

# Product Focus

## Avocados -HS Code 0804400



Avocados (*Persea Americana*) are green or brown skinned, pear-shaped or egg-shaped fruits that ripen after harvesting. The fruit can self-pollinate because of dichogamy in its flowering and this added to the long juvenile period, makes the species difficult to breed. Most varieties are propagated by grafting.

The avocado is popular in vegetarian cuisine as a substitute for meats in sandwiches and salads because of its high fat content. Generally, the fruit is served raw, though some varieties like the Hass can be cooked for a short time without becoming bitter. Their potential health benefits include improving digestion, decreasing risk of depression and protection against cancer.

### VARIETIES

#### Commercial varieties

- Hass (Guatemalan)
- Fuerte (hybrid)
- Ettinger (hybrid)
- Pinkerton (hybrid)

#### Minor commercial varieties

- Reed (Guatemalan)
- Ryan (Mexican/Guatemalan)
- Zutano (Mexican)

The Hass avocado, a Guatemalan race with pebbled black skin, is the main planted variety today. There are new Hass varieties available, such as Lavi Hass, Lamb Hass and Gem Hass. These Hass sub-varieties help extend the supply season.

## OPPORTUNITIES

The global import of avocados almost doubled in the period 2014 to 2018 from US\$3.4 billion to US\$6 billion. The table below highlights major importers regionally and internationally;

International Markets	Regional Markets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States of America</li> <li>• Netherlands</li> <li>• France</li> <li>• Germany</li> <li>• Spain</li> <li>• United Kingdom</li> <li>• Canada</li> <li>• Japan</li> <li>• China</li> <li>• Belgium</li> <li>• United Arab Emirates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morocco</li> <li>• South Africa</li> <li>• Egypt</li> <li>• Namibia</li> <li>• Botswana</li> <li>• Kenya</li> </ul>

## MARKET ANALYSIS

According to Trademap statistics, COMESA's exports of avocados to the world has been increasing over the years. Over the past five years, COMESA's exports increased by 219% from US\$38 million in 2014 to US\$123 million in 2018. The major export markets for COMESA include Netherlands sourcing 35% of total exports, United Arab Emirates (14%), France (12%), Spain (9%), United Kingdom (8%), Russia (7%), Saudi Arabia (6%) and South Africa (2%), among others.

Global supply of avocados is highest from February to September, when prices are lower than during the rest of the year. In periods of low global supplies, especially in October and November, prices of small volumes of ready-to-eat avocados tend to increase their prices to approximately US\$15 per 4kg box.

## EXPORT POTENTIAL

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

	Country	Potential Export Markets
1.	Kenya	Netherlands, UAE, France, Spain, Russia, UK, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Egypt, Singapore, Turkey, Hong Kong, Qatar, Oman, Denmark
2.	Zimbabwe	Netherlands, France, UK, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Belgium, Poland, Spain, UAE, Czech Republic, Austria, Ukraine

3.	Egypt	United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, UAE, Jordan, Oman, Bahrain, Mauritius, Kuwait, Seychelles, Kenya, Iraq
4.	Eswatini	United Kingdom, Netherlands, South Africa, France, Poland, Ukraine, Austria, Czech Republic, Serbia, Norway
5.	Rwanda	UAE, Belgium, United Kingdom, China, France, Kenya
6.	Ethiopia	Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, UAE, France, Kuwait, Germany
7.	Uganda	Sudan, DRC, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Belgium, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Netherlands, Germany, Maldives, Kuwait, France, Czech Republic, Estonia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Egypt, Norway

Countries with potential to increase their exports include Burundi, Mauritius, Zambia and Tunisia.

Generally, COMESA has potential to increase export of avocados to the world considering the favourable climatic conditions suitable to organically grow avocados. Avocados are a crop/tree that most easily lends itself to organic practices because of the relatively low pest pressure, low nutrient demand and low weed pressure when mature.

## 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) **HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points),** Requirements for the hygiene of food is laid down and states the general hygiene procedures for food at all stages of the production process from primary production to the world consumer (“*from-farm-to-fork approach*”).
- c) **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.
- d) **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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