

U.K. fruit imports held steady in 2017

International Trade Center (ITC) data shows fruit and nut imports in the United Kingdom rose by 1% last year to reach US\$6.35 billion, driven largely by upticks from South Africa (+14%), Germany (+2%) Costa Rica (+10%) and Peru (+10%).

The figure would have been higher if it weren't for downturns in exports from leading provider Spain (-6%), the Netherlands (-1%), Chile (-2%) and France (-1%).

The total volume brought into the country was relatively static at 4.2 million metric tons (MT).

The ITC data is in U.S. dollars, but a rough estimate in pounds sterling can be made based on average exchange rates, translating to a 6% increase to £4.93 billion.

These figures come despite a decline in the country's two leading import commodities – bananas (-3%) and grapes (-2%) – which combined account for more than a fifth of the total.

Apple imports saw a 5% increase in value to hit US\$461 million in the U.K. market, however this number isn't so positive considering volume jumped by 32% to 527, 154 metric tons (MT).

Results were mixed for citrus fruit with imports down for mandarins (-9%; US\$348 million) and lemons (-12%; US\$176 million), while orange imports rose (+11%; US\$234 million).

Blueberries dropped 2% to US\$333 million but values were still much higher than in any year prior to 2016. Meanwhile avocado shipments surged 14% to US\$276 million.

The sharpest increase in the category was for cashew nuts, which were up 25% at US\$218 million.

In terms of countries exporting to the U.K. market, Spain continued to see returns above US\$1 billion, representing a higher figure than the sales achieved in 2015.

The Mediterranean country was then followed by South Africa (US\$644 million), Germany (US\$398 million), the Netherlands (US\$364 million), Chile (US\$298 million), the United States (US\$265 million) and France (US\$257 million).

Latin American countries rounded out the top 10 suppliers with Costa Rica (US\$254 million), Colombia (US\$250 million) and Peru (US\$228 million).

Since 2013, the biggest increases in fruit exports to the U.K. have come from Peru (+119%) and Germany (+83%).

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