

The Colombian Banana Association Augura was recognised for its contribution to Colombian society and economy, as it was awarded the Entrepreneurial Merit medal last month.

[According to a report by the Colombian newspaper El Nuevo Siglo](#), the Colombian banana industry has not only created employment in violence-stricken areas, but its banana exports have also significantly boosted the country's economy.

“The industry is resilient, as it has succeeded in positioning a Colombian product [on the global market], which makes us one of the biggest banana exporters in the world”, stated Iván Duque, President of Colombia, who presented Augura with the award.

Augura's figures showed a 1 percent increase in banana export volumes between 2020 and 2021. In the region of Urabá, exports decreased by 2.5 percent, while in Magdalena and La Guajira, they increased by 9.6 percent. However, according to DANE, export prices have fallen by 11 percent in the first quarter of 2022.

This year's fall in exports parallels the conflict regarding the price of bananas being exported, which has been going on for the last few years. Latin American banana associations, as a result, have come together to ask for shared responsibility and better prices, especially in the E.U., as sustainability requirements have increased.

Big challenges affecting the industry

In neighboring Ecuador, banana exports have been directly affected by sanctions imposed on Russia, as Russian imports of Ecuadorian bananas amount to approximately \$680 million annually. However, this has also had a secondary effect on Colombian bananas, as it has generated a backlog in the market and a subsequent fall in prices.

The banana industry has also been continuously affected by elevated shipping costs, as well as delays in shipping, as a result of strict COVID-19 restrictions in Asia. The global logistics crisis has made both agricultural production supplies, such as fertilizers, and fruit transportation more expensive.

In addition, with the E.U. putting more restrictions in place on the use of fungicides, combatting against diseases such as Fusarium R4T has become more difficult. It is important for growers to stop the spread of the disease, but at the same time, preserving their image and position in the European market is vital.

On the other hand, inflation in the E.U. should increase demand for bananas in 2022, given that they are both nutritious and affordable. Their skin provides them with their own natural

protection, too.

When considering the new restrictions on the use of plastic in fruit and vegetable packaging in the retail sector in France, this should give them an advantage over other fruits like apples and pears. Given that France is a leader when it comes to sustainability trends, it is likely that other European countries will follow suit.