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General Summary

France is the leading consumer of fresh grapefruit in Europe. The French prefer the pink grapefruit varieties from Florida, thereby, making the United States the number one French supplier for this product. The State of Florida, through the Florida Department of Citrus (FDOC), has developed a strong market image for pink grapefruit, and FDOC's active promotional campaigns throughout the country have strongly contributed to the increase in sales of fresh grapefruit in France. However, over the past few months, the French market for this product has been targeted by other countries which produce grapefruit, such as Israel and South Africa. Presently, Florida grapefruits have a better image as far as product quality and health properties are concerned, than third country competitors' products.

A. Trends in Consumption

France leads the European Union in fresh grapefruit consumption. In 1994, French consumption of fresh grapefruit amounted to 2.5 kg per capita. French consumers prefer pink grapefruit varieties from Florida, versus white varieties, because of the perceived healthy properties of

pink varieties (better quality, healthy image and freshness), and the sweeter flavor.

According to a study conducted by the FDOC, 87 percent of French consumers are willing to pay premium prices for pink Florida grapefruit. In fact, 75 percent of French consumers buy Florida grapefruit every month, while 38 percent buy some every week. The purchase of Florida grapefruit is often thought to be an "impulse purchase." This year and to boost sales, FDOC organized luncheon and seminars with journalists and importers. FDOC is constantly trying to enhance the Florida grapefruit image by advertizing in French supermarkets and promoting the product in trade magazines, or TV spots.

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B. Domestic and Foreign Competition

France accounts for 40 percent of total Florida's grapefruit exports. During Calendar Year 1994, France imported a total volume of 58,535 tons from the United States, for a value of 216 million French Francs (USD 38.9). The United States, France's leading supplier of this product, is well ahead of South Africa (14,577 tons imported during CY 1994, or 11 percent of total imports), Israel (13,966 tons, or 10.8 percent of total imports), and Argentina (11,101 tons, or 8 percent of total imports). Fresh Florida grapefruit is available in France from October 15 through the end of April.

During Marketing Year 1994/95, the total European market increased its imports of fresh Florida grapefruit by eight percent, compared to the previous year. The FDOC hopes to maintain this increasing trend, and is even projecting a possible seven percent increase in imports during MY 1995/96.

C. Distribution and Pricing

Most of the U.S. sales of fresh grapefruit in France are made in supermarkets. In 1995, total sales of fresh Florida grapefruit in France amounted to 56,854 tons. According to the FDOC, sales are expected to reach 60,900 tons during CY 1996. Although most of the fresh U.S. grapefruit sold in French supermarkets are marketed through local importers/distributors, some supermarket chains import directly from Florida. During Marketing Year 1993/94, an estimated volume of approximately 7,200 tons were directly imported from the United States. Direct imports offer advantages such as a gain of profits, and better prices for consumers; on the other hand, many U.S. exporters also sell to French distributors, which often means that quality suffers. Important improvements remain to be done as far as packaging is concerned.

The wholesale price of fresh grapefruits through most of the 1994/95 season was FF 70, per carton. At the end of the season, short supply drove the price up to FF 90, per carton. Please note that cartons generally contains 40 or 48 pieces depending on the size of the fruit.

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D. Packaging

In France, Florida fresh grapefruit is traditionally sold in bulk. String bag packaging was raised as a way to stimulate the sales for this product. However, for different reasons, string bag packaging is unlikely to be adopted by the French supermarkets since it will increase linear space expenses and also probably the product price. Also, another good reason for not having bag packaging is that France is encountering more and more single households.

E. Import Regulations

There are no trade barriers to importing fresh grapefruit from the United States into France. This product is only subject to quality and sanitary inspections on the European territory prior to custom clearance. Also, customs duties levied on imports of fresh grapefruit into the EU, including France, amount to 1.5 and 2.9 percent, ad valorem, depending on the season. The difference in duties is to protect EU imports at certain period of the year, mainly from Spain, Italy and Turkey.

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F. Importers

SAMSON

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94572 Rungis
Tel: (1) 46 86 01 49
Fax: (1) 46 86 28 49

SANCHO

50, avenue de Lorraine, Bat E.2
Fruileg 116
94512 Rungis
Tel: (1) 46 87 58 18
Fax: (1) 46 87 83 59

SELECT AGRUMES

31, rue d'Avignon, Bat. C.2
Fruileg 809
94614 Rungis
Tel: (1) 46 87 99 98
Fax: (1) 46 87 37 17

SELECTION

36, rue d'Angers, Bat. A. 3
Fruileg 708
94584 Rungis
Tel: (1) 46 86 02 62
Fax: (1) 46 87 07 42

SICORLY

57, avenue de Carpentras, Bat. E. 3
Fruileg 289
94592 Rungis
Tel: (1) 46 86 41 01
Fax: (1) 45 12 91 15

SODEPA

32, rue d'Agen, Bat. A. 2
B.P. 372

04154 Rungis
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Fax: (1) 49 78 05 21

SODIFRUIT
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94594 Rungis
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94512 Rungis
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Fax: (1) 46 86 72 05

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Fruileg 296
94592 Rungis
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Fax: (1) 49 79 06 99

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DUNAND ET CIE DES BANANES
10, rue du Colonel Driant
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Fax: (1) 49 27 93 14
Contact: Christian Grey

GEORGES HELFER S.A. FRANCE
1, rue des Tropiques - Entrepot 133
94538 Rungis Cedex
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Fax: (1) 45 60 48 52
Contact: Georges Helfer

J. BROUSSE, D. VERGEZ ET CIE
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13002 Marseille
Tel: 91 91 92 36
Fax: 91 91 25 60
Contact: Stephan Brousse

MALET AZOULAY S.A.
24, rue du Pont des Halles
94566 Rungis Cedex
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Fax: 46 87 16 45
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PASCUAL FRANCE
1, cours Alsace
94150 Rungis Complexe
Tel: (1) 46 87 25 15
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POMONA IMPORT
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RAFAEL LOPEZ
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94572 Rungis Cedex
Tel: (1) 46 86 44 99
Fax: (1) 46 86 44 99
Contact: Rafael Lopez

SVA BRAMBI FRUIT S.A.
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Contact: Mr. Nardonne
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