

Profile on Fruits and Vegetables in Uganda

Fruit and vegetable sector of late has become an important sector in Uganda economy and it contributes a big share of non-traditional exports.

According to Hortexa, 2000, Fruits and vegetable exports have been growing and contributing US\$ 6.5m in 1996 to US\$ 9.4m in 1999.

The sector is bound to grow as the government continues its operations under the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture.

Fruit Subsector

A variety of tropical fruits are produced throughout Uganda. The most outstanding and significant fruits that have potential for export and processing are: pineapples, passion fruits, bananas, mangos and pawpaws.

- **Pineapples**

The pineapple production has consistently increased over since 1995 and there is a glut in the market during peak harvest.

Uganda pineapples are sweeter and less acidic than those produced in the region. The rain pattern and agronomic practices result in large sized fruits that are not suitable for export but this can be pre-determined by plant spacing. Most European markets have preferred small sized fruits.

There are currently about 5 small firms that are dealing in the export of pineapples.

- **Passion Fruits**

The production has been on an increase over years and there has been an increasing demand for both local consumption and export. Purple passion fruits are produced in high altitude. There is a hybrid, yellow passion fruit that has been developed with high yields. There is currently one firm that is exporting the fruits.

- **Citrus Fruits**

These include several varieties of oranges, lemons and tangerines.

The demand for citrus fruits on the local market is high as Uganda imports oranges from South Africa.

There is a high potential for increase production if farmers can be assured of a market.

- **Pawpaws**

These grow on papaya tree. Many varieties of pawpaws are grown widely in Uganda producing different quality pawpaws. The foreign market requires pawpaws of a consistent small size. There is potential for increased introduction either by contracting local farmers to produce for export or opening commercial farms that will engage in production. Pawpaws can be produced for processing a papain enzyme which I am made to understand can fetch good revenue from the export.

There are currently 2 firms that are involved in the processing and exporting of the papain enzyme from Uganda. 34 firms are involved in the direct export of pawpaws but on very little scale.

- **Mangos**

Different varieties of mangos are grown in the entire Uganda, some varieties are suitable for fresh fruit market while others are for processing into juice and other products. Production has been increasing over years with increasing demand on local and export markets. There is currently one company that has commenced processing mango juice from local fruits.

There are 5 firms exporting mango products on small scale.

- **Avocado**

A number of varieties are grown in Uganda. Some are large while others are small in size. There is a high potential for increased production. Opportunities exist in commercial production once the market is assured. Currently there is one firm producing and exporting the fruit on small scale.

- **Bananas**

The bananas produced are mainly for cooking as a staple food. The export has been limited to ethnic tastes of immigrant African and Asian population in Britain.

There are varieties of bananas (matooke), namely;

Dessert bananas which include apple bananas (Ndiizi) and Cros Michael bananas (Bogoya).

Apple bananas are grown throughout the country. There is potential for increased production through specialized farms.

The Cros Michael banana variety is a popular fruit with a flavour. There is a growing potential for export in value is added on.

Market Fruits

As indicated above, markets for fresh fruit are in European Union, the Arab countries and in the east African Region. Exports have rather been on small scale due to their perishable nature.

Table 1: Production Trends of Major Fruits in Uganda

Year	Average	Pinapple	Panssion	Citrus	Pawpaw	Avocado	Mango	Cros Bananas	Apple Bananas
1995	Acreage 10 ³ h	6.0	1.12	2.0	2.1	2.2	3.9	0.4	0.5
	Production 10 ³ (tons)	150	7.8	24	21	22	39	1200	2,200
1996	Acreage x 10 ³ tons	6.0	1.2	2.1	2.1	2.3	4.0	0.4	0.5
	Production x 10 ³ tons	150	8	25	22	22.5	40.5	1200	2,200
1997	Acreage x 10 ³ (tons)	6.2	1.3	2.1	2.3	2.3	4.0	0.5	0.5
	Production x 10 ³ (tons)	160	8.0	24	22.5	23.8	40.0	1200	2,250
1998	Acreage x 10 ³ (ha)	6.5	1.3	2.1	2.	2.5	4.1	0.5	0.6
	Production x 10 ³ (tons)	163	8.1	26	22.0	24.0	42.0	1,300	22,500
1999	Acreage x 10 ³ (ha)	6.8	1.5	2.3	2.3	2.5	4.2	0.5	0.6
	Production x 10 ³ tons	163	8.3	26.0	24.2	42.0	1,300		23,000

Source: MAAIF 2000 (Unpublished)

Table II Volume of Fruit Exports for Period 1995 - 1999 (in Kgs.)
Source - Uganda Revenue Authority - (unpublished).

Fruit	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Bananas	584,088	3,045,236	50,454	524,986	969,420
Pineapples	61,649	23,842	4,359	23,976	64,836
Avocadoes	7,634	71,220	1,500	11,322	48,250
Managos	12,712	*	600	*	*
Citrus	769	*	443,964	*	*
Cherries	7,000	7,200	*	*	*

* **Not available**

Fruit Processing

The fruit processing in Uganda is first limited to extraction of fresh juice, which is sold on local market.

This is largely attributed to lack of technology and capital by potential investors.

Fruit Juice

Fruits are processed locally into juice that is sold fresh in the restaurants and on the streets and Take-aways. Juices are also prepared and consumed at home. The most popular fruit for juices preparation is the passion fruit. Others are pineapple, orange and banana. Banana juice is a special variety prepared through the local technology but its marketing is limited to village level. Currently, the demand for fruit juice exceeds production. The demand is met through import of fruit juices. There is a strong indication of existence of investment opportunities in fruit processing for local and export markets.

A few industries are coming up and utilise locally produced fruit to produce juice.

Table III: Firms that process fruits into juice

COMPANY	LOCATION	PRODUCTS
Reco Industries Kasese	Kasese	Passion fruit juice concentrate and jam
Britannia Ltd.	Kampala	Mango juice and passion fruit juice
Elgonia Ltd.	Mbale	Pineapple and passion fruit juice concentrates
Craft Bazaar Ltd.	Kampala	Pineapple and passion fruit juices.

Source: Uganda Investment Authority

Vegetable Subsector

Vegetables are a major subsector produced throughout the country and a range vegetables are found in the markets.

The vegetables of economic importance produced in the country are: beans, peas, onions, okra cabbage, spices and tomatoes.

Conclusion

Generally, there are investment opportunities in the fruit-subsector both for the local market and export. There is a limited number of fruit processing industries in the country and in the regional markets. There is need for a fruit processing factory handling different fruits in one being area for investment.

- **Pineapple**

Given that Uganda pineapple is sweet and less acidic, it is suited for ready-to-eat pre-prepared fruit salads either alone or mixed with other tropical fruits. Demand for pre-prepared fruit salads is growing in European Union.

There is also potential for concentrates.

- **Mangos**

There are great abundance of mangos especially during the peak harvest and often left to mature. This calls for processing these fruits into jam, arched slices. There is one company Britannia that has ventured into preparing concentrates.

- **Passion Fruit**

This is an attractive venture for investment. Uganda offers an excellent climate for production of purple passion fruit.

Concentrates would be ideal for export.