), followed by Jordan (December-May) and the USA, which can supply year-round. Other winter suppliers are Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico and Zimbabwe. There are few supplying gaps, though buyers are keen to diversify their sources in order to hedge against poor quality supplies in case of poor weather in Spain.

Wholesale prices of courgettes are quoted regularly on the market and have averaged around 95 pence per kg during 1989/90, reaching a low of 30 pence in August and up to 180 pence in January/February. Prices have also shown a generally rising trend over the year and have not fallen back in the spring as usually happens.

#### **Market Trends**

Imports of courgettes have grown by over 300% over the last decade and have now reached almost 17,000 tons per annum. Volumes are expected to continue to grow, although at a slower pace. Without significant gaps in the market, new suppliers may find it difficult to enter the market. However, buyers are diversifying supplies in the winter and prices have been on an upward trend. There is also likely to be a growing demand for mini courgettes.

---

## Mangetout

---



### 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)

---

## Mangetout

---

- 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 1-2°C 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.

---

# Mangetout

---

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:

<b>Full rate:</b>	14%
<b>GSP countries:</b>	Full rate
<b>ACP countries:</b>	Free
<b>Turkey:</b>	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 phytosanitary 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:

<b>Ecuador:</b>	July-August
<b>France:</b>	May-June
<b>Nigeria:</b>	November-February
<b>Peru:</b>	August-September
<b>Spain:</b>	January-April
<b>Zimbabwe:</b>	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.

---

## Okra (ladies' fingers)

---



### Market requirements

**Varieties:** Ridged cultivars, such as Clemson Spineless, Bindi and Annie Oakley are preferred

**Size:** 4-10 cm  
Clemson: 4-7 cm

**Shape:** "ladies' finger", smooth skinned, some ridging

**Colour:** Green, but not too light in colour

**Ripeness:** Very immature and readily snapped

**Taste & Texture:** Contents sticky, but unfibrous

### Getting to market

#### Harvesting, Handling and Storage

Okra should be harvested at least every other day, but should not be picked in wet conditions. Secateurs can be used for harvesting, and a stem of 1 cm should be left on the pod. Harvested pods should be stored in the shade in crates, although bags can be used by pickers and pods transferred as soon as possible to the crates, since okra generates a great deal of field heat. Rubber gloves are best for handling, which should be kept to a minimum.

Okra needs rapid post-harvest cooling to reduce the field heat and should be cooled in a temperature of 8-10°C, but for not more than 36

(continued)

---

## Okra (ladies' fingers)

---

hours prior to shipment. Okra can be shipped in aircraft pallets, but if they are shipped already packaged, it is important that the boxes are removed from the cool store 2-3 hours before shipment in order to allow any condensation to evaporate. Okra have high rates of respiration and deterioration, developing yellow or black ridges, mould or pod collapse if exposed to excess moisture. Relative humidity should be kept at 90-95% to prevent wilting.

### Packaging

Okra can be loose packed in 2.5 to 5 kg boxes, which must be ventilated and preferably be full lidded. Lower capacity packs are preferred. There are no international quality standards issued for okra, which nonetheless must be of high quality and homogenous in each carton for acceptability on the market. It is also advisable to provide the following information on the carton:

- country of origin
- produce
- weight
- date of packing
- packer

together with the following handling information:

- fragile symbol
- side-up symbol
- indication of temperature range.

### Branding and Promotion

There has been no generic promotion nor major in-store promotion of okra. Such promotion could help the market prospects of okra. Attractive packaging and clear labelling are also good forms of quality promotion.

### Import Regulations

Okra come under tariff heading 0709 90 90 for "other vegetables" not categorised elsewhere and tariffs on entering the EEC are as follows:

<b>Full tariff:</b>	16%
<b>GSP countries:</b>	Free
<b>ACP countries:</b>	Free
<b>Cyprus:</b>	5.8%
<b>Malta, Turkey:</b>	Free

---

## **Okra (ladies' fingers)**

---

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 countries or least developed countries (LDDC). Certain hygiene standards must be met and all fresh produce entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitary certificate (see Appendix 1).

### **When to sell**

#### **Timing**

There are a number of small suppliers of okra, covering the different seasons:

<b>Brazil:</b>	October-May
<b>Cyprus:</b>	May-November
<b>Egypt:</b>	June-August
<b>India:</b>	July-October
<b>Kenya:</b>	all year
<b>Mexico:</b>	October-March
<b>Nigeria:</b>	February-November
<b>Zambia:</b>	January-March
<b>Zimbabwe:</b>	November-April

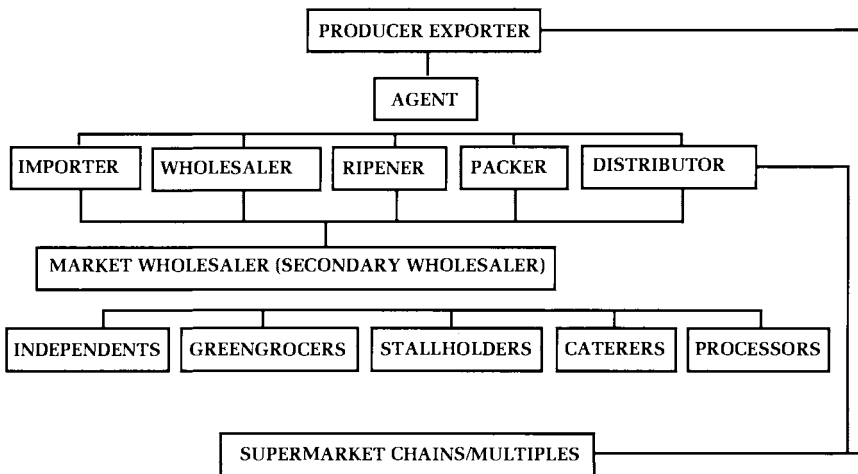
Seasonal gaps on the market have not been a problem, but sales are currently mainly through outlets serving ethnic communities. If quantities sold increase, December-January is the weakest supply period. Wholesale prices quoted are predominantly for Kenyan produce and show little seasonal variation, averaging 200 pence per kg over 1989/90.

#### **Market Trends**

The market for okra has shown slow growth over the last decade and is now estimated to stand at about 3,000 tons per annum. Consumption is forecast to continue growing as it gains wider acceptance with the public. It is reasonably versatile, being acceptable as a salad vegetable, for stir-frying, for thickening stews and soups and as a vegetable accompaniment to a variety of dishes. This versatility, together with its relative ease of preparation, makes it a vegetable to watch for possible future expansion on the market.

## Market channels

There are a number of channels for trading vegetables in the UK and the situation has been changing as the multiples (larger supermarkets) increase their market share of the fresh vegetable, and particularly unusual vegetable, trade. They are now estimated to control about 44% of the fresh fruit and vegetable trade and a greater proportion of the newer type vegetable trade. For some of the vegetables being considered here, there is local production in the UK for some of the year. Methods of getting this produce to the customer can differ from those described, for example with growers selling direct or offering pick-your-own sales. However, the following diagram indicates the various ways in which imported produce gets on to the market.



The producer/exporter (occasionally using the services of an export agent) has a number of options for selling his produce, including dealing with:

- either a large or small specialist importer who could offer to buy the product, work on a joint account basis, or sell the produce on commission. The importer's customers will be both the multiple trade and the wholesale markets;
- an importing company which also has its own distribution network to service mainly the multiple trade. This would generally include depot and pre-packing facilities and a transport service working with a centralised distribution system. It will be usually through this type of contact that direct association is made with supermarkets;

---

## Market channels

---

- an importing company with wholesale premises in the primary markets, such as New Covent Garden, Liverpool or Birmingham;
- a company with premises in primary markets, but which is also capable of distributing vegetables on a wider geographical basis, through the creation of a “panel”, or appointed franchised wholesalers selling on its behalf in other markets. These would include the smaller markets such as Bradford and Leicester, which can have significant demand for certain produce, due to the large ethnic consumer population.

There are also a few large importing/wholesaling companies carrying out all activities prior to getting the produce on to the shelf and this has reduced the participants in the marketing chain. In some cases the multiples are dealing directly with the producer/exporter, though mostly retaining the involvement of their importer/distributor, since the supermarkets rely on them for operating their storage/ripening/distribution depots. Nonetheless, this process has cut down the number of intermediaries. The independents, market stalls and greengrocers still use wholesalers to procure produce, but the quantity of produce moving through the traditional wholesale markets (Covent Garden, Spitalfields) is reported to be declining.

The choice of market contact for an exporter depends, to a large extent, on what volumes and quality will be exported to the market and whether the exporter is looking for a long term commitment from a buyer. If an exporter can assure steady supplies of high quality, well packaged produce, particularly of produce not readily available from European suppliers, it may be worth contacting a retailer direct. Even if retailers have an existing relationship with an importer, they are keen to identify new suppliers themselves and communicate their requirements direct to the producer. Programmed volumes and shipping dates, linked to a broad price commitment, have to be rigorously adhered to if the exporter is to make a success of this business.

The next option is to sell to one of the larger importer/wholesalers on an agreed contractual basis. Exporters can contract at a specific price on a weekly basis, or even sometimes on a monthly basis, if that is thought to be advantageous. Buyers are more likely to consider this for items where they have a problem ensuring the quality and quantity of supplies. Some impose other demands on the exporter under this type of contract, such as not supplying to other buyers. Again, if shipments are not up to standard, or the exporter's price is considered too high, the importer is likely to discontinue business. The market is very competitive.

(continued)

---

## Market channels

---

It is also fairly difficult to enter business through these channels. Although both supermarket retailers and importer/wholesalers make visits to potential supplying countries, they rarely turn up “on spec” to growers or exporters. So it is no good waiting for a buyer to arrive - the potential exporter has to get in touch with buyers and persuade them that it is worth buying their goods. Once this has been done, the exporter does have a reasonably assured market for the produce, so long as quantity and quality specifications are met.

If an exporter is not so concerned with having a secure sales outlet, and is willing to risk fluctuations in price, then one of the smaller importers or importer/wholesalers may provide the best opportunity for a smaller exporter. Quantity and quality requirements are less rigid, though still high. The exporter has to communicate with or visit prospective buyers before despatching produce, which is then usually sent as a test-case consignment. Once a test consignment has reached the market, to the satisfaction of both parties, further shipments may be made. The importer, if he has not agreed to buy the produce outright, or offered a joint-account arrangement guaranteeing a minimum price, will sell on commission in the order of 8-10% of the wholesale price, though this can be negotiated. A problem with this method is that the exporter is dependent upon the importer for achieving the best price in the market and only then knows what returns will be made. So there has to be a great deal of trust between contracting parties. If the exporter can negotiate through family contacts to wholesalers or to greengrocers, he may feel this offers better security and this is one of the reasons traditional trade in the “exotic” produce sector has gone through such channels.

One of the disadvantages of selling through these “smaller business” channels is that there is less likelihood of expanding trade to optimise on increased multiple sales, since they do not generally trade with the smaller importers. There are also dangers of the smaller importers being squeezed out of business as the structure of trade changes, leaving the exporter with no UK outlet.

A further option is where in the country to sell to. The market is largest and growing fastest in the South-East of England and the majority of the vegetables under consideration is traded through London. However, there are significant pockets of demand for exotic vegetables, such as okra and christophene, throughout the UK, including Birmingham, Bradford, Leeds, Manchester and other centres in the North-East of England. If freight space is available to a destination other than London, such as Liverpool or Cardiff, the exporter can also pursue contacts in that area.

---

## Market channels

---

This brief outline of how the market works shows that the exporter is the one who has to identify a buyer and prove that the vegetables are worth buying, whichever way they are traded. It is not an easy market; standards are high and competition is strong. Nonetheless, the major buyers are always keen to identify reliable new suppliers, particularly to cover seasonal gaps in demand, and, if they think their standards can be met, are willing to try working with exporters or even growers. It is to an exporter's advantage to try to identify such a buyer, to help him through the initial stages of entering the market.

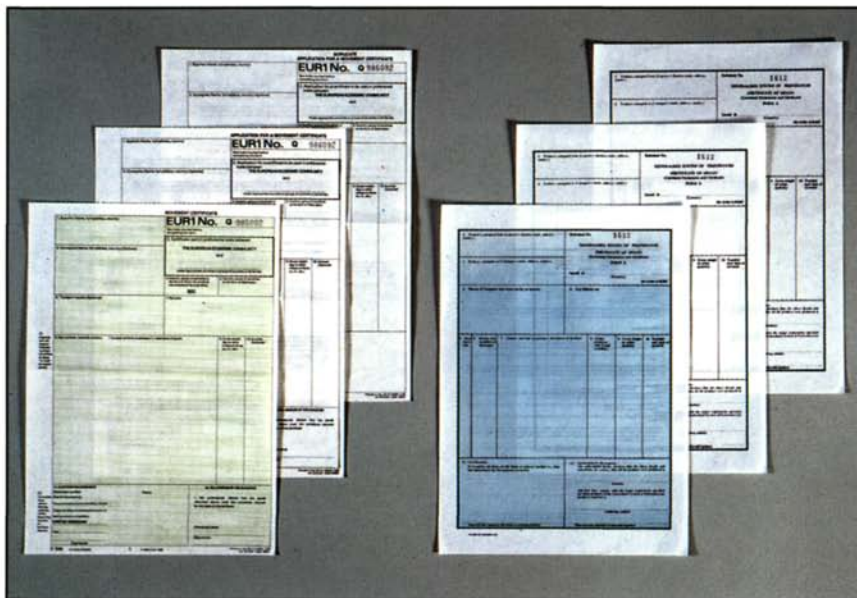
## Import legislation

### Preferential Tariff Documentation

Commonwealth countries are likely to benefit from preferential tariffs under three categories: those available to ACP countries, the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), or those available to Least Developed Developing Countries (LDDC). The rules of origin covering the ACP countries are more straightforward than those governing GSP, so, where both systems offer the same tariff, an exporter would generally opt for ACP. For example, produce freighted from an ACP country to the UK, but diverted through another ACP country, is still eligible for the preferential tariff. The same need not apply for produce originating from a country benefiting from GSP.

An additional reason is that generally the exporting country's Customs and Excise Department is responsible for the handling of ACP exports, whereas the relevant Ministry is in charge of LDCC or GSP exports. Dealing with the Customs and Excise, who have to deal regularly with such procedures, may be more straightforward for an exporter.

### ACP Exports



---

## Appendix 1

---

Form EUR 1 (see page 48) must accompany produce sent from ACP countries, if the exporter is to benefit from the lower tariffs applicable. These forms should be available from the exporting country's Customs and Excise Office, which is responsible for classifying the goods as originating from an ACP source, the Ministry of Trade or the Chamber of Commerce. Alternatively, the importer should be able to offer assistance in acquiring these forms. A list of Commonwealth ACP countries is given at the end of this appendix.

### **GSP and LDCC Exports**

Form A must accompany produce sent from qualifying countries, to benefit from the lower GSP or LDCC tariff. These forms should be available from the country's Ministry of Trade, or the Chamber of Commerce in the exporting country, but otherwise may be obtained with assistance from an importer.

### **Customs Entry**

The importer is responsible for customs clearance and presentation of the Customs Entry form (C88).

### **Reference Price System**

The reference price system has been established for certain agricultural products under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Economic Community. It is in place to ensure that European producers obtain a fair price for their produce, seeking to prevent any unfair competition (so-called dumping) from imported produce. If CIF prices fall below a certain level stipulated by the European Commission, then a compensatory tax is levied on the produce. The reference prices are set, according to the market situation, for the whole season or part of a season and can vary by country of origin. Of the vegetables include in this publication, aubergine, courgettes and tomatoes have reference prices set for part of the European production season.

### **Health and Hygiene Legislation**

All fresh fruit entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitary certificate, submitted by the authority given that responsibility in the exporting country. There are currently no other regulations in force, but there are certain standards and a number of importers already test for chemical residue in fruit. Legislation governing residue levels in food was brought in in the UK during 1988, but did not cover the vegetables dealt with here. However, legislation may eventually be brought into force for all EEC countries.

---

## Appendix 1

---

Commonwealth ACP countries are:

### AFRICA

Botswana  
The Gambia  
Ghana  
Kenya  
Lesotho  
Malawi  
Mauritius  
Namibia  
Nigeria  
Seychelles  
Sierra Leone  
Swaziland  
Tanzania  
Uganda  
Zambia  
Zimbabwe

### CARIBBEAN

Antigua & Barbuda  
Bahamas  
Barbados  
Belize  
Dominica  
Grenada  
Guyana  
Jamaica  
St Kitts & Nevis  
St Lucia  
St Vincent & the  
Grenadines  
Trinidad & Tobago

### PACIFIC

Kiribati  
Papua New Guinea  
Solomon Islands  
Tonga  
Tuvalu  
Vanuatu  
Western Samoa

---

## Appendix 2

---

### Contacts in the market

The organisations included in this list, which is by no means exhaustive, are known to trade or have a wish to trade in the items included in this booklet. However, it should be noted that all exporters should carefully assess the capability of any company with whom they hope to trade, since the Commonwealth Secretariat takes no responsibility for the financial standing of these organisations.

NB Telephones: The international dialling code for the UK is 44, after which the area code and number are dialled, but excluding the 0 at the beginning of the area code.

#### **MAJOR MULTIPLES (supermarkets)**

##### **Argyll Foods plc**

(Argyll, Safeway,  
Presto)

Argyll House

6 Millington Rd

Hayes

Middlesex UB3 4AY

phone: 081 848 8744

telex: 934888

fax: 081 573 1865

##### **Asda Stores**

Asda House

South Bank

Great Wilson St

Leeds LS11 5AD

phone: 0532 435435

fax: 0532 418666

##### **Budgen Stores Ltd**

PO Box 9

Stonefield Way

Ruislip

Middlesex HA4 0JR

phone: 081 422 9511

telex: 269531

fax: 081 864 2800

##### **Gateway Foodmarkets Ltd**

Hawkfield Business  
Park

Whitchurch Lane

Bristol BS14 0TJ

phone: 0272 780629

telex: 44313

fax: 0272 359359

##### **Littlewoods Organisation plc**

JM Centre

Old Hall St

Liverpool

Merseyside L70 1AB

phone: 051 235 326176

telex: 628501

fax: 051 235 3252

##### **Marks and Spencer plc**

Michael House

47-67 Baker St

London W1A 1DN

phone: 071 935 4422

telex: 267141

fax: 071 487 2679

##### **Safeway**

Argyll House

6 Millington Rd

Hayes

Middlesex UB3 4AY

phone: 081 848 8744

telex: 934888

fax: 081 573 1865

##### **J Sainsbury plc**

Stamford House

Stamford St

London SE1 9LL

phone: 071 921 6000

telex: 264241

fax: 071 921 6132

##### **Tesco plc**

Tesco House

PO Box 18

Delamere Road

Cheshunt

Waltham Cross

Hertfordshire EN8 9SL

phone: 0992 32222

telex: 24138

fax: 0992 30794

(continued)

---

## Appendix 2

---

**Waitrose Ltd**  
Doncastle Road  
Southern Industrial  
Area  
Bracknell  
Berkshire RG12 4YA  
  
phone: 0344 424680  
telex: 847271  
fax: 0344 488195

---

### WHOLESALEERS/ IMPORTERS

**Bluebell International  
Ltd**  
646 Kingsbury Road  
London NW9  
  
phone: 081 459 4466  
telex: 923940  
fax: 081 459 4000

**K S Butt & Co Ltd**  
Smithfield Wholesale  
Market  
Pershore St  
Birmingham B5  
  
phone: 021 622 3210

**Condor Fruit Ltd**  
Block B  
29/33 Wholesale Fruit  
and Vegetable Market  
Prescot Road  
Liverpool  
  
phone: 051 259 1301/2  
telex: 267179  
fax: 051 220 1361

**Consolidated Fruit Co  
Ltd**  
25/26 Humber St  
Hull HU1 1TS  
  
phone: 0482 24058  
telex: 592252  
fax: 0482 225090

**Del Monte Fresh Fruit  
(UK) Ltd**  
Paddock Wood  
Tonbridge  
Kent TN12 6UU  
  
phone: 089 283 6111  
fax: 089 283 6055

**Exotic Farm Produce  
Ltd**  
628 Spur Road  
Feltham  
Middlesex  
TW14 0SX  
  
phone: 081 890 2222  
telex: 9419833  
fax: 081 890 6261

**JC Exotics Ltd**  
B60/61 New Covent  
Garden  
London SW8  
  
phone: 071 720 0482

**Fagan**  
Balmoral Industrial  
Estate  
Balmoral Road  
Belfast  
BT12 6QA  
  
phone: 0232 663691  
telex: 747593

**Fyffes Group Ltd**  
12 York Gate  
Regents Park  
London  
NW1 4QS  
  
phone: 071 487 4472  
telex: 919186  
fax: 071 487 3644

**The Geest  
Organisation**  
White House Chambers  
Spalding  
Lincolnshire  
PE11 2AL  
  
phone: 0775 61111  
telex: 32481  
fax: 0775 60254

**Glass Glover & Co Ltd**  
Coldharbour Road  
Elizabeth Way  
Pinnacles Industrial  
Estate  
Harlow  
Essex  
CM19 5BE  
  
phone: 0279 35422  
telex: 817208  
fax: 0279 441509

**Hunter Saphir plc**  
10 Finsbury Square  
London  
EC2A 1AD  
  
phone: 071 638 8222  
telex: 914952  
fax: 071 628 1168

---

## Appendix 2

---

### **Janic Import Export Ltd**

Orchard Court  
4 Station Square  
Balgores Lane  
Gidea Park  
Essex  
RM2 6AT

phone: 0708 766819

### **John Denis Food Group Ltd**

Wholesale Market  
Pershore St  
Birmingham  
B5 6UN  
phone: 021 622 5473  
fax: 021 622 6686

### **J O Sims Ltd**

16 Winchester Walk  
Borough Market  
London  
SE1 9AQ

phone: 071 407 0756  
telex: 886769

### **Joseph Lowe & Sons**

25-28 NE Wholesale  
Fruit Market  
Team Valley Trading  
Estate  
Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear  
NE11 0QY

phone: 091 482 2551  
telex: 379622  
fax: 091 487 9021

### **Kirby International Foods Ltd**

17 Swan St  
Congleton  
Cheshire CW12 4BN

phone: 0477 34506  
telex: 367484  
fax: 0477 37170

### **Louis Reece Ltd**

B124/129 Fruit &  
Vegetable Market  
New Covent Garden  
London SW8 5LS

phone: 071 720 6931  
telex: 91759  
fax: 071 627 5845

### **Mack Multiples Division Ltd**

Church Road  
Paddock Wood  
Kent TN12 6ES

phone: 089 283 5577  
telex: 95215  
fax: 089 283 4890

### **Max Levin & Partners Ltd**

The Warehouse  
Pattenden Lane  
Marden  
Kent TN12 9QL

phone: 0622 831653

### **Minor, Weir and Willis**

Smithfield Wholesale  
Market  
Pershore Street  
Birmingham B5

phone: 021 622 3984

### **Montana**

A130-131 New Covent  
Garden Market  
London SW8 5EE

phone: 071 720 0212  
telex: 888040  
fax: 071 622 0415

### **Pascual (Fruit Importers) Ltd**

Paddock Wood  
Tonbridge  
Kent  
TN12 6UX

phone: 089 283 2333

### **Poupart Ltd**

Station Approach  
Waltham Cross  
Hertfordshire  
EN8 7LU

phone: 0992 700711  
telex: 266351  
fax: 0992 768233

### **O M Sharif & Co**

Wholesale Market  
Precinct  
Pershore St  
Birmingham B5

phone: 021 622 3949  
telex: 339551  
fax: 021 666 6835

(continued)

---

## Appendix 2

---

**Suma Fruit  
International Ltd**

Suite 22/23  
The London Fruit  
Exchange  
Spitalfields Market  
Brushfield Street  
London  
E1 6HB

phone: 071 247 3381/6  
telex: 945858

**Sunzest Ltd**  
101 Commercial Road  
London  
E1 1RD

phone: 071 377 9000  
telex: 918083  
fax: 071 247 7159

**Wealmoor Ltd**  
Jetha House  
Springfield Road  
Hayes  
Middlesex  
UB4 0JT

phone: 081 569 1760  
telex: 888725  
fax: 081 569 1755

**William McGrattan &  
Sons Ltd**  
Balmoral Fruit Market  
Belfast  
BT12

phone: 0232 663581  
telex: 747624

**PACKAGING  
SUPPLIERS**

**Consolidated Bathurst  
Inc**

PO Box 69  
Montreal  
Quebec H3C 2R5  
Canada

phone: 010 1 514 875  
216

**Corby Cases**  
Ainsley Road  
Weldon Industrial  
Estates  
Corby

Northants NN17 1QW  
UK

phone: 0536 60848  
fax: 0536 400132

**Corrugated Products  
Ltd**

Butlers Leap  
Clifton Road  
Rugby  
Warwickshire  
CV21 3RQ  
UK

phone: 0788 70612

**Domtar Packaging**  
PO Box 7211  
Montreal  
Quebec H3A 1L6  
Canada

phone: 010 1 514 848  
5400

**Lin Pac**

Paper Mill Road  
Rawcliffe Bridge  
Goole  
Northumbria  
DN14 8SL

phone: 0405 83331

**Metal Box Ltd**  
Queens House  
Forberry Road  
Reading  
Berks  
UK

phone: 0734 581177

**Reed Corrugated Cases**  
Aylesford  
Maidstone  
Kent ME20 7PF  
UK

phone: 0622 883715  
telex: 96123  
fax: 0622 715121

### Transportation and packaging

#### Transport

Fresh produce goes through at least three stages of transportation and it is in the exporter's interest to monitor the first two of these quite carefully. There is initial transport from the growing area to the place of shipment, for which the grower may be responsible. Shipment by sea or by air comprises the second stage, and the final stage is from port of arrival into the UK to point of sale, ultimately to the consumer. Once the produce has reached the importer, with whom the exporter has contracted, the importer takes responsibility for any further distribution prior to selling.

There are a number of factors influencing the state of the produce on arrival and so it is in the exporter's interest to ensure they are correct. They include:

- timely departure
- careful loading and stacking
- temperature control - from pre-cooling, through cold storage/refrigeration
- adequate ventilation, particularly when using sea freight.

The exporter needs to know the approximate storage life of the vegetable being transported, and this varies in relation to a number of different factors, such as when it was picked and whether it has been sufficiently cooled prior to shipment.

It is important that vegetables are not transported with items which could impair their quality or flavour. For example, ethylene is expelled by some produce and this causes other produce to ripen. Vegetables will take on the flavour of strongly scented goods, if stored alongside, so this should be avoided.

The choice of transport mode depends upon the buyer's requirement for freshness and the price that he is willing to pay, since prices will not always warrant the extra cost of air freight. Exporters usually need to make arrangements with the freighter themselves, unless their contact importer is already receiving shipments and has additional space. It is always worth negotiating with the freight carrier and may be advantageous to negotiate jointly with other exporters, since this increases bargaining power and may result in space being filled and unit transport costs being reduced.

(continued)

---

## Appendix 3

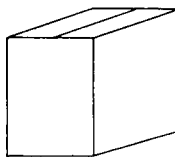
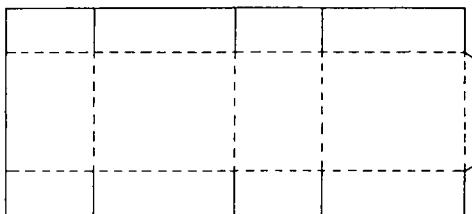
---

### Packaging

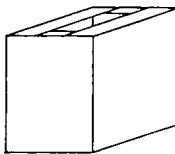
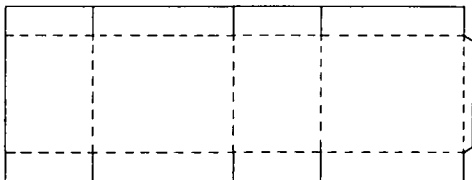
Packaging should be selected with the type of journey in mind, to make sure it is suitable. Neat, easy to handle and well labelled packaging is more likely to be carefully handled at the receiving end. There are a number of types of packaging and it is advisable for the exporter to consult with the importer on the preferred style.

There is an International Fibreboard Case Code, under which boxes are given reference numbers. Commonly used types for fresh fruits and vegetables are:

**Code 0201:** a one-piece box.



Variation (a)



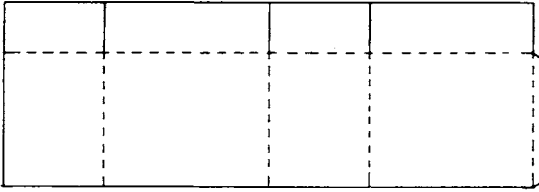
Variation (b)

## Appendix 3

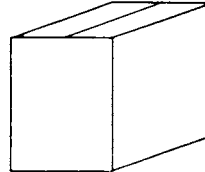
**Code 0320:**

full telescope box (a two-piece in which the lid slides over the lower part and covers the full height of the box).

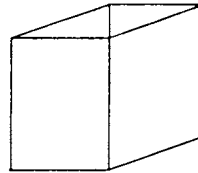
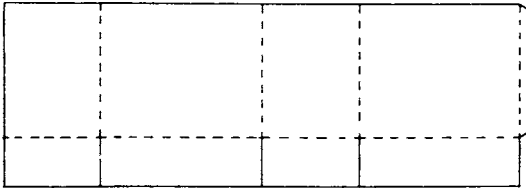
Upper part (lid), blank



Assembled box



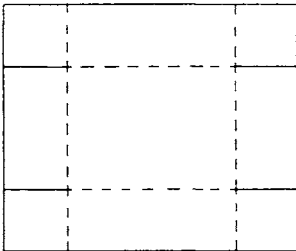
Lower part (base), blank



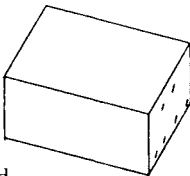
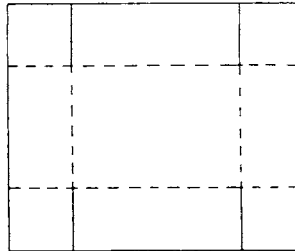
**Code 0301:**

case lid box (a two-piece box without manufacturer's joints, requiring erection using staples or glue).

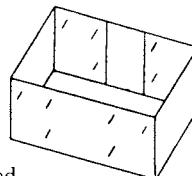
Upper part (lid), blank



Lower part (base), blank



Assembled  
upper part (lid)



Assembled  
lower part (base)

(continued)

---

## Appendix 3

---

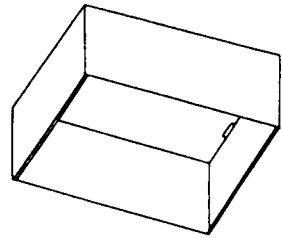
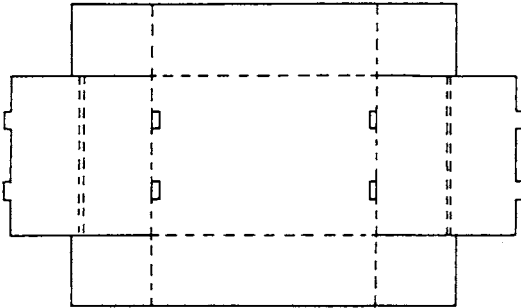
**Code 0422 to 25:**

two-piece folder type boxes, die-cut (the shape is cut and the creases formed, for easy erection).

Stackable trays are also used, but are not coded.

**Code 0422:**

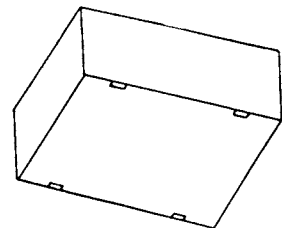
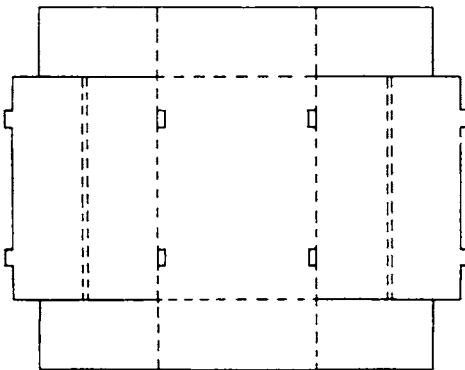
Upper part, blank



Assembled upper part

**Code 0423:**

Lower part, blank



Assembled lower part

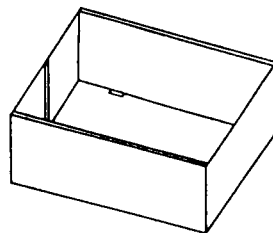
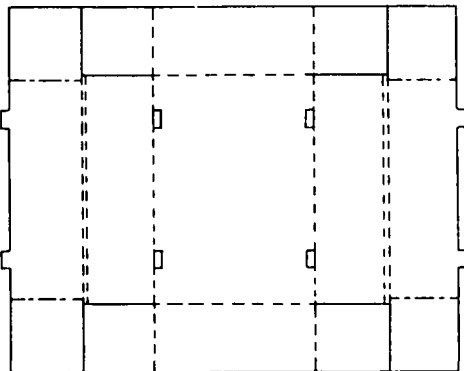
---

## Appendix 3

---

Code 0424:

Lower part, blank



Assembled lower part

The International Trade Centre (ITC) has recently published a handbook which gives details on how to package fresh fruit and vegetables (Manual on the Packaging of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: ITC - see Appendix 5). It may be that it is difficult in an exporting country to acquire the correct type of box. A limited list of possible packaging suppliers is given in Appendix 2.

### Marketing costs

Actual costs vary according to country of origin, type and quality of vegetable and the quantity being sold, but the exporter needs to take account of all costs listed below to calculate whether it is profitable to ship produce to the UK.

**Grower:** Transport cost between growing area and port of embarkation

**Exporter:** Letter of credit (if required)

Export duties

Freight costs

Customs duty (if applicable)

Insurance costs

**Importer:** Commission or margin to the importer (5-10% of wholesale price or of final cost to the importer)

Customs entry and clearance

Handling charge to importer (can be a small charge deducted from wholesale price)

Transport to packhouse and on to depot

Packing and labelling

Overheads and wastage and shrinkage allowance

**Retailer:** Mark up by retailer (50-60% for independent greengrocer, up to 30% for supermarkets)

In either system of selling (fixed price or commission trading, but particularly the latter), it is in the exporter's interest to know overall market prices, since his own returns are dependent upon the end price. It must be remembered that final retail prices will include allowances for wastage and shrinkage and final packaging and so cannot be readily related to the FOB price paid to an exporter. It is easier for an exporter to work backwards from a wholesale price, as shown in the examples below, than from a retail price. Regular price data are available from a number of sources, such as the International Trade Centre (ITC) or COLEACP (see Appendix 5), but this is not detailed enough to enable an exporter to make a decision on whether it is

---

## Appendix 4

---

worth shipping produce that day. This emphasises the need to have a trusted party monitoring UK market prices.

Examples are given here to illustrate how the system could work for asparagus, chillies and okra, but it must be stressed that the exporter should assess the costs applicable to his or her own situation very carefully in each case.

### Example 1

The current wholesale price for asparagus is £1.30 per lb, which is equivalent to £14.30 for a 5 kg carton.

Working back to the FOB price achieved by the exporter, the following would have to be taken into account:

	£
Importer margin:	1.10
Clearance, insurance and transport from port:	0.60
16% import duty (applied on C&F price):	1.74
Airfreight:	6.60

In this example the above costs total £10.04, which is £4.26 less than the wholesale price of £14.30 per kg. From this FOB price of £4.26 the exporter would have to subtract the costs for:

- produce
- packaging
- export duty (if applicable)
- letter of credit (if required)
- transport to port

in order to work out whether the returns are high enough to warrant shipment.

### Example 2

Taking another example, chillies currently have a wholesale price of £8.00 per 2 kg. The FOB price achieved by an ACP exporter would therefore be £4.40 per kg once the following costs totalling £3.60 per kg are taken into account:

	£
Importer margin:	0.60
Clearance, insurance and transport from port:	0.40
Import duty (applied on C&F price):	0.00 (ACP duty free)
Freight:	2.60

(continued)

---

## Appendix 4

---

From this FOB price of £4.40 per kg the exporter would have to subtract the costs for:

- produce
- packaging
- export duty (if applicable)
- letter of credit (if required)
- transport to port

in order to work out whether the returns are high enough to warrant shipment.

### Example 3

As a further example, okra have a wholesale price of £4.50 per 2 kg. The FOB price achieved by an ACP exporter would therefore be £1.10 per kg once the following costs are taken into account:

Importer margin:	0.40
Clearance, insurance and transport from port:	0.40
Import duty (applied on C&F price):	0.00 (ACP duty free)
Freight:	2.60

From this FOB price of £1.10 per kg the exporter would have to subtract the costs for:

- produce
- packaging
- export duty (if applicable)
- letter of credit (if required)
- transport to port

in order to work out whether the returns are high enough to warrant shipment.

**Useful addresses****COLEACP**

5, Rue de la Corderie  
Centra 342  
94586 Rungis Cedex  
FRANCE

phone: 331 468 70206  
telex: 205166 F  
fax: 331 468 63315

*Offers trade information, trade promotion and technical assistance to ACP fruit exporters. (Countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific - see Appendix I for list of Commonwealth countries included)*

**Developing Countries Trade Agency (DECTA)**

69 Cannon St  
London EC4 5AB

phone: 071 248 4444  
telex: 888941 LCCI G

*Provides information on UK market and importing requirements to exporters*

**Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Information Bureau**

Bury House  
126-128 Cromwell Road  
London SW7 4ET

phone: 071 373 7734

*Provides information on and promotes fresh produce to the consuming public*

**Fresh Produce Journal**

Lockwood Press Ltd  
430-438 Market Towers  
New Covent Garden  
London SW8 5NN

phone: 071 622 6677  
telex: 915149

*Publishes weekly wholesale prices and general information on UK market trends*

**Fruit Importers' Association**

Room 408/9 Market Towers  
New Covent Garden  
London SW8 5NQ

phone: 071 720 1387  
telex: 919219

*Trade association representing UK fruit importers, can provide details on association members and market information*

**HM Customs and Excise**

King's Beam House  
39-41 Mark Lane  
London EC3R 7HE

*Can provide up-to-date information on export procedures governing the entry of fresh produce to the UK*

---

## Appendix 5

---

### **The Geest Organisation**

White House Chambers  
Spalding  
Lincolnshire PE11 2AL

phone: 0775 61111

telex: 32481

fax: 0775 60254

*Undertakes small scale public education and promotion programmes regarding the source and use of fresh produce, which can occasionally be linked with retail promotions.*

### **Overseas Development Natural Resources Institute (ODNRI)**

Central Avenue  
Chatham Maritime  
Chatham  
Kent M4 4TB

phone: 0364 880088

fax: 0364 880077

*Scientific Unit of the Overseas Development Administration, which provides technical assistance to developing countries and can offer advice on post-harvest technology.*

### **International Trade Centre**

#### **UNCTAD/GATT**

54-56 rue de Montbrillant  
1202 Geneva 10  
Switzerland

phone: 41 22 34 60 21

telex: 289466 MNS CH (for news service)

*Transmits market information on fresh horticultural products through Market News Service (MNS), helps exporters with contacts, provides export packaging and other advisory services. Recent publications: 'Manual on the Packaging of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (1989)'; 'Tropical and Off-Season Fresh Fruits and Vegetables: A Study of selected European Markets (1987)'.*



**Commonwealth Secretariat**  
**Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX**  
**Phone: 071 839 3411 Fax: 071 930 0827 Telex: 27678**

ISBN 978-1-84859-618-4

