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Competitiveness assessment of the USA – Miami market for Trinidad & Tobago habaneros

Mr. Nkosi Felix, Dr. Govind Seepersad, Dr. Ardon Iton

Trinidad and Tobago has been a producer and exporter of habaneros to the North American market, primarily to Miami and New York for more than a decade. Interest has been increasing for this commodity as the population and foods become more diverse and consumers explore more spicy foods. Within these markets, the situation changes frequently through new entrants, exits, price changes, market presence and SPS requirements, all of which lead to fluctuations in the terminal markets prices.

In Trinidad and Tobago, as well as many other Caribbean countries, require analytical information to improve the competitiveness of habaneros; to maintain a year round market presence remains incomplete. At the same time, it is well recognized that up-to-date market information and intelligence has the potential to help agricultural producers identify, secure market share and export competitively to foreign markets. If provided as a Public Good, countries can develop Commodity Briefs which provide detailed assessment of the market for specific commodities / products, including the size of the market, factors affecting demand, market entry conditions, market presence and competitiveness opportunities.

This study provides a competitiveness analysis of the Miami market for habaneros. Trend data for the last three years was used in the analysis: terminal market prices, sources of supply and market presence.

The price transmission from the farmgate to the Miami Terminal market was computed and the Export Competitiveness Coefficient was used to benchmark Trinidad and Tobago's international price competitiveness against other major habanero suppliers during various months of the year.

The results of the study show the best months to enter the market. The study also highlights the need for Trinidad and Tobago to develop strategies for year-round competitiveness in the lucrative Miami chili market.

Key Words: Competitiveness, Export Competitiveness Coefficient, habaneros, chili.

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