

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

Required Report - public distribution

Date: 11/25/2009

GAIN Report Number: AR9025

Argentina

FRESH DECIDUOUS FRUIT ANNUAL

2009

Approved By:

David Mergen

Prepared By:

Maria Julia Balbi

Report Highlights:

Argentina's CY 2010 fresh apple and pear production is expected to decrease due to unfavorable weather conditions, and table grape production is projected to increase due to higher yields. Exports of apples and pears are estimated to remain stable and table grape exports are forecast to increase. Import permit requirements have been affecting fruit exports to Brazil.

Executive Summary:

For CY 2010, Post forecasts a decrease in fresh apple production to 800,000 MT

due to late frosts and strong winds. Fresh pear production will decrease slightly to 750,000 MT, as unfavorable weather conditions did not affect pear as much as apple plantations. Table grape production is estimated to increase to 140,000 MT as a result of higher yields. Apple and pear exports are forecast to remain stable as local exporters do not expect a significant recovery of export markets, while table grape exports are expected to increase. Import permit requirements have been affecting fruit exports to Brazil.

Commodities:

Apples, Fresh

Pears, Fresh

Grapes, Table, Fresh

Apple Juice, Concentrated

Select

Production:

CY 2010 fresh apple production is estimated to decrease to 800,000 MT due to late frosts, which affected blossoms, and strong winds in 2009. Fresh pear production is expected to decrease slightly to 750,000 MT, as unfavorable weather conditions did not affect pear as much as apple plantations. In addition, overall pear plantations are younger than apple plantations which make them more resistant to unfavorable climate. Fresh table grape production is forecast to rebound to 140,000 MT as a result of higher yields resulting from good weather conditions.

CY 2009 fresh apple production is projected to increase to 940,000 MT and fresh pear production to 760,000 MT, compared to the previous year, as a result of higher yields resulting from good weather conditions in 2008, and new plantations entering production. Both the apple and pear production were expected to be larger, but over 80,000 MT of fruit (primarily pears) were reportedly lost due to a labor dispute over salaries and very low prices paid to producers, which resulted in fruit remaining unharvested. Table grape production is estimated to decrease to 120,000 MT due to excess rain during the harvest season, as well as late frosts and high temperatures.

Apple juice concentrate (AJC) production in CY 2010 is expected to decrease to 40,000 MT due to a smaller supply of fruit for processing, especially of Red Delicious variety. AJC in CY 2009 is forecast to remain stable at 45,000 MT, compared to CY 2008. Although apple production was larger, there were significant volumes of fruit which were not harvested due to low prices and increased harvest costs, particularly during the labor union conflict with harvesters.

Table 1. Apple Production						
	CY 2008		CY 2009		CY 2010	
	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)
Mendoza Province	4,000	85,000	4,500	94,000	4,500	80,000
Southern Valley	27,000	765,000	27,500	846,000	27,500	720,000
Total	31,000	850,000	32,000	940,000	32,000	800,000

Source: FAS Buenos Aires

Table 2. Pear Production						
	CY 2008		CY 2009		CY 2010	
	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)
Mendoza	5,000	110,000	5,000	115,000	5,000	110,000
Southern Valley	22,000	610,000	22,000	645,000	22,000	640,000
Total	27,000	720,000	27,000	760,000	27,000	750,000

Source: FAS Buenos Aires

Table 3. Table Grape Production						
	CY 2008		CY 2009		CY 2010	
	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)
San Juan Province - Total	9,500	145,000	10,000	120,000	10,000	140,000

Source: FAS Buenos Aires

Table 4. Concentrated Apple Juice			
	CY 2008	CY 2009	CY 2010
Production	45,000 (+Beg. Stocks 3,633)	45,000 (+Beginning Stocks: 2,300)	40,000 (Beg. Stocks 1,800)
Exports	43,000	42,000	37,000
Imports	0	0	0
Domestic Consumption	3,333	3,500	3,500

Source: FAS Buenos Aires

Organic fresh apple and pear production, destined for niche export markets, has been growing steadily during the past few years -- despite 30-percent higher production costs

compared to conventional fruit production (production costs for organic apples and pears have increased by over 300 percent since 2001). This trend is expected to continue, primarily to supply high-value export markets, such as the U.S. and EU. During this harvest season, a local company sent the first shipment of organic apples for processing to Spain. The industry expects that this export will facilitate the opening of other export markets for organic fruit for processing.

Conventional fruit production costs in CY 2008 increased by about 35 percent and, in CY 2009, they are estimated to go up another 25 percent. Except for international freight costs, all of the other costs of the fruit activity increased significantly during the current season. The highest increases were for labor (+26 percent – labor represents 40 percent of total production costs), followed by energy, and fertilizers. The industry is hoping that the GOA will further devalue the Argentine peso to become more competitive in international markets.

This season, a fixed farm-gate price of \$0.29/kg of fruit was set jointly by the Secretariat of Fruit Production of the Province of Rio Negro, the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA, in Spanish) and the University of Comahue. However, the actual price that producers received was around \$0.15/kg, which made the business increasingly unprofitable. As a result, there is a gradual concentration in fruit growing, primarily in Rio Negro and Neuquen Provinces, and smaller producers tend to disappear.

Varieties

Among the bicolor apples, only some Gala and Braeburn clones have succeeded in Argentina. Others, like Fuji, Jonagold and Elstar, did not adapt well to local conditions. Among yellow apples, Golden Delicious is the classic variety. Although it adapted well to Argentina's production conditions, this variety has lost popularity due to marketing problems. Among the red varieties, Red Delicious is the most widespread variety in Argentina. Since it is sterile, it must be crossed with other varieties such as Gala, Fuji, Elstar, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Jonathan and Ozarkgold. In Argentina, many Red Delicious clones such as Starkrimson, Red Chief, Hi Early, Top Red Delicious, Oregon Spur, or Red King Oregon and Cooper 8, have been adopted. The second most important apple variety in Argentina is Granny Smith with 20 percent of the planted area.

Among the most popular pear varieties, Bartlett accounts for 35 percent of the Argentine pear production followed by Packham's Triumph. Other varieties are: Red Sensation, Red Bartlett, Beurré D'Anjou, Red Anjou, Abate Fetel (Abbé Fetel), Conference, General Leclerc, and Forelle.

The most popular table grape varieties are Superior Seedless and Red Globe (mostly exported), while the varieties Cherry and Moscatel are devoted to the domestic market.

Factors Affecting Industry Structure

As mentioned previously, at the beginning of CY 2009 harvest season over 80,000 MT of apples and pears were lost as a consequence of low prices and the trade union conflict over salary increases with Alto Valle harvesters, followed by an 11-day strike by packing plant operators. The Argentine Chamber of Integrated Fruit and Vegetable Producers (CAFI, in Spanish) estimates that the Alto Valle fruit sector lost over \$30 million as a result of the labor dispute.

Fruit shipments in 2008 were disrupted during the Argentine farm strike, which affected transportation throughout the country for extended periods during March to June of 2008. Transportation has returned to normal since the end of the farm strike.

Consumption:

Domestic Consumption

Domestic consumption of apples and pears in CY 2010 is expected to remain stable, and table grape consumption is projected to remain at similar levels.

For CY 2009, domestic consumption is projected to increase for apples and pears a result of larger production and smaller exports and, in the case of apples, due to the impact of local marketing campaigns. For table grapes, consumption is expected to decrease due to smaller production.

AJC is forecast to increase in CY 2009 and remain stable in CY 2010 as a result of the expansion of the Argentine beverage industry during the past few years.

Trade:

Trade

CY 2010 apple and pear exports are forecast to remain stable as local exporters do not have great expectations about the recovery of export markets, added to the fact that domestic prices in CY 2009 have been relatively high, especially for apples, which fosters competition with exports. Table grape exports are projected to rebound in CY 2010, following the recovery of export markets for this type of fruit.

CY 2009 apple and pear exports are estimated to fall to 200,000 MT (apples) and 410,000 MT (pears) due to the impact of the global economic crisis, which has been reducing world demand; the devaluation, vis-a-vis the U.S. dollar, of local currencies in several export markets during the shipping season, such as Brazil, Russia, and the EU; large apple production in the Northern Hemisphere countries; and the labor union conflict in Argentina between producers and fruit harvesters, followed by another conflict with packing plant operators during the harvest season. Table grape exports for

CY 2009 are estimated to decrease as a result of lower production and the impact of the crisis.

CY 2010 AJC exports are forecast to decrease to 37,000 MT, compared to the previous year, as a result of smaller production. CY 2009 AJC exports are expected to decrease slightly to 42,000 MT due to lower supply. Local processors do not foresee a significant decrease of the demand in the U.S., the largest (and almost only) export market for Argentine AJC, as a consequence of the current international economic crisis.

Table 5. Fresh Apples Exports – Main Destinations						
Partner Country	2007		2008		Jan-Aug 2009	
	USD	MT	USD	MT	USD	MT
World	157,929,159	283,067	174,025,382	235,738	124,418,168	177,867
E.U.	64,446,296	110,365	61,088,205	79,107	43,801,381	57,481
Russia	34,771,599	67,319	47,442,969	72,100	26,882,623	41,843
Algeria	9,045,923	17,601	12,676,797	18,589	23,279,090	34,588
Brazil	35,143,923	58,352	39,471,166	45,210	19,352,842	26,583
Norway	4,104,897	7,290	4,500,631	6,247	4,381,966	6,375

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 6. Fresh Pears Exports – Main Destinations						
Partner Country	2007		2008		Jan- Aug 2009	
	USD	MT	USD	MT	USD	MT
World	269,499,810	454,005	336,526,670	463,809	305,206,460	421,166
E.U.	90,083,694	157,224	113,946,401	162,872	119,022,735	162,896
Brazil	73,359,061	112,901	98,864,616	121,605	76,262,861	104,092
Russia	49,521,368	94,991	75,555,129	116,088	64,597,604	95,775
United States	35,480,243	59,967	26,974,389	38,444	29,658,083	38,742

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 7. Fresh Table Grape Exports – Main Destinations						
Partner Country	2007		2008		Jan-Aug 2009	
	USD	MT	USD	MT	USD	MT
World	62,038,753	60,000	88,640,188	69,657	49,361,417	40,240
E.U.	37,155,831	33,000	51,665,653	38,947	30,666,999	23,414
Brazil	7,312,167	8,000	10,209,443	8,925	7,554,598	7,200
Russia	12,345,464	12,000	23,442,506	18,663	8,227,902	6,898

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 8. Apple Juice Concentrate Exports – Main destinations						
Partner Country	2007		2008		Jan-Sep 2009	
	USD	MT	USD	MT	USD	MT
World	63,651,830	57,857	72,515,799	42,931	31,522,511	30,612
United States	59,860,102	54,494	69,965,988	41,431	30,199,497	29,714
E.U.	625,959	382	579,952	247	736,587	397

Trinidad & Tobago	472,106	477	409,989	280	263,253	287
Russia	672,006	686	1,090,672	734	143,898	99

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

The EU, Russia, and Brazil continue to be the main export destinations for Argentine fruit, although exports have decreased, both in volume and value, in January-August 2009, compared to the same period of 2008. Algeria has become a relatively significant market for Argentine apples, with total imports during the above period of about 35,000 MT. This alternative market has proved to be very useful to compensate for the lower demand in most export markets, primarily Russia.

Fresh deciduous fruit imports continue to be negligible. In CY 2008, imports were as follows:

	MT	\$
Apples	795	617,827
Pears	45	35,250
Table Grapes	1,736	2,638,642

Policy:

Policy

Import and Export Regulations

On December 22, 2008, President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner announced a new package of stimulus measures for the Argentine agricultural sector. The measures affecting fruit and vegetables were published in the Official Bulletin, Decrees Nos. 38/2008 and 40/2008, on December 31, 2008. They established that the export tax for pears, apples, peaches, citrus fruit, grapes, blueberries, strawberries, onions, frozen potatoes, beans and pulses were reduced by 50 percent (i.e. fresh deciduous fruit and stone fruit currently pay a 5 percent export tax, while citrus fruit and vegetables pay 2.5 percent).

Post does not expect the changes announced to have a significant impact on overall fruit production. Export taxes for these products were already relatively low (5 percent to 10 percent). Part of Argentina's 5 percent export tax on apples, pears, and table grapes is rebated depending on the size of the container. The export tax for AJC is 5 percent, with part of the tax also rebated depending on the size of the container.

Table 9. Fresh Apples (0808.10) & Pears (0808.20)	
Outside the Mercosur area	
Import Tariff (%)	10.00
Statistical Tax (%)	0.50
Export tax (%)	5.00
Export Rebate (%) Bulk (apples)	3.40
Export Rebate (%) Bulk (pears)	2.70
Export Rebate (%) Cases containing between 2.5 Kg. and 20 Kg.	5.00
Cases containing 2.5 Kg. or less	6.00
Within the Mercosur area	
Import tariff (%)	0.00
Export tax (%)	10.00
Export Rebate (%) Bulk (apples)	3.40
Export Rebate (%) Bulk (pears)	2.70
Export Rebate (%) Cases containing between 2.5 and 20 kg.	5.00
Cases containing 2.5 kg. or less	6.00

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from Tarifar

Table 10. Fresh Table Grapes (0806.10)	
Outside the Mercosur area	
Import Tariff (%)	10.00
Statistical Tax (%)	0.50
Export tax (%)	5.00
Export Rebate (%) Bulk	2.70
Export Rebate (%) Cases containing between 2.5 Kg. and 20 Kg.	4.05
Cases containing 2.5 Kg. or less	6.00
Within the Mercosur Area	
Import tariff (%)	0.00
Export tax (%)	5.00
Export Rebate (%) Bulk	2.70
Export Rebate (%) Cases containing between 2.5 and 20 kg.	4.05
Cases containing 2.5 kg. or less	6.00

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from Tarifar

Table 11. Concentrated Apple Juice (2009.79)	
Outside the Mercosur Area	
Import Tariff (%)	14.00
Statistical Tax (%)	0.50
Export tax (%)	5.00
Export Rebate (%) Containers larger than 1 liter	5.00
Containers of 1 liter or less	6.00
Within the Mercosur Area	
Import tariff (%)	0.00
Export tax (%)	5.00
Export Rebate (%) Containers larger than 1 liter	5.00
Containers of 1 liter or less	6.00

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from Tarifar

Export/Import Restrictions and Phytosanitary Issues

The Government of Brazil recently imposed new import restrictions which are affecting Argentine fruit. The second half of the year is when exports to Brazil become increasingly frequent. Special permits must be requested to allow the entry of trucks carrying fruit and other agricultural products. According to private sources, the issuance of those permits may be delayed about two months. The GOA is currently negotiating a solution to this issue with the Government of Brazil. During the period January-August 2009, Argentine apple and pear exports to Brazil totaled 130,000 MT (pears accounting for 80 percent of total exports).

Russia (one of the primary export markets for Argentine fresh fruit) implemented a “temporary import restriction” for Argentine apples, pears, table grapes, and citrus fruit until they complied with lower pesticide MRLs, starting October 1, 2008. The new MRL levels are more stringent than those required by the E.U., Japan, Canada, and the U.S, among other countries. The local industry was initially highly concerned about this new measure as, during the past few years, Russia had a significant market share of total Argentine fruit exports. However, local producers have been adjusting well to the new measure during the current season.

About two years ago, GOA phytosanitary authorities implemented a National *Carpocapsa* Eradication Program, which has managed to keep the plague under control.

Government Support to Producers

In 2002, the Government of Neuquen Province implemented a voluntary Compensation Fund for Fruit Producers for producers who want to insure, at least, part of their harvest against hail damage. If over 50 percent of the harvest is damaged, the fund will cover the full harvest. Over 90 percent of producers have participated in this Fund. The Government of Rio Negro Province has a similar system to help fruit producers face challenges affecting the sector.

Marketing:

Prices

During the period January-September 2009, international prices for fresh deciduous fruit fell significantly, especially in the second quarter of the year, due to the decrease of

world demand and the impact of the financial crisis. AJC prices were significantly lower throughout the above period, especially in July and September, when they decreased by around 50 percent.

The following tables show average export prices for CY 2008 and Jan-Sep 2009:

Table 12. FOB Prices (US\$/MT)		
Fresh Apples		
Month	2008	Jan-Sep 2009
Jan	691	815
Feb	688	725
Mar	672	691
Apr	713	714
May	765	703
Jun	793	679
Jul	828	654
Aug	862	658
Sep	898	679
Oct	887	
Nov	862	
Dec	859	
Average	793	
Exchange rate	3.82	Local currency/US\$1
Date of Quote	11/17/2009	

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 13. FOB Prices (US\$/MT)		
Fresh Pears		
Month	2008	Jan-Sep 2009
Jan	678	734
Feb	650	705
Mar	672	717
Apr	706	715
May	749	726
Jun	828	749
Jul	925	807
Aug	918	832
Sep	998	864
Oct	1,000	
Nov	992	

Dec	994	
Average	843	
Exchange rate	3.82	Local currency/US\$1
Date of Quote	11/18/2009	

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 14. FOB Prices (US\$/MT) Fresh Table Grapes		
Month	2008	Jan-Sep 2009
Jan	1,289	1,280
Feb	1,208	1,164
Mar	1,167	1,092
Apr	1,,221	1,152
May	1,179	1,031
Jun	1,723	1,235
Jul	0	2,485
Aug	0	479
Sep	0	0
Oct	0	
Nov	1,518	
Dec	1,405	
Average	1,339	
Exchange rate	3.82	Local currency/US\$1
Date of Quote	11/18/2009	

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 15. FOB Prices (US\$/MT) Apple Juice Concentrate		
Month	2008	Jan-Sep 2009
Jan	1,070	1,048
Feb	1,935	1,284
Mar	1,328	1,181
Apr	1,906	1,187
May	1,759	1,077
Jun	1,784	1,635
Jul	1,751	862
Aug	1,565	1,008
Sep	1,738	864

Oct	1,552	
Nov	1,702	
Dec	1,511	
Average	1,633	
Exchange rate	3.82	Local currency/US\$1
Date of Quote	11/18/2009	

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

The following table illustrates retail prices for apple, pear, and table grape varieties most widely sold in Argentina:

	Variety	Price (US\$/Kg) (Superior Quality)
Pears	Packam	2.15
	William's	2.45
Apples	Red Delicious	2.13
	Granny Smith	2.10
	Gala	2.10
	Golden	NA
Table Grapes	Red Globe (imported from Chile)	7.85

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from local supermarkets

The following table illustrates wholesale prices for all varieties of fresh apples, pears, and table grapes:

	2007			2008			2009		
	Apples	Pears	Grapes	Apples	Pears	Grapes	Apples	Pears	Grapes
January	0.49	0.52	0.58	0.85	0.71	0	1.70	2.45	2.09
February	0.53	0.40	0.44	0.89	0.53	0.65	1.78	1.92	1.93
March	0.38	0.34	0.37	0.83	0.48	0.59	1.82	1.84	1.91
April	0.40	0.36	0.45	0.88	0.49	0.61	2.16	1.76	0
May	0.45	0.42	0.51	0.89	0.56	0.69	2.36	1.84	2.31

June	0.46	0.38	0.49	0.99	0.60	0	2.58	1.88	0
July	0.52	0.42	0.56	0.99	0.67	0	2.58	2.16	0
August	0.50	0.43	0	1.10	0.71	0	2.72	2.34	0
September	0.54	0.48	0	1.11	0.81	0	2.65	2.25	0
October	0.59	0.54	0	1.02	0.79	0			
November	0.65	0.59	0	1.29	0.98	0			
December	0.72	0.62	0	0.60	1.06	0			
Annual Average	0.52	0.46	0.49	0.95	0.70	0.64			

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data provided by the Buenos Aires Central Market

Production, Supply and Demand Data Statistics:

Fresh Apples, Argentina	2007			2008			2009		
	2007/2008			2008/2009			2009/2010		
	Market Year Begin: Jan 2008			Market Year Begin: Jan 2009			Market Year Begin: Jan 2010		
	USDA Official Data	Old Post	New Post	USDA Official Data	Old Post	New Post	USDA Official Data	Jan	
			Data			Data			Data
Area Planted	31,000	31,000	31,000	32,000	32,000	32,000			32,000
Area Harvested	26,000	26,000	26,000	26,000	26,000	26,000			26,000
Bearing Trees	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000			27,000
Non-Bearing Trees	4,500	4,500	4,500	5,000	5,000	5,000			5,000
Total Trees	31,500	31,500	31,500	32,000	32,000	32,000			32,000
Commercial Production	850,000	850,000	850,000	940,000	940,000	940,000			800,000
Non-Comm. Production	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Production	850,000	850,000	850,000	940,000	940,000	940,000			800,000
Imports	760	760	795	0	0	1,000			1,000
Total Supply	850,760	850,760	850,795	940,000	940,000	941,000			801,000
Fresh Dom. Consumption	264,760	260,760	260,000	280,000	280,000	270,000			270,000
Exports	236,000	240,000	236,000	250,000	250,000	200,000			200,000
For Processing	350,000	350,000	354,795	410,000	410,000	471,000			331,000
Withdrawal From Market	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Total Distribution	850,760	850,760	850,795	940,000	940,000	941,000			801,000
TS=TD			0			0			0
Comments									
AGR Number									

Comments To Post

Units of Measure: Hectares, Thousand Trees, and Metric tons

Fresh Pears, Argentina	2007			2008			2009		
	2007/2008			2008/2009			2009/2010		
	Market Year Begin: Jan 2008			Market Year Begin: Jan 2008			Market Year Begin: Jan 2010		
	USDA Official	Old	New Post	USDA Official	Old	New Post	USDA Official	Jan	

