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Philippines

Asparagus

Philippine Asparagus Production and Trade 1998

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Report Highlights:

Philippine asparagus production, which had been increasing in recent years, declined in 1997 as a result of the El Nino drought. 1997 also saw exports decline and imports increase. The extension of the drought through most of 1998 will likely again result in a production and export decline.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report, RP

Philippine asparagus production from 1993 to 1996 had been growing due to increasing area planted. In 1993, nearly 6,000 MT of asparagus was produced from an area of 665 hectares. Production peaked in 1996 reaching 12,000 MT from an area of 1,400 hectares. Last year, production declined slightly to 10,988 MT as area planted decreased to 1,331 hectares due to the onset of the El Nino drought. The prolonged dry period through most of 1998 will likely result in another decline in production.

PHILIPPINE ASPARAGUS PRODUCTION: VOLUME & AREA						
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998*
Volume (MT)	5,875	9,821	10,842	11,761	10,988	10,000
Area (Hectares)	664	1,088	1,291	1,384	1,331	1,200
* Post estimate						
Source: Bureau of Agricultural Statistics						

Around 98-99 percent of total production is found in South Cotabato province in the southern island of Mindanao where it is largely contract grown by Tropifresh, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Dole Philippines, Inc. Tropifresh reportedly started asparagus exports to Japan in the late 1980s from an initial 35-hectare plantation and later expanded operations to 200 hectares through several contract growers. Production costs are not well known although press reports place the annual operational budget per hectare at around P130,000 although this may not necessarily mean actual production costs. Contract growing schemes usually provide subsistence to growers in the form of advances during the growing period or the lean months of production.

Increasing production has resulted in increasing exports which reached their highest level (5,700 MT) in 1996. Exports declined the following year and are expected to continue declining in calendar year 1998. More than 95 percent of all asparagus exported goes to Japan.

ASPARAGUS, FRESH/CHILLED EXPORTS (MT)						
Destination	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Sep 1998
Australia		2				
Taiwan					17	8
Hong Kong			26	0	36	43
Japan	3255	3879	4894	5631	4969	2031
Okinawa		2			3	
Korea				22	32	
Singapore				8	49	4
UAE	2					
TOTAL	3257	3881	4919	5660	5105	2085

ASPARAGUS, FRESH/CHILLED EXPORTS (1,000 US\$FOB)						
Destination	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Sep 1998
Australia		4				
Taiwan					53	20
Hong Kong			45	0	86	87
Japan	5877	6873	9060	13632	11960	4892
Okinawa		3			7	
Korea				53	77	
Singapore				40	332	28
UAE	4					
TOTAL	5880	6876	9105	13725	12515	5028
Source: National Statistics Office						

Provided below, are import statistics from 1993 to 1997. Note that imports were nil in 1996 indicative of good production during this period. Imports increased in 1997 as the El Nino-induced drought set in and affected production. Imports in 1998 are likely to be higher than the previous year's level owing to lingering effects of the drought. Most of the imported asparagus originated from Australia.

ASPARAGUS, FRESH/CHILLED IMPORTS (MT)						
Origin	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Sep 1998
Australia	6	41	2		1	
Austria			0			
Hongkong	0	2	1			
Singapore		1			1	1
Switzerland						1
TOTAL	6	45	3	0	2	2

ASPARAGUS, FRESH/CHILLED IMPORTS (\$1,000 FOB)						
Origin	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Sep 1998
Australia	7	69	3		0	
Austria			0			
Hongkong	0	3	1			
Singapore		2			1	1
Switzerland						1
TOTAL	7	74	5	0	2	2