PINING for the flavour

Pineapple (Ananas comosus) is an economically important fruit in Jamaica. The fruit is utilized extensively in the agro processing sector as well as the export and fresh food market. In 2009, total production was 21,367.6 mt while import and export of processed pineapple were 1,233.1 mt and 77.5 mt respectively.

Pineapple is cultivated island-wide and is available all year round. However, the main reaping season is between May to July. In 2009, 84.8% of the island’s production came from the parishes of St. Elizabeth, St. James, Westmoreland and Portland.

With the high demand for the fruit locally, production of the crop is a viable investment option. The climatic conditions of Jamaica is favourable for pineapple cultivation; further adding to the the relative ease with which it grows.

Varieties

The three market preferred varieties of pineapple are Cowboy, Ripley and Sugar Loaf. However, in 2009, the MD2 variety of pineapple was introduced into the island. The MD2 is said to be sweeter and has a higher shelf life than the sugar loaf.

MD2 Variety

Del Monte scientists have recently developed this new strain of pineapple variety (MD2) that is sweeter than regular varieties. The MD2 grows to a uniform size, ripen evenly and has a longer shelf life than other varieties. It has high brix (14 and more) and low acidity 0.4 to 0.45%.

Market Demand

In 2009, although total pineapple production was 21,367.6 mt, Agro processors imported approximately 1,233.1 mt of pineapple juice. In a survey done by the Marketing & Credit Division of the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries, it was determined that Agro processors sourced 100% of their pineapples juices from overseas because local supply was inconsistent or unavailable. Total importation of processed pineapple over the period in review (2005 to 2009) was approximately 8,016 mt. Of the total processed pineapple imported during the five-year period, pineapple juice represented 99.8% or 8,000.7 mt. In 2009, Jamaica imported pineapple concentrate from Thailand, Costa Rica, Belize, USA and the Philippines.
World Demand for Pineapple

Twelve countries absorb 90% of the world demand of fresh pineapple. The US leads the demand, while France, Japan, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Canada, Spain, England, Korea, Netherlands and Singapore share the rest of the supply. The supply of single strength pineapple juice emanates mainly from the Philippines and Thailand. Indonesia supplies 70% of the concentrated juice. However, canned pineapple is the most important product in pineapple world trade. Its consumption increases at the end of year due to Christmas salads and a greater demand by fast food outlets.

Currently the MD2 variety of pineapple is the most preferred on the international market compared to the Smooth Cayenne; it controls about 75% of the European market.

Market Potential

Agro processors import approximately 1,603.2 mt of pineapple juice annually. This annual import quantity could be produced locally, thus further reducing the countries food import bill.

Farmgate Price

On the week ending July 3, 2010 the farmgate price of pineapple ranged from $66 to $154 per kg.

Retail Price

On the week ending July 3, 2010 the retail prices for Cowboy and Sugarloaf pineapple ranged from $148.81 to $439.47/kg and $185.25 to $265/kg respectively.

International Price

The average terminal market price of fresh pineapple in the USA (July 3, 2010) was US$8.5 per kg.

Pineapple Export

Over the period from 2005 to 2008 pineapple juice exportation increased steadily from 20.8 mt to 156.05 mt. In 2009, pineapple juice export decreased by 50% moving from 156.05 mt in 2008 to 77.5 mt.

Uses & Benefits

Pineapple is eaten fresh, and served sliced, chunked or as juice. It is also a favourite when processed into marmalades, jam, jellies or candies. Pineapple oil or essence is also used as flavouring for confectionery. Meat dishes and curries become tastier with the fruit of the pineapple added.

Pineapple contains the protein digesting enzyme mixture called bromelain. This enzyme is natural anti-inflammatory that encourages healing. For tuberculosis patients, the juice was also found to be effective in dissolving mucus and aiding recovery. Pineapple destroys harmful bacteria in the stomach and intestines. The fruit is rich in Vitamin C and manganese. Pineapple also strengthens the bones of people as well as the growth of bones in youths.

Tropical Smoothie

1 1/2 cups fresh pineapple (cubed)
1 cup ice
3/4 cup of milk
1/2 cup orange juice
3 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp freshly squeezed lime juice
2 pineapple slices for garnish

Combine pineapple, ice, milk, orange juice, sugar and lime juice in a blender. Puree. Pour mixture into 2 tall glasses.

Garnish with pineapple slices.