

Market Development Strategies for the Florida Tropical Fruit Industry, 1997¹

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Abstract

Telephone surveys of tropical fruit growers and shippers in south Florida and major food retailers and specialty produce wholesalers nationwide were conducted to determine the availability, sales trends, and market development strategies for 11 tropical fruits selected by Tropical Fruit Growers of South Florida, Inc. on the basis of their commercial potential. The fruits targeted were mangos, carambola, lychee, papaya, mamey sapote, specialty bananas, longan, guava, passion fruit, atemoya, and sugar apples. The grower-shipper survey revealed no major changes in the production of most fruits in the wake of Hurricane Andrew although modest increases were anticipated for lychees, longans, and papayas. Mangos, papayas, and carambolas were found to be widely available at wholesale and retail levels, and sales trends were generally positive. However, the remaining fruits had varying degrees of availability at wholesale and retail levels. Some fruits,

such as mamey sapote, atemoya, and sugar apples, had very limited distribution, particularly west of the Mississippi River because of phytosanitary restrictions. Retail and wholesale produce buyers generally agreed that the greatest impediments to increased sales of tropical fruit from Florida were (1) lack of consumer familiarity and awareness, (2) high prices relative to other types of fruit, and (3) supply problems such as limited or inconsistent supplies and short production seasons. This paper analyzes marketing suggestions made by the trade and makes specific recommendations for improved marketing programs for south Florida's tropical fruit growers and shippers.

The complete document also can be accessed at http://www.agmarketing.ifas.ufl.edu/pubs/1990s/Tropical_fruits.pdf.

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