Bananas, kiwifruit and avocados remained the top three fresh fruit imports for Japan in terms of value during the first six months of 2017.

Banana imports increased from 488,496 tonnes in the first six months of 2016 to 493,647 tonnes in the first six months of 2017, valued at ¥49,683m (US$449.44m). Pineapples came in second in terms of volume, followed by kiwifruit at 51,250 tonnes, valued at ¥19,751m (US$178.67m).

Avocado imports dropped from 37,317 tonnes to 31,501 tonnes, valued at ¥12,372m (US$111.92m).

But it was the apple category that saw the biggest growth between the two comparative periods, albeit off a low base, with imports up more than 200 per cent to 2,341 tonnes, valued at ¥563m (US$5.09m).

The Philippines remained the major supplier of bananas to Japan, shipping 389,279 tonnes valued at ¥39,735, which came in a little under the 394,287 tonnes shipped in the first six months of 2016.

This year saw an uptick in supplies from Latin America nations, with Ecuador increasing its shipments 108 per cent to 78,870 tonnes, and Mexico recording a 413 per cent increase in shipments to 9,235 tonnes.

New Zealand was the major supplier of kiwifruit, an increasingly popular fruit in Japan, supplying 46,990 tonnes valued at ¥18,576, which was a drop from the 49,643 tonnes supplied in 2016, valued at ¥17,412.

Chile and the US supply much smaller volumes, though both countries saw volumes increase about 180 per cent to 1,910 tonnes and 1,519 tonnes, respectively.

Avocados are largely supplied by Mexico, which shipped 30,239 tonnes valued at ¥11,807, down from the 35,221 tonnes shipped from January to June 2016. The US supplied just a quarter of what it has the year prior at 527 tonnes, while Peru almost doubled its avocado shipments to 706 tonnes.