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Belgium-Luxembourg

Fresh Deciduous Fruit

Annual

2000

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Report Highlights:
Recent EU apple overproduction and low prices, decreasing consumption, and heavy competition has led to serious financial problems for Belgian apple growers. However, expected decreases in EU apple and pear production of 5 and 6 percent respectively, are likely to support higher EU apple and pear prices in the coming season.

Includes PSD changes: Yes
Includes Trade Matrix: Yes
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Table of Contents

General Summary

According to the Belgian Ministry of Agriculture, initial estimates for the Belgian MY 2000/01 apple and pea are 485,475 metric tons and 154,310 metric tons, respectively. The MY 1999/00 apple and pear crop will be than the preceding year, but of good quality. Despite favorable weather conditions during the blooming and grc season, estimated apple production decreased by 12 percent, while total pear production decreased 5 percent. decrease in apple production is due to smaller profits on *Jonagold*. Although the apple crop is not excellent, i than the average crop of the last couple of years. The overall quality of the MY 1999/00 apple and pear crop i expected to be good. The *Jonagold* is the most important apple variety and the *Conference* is the most importar pear variety grown in Belgium. However, the popularity of the *Jonagold* among consumers is decreasing.

The total value of the 1999 Belgian fruit crop is estimated at Belgian Francs (BF) 13.3 billion (US$ 351.4 mil 1999 apple crop is valued at BF 4.6 billion (US$ 121.5 million) and the pear crop at BF 3.6 billion (US$ 95.1 Together, apples and pears account for 62 percent of the total value of fruit production. The average annual pr paid to apple and pear growers in 1999 decreased by 13 and 15 percent, compared to the previous year. Howe an expected decrease in EU apple and pear production by 5 and 6 percent respectively, is likely to support higl apple and pear prices in the coming season.

According to national trade data, Belgian apple imports reached 232,277 metric tons in MY 1998/99, down fr 249,087 metric tons in the previous marketing year. Belgian apple exports increased to 313,917 metric tons : 1998/99, up 4 percent from the previous marketing year. The future of Belgian apple exports will be determin ability of the Belgian apple sector to adapt to the competitive challenge from other countries around the worlc

Exchange Rate		
Year	U.S. $	Belgian Francs
1997	1	35.74
1998	1	36.31
1999	1	37.85

Fresh Apples

PSD Table						
Country	Belgium-Luxembourg					
Commodity	Fresh Apples			(HA)(1000 TREES)(MT)		
	Revised	**1998**	**Preliminary**	**1999**	**Forecast**	**2000**
	Old	**New**	**Old**	**New**	**Old**	**New**
Market Year Begin		**07/1998**		**07/1999**		**07/2000**
Area Planted	9,606	10,924	9,600	10,859	0	10,750
Area Harvested	9,606	10,924	9,600	10,859	0	10,750
Bearing Trees	18,862	19,100	18,900	18,959	0	18,800
Non-Bearing Trees	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Trees	18,862	19,100	18,900	18,959	0	18,800
Commercial Production	413,730	413,730	473,485	558,135	0	493,225
Non-Comm. Production	7,000	3,516	4,000	3,950	0	3,850
TOTAL Production	420,730	417,246	477,485	562,085	0	497,075
TOTAL Imports	200,000	232,277	145,000	220,000	0	240,000
TOTAL SUPPLY	**620,730**	**649,523**	**622,485**	**782,085**	**0**	**737,075**
Domestic Fresh Consump	237,975	202,740	242,485	267,458	0	260,000
Exports, Fresh Only	240,000	313,917	250,000	340,000	0	330,000
For Processing	130,000	120,000	130,000	168,700	0	144,600
Withdrawal From Market	12,755	12,866	0	5,927	0	2,475
TOTAL UTILIZATION	**620,730**	**649,523**	**622,485**	**782,085**	**0**	**737,075**

Note: Specific data on bearing and non-bearing trees is not available.

Production

Total apple production in the 1999/00 marketing year is expected to decrease by 12 percent. The decrease in production is due to smaller profits on *Jonagold*. Although the apple crop is not excellent, it is better than the a crop over the last couple of years. In addition, the overall quality of the 1999 apple (and pear) crop is expecte good. The *Jonagold* continues to be the most important apple variety grown in Belgium. The country has a 27 share in EU *Jonagold* production. In addition to Belgium, this variety is also grown in central and southern Hol north of France and the western/southwestern regions of Germany.

Low apple prices in recent years have deepened the problems of the Belgian apple sector. Higher production a decreasing consumption increase competition among European suppliers. With apple imports from southern hemisphere countries intensify the problem. EU uprooting schemes are still too small to be really effective. disappearance of the smaller, less efficient growers.

The long term outlook for the Belgian apple sector is unclear. According to Belgian horticultural analysts, wo production is increasing while consumption, in contrast, is expected to decline. It will become increasingly d Belgian growers to effectively compete on the world market because of relatively high production costs and i competition from other suppliers. The Belgian industry is also concerned about the growing popularity among consumers of apple varieties produced by competitor countries such as the *Braeburn, Gala* and the *Fuji.* There some Belgian producers are working to develop new varieties in order to meet changing consumer preferences addition, Belgian growers of *Jonagold* wish to regain confidence of the wholesaler and the consumer.

In the past couple of years, according to the Belgian fruit producers organization S.V.F., too much attention w to grow apples with attractive colors at the expense of the tartness. Year after year the color of the *Jonagold* b more and more red, resulting in apples of a lesser tartness and a lesser tast. Growers will now give priority to tartness which will also be beneficial to the keeping quality of the *Jonagold* apple. In addition, quality increase sustantially by rejuvenation of the plantings. However, because of the low apple prices in the last couple of ye growers did not invest enough in plantings. As a result, overall quality of *Jonagold* apples could become less i long term.

At the moment, one-third of the Belgian apple production is purchased by the processing industry which buys, general, low priced and lower quality apples. In former years, between 15 and 23 percent of the apple crop was purchased by the processing industry. Because of relative high investment costs and high wages, Belgium is no competitive region for industry fruit.

In May 2000, the Belgian apple growers' group *NV Jo Nicolaï & Co*, member of the European growers organiza *Belpomme*, received the first Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP)/ ISO 9002- certificate in B Certifications like this are likely to improve the quality of Belgian fruit and therefor the image of the Belgian which contribute to a better competitive position of Belgium.

BELGIUM - APPLE PRODUCTION (metric tons)			
	1998/99	**1999/00**	**2000/01***
TALL TREES (sub total)	700	1,085	850
Boskoop	455	810	550
other	245	255	300
DWARF TREES (sub total)	**406,030**	**549,320**	**484,625**
Golden Delicious	40,500	49,500	43,400
Jonagold	221,000	290,500	262,400
Jonagored	52,380	73,500	72,600
Boskoop	29,700	60,800	40,000
Cox Orange	11,800	13,750	8,925
Gloster	8,760	11,050	8,700
Elstar	19,600	23,220	18,000
James Grieve	1,700	2,000	2,000
Other	20,500	25,000	28,600
TOTAL APPLES	**406,730**	**550,385**	**485,475**

*Source: Belgian Ministry of Agriculture * Preliminary*

LUXEMBOURG - APPLE PRODUCTION (metric tons)			
	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01*
TOTAL APPLES	10,516	11,700	11,600
Commercialized	7,000	7,750	7,750

*Source: Luxembourg Ministry of Agriculture - STATEC * Preliminary*

BELGIUM - Planted Area; Number of Fruit Farms; and Number of Fruit Trees			
APPLES	Area - HA -	Number of Farms	Numberof Trees
TALL TREES			
Belle de Boskoop	27	52	3,380
Other	36	62	2,947
DWARF TREES			
Golden Delicious	710	631	1,301,478
Boskoop	913	850	1,533,078
Cox Orange Pippin	247	311	448,156
Jonagold	4,968	1,390	10,037,307
Jonagored	1,454	713	2,901,496
Gloster	168	281	312,002
Elstar	434	614	872,319
Mutsu	28	58	52,316
Other	618	648	1,217,756
TOTAL APPLES	9,541	1,582	18,675,908
TOTAL ALL FRUITS	17,376	3,481	--

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, May 15, 1999 census

LUXEMBOURG: PLANTED AREA AND NUMBER OF FRUIT TREES		
	Area HA	Total No. of trees in 1995
Tall Trees	1,220	105,000
Dwarf Trees	98	78,400
TOTAL APPLES	1,318	283,400

Source: STATEC 1995

BELGIUM: APPLE CROP VALUE (Million Belgian Francs)		
	1998	1999
TOTAL FRUIT	12,065	13,279
of which Apples	4,254	4,554
of which Pears	3,176	3,638

Source: Agricultural Economics Institute

Prices

Approximately 57 percent of the Belgian apple crop is sold at auction by the Association of Major Belgian Au (V.B.T.). The association reported that total sales volume of apples in 1999 increased by 20 percent, while th average price decreased by 23 percent compared to 1998. Therefore, 1999 was an absolute low for the Belgia sector.

Auction prices for apples have remained low over the past several years, largely due to abundant worldwide su apples and other fruit. Low returns to Belgium growers have caused serious financial distress to many fruit gr with an increasing number of growers discontinuing operations. In 1999, the average annual price paid to appl growers decreased 13 percent from 1,208 Belgian Francs (BF)/100 Kg in 1998 to 1,046 BF/100 Kg in 1999. However, the average consumer price of apples lay for a couple of months among the 4,000 BF/100 Kg and 6 BF/100 Kg. According to apple growers, wholesalers and retailers took an excessive profit from the apple sal

Apple prices are expected to grow slightly until the end of 2000. Supplies may drop after January 2001, with some further increase in prices, but new crop apples from southern hemisphere countries will begin again arou April, 2001.

BELGIUM: AVERAGES PRICES PAID TO APPLE GROWERS	
Marketing Year	Belgian Francs/100 Kg
1996/97	1,682
1997/98	1,208
1998/99	1,046

Source: Belgian Ministry of Agriculture

BELGIUM: AVERAGES ANNUAL PRICES RECEIVED BY GROWERS FOR SELECTED APPLE VARIETIES (Belgian Francs per Kilogram/Base Year 1990 = 100)				
	1998		1999	
	Price	Index	Price	Index
Fruits	---	86.7	---	73.1
Apples	---	64.9	---	55.6
Jonagold	14.56	62.1	11.87	53.0
Golden Delicious	15.52	74.0	13.18	66.5
Boskoop	12.67	---	11.08	---
Gloster	8.70	---	8.18	---

Source: Institute of Agricultural Economics

In the Belgian fruit sector underbidding is one of the largest problems due to the small amount of large buyers Therefore, minimal price-arrangements are welcomed by producers. The Belgian fruit producers' organizatior is investigating the possibility of establishing a quotation commission, which could fix a recommended price (In addition, an independent, objective, and reliable check on quality control at different auctions is needed to g high quality. S.V.F. also asks growers to put packing-data on their fruit crates in order to accelerate the distribu improve quality.

The Belgian, Dutch and German fruit producers organizations want a stricter policy on quality controls to raise prices. Since February 2000, large Jonagold apples of lower quality have been offered to the processing indus instead of the fresh-market. Partly due to this intervention, growers have gotten better prices. Therefore, the countries want a similar approach for other varieties. In September 2000, a proposal will be made to the Euro growers' organization, Copa-Cogeca. In addition, as of September 15, 2000, no apples from the former crop r enter the markets of the three countries anymore, to give room to the new crop. The three countries also want establish an agreement on standards for hardness and sugar content for apples and pears. European criteria for minimum standards already exist, but Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany want to emphasize these qualitie with size standards and color scheme.

Consumption

Average annual per capita consumption of apples in Belgium is estimated at 30 kilograms per person. Domest are thought to account for approximately 70 percent of total Belgian apple consumption. Hypermarkets and m supermarkets are the major distribution channels for fresh fruit, with a 63 percent market share.

Apples tend to be popular with adults over the age of 35, particularly women and elderly adults. Apples are no popular with younger adults as they compete with the increasing popularity of snack foods such as confection cream and other snack items. In order to heighten consumer awareness of apples and the range of varieties ava the Union of Belgian Horticultural Auctions and VLAM, a Flemish agricultural marketing organization, are co promotional campaigns. The campaigns partly focus on the nutritional aspects of apples in an effort to capital growing consumer interest in health foods.

Trade

Imports
Belgium is an important distribution point for apples and other fruit. The country has a ranking in the top ten c importing and apple exporting nations. The port of Antwerp handles nearly all apples and pears imported throu Belgium. The Antwerp Port Authority estimates that 95% of the apples and pears imported from New Zealand Africa and Latin America are transhipped to other markets in Europe.

According to national trade data, Belgian apple imports reached 232,277 metric tons in marketing year 1998/9 from 249,087 metric tons in the previous marketing year. Southern Hemisphere exporters, in particular New Z accounted 27 percent of total BLEU (Belgium & Luxembourg Economic Union) imports during MY 1998/99 by Argentina, South Africa and Chile with respectively 11, 10 and 9 percent share of total imports. It is expec apple imports from the southern hemisphere countries will decrease by more than 20 percent because of high costs due to high oil prices, a high US dollar rate (the countries sell their apples in US dollars) and low apple the EU due to a large supply. However, the prices of processing apples are reasonable. In addition, the apple production in Chile, Argentina and South Africa should decrease 10 percent compared to the previous year du unfavorable weather conditions.

According to national statistics, exports of U.S. apples to BLEU increased from none in MY 1997/98 to 537 tons in MY 1998/99. Since trade contacts estimate that approximately 95 percent of U.S. apples and pears im through Belgian were transhipped to other markets, we believe that most US apples were not shipped through I but rather directly to their final destinations the United Kingdom and Germany. However, this situation has re changed.

Exports
Belgian apple exports increased to 313,917 metric tons in MY 1998/99, up 4 percent from the previous mark year.

Belgian horticultural analysts opine that China will likely become an important player over the long term beca strong growth in Chinese apple production. These analysts believe that there is a real threat that China will cla the growing markets in Southeast Asia, where today, the U.S. and some EU countries play an important role. (However, demand in these countries will be dependent upon the outcome of the current financial crisis in Asi Horticultural observers from the Belgian fruit producers organization S.V.F. also report that East European co the long run, are bound to develop production of EU apple varieties for export which means that current and/o potential Belgian export markets will become producers and export competitors.

In addition, Belgian industry analysts believe that the world's apple consumption will not increase significantly of the availability of many varieties of fruits. They also believe that Belgium's pride and major export variety, *Jonagold* , will not be able to compete, in the long run, with new apple varieties such as *the Braeburn, Gala* and *Royal Gala* from New-Zealand. However, in the short term Belgium can take advantage of the low Euro exchar rate.

Export Trade Matrix			
Country	Belgium-Luxembourg		
Commodity	Fresh Apples		
Time period	June/July	Units:	Metric Tons
Exports for:	**1999**		**2000**
U.S.	0	U.S.	0
Others		Others	
France	27,268	France	28,310
Netherlands	77,078	Netherlands	78,278
Germany	148,322	Germany	145,139
U.K.	11,874	U.K.	7,790
Russia	26,840	Russia	21,899
Total for Others	291,382		281,416
Others not Listed	10,284		32,501
Grand Total	**301,666**		**313,917**

Source: Belgian Office for Foreign Trade

Import Trade Matrix			
Country	Belgium-Luxembourg		
Commodity	Fresh Apples		
Time period	June/July	Units:	Metric Tons
Imports for:	**1999**		**2000**
U.S.	0	U.S.	537
Others		Others	
France	55,708	France	35,373
Netherlands	25,530	Netherlands	34,459
Germany	6,947	Germany	6,904
Italy	13,630	Italy	5,586
South Africa	22,122	South Africa	23,641
New-Zealand	75,689	New-Zealand	63,353
Chile	20,619	Chile	20,886
Argentina	26,282	Argentina	25,655
Total for Others	246,527		215,857
Others not Listed	2,560		15,883
Grand Total	**249,087**		**232,277**

Source: Belgian Office for Foreign Trade

Note: National statistical data in the trade matrixes related to "other" may include a substantial *amount of apples in storage. The origin of these apples is not known.*

Marketing

The Belgian apple sector is striving to enhance their competitiveness in both the domestic and foreign markets producing and marketing varieties that are geared toward consumer tastes. In order to meet consumer prefere Belgian sector is conducting research into the development and marketing of new and existing varieties. This partly based on the realization that the Belgian apple sector will likely undergo major changes as a result of th of the EU Common Agricultural Policy and the expansion of the EU to include Eastern European countries.

Several new apple juice products have been launched on the Belgian market. The upsurge in new juice product partly a result of lower prices for apples over the past several years. As a result, the Belgian juice market has expanding in recent years. Total per capita consumption of fruit juices is approximately 21 liters, up from jus 1986.

Belgian Imports of Apple Juice
- in Million Dollars -

	1997	1998	1999*
Total Imports	24.2	25.7	27.2
Germany	16.0	17.0	18.0
Poland	1.4	1.1	0.9

** Ag Affairs Office estimates*
Source: Belgian Office for Foreign Trade

Policy

The Belgian Government supports apple and pear producers through a support price system purchasing apples pears if domestic prices fall below EU-determined levels. The quantities of apples and pears withdrawn from market are sold by the Belgian Governmental Intervention Agency (OBEA).

There are not any other production support programs available except an interest rate reduction program for n investments. Under this program, up to a maximum of 5 percentage points can be deducted from the prevailin interest rate. (This is also valid for other agricultural sectors.)

Belgian fruit and vegetable growers have responded favorably to the initiative permitting the Belgian industry/government to invest BF 2.73 billion (US$ 76.4 million) in the Belgian fruit sector, of which BF billi (US$ 33.5 million) was invested in 1997 and BF billion 1.53 (US$42.9) in 1998. The investments are orient toward production techniques, improvement of fruit quality, and marketing and technical information for grov addition, the Belgian Ministry of Agriculture announced that producers using integrated production techniques use of pesticides etc.) will receive a subsidy of BF 10,000 (US$ 275) per hectare. The subsidies will be funde both the EU and the Belgian national budget.

Apples and Pears Withdrawn from the Market and Sold by Belgian Governmental Intervention Agency (OBEA)				
	Apples		Pears	
MY	Metric Tons	X 1,000 BF	Metric Tons	X 1,000 BF
1997/98	4,849	21,218	1,099	4,579
1998/99	12,866	54,112	969	3,871
1999/00*	5,927	23,768	830	3,166
Note: EU categories I and II (Grades eligible for intervention)				

*Source: Ministry of Agriculture * Preliminary*

Fresh Pears

PSD Table						
Country	Belgium-Luxembourg					
Commodity	Fresh Pears			(HA)(1000 TREES)(MT)		
	Revised	**1998**	**Preliminary**	**1999**	**Forecast**	**2000**
	Old	**New**	**Old**	**New**	**Old**	**New**
Market Year Begin		**07/1998**		**07/1999**		**07/2000**
Area Planted	5,070	5,123	5,200	5,359	0	5,600
Area Harvested	5,070	5,123	5,100	5,359	0	5,600
Bearing Trees	7,555	7,578	7,700	7,917	0	8,100
Non-Bearing Trees	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Trees	7,555	7,578	7,700	7,917	0	8,100
Commercial Production	151,485	151,485	155,000	163,720	0	155,360
Non-Comm. Production	1,175	1,175	1,300	1,150	0	1,230
TOTAL Production	152,660	152,660	156,300	164,870	0	156,590
TOTAL Imports	85,000	74,321	80,000	63,175	0	62,500
TOTAL SUPPLY	**237,660**	**226,981**	**236,300**	**228,045**	**0**	**219,090**
Domestic Fresh Consump	48,023	45,847	48,000	48,765	0	43,000
Exports, Fresh Only	175,000	165,915	175,000	160,900	0	160,000
For Processing	14,000	14,250	13,000	17,550	0	15,680
Withdrawal From Market	637	969	300	830	0	410
TOTAL UTILIZATION	**237,660**	**226,981**	**236,300**	**228,045**	**0**	**219,090**

Note: Specific data on bearing and non-bearing trees is not available.

Production

Although area planted to pears is trending upward slightly in Belgium - due to better prices compared to apples pear production in the 1999/00 marketing year is expected to decrease by 5 percent. The decrease in pear pro is due to the disappointing *Conference* crop of the young planting. However, the Doyenne du Comice crop is expected to increase with a remarkable 59 percent.

The *Conference* continues to be the most important variety produced in Belgium with a share of approximately percent in total production. This variety is very popular in Europe, especially in the Scandinavian countries. B producers are experimenting with other varieties including the *Concorde*. The quality of the Belgian pear crop 1999/00 is reported to be good. Therefore, it is hard for countries like Italy and Spain to compete on quality. pears are hardly grown in Europe. Therefore, organic pears offer another opportunity for Belgium growers.

BELGIUM - PEAR PRODUCTION
(metric tons)

	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01*
TALL TREES (sub total)	275	430	280
Legipont	110	170	117
Other	165	260	163
DWARF TREES (sub total)	150,410	162,290	154,030
Conference	117,500	142,100	119,600
Doyenne du Comice	19,110	8,325	20,240
Durondeau	10,350	9,345	10,625
Beurre Hardy	1,360	640	1,440
Triomphe	1,040	1,040	1,280
Other	1,050	840	845
TOTAL PEARS	150,585	162,720	154,310

*Source: Belgian Ministry of Agriculture * Preliminary*

In January 1999, the British supermarket chain Tesco stopped sales of imported Belgium and Dutch pears afte discovering high concentrations of the growth retardant cloremequat (CCC). Pear growers in the United King not allowed to use CCC in pear growing and the EU only allows the use of CCC with a maximum residue level parts per million (ppm). Tesco found levels of 15 to 20 ppm. However, since 1999 the use of CCC is forbidd Belgium and all pears brought into the market had been systematically inspected on CCC. Since 2000 this mea been replaced by a selective inspection. At the moment, only Conference pears and Doyenne du Comice pear growers who contravened the measure in the past, will be inspected before gathering.

LUXEMBOURG: PEAR PRODUCTION (Metric Tons)			
	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
TOTAL PEARS	2,075	2,150	2,280
(Commercialized)	950	1,000	1,050

Source: Luxembourg Ministry of Agriculture - STATEC

BELGIUM: Planted area; Number of Fruit Farms; and Number of Fruit Trees			
PEARS	*Area - HA-*	*Number of Farms*	*Number of Trees*
TALL TREES			
Legipont	22	29	1,096
Other	35	49	2,171
DWARF TREES			
Conference	4,086	1,421	6,134,650
Doyenne du Comice	705	799	997,496
Durondeau	337	469	507,678
Other	179	333	274,848
TOTAL PEARS	5,306	1,456	7,894,672
TOTAL ALL FRUITS	17,199	3,595	--

Source: Ministry of Agriculture - May 15, 1999 census

LUXEMBOURG: Planted Area and Number of Fruit Trees		
	area HA	Total No. of trees in 1999
Tall Trees	41	15,650
Dwarf Trees	12	7,200
TOTAL PEARS	53	22,850

Source: STATEC (1995)

Nowadays, many growers replace apple trees by pear trees, which are more profitable because of higher price: recent years. In the next couple of years, the Belgian production of Conference pears will grow strongly, beca the investments in this variety (planting trees and enlarging planted area). While the area planted with apples d by 65 ha in 1999, the area planted with pears increased by 236 ha. However, at the moment the demand for pea exceeds by far the supply.

Prices

Approximately 79 percent of the Belgian apple crop is sold by auctions of the Association of Major Belgian A (V.B.T.). The association reported that the total sales volume of pears in 1999 increased by 3 percent, while tl average price decreased by 13 percent compared to 1998.

In 1999, the average annual price paid to pear growers decreased 15 percent from 2,431 Belgian Francs (BF)/ in 1998 to 2,058 BF/100 Kg in 1999. As the total EU pear crop is expected to decrease by 6 percent in 2000 pear prices are likely to remain on the same level or may increase.

Average Marketing Year Prices Paid to Pear Growers	
Market Year	in BF/100 Kg
1996/97	1,674
1997/98	2,431
1999/00	2,058

Source: Belgian Ministry of Agriculture

AVERAGE ANNUAL PRICES RECEIVED BY GROWERS OF SELECTED PEARS (FIRST QUALITY) (Belgian Francs/Kilogram) (Base Year 1990 = 100)				
	1998		**1999**	
	Price	**Index**	**Price**	**Index**
Fruits	---	86.7	---	73.1
Pears	---	86.1	---	66.4
Conference	26.45	90.0	21.05	67.5
Doyenne	27.94	78.2	26.21	65.9

Durondeau	16.92	---	16.57	---

Source: Institute of Agricultural Economics

Consumption

Per capita consumption of pears in Belgium is estimated at 6 to 7 kilos and increasing. The Conference variet likely continue to be the most popular in Belgium among consumers. The Concorde variety is also becoming popular.

Trade

After jumping 35 percent in MY 1996/97, BLEU pear exports have decreased by 4 percent from 173,197 met in MY 1997/98 to 165,915 metric tons in MY 1998/99. Major export markets for BLUE pear exports includ Germany, the Netherlands, France and Spain. Russia has also been an important destination in the past but futu export levels are dependant on the financial state of the Russian economy. However, when Belgium growers c the strict quality requirements of British supermarkets, Belgium could increase market share to the U.K. Gern offers opportunities. The Belgian Conference pear is a popular export variety because of it's relatively long s

After increasing significantly in MYs 1995/96 and 1996/97, BLUE pear imports have decreased remarkable b percent in MY 1998/99.

Export Trade Matrix			
Country	Belgium-Luxembourg		
Commodity	Fresh Pears		
Time period	June/July	Units:	Metric Tons
Exports for:	**1999**		**2000**
U.S.	0	U.S.	0
Others		Others	
France	24,779	France	28,189
Netherlands	33,548	Netherlands	37,053
Germany	43,528	Germany	41,542
Italy	4,125	Italy	4,105
U.K.	21,651	U.K.	19,106
Denmark	2,533	Denmark	2,501
Norway	6,657	Norway	7,193
Spain	2,856	Spain	3,015
Russia	21,963	Russia	8,023
Total for Others	161,640		150,727
Others not Listed	10,557		15,188
Grand Total	**172,197**		**165,915**

Import Trade Matrix			
Country	Belgium-Luxembourg		
Commodity	Fresh Pears		
Time period	June/July	Units:	Metric Tons
Imports for:	**1999**		**2000**
U.S.	0	U.S.	0
Others		Others	
France	6,442	France	6,510
Netherlands	7,808	Netherlands	7,805
Spain	9,024	Spain	2,081
Italy	1,121	Italy	1,191
Argentina	26,013	Argentina	28,998
South Africa	21,636	South Africa	14,899
Chile	15,437	Chile	10,275
New-Zealand	542	New-Zealand	882
Total for Others	88,023		72,641
Others not Listed	3,305		1,680
Grand Total	**91,328**		**74,321**

Source: Belgian Office for Foreign Trade

Note: BLEU official trade data are edited by the Belgian Office for Foreign Trade (BOFT) and are based on statistical data received from the National Bank of Belgium (NBB). NBB/BOFT advised that since early 1998 they have changed the compilation of statistical data and now include transit movements within the EU in all trade data (imports and exports). Please take this into consideration when comparing.