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By Gill McShane

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## Guatemala pineapples find favour

Leading exporters are significantly increasing exports to Europe in order to satisfy growing demand for the MD2 variety



**G**uatemalan pineapple exporters claim the industry has the potential to claim a solid share of the European MD2 market as well as significantly increase production over the next few years.

"Pineapples represent about 5 per cent of Guatemala's total fruit exports, but there is huge potential to dramatically boost production and export volumes as long as the right investment is funnelled into the sector," Lisbeth Viteri of Agropecuaria Popoyán told Fruitnet.com.

Guatemala currently exports 80 per cent of its crop to the US, but as more and more importers look to additional sources for 12-month supplies of MD2 pineapples, the industry is confident it can achieve a larger share of the European market.

"Guatemala continues to position itself as a very good source for year-round MD2 pineapples among European and US importers on account of the fruit's quality, sweetness and consistency due to the country's favourable growing conditions," Ms Viteri added.

In 2008, Guatemala plans to increase its pineapple shipments to Europe by 12 per cent and, so far, exporters claim demand has been strong, especially during the first quarter.

Overall production, however, is expected to fall slightly in 2008 due to the consolidation of the country's pineapple grower network during the last couple of years.