



Avocado in Europe

PRACTICAL MARKET INSIGHTS INTO YOUR PRODUCT



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Avocados have become a standard product for European retailers. The demand for avocados is strong and still rising. More and more suppliers from new avocado countries try to enter the European market. With competition becoming more intense, occasional oversupply becomes unavoidable. In the next years, you will see the avocado market mature further with more focus on fruit ripening and higher standards.

Exporters from developing countries can profit from the growing imports of fresh avocados. Good opportunities exist for ready-to-eat avocados. Additionally, exporters can differentiate themselves on the market with organic certification.

1 Product description

AVOCADO VARIETY: HASS



AVOCADO VARIETY: FUERTE



Source: [Avocado Information Kit](#)

Avocado trees (*Persea Americana*) are grown for their edible fruits and are native to Central America. Worldwide, the trees are cultivated in countries with tropical and Mediterranean climates. These include countries in South America (e.g. Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Peru and Colombia), Africa (e.g. Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa), Asia and the Middle East (e.g. Indonesia and Israel), Europe (Spain), the USA and Australia.

Avocados are green- or brown-skinned and pear-shaped, egg-shaped or spherical. The fruits ripen after harvesting. Various cultivars or varieties are available of the fruit. In Europe, the green Hass and Fuerte varieties are preferred. There is an increasing popularity of Hass, globally the most common variety. New Hass varieties are bred, such as Lavi Hass, Lamb Hass and Gem Hass. Such Hass sub-varieties help extend the supply season. Other commercially relevant varieties include Ettinger and Pinkerton.

Avocados are best known as the basic ingredient for guacamole, an avocado-based sauce which originated from Mexico and is used as a dip or condiment. Additionally, avocados are used in salads, on sandwiches and as spreads.

Classification of avocados according to the Harmonized System (HS)

HS code	Description
08044000	Avocados, fresh or dried

2 Product specifications

2.1 GENERAL QUALITY STANDARDS

A good source for understanding and defining the quality of avocados is the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) standard. In the [UNECE standard FFV 42](#), avocados are categorised into three classes:

1. "Extra" Class = superior quality
2. Class I = good quality
3. Class II = satisfying minimum requirements

The minimum requirements for fresh avocados are that they are intact, sound, clean and free from: pests, damage caused by pests (affecting the flesh), damage caused by low temperature, external moisture, and any foreign odour and/or taste. The avocados must also have a stalk no more than 10 mm in length, cleanly cut off. If the place of stalk attachment is dry and intact, stalk absence is not a defect.

At the very least, avocados should comply with the general quality requirements. In Europe, almost all buyers exclusively require Class I as a minimum. Permissible tolerances for Class I avocados include slight defects in shape and in colour, slight skin defects (corkiness, healed

lenticels) and sunburn, provided they are not progressive (the maximum total area should not exceed 4 cm²). The stalk, if present, may be slightly damaged. Furthermore, a tolerance of 10% is allowed for fruit that meets Class II standards as well as 10% in number or weight for avocados not meeting the sizing requirements.

Generally, the condition and development of the avocados must be in such a state that they can withstand transportation and handling and arrive in a satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

TIP Read the different but similar internationally recognized standards and apply them:

- + UNECE standard FFV 42 on fresh avocados
- + OECD International Standardisation of Fruit and Vegetables – Avocados
- + WHO/FAO's Codex Alimentarius standard for avocados

2.2 CULTIVATION AND MATURITY

Avocados do not ripen on the tree. Instead they need to be harvested when they are immature. The fruits are harvested when a minimum level of dry matter content exists. For Hass, this is 21%, although European importers prefer 23%. Fuerte and Pinkerton, two other popular varieties in Europe, can be harvested at 19% dry matter. To determine this percentage, one should weigh a part of avocado flesh, before drying this to a point when no further weight loss occurs. What is left is the dry matter of the avocado. The percentage of this weight compared to the weight measure before drying determines the percentage of dry matter.

Once harvested, avocados are sensitive and their quality deteriorates quickly. This can be due to damages to the fruit, high temperatures, moisture (resulting in mould, rotting and spoilage), odour, inadequate ventilation or unclean containers.

The avocado size is determined by weight or count of the fruit (see Table 1). According to the UNECE standard, the minimum weight for avocados is 123g for most varieties. Two exceptions are the Hass variety, with a minimum weight of 80g, and Antillean varieties, with a minimum weight of 170g.

TABLE 1:
SIZE CODES FOR AVOCADOS

Source:
UNECE standard FFV 42 on fresh avocados and WHO/FAO's Codex Alimentarius standard for avocados

Size code	Weight range (gr)	Size code	Weight range (gr)
4	781 to 1,220	20	184 to 217
6	576 to 780	22	165 to 196
8	456 to 576	24	151 to 175
10	364 to 462	26	144 to 157
12	364 to 462	28	134 to 147
14	364 to 462	30	123 to 137
16	364 to 462	32	80 to 132 (only Hass)
18	364 to 462	S	less than 123

TIPS If you need more information on measuring avocado maturity, you can refer to this article on www.avocadosource.com.

Harvest avocados when the fruits have reached the sufficient level of dry matter in the pulp.

Make sure to discuss the quality and maturity requirements with your buyer. Maintain strict compliance with quality as agreed. Being careless with your standards will lead buyers to raise issues with quality. To avoid miscommunication, send images of your product before shipment.

Maturity must be uniform throughout each parcel.

2.3 PACKAGING, LABELLING AND TRANSPORT

PACKAGED AVOCADOS



Source: [Natural Tropic](#)

Avocados are commonly packaged in 4 kg, single layer (fruit) crates, trays or cartons, sometimes with padding. Fresh avocados are classified according to Size Codes 1 to 30 (see Table 1). The difference between the smallest and largest fruits within a package should not be more than 25 g. In Europe, the preferred sizes for Hass avocados are 16–18, and sometimes 20 per 4 kg box. For the Fuerte variety, it is 14–16. Southern Europe is more flexible with sizes. Bigger sizes, such as 14, are more easily sold in Southern Europe.

Packaging requirements vary between customers and market segments. Buyers might have specific packaging requirements, so the packaging should also be part of your discussion with your buyer. Avocados must at least be packed in new, clean and quality packaging to prevent damage and to protect the product properly. Common packaging besides the 4 kg cardboard boxes are 10 kg plastic or cardboard crates, often for importers that ripen and repack avocados.

The main concern for the packaging is that the quality of the fruit is preserved during transportation. Thus, it is important to:

- + use clean and high quality packaging
- + protect the cargo from moisture during loading to avoid mould and spoilage
- + ensure appropriate temperature, humidity/moisture and ventilation conditions during transportation
- + protect the cargo from pests such as beetles, moths, etc.

Furthermore, it is important that the content of each package of avocados is uniform and only contains avocados of the same origin, variety, quality, colouring and size. Visible contents of the package should be a representation of the entire contents.

If your product is organic certified, make sure that the organic avocados remain physically separated from conventional avocados at all times so that the organic product is fully traceable.

Traceability, however, is also important for conventional products. The producer should enable traceability of individual lots. Labeling should, for example, include traceability codes. Unless the buyer has indicated otherwise, English should be used as the labelling language.

Labels must include the following:

Product name, including name of the variety

- + Class (Extra, I or II)
- + Batch code
- + Name and address of exporter
- + Size of fruits (minimum and maximum weight or by count)
- + Number of units
- + Net weight in metric units
- + Recommended storage conditions
- + For organic: Name/code of the inspection body and certification number

TIPS

Always discuss specific packaging requirements and preferences with your customers.

If your product is pre-packed for retail, check the additional requirements in the [Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods or Regulation \(EU\) No. 1169/2011](#) on the provision of food information to consumers in Europe.

Please refer to the [German Transport Information Service](#) for further information on storage and transportation conditions for avocados.

Use good quality packaging and strong carton. If such packaging is not available in your country, import the packaging from a foreign producer. It will raise your costs but at the same time avoid lots of problems with importers in Europe.

3 What is the demand for avocados in Europe

The healthy nature and multiple uses of avocados result in a strong consumer demand for avocados. The supply of avocados is increasing fast, but the European market still has room for growth and can absorb the higher volumes. Fruit businesses can free-ride on the promotion of avocados. However, to join the success in trade your supply must be consistent and of high quality.

3.1 GROWTH IN CONSUMPTION FOR THE NEXT YEARS FORESEEN

Avocados are appreciated because it is a unique and healthy product (oleaginous or oil containing fruit) with many culinary applications. Compared to other high-demand regions, European consumption is still underdeveloped. The average consumption in Europe is 1.16 kg per capita. In the United States this is 3.5 kg and in Canada 2.5 kg. Mexico, the world's largest avocado producer, even consumes 6.5-7 kg per capita.

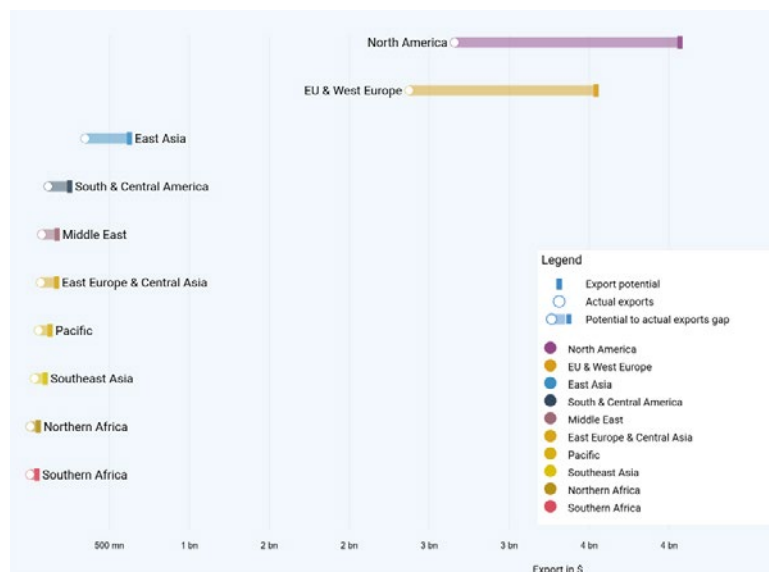
The consumption of avocados in Europe has grown on average by 8% in the years 2017-2019; and the consumption in 2019-20 was 73% higher compared to 2015-2016. Scandinavia has the highest consumption rate per capita. Growth is most notable in countries where consumption is still relatively low such as Germany, Italy and Eastern Europe.

The differences in consumption within Europe and the gap with developed consumer countries such as the United States and Canada show that there is much potential for growth. However, with current growth rates, market maturity could be reached within five to eight years and consumption will become more stable. According to the [World Avocado Organization \(WAO\)](#) the avocado consumption in Europe can reach the same level as in the United States by the year 2027.

Global production of avocados has been increasing in recent years as various countries want to take advantage of the increased demand. In the beginning of the century, global production was around 2.7 million tons. It increased to around 7.2 million tons by 2019. The [International Trade Centre \(ITC\)](#) estimates that there is an untapped market potential for avocados in the EU and Western Europe of 1.5 billion USD (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1:
THE 10 REGIONS WITH THE HIGHEST POTENTIAL MARKETS FOR AVOCADOS

Source: [ITC Export Potential Map](#)



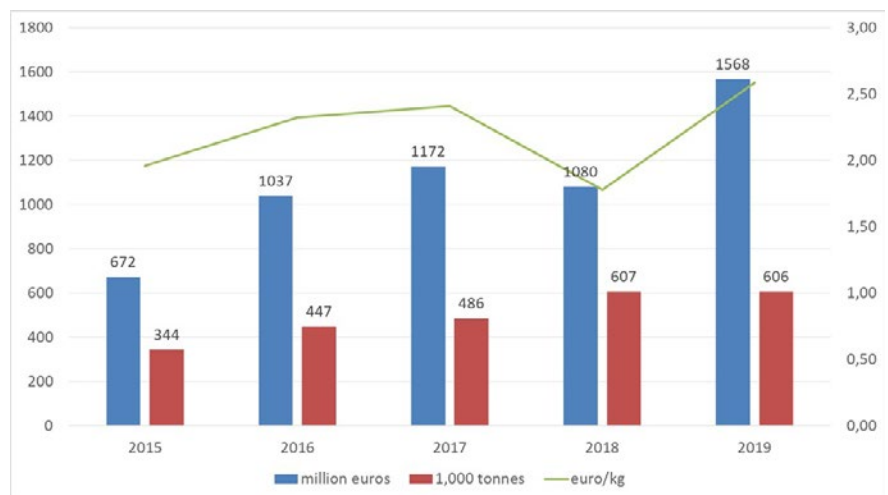
3.2 EUROPE CAN ABSORB GROWING IMPORTS OF AVOCADOS

Avocado has been a very dynamic fruit in the past years, characterized by an insatiable demand and an unbalanced supply. Europe has shown to be able to absorb higher import volumes, as the market is not saturated yet. The advantage of avocados is that they are programmed (contractually planned) by retailers and their promotions can help sell additional volume. This way, a much larger volume can be pushed into the market and boost consumption. This is what happened in 2018 and again in 2020.

Supply volumes have a major influence in stimulating European imports. In the next years, import volumes are likely to increase further, but price drops can be expected when there is too much supply in a short time span. This happened in 2018 when the prices dropped by around 18% (see Figures 2 & 3). In the long term (>3 years), avocados are likely to become a standard product for retailers with higher volumes throughout Europe but also with a slower growth rate.

FIGURE 2:
EUROPEAN IMPORT OF AVOCADOS

Source: Eurostat



3.3 MOST PROMISING EUROPEAN MARKETS

France and the United Kingdom are the largest end markets for avocados, while the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries have the highest consumption per capita. The growth in these leading consuming countries is slowing down, but countries such as Germany, Italy and even Eastern Europe still have lots of growth potential in the coming years. The Netherlands and Spain in particular act as import trade hubs especially for Germany and Eastern Europe.

TABLE 2: ESTIMATED AVOCADO MARKET SIZE AND CONSUMPTION IN EUROPE IN 2020

Source: CBI – The European market potential for avocados quoting Fruitrop Magazine no. 271

Country	Estimated market volume in 2020 (tons)	Consumption per capita (kg)
France	130,797	1,96
United Kingdom	95,054	1,44
Germany	89,315	1,08
Spain	67,500	1,45
Scandinavia (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland)	57,074	2,13
The Netherlands	40,000	2,33
Italy	23,147	0,38

THE NETHERLANDS: THE MAIN TRADE HUB FOR AVOCADOS

In 2020, the Netherlands officially imported 414.969 tons of avocados, of which only a fraction was then consumed inside the country itself. Several major avocado importers can be found in the Netherlands where avocados are ripened and from where they are distributed to many European destinations.

The Netherlands is responsible for almost half of Europe's avocado imports. At the same time, the country is also the largest non-producing exporter of avocados in the world. Large volumes are re-exported to Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Scandinavian countries and many others.

Because of the leading role in avocado trade, the Dutch internal market is familiar with avocados and has a large per capita consumption. It is likely that the Netherlands will remain a major trade hub for avocados, although over time its function may become more logistical and less commercial.

TIP Consider using the established trade routes and find an importing partner in the Netherlands, even if you are targeting a different end consumer market within Europe.

FRANCE: THE LARGEST DESTINATION MARKET FOR AVOCADOS

France is the largest destination market for avocados in Europe with a focus on high-quality avocados. Potentially, decent margins can be found when fitting the product into the major retail chains.

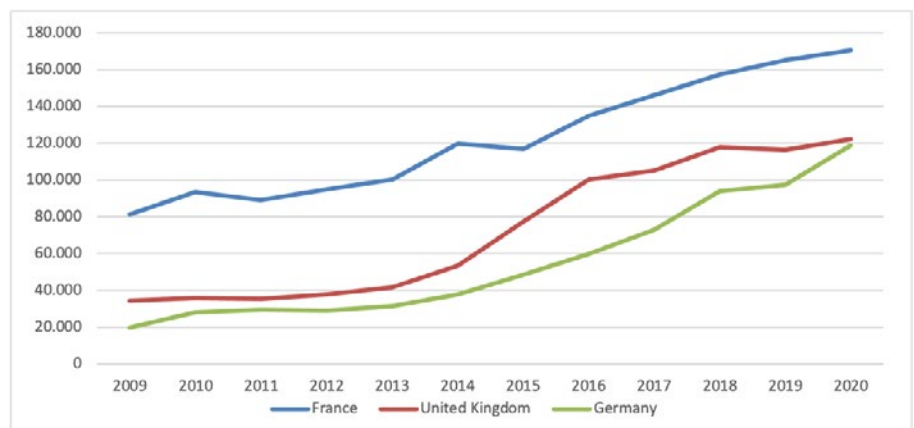
France imported 170.608 tons of avocados in 2020 and had a calculated annual local demand of around 130.000 tons until May 2020. Most of the imports in France come from Spain (27,6% according the ITC Trade Map data) – these imports are partly Spain's own production, partly re-exports of Spain coming originally from countries outside Europe. France is also directly importing from producer countries such as Peru (19,8%), Israel (12,7%), Mexico (11,6), Chile (6,2%) and Kenya (4,6%). Interestingly, the Netherlands does not re-export much to France (import share of only 0,6%), which indicates that the Netherlands is primarily the trade hub for Northern and Eastern Europe.

Although France offers the largest market for avocados in Europe, consumption growth has been lower than the European average in the past years. This can be attributed to the fact that France is a more mature market with a consumption of almost 2 kg per capita. France is known to focus on quality, including organic, so that price is less of an issue for French consumers.

TIP When finding buyers that supply larger retailers in France, be prepared to commit to extra quality requirements. Prices and margins are likely to be better on average when working with retail contracts compared to the traditional wholesale markets.

**FIGURE 3:
DEVELOPMENT OF IMPORTS OF THE
THREE COUNTRIES WITH THE LARGEST
CONSUMER MARKETS (IN TONS)**

Source: [ITC Trade Map](#)



UNITED KINGDOM: IMPORTANT CONSUMER WITH INCREASING ECONOMIC PRESSURE

The United Kingdom is the second-largest consumer market for avocados (see Table 2), but with high standards and increasing price pressure. The country imported 122.063 tons of avocados in 2020. Like in France, consumption in the United Kingdom increased fast until 2016. This growth, however, has been much slower since then. Uncertainty about the consequences of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union and the devaluation of the British pound contribute to less attractive prices, and consumption growth has levelled out.

Nevertheless, the United Kingdom remains one of the principal markets for avocados. Prices can be expected to face more pressure due to inflation while the quality and certification standards remain one of the highest.

The effect of the Brexit is hard to foresee. At the moment, business still goes on with many exceptional regulations in the trade between the EU and the UK. In the long run it is likely that non-EU supplier countries will face a more direct competition with EU suppliers. Border checks for all the paperwork on sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, customs, health and security are currently still delayed. Soon, however, these controls will most likely be introduced (probably in 2021) and this will, for example, make relations to EU exporters more difficult for British importers, so that switching to other suppliers from around the world might become interesting.

TIPS

Be aware that you need to be flexible with your volume and prices to remain active in the United Kingdom after Brexit.

Stay in close contact with the markets and buyers to monitor changes in regulations.

Note that an entrance to the EU market via the UK will not be possible anymore in the future, so become prepared for changes in your clientele as well.

Stay informed on the regulations coming into force between the UK and the EU, as they will indirectly affect your own possibilities. A good website for this is the [Confederation of British Industry](#).

GERMANY: AVOCADO MARKET IS IN FULL DEVELOPMENT

In Germany, promotion of health benefits and discount offers are important drivers for the fast-rising avocado market. This makes it an interesting country for exporters. Germany is probably the country with the highest growth perspective because it has a very large population and currently, the consumption is just over 1 kg per capita.

In the ten years from 2009 to 2019, Germany has increased its import of avocados from slightly under 20.000 tons to slightly under 98.000 tons. This reflects a market growth of 398%, which particularly took off since 2016. The upcoming years are expected to show a continuous steady increase in consumption. Imagining a per capita consumption in Germany comparable to that of the United Kingdom or to that of France would mean a market growth of between 50 to 100%. Given its population size, Germany could possibly develop into the largest avocado market within Europe.

Germany is the home country of discount retailers such as Lidl and Aldi, which often take the lead in offering promotions on avocados. At the same time, retailers like Lidl are known to be one of the strictest when it comes to pesticide residues, which can be a barrier for avocado exporters.

Germany imports large volumes of avocados from the neighboring trade hub, The Netherlands, which, however, is not the biggest supplier to Germany. Peru has become the stable number one direct supplier of avocados to Germany. Likewise, Chile exports to Germany. In terms of volume, the deliveries are comparable to those from The Netherlands. At the same time, Germany acts to a small extent as a re-exporter of avocados (around 14.000 tons in 2020) mainly to Austria, Switzerland, the Northern European countries and Poland.

TIPS

Consider various entry points for the German market:

- + Direct sourcing of avocados, also from developing countries, is common among German buyers; you can therefore approach them directly.
- + The Netherlands remains an important trade hub for Germany; consider using the Netherlands as an intermediary.

If you want to reach markets in Austria, Poland, or Switzerland, you might want to consider a partner in Germany.

Maintain Lidl standards for supplying the German market, which is known as being one of the strictest. This means the pesticide residue level of your avocados must be a third of the European allowed limits.

Focus on facts when presenting your product, such as the results of a laboratory analysis. German purchasers are not very sensitive to emotional sales arguments.

SPAIN: EUROPE'S LARGEST PRODUCER COMPLEMENTS PRODUCTION WITH IMPORT

Spain is a producer, consumer and an emerging trade hub for avocados. For an exporter from a developing country, Spain is an interesting target country because it is likely to find a broader market than just Spain itself.

With a production of 97.730 tons in 2019, Spain is the only country in Southern Europe producing a noteworthy amount of avocados. While Italy and Greece often grow similar crops, they have only a very small avocado production. To complement their own production season and comply with international supply contracts, Spanish traders are therefore buying more and more avocados from abroad. This makes Spain Europe's second-largest exporter of avocados after the Netherlands.

Most of the 390.005 tons of imported avocados in 2020 came from Peru and Mexico. Besides, there is also an increase in imports from Morocco, which overlap with the Spanish season as well as Colombia and Kenya, which fill the production gap of Spain in the European summer months. Around 45% of the avocados traded from Spain have France as their destination (52.911 tons in 2020).

In the years to come, it can be expected that Spain becomes a larger consumer of avocados, but more importantly, it will also play a bigger role in the European avocado supply.

TIPS

Use Spanish avocado importers and traders to strengthen your position in France and Southern Europe.

Visit the Fruit Attraction trade fair, which is the second most important fresh fruits fair in Europe, to get in contact with Spanish avocado buyers.

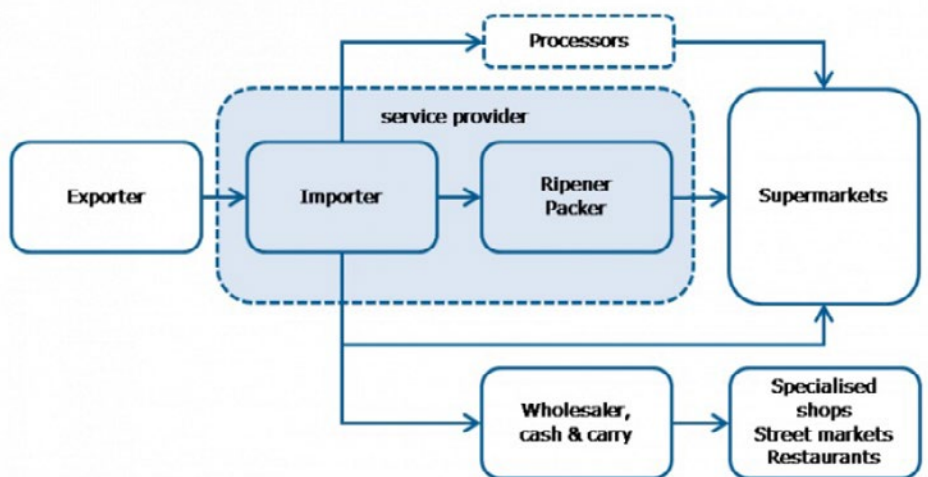
4 Market entry of avocados into Europe

4.1 MARKET CHANNELS AND SEGMENTS

Avocados are a typical retail product. Importers that supply supermarkets and other major retailers offer the most stable and largest supply chains. Food service outlets (e.g. catering industries) represent a less important market channel. Fresh avocados require little additional processing at the country of origin or in Europe. Consequently, the value chain is relatively short (see Figure 5). Common activities undertaken in the country of origin are sorting, washing and packing the avocados. In addition, avocados can be ripened in European facilities before being re-packed for the consumer market.

**FIGURE 4:
VALUE CHAIN FOR AVOCADOS**

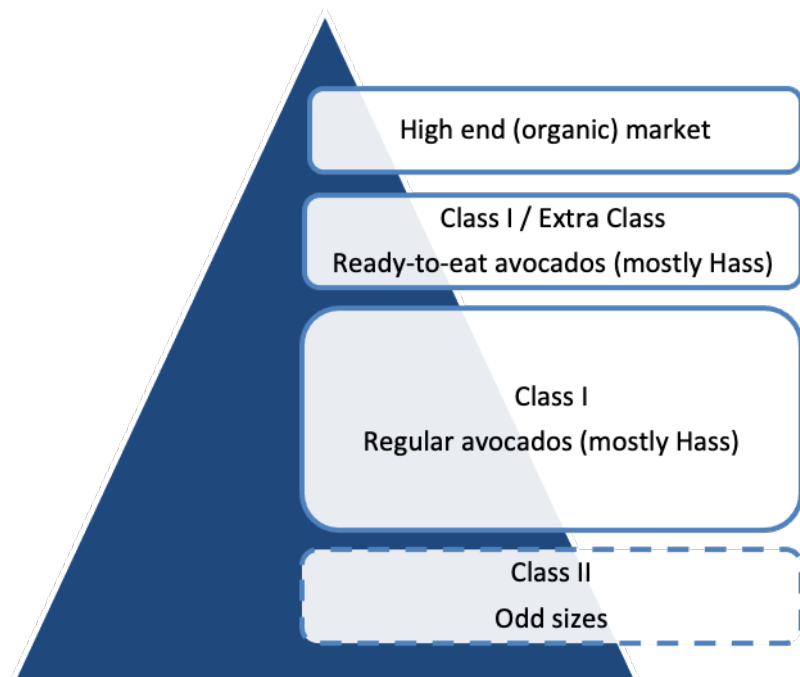
Source: CBI Market Information: Entering the European market for avocados



Avocados are mostly sold in supermarket chains. The main market segment for this channel is Class I Hass avocados complying with standard retail requirements (see chapter on requirements below). Ready-to-eat avocados are becoming more and more popular in end markets with high desire for convenience products, such as in Northern Europe.

**FIGURE 5:
MARKET SEGMENTS FOR AVOCADOS**

Source: CBI Market Information: Entering the European market for avocados



High-end markets favour organic avocados, for example, which are usually sold for 25 to 45% more than conventional avocados on retail shelves. Organic avocados are especially in demand in German-speaking countries and Scandinavia. Class II avocados can be considered the bottom segment of the market. They are generally not fit for supermarkets but may still serve for processing into fresh salads or guacamole. Odd and small sizes are usually sold for promotional prices. Those Class II avocados are not supplied on purpose but rather a buy-product of the trade for the regular Class I product.

4.2 MARKET ENTRY POINTS

Importers play a central role in the distribution of avocados. They are familiar with all the different requirements of end clients and are able to distribute to different market channels, such as wholesalers and supermarkets. Some importers have their own ripening and packing facilities, such as Nature's Pride in the Netherlands and Ripenow in the United Kingdom. Ripening facilities are important for the growing segment of ready-to-eat avocados and for supplying to supermarkets.

MOST ATTRACTIVE: BECOMING A SUPPLIER TO SUPERMARKET PROGRAMS

When import companies provide different services, such as ripening and retail packing, they can also become service providers to large retailers. For example, Bakker Barendrecht, part of Greenyard, supplies the leading Dutch supermarket Albert Heijn with ripened and packed avocados, being responsible for quality control and forecasting its client's needs.

Most avocados are sold through supermarkets. Avocados are a typical product that is programmed under supply contracts. In France, the largest European market for avocados, 65% of the avocados are handled by the largescale distribution networks of supermarkets, hypermarkets and discounters. These distribution channels are even more dominant in the Northern European markets. Supermarkets have become increasingly involved in the sourcing of avocados but tend to have different structures. Some work with annual contracts, while others select a dedicated service provider, such as the German discounter Lidl who is working with OGL Food Trade.

Because avocados have become a typical product in the retail market, becoming part of a supermarket supply program is the most interesting channel for any supplier. It provides stability and almost guaranteed volumes, but the requirements are high and the room for negotiation is minimal. As an exporter, the most likely route to reach this market is to cooperate with a service provider that has a local infrastructure and supply contracts with retailers. Exporters with an own avocado production have the best chances to find cooperation with large buyers and service providers, such as Bakker Barendrecht or OGL Food Trade as mentioned above, and the purchase centres of supermarkets such as Rewe (Eurogroup) and Carrefour (Socomo). Direct sales to supermarkets are difficult and only feasible for companies that can arrange a year-round supply and have the resources to have a presence in Europe.

EASIER MARKET ACCESS: SUPPLYING TO THE WHOLESALE SPOT MARKET

Traditional fruit wholesalers cover the spot market and move according to the fluctuations of fresh trade. They supply specialised shops, street merchants, restaurants, and hotel chains. Sometimes import and wholesale activities are combined, but a traditional wholesaler does not take many risks with importing long-distance avocados. Typical wholesale markets for avocados and other fruit include Rungis in Paris and Mercabarna in Barcelona. Large fruit wholesalers, such as the Staay Food Group, maintain a large international network and offer their own cash & carry service point where clients can purchase a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Non-specialised (cash & carry) wholesalers, such as Metro, supply the same end market but depend more on the services of importing companies or have their own purchase centers. Just like supermarkets they are able to work with long-term contracts.

Trading companies that supply the spot market are easiest to connect to. In a good market they can provide you with a very profitable return, but there are no guarantees. Prices on the spot market fluctuate more and are associated with a higher risk.

TIPS

Make yourself attractive as a supplier to supermarket supply programs by committing to minimum volumes and guaranteeing regular shipments. Large volumes will widen your potential buyer group and make you less dependent on the spot market.

Find importers that also have ripening activities. They tend to be more involved in the avocado business and probably need larger volumes for retailers.

4.3 COMPETITION

In contrast to some other fresh products, avocados do not face a big competition from the product side. They are not easy to substitute, with their unique taste, characteristics, applications and health benefits. Within the avocado trade, the Hass variety is very dominant due to their favourable conditions in ripening. Over time, however, it is not unusual for popular varieties to be replaced by improved varieties. Specific Hass sub-varieties can also become more relevant as the market further develops, not only to diversify taste, but also because different varieties can extend the supply season.

Primarily, the competition you face will depend on which country you are producing in, as seasons for avocados differ according to their origin. The European summer's supply of avocados is dominated by Peru, South Africa and Kenya. In the winter months, avocados come to Europe mostly from Chile, Mexico, and Israel and are also harvested in Spain. Colombia and Morocco are fast upcoming suppliers.

See Table 3 for the months in which avocados are provided to the European market from which country.

TABLE 3: EUROPEAN INDICATIVE SUPPLY CALENDAR FOR AVOCADOS

Source: ICI Business

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Peru												
S. Africa												
Kenya												
Chile												
Israel												
Mexico												
Colombia												
Morocco												
Spain												

The non-EU countries you will compete with are shortly described below.

PERU

In the last decade, Peruvian avocado exports to Europe have grown the most. Peru is now the leading supplier of avocados to Europe, accounting for around 200.000 tons and 30% of the total EU supply. This development has also turned into a handicap for Peruvian growers, because as soon as the Peruvian harvest starts, the large volumes drive prices down.

Peruvian suppliers are competitive, well organised and able to keep supplies for a long season, although not year-round. During this period, it is difficult to compete and profit margins are often lower. Countries with similar seasons such as South Africa and Kenya feel the impact of planning, volume and quality of the Peruvian harvest.

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has a similar supply season as Peru. Several multinational fruit companies and experienced avocado specialists, such as Halls and Westfalia Fruit, originate in South Africa. They have a solid reputation in the production of avocados. These large multinational operations have the knowledge and financial means to accurately comply with market requirements.

The South African supply is relatively stable compared to other countries. At an annual growth of 1,000 to 1,500 new hectares in planted area, South Africa will continue to play an important role in the avocado trade.

CHILE

Chile covers the supply gap between the Peruvian and the Spanish productions (see the supply calendar in Table 3). European buyers are generally very satisfied with the constant and reliable quality of avocados from Chile, which has been a stable and a long-term supplying country. Unlike Peru, whose producers focus almost exclusively on export markets, Chile's domestic market consumes approximately 30% of the country's avocado production. The other 70% is exported, with the Netherlands and the United Kingdom being the most important markets in 2019.

However, there are growing concerns among consumers in Europe about unsustainable water use in Chile's avocado production. Even the United Nations water rights expert questions Chile's avocado and energy priorities, expressing concerns about the rights to water and health. Although these problems are not unique to Chile, it has slowed down the Chilean avocado production growth and sales.

MEXICO

Mexico is the largest producer and exporter of avocados in the world. Mexico's avocado exports to Europe are still relatively minor compared to the volumes shipped to the United States. But producers are also able to produce practically year-round, which gives them a commercial advantage. Their main strength is supplying to Europe during the European winter.

Mexican avocado exports to Europe are growing, as suppliers look for alternative markets due to trade uncertainties with the United States. However, European buyers are reluctant to buy from Mexican producers, mainly because Mexican post-harvest is targeted to the US market nearby, which means that long-distance markets, such as Europe, sometimes receive lesser quality produce. A new sea-freight route between Veracruz and Rotterdam will help change this and facilitate future growth. Mexico has the production scale and international experience to become a more significant supplier to Europe.

ISRAEL

Israel is not the strongest competitor in volumes or price but competes in quality, innovative breeding and production programmes. Geographically, Israeli growers are also closer to Europe than their Mexican and Chilean competitors.

Most of the Israeli exports to Europe consist of Hass avocados. However, the country also offers a variety of green avocados, such as Ettinger, Fuerte, Pinkerton, Arddit, Nabal, and Arad. The proximity to Europe and the local growers' experience with improving varieties make Israel a high-level competitor in the European avocado market.

COLOMBIA

Colombia has taken a big step forward in production and surpassed Kenya in 2019 as supplier to the European market. As new suppliers, Colombian producers have faced several challenges in product quality and internal logistics. Growers and exporters are quickly dealing with these issues and are building a stronger reputation.

European buyers see a great deal of potential in Colombian avocados since they can fill the gap between two supplying seasons. In sea freight, they have a logistical advantage over Chile, which supplies a similar season. Major avocado groups have put their focus on Colombia, leading to international investments and cooperation in the Colombian avocado sector. In the next few years, Colombia's avocado production is expected to skyrocket. According to [FruiTrop](#), professionals estimate a growth in volumes to Europe of 20-30%.

OTHER NON-EUROPEAN SUPPLY COUNTRIES

In the dynamic avocado sector there are a number of upcoming suppliers, the most important being Kenya and Morocco.

Kenya is gradually expanding avocado exports to Europe, although producers have not yet built a flawless reputation in quality. Still, Kenyan suppliers are price competitive: Kenya is the third largest supplier in the European summer.

Morocco is ideally positioned to supply avocados during the European winter season, but it will also have to deal with established suppliers from Spain and Israel. Despite its fluctuating production, Morocco is on course to become another winter supplier.

Avocado production and exports are also increasing in many other countries. In 2019, the Dominican Republic doubled its export to Europe, while Brazil has future potential in the eyes of avocado buyers. Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Guatemala are still minor suppliers to Europe but their export volumes are going up annually. Quality and compliance with European standards are often the main challenges for these new suppliers.

TIPS

Make sure you can offer Hass avocados, but be open minded about new varieties that offer advantages in production season, ripening or other.

Try to extend your season by gathering avocados from different climate zones in your country, if possible. Season is an important factor when considering supplying to Europe. The longer your season, the more attractive you are for buyers that want to fill a year-round supply.

Maintain close contact with buyers about market conditions and act accordingly. For example, if other suppliers have extended their supply season to Europe, you could decide to postpone your harvest.

4.4 ACCESS TO EUROPEAN BUYERS

The best way to get into contact and built trustful relationships is when meeting face-to-face at one of the important trade fairs for the sector.

The largest fair for fresh fruits and vegetables is the [Fruit Logistica](#). It takes place every year in February in Berlin, Germany. Fruit Logistica is the leading trade fair for the global fresh produce market. It welcomes over 3.000 exhibitors and 75.000 trade visitors each year. The event covers the full spectrum of the fresh fruit and vegetable sector: fresh fruit and vegetables, packaging and labelling, transport and logistical systems, produce handling and storage, computer and internet solutions and cultivation systems.

Another interesting trade fair is the [Fruit Attraction](#). It takes place every October in Madrid, Spain. There are around 1.600 exhibitors and almost 80.000 trade visitor each year. Fruit Attraction is growing in establishing itself as one of the most efficient fruit and vegetable trading platforms. Southern Europe is developing into an essential hub for the international marketing of fresh produce. The event is divided into two main sectors: the fresh produce sector and the supporting industry.

Importers that specialise in organic products can also be found at the world's largest organic food fair [BIOFACH](#). It takes place every February on the exhibition grounds of the city of Nuremberg, Germany. IFOAM, the global umbrella organisation of organic farming associations, has assumed the patronage. Each year, there are around 3.200 exhibitors and about 50.000 visitors at BIOFACH.

TIP

Follow the [CBI tips for doing business with European buyers of fresh fruit and vegetables](#).

5 What trends offer opportunities on the European market for avocados?

Avocado consumption is boosted by its reputation as a healthy fruit, product promotion and the innovation in ready-to-eat avocados. Due to the increased attention, sustainability has become an important factor in the avocado trade.

5.1 READY-TO-EAT CONSUMPTION

The consumption of avocados has been supported by new developments such as “ready-to-eat”. Ripening helps provide convenience and quality at the same time. Consumers are prepared to pay a premium price for high quality “ready-to-eat” avocados, because it is a safe and an easy choice. For exporters it is important to check the fruit maturity well before shipping.

READY-TO-EAT RIPENED AVOCADO



Source: [Marktvers.nl](https://www.marktvers.nl)

The experience in fruit ripening is rising quickly and the technology is being optimized, although there is still room for perfection. Companies offer fruit ripening as a service or large fruit suppliers implement their own ripening facilities. Examples of specialist ripeners are [Nature's Pride](#) and [LBP](#) in the Netherlands and [Ripenow](#) in the United Kingdom. In 2018, the German discount retail chain Lidl opened one of the largest ripening facilities of Europe in the Netherlands. From there, they service their distribution centers in the Netherlands and Belgium for avocados, bananas and mangoes. British retailer Tesco also took convenience a step forward by introducing the [EasyAvo](#) in 2018, an easy-to-peel avocado.

The “ready-to-eat” trend is particularly strong in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, but many countries in Europe are following. It will continue to develop further and help boost the consumption, but exporters must be aware of supplying the right uniform quality. As an exporter you can best capitalize on this trend by focusing on importers with ripening facilities and supply avocados with an acceptable dry matter content.

TIPS

Supply avocados with a minimum dry matter content of 23%, especially when destined for ripening.

Keep an eye on market developments on the European avocado market and beyond, for example on [Freshplaza](#), [Fruitnet](#), [FruiTrop](#), and [FreshFruitPortal](#).

5.2 SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental and social issues are becoming more and more important in the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables in general. This is also the case for avocados. To stay in business you must work on a sustainable and responsible production.

There are increasing concerns about water resources, deforestation and supply chain transparency. These concerns touch Peru, Chile, Mexico and Brazil, among others. Because avocados are a popular fruit in health food media, negative attention resonates in the public sphere. Although it has had little impact on the general consumption so far, it can influence the sourcing preferences and certification pressure of buyers.

Marketers of avocados will have to prove to consumers that their products are produced sustainably – this is a tendency that will only become stronger in the long run. Avocado exporters have taken steps to improve their sustainability. But as an exporter you must also be able to prove your good practices and convince importers and retailers in Europe.

Social and environmental standards and certifications such as [GlobalGAP](#), [GRASP](#), and [amfori BSCI](#) have become a precondition for the import of fresh tropical fruit such as avocado.

A large number of retailers and importers have committed to the [Sustainability Initiative Fruit and Vegetables \(SIFAV\)](#). SIFAV aims for 100% sustainable imports of fruits and vegetables from Africa, Asia and South America and has the objective to reduce the environmental footprint and enable fair living wages.

TIP

Get certified and implement standards. See the [SIFAV Basket of Standards](#) for relevant social and environmental standards, but also try to think creatively and undertake activities to guarantee a sustainable production and sustainable water use.

5.3 ATTENTION TO HEALTHY FOOD

Consumers in Europe are becoming more aware of health issues and pay more attention to their diet. Avocado has gained a good reputation for its health benefits. Its health benefits include antioxidant properties, high potassium content and a good source of fibre. Moreover, avocado is a source of monounsaturated fat, Omega 3 fatty acids, as well as various vitamins and minerals.

Furthermore, many consumers prefer to eat organic food which is presumed to be better for their health as well. Avocado also serves specific consumer groups that prefer a plant-based diet, such as vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians. All these aspects are used in the promotion of avocados and contribute to the increasing consumption throughout Europe. Health is also the reason that the COVID-19 pandemic had little negative effects on the avocado consumption.

Thanks to the increased attention to health and the environment, the interest in organically produced avocados is growing. The current supply does not fully satisfy market demand due to the difficulty of producing organic avocados. Organic avocados can be an opportunity for growers that are able to produce according to the strict European guidelines for organic production.

TIP

Familiarize yourself with the [organic guidelines and organic farming in Europe](#) in order to decide whether an organic certification is a suitable business endeavor for your company.

5.4 PROMOTION, INNOVATION AND BRANDING TO IMPROVE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

The promotion of avocados has reached almost extreme levels. It explains why avocado consumption continues to follow a strong upward trend, but it is also a reason to be cautious, because food hypes never last forever and will eventually come to an end. As a supplier you can best add to the promotional strength of avocados by providing a positive background story about the origin and the growers of your product.

Branding and promoting can contribute to the consumers' experience and quality perception. Avocados have great promotional value and are unique in the fresh sector for their level of innovation. Some examples of creative promotion by retailers include:

- + [Small avocados for home ripening](#), for example in PLUS supermarket (The Netherlands)
- + [Fresh guacamole kits](#), for example in Albert Heijn (The Netherlands)
- + From [supersized](#) to [egg-sized](#) avocados, for example in Tesco (UK)
- + [Stoneless avocados](#), for example in Marks & Spencer (UK)
- + [Ecologically labelled avocados through laser technology](#) in Marks & Spencer and ICA (UK, Sweden)

The Western obsession with avocados has become so strong there are nowadays even restaurants dedicated to avocados as a main ingredient: the franchise restaurant [The Avocado Show](#) started in Amsterdam and Brussels, and the [Avobar](#) launched in London.

TIPS

Create and communicate the story of your product and be consistent with your supply. Avocados benefit from their promotion, but your contribution as a supplier is limited and your actions must be targeted at your buyer.

Provide your buyers with information on avocados, which they can use in their promotion towards end-consumers. Examples are information on selecting and storing, as well as recipes.

See the [CBI Trends in Fresh Fruit and Vegetables](#) for more information on trending topics.

Explore your potential to export stoneless avocados. Commonly, these fruits are not exported, but left on the tree.

6 What legal requirements must avocados comply with?

Legal requirements are the minimum requirements which must be met by products marketed in the EU. Products which fail to meet these requirements are not allowed onto the EU market. Food safety is the key issue in EU food legislation, in which the General Food Law is the framework regulation. The legislation also introduces requirements on traceability.

6.1 FOOD SAFETY: TRACEABILITY AND CONTROL

Food safety is a key issue in EU food legislation. All food products in the EU, including avocados, must comply with the [General Food Law \(Regulation \(EC\) 178/2002\)](#). This legislation lays down the general principles and requirements of food legislation, establishes the [European Food Safety Authority](#) and lays down procedures in matters of food safety. It also includes provisions on the traceability of food – the ability to track food products through the stages of production. For exporters to the EU, your buyers often expect you to know and document your suppliers, which products are used during your production process and to label final products for traceability.

In the event of repeated non-compliance of specific products originating from particular countries, such products can only be imported under stricter conditions. The EU introduced the European rapid alert system for food (and feed) products (RASFF) as a tool to exchange information on the enforcement of EU food safety legislation.

TIPS

Read more about sanitary and phytosanitary requirements at the [EU Access2Markets Portal](#) and pay special attention to the following documents from the European Commission:

- + [Import Conditions](#)
- + [Implementation of certain provisions of Regulation \(EC\) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs](#)

Check if there are any increased levels of controls for your product and country. The list is updated regularly. Check the [Regulation](#) periodically for the most recent list. Refer to an overview of the [RASFF database](#) for notifications on avocado.

6.2 PESTICIDE RESIDUES AND CONTAMINANTS

Pesticide residues are one of the crucial issues for fruit and vegetable suppliers. To avoid health and environmental risks, the European Union has set **maximum residue levels (MRLs)** for pesticides and other contaminants, such as heavy metals, in and on food products. Products exceeding the MRLs are withdrawn from the market. For substances that are not yet included in the European regulation, the default MRL of 0.01 mg/kg applies. Note that buyers in several EU Member States, such as Germany, the Netherlands and Austria, use even lower maximum residue levels than those established by European legislation!

TIPS

Check the [EU Pesticides database](#) to find all MRLs and those specific for avocados. Search by product or pesticide and the database to find the list of associated MRLs.

Use integrated pest management (IPM) in production to reduce the use of pesticides. IPM is an agricultural pest-control strategy that includes growing practices and chemical management.

Read more about [MRLs on the website of the European Commission](#). Check with your buyers if they require additional requirements on MRLs and pesticide use.

Make sure that lead contamination in your avocados remains below 0.10 mg/kg and cadmium below 0,050 mg/kg, according to the [maximum levels in foodstuffs](#). Find out more about the prevention and reduction of lead contamination in the [Code of Practice](#) published by the FAO Codex Alimentarius.

6.3 PHYTOSANITARY REGULATIONS

The [European Directive 2019/523](#) requires avocados to go through plant health checks before entering the European Union. The plant health inspection must take place in the country of origin and the shipment must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate, guaranteeing that the avocados are:

- + properly inspected,
- + free from quarantine pests, within the requirements for regulated non-quarantine pests and practically free from other pests,
- + in line with the plant health requirements of the EU, laid down in [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2072](#).

TIPS

Learn more about the European phytosanitary rules in [Council Directive 2000/29/EC](#) and the [Implementing Directive 2019/523](#) on the protective measures against the introduction of harmful organisms in the European Union.

Check which (other) fruit and vegetables require a phytosanitary certificate in the lists of [Annex XI](#) and [Annex XII](#) of [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2072](#).

Check [Annex VI](#) of [Directive 2000/29/EC](#) which provides an example of a phytosanitary certificate on page 170 – 171.

6.4 BORDER CONTROLS

Fresh produce which enters the EU is inspected at the border. These controls are carried out to ensure that all foods marketed on the European market are safe and are in compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements. Shipments are checked for documentation, identity, physical plant health and compliance with the European Commission's general and specific import requirements, such as the phytosanitary certificate, issued from the country of origin.

EU countries collect a fee for the documentary, identity and plant health checks, to be paid by the importer or their customs representative. This fee is usually settled with the account of sales and final payment of the buyer.

For importers of fresh fruit and vegetables, the traceability of products is compulsory. To fulfil this obligation, you must document the sources of your product, and be able to hand over proof of origin for all fruits and vegetables. Proof of origin is also necessary for importers to get beneficiary tariffs, if they apply.

TIPS

Familiarise yourself with the procedures. See the [CBI tips for organising your export of fresh fruits and vegetables to Europe](#). Failure to follow the right procedures could decrease and delay orders, increase costs and result in actions by European enforcement authorities.

Make sure that the accompanying documents (such as a Bill of Lading) correspond exactly to the food products contained in the consignment, including indicated volumes and weight, classes and sizes, number of pallets and boxes.

Check the documents needed for customs clearance in the EU [Access2Markets](#) tool. Check out the [Factsheet on Food Traceability of the European Commission](#).

6.5 FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

The European Union has laid down rules for materials and articles coming into contact with food (including for example packaging) in order to prevent any unacceptable change in the composition of the foodstuffs and to protect human health. These rules are laid down in the framework legislation [Regulation \(EC\) 1935/2004](#).

7 What additional requirements do buyers often have?

European buyers often have specific requirements, depending on their sales channels and product segments. Common buyer requirements include GLOBALG.A.P. certification and compliance with social and environmental standards.

7.1 GLOBAL GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE (GLOBALG.A.P.)

The most important non-legislative requirement is the one of good agricultural practices, which most EU retailers demand compliance with. [GLOBALG.A.P.](#) is a private global standard and certification for agricultural products. This pre-farmgate standard covers the whole agricultural production process from before the plant is in the ground to the unprocessed product. GLOBALG.A.P. focuses on food safety as well as the environment, labour conditions and product quality. It has become a minimum standard for most European supermarkets.

As social sustainability became more important, GLOBALG.A.P. added a voluntary assessment that can be conducted at the same time as a GLOBALG.A.P. audit to their certification, which is called [GLOBALG.A.P. Risk Assessment on Social Practice \(GRASP\)](#). Its main objective is to raise awareness on social practice in primary production. The outcome of the assessment does not affect the GLOBALG.A.P. certification, but serves as additional information to supply chain partners. European buyers are increasingly asking for G.R.A.S.P. certification.

TIPS

[GLOBALG.A.P.](#) is a certification which has almost become mandatory for the EU market. Make sure to become informed about it!

If you need to prepare for a certification and are not sure how you can go about it, look for a certified [GLOBALG.A.P. Farm Assurer](#), a consultant knowledgeable about the certification.



7.2 SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL COMPLIANCE

There is growing attention to the social and environmental conditions in the producing areas. Most European buyers have a code of conduct, which they expect their suppliers to comply with. Although product quality is the top priority, social compliance becomes more and more important.

Due to concerns about excessive water use in avocado cultivation in arid production areas of Peru, Chile and South Africa, in addition to social issues and deforestation, it has become common for buyers to ask for assurances of good practices – also for other countries.

Initiatives in and attention to corporate social responsibility (CSR) vary across the various parts of Europe. In the Eastern part of Europe, fewer buyers require strict social compliance, while there are multinational buyers in Western Europe which have their own compliance program. Examples include [Unilever's Sustainable Agriculture Code](#) and [Tesco's Nurture accreditation](#).

The best way to comply with such buyer requirements is through adopting social and environmental standards or joining respective buyer initiatives, such as:

- + [Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit \(SMETA\)](#)
- + [Business Social Compliance Initiative \(BSCI\)](#)
- + [Sustainability Initiative for Fruit and Vegetables \(SIFAV\)](#)
- + [Ethical Trading Initiative \(ETI\)](#)
- + [ISO 26000](#) for social responsibility and/or [ISO 14000](#) for environmental management

Fairtrade labels are not (yet) on the top of the list of buyers because of their complex requirements and high costs. Fairtrade is most often used for the largest product categories such as bananas. SMETA and GRASP are more accessible for most exporters and are gaining in importance.

TIPS

Implement at least one environmental and one social standard. See the [Basket of Standards of The Sustainable Trade Initiative for Fruit and Vegetables \(SIFAV\)](#).

Explore new standards. Consult the [ITC Standards Map](#) for the different labels, and to learn about differences between social and environmental standards.

For more information on Fairtrade, check the [Fairtrade International and FLO-cert certification requirements](#) and [Fairtrade minimum prices](#).

Measure your environmental impact and check your company's current performance; for example, by doing an [amfori BEPI self-assessment](#).

7.3 FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Even though food safety management systems are much more important in the trade of processed food items, some buyers might require compliance also for their fresh fruit and vegetable partners.

Food hygiene is based on [Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points \(HACCP\)](#) method, an internationally recognized method of identifying and managing food safety related risk. The adoption of standards which go beyond HACCP (and which specific standard) will depend on the profile of your buyer; usually large retailers are more demanding and might require compliance with one of the following:

- + [International Featured Standards \(IFS\)](#): IFS Food 7 corresponds to ISO 9001, but with a focus on food safety, HACCP, hygiene, the manufacturing process and business surroundings. The IFS is a quality and safety standard published by the union of German supermarket chains, [HDE \(Hauptverband des Deutschen Einzelhandels\)](#).
- + [British Retail Consortium Global Standards \(BRCGS\)](#): private institution which promotes private standards, which contain more extensive rules on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) than HACCP, e.g. regarding organisation and communication.

All the mentioned management systems are recognised by the [Global Food Safety Initiative \(GFSI\)](#), which means that any of them should be accepted by your buyer. However, in practice some buyers still have preferences for one specific management system.

TIP

Stay in close contact with the market and potential buyers to find out whether one of these standards or certifications could become interesting for you.

7.4 COMPANY PERFORMANCE AND RELIABILITY

Complying with the food safety requirements, quality standards and certifications is a precondition to market fresh products in Europe, but it is still not a guarantee for success. Soft skills and company performance are also important. Buyers look for trust and reliability and flawless communication. Such skills are just as important as your product and certifications.

Some of the most important things in the fresh trade are a timely delivery, proactive communication and commitment to agreements. However, good conduct works both ways, so be aware of buyers that have a poor reputation or only show a short-term interest. In this fast-moving and perishable market, sudden decisions are taken, such as “dumping” your products at very low prices, when the quality starts to deteriorate or when the demand slows down. European buyers are not eager to accept their loss and often rather settle by claiming a quality issue. It is crucial that you can deal professionally with claims, whether they are justified or not.

TIPS

Make sure that you are well organized as a company. Maintain good logistical planning, document your shipments (including proof of quality), respond to your emails within a day and be professional in every aspect of the business.

Do not put your product in consignment with a buyer which you do not know. Consignment is becoming less of a standard practice and it increases your risks significantly.

Establish and confirm agreements with your buyer on important topics such as delivery and payment terms, product specifications and certifications.

Follow the [CBI tips for doing business with European buyers of fresh fruit and vegetables](#).

7.5 REQUIREMENTS FOR NICHE MARKETS

Additional requirements for niche markets (subset of a market that focuses on a specific segment) are becoming increasingly important. Those requirements are usually even mandatory to enter the respective niche market.

ORGANIC CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

More and more consumers in Europe prefer organic fruit and vegetables because of their natural and sustainable production methods and their connection to a healthy diet. In countries such as Italy, Ireland, France, Germany and Sweden, organic fruit and vegetables represent around a fifth of the total organic demand.

DIFFERENT ORGANIC CERTIFICATION LOGOS



In order for a company to market their product as "organic" in the European market, it must comply with the [EU Regulation \(Council Regulation \(EC\) No 834/2007 and Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 889/2008 \(OJ L-250 18/09/2008\)](#) for organic production and labelling – which is a legal requirement for all organic products. Organic products must be grown using organic production methods which are laid down in the legislation. Growing and processing facilities must be audited by an accredited certifier, before you may put the EU organic logo onto your products.

One of the factors which exporters have to pay special attention to is whether their organic certification is de facto recognised by the EU legislation. Therefore, producers/exporters should search for a certifier whose standards are accredited by the EU. The [European Commission's website on Trade in organics](#) provides a thorough explanation of import regulations and other related issues.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 of 8 December 2008 laying down detailed rules for implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and its latest amendments, regarding the arrangements for imports of organic products from third countries, can be found on the [EUR-Lex website](#).

In the organic food market, there are also some certifications which go much further than the EU regulation. Those standards might become important in case a small niche within the organic market is targeted. The most common of these standards are [Demeter](#) or [Naturland](#) organic certification.

All organic products imported into the EU must have the appropriate electronic certificate of inspection (e-COI). These certificates are managed through the [Trade Control and Expert System \(TRACES\)](#). If you do not have an electronic certificate of inspection, your products will not be released from their port of arrival in the European Union.

TIPS

Investigate the possibilities for organic certification, including the opportunities and costs involved in the process.

Consider organic avocados as a plus, not as a must. Remember that implementing organic production and becoming certified can be expensive.

For information on organic certification in Europe, visit the website of [Organic Farming in the European Union](#), which also contains guidelines concerning imports of organic products. Also consult the [International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements \(IFOAM\)](#) website for information on certification standards.

Make sure you become familiar with the [Trade Control and Expert System \(TRACES\)](#) before your first organic exports in order to avoid losses.

FAIRTRADE PRODUCTS

Fairtrade labels are niche requirements that can distinguish your product from the masses and attract the more conscious consumers. These certification labels are consumer-focused and are the most applicable to products from smallholder farms and main fruit and vegetable categories.

[Fairtrade International](#) is the leading standard-setting and certification organisation for fair trade. Products which carry the Fairtrade label indicate that producers are paid a [fairtrade minimum price](#). Other fair trade standards available in the European market are [Fair Trade Ecocert](#) and [Fair for Life](#). Fair Trade Ecocert provides for guaranteed minimum prices, producer support and good agricultural practices; this standard requires an organic certification. Fair for Life has a similar proposition, and is a standard for companies which demonstrate decent working conditions and commit to fair sourcing and responsibilities towards their primary producers. Organic certification is not compulsory for Fair for Life.

TIP

Before engaging in a Fair Trade certification programme, make sure to check (in consultation with your potential buyer) that this label has sufficient demand in your target market and whether it will be cost beneficial for you.

8 What are the market prices for avocados?

Trade prices for avocados fluctuate mostly depending on the available volume. The summer prices are generally lower due to the higher offer, especially from Peru. Other influences that determine prices are quality, size and variety. The highest prices are generated by Class I Hass avocados around size 18.

Average wholesale prices are approximately €8 to €10 per 4kg box. Peak prices go up to €14 per box for excellent quality and when supply is scarce, but bottom prices of €4 or €5 (importer's wholesale price) have also been recorded during oversupplied markets. Importers generally maintain a profit margin of around 8% of the wholesale price, excluding handling costs.

Industry sources indicate that organic certified avocados are sold at a premium on the market. However, the size of this premium depends on the quality of the fruit, the season it is sold in and the general available supply of organic avocados.

FIGURE 6:
AVOCADO SUPPLY AND AVERAGE PRICE IN THE SUMMER SEASON IN THE EU

Source: [CBI Entering the European market for avocados](#)



FIGURE 7: AVOCADO SUPPLY AND AVERAGE PRICE IN THE WINTER SEASON IN THE EU

Source: [CBI Entering the European market for avocados](#)



Avocado trade prices are likely to gradually develop in an upward trend over the next years, but peaks and lows will remain present due to an uneven growth rate of supply and demand. The summer prices in 2018 were extremely low due to an oversupplied market, which had a negative effect on the winter supply that followed (see Figures 7 and 8). These prices recovered in 2019. In 2020, preliminary data showed some price fluctuation due to COVID-19,

but the summer was again characterized by high volume and low prices. At the start of the winter season prices improved again.

Retail prices are between €1.10 and €1.60 for regular sized, ripened avocados. On sale, they can be sold for as low as €0.99 each. These retail prices do not reflect trade prices because large retail chains or supermarkets often have supply programmes for avocados with fixed prices.

The retail prices and promotions are managed independently from those on the free spot market. A retail program provides the stability and security of a steady supply volume, but prices are not negotiable.

SOURCES

CBI (2021): The European market potential for avocados,
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CBI/IPD (2015): Avocado in Germany

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