



CHALLENGES IN EXPORTING COFFEE

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- The Exportation of coffee has been accompanied by many challenges through the years.
- No overseas buyer was interested in any Jamaican coffee during the latter part of the 1940s because of poor and inconsistent quality.
- With advent of the CLB in the 1950s to manage the quality issues the exportation of Jamaican coffee restarted
- Other challenges evolved and are still evolving.



Factors Impacting Coffee Exports

- Quality Standard Maintenance
- Food Safety Status
- Production Levels
- Market Diversification
- New Entrants
- Unlicensed Processors
- Contrabands in Coffee Shipments

Quality

- The reputation of Jamaican coffee is well known especially the Blue Mountain® coffee.
- Jamaica's highest annual coffee production in the last thirty years is less than 0.05 % of the world's production
- Traders and consumers have come to expect a coffee of the finest quality
- Sometimes it is almost an uphill task to get some entities to understand why standards that were established has to be maintained
- The CIB has the responsibility to ensure that these standards are met by the various shipments.

Quality continued

- In the years of low production it is sometimes felt that the standards could be relaxed to accommodate additional volumes for export – but our coffee is in a niche market known as the Specialty sector.
- Oftentimes the price remains unchanged or may increase hence quality expectations of the buyer should always be met.

Food Safety Status

- The processors and handlers of coffee have been sensitized and trained in how to ensure that the coffee is safe for consumption by:-
 - Proper usage and storage of agrochemicals
 - Employing good manufacturing practices
- Shipments of coffee are now tested for pesticide residue since market for Ja coffee could be jeopardized if excessive levels were found in the coffee.

Food Safety Concerns

- Shipping lines are advised that only food safe shipping containers should be sent to the CLB for exporting coffee
- Dirty or suspect containers are returned to the shipping and replacement is sought

Production Levels

- Production levels vary from year to year and when level fall significantly there are challenges in arranging export shipments.
- Some shipment are now smaller and for cost effectiveness buyers ask for consolidation of lots of coffee from different exporters oftentimes causing long delays
- There are more small shipments hence some buyers resort to more expensive air shipments rather than sea shipments

Production Levels cont'd

- In years of significant increase in production there are large slow moving inventory of beans because the market diversification strategy is still in its infancy.
- Japan is Jamaica's major market, taking 65-70% of green coffee exports (down from 85%)
- Not enough alternative markets to totally absorb the excess volume hence some losses are incurred from discounts and eventual downgrades and or spoilage
- Joint marketing diversification strategy is needed



New Entrants and Unlicensed Processors

- New entrants often create some challenges as they go down their experience curves
- Higher level of spoilage and rework
- Overall volume of premium beans for export fall hence the full potential of the sector is not realized
- The unlicensed roasters sell their poorly packaged sub-standard coffee to unsuspecting tourists who take it overseas only to realize that the product is no good.
- CIB is embarking on a programme with different government entities to minimize or eliminate these operators

Contrabands

- The inclusion of drugs in exports has been a big problem for Jamaica
- A few shipments of coffee was found with vegetable matter included in the early to mid 1990s but with increased vigilance of the CIB and collaboration with the Customs Department and the Police there has been no reported case since.



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