



By Maura Maxwell

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## Banana suppliers act to avoid UK tariff hike



Ecuador, Colombia and Peru are latest countries to sign deals to maintain existing tariff levels after UK leaves EU

**K**ey Latin American and Caribbean banana suppliers to the UK are set to sign a continuity agreement with the British government to ensure there is no disruption to trade in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

Ecuador's Minister of Foreign Trade, Pablo Campana said the official signing of a multi-party trade agreement between Ecuador, Colombia, Peru and the UK would take place in Lima on Friday.

The deal will ensure that the three countries' banana exports to the UK will be subject to their existing tariff of €75 per tonne, as opposed to the **default rate of €114 stipulated by the British government in last month's tariff schedule.**

"We have been worried about the impact of Brexit on Ecuadorean producers, and with this deal they will not suffer at all," Campana said.

The UK has also signed trade continuity agreements with a number of Caribbean banana suppliers.

On Friday, Conservative MP Alan Duncan tweeted: "Delighted to sign today the trade continuity agreement with the Dominica Republic, the largest economy in the Caribbean.

"This agreement is very important for our trade, particularly in sugar, bananas and rum."

On 22 March, the British government signed the Cariforum-UK Economic Partnership Agreement, allowing Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to trade with the UK under existing rules after it leaves the European Union.

In 2017, the UK bought all of the bananas exported by Saint Lucia, and 69 per cent of the banana production in Belize.

This leaves Costa Rica as the only major banana supplier to the UK without a continuity agreement in place, although negotiations are believed to be ongoing.

In 2017, the UK's biggest banana supplier Colombia shipped 276,000 tonnes of bananas to the country, according to ITC data. Costa Rica, meanwhile, exported 187,407 tonnes to the UK, the Dominican Republic sent 160,078 tonnes and Ecuador shipped 145,053 tonnes.

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<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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