

Mexican growers can benefit from huge, untapped potential in markets from Asia-Pacific to the Middle East and Europe as well as increasing demand for fresh fruits and vegetables by looking beyond traditional export destinations, delegates to the inaugural [IFPA Mexico Conference](#) heard on June 23.

Despite being traditionally focused on the neighboring U.S. market, Mexico can realize greater export sales by expanding to countries outside its normal scope, with untapped potential for Mexican fruit exports in Germany estimated at \$233 million.

In a presentation to the IFPA Mexico Conference in Guadalajara, Mexico, which took place from June 22-23, Euromonitor International trade and agriculture consultant Devorah Kaufman told delegates that exporters could benefit from phenomenal forecasted growth in fresh produce.

“Worldwide we are seeing a huge emphasis on health and how our food choices impact our health,” she said. “We are also in an area of dramatic population shifts. Consumers are increasingly concerned about climate change.

“Following Covid, many people have come to believe that prevention is better than the cure and they want to get vitamins and minerals from fresh produce rather than supplements.”

Kaufman said surveys had found 70.4% of consumers worldwide are trying to eat more than fruits and vegetables, with consumption of cranberries and blueberries expected to grow 50% globally over next five years.

This growth, she said, was predicted to be particularly significant in Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, with consumption forecast to grow by 85% and 201% respectively. In Eastern Europe and the UK, consumption is expected to rise by at least 50%.

“There’s a perception of blueberries as an antioxidant superfood that is especially good for office workers who spend all day staring at computer screens,” Kaufman continued.

With the global population expected to rise from 7.7 billion in 2020 to 9 billion by 2040, the worldwide fruit market was also predicted to grow from 521 million tons in 2020 to 648 million tons by 2026; a 4.4% increase.

Similarly, global vegetable production is forecast to increase from 668 million tons in 2021 to 806 million tons by 2026.

“What’s interesting is a lot of this growth is being driven by Asia-Pacific with an over 5%

annual growth rate,” said Kaufman. The fastest growing countries included India, Egypt, Vietnam, Israel, South Africa, the UAE, Colombia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia.

In the case of Mexico, a country which produces \$17.5 billion worth of fresh produce every year (16.1% is accounted for by avocados and 15% by tomatoes), the consultant said there were significant untapped potential export markets.

One notable example is Germany. Mexico currently exports \$40 million worth of fruits to Germany each year, but Kaufman claimed there was \$233 million in unrealized export potential.

Other notable markets identified by Euromonitor included the Netherlands where it estimates an additional \$205 million worth of fruit could be exported and Poland at \$19 million.

“In Poland, there’s been an 8% increase in population since beginning of the Ukraine war in February 2022,” said Kaufman.

“Whereas the Netherlands may be a small country, but it’s also a regional hub; products are often exported from Netherlands to other parts of Europe.”

In Asia, Euromonitor has identified \$39 million of potential in Japan (from \$297 million at the current time) and an additional \$164 million in China (from \$188 million)

The potential for vegetable exports was even more stark. Mexico only exports \$5 million worth of vegetables to Germany at the current time, but Euromonitor estimates this could increase to \$123 million.

“There are other real growth opportunities that should not be missed, including \$12 million in Poland, \$12 million in Hong Kong and \$22 million in Singapore,” she added.

Closer to home, Kaufman said there remained \$2.6 billion in untapped potential for Mexican fresh produce in the U.S. and \$259 million in Canada.

“The U.S. obviously is not a new market, but these are just huge opportunities,” she said. “Drought in California and other areas is impacting production, while there is an increasing demand for healthy foods from an ageing population.”

Kaufman added: “The world has come to understand you are what you eat and consumers want to eat more fruit and vegetables. There is a huge opportunity for Mexico to grow its

exports both to established and newer markets.”