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GENERAI	L MARKET OVERV	ΙEW				

Taiwan consumers are among the worlds leading per capita consumers of fresh fruit and vegetables. Cultural habits, rising per capita incomes and an increasing focus on more healthy eating have contributed to higher consumption of a wide variety of local and imported fresh fruits and vegetables.

In 1996 total consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables on Taiwan is estimated at US\$3.7 billion*. Domestic production accounted for US\$3.42 billion, or 92 percent of the total. Local production of fresh fruits is estimated at US\$2.05 billion, and for fresh vegetables, US\$1.37 billion.

Based on General Customs data from the Ministry of Finance of Taiwan, total imported fresh fruits and vegetables during 1996 was worth US\$279 million, and represented 8% of the total fresh fruit and vegetable market on Taiwan. Fresh fruit imports were valued at US\$258 million and accounted for 11% of the total fresh fruit consumption, while fresh vegetable imports accounted for only US\$21 million, or 1.5% of the fresh vegetable market on Taiwan.

From 1986 to 1996, the growth in volume of fresh fruit imported by Taiwan averaged nearly 14 percent per year (1996=336,598 MT). Fresh vegetable imports averaged almost 24 percent annual growth over the same period (1996=60,434 MT). The somewhat erratic year-to-year fluctuation in import volume is primarily a factor of typhoon damage.

According to CEOs in Taiwan's fruit and vegetable industry, the Taiwan fresh produce market is expected to continue to grow at a rate of 10-15 percent annually. Imported fresh vegetables may have a slightly better "percentage" growth potential compared to fresh fruit based on the following factors: A) the imported fresh vegetable market is undeveloped; B) a growing demand for "imported" items prompted by Taiwan consumers' concern with locally produced vegetables due to perceived overuse of pesticides; C) High living standard and health consciousness will make local consumers seek a wider variety of higher quality and more healthy food products.

* The average exchange rate of US\$1 = NT\$ 27.5 in 1996 will be used in this report unless otherwise noted.

Report Code: TW9724V AGR Number: TW7310 Page: 2 Agricultural Situation U.S. MARKET POSITION AND COMPETITION U.S. Market Position - Fresh Fruit

Of the total US\$258 million market of imported fresh fruits in 1996, the United States accounted for US\$156 million, or 61% of the market share.

Among the more than 20 imported fruit varieties, apple, grape, kiwi, plums, cherries, and grapefruit were the top 6 varieties in terms of value and accounted for 66.5% of total fresh fruit imports. The United States took 100% of the market share for imported grapes and plums, 75% of apple imports, 92% of imported cherries, and 98% of imported grapefruits. New Zealand was the market leader for imported kiwis with a 69% market share, while the U.S. share was only 5% in 1996.

The other 38% (in value) of imported fresh fruits includes avocados, mangosteens, oranges, lemon/limes, watermelons, honey dew, pears, peaches, nectarines, strawberries, berries, apricots, oriental pears, and

various tropical fruits.

U.S. Market Position - Fresh Vegetables

Of the total US\$21 million imported fresh vegetables in 1996, the United States supplied 58% of the total, or US\$12 million.

Among more than 25 varieties of imported vegetables, the top six varieties accounted for 88% by value. The United States was the leading supplier for four of the top six varieties: 86% of imported onions, 84% of imported cauliflower/broccoli, 92% of imported lettuce, and 77% of imported celery. Of the other two popular varieties are kohlrabi and bell pepper, Vietnam and Thailand were the market leaders respectively.

In 1996, other imported fresh vegetable included shallots, leeks, brussel sprouts, cabbage, chicory, turnips, radishes, peas, beans, spinach, pumpkin, asparagus, egg plants, etc.

Third Country Competition

In 1996, US\$258 million of fresh fruits were imported from 18 countries, but the United States alone took 61% of the total market share. Thailand was the second largest fruit exporter to Taiwan, with 17% of the market share. New Zealand, Korea, Chile, Indonesia, and Japan collectively made up another 17% of the market. The remaining suppliers were Australia, Canada, France, India, Iran, Italy, Malaysia, Philippine, South Africa, Togo, and Vietnam which together accounted for only 5% of the market share in 1996.

For imported vegetables, the U.S. held a 58% market share (US\$21 million) in 1996. The other 4 major suppliers were Vietnam (11.7%), Australia (10.2%), Thailand (7.7%), and Indonesia (7.4%). The balance was

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 Agricultural Situation
 U.S. MARKET POSITION AND COMPETITION

supplied from Canada, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, and Spain accounting for 5% of the market.

Currently, the U.S. enjoys complete market access for most varieties of fruit and vegetables, unencumbered by import quotas. Some varieties of fresh vegetables, however, face phytosanitary restrictions which prevent their entry to the market (see Trade Restrictions). Following Taiwan's eventual entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), third country competition for the Taiwan market is expected to significantly increase as a result of MFN privileges under WTO.

Domestic Competition

Taiwan's locally grown crops, especially fresh vegetables, are the major competitor for U.S. produce in the Taiwan market. Degree of "Freshness" and price are the major considerations among Taiwan's consumers for choosing fresh produce. Imported produce is often viewed as being "aged" by the time it is offered for retail.

Although overuse of pesticides in Taiwan is a major concern of many local consumers, resulting in an increased preference for imported produce from developed counties, locally produced fruits and vegetables are still in higher demand from Taiwan's consumers because of the wider variety and availability. A total of roughly 50 varieties of fruit and 100 varieties of vegetables are grown locally.

High tariffs, non-tariff barriers and phytosanitary regulations

continue to be major obstacles to foreign companies competing with local producers. Several varieties of vegetables from the United States, for example, are restricted due to phytosanitary controls. These controls are established on a specific pest (disease or insect) basis, rather than on a product-by-product basis. Taiwan's Council of Agriculture (COA) is responsible for drafting policy relating to quarantine controls and the Bureau of Commodity Inspection and Quarantine (BCIQ) is responsible for implementing those policies and conducting quarantine inspection.

(Please refer to the section on "Trade Restrictions" for more detail on import tariffs and regulations).

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There are many variables impacting the price difference between imported and local produce. A sampling of various products sold in retail showed imports to be 23% more expensive on average.

Mark-ups within distribution channels can also vary, but an approximation based on price sampling at each stage of the distribution system is listed below :

Importer 5%
Wholesale Market Fee 5%*
Wholesaler/Distributor 10-30%
Retailer 17 - 52%

* Note : Wholesale market fees are set by local government regulation to be no higher than 5%. However, according to the Department of Agriculture, in recent years most markets have generally collected rates lower than the maximum allowed. Approximately all wholesale markets collected fees between 2% to 4%.

Higher pricing may occur due to weather fluctuation. For instance, in 1996, two typhoons caused severe damage to the horticultural industry resulting in wholesale prices increase for fresh produce of more than 50%.

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Tariff Rates

Until Taiwan becomes a member of WTO, the tariff rates of fresh fruits and vegetables will most likely remain high. The current average tariff rate is 37% applied to the CIF price. In addition to high tariffs, there are also other fees such as harbor dues (0.5%), the trade promotion fee (0.05%), and the BCIQ inspection fee (0.13%).

Hypothetical Build-up Cost

Grape:	CIF price	US\$	1000.00					
	Tariff (42.5%)		425.00					
	Harbor dues		5.00	(exempted	if	shipped	by	air)
	Trade promotion	fee	0.50					
	BCIQ inspection	fee	1.30					
	Total cost	US\$	1431.80					

Other miscellaneous fees include NT\$500 per shipment (for inspector) and NT\$3500 - NT\$5000 per container for customs clearance.

Note: Occasionally, the Council of Agriculture (COA), Ministry of

Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Finance will intervene by temporarily reducing the applied duty rates in order to alleviate severe shortages of vegetable supplies in the market caused by typhoon or heavy rain damage. Tariff rates of fresh vegetable items may be lowered by 50% within a specific period of time by public announcement issued by the Ministry of Finance in Taiwan.

Import Regulations

All fresh fruits and vegetables originating in the U.S. require a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) phytosanitary certificate for entry onto Taiwan. A phytosanitary certificate is issued by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) upon physical inspection and the determination that the product is free from insect pests, plant disease, and other organisms considered harmful by Taiwan. (Please see Reference section for USDA/APHIS's address and phone numbers).

Since import regulations for food products entering Taiwan are frequently modified, it is recommended that U.S. exporters contact their Taiwan importer directly to ensure that product import requirements meet current Taiwan regulations.

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Listed Ta U.S.:	riffs & Import 1	Regulations for Fres	h Fruit & Vegetable f	rom
Fresh Veg	etables			
	TARII	FF RATE	IMPORT	
HS CODE	PRODUCT (App)	lied to CIF price)	REGULATION CODE	
070190	Potatoes	25.0%	в01, 111	
070200	Tomatoes*	10.0%	B01	
07031010	Onions	32.5%	B01	
070320	Garlic	40.0%	B01, 111	
070390	Leek	40.0%	B01	
070410	Cauliflowers			
	& Broccoli	36.0%	B01	
070420	Brussels	40.0%	B01	
07049010	Chinese Cabbage	e 25.0%	B01	
07049090	Kohlrabi	32.5%	B01	
070511	Head Lettuce	27.0%	B01	
070519	Other Lettuce	30.0%	B01	
070521	Chicory	40.0%	B01	
070610	Carrots & Turn	ips** 40.0%	B01	
070690	Radishes	40.0%	B01	
070700	Cucumbers	40.0%	B01	
070810	Peas	40.0%	B01	
070820	Beans	40.0%	B01	
070890	Leguminous	40.0%	B01	
070910	Artichokes	40.0%	B01	
070920	Asparagus	7.5%	B01	
070930	Egg Plants	40.0%	B01	
070940	Celery	24.0%	B01	
070951	Mushroom	40.0%	B01	
070960	Bell Peppers	35.0%	B01	
070970	Spinach	35.0%	B01	
07099020		35.0%	B01	
07099090	Pumpkin/Squash	40.0%	B01	

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Fresh Fru	its			
		TARIFF RATE		IMPORT
HS CODE	PRODUCT (App)	lied to CIF pri	ce)	REGULATION CODE
080440	Avocados	28.0%	в01,	C02
080450	Guava			
	& Mango	50.0%	-	C02, 111
08045030	Mangosteens			C02
080510	Orange***	40.0%	в01,	121, 213
080520	Mandarins	40.0%	B01	
080530	Lemons/Limes**		в01,	121, 213, CO2
080540	Grapefruit***	40.0%		121, 213, CO2
080610	Grape		в01,	121, 203
080710	Watermelons		в01	
08071030	Honey Dew Melon	n 42.0%	в01	
08071090	Other Melons	50.0%	в01	
080720	Papayas	50.0%	в01,	111
080810	Apples	50.0%	в01,	121, 211
080820	Pears (European	n) 40.0%	B01	
080910	Apricot	45.0%	B01	
080920	Cherries	12.0%	B01	
080930	Peaches	50.0%	в01,	122, 205
080930	Nectarines	50.0%	B01	
080940	Plums	35.0%	в01,	121, 203
081010	Strawberries	40.0%	B01	
081020	Raspberries			
	& Blackberries	30.0%	B01	
081030	Black, White,			
	& Red currants	30.0%	B01	
08104010	Blueberries	45.0%	B01	
08104090	Cranberries &			
	Bilberries	23.0%	в01	
08109091	Kiwi fruits	40.0%	в01	

* On March 25, 1997, the Taiwan authorities at the COA announced publicly that tomatoes were no longer considered a host plant of tobacco blue mold. This announcement liberalized imports of U.S. fresh tomatoes which had been banned entry.

** Currently, the importation of fresh carrots to Taiwan from countries recognized as having burrowing nematode (Radopholus similis) is banned. The United States is currently among those countries. Agricultural Affairs Section of AIT is holding discussions with Taiwan's agriculture and quarantine authorities to establish a protocol for shipping carrots from nematode free areas.

*** From March 1 to September 30, Taiwan's fruit production is generally out-of-season. During this period of time, the tariff rate for imported citrus from the United States is reduced to 25% from 40%.

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Explanation of Import Regulation Codes

в01

Importation shall be subject to prescription set forth in the Table of Commodities Subject to Legal Animal & Plant Quarantine complied by the Bureau of Commodity Inspection and Quarantine (BCIQ), Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA).

CO2 Some of the commodities under this item subject to legal import inspection announced by the BCIQ, MOEA.

111 Import controlled (de facto import ban). 121Import permit issued by Board of Foreign Trade (BOFT) in Taiwan. 122 Import permit issued by licensing banks authorized by the BOFT. 203 Importation is limited to be procured from the U.S.A. 205 Importation is limited to be procured from the European and American regions. 211 (1) Apples of U.S.A. or Canada origin are permitted to import. (2) Apples of Chile, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and France origin are permissible for import in accordance with quota system. 213 Importation is limited to be procured from the U.S.A., but fresh oranges and grapefruits procured from South Africa are permissible for import in accordance with quota system. Source: Customs Import Tariff and Classification of Import & Export Commodities of Taiwan, published by BOFT. Report Code: TW9724V AGR Number: TW7310 Page: 9 Agricultural Situation DISTRIBUTION _____ The distribution channels for imported and domestic produce in Taiwan are relatively inefficient and cumbersome. Between the importer (or farmer) and the consumer are several layers of middlemen adding to the cost of the product by the time it finally reaches retail. In some instances, the extra handling or improper handling contribute to increased product damage and reduced shelf life. For imported items there are three principal distribution channels used by importers: A) 80% of fruit and vegetalbel imports are sold through a wholesale market to other wholesalers, retailers, major institutional users, or processors; B) 10% of the imports are sold directly to wholesalers or distributors, who in turn sell to retailers, institutional users. C) 10% of the imports are sold directly to large retailers. Importers Although there are hundreds of companies listed by the BOFT as registered importers of fruits and vegetables, in reality many only import one or two shipments a year and will actually trade in a variety of different items, including manufactured goods. As a general rule, the most successful and reliable importers deal exclusively in fresh fruits and vegetables. The successful importers will usually order several smaller shipments from different suppliers rather than a single large shipment from just one exporter. By cultivating relationships with several sources of produce, the importers hedge their risks so that in times of shortage they still have access to multiple supply sources. At the same time, these firms prefer to hold

suppliers "captive" through exclusive contracts, giving them leverage in

pricing and exclusive access to products in times of shortage.

Wholesale Markets

Approximately 80% of imported fruits and vegetables in Taiwan pass through one of 66 fruit and vegetable wholesale markets scattered throughout the island. 17 wholesale markets use auction methods, while 46 markets use price negotiation, and the remaining three markets use both methods.

Besides auction/sales, the wholesale markets also offer services like cold storage, inspections, disinfections, and environmental sanitation. A fee, 2 - 4% of the transaction for market management, will be shared by buyer and seller.

People eligible to purchase in the wholesale markets are retailers, wholesalers, processors, exporters, and institutional buyers, all of whom require a buyer's license.

Wholesalers

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There are several types of fruit and vegetable wholesalers, the most common purchases product at the wholesale market and then distributes the produce in their own trucks to small retailers and institutional customers.

Some wholesalers also purchase produce directly from farmers and either distribute it themselves or sell through wholesale markets. Only a few wholesalers maintain warehouses and employ a secondary distributor to handle transportation of the product to customers.

Distributors

There are 4 main types of distributor systems in Taiwan:

- A) Operated by retail chains.
- B) Operated by large food manufacturers.
- C) Operated by wholesalers.
- D) Operated by transportation firms.

Such firms specialize in the warehousing and distribution of food products from the port of entry (or manufacturer) to the purchaser. The most important characteristics distinguishing these firms from wholesalers and agents is that they do not import nor do they ever take ownership of the goods which they distribute.

Independent distributors, those built from wholesalers and transportation firms, usually contract with multiple retail chains and confine their operations to a limited geographical region of Taiwan. Captive firms, those built by retailers and manufacturers, usually service their parent companies exclusively.

Retail Outlets

Retail outlets account for approximately 80% of total fresh fruit & vegetable sales. The following is a recent estimate for the market shares of the retail segment based on a survey of key outlets.

HYPER MARTS	15%
SUPERMARKETS	15%
WET MARKETS*	70%
TOTAL	100%

* Including fruit stores, street venders.

-- HYPER MARTS There are two kinds of hypermarkets in Taiwan -- warehouse and large-scale supermarkets. Hypermarkets first arrived on Taiwan in 1989, and the trend is growing fast. Currently, there are 41 hypermarket stores on Taiwan and the prediction is for a 20% increase in number by the end of 1997.

Hypermarkets are getting more popular in Taiwan because they offer:

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A) lower pricing by selling larger volumes, B) fresh, clean and spacious, C) convenience in terms of one-stop shopping with parking facilities.

According to distribution experts, the hypermarket format has been found to be more successful than supermarkets because a single hypermarket's sales is 8-12 times higher compared a single supermarket.

Major Hypermarkets in Taiwan:

Carrefour (France) Macro (Holland) PriceCostco (U.S.) Shinung (Taiwan) Safe & Save (Taiwan) Ruentex (Taiwan)

-- SUPERMARKETS

Supermarkets were first introduced onto Taiwan in the early 1980's. While initially trying to provide a one-stop shopping experience in a modern format, supermarkets today are facing increased competition from convenience stores and warehouse style hypermarkets. Taiwan supermarkets in general, are located in crowded neighborhoods with no parking space. They price their products higher than hypermarkets due to comparatively higher overhead costs. The key customer group for supermarkets are the younger, better educated, working Taiwanese. In order to try and compete with the traditional "wet" markets and newer warehouse style hypermarkets, supermarkets on Taiwan are starting to put more emphasis on fresh food merchandising.

Currently, there are about 700 supermarkets island-wide, the major companies are:

Wellcome (British) Sung Ching (Taiwanese) Kasumi (Japanese/Taiwanese) President (Taiwanese) Yumuwu (Japanese) Taipei Fruit & Vegetable (Taiwan Government Store) Sogo (Japanese Department Store) Takashimaya (Japanese Department Store) Far Eastern (Taiwan Department Store)

-- WET MARKETS

An open market with many individual stalls, also called traditional markets. Traditionally, wet markets have been the most common place for consumers to buy fresh food. But the wet market format is gradually shrinking in importance. For instance, the Taipei city government recently reported that in 1996, 27% of the vendors from Taipei wet markets went out of business. The reasons for the decline are: A) more consumers, especially Report Code: TW9724V AGR Number: TW7310 Page: 12 Agricultural Situation DISTRIBUTION

the younger generation, prefer to shop in modern supermarket or hypermarket formats and consider wet markets too uncomfortable, and B) due to higher education opportunities, there are fewer people interested in working as wet market vendors.

However, the wet market remains the largest retail segment for fresh produce.

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 Agricultural Situation
 CONSUMER PREFERENCE AND CONSUMPTION TRENDS

In general, Taiwanese consumers are more particular about the quality of their fruits than their vegetables, because fruits are considered as premium food while vegetables are a daily staple.

For fruits, Taiwan consumers are willing to pay a higher price for imported items because of taste preferences, appearance and the appeal to Taiwan consumers for new-to-market products. According to local importers, Taiwan consumers are always enjoy experimenting with new varieties, and strongly prefer sweeter tastes. In fact, the sweetness of fruit is a key criterion in selecting fruit.

Fruits are also considered as good gift items. Chinese New Year (around February) and Moon festival (around September/October) are two main seasons for gift giving, and fruits play an important role in the gift giving seasons. The gift package usually contains an even number of pieces of identical size and appearance.

Vegetables are the basic ingredients for Chinese cooking. Virtually every Chinese dish includes at least one vegetable, and often more. In traditional Chinese living, vegetables and rice were daily staples, while meat and fish were "treats". With today's Chinese lifestyle, even though meat and fish are more affordable, vegetables are still are main ingredients in the daily diet.

Freshness is the key factor for Taiwan consumers choosing vegetables. The average consumer feels that locally produced vegetables are fresher than imported items.

Unlike fruits, local consumers, in general, are not willing to try new, exotic vegetable items, simply because they are unfamiliar with how to cook them or to prepare properly. For instance, many Taiwanese consumers do not like lettuce, because it will not taste right after being cooked. Moreover, they are not used to eating vegetables raw or uncooked. However, Western influence has made more local consumers learn new ways to prepare imported vegetables and realize their nutrition values.

Local consumers are also aware that domestic vegetables have been excessively sprayed with pesticides, and recognize that U.S. produce is inspected by the U.S. government and perceived to be safer.

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 Agricultural Situation
 MARKET PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Labeling as Promotional Activity

Because imported fresh produce does not require labeling for retail sale, most Taiwan consumers are not aware of the origin of the fruits or vegetables they buy, especially for vegetables. "Stickering", or labeling the items as well as the use of POS material may be helpful in distinguishing from local produce.

Educational Promotion

Educational information including providing nutritional value, cooking/preparation instruction at the consumer level is another useful promotional tool.

Proper handling seminars for fresh produce at the local distribution level to include importers, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers are strongly recommended. Educational seminars that include proper handling techniques, category management, variety selection, which help reduce spoilage and increase profit for the Taiwan trade will result in higher demand for imported products.

Other Promotions

Other promotional activities including T.V. advertising, in-store promotion, trade promotions are commonly used in Taiwan. The cost of TV advertising (at this point), while expensive, is actually competitive compared to ads carried by other media.

Report Code: TW9724V AGR Number: TW7310 Page: 15 Agricultural Situation REFERENCE _____ _____ Taiwan Government Offices Council of Agriculture (COA) 37 Nanhai Road Taipei, Taiwan Tel : 886-2-381-2991 Fax: 886-2-331-0341 Board of Foreign Trade (BOFT) #1 Hu-Kou Street Taipei, Taiwan Tel : 886-2-351-0271 Fax: 886-2-351-3603 or 7078 Bureau of Commodity Inspection and Quarantine (BCIQ) Fifth Department (Animal & Plant Quarantine) BCIO #4 Chinan Road, Sec.1 Taipei, Taiwan Tel: 886-2-343-1816 USDA - APHIS Office Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA USDA-APHIS-IS Region III Room 485, Federal Building 6505 Belcrest Rd. Hyattsville, MD 20782 Tel: (301) 436-8292 Fax: (301) 436-7703 Report Code: TW9724V AGR Number: TW7310 Page: 16 Agricultural Situation REFERENCE

Taiwan Fresh Vegetable Importers Ericome Trading Co., Ltd. #6, Alley 357, Chung Shan Rd.. Sec 2 Chung Ho City, Taipei, Taiwan Tel: 886-2-222-6154 Fax: 886-2-222-6157 Green Village Inc. 7F, 121 Min Sheng E. Road Sec. 3 Taipei, Taiwan Tel: 886-2-719-6058 Fax: 886-2-718-6923 Ho-Huan Agricultural Product Co., Ltd 511 Jen Ai Road, Puli Nantou, Taiwan Tel: 886-4-998-0011 Fax: 886-4-998-6570 Pride Enterprise Co., Ltd. 2F, 50 Wei Shuei Road Taipei, Taiwan Tel: 886-2-752-5422, 711-1595 Fax: 886-2-775-1828 Three Shine Trading Co., Ltd. 5F, #7 Alley 33, Lane 250 Huan-ho S. Road, Sec. 2 Taipei, Taiwan Tel: 886-2-308-3553 Fax: 886-2-304-1101 Report Code: TW9724V AGR Number: TW7310 Page: 17 Agricultural Situation REFERENCE _____ _____ Taiwan Fresh Fruit Importers Chiao Chiant Enterprise Co., Ltd. 10F-2, 136 Min Chuan W. Rd. Taipei, Taiwan Tel: 886-2-553-6136/7 Fax: 886-2-557-5410 Coverings Industrial Corp. 3, Lane 8, Lin I Street Taipei, Taiwan Tel: 886-2-356-9311 Fax: 886-2-394-9707 Fullbloom Limited 7F, 142 Shiang Yang Rd.., Feng Yuan City Taichung, Taiwan Tel: 886-4-520-2371 Fax: 886-4-520-5086 Kingo Fruits Co., Ltd. 10F, 34 Chung Shan N. Rd.. Sec. 3 Taipei, Taiwan Tel: 886-2-598-1308 Fax: 886-2-594-7199 Oversea Fruits Trading Co., Ltd. 2F, 79 Chung Shan N. Rd.. Sec. 2 Taipei, Taiwan Tel: 886-2-571-3215, 5758

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