

Product Focus

Sweet Potatoes-HS Code 071420



Sweet potatoes are a sweet root vegetable that is rich in vitamins, potassium and other nutrients. The sweet potato is a dicotyledonous plant that belongs to the bindweed or morning glory family, Convolvulaceae. Its large, starchy, sweet-tasting, tuberous roots are a root vegetable. The young leaves and shoots are sometimes eaten as greens.

OPPORTUNITIES

Sweet potato varieties such as Beauregard and Covington, is currently the main demanded variety. The global import of sweet potatoes increased by 65% in the past five years from US\$339 million in 2014 to US\$563 million in 2018.

The table below highlights major importers regionally and internationally;

International Markets	Regional Markets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ United Kingdom ✓ Netherlands ✓ Canada ✓ France ✓ Germany ✓ Belgium ✓ Japan ✓ United States of America ✓ Thailand ✓ Singapore ✓ Hong Kong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Namibia ✓ Mauritania ✓ Botswana ✓ Seychelles ✓ Niger ✓ Rwanda ✓ South Africa ✓ Guinea Bissau

MARKET ANALYSIS

According to Trademap statistics, COMESA's exports of sweet potatoes to the world has been increasing over the years. Over the past five years, COMESA's exports increased by 72% from US\$13.9 million in 2014 to US\$23.8 million in 2018. The major export markets for COMESA include United Kingdom sourcing 39% of total exports, Netherlands (14%), Saudi Arabia (13%), United Arab Emirates (10%), Jordan (8%), Kuwait (4%), France (6%) and Lebanon (2%), among others.

EXPORT POTENTIAL

In the past years COMESA countries who have been producing and exporting sweet potatoes include:

	Country	Potential Export Markets
1.	Egypt	UK, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Kuwait, France, Lebanon, Bahrain, Oman, Spain, Italy, Slovenia, Germany, Hungary, Romania
2.	Uganda	Rwanda, South Sudan
3.	Madagascar	France, Comoros
4.	Kenya	Somalia, Qatar, Norway, United Kingdom, Djibouti, United Arab Emirates, Uganda
5.	DRC	Belgium, Switzerland, Burundi, Rwanda

Generally, COMESA has potential to increase export of sweet potatoes to the world considering the favourable climatic conditions suitable to organically grow the sweet potatoes.

PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS



Packaging requirements differ between customers and market segments. They must at least be packed to protect the produce properly, in new, clean and quality packaging to prevent damage to the product.

Wholesale packaging in cardboard boxes or crates. In European retail outlets, sweet potatoes are usually sold out of the wholesale box or in plastic crates. More recently, sweet potatoes have also become available in consumer packing (sealed plastic).

LABELLING REQUIREMENTS

- a) Name of Food
- b) Net Quantity
- c) Country of Origin
- d) Name under which the product is sold
- e) Minimum durability date
- f) Storage conditions

Labelling can include a nutritional declaration which shall cover the following contents:

- energy value
- the amounts of fat, saturates, carbohydrate, sugars, protein and salt

NB: Labels cannot contain any toxic ink or glue

STANDARDS

Exporters are urged to comply with food quality and safety standards such as Global GAP, Fair Trade and Sustainable Agriculture Network:

- a) **GLOBAL G.A.P. Crops (*Global Good Agricultural Practice*)**: the standard is primarily designed to reassure consumers about how food is produced on the farm by minimising detrimental environmental impacts of farming operations, reducing the use of chemical inputs and ensuring a responsible approach to worker health and safety as well as animal welfare.
- b) **Fair Trade International**: an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that promotes sustainable development and poverty alleviation and sets the Fairtrade standards. One organization (FLO-CERT) is responsible for auditing and certification of compliance against the Fairtrade standards.
- c) **Sustainable Agriculture Network - Rainforest Alliance**: network of conservation groups committed to community-based conservation initiatives and research. The certification program for SAN standards is operated by Rainforest Alliance.

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