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Mexico

Post: Mexico

Christmas Trees

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

Climate Change

Competitor

Global Warming

National Plan

Promotion Opportunities

Wood Products

Solid Wood Products

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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Report Highlights:

Although tree nurseries are sprouting up in Mexico and domestic production is on the rise, the greatest volume of Christmas trees used in the country is of imported origin. Most trees enter Mexico in late November and pass into consumers hands during the 15 days prior to December 25. Sanitary requirements for imported Christmas trees were finalized in late 2010 after years of scientific studies and negotiations. Christmas tree nurseries are bringing environmental, economic, and social benefits to rural areas and agricultural producers.

General Information:

Production:

The Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) estimated the 2010 Christmas tree planted area at 5,000 hectares (ha) and production at 800,000 trees in both 2009 and 2010.

Planted areas are located in the states of Mexico, Veracruz, Nuevo Leon, Mexico City, Puebla, Jalisco, and Guanajuato. The State of Mexico is responsible for almost 60 percent of total production. The production cycle is between five and seven years (depending on the species). The most common species grown in Mexico are Mexican White Pine (*Pino ayacahuite* [*Pinus ayacahuite* var. *veitchii*]); Douglas Fir (*Abeto douglas* [*Pseudotsuga macrolepis*]); Mexican Pinyon (*Pino piñonero* [*Pinus cembroides*]); Sacred Fir (*Oyamel* [*Abies religiosa*]); and, Aleppo Pine (*Pino alepo* [*Pinus alepensis*]).

Christmas trees are grown on plantations and specialized nurseries established to supply the growing demand for this product. Christmas tree farming is a sustainable development alternative in many rural areas and considered a profitable business venture. In some areas, Christmas tree planting is more profitable than using land for residential or commercial use and has been an effective strategy to stop the advance of urban sprawl. Similarly, Christmas tree production is an alternative crop to traditional rain fed crops, such as oats, planted in these areas.

Trade:

According to industry information, Mexico imports 1 million trees to help meet the annual demand of about 1.8 million trees. Statistics for calendar years 2008, 2009, and 2010 under harmonized tariff system (HTS) code 06049102 “Christmas Trees” show that Mexico imported 24,412 metric tons (MT), 21,352 MT, and 21,775 MT of trees valued at \$20.2 million, \$12.1 million, and \$12.7 million, respectively. Nearly all imports originated from the United States. A small fraction, however, originated from Canada in 2009. Approximately 75 to 80 percent of all Christmas tree imports cross into Mexico during November of each year.

Policy:

Christmas tree plantations receive support through CONAFOR’s ProArbol program. This is the primary program supporting the forestry sector. It offers incentives to landowners to protect, conserve, restore, and sustainably exploit forest resources as well as forested and arid areas in Mexico. CONAFOR is responsible for carrying out this program and delivers resources under strict operational rules. From 2008 through the end of 2010, CONAFOR supported the plantation of 1,040 ha of trees through ProArbol.

SEMARNAT published the final standard regulating the importation of Christmas trees, [NOM-013-SEMARNAT-2010](#), in the *Diario Oficial* (Federal Register), on November 6, 2010. The NOM regulates the sanitary requirements for the import of natural Christmas trees of the species *Pinus* and *Abies*, and of the species *Pseudotsuga menziesii* into Mexico. SEMARNAT had been working to

modify the original regulation published in 2004, which was issued to protect the country from possible pests that could severely damage the domestic tree industry and/or create other ecological problems if left unregulated. Attempts to modify NOM-013 had been rejected by the Federal Commission for Regulatory Improvement (COFEMER) until last November. See 2010 GAIN Reports [MX0085](#) *NOM-013 Finalized for Christmas Tree Imports* and [MX0029](#) *Christmas Tree NOM Extension*.

Marketing:

Industry information covering the 2009 sales season suggests that approximately 75 percent of Christmas trees are sold through traditional retail markets and informal street vendors hold the remaining share. According to information from the Federal Consumer Protection Agency (PROFECO), the majority of Christmas tree purchases occur 15 days prior to December 25 and the most popular imported tree varieties are Douglas and Noble Firs. In addition, according to the PROFECO survey, most respondents (81 percent) purchase artificial trees and 18 percent purchase cut or live trees.

PRICES

Table 1. Mexico: Christmas Tree Varieties, Sizes, and Sale Prices (in pesos) during the 2009 Sales Season

Variety	Size in Meters (m.)	Price in Pesos
Douglas Fir	1.5 a 1.8 m.	375
Douglas	1.8 a 2.1 m.	459
Douglas	2.1 a 2.4 m.	590
Noble Fir	1.5 a 1.8 m.	399
Noble	1.8 a 2.1 m.	449
Noble	2.1 a 2.4 m.	699
Noble (Plastic Basin)	2.1 a 2.4 m.	799
Noble (Plastic Basin)	2.4 a 2.7 m.	999

November Exchange Rate: 13.12 pesos per U.S. \$1.00

December Exchange Rate: 12.85 pesos per U.S. \$1.00

Author Defined:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to SEMARNAT, growing natural Christmas trees in Mexico allows land to be returned to forest and offers an alternative to urban sprawl and the conversion of forested lands to traditional agriculture. Commercial plantations producing Christmas trees capture carbon, thus contributing to the mitigation of global climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, it allows for the sustainable and productive use of soil. The cultivation of Christmas trees can discourage the illegal harvest of small trees in the forest, as well. Additionally, after use, spent Christmas trees can be composted, thus maintaining or adding to green areas in large cities. Christmas tree production represents an alternative income source for rural producers and limits capital flight as domestic production substitutes for imports. The production of Christmas trees generates rural employment and offers alternative to rural people emigrating to urban areas and other countries.

Consult the following CONAFOR web sites for additional information:

<http://www.conafor.gob.mx/portal/>

<http://www.conafor.gob.mx/portal/index.php/proarbol>

For More Information:

FAS/Mexico Web Site: We are available at www.mexico-usda.com or visit the FAS headquarters' home page at www.fas.usda.gov for a complete selection of FAS worldwide agricultural reporting.

FAS/Mexico YouTube Channel: Catch the latest videos of FAS Mexico at work

<http://www.youtube.com/user/ATOMexicoCity>

Other Relevant Reports Submitted by FAS/Mexico:

Report Number	Subject	Date Submitted
MX0085	NOM-013 Finalized for Christmas Tree Imports	11/19/10
MX0054	Mexico Increases Trucking Retaliation Against Ag Products	8/18/10
MX0029	Christmas Tree NOM Could Impact U.S. Exports	4/30/10