

Fresh produce from Ghana: poised to be the preferred consumer choice.

A trip to Ghana, the home of colorful kente fabric, will offer opportunity to enjoy the variety of natural tropical fruits and vegetables needed for health and nutrition. Ghana is determined to produce top quality produce and share these with the rest of the world. There is much optimism that the young and buoyant horticulture industry is poised to take leadership and position Ghana as the preferred destination for sourcing exotic fruits and vegetables. The fruits sub-sector is the most developed among the non-traditional horticultural export products contributing a greater share of foreign exchange. Pineapples have driven the performance of this sector and other emerging fruits in the Ghanaian horticulture are mango and papaya.



The inherent contributory factors to Ghana's repositioning include her favourable climate for the production of fruits and vegetables and geographical location which allows for low freight charges thus improving competitiveness. The stable political and social system, low labour costs, qualified human resources and availability of technical assistance are the other factors.

The last five years have seen a total transformation of the sector and several activities have led to the current optimism. The total volume of exports has doubled during the period and this may be attributed to the private sector-led management of sea freight logistics and the diversification of air freight into higher value products such as Asian vegetables and minimally processed fruits. Industry is awakening to the realities of the international agri-business and steps are actively being taken to increase competitiveness.

The activities which have contributed to this positive trend include:

- the formation of produce associations providing services to its members.
- the development of horticultural industry code of practice through private sector initiative.
- the development of grades and standards for horticultural products
- the formulation of inspection manuals and inspection schemes;
- skills and capacity building to promote food safety and other market requirements,
- the formation of a national horticultural task force, a private-sector-led group which provides a unified front;

- increase in infrastructure investments for the efficient functioning through the new horticultural export industry initiative and
- strong government, private sector and donor commitment and support.

Produce and Marketing Associations:

Produce and marketing associations with interest in specific commodities have been recognized as important in fashioning strategic plans and addressing critical issues peculiar to the commodity. Several produce/marketing associations exist in Ghana. These include the Sea Freight Pineapple Exporters (SPEG), Horticulturist Association (HAG), the Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association and the Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters (FAGE). In the past year an association representing the Papaya and Mango Producers and Exporters (PAMPEAG) was formed to support this emerging sector. These associations have been key in mobilizing private sector inputs to guide the process of change and improvement.



Code of Practice: In 2000 a code of practice for the horticultural sector was developed by the Ghana Working Committee on Ethical Trade with support from the Natural Resources Institute of U.K. The rationale for the code is to ensure that horticultural exports from Ghana meet the food safety and social and environmental requirements of the major trading partners. The code is also to ensure that the interest of the Ghanaian industry is protected.

Grades and Standards: A recent output for guidance and regulation of the industry is the development of standards for eight horticultural products. This activity which was through a public-private partnership was led by the Ghana Standards Board and funded through the Ghana Private-Public Partnership Food Industry Development Program with funding from USAID. The industry is now looking at inspection manuals and the implementation of an inspection scheme. These activities are to assure consumers of consistent, safe and high quality produce.

Skills Development: The industry has witnessed several training and capacity-building programs. Skills development has been through training, (cold chain and logistics, food safety, standards and regulation, EurepGAP etc.) attendance at trade shows and study tours through the support of government, donor agencies and the private sector

National Horticultural Task Force (NHTF): This is a broad-based private sector-led group with representation from produce and marketing organizations, public sector institutions and the donor community. The task

force is a forum for dialogue, sharing of challenges and the taking of joint actions to address these challenges. In addition the NHTF acts as a lobbying force for the sector and identifies needs for capacity building. Since its inception in 2003, it has been instrumental in initiating discussions on a “National Quality Assurance Scheme” for horticultural products. This activity had led to the initiation of the GhanaGAP program to address issues on quality , safety and traceability.

Horticultural Exports Industry Initiative (HEII); This is a Government of Ghana initiative under the Agricultural Services Sub-sector Investment Program (AgSSIP). This initiative has four objectives:

- Market share expansion through introduction of new varieties (MD2, golden papaya), infrastructure improvement (cold chain) and developing quality management systems.
- Consolidation of competitiveness through improved seed stocks, shipping logistics, irrigation; development of traceability and pest management systems.
- Diversification of export products.
- Integration of industry stakeholders and provision of technical, logistical services along the supply chain.

Under HEII there is a strong commitment to improve infrastructure, such as port handling, storage and logistics. These include improvements to the current facility at the Tema port (Shed 9) including installation of cold storage facilities; the construction of a full service perishable cargo at the

airport and the construction of field packing sheds to provide services (packing, warehousing and cold storage)to small-holder farmers. These are to preserve quality and increase competitiveness.

Fruit Logistica 2006.

Ghana intends to participate and present a united horticultural sector at Fruitlogistica 2006. Participants are invited to interact with the Ghanaian delegation and learn more about business opportunities.

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