

Entering the European market for fresh peas

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Fresh peas are a perishable product that requires extra attention be paid to food safety management and efficient logistics. To compete with major suppliers from Guatemala, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Peru, you must work closely with the growers and build long-term partnerships with specialised importers.

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1. What requirements must fresh peas comply with to be allowed on the European market?

Fresh peas must comply with the general requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables. You can find these in the [buyer requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables](#) on the CBI market information platform. You can also use the [Trade Helpdesk](#) that provides an overview of export requirements for fresh peas (code 07081000).

What are mandatory requirements?

Avoid pesticide residues and contaminants

Pesticide residues are one of the crucial issues for fruit and vegetable suppliers. To avoid damaging consumer health and the environment, the European Union has set maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides in and on food products. Fresh peas containing more pesticides than allowed will be withdrawn from the market. The same goes for contaminants such as heavy metals. Countries that have a higher risk of contamination may become part of a more frequent checking for pesticides.

Fresh peas are a high risk product for pesticides and the MRLs are regularly updated – in 2019 alone there were [17 new regulations amending pesticide MRLs](#). Low residue limits are a challenge for exporters and additional checks are sometimes implemented for countries which have a high rate of exceeding these pesticide residues

Note that retailers in several Member States such as the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria, use MRLs that are stricter than the MRLs laid down in European legislation.

Tips:

Find out which MRLs are relevant for fresh peas by [consulting the EU MRL database](#) in which all harmonised MRLs can be found. You can search for your product (“peas”) or the pesticide used. The database shows the list of the MRLs associated to your product or pesticide.

Reduce the amount of pesticides by applying [integrated pest management](#) (IPM) in production. IPM is an agricultural pest control strategy that includes growing practices and chemical management.

Read more about [MRLs on the website of the European Commission](#). Check with your buyers if they require additional requirements on MRLs and pesticide use.

Make sure that contamination of lead in leguminous vegetables remains below 0.20 mg/kg and cadmium below 0,050 mg/kg, according to the [maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs](#).

Follow phytosanitary regulations

In December 2019, the new European regulation for the [trade in plants and plant products from non-EU countries](#) came into force. The [Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2072](#) (ANNEX XI part B) requires all leguminous vegetables, including peas (code 07082000), shelled or unshelled, to have a phytosanitary certificate before being brought into the European Union. A phytosanitary certificate must guarantee your product to be:

- properly inspected;
- free from quarantine pests, within the requirements for regulated non-quarantine pests and practically free from other pests;
- in line with the plant health requirements of the EU, laid down in [Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2072](#)

Tips:

See the details on the contents of a phytosanitary certificate for the European Union in ANNEX V of [Regulation \(EU\) No 2016/2031](#).

Make sure your plant health authority is able to comply with the phytosanitary requirements before planning your export. Get in contact with the [National Plant Protection Organisation \(NPPO\) in your country](#) and make sure they can issue a phytosanitary certificate on time.

Food safety and traceability

Imported fresh peas are a labour-intensive product, typically for small farmers. This requires extra attention to food safety and traceability.

Because of picking and processing is done manually, there is an increased risk of microbiological contamination. Proper attention to hygiene must prevent fresh peas from getting contaminated. The EU [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 2073/2005](#)) has set microbiological criteria for ready-to-eat or pre-cut vegetables:

- Salmonella must be absent in 25 g (Analytical reference method: EN/ISO 6579).
- E. coli: maximum 2 out of 5 representative samples is allowed to measure between 100 and 1,000 cfu/g (Analytical reference method: ISO 16649-1 or 2).
- In other cases where no specific legislation for microbiological contamination is available, food safety authorities can withdraw imported food products from the market or prevent them from entering the European Union when Salmonella, E. coli or other microbes are found.

When there is a microbiological issue, the product must be traceable. Traceability can be a major task when working with a large number of smallholder producers. You will need a system and continuous labelling to ensure traceability.

Maintain high quality standards

The marketing standard regarding the quality and packaging of fresh peas is described in the [UNECE Standard for peas](#). This standard describes the quality requirements that applies for shelling peas (without the pods) as well as mangetout (snow peas) and sugar snap peas intended for consumption with the pod.

Peas are divided into two classes: Class I and Class II. Class II applies to peas that are slightly more developed (making the pods more fibrous) or that have some slight defect (e.g. in shape, colouring or skin). Europe almost exclusively requires Class I peas as a minimum. Peas in this class must be of good quality and within the permissible tolerances (see table 1). Pods that are trimmed and stringless are best suited for the European market.

Table 1: Quality requirements and permissible tolerances for fresh peas

General quality requirements (all classes)
The pods must be:
1. intact; however mangetout peas and sugar snap peas may have their ends removed
2. sound; produce is excluded when affected by rotting or deterioration which make it unfit for consumption
3. clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter (including parts of the flowers)
4. free from hard filaments or films in mange-tout peas and sugar snap peas
5. practically free of (damage caused by) pests
6. free of abnormal external moisture
7. free of any foreign smell and/or taste
*Similar requirements apply to the seeds, which need to be fresh and normally developed in shelling peas
Additional requirements and permissible tolerances for class I peas
The pods in Class I must be:
1. fresh and turgid
2. free of damage caused by hail

3. free of damage caused by heating

*For shelling peas other quality standards apply

Tolerances:

- A tolerance of 10% is allowed for peas that meet Class II standard
- No more than 1% may consist of produce not satisfying the minimum requirements or of produce affected by decay

Mangetout are normally picked when they are between 6.5 and 9 cm, sugar snap between 5 and 8cm. There are no specific size requirements. Nevertheless, the contents of each package must be uniform and contain only peas of the same origin, variety or commercial type and quality. The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

Tip:

Maintain strict compliance with quality requirements and deliver the quality as agreed with your buyer. Being careless with product requirements or stretching the minimum standards will give buyers a reason to claim on quality issues.

Follow handling recommendations

The development and condition of the fresh peas must be of a level that is able withstand transportation and handling and to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination. Post-harvest processes, such as temperature, storage and lead time, are important to protect quality and freshness.

- Peas should be stored as close to 0°C as possible without freezing and sustaining chilling injuries.
- Maintain good storage conditions. Avoid brown spots due to misting or exposure to water.
- Make your supply chain as efficient as possible with short lead times. Long storage and inefficient supply chains will result edible pods to wilt, discolour and lose tenderness.
- Experiment with controlled atmosphere that can extend the quality of fresh sugar snaps and mangetout. According to the BMT Cargo Handbook an atmosphere of 2-3% O₂ and 2-3% of CO₂ are considered the best.

Tip:

Check the [BMT Cargo Handbook on recommendations on handling fresh peas](#) and the [recommendations for maintaining postharvest quality of snow and snap pods](#) of the Postharvest Center of the University of California.

Use protective packaging

Packaging requirements differ between different customers and market segments. In all cases you must use

protective packaging to maintain the freshness and quality of your fresh peas.

Fresh mangetout peas (snow peas) and sugar snaps can be packed in 2kg carton boxes, and occasionally in larger 4.5 or 5 kg boxes, with perforated plastic liners. Pre-packed they are sold in punnets or micro-perforated bags, for example in 12x150g, 10x250g or 12x250g. If packed in punnets, the peas are often laid together in the same direction (top and tail).

Image 1: Example of perforated packaging with mangetout / snow peas in the Netherlands



Image by [ICI Business](#)

Tips:

Always discuss specific packaging requirements and preferences with your customers.

Check the additional requirements if your product is pre-packed for retail in the [Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods](#) or [Regulation \(EU\) No. 1169/2011](#) on the provision of food information to consumers in Europe.

Find the legal requirements for labelling in the [Buyer requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables](#) on the CBI market information platform.

See also the [Recommended International Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Tropical Fresh Fruits and Vegetables \(CAC/RCP 44-1995\)](#) with recommendations on how to maintain produce quality during transportation and marketing.

What additional requirements do buyers often have?

Certifications as a guarantee

European buyers almost always require certifications as a guarantee for quality and food safety. Common certifications for fresh peas are [GlobalG.A.P.](#) for good agricultural practices and [BRCGS](#), [IFS](#) or similar HACCP-based food safety management systems for packing and processing facilities. Using food safety management systems recognised by the [Global Food Safety Initiative \(GFSI\)](#) is highly recommended.

Apply additional sustainability and social standards

Complying with sustainable and social standards has become common for all fresh fruit and vegetables. Besides [GlobalG.A.P.](#) to ensure good agricultural practices, a standard for social performance is highly recommended to get your product up to retail standards, for example [Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit \(SMETA\)](#), [Business Social Compliance Initiative \(BSCI\)](#) or, especially for the United Kingdom, [Ethical Trade Initiative \(ETI\)](#).

Retailers can also impose their individual standards, such as [Tesco Nurture](#). Especially larger retail chains in Northern Europe are more prepared to buy your product if your compliance to social and sustainability standards is in order.

Tips:

Implement at least one environmental and one social standard. See the [Basket of Standards](#) of SIFAV,

the Sustainability Initiative for Fruit and Vegetables.

For other additional requirements such as payment and delivery terms, see the [CBI Buyer Requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables](#) and the [Tips for doing business with European buyers](#).

What are the requirements for niche markets?

Use organic certification to increase product value

Organic certification can be an interesting way to set your fresh peas apart and market them at a higher value. The demand for organic vegetables is growing and the supply of organic sugar snaps and mangetout is limited.

In order to market organic products in Europe, you have to use organic production methods according to [European legislation](#) and apply for an organic certificate with an accredited certifier. Note that starting January 2021 the new [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/848](#) will come into force. You must use sustainable and organic production methods and apply for an organic certificate with an accredited certifier.

Tips:

Strive for residue-free peas, and only certify your production as organic if possible. It can broaden your market opportunities, but remember that implementing organic production and becoming certified can be expensive. You must be prepared to comply with the whole organic process.

Download the [current list of control bodies and authorities](#) to see which certifiers are active in your region.

Address consumers with a fair-trade label

In the cultivation of sugar snaps and mangetout there are often many small farmers involved. This is ideal for implementing a fair-trade label that can be featured on your product towards consumers. It will help your company to comply with a social standard and at the same time address the conscious consumers.

A good example of fair-trade beans and peas there is the company [Fair-fruit](#), which is an initiative of [Durabilis](#) of an integrated supply chain that provides a market for small producers in Guatemala, Peru and Ethiopia.

When you choose to get fair-trade certified yourself, you could use for example [Fair for Life](#) or [Fairtrade International](#) (Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International). Be aware that social circumstances have become a key element in the trade of fresh peas, but a Fair Trade label is still a niche requirement.

2. Through what channels can you get fresh peas on the European market?

Imported fresh peas such as sugar snaps and mangetout are exclusive vegetables but common in most supermarkets. Excellent quality and Class I peas are the standard in practically all market segments. Most of these fresh peas enter the market through importers that are specialised or well-integrated in the sourcing and production of exotic vegetables.

How is the end-market segmented?

Sugar snaps and mangetout (snow peas) are mostly imported and commercialised as fresh products and therefore placed automatically in a medium to high price segment. This is different from common shelled garden peas (without pods), which make up most of the pea sales. However, unlike sugar snaps and mangetout, common peas are most often sold as a preserved or frozen product.

Figure 1: European market segments for fresh peas



Most markets demand Class I quality peas, either air-freighted or efficiently transported by sea. Sugar snaps and mangetout in this class are often pre-packed in small bags for major retailers or sold loose or in larger bags for Cash & Carry, food service clients or specialised shops. Optionally the fresh peas in the middle segment are blanched and frozen, which extends the shelf life and therefore can be sold for a lower retail price. Frozen peas are often directly processed after harvest. It is a smaller segment than fresh but especially in Northwest Europe it is growing due to the demand for convenience products.

In the top segment you can find the highest value and best quality peas. Although the “Extra” Class is not a very common standard, there are several other quality indicators that can place fresh sugar snaps and mangetout in a superior segment. These indicators can be for example an organic label, attractive packaging or a guarantee of an ultra-fresh (air-freighted) product. A branded product can also deliver a certain promise of exclusivity.

The market for Class II sugar snaps and mangetout is very small. It is an additional segment automatically stocked by the produce that is rejected in higher segments. It is not really a segment to supply pro-actively. Class II sugar snaps and mangetout often end up in street markets or smaller shops that compete on price.

Tips:

Plan carefully and make sure your product meets all expectations of the main market segments. Use quality materials for packing and precise logistical planning (by sea or air). Do not ship your product if you have doubts about the quality on arrival. See also the requirements above.

Brand your product for clients that do not require private label packing such as food service clients or small retailers. Do this preferably in cooperation with a trading partner of fresh vegetables. A branded product can create value if it is well marketed and provides continuity in quality.

Through what channels does a product end up on the end-market?

Service providers and importers have a central role in the import and distribution of fresh peas. They are familiar with all the different requirements of end clients and are able to distribute to different markets. Through sourcing fresh peas in different regions, importers can ensure their clients have a year-round supply.

Figure 2: Supply channels for fresh peas in Europe



Specialised and integrated importers are important for foreign suppliers

Most importers of fresh peas have steady commercial relationships with growers and exporters in different countries. They are specialised in working together with multiple supply countries. Most of them have strengthened their position through specialisation and integration.

Several of fresh pea importers are specialised in exotic vegetables, such as [SpecialFruit](#) (Belgium) and [Nature's Pride](#) (Netherlands).

Through further integrating with the pea production trade companies gain more control over the supply chain, which is necessary to supply major retail channels. Companies such as [ElbeFruit Company](#) (Germany), [Flamingo Horticulture](#) (United Kingdom) and [Van Oers United](#) (Netherlands) promote themselves with international cultivation projects or integrated partnerships.

There are also importers that differentiate themselves through organic and fair-trade produce such as [Eosta](#) (Netherlands) and [Fair-Fruit](#) (Belgium).

Service providers provide access to supermarkets

Fresh peas such as sugar snaps and mangetout are common retail products. Large retail organisations such as supermarkets usually work with supply programmes and mostly offer pre-packed sugar snaps and mangetout. In this retail market it is very common for producers to have supply contracts with their buyers.

Successful suppliers to supermarkets often position themselves as service providers. They organise the supply chain according to the needs of their clients, from growing and sourcing to re-packing and branding. You can become part of this supply chain if you are able to offer the quality, packing and logistics that a service provider demands. This often requires close cooperation.

Larger importers can supply supermarkets, but there are also service providers that maintain exclusive supply relations with large retail chains. Examples are [Bakker Barendrecht](#), part of the Greenyard group, supplying the leading Dutch supermarket [Albert Heijn](#) and [OGL Food Trade](#), which is an exclusive fresh supplier for Lidl supermarkets.

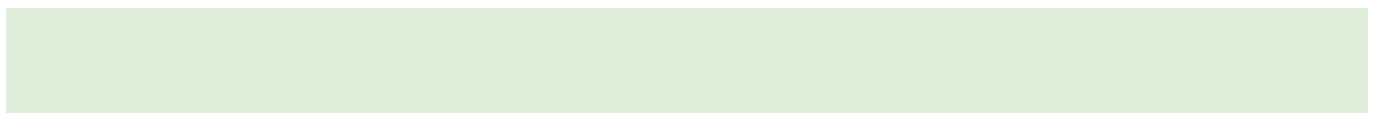
Frozen vegetable suppliers

Frozen peas are supplied by frozen food brands, but also by private label processors. The freezing process usually takes place directly after harvest to preserve the freshness. This means these companies work with processing facilities nearby the product's origin or with importers of frozen vegetables. Well-known companies that are involved in the processing and supply of frozen vegetables are, for example, [Bonduelle](#) and the [Penguin brand of Greenyard](#).

Wholesalers supply the spot market

Wholesalers supply fresh peas to smaller retailers and food service companies. Import can be among the activities of a wholesaler, but usually they are not equipped to organise a global network of growers. Instead, they prefer to buy from local growers and international import specialists. Without a retail programme they mainly cover the spot market, moving with the fluctuations of the trade. They often operate from typical wholesale markets such as [Rungis](#) in Paris and [New Spitalfields market](#) in London.

Larger wholesale activities are covered by Cash & Carry companies such as the [Bidcorp group](#) and [Metro](#). Metro's global sourcing of fruit and vegetables takes mostly place in its Valencia Trading Office (VTO).



Tips:

Build long-term relationships with your buyers in Europe. Importers that serve large end clients need a reliable supply. The supply chain of fresh peas can be complex and for them selecting and assessing new suitable suppliers of fresh peas is time consuming. As an exporter you must create confidence and provide continuity to build a structural business in Europe (hit and run is not the way to go).

Explore your opportunities in the frozen vegetable market by studying the [CBI publications on Exporting frozen vegetables to Europe](#).

What is the most interesting channel for you?

The most interesting channels to supply steady volumes of fresh peas to are supermarket channels and their service providers, but for smaller suppliers more specific channels could be a better choice.

When you are able to offer high production volumes, you can focus on strategic partnerships with importers that offer supply contracts. This allows you to plan your production. Developing such relations takes time.

Small farmers and cooperatives may be better off with specialised importers that differentiate with fair trade or organic produce. Importers of exotic vegetables often provide the best experience and diverse market to represent your fresh sugar snaps and mangetout.

Tip:

Go to trade fairs to find buyers and get insight information from different specialist buyers. The main trade fair for vegetables such as fresh peas is the [Fruit Logistica](#) in Berlin. The second largest trade fair for fresh products is the [Fruit Attraction](#), organised in southern Europe (Madrid).

3. What competition do you face on the European fresh peas market?

Guatemala, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Peru fill in most of the annual supply of fresh sugar snaps and mangetout. These fresh peas are labour intensive and there is only minor competition from European growers between June and September. Successful suppliers are able to export a weekly volume by air or sea-freight and maintain a well-organised supply chain with growers.

Important note: Air freight may become structurally more expensive due to COVID-19. This means that countries with efficient sea-freight logistics to Europe have the best opportunities to export fresh peas. Sea-freight is also considered most sustainable and therefore of increasing importance.

Figure 3: Indicative supply calendar for fresh peas (sugar snaps and mangetout) to Europe



Which countries are you competing with?

Europe imports fresh peas year-round from countries with different growing seasons such as Guatemala, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Peru, Egypt, Morocco and several smaller supply countries. Efficient logistics are a pre-condition for competing with these suppliers. The climate is a major influence on the development of the season and the annual availability per country.

Guatemala: large volumes and long season

Guatemala is able to produce large volumes during a relatively long season. The main export takes place from December until May, which is counter-seasonal to Zimbabwe and Peru. According to Eurostat the European Union imported between 8.4 and 9.5 thousand tonnes from Guatemala on an annual basis between 2015 and 2019. The United Kingdom and the Netherlands are the main importers of Guatemalan fresh peas.

The strong supply is the result of a large number of small farmers that are competitive in labour intensive crops such as sugar snaps and mangetout. Smallholder engagement can also result in [social initiatives that fit the goals of the IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative](#), such as the integrated cooperation between smallholder cooperatives and Asuncion Export in Guatemala, Nature's Pride (importer) and the supermarket ICA Sweden.

The large number of farmers also means that supply can be difficult to control, not just in quality but also in volume. The Guatemalan peak season is often characterised by high volumes which have a suppressing effect on trade prices.

Kenya: year-round pea supplier

The horticultural sector in Kenya is well-developed with a number of professional growers and exporters of fresh peas, fresh beans and herbs. Most of the export to Europe is realised between October and January, but the climatic circumstances allow Kenyan farmers to produce and export fresh peas throughout the year. This makes it an interesting country for European buyers to source from, because they often look for a year-round supply. However, occasional heavy rains make the production less reliable than some of its competitors.

Unlike other supply countries, Kenya mostly exports their fresh peas by air – so export volumes are often smaller. The average European import from Kenya is just over five thousand tonnes spread out over a calendar year. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom are the main importers from Kenya according to European trade statistics.

Despite of its potential there has not been much growth of Kenyan pea export in recent years. Farmers have struggled to comply with the strict regulations on pesticide residues and for several years the European Union had increased checks on Kenyan vegetables. As a consequence several exporters were temporarily banned and exports had become more costly due to the additional costs of inspections. The European regulations on MRLs are regularly sharpened, which could be a problem for the future of the Kenyan fresh pea exports.

Zimbabwe: competitive by optimising logistics

Horticulture is considered a high-potential sector in Zimbabwe. Fresh peas are considered to be one of the most viable vegetables for local producers. Sugar snaps and mangetout can [greatly benefit growers according to Zimbabwean media](#). Their season overlaps with Peru, but the country also competes at a competitive price level with Kenyan growers.

The European import of fresh peas from Zimbabwe has been relatively stable over the past five years after a strong growth in the years before. Imports declined to just over five thousand tonnes in 2019; the same year that the Zimbabwean prices were slightly higher and the Peruvian season started early.

A transition to sea freight will make Zimbabwe more competitive. [Foreign expertise of PUM have been used to improve the distribution chain](#) and make logistics more efficient. Sea freight is much cheaper and more sustainable as long as exporters are able to be flexible and fill a container in a short amount of time. At the beginning and end of the season air-freight is more feasible due to the smaller volumes and more vulnerable product. Ultimately 75% is expected to be shipped by sea via Cape Town (South Africa).

Peru: productive powerhouse

Over the last decade Peru has become a production powerhouse for a wide range of fruit and vegetables. The export of sugar snaps and mangetout has benefited from this commercial development and its increase of professional growers. European imports from Peru have more than doubled in five years to 4.7 thousand tonnes in 2019. Among the largest suppliers with multiple million euros of fresh pea exports according to [Agrodataperu](#) are [Intipa Foods](#) and Fair Fruit Peru (a subsidiary of [Fair Fruit](#) that works with small farmers).

Peru is able to cover a supply gap from June to October when the volumes from Guatemala are low, partially competing with growers in Zimbabwe. Its main destinations in Europe are the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

Egypt: short distance supplier

Egypt is among the world's largest producers of green peas. The Egyptian offer does not only include sugar snaps and mangetout, but also a large amount of fresh garden peas or shelling peas. In general, there is a large offer of vegetables from Egypt, but the number of exporters is sometimes overwhelming for European buyers and many of the potential suppliers do not meet their standards. However, the exporters that comply with all the requirements are gaining market share.

Egypt is gaining market share competing in the same window as Guatemala, although the Egyptian campaign is much shorter from December to March. Their main advantage is that they are significantly closer to Europe. This helps to keep logistical costs low and the products as fresh as possible. Fresh pea imports from Egypt were at 2.8 thousand tonnes in 2019, much more than the 1.7 thousand tonnes from five years earlier. Egypt becomes most competitive just after Christmas.

Morocco: popular for cultivation projects

Moroccan growers are important suppliers of vegetables to Europe. They are already leading in fresh bean exports and increasing their value in fresh peas as well. In five years' time Morocco has doubled its export of fresh peas to Europe from 600 to 1,200 tonnes in 2019. Part of their supply consists of common garden peas, but sugar peas and mangetout are also being cultivated.

Morocco is close to Europe and offers an ideal extension of the European season. Therefore European fresh companies often look for cultivation opportunities or join forces with growers in Morocco. For example the Dutch company [Van Oers United](#) owns two production locations in Morocco, cultivating sugar snaps and mangetout, among many other vegetables. Most fresh peas are exported to Spain, the Netherlands and France.

Tips:

Look for supply gaps to define potential opportunities and monitor the production of competing countries.

Invest time in selecting logistical suppliers that can transport your fresh peas safe and efficiently.

Explore ways to extend the shelf life of your fresh peas, for example in the way you process and package your product or in innovations in seed breeding or modified atmosphere.

Which companies are you competing with?

Successful exporters are efficient and able to process and supply decent volumes (full container loads on weekly basis during peak season). This requires a well-organised supply chain of growers and excellent management of packaging facilities.

Frutesa: pioneer in exporting peas to Europe

[Frutesa](#) in Guatemala is one of the pioneers in exporting fresh peas to Europe, starting out with the United Kingdom as the first destination country. Nowadays they export to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Germany. This experience and track record comes in handy when they present themselves to new buyers.

The company does not have its own plantations but works with a very large number of associated and contracted producers. They support these producers by offering technical assistance, training in pesticide use, quality and hygiene, and agricultural input. The large number of small farmers give the company a positive social image and sufficient volumes for export markets. But it will also take effort to support them and manage traceability.

With their own packing facility they are able to offer different packing options. Flexibility and tailored packaging are necessary to get into the supply chain of larger retailers. During the peak season sugar snaps and mangetout can be shipped by sea, which helps to maintain a competitive price level.

Interveg: support to growers as key element for success

[Interveg](#) in Kenya claims that it owes its success to local farmers. Local farmers grow the crops and in return Interveg provides them with farm inputs like seeds and fertiliser and technical expertise on good agricultural practices. The company proves the importance of grower cooperation.

In addition to their close cooperation with growers, the company has used the support of [CBI](#) and [COLEACP](#) to successfully prepare and organise their export to Europe. They comply with standards that are important in Europe such as BRC, GlobalG.A.P. and SEDEX.

According to the company's website, they supply Europe with 150 tonnes of fresh peas and other vegetables every month. Supply volume is important and for new, smaller companies it is very difficult to grow as an exporter, as pointed out by another [grower from Kenya on Freshplaza](#). Being close to the airport they have a fast logistical route and can keep their produce fresh while it is being shipped to Europe – but the dependence on expensive air freight can become a weakness in the future should you wish to supply larger and competitive volumes.

Tips:

Check the [e-learning platform](#) and [e-library of COLEACP](#) for production guides and training material for fresh peas (membership required).

Work with experienced agronomists that can advise you and your growers on pesticide management and good agricultural practices.

Which products are you competing with?

Frozen as alternative for fresh peas

The main competition for fresh peas are frozen (or preserved) peas. Sugar snaps and mangetout are most often sold as a fresh product, while common garden peas (without pods) are mostly conserved in jars and cans. As an alternative there are frozen peas available (with or without pods) for consumers that look for a balance of fresh and shelf life.

Frozen peas do not give the consumer the same experience, but in reality the freshness of frozen vegetables is often better than the fresh import. Frozen peas are blanched and frozen just after their harvest which maintains their quality. One of the leading companies in frozen peas is [Greenyard with their Pinguin brand](#).

Competition from local in-season vegetables

During the European summer there is a great variety of local peas and beans which compete with imported products. This local produce includes cheaper common green beans as well as some fresh sugar snaps and mangetout. During this time the consumer often prefers local products, which are fresher, more sustainable and widely available for a good price. So between June and September the demand for imported sugar snaps and mangetout declines.

Tip:

Make your fresh product as attractive as possible. Use nice packaging, visible quality and sort the fresh pods nicely when using trays or punnets.

4. What are the prices for fresh peas?

Prices for imported fresh peas mainly depend on their availability throughout the year. Sugar snaps and mangetout have more or less the same price level. Climate and annual changes have a great influence on the price development. However, it is the market that in the end sets the price.

During supply gaps and in between the seasons of different supply countries prices can go up due to lower availability. At this time there is more room to ship fresh peas by air. At the beginning of a season the young pea pods are also most fragile, which is another motivation to use faster air freight. During the peak season prices may settle down and larger volumes are then often sea freighted.

Over the last decade the trade value per kilo shows a gradual increase of around 15% (see figure 5). Kenya exports the highest value per kilo, likely because of its intensive use of air freight, followed by Peru and Guatemala. Zimbabwe is more price competitive according to the trade statistics. Egypt and Morocco are the bottom two being closest to the European market and exporting both high-value snap peas and common peas.

Wholesale purchase prices in Europe average around 4.5 to 6 euros per kilo. Bulk boxes of 2 to 5 kilos may be slightly lower priced than the pre-packaged peas for consumers. Importers generally maintain a net profit margin of at least 8% over their selling price, excluding handling and packing costs.

Consumer prices for fresh peas fluctuate according to their quality, packing and segment. Supermarket prices for sugar snaps and snow peas range between 9 and 12 euro per kilo. These retail prices are relatively stable and have little connection with the trade and wholesale prices.

*the price breakdown varies depending on the timing and the origin

Tip:

Find a [price history in France on the Market News Network of FranceAgriMer](#) from producers, importers, wholesalers (“gros”) and retail (“détail”). Look for “POIS GOURMAND”.

This study was carried out on behalf of CBI by [ICI Business](#).

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