

BANGLADESH

Exports suspended to ensure vegetable supply in Ramadhan

The Ministry of Commerce in Dhaka is expected to ban the export of green chilli, eggplant, cucumber and coriander-leaves to ensure smooth supply of these essentials in the market during Ramadhan.



Commerce Secretary Mahub Ahmed stated that the restriction may continue for at least a month as the demand for these essentials goes up during Ramadhan. He further added that the government imposes such restriction every year.

Dry fruit import increases before Ramadhan

Food import orders increased slightly in Bangladesh this May as compared to the corresponding period of the previous calendar year ahead of Ramadan. The most important is a rise in imports of dried fruits and dates. The import orders for dry fruits including dates rose to \$2.96 million in May from \$1.82 million in May 2012. Opening of letters of credit (LCs) against imports rose by 0.38% to US\$ 3.17 billion in May, 2013 from \$3.16 billion in the same month last year, according to the central bank statistics, released in May 2013.



West Bengal expects increase in pineapple trade with neighbours

Pineapple growers in West Bengal are hopeful about the possibility of boosting trade links with Bangladesh and Nepal.

Elias Sheikh, a pineapple farmer, stated that they have found new markets in Nepal and Bangladesh. The pineapples which are exported to Bangladesh via Tripura often reach bigger markets like Thailand. He further added that they could also send these pineapples in large quantities to Bangladesh, which could benefit the farmers a great deal.

He added that the government should advance trade ties to the maximum, so that they could send their produce to Bangladesh which comes from northern part of Bengal and thus benefitting the farmers of West Bengal.

CANADA

Canadian Cherries are ready for China

As the first truck left the Packing House the season kicked off with Chelan's and Cristalina's. The size of the cherries looked great along with optimal firmness and rich uniform coloration. The cool nights from unusual Spring had given higher than normal sugar readings.



The Lapins also matured nicely, showing high brix and evenly distributed coloring. Heavy rainfall in June resulted in the fruit being nicely spaced out, which is going to result in great sizing. Lapins are generally the beginning of the busy export season.

The ideal growing season means that the season is expected to run late into September 2013. As of June 2013, the Canadian Cherries have been granted access to a new major market, that will vastly expand the industry possibilities. With British Columbia's warm days, cool nights and excellent looking crop, this season's fruit will be top quality and ideal for these new opportunities.

CHINA

Lychee output to decrease in Guangzhou

Due to prolonged rains in Guangdong province, the output of lychee from Zengcheng (city in Guangzhou), is expected to drop by 40% this year.



Yao Wenhao, deputy director of Zengcheng agricultural bureau, confirmed the steep drop in lychee production, adding that just 7,900 tons will be produced because of persistent heavy rains over the last two months.

Zengcheng is a major production base of the subtropical fruit and its lychee plantations cover 11,470 hectares.

China unveils new food safety program

China is expanding a pilot system that tracks the movement of fresh produce to the supermarket shelf as part of efforts to tighten supervision of its food industry. Under the programme, which is volun-



tary, city government is monitoring the produce as it leaves wholesale markets to make sure the same food arrives at the supermarket and to get unlicensed vendors out of the supply chain.

The system has been set up in 20 cities and is currently being rolled out in another 15 including Beijing. It should cover 50 cities by the end of 2013 stated Li Zhenzhong, deputy chief of the Ministry of Commerce's market supervision department.

Beijing has repeatedly urged more inspections of food processing facilities and meted out tough punishment to those found responsible for safety scandals.

The pilot system uses barcodes as well as tags that allow radio frequency identification (RFID) to transmit information about product batches to a central database. Some experts said that the system would have only limited use because it did not include China's 200 million farmers, where health standards could be low and regulation often has little reach.

Many large retailers run their own audits on what they source from farms. To try to tackle that problem, Beijing is encouraging a move to larger farms and farmers' co-operatives.

Carrefour to open 30 new Chinese stores

Carrefour SA, the world's second-largest retailer by revenue, said that it will set up operations in 30 new Chinese cities in the next three years.

Carrefour announced in March the opening of its first hypermarket in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region to further its penetration into lower tier cities. Currently, it has more than 220 stores in over 60 cities in China.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Good prospects for mango exports to US and EU

Mango varieties such as the Banilejo, Mingolo or Gota de Oro (Gold Drop), among others, have a delicious flavour. Mangoes, just like bananas, are consumed all over the world.

The Dominican Republic welcomed European buyers (from England, Spain and others) at Expo Mango 2013, which is the Dominican mango harvest festival. This year, the event was preceded by the 10th International Mango Symposium, which took place last week in Bávaro and was attended by representatives of 31 countries.

According to the president of the Mango Cluster, Rafael Leger, "mango growing has increased in popularity in the past 5 years and today we have 64,500 hectares planted in 1,300 plantations, which generate more than 3,500 direct jobs and over 225,000 annual wages. Last year, exports reached a value of 9 million dollars. Additionally, the acreage is still expanding."

Leger explains that with the newest technological innovations being introduced by mango producers, they expect to increase productivity and volumes. The Keitt variety is the most popular in the country, because it is of late harvest (takes place when other varieties are about to finish). "There are other late varieties that we may plant in the future. The most demanded creole varieties are the Banilejo, Mingolo and Kent."

The event is organized by the Mango Cluster and supported by the Ministry of



Agriculture, the Centre for Agricultural and Forestry Development (CEDAF), the Dominican Institute of Agricultural and Forestry Research (IDIAF) and the National Council of Agricultural and Forestry Research (CONIAF), among other institutions and producer organisations.

The largest commercial mango plantations are located in the provinces of Peravia, San Cristóbal, Azua and San Juan, which joins close to 90% of the production areas. Some of the main varieties for export include the Tommy Atkins and the Keitt, which are mainly sold in the United States and the UK, as well as other European countries and Caribbean islands.

GERMANY

Germany wants better frozen fruit communication

Germany wants better frozen fruit communication and demands that origin should be noted on frozen fruits and vegetables in future. The ministers of Consumer Protection of the various German states believe it is inexplicable that the origins of fresh fruit is required by law to be noted, but the origins of frozen fruit is not revealed.

The ministers believe that consumers have the right to know where their food comes from. How they judge these origins, is up to them.

Last year in Germany there was a scandal involving frozen strawberries. In September 11,000 children and adults, mostly from Eastern Germany, fell ill after consuming frozen strawberries from China.

Domestic potatoes counter imported Spanish variety

The Spanish potatoes are still very expensive with prices between 80.00 and 85.00 Euro /qt. The demand in Northwest Europe is clearly higher than the supply that Southern Europe can provide. Germany will make the complete switch to domestic potatoes. The demand for new domestic



potatoes is good with prices fluctuating between 70.00 - 74.00 Euro/qt in the Palatinate and Lower Saxony. The prices are around 68.00 and 72.00 Euro /qt in the Rhineland according to the desired cooking quality. The market is still unstable. The only old potatoes for processing that can be found in the market were purchased on contract.

INDIA

Punjab still a long way from banana self-sufficiency

Banana growers in Indian Punjab claim to be profiting heavily from the relatively new crop, but its one-crop-a-year pattern has prevented it from really profiting. Punjab consumes bananas worth Rs 600 crore every year, but produces just 1% on its own six years after its farmers first cultivated the crop.

Farmers who had taken to banana in 2007 claim to be earning Rs 2.5 lakh per acre after selling directly to consumers. Two farmers, Sushil Kumar Malhotra and Mewa Singh Kular, vice-president and president respectively of Banana Growers' Association, claim that the profits of some 60 farmers in Ludhiana attracted businessmen, who they say have taken to growing bananas on vacant land in their farmhouses.

Malhotra and Kular grow the fruit on their 3.5-acre farm in Kular village. "Banana farming in Punjab began in 2007 on about 15 acres of land; last year 350 acres came under banana cultivation. In Ludhiana alone, around 60 farmers have started growing bananas on about two acres each," Kular says.

"Punjab Agriculture University advises us to sow the crop in February so that it can be ready by the end of December,"



he said. "But looking at the changing weather conditions, we have started sowing it by the end of August and September so that the crop can be ready before the festive season and we can get good prices. We have a ripening chamber installed at Kular village, and farmers sell to fruit sellers directly."

Farmers are earning Rs 25-30 a kg for the ripened bananas while the price in mandis is not more than 10-15, they say. At times, however, it is still sent to mandis when there is a bulk order, says Malhotra.

It is anticipated that the time when Punjab is self sufficient in bananas is a long way off.

KENYA

Tomato and onion prices start to fall after large hikes

Tomato and onion prices have dropped in Kenya following the increase in supplies. Persistent bad weather had led to damaged crops and shortages forced prices upwards.

Tomatoes were worst affected, with a 64 kg box retailing for between \$59 and \$95 US.

Now it seems that prices have begun to drop, already lowering the price of a box of tomatoes by as much as \$25.

Despite the recent fall in value, prices have not yet returned to what they were prior to the rainfall.

Onions have also come down in price, but, though they also experienced rises, it was not to the same degree as that seen in tomatoes. In Nairobi a 13 kg bag of onions is currently retailing at \$8 US, down from 9.5 dollars. Further drops are expected over the coming weeks.

MEXICO

Mexican ports estimated to grow 80%

The General Coordination of Ports and Merchant Marine estimated that they would reach 508 million tons of cargo.

According to the General Coordinator of Ports and Merchant Marine, Guillermo Ruiz de Teresa, expectations are that the total load moved through the country's ports, at the end of this six-year period, will increase 80%, achieving a movement of 508 million tons.

The federal official said that, currently, the movement of cargo amounted to 282 million tonnes. He explained that such forecasts are due to the expected economic growth of the country.

"As the President said, Mexico can grow at yearly rates of 5 or 6%, as a result of structural reforms. This implies a cumulative growth of about 40% at the end of this administration," said Ruiz de Teresa.

These port growth figures can be achieved by exploring new mechanisms of cooperation between the public and private sectors, based on the current model within the Ports Act, and also based on the new Federal law on public-private partnerships, he said.



Currently the companies' involvement has focused on the construction and operation of specialized terminals. "But we want them to participate in basic infrastructure, such as the construction of seawalls, dredging, protection, access and maintenance of these facilities."

Thus, "in 2014 we plan to spend 11.184 million pesos on these type of projects, originally with public resources," said Ruiz de Teresa. However they will also pursue projects that are driven by the private sector.

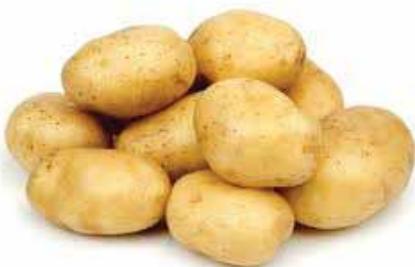
This way, the General Coordinator of Ports and Merchant Marine of the SCT said, "the private investment's participation will spread to other areas in the medium term, such as logistics, connective infrastructure, and to mention another example, facilities for scrapping, repairing and for the construction of ships."

RUSSIA

Citrus production, exports to increase

Russia has temporarily banned potato imports from the EU. An official letter from Russian authorities has been sent to the European Commission's Director for Health and Consumer Protection, Eric Poodle, explaining that the country finds European phytosanitary regulations unsatisfactory.

The situation comes about as a result of an earlier finding of a golden potato nematode in a potato shipment originating in the Netherlands.



SOUTH AFRICA

Citrus production, exports to increase

Due to good weather and rainfall, South African citrus production is expected to increase this season. Good production, along with a weak local currency, has made for increased exports.

South African orange production is expected to reach 1.5 million MT this year, according to a report by the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. That increase over the previous year's production is due to good weather, and combined with a weak rand, exports are also expected to increase. Orange exports for the season are expected to reach 1.1 million MT.

Grapefruit production for the season is expected to reach 410,000 MT due to good rainfall and maturation of new trees. Of that, 225,000 MT will be exported. Because of sluggish demand in Europe due to the economic situation there, South African citrus suppliers are increasingly looking to new markets in Russia and the Middle East.

Like orange exports and grapefruit exports, tangerine and lemon exports are also expected to be healthy at 120,000 MT and 160,000 MT, respectively. That's also due to good seasons for both commodities, with production for the season expected to reach 160,000 MT for tangerines and 260,000 MT for lemons.

TAIWAN

Taiwan to export lychees to Australia

Taiwan, in its bid to increase fruit exports, will commence lychee export to Australia next season. The agricultural officials in the country have announced, "We have had some very positive

response from Australia after 10 years of effort," said Rose Hsiou, deputy director-general of the Department of International Affairs under the Council of Agriculture.

Australian inspectors have already visited Taiwan to view production and their response has led to confidence that exports will be taking place this time next year.

Taiwan currently exports lychees to China, Canada, Japan and Malaysia, with a total annual average of some 1,000 metric tons shipped, according to the council.

USA

Cherry season in Washington off to rocky start

Poor pollination and rain have meant fewer-than-normal quantities of cherries from Washington this month. Demand for fruit has outpaced supplies, but despite diminished quantities this month, growers are hoping July will bring better volumes.

"We've had a diminished crop so far," said Stemilt Growers' Roger Pepperl. "We had poor pollination, and then rain took out some of our June cherries."

While exact numbers on how much of this month's crop was affected weren't available, Pepperl said it was a significant amount. But he noted that Stemilt's cherry season, that's planned to go into late-August or early-September, should see increased volumes of fruit in July.

Similarly, Columbia Marketing International's Bob Mast expects the later half of the season to be much better than the beginning.



"We've been off to a slow start, and we hope to ramp things up when the weather turns," said Mast. "It's going to be important for retailers to catch up with sales that have been lost due to lack of availability, so the hope is to get late season sales going." The weather Mast mentioned has included inopportune rain. While precipitation has slowed down the harvesting of fruit, it's also made for cracked fruit that needs to be culled.

The more fruit that is weeded out because it's cracked, the less fruit available on the market. That's caused problems for retailers who want to take advantage of strong demand ahead of the Fourth of July holiday.

"Supplies from California finished off pretty quickly, so demand for the volume coming out of the Pacific Northwest picked up rapidly," explained Mast. "We're frustrated because retailers want to get fruit into the system for the Fourth of July, so we're looking to transition into our later season varieties." With diminished volumes of fruit, pricing has been high. But less fruit per tree has also meant that the cherries that do make it to stores are larger and of very good quality.

"This is some of the best quality fruit we've seen in a while," said James Michael, vice president of marketing for Northwest Cherries. "Fewer buds and fewer cherries per tree means better quality, so the fruit on shelves is incredible, and that's fueling demand." Increased demand and good quality fruit have been the bright spots to a beginning of the season that has seen lower volumes. Now growers are hoping to get past the rough start and finish the season strong. "It's been a bad June so far," said Pepperl, "but we anticipate having a good July."

USA

Late start to watermelon season in Georgia

Unusual weather during the growing season delayed the start of Georgia's watermelon harvest this month. While growers typically begin harvesting fruit at the beginning of the month, growers reported delays of up to two weeks.

"Harvesting started about two weeks later than in the past," said Greg Leger, owner of Leger and Son, Inc. He cited cold weather that delayed planting as the reason for the late start, and further delays came as a result of rain and cold temperatures throughout the Spring. In addition to delaying this year's harvest, the weather disrupted pollination, which could result in less fruit this year.

A delayed start has brought less fruit to the market. Last week, as harvesting began, prices were higher than usual due to low volumes of fruit. While prices are usually around 17 cents per pound, noted Border Melons East's Mark Paulk, the start of this season has brought prices closer to 22 cents per pound.

"The market is above-average right now," said Paulk. "It's been a slow start in Georgia." Leger said that the slow start has made for high prices, but, more worrisome, it will likely mean that less of this year's crop will be in stores before the Fourth of July. That could be a problem for growers because prices for watermelons typically drop after the holiday.

"Normally, Georgia is about 80% done with watermelons after the Fourth of July," said Leger. "But this year, I'm looking at about 60% done by that time." But Leger also noted that prices tend to drop after the holiday because the market has been saturated by that point. With volumes of fruit being slow to come in this year, he hopes summer demand will remain strong throughout the prolonged season. While the season started late, it's also expected to last a little longer than usual, and Leger believes consumers will still buy melons as long as it's warm out.



"It seems demand follows the weather," said Leger, "because people like to go out and picnic when it's nice out, and they'll buy watermelons. So if the weather's good, demand will be good."

UK

Potato prices continue to be high through 2013 season

There is no real change in the UK potato market, according to Colin Galbraith from Moorhouse and Mohan. The market is still short and the prices in the EU are high with no signs of coming down anytime soon. Some of last season's potatoes are fetching higher prices than new potatoes. "This is just for certain varieties, those for baking and frying in particular.

Old season Maris Piper are selling for as much as £600 farm gate, this is an exceptional price, but in general high prices are dependent on variety and quality.

In the UK imports are coming in from Holland, Belgium, France, Israel and Spain, these potatoes are also, as expected, expensive. New Mallorcan stock is priced at £500 a ton.

According to Galbraith there is no end in sight to the high prices, "Planting in England is already a month behind, with some parts of Scotland even later. Although the last few days we have had ideal conditions, it is forecast to turn cold again at the weekend and that cold Northerly wind will return. What we really need is a good long period of warm dry weather, there is plenty of moisture in the soil."

To add to the problems of a late crop, there will also be less acreage planted. This is due to a high seed price which meant a lot of farmers opted out of planting potatoes. The uncertainty in the market has also contributed.

Galbraith predicts that the high prices will remain for 2013 harvest at least, but there are no guarantees as far as the weather is concerned. ♦