

ABSTRACT

The exporting of fresh fruits from the Caribbean is greatly underexploited. Fruits of a high quality can be produced from idle lands and those that were used for traditional crops. The consumption of more fruits as recommended by our health care professionals has resulted in a greater demand for fresh fruits as well as processed fruits and juices.

Soursop is one tropical fruit which has unique characteristics and is highly favored as a fresh fruit, in juices, ice cream and other products. At present the fruit is not being exported to the North American Markets. An assessment of the export market is therefore necessary in order to determine its suitability and feasibility for markets identified.

Utilizing a farmer survey with soursop farmers was a means of doing an evaluation of the crop and how the present conditions exist. Barriers that prevented the crop from being successfully exported were explored. The fruit import bill in Trinidad and Tobago and other Caribbean Islands seems to continue to increase each year while domestic fruit production continues to steadily decline. This is an undesirable situation.

The survey was conducted using a prepared Questionnaire and administered to farmers. A readily available list was not available, however names were provided upon requests made at Agricultural Offices. Key stakeholders in the soursop and export industries were interviewed to gain insight into various activities associated with soursop.

Exporting is viewed as a critical component in its efforts to stimulate positive economic growth. The export of soursop from the Caribbean can have positive effects. On an overall basis, exports contribute to the accumulation of foreign exchange, reduction of the trade deficit and diversification of the economy away from the dependence of a single export commodity (such as oil). In addition there is a reduction in the unemployment rate, better investment regionally as well as outside the Caribbean and enhanced social prosperity.