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Pomegranate marketing: Traditional skills for the future

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SUMMARY – The international trade of pomegranates produced in Spain and exported to Europe and other countries around the world is studied from 1986, year in which Spain joined the present European Union, to 1998. This study attempts to define the main issues of Spanish pomegranate exportation and to identify the basic elements of the Spanish export sector. In the light of such issues, options are indicated to enable the pomegranate trade to respond in the future to the increase in production.

Key words: Pomegranate, international trade, exportation, statistics.

RESUME – *"Marketing de la grenade : Un savoir-faire traditionnel pour l'avenir". Le commerce international de grenades produites en Espagne et exportées en Europe et autres pays du monde est étudié à partir de 1986, année où l'Espagne a adhéré à l'Union Européenne actuelle, jusqu'en 1998. Cette étude vise à définir les grandes problématiques de l'exportation de grenades espagnoles et à identifier les éléments de base du secteur espagnol de l'exportation. A la lumière de ces thématiques, des options surgissent pour permettre au commerce des grenades de répondre dans le futur à l'augmentation de la production.*

Mots-clés : *Grenade, commerce international, exportation, statistiques.*

Introduction

Within the agricultural sector, the fruit and vegetable sector is outstanding for its economic importance and dynamics, constituting 6.3% of the final agricultural output in 1996. Within the EU, Spain holds second place in fruit and vegetable production behind Italy but ahead of France, representing 30% of the final agricultural output. The Netherlands and Spain are the biggest fruit exporters in the EU, both countries making up 50% of the total, but Spain is a net exporting country with a cover rate of more than 400% in value terms in comparison to the Dutch 150%. This places Spain in a prominent position within the EU in this commercial sector, in which EU is a net importer in spite of being, as a continent, the first world exporter. Spain has the biggest net export balance of all the European countries and also at world level with data from 1994[1].

In spite of the difficulties in interpreting the Tariff Statistics in chapters 07 and 08, which include other products not strictly considered as fruit and vegetables, the evolution of the Spanish fruit and vegetable trade, indicated in Table 1, shows a positive net balance with cover rates, in tonnage, of about 800-900%. The cover rate rose rapidly in the period 1986-1990. Both years are significant in the incorporation of Spanish agriculture into the current EU. This rate and the positive trade balance of fruits and vegetables decrease sharply if citrus fruits are excluded or if only fruit is considered. However, although not as significant, they do present similar behaviour (Table 2). International trade of non-citrus fruits still has a clear export balance with cover rates of around 300% since 1990, much lower than the 1986-1990 period.

Within this important exporting potential of this Spanish sector, the pomegranate, the aim of this Symposium, has very little quantitative significance. However, as pomegranate cultivation takes place in the area of Vega Baja (Alicante province), its lack of importance on the fruit and vegetable trade is heavily compensated by its social impact and its marked Mediterranean and marginal character.

Until 1993, the pomegranate (Table 3) constituted between 1.5 and 2% of the global Spanish non-citrus exports. The data from 1 January 1993 also incorporates, apart from the statistical uncertainty,

[1] Arcas Larro and Ruiz de Maya, 1997.

the uncertainty that arises from the simplification of tariff lines in trade within the European Union. This uncertainty becomes apparent when the simplified tariff statistics establish exports around 1000 MT in 1993 and 1994. This quantity is imprecise and certainly wrong.

Table 1. Evolution of foreign fruit and vegetable trade[†]

	Import (TM)	Export (TM)	Balance (TM)	Cover (%)
1985	89,080	3,430,351	3,341,271	3851
1986	110,563	4,845,097	4,734,534	4382
1987	172,133	4,585,865	4,413,732	2664
1988	26,455	4,574,361	4,547,906	17291
1989	260,665	4,430,489	4,169,824	1700
1990	462,919	4,395,054	3,932,135	949
1991	498,125	4,692,805	4,194,680	942
1992	593,913	5,199,955	4,606,042	876
1993	606,309	6,000,067	5,393,758	990
1994	780,073	6,536,012	5,755,939	838
1995	813,456	6,700,198	5,886,742	824
1996	765,309	7,045,926	6,280,617	921
1997	704,820	8,374,999	7,670,179	1188
Jan./June 1998	326,649	4,791,169	4,464,520	1467

[†]Includes data on tapioca, dry legumes and potatoes contemplated in chapters 07 and 08 of Tariff Statistics.
Source: own elaboration based on data from the customs dept. and II.EE. (1998).

Table 2. Foreign fruit trade (non-citrus)

	Import (TM)	Export (TM)	Balance (MT)	% Cover	Export (%)
1985		491,393			
1986	43,838	583,058	539,220	1330	18.65
1987	79,917	659,874	579,957	826	13.17
1988	84,460	695,672	611,212	824	5.42
1989	108,586	642,614	534,028	592	-7.63
1990	232,258	628,587	396,329	271	-2.18
1991	256,490	830,815	574,325	324	32.17
1992	344,515	818,102	473,587	237	-1.53
1993	303,161	1,012,560	709,399	334	23.77
1994	430,686	1,139,641	708,955	265	12.55
1995	618,108	1,398,662	780,554	226	22.73
1996	581,534	1,534,246	952,712	264	9.69
1997	518,339	1,868,114	1,349,775	360	21.76
Jan./June 1998	244,129	1,003,705	759,576	411	-46.27

Source: own elaboration based on data from Customs Department and II.EE. (1998).

To introduce this session "Economics and marketing", I would like to pick up on the title of the paper presented in the III Pomegranate Workshop held in 1993, five years ago, "Pomegranate trade abroad" in order to conclude with the title of the paper presented in the 1992 workshop "The commercial challenge for the pomegranate". Both titles encompass the marketing of this fruit, included in a sector being subject in the last few years to deep modifications in technology, innovation and development. Supply has also been transformed through changes in modes and areas of production so as to rise to the competition and the great shifts in demand caused by changes in consumer behaviour and the enormous and increasing pressure of distribution.

Table 3. Significance pomegranate/fruit exports

	Export fruit	Pomegranates		Incr. export (%)	
	MT	Export (TM)	% Sign.	Fruit	Pomegran.
1985	491,393	7,774	1.58		
1986	583,058	8,585	1.47	18.65	10.43
1987	659,874	8,115	1.23	13.17	-5.47
1988	695,672	8,341	1.20	5.42	2.78
1989	642,614	8,724	1.36	-7.63	4.59
1990	628,587	12,071	1.92	-2.18	38.37
1991	830,815	9,384	1.13	32.17	-22.26
1992	818,102	11,040	1.35	-1.53	17.65
1993[†]	1,012,560	12,990	1.28	23.77	17.66
1994[†]	1,139,641	12,340	1.08	12.55	-5.00
1995	1,398,662	9,867	0.71	22.73	-20.04
1996	1,534,246	11,364	0.74	9.69	15.17
1997	1,868,114	15,111	0.81	21.76	32.97

[†]Values estimated from pomegranates due to lack of customs information.
Source: own elaboration based on data from customs department and II.EE. (1998).

Despite this, the pomegranate trade still follows the same patterns and unlike other fruit and vegetables, its form of production, marketing and eating habits have not evolved. Perhaps due to this involution, the present pomegranate production and export values (although lower than in reality) are double the 1986 figures although the market is now more global and competitive. The production and marketing sector has found its own evolution and development through its involution.

(i) *Involution* characterised as thesis to be developed through the following elements:
- Concentration of production and of exporting and trade companies.
- Stagnation of source and destination prices.

(ii) *Evolution and development*, of trade, characterised as thesis to be developed in the following aspects:
- Diversification in time of the market shipments.
- Stagnation of the export/production ratio.
- Increase in volume.
- Decrease in competition between companies.

Involution and evolution are developed for this session, whose objective is to encourage a debate on the future of the economics and marketing of the pomegranate.

Pomegranate production and cultivation

In Spain, pomegranate cultivation at the end of the eighties and in the nineties lost its marginal character, although this country continues to be the main European exporter. The province of Alicante continues to account for more than 80% of production and area under cultivation (Fig. 1).

The total crop area in this province increased significantly at the end of the eighties to become stable during the nineties, with a slight increase in 1995 and 1996 (latest data available). Figure 1 shows the evolution of the production area in this province which has constituted about 80% of the pomegranate-producing area in the last ten years. This percentage increased slightly from year to year in the nineties as a consequence of the plantations created particularly between 1989 and 1991.

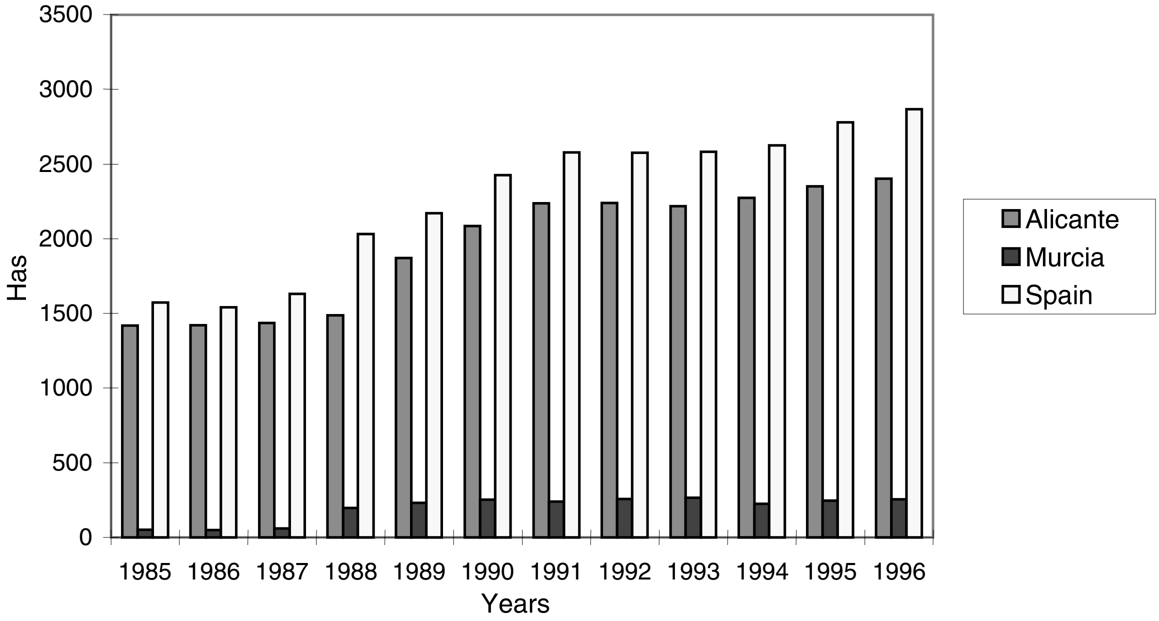

Fig. 1. Evolution of pomegranate growing area. Source: own elaboration based on data from yearbook of agricultural production (MAPA) (1998).

The second significant province in Spain is Murcia. Its production is far from the Alicante province. There was a significant increase in the area under cultivation in 1987 and 1990, which later became stable. As from 1991, the areas cultivated with pomegranates in Alicante and Murcia have accounted for more than 95% of the whole Spanish area. This feature of *spatial concentration of area under cultivation* is the result of particular climate and soil characteristics together with vegetative and rustic features.

Figure 2 shows data from the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food corresponding to pomegranate production. These figures should in fact be lower if the ornamental pomegranate trees and pomegranate trees grown as border vegetation (a total spread of 100,000 trees) are taken into account. In 1996 the biggest production since 1985 was achieved, corresponding to about 25,000 MT. This value will certainly have been exceeded in 1997, although no official data is available. Leaving aside production failures due to climatology and lack of irrigation water in recent years, it is clear that the rising trend shown by the pomegranate production since 1988 will probably continue in the forthcoming years.

The provinces of Alicante and Murcia concentrate more than 92% of the Spanish production, a slightly lower percentage than that of the area under cultivation, partly due to the motive already indicated. As in the case of the area under cultivation, Murcia has presented significance in recent years of about 10% of the province of Alicante. This data shows *the spatial concentration of pomegranate production in Spain*, first exporter of this product in Europe and probably in the world.

Until 1991, the pomegranate-harvesting season was determined by the establishing of the export commencement date[2]. This harvest used to take place about a fortnight before that date. Depending on the maturity and on the established date, the trader would determine the price of purchase. This purchase has traditionally been carried out by previously estimating the fruit on the tree or per kilo. The prices paid to the farmer in 1986-87 oscillated between 40 and 52 ptas/kg and were similar in the following two seasons. These prices may perhaps explain the increase in plantations in those seasons. In 1989 the prices paid to farmers dropped, to between 25 and 45 ptas/kg, and ranging from

[2] Before this date, no pomegranates were shipped abroad, complying with the legal customs procedures in force at that time.

28 to 35 ptas/kg in 1992. These prices rose very slightly between 5 and 10 ptas/kg and remained constant until recent years. This range has not contemplated exceptional batches in ripeness or commercial quality. This slight variation in prices indicates the *stability of prices paid to the farmer in at least the last six years of export*.

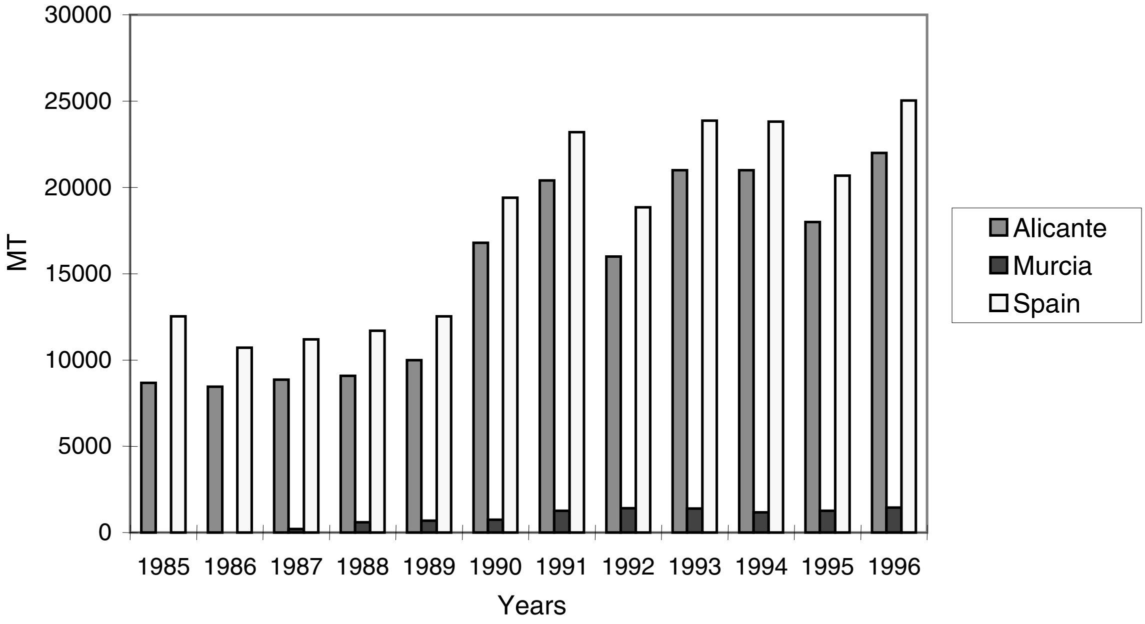

Fig. 2. Evolution of pomegranate production. Source: own elaboration based on data from yearbook of agricultural production (MAPA) (1998).

Pomegranate exports

Previous considerations

Before commenting on the characteristic aspects of the Spanish pomegranate exports, it is necessary to point out that grouping together and simplifying the tariff lines for intracommunity trade meant that pomegranates were included in heading 08.10.90.80 from 1 January 1993 until 1 January 1995 and in heading 08.10.90.85 from then onwards. This has meant a loss of statistical information, as the product was included together with other products. Therefore, to analyse its evolution, a number of checks and estimations should be made in order to approach such values, which may of course have some mistakes but whose objective is to inform, even if only approximately, of the evolution of the Spanish exports.

In order to make estimations, the export period has been taken into account as well as the comparison between the different statistical sources for the years before 1993, for both value and weight, considering the corresponding tariff lines. Finally, to correct the estimations, the corresponding monthly distributions from 1990 to 1992 have been considered. These estimations refer to the seasons between 1993 and 1995 and should be kept in mind throughout this paper.

Furthermore, the customs controls between EU member countries were eliminated since 1 January 1993 and hence another source of statistical information was lost. This had been provided annually by the General Directorate of External Trade based on data from SOIVRE, the body entrusted with quality control in fruit and vegetable shipments made from Spain to other countries. This loss of information has partially been palliated by the implementation of the Regulation (EEC) No. 2251/92 on fresh fruit and vegetable quality control. Although it came into force in 1993, it cannot be considered fully implemented until 1995. In spite of this fact, this does make certain data available based on information facilitated by the operators themselves. This is not 100% complete but it is significant and at least refers exclusively to pomegranates. This is not distorted by information on other fruits that are included in the same tariff line. This data has been used as a source since 1995.

Total pomegranate exports

Table 4 shows the evolution of exports in groups of countries from 1986-87[3] until 1997-98. Even in the light of previous considerations, in 1997 pomegranate exports beat their record of 1986, the year when Spain joined the European Union and which has been taken as reference for this analysis. This is possibly an historic record, and, according to available data, exceeded 15,000 MT, with an increase of about 30% in comparison to the previous one, 50% more than in 1992-93 and more than double the first year considered in this analysis.

The export volume accounts for about 60% of production. This proportion varies from one season to another, but does not generally drop below 50%, showing that both crop and production are export-oriented.

The key years of the Spanish agriculture integration in the EU, 1990 and 1993[4], coincide with maximum export volumes in comparison to previous years. From 1993 onwards, the export volumes began to rise, powered by production and profiting from the synergy generated by other fruits and vegetables and by the opening of markets in non-community countries. The pomegranate exports *have increased their export volumes, taking advantage of the global increase in Spanish fruit and vegetable exports*.

Just as with other products, pomegranate exports have been characterised by the fixing of an export commencement date with the purpose of avoiding shipments of unripe and unfit fruit. This date was maintained up until the 1991-92 season, perhaps unduly restricting the sales period. This date was no longer applied from the 1992-93 season onwards, allowing the market and the good sense of the operator to decide when fruit was fit to be sold. If these decisions are taken lightly, they can greatly jeopardise the export sector, but they do confirm, in accordance with the evolution of the export volumes, the degree of responsibility of the operator, acquired throughout the nineties.

Exports according to countries

Exports by associations of countries

Shipments to the European Union[5] have represented more than 90% of Spanish exports. The pomegranate was and still is sent first to the Community markets, following the general patterns of most fruits and vegetables and responding to natural demand. But in spite of its significance, this has dropped in recent seasons to around 80%. This decrease has been accompanied by an increase in quantities exported to these markets, partially explained by the lack of exact information on shipments but which does characterise *a continuation to some extent of the significance of traditional markets as well as a certain degree of diversification of the destination countries.*

The shipments to EFTA countries[6] have remained practically stable in the last twelve years in absolute value. Their global significance is around 1%, with a certain downward trend. This indicates that there is no more demand for this product in these markets.

[3] Traditionally, the export season has always begun with fruit harvested in the same year and continues until the end of that year. In the case of pomegranates, the export season normally begins in Agust and ends in February of the following year. This is why this term is used for both years.
[4] The pomegranate was not subject to any of the mechanisms established to model the integration of Spanish agriculture in the European Union.
[5] From 1 January 1995 Austria, Sweden and Finland joined, constituting the current European Union of fifteen countries.
[6] From 1 January 1995, Austria, Sweden and Finland, members of EFTA before that date, joined the European Union.

Table 4. Pomegranate exports to groups of countries

	EU		EFTA		East Eur.		Persian Gulf		South Asia		Others		Total
	TMS.	%	TMS.	%	TMS.	%	TMS.	%	TMS.	%	TMS.	%	TMS.
1986-87	6,510.65	92.16	151.97	1.30		0.00	68.22	0.97	132.32	1.87	201.27	2.85	7,064.43
1987-88	7,475.01	94.52	111.77	1.20		0.00	207.44	2.62	64.00	0.81	50.00	0.63	7,908.22
1988-89	7,760.75	93.38	69.41	1.12		0.00	348.93	4.20	131.87	1.59		0.00	8,310.96
1989-90	8,232.51	92.74	55.09	1.04		0.00	470.29	5.30	119.57	1.35		0.00	8,877.46
1990-91	11,133.93	93.22	344.02	0.78	44.12	0.37	284.57	2.38	136.58	1.14		0.00	11,943.22
1991-92	8,760.33	94.08	73.80	1.01		0.00	200.81	2.16	272.98	2.93	4.13	0.04	9,312.05
1992-93	9,462.87	94.82	62.87	0.95		0.00	77.72	0.78	376.19	3.77		0.00	9,979.65
1993-94[†]	11,823.50	91.01	98.00	0.70	23.00	0.18	391.00	3.01	648.00	4.99	8.50	0.07	12,992.00
1994-95[†]	11,303.00	91.60	58.00	0.74	89.00	0.72	349.00	2.83	523.00	4.24	18.00	0.15	12,340.00
1995-96[†]	8,574.00	86.90	52.00	0.88	163.00	1.65	211.00	2.14	811.00	8.22	56.00	0.57	9,867.00
1996-97[††]	8,779.42	77.25	42.15	0.68	649.06	5.71	376.76	3.32	1517.01	13.35		0.00	11,364.41
1997-98[††]	12,484.58	82.62	62.56	0.55	676.79	4.48	460.90	3.05	1343.20	8.89	83.24	0.55	15,111.28

[†]Estimated data of EU countries due to lack of breakdown of data in the tariff statistics.
[††]Data obtained by SOIVRE from statements by operators applying RTO. EEC 2251/92 to the EU.
Source: own elaboration based on data from SOIVRE (General Secretariat of Foreign Trade) (1998).

The Eastern European countries, ignored by or unknown to exporters until 1992, underwent a noteworthy increase after 1995. This should be confirmed in later seasons because the volume exported has been similar in the last two years. They represent a volume of about 5% of global exports. This could increase in the future if the standard of living rises in those countries, shipments of other Spanish fruits and vegetables increase and if the quality and differentiation of Spanish fruits and vegetables become recognised.

The countries of the Persian Gulf have traditionally been one destination of the Spanish pomegranate exports[7]. It can be concluded that the same volumes of exports are maintained with a slight upward trend since 1995 excluding 1986-87 and 1992-93. The relative significance of this group of countries has oscillated between 2% and 5% of the total quantities shipped.

The South East Asian countries[8] have also been traditional destinations for the Spanish pomegranates exported in the last twelve seasons. However their evolution shows an increase in significance and in volumes exported. Up until 1990, these exports accounted for 1% of the total. From this year onwards, this percentage began to increase, placing them at about 4-5% of the total in 1993, reaching 13% of the total in 1996 and more than 8% in the last three seasons. This means that in the last two seasons more than 1200 MT have been sent to those countries, more than to all of the non-EU countries in the previous two seasons. In the 1996 season, ten times the 1990 volume was sent. These countries, together with some countries from Eastern Europe, to be specified later on, show that in pomegranate exports *the diversification of traditional markets* is another characteristic*.*

To sum up this section, it can be pointed out that pomegranate exports in the last twelve marketing seasons have been characterised by increases in the volumes of shipments to the main groups of countries, traditional markets, and the emergence of other countries with a clear rising and continuous trend, an increase in demand determined basically by the growth in supply of other Spanish fruit and vegetables.

Exports to EU countries

The European Union has been and still is the main destination of the Spanish pomegranate due to geographical proximity, the existence of a number of "euro-consumers" and to being in the main trade area of the world. However, this was not an obstacle to the fact that it was also the main destination before Spain joined the EEC. Table 5 illustrates the evolution of exports since the 1986 season to different countries, considering the three countries that joined in 1995. Figure 3 shows the evolution in percentage for the main destination countries within the European Union.

France and the United Kingdom are still the two main destination markets within the EU with a joint significance exceeding 50%. This joint significance has undergone a clear regression throughout the seasons, going from 80% in the 1985 season to 70% between 1987 and 1989 seasons; to 58% in the season of 1992 and to 53-54% in the last two seasons. The relative importance of the United Kingdom decreased from 45% in the 1985 season down to about 40% in 1990 and a new decrease commenced down to the current 25%. This evolution has not been the same when considering absolute quantities. Until 1992 the volumes exported oscillated around 3000 MT. with the exception of the 1990 season which beat the all-time record with a volume of more than 4000 MT. This value of 3000 MT was still sent in the 1997-98 season.

France experienced the same drop in relative significance, but this was much more gradual. Until the 1990 season, France still had percentages over 30% of the total, but from then onwards, percentages dropped to between 25 and 30%. The volumes exported oscillated between 2200 MT and 3500 MT reaching the maximum of the last twelve seasons in the 1997 season (always with available data). The export volumes did not suffer the impact of the loss in significance in the distribution of Spanish fruit and vegetables of the Perpignan market. This indicates that the Spanish operator has reached trade maturity.

The Netherlands has taken Italy's place as third destination for pomegranate exports. Its relative significance has gone from 3% in the 1989 season with 20% in the last two seasons. The amount sent to The Netherlands in the season of 1997 accounted for more than four times the quantity sent in the

[7] Countries situated around the Gulf such as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, etc.
[8] Includes countries such as Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, etc.

Table 5. Exports to EU countries (MT)

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1996-97	1997-98
Germany	291,010	187,948	220,848	154,476	139,246	92,621	80,062	86,112	447,258	830,566
Austria	4,165	37,963	14,195		23,620					
Belgium	66,510	65,170	240,933	141,177	184,558	461,914	336,219	299,607	567,808	603,995
Denmark	3,610	2,185	1,140	7,383					21,224	27,821
France	2,549,640	2,337,117	2,457,260	2,392,479	2,676,443	3,213,170	2,550,969	2,373,970	2,220,365	3,497,970
Finland	2,170	2,417		2,752	1,236	1,604			6,627	5,010
Greece										10,323
Italy	824,710	892,018	1,347,289	1,481,428	1,483,741	2,314,619	1,837,138	1,826,810	957,538	1,247,575
Ireland				3,990			1,420	5,960		
Netherlands	167,550	186,166	224,315	198,888	305,761	622,891	403,367	637,766	1,812,324	2,620,738
Portugal			55,325	190,431	186,769	441,160	282,086	1,050,411	297,093	538,617
UK	3,298,060	2,870,042	2,923,548	3,190,134	3,255,992	4,254,020	3,269,070	3,179,772	2,443,941	3,101,968
Sweden	19,190	13,862	85,656	20,186	18,795	16,916	19,958	16,572	5,240	
Total EU	7,226,615	6,594,888	7,570,509	7,783,324	8,276,161	11,418,915	8,780,289	9,476,980	8,779,418	12,484,583
% Variat.		-8.74	14.79	2.81	6.33	37.97	-23.11	7.93	-7.36	42.20

Source: own elaboration based on data of SOIVRE, Alicante (General Secretariat of Foreign Trade) (1998).

seasons of 1990 and 1993, and more than 15 times that which was sent in 1985. This increase in shipments is not justified by the consumption but based on marketing vigour.

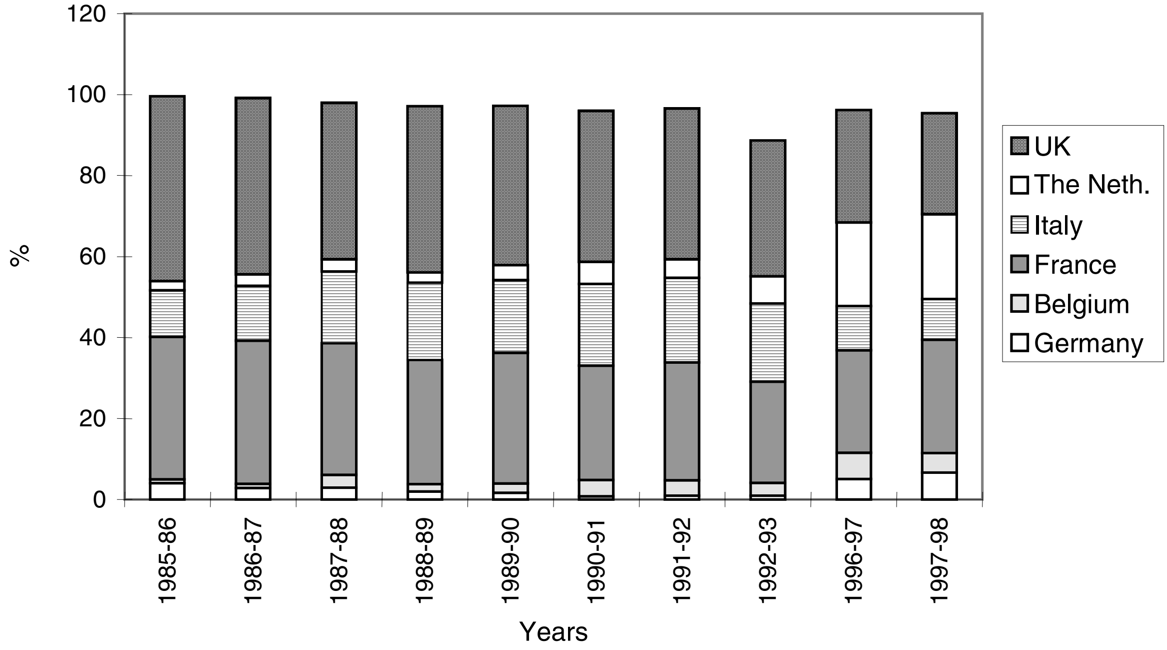

Fig. 3. Evolution of pomegranate exports to EU countries. Source: own elaboration based on data from SOIVRE, Alicante (General Secretariat of Foreign Trade) (1998).

Italy is the fourth EU destination for the Spanish pomegranate, although the data available for the last two seasons should be questioned. Its relative significance within the EU increased during the latter part of the eighties, reaching 20% of the total in the 1990 to 1992 seasons. In the last two seasons this significance is only 10%. The volumes exported reached their maximum of 2300 MT in the 1990 season and then settled during the 1997 season with around 1300 MT, a value similar to that exported in the season of 1987.

Germany has held fifth place in the last two seasons with a relative significance over 5%, constituting a volume in the last season over 800 MT. Its evolution since 1985 is characterised by a constant decrease until the 1992 season, followed by a continuous rising trend. The explanation for this is based perhaps on the increase in immigration and its commercial influence on the surrounding countries.

Portugal began to receive Spanish pomegranates upon joining the EU, increasing its quantities every year, and exceeding 1000 MT in 1992. Due to the lack of data, it is stated that in the 1996 season they only received 200 MT and in 1997, 540 MT. These values are far from the figures mentioned previously. In spite of this, its relative significance is situated at around 4%.

Belgium has experienced a rising trend over the last few seasons with a significance of about 5% in the last season when it reached the maximum volume of exports exceeding 600 MT.

The United Kingdom and France together accounted for an 80% significance of the global exportation to the EU in the season of 1986. However, in 1990, the same significance was reached with shipments to Italy in addition, accounting, between the three countries, for more than 85% of the total. In 1992, 80% of the global export to EU countries was reached including shipments to France, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom. In the 1997 season total shipments to these four countries reached only 73%.

Therefore, in spite of the enormous significance of the EU pomegranate exportation, there is a lesser relative significance of countries such as the United Kingdom and Italy in comparison to countries such as The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. This determines, as a characteristic, *a wider diversification of the export destination markets of the pomegranate within the European Union*, motivated more by trade demands than the actual consumption demands.

Exports to non-member countries of the EU

The pomegranate exports to countries outside the European Union are characterised by a stabilisation period between 500 and 600 MT from the 1988 season until 1992 which later increased to the value of 1000 MT from 1993 to 1995, exceeding the figure of 2500 in the following two years (Table 6). Observing the variations in comparison to the previous season of the volumes exported to non EU-member countries, two increases of more than 100% took place in 1993 and in 1996, the beginning of the two stages mentioned previously.

Since 1993, the main market outside the EU is Malaysia with 30% significance except in 1996 when it approached 40%. More than 1000 MT was sent in 1996, three times higher than that of the previous season, but only 200 MT higher than the 1997 volume. Malaysia has substituted Singapore as the main destination outside the EU. This country increased its relative significance from 20% in 1987 to 45% in 1992, to later decrease down to 17-18% in the last two seasons. In absolute volumes, this means that until 1990 the export amount was of about 100 MT, and about 200 MT until the 1995 season, reaching 250 MT in the last two seasons.

In the last season Poland and the United Arab Emirates represented almost 10% of the shipments of pomegranates outside the EU. The former is by circumstance one of the destination market for 1990, becoming consolidated following the 1994 season and reaching a maximum of 300 MT in 1996. The latter was always a traditional market, reaching its maximum in the 1989 season when it accounted for 60% of the shipments outside the EU, before its decline until the present season.

Bahrain is another of the traditional destinations with some export volumes at around 70 MT until the season of 1992, when they rose to 150 MT. This has meant significance between 10 and 25% until 1992 and between 5 and 15% from then onwards. Switzerland is another traditional market that has received pomegranates in all the seasons considered in this analysis. From 1987 it did not exceed 50 MT with a relative significance oscillating around 5% until the season of 1992, when it dropped to 3% and still further until 1995 when it declined to 2%.

In the last three seasons considered, the shipments to Croatia must be taken into account. Croatia appeared as a destination in the 1995 season, and in just three seasons has quintupled its volume, exceeding 150 MT with significance higher than 5% in the last one. On the other hand, the shipments to Canada, Slovakia, Kuwait and Russia were around 40 MT. Even though exports to Canada and Kuwait had been registered before 1992, this was not so for the other two countries contributing to the increase in significance of the Eastern Europe countries.

In 1997-98, shipments were sent to 24 countries outside the European Union, which exceeded 20 MT in twenty cases. This number of countries is noticeably higher than 12 in the 1994 season, eight countries in 1988 or 7 in the 1991 season. This determines another characteristic of the pomegranate export: *the wider diversification of the destination markets outside the EU*.

The consolidation of the Asian markets, their boom, and the Eastern European markets (Croatia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Russia, etc.), added to the rising trend of the last two seasons, determine a hopeful future for the production surpluses, difficult to place on the traditional markets. This future would permit the increase of volumes to be commercialised. This will make possible noteworthy profits for pomegranate export and hence production if they take into account market demands and commercial practices that allow adequate competition.

Monthly exports

In Table 7, the monthly pomegranate exports are indicated from 1986, both in absolute and relative values. The first fact to point out is that pomegranates have only been shipped in August since the 1994 season. This is partly due to the existence of an export commencement date until 1991, and

Table 6. Pomegranate exports to countries outside EU (MT)

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Switz.	76.005	64.971	10.775	45.636	31.294	5.873	17.128	29.13	37	38.024	22.6	21.4	38.2
Norway	0.91	2.76		0.84	3.76	11.441	36.71	20.17	17	3.84	29.1	20.7	54.4
Bahrain	34.09	33.8	83.82	77.5	66	79.394	80.44	77.72	125	150	92.2	175.2	141.1
Saudi A.		17.32		59.44	21.84	42.961			20				19.6
UAE	133.39	17.1	173.62	211.99	382.45	162.21	120.37		246	181	119.3	201.6	259.9
Malaysia		15.8					60.48	148.3	350	276	299.5	1006.5	816.3
Singapore	70.465		64	131.87	110.99	136.58	212.5	227.885	259	227	282.5	433.07	471.5
Indones.									39	20	17.9	57.76	20
Thailand										12		19.7	35.4
Poland						44.12			23	89	163.5	361.8	260.3
Canada							4.13						41.2
Kuwait										18			40.3
Croatia											31.1	100.3	173.9
Slovakia													46.3
Russia													45.2
Others	1.72			0.364	8.58				8.5	2	22.5	186.95	163.1
Total	316.58	151.751	332.215	527.64	624.914	482.579	531.758	503.205	1124.5	1016.864	1080.2	2584.98	2626.7
% Variat.		-52.07	118.92	58.82	18.44	-22.78	10.19	-5.37	123.47	-9.57	6.23	139.31	1.61

Source: own elaboration based on data from SOIVRE, Alicante (General Secretariat of Foreign Trade) (1998).

Table 7. Monthly pomegranate exports

	Aug.		Sep.		Oct.		Nov.		Dec.		Jan.		Feb.		Total
	MTS	%	MTS	%	MTS	%	MTS	%	MTS	%	MTS	%	MTS	%	MTS
1986-87		0.00	1134.32	16.06	4623.12	65.44	1094.28	15.49	211.92	3.00	0.86	0.01		0.00	7064.49
1987-88		0.00	1760.61	22.26	4394.05	55.56	1514.20	19.15	238.06	3.01	1.30	0.02		0.00	7908.22
1988-89		0.00	1428.83	17.19	4813.80	57.93	1563.73	18.82	429.35	5.17	74.34	0.89	0.33	0.00	8310.38
1989-90		0.00	90.91	1.02	7016.01	79.03	1608.52	18.12	162.01	1.82		0.00		0.00	8877.46
1990-91		0.00	1714.08	14.36	6876.20	57.60	2521.93	21.13	764.90	6.41	28.67	0.24	31.96	0.27	11937.74
1991-92		0.00	314.00	3.38	7075.96	76.07	1650.43	17.74	259.57	2.79	2.11	0.02		0.00	9302.07
1992-93		0.00	1709.40	17.13	6439.80	64.53	1509.79	15.13	313.52	3.14	5.36	0.05	1.78	0.02	9979.64
1993-94[†]	20.86	0.16	3177.80	24.46	5426.63	41.77	2930.19	22.55	1384.91	10.66	50.10	0.39		0.00	12991.70
1994-95[†]	52.10	0.42	3640.51	29.50	5248.25	42.53	2746.68	22.26	637.92	5.17	14.63	0.12		0.00	12340.09
1995-96[†]	90.74	0.92	3105.78	31.51	4130.29	41.90	2159.42	21.91	261.59	2.65	109.11	1.11		0.00	9856.94
1996-97[††]	89.25	0.79	2883.76	25.38	4627.35	40.72	2821.06	24.82	839.44	7.39	91.66	0.81	11.89	0.10	11364.41
1997-98[††]	270.03	1.79	4056.61	26.84	5648.65	37.38	3512.60	23.24	1432.48	9.48	184.89	1.22	6.02	0.04	15111.28

[†]Estimated data of EU countries due to lack of breakdown of data in the tariff statistics.
[††]Data obtained by SOIVRE from statements from operators applying RTO. EEC 2251/92 to the EU.
Source: own elaboration based on data from SOIVRE (General Secretariat of Foreign Trade) (1998).

plantations of varieties that are named, at least in Spain, as 'Israeli' varieties beginning to produce yield. These varieties are very different from the traditional 'Mollar' variety in their organoleptic characteristics and in the seed production which is more similar to the 'Piñonenca' or 'Valenciana', whose early ripening for taste is an obvious commercial advantage.

The other element that stands out when observing the table is the appearance of exports in January and February. Although these shipments were sporadic in the eighties, their significance seems to have become consolidated in the last three seasons, exceeding 100 MT in the month of January.

Finally, a third differentiating element is a greater volume of exports during September since the 1993 season. This increase places it as the second month.

These previous three elements allow the pomegranate exports since 1993 to be characterised as a *greater diversification of shipments over time* in comparison to the traditional feature of the previous seasons of *concentration of shipments in October and November*. Pomegranate exports have extended their traditional three-month marketing period (October[9], November and December) to a wider period starting in the second fortnight of August and concluding in the second fortnight of January. This lengthening is determined by what has been indicated previously regarding varieties and by a greater awareness and use of exporters of the cold storage facilities. Additionally, old practices have been forgotten and exporters have preferred self-regulation at source rather than regulation at the destination market.

October continues to be the month with the greatest volume of shipments abroad. Its relative significance has gone from 79% in the 1989 season to 37% in the 1997 season. This represented between 50 and 80% of total exports until the 1992 season. This significance became stable from that season onwards at around 40%.

September has replaced November as the second month of pomegranate exports. If, until the season of 1992, September had represented on occasions 20% of the total exports, it is from then onwards that percentages over and around 30% were regularly reached. This significance was motivated by the export commencement date and by the wish of any or all exporters to place their product on the market right from the first day. The present significance of September obeys the commercial maturity of the export sector and the pomegranate demand. It does not have a temporary component as in the period up to the 1991 season.

November has kept, in the last twelve seasons, a similar significance at around 20%. In the November shipments, there has been no influence of the existence or otherwise of the export commencement date. In spite of this, a slight increase of volumes sent out has been observed in recent seasons, which perhaps reflects shipments sent to countries of South East Asia and to a lesser extent to The Netherlands.

December, as the fourth month of significance in shipments also shows a slight increase in the last seasons, determining certain volumes at around 1000 MT and 5% significance but presenting oscillations of one season to another as has been habitual in the seasons from 1986 to 1992.

August, as the month when exports begin, presents very little significance, less than 1%, except in the last season when it approached 2% with almost 300 MT. Likewise, January presents a significance at around 1% in the last three seasons, which is greater than in the previous seasons, except 1988.

From September to November, between 80-90% of the total export is sent abroad, independently of the season.

Tables 8 and 9 show the monthly exports to several countries during the seasons of 1996 and 1997, respectively. Considering the data of the monthly exports in other seasons, it can be pointed out that the shipments to France during October have lost significance. In the case of Italy, September has substituted October as the month with the greatest volume of shipments. The United Kingdom

[9] According to the export commencement date fixed until 1991, exports have taken place during the second fortnight of September. Exports determined by fruit ripeness, but cannot be considered to be a traditional element of pomegranate exportation.

Table 8. Pomegranate exports per country, season 1996-97

Country	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Total kg	%
Germany	4,856	88,907	164,529	151,697	28,813	6,192	2,264	447,258	3.94
Belgium	0	144,246	274,588	127,091	21,883			567,808	5.00
Denmark	0	14,336	5,320	0	0	1,568		21,224	0.19
Finland	0	1,597	4,721	309	0			6,627	0.06
France	21,935	398,035	748,073	727,756	300,077	23,789	700	2,220,365	19.54
Italy	8,001	361,711	316,366	231,153	40,307			957,538	8.43
The Netherlands	4,846	443,030	531,976	552,645	233,099	43,120	3,608	1,812,324	15.95
Portugal	0	93,366	129,354	60,821	13,552			297,093	2.61
UK	49,614	850,626	1,239,744	247,715	55,269	973		2,443,941	21.51
Sweden	0	4,500	740	0	0			5,240	0.05
Total EU	89,252	2,400,354	3,415,411	2,099,187	693,000	75,642	6,572	8,779,418	77
% area EU	1.02	27.34	38.90	23.91	7.89	0.86	0.07	100.00	
Bahrain	0	40,320	94,520	40,320	0			175,160	1.54
Bielorr.	0	0	1,980	0	0			1,980	0.02
Croatia	0	7,138	18,931	39,435	31,864	1,963	700	100,031	0.88
UAE	0	80,640	120,960	0	0			201,600	1.77
Slovakia	0	3,472	7,752	4,740	6,337	1,680	1,664	25,645	0.23
Slovenia	0	3,009	4,272	3,297	3,917	633	700	15,828	0.14
Estonia	0	0	15,848	13,522	6,762	10,926	2,256	49,314	0.43
Indonesia	0	40,000	17,760	0	0			57,760	0.51
Latvia	0	840	0	3,586	912			5,338	0.05
Lithuania	0	0	11,727	2,433	3,730			17,890	0.16
Malaysia	0	123,386	476,350	349,418	57,330			1,006,484	8.86
Norway	0	9,756	5,952	4,155	880			20,743	0.18
Poland	0	55,063	182,438	93,012	30,527	813		361,853	3.18
Cheq. Rep.	0	1,680	5,993	22,780	3,442			33,895	0.30
Russia	0	0	6,720	22,887	0			29,607	0.26
Singapore	0	117,430	217,960	97,680	0			433,070	3.81
Switzerl.	0	673	10,775	9,224	737			21,409	0.19
Thailand	0	0	12,000	7,700	0			19,700	0.17
Ukrania	0	0	0	7,680	0			7,680	0.07
Tot. countries	0	483,407	1,211,938	721,869	146,438	16,015	5,320	2,584,987	22.75
Total (kg)	89,252	2,883,761	4,627,349	2,821,056	839,438	91,657	11,892	11,364,405	100.00
% Total area	0.79	25.38	40.72	24.82	7.39	0.81	0.10	100.00	

Source: own elaboration based on SOIVRE data, Alicante (Secretaria General de Comercio Exterior) (1998).

Table 9. Pomegranate exports per countries 1997-1998

Country	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Total kg	%
Germany	15,992	134,907	352,130	202,948	93,822	28,911	1,856	830,566	5.50
Belgium	9,880	151,978	160,148	239,137	42,852			603,995	4.00
Denmark	0	18,141	6,160	1,728	1,792			27,821	0.18
Finland	0	1,435	2,130	1,445	0			5,010	0.03
France	75,341	716,725	1,086,212	935,120	602,281	82,291	0	3,497,970	23.15
Greece	0	0	10,323	0	0			10,323	0.07
Italy	24,487	445,731	376,198	283,791	117,368			1,247,575	8.26
The Northerlands	26,795	708,014	500,306	901,281	452,956	27,610	3,776	2,620,738	17.34
Portugal	2,538	165,004	215,322	109,831	38,244	7,678	0	538,617	3.56
UK	113,206	908,784	1,413,202	606,251	60,525			3,101,968	20.53
Total EU	268,239	3,250,719	4,122,131	3,281,532	1,409,840	146,490	5,632	12,484,583	82.62
% area EU	2.15	26.04	33.02	26.28	11.29	1.17	0.05	100.00	
S. Arabia	0	19,600	0	0	0			19,600	0.13
Bahrain	0	40,320	100,800	0	0			141,120	0.93
Bielorr.	0	0	2,880	0	0			2,880	0.02
Bosn-Herz.	0	1,487	693	1,384	0	687	0	4,251	0.03
Brazil	0	7,590	1,242	5,489	1,568			15,889	0.11
Canada	0	41,216	0	0	0			41,216	0.27
Croatia	0	23,921	44,977	69,208	3,425	32,330	0	173,861	1.15
UAE	0	80,640	161,280	18,000	0			259,920	1.72
Slovakia	0	23,805	13,240	7,563	0	1,715	0	46,323	0.31
Slovenia	0	4,263	7,378	5,757	3,101			20,499	0.14
Estonia	1,187	0	3,758	2,664	6,643	2,530	384	17,166	0.11
Indonesia	0	20,000	0	0	0			20,000	0.13
Kenya	0	0	28,709	0	0			28,709	0.19
Kuwait	0	20,160	20,160	0	0			40,320	0.27
Latvia	602	1,945	14,193	6,273	0			23,013	0.15
Lithuania	0	4,536	5,888	10,685	0			21,109	0.14
Malaysia	0	249,854	546,444	20,000	0			816,298	5.40
Norway	0	5,236	37,453	11,713	0			54,402	0.36
Poland	0	75,231	159,523	17,725	7,904			260,383	1.72
Cheq. Rep.	0	2,510	18,227	8,225	0	472	0	29,434	0.19
Russia	0	4,080	40,496	0	0	669	0	45,245	0.30
Singapore	0	171,840	281,900	17,760	0			471,500	3.12
Switzerl.	0	7,661	9,574	20,926	0			38,161	0.25
Thailand	0	0	27,700	7,700	0			35,400	0.23
Tot. countries	1,789	805,895	1,526,515	231,072	22,641	38,403	384	2,626,699	17.38
Total (kg)	270,028	4,056,614	5,648,646	3,512,604	1,432,481	184,893	6,016	15,111,282	100.00
% Total area	1.79	26.84	37.38	23.24	9.48	1.22	0.04	100.00	

Source: own elaboration based on SOIVRE data, Alicante (Secretaria General de Comercio Exterior) (1998).

continues to present a large concentration of October shipments which means almost 50% of the season total, but far from the 70% significance of the seasons prior to 1992, due, in particular, to a greater concentration of September shipments. The exports to The Netherlands present a monthly maximum in November, being the only country in the EU with this characteristic. Finally, the significance of November is situated between 10 and 20% of the total shipments to France and to The Netherlands. On one hand, this means that in the case of the United Kingdom and Italy *the same temporal distribution of the exports as those made in the last twelve years* is maintained. On the other hand, the monthly distribution of the exports to France and to The Netherlands *a longer marketing period* can be observed, perhaps as a consequence of the non-existence of temporary situations in the light of what happened before 1993.

The sales period for non-EU countries is slightly shorter, given that during the month of August, hardly any shipments were sent, due perhaps to their price and condition, and that the months of December and January are less significative than for the EU countries. Furthermore, the significance of the September shipments may oscillate between 20 and 30% of the total even though a good part of these volumes exported are destined to countries of South East Asia and in particular to Malaysia and Singapore which represent about 60% of the total exported to SEA during that month. In almost all countries outside the EU, the greatest volume of shipments is sent in October with a significance of about 60% of the total. December presented, in 1996-1997, a large volume exported to countries outside the EU especially due to the pomegranates exported to Malaysia, Singapore and Poland, a situation that did not arise in 1997-98.

Finally, it can be pointed out that the monthly distribution of the shipments is less erratic from 1993 onwards. This is much smoother in the case of the EU countries than when considering the shipments to outside the EU. This is caused by the large geographical distance from the destination market. A greater uniformity of the monthly distribution takes place preferably in the shipments to France and to The Netherlands within the EU.

Quotations in foreign markets

Based on data supplied by the different Spanish trade offices in France, Italy, Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom, information is available. This is aggregated weekly in sizes and qualities. Quotations in these markets are compared.

In the French market, comparing different seasons, quotations in the last few seasons are lower during the first fortnight of October and then rise slightly towards the second fortnight of November reaching similar or even higher values. As usual, the different quotations between sizes are maintained in the French market. Size 24 fetches a quotation 1 FF higher than size 30 and similarly for size 40. The presentation in a single-layer tray reaches quotations 0.5 or 1 FF/kg higher for the same size, than in the traditional wooden box. The changing trend in the quotations of the French market is due on one hand to bringing the shipment dates forward, which means that saturation occurs in the second fortnight of September in comparison to the normal market saturation that occurred around the second ten days of October. On the other hand, this is also due to the more uniform distribution of dispatches.

In all seasons when information is available, the first shipments to the United Kingdom present high quotations that fall later on, at the very latest, a month after the first pomegranate is sold in the market. This drop will continue until the end of October and will rise slightly in November. This evolution in the last few seasons is similar to the previous one with the slight difference in timing as shipments are sent earlier.

In Italy, quotations are high in December and fall in early October.

If quotations in different seasons are compared, there is *a certain degree of stability in the prices of the destination markets* and *a maintenance of the same evolution, although softer in the seasons after 1992*. Stability of prices in the destination markets is determined by narrower sales margins, that requires a higher specialisation of exporters, and by the oversight of exporting large quantities in short periods by exporters. This was a characteristic element of some companies before 1991.

Structure of the export sector

Provincial structure

The provincial distribution of pomegranate exporting companies from the seasons of 1986-87 to 1997-98 (Table 10) is analysed. The number of companies has greatly varied, oscillating between 36 firms in 1986 and 81 firms in the season of 1997.

In spite of this great variation in the companies' number, the province of Alicante has the greatest number of exporting companies, whatever the season considered, and represents as a whole, between 80 and 85% of the total amount exported in each season. The number in this province presents less variation than the total number, oscillating between 23 and 34. This indicates a greater stability of the export sector, as a consequence of greater awareness and proximity of the product. As Alicante is the main producing province in Spain, it is also the most significant from the point of view of exports, concentrating more than 80% (Fig. 4). This determines *the spatial concentration of pomegranate exports*, which occurred in the seasons of the eighties and which still occurs in the nineties, in spite of the diversification in destinations and the temporary diversification of shipments.

The second most significant province, in almost all seasons analysed, is the province of Murcia, where between 7 and 23 export companies are placed, representing between 7 and 12% of the total number of shipments in each season.

The companies of the Valencia province have commercialised since 1987 between 5 and 10% of the total amount of pomegranates exported, even though these volumes were reached as a maximum by four firms since the 1992 season and by 18 firms in the 1997 season. In both provinces of Valencia and Murcia, an increase in the number of companies has been observed in the last seasons analysed. This increase does not correspond to volumes exported and must be interpreted bearing in mind that pomegranates are marketed to make up loads in citrus cargoes, with which they coincide in the initial marketing period.

More than 80% of the total number of export companies and more than 95% of the volume exported are concentrated in the three provinces mentioned. Other exporting companies are distributed throughout provinces such as Almería, Barcelona, Madrid, Lleida, etc. but they have a little significance and introduce a wider appearance of this product in markets. This appearance hardly increases the competition but may distort external markets.

Characterisation of the export sector

In the season of 1997, 55 companies sent abroad less than 50 MT of pomegranates throughout the whole season (Table 11). Almost 70% of the exporting companies represented less than 4% of the total volume exported in that season. This relative significance of the companies' number and volume exported (without reaching extreme values such as in the 1997 season), has been repeated since the 1986 season. *A high number of companies of little significance in the global exportation as export pomegranate shipments are small.*

Between 50 and 150 MT, eight companies exported in the 1997 season with a significance of 4%. This number is slightly less than that of previous seasons and their significance is also less, although in none of the seasons dealt with in this analysis is it more than 15%.

Eighteen companies sent almost 92% of the total in the 1997 season. This number is slightly higher than in the 1996 season, when fourteen companies exceeded 150 MT. In general, the number of exporting companies which sent more than 150 MT oscillates between 16 and 22, representing globally between 80 and 95% of the total. This represents another feature of the pomegranate exportation such as *the concentration of exports in a small number of export companies.*

More than 500 MT were sent during the 1997 season by nine export companies, which together accounted for 70% of the total. This percentage and number of firms is slightly lower than that of the 1996 season but much higher than the 1987 (40%), 1988 (45%), 1989 (32%), 1990 (49%), 1991 (37%) and 1992 (39%) seasons. In the last two seasons, a greater number of companies have

Table 10. Structure of export sector by provinces[†]

	1986-87		1987-88		1988-89		1989-90		1990-91		1991-92		1992-93		1996-97		1997-98	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Alicante	25	84.87	29	86.1	25	83.77	30	79.56	34	83.44	30	81.87	32	81.25	23	79.39	26	84.22
Almería	1	0.43			1	0.02	1	0.03	2	0.11							2	0.09
Barcelona	1	0.05							1	0.36			1	0	1	0.01	6	0.83
Cádiz					2													
Castellón			1	0.51														
Jaén					1													
Lleida			1	0.25	2	0.38	1	0.46	3	0.5	3	0.47	1	0	2	1.64	2	0.37
Madrid					1	7.56					2	0.06	3	0.37			1	0.13
Murcia	7	12.3	9	6.92	11	0.13	7	10.35	12	10.21	10	9.89	19	12.03	6	12.2	23	7.63
Sevilla			1	0.04														
Valencia	2	2.41	4	6.17	2	8.13	3	9.59	4	5.38	3	7.57	4	5.15	8	5.75	18	6.53
Others											4	0.14	5	1.16	3	1.02	3	0.19
Total	36	100	45	100	45	100	42	100	56	100	52	100	65	100	43	100	81	100

[†]N = number of firms; % = % of volume exported
Source: own elaboration based on data from SOIVRE, Alicante (General Secretariat of Foreign Trade) (1998).

exported more than 500 MT with a greater global significance all together. Over the last seasons, there has been an increase in the volumes exported by significant companies of the sector, increasing their share in exportation. Therefore, there is an increase in volumes marketed by a small number of companies, which shows that, in the last few seasons, there is *a certain degree of specialisation in pomegranate export companies.*

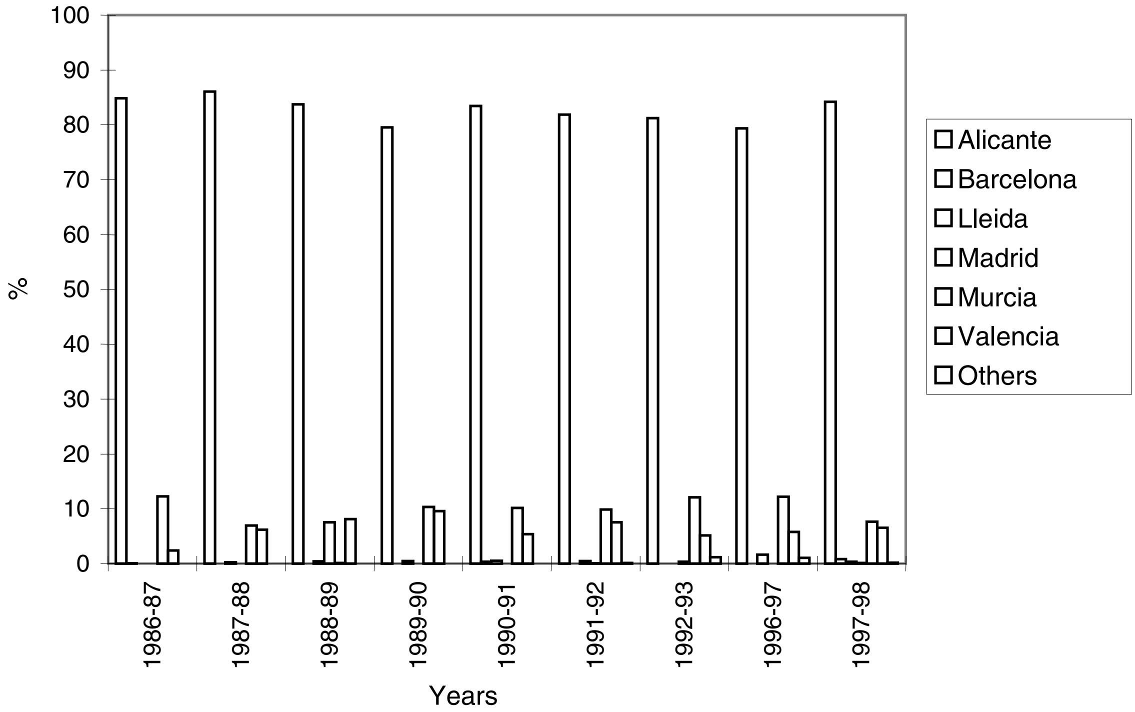

Fig. 4. Distribution of pomegranate export sector by provinces. Source: own elaboration based on data from SOIVRE, Alicante (General Secretariat of Foreign Trade) (1998).

Among the first twelve export companies, less than 20% of the export sector has been sending, season after season, 70 and 85% of global exports. This shows a high degree of concentration in the sector. These companies are nearly always the same ones.

Therefore, the export sector is characterised by *a high degree of concentration of traditional export companies that increase their specialisation and volume of pomegranates marketed.* This contrasts with the increase in the number of export companies, the majority of which are of little significance.

Producers' associations

The number of producers' associations that have been involved in pomegranate exports has varied between 7 and 12, except in the 1996 season when it was 4 (Fig. 5). Its significance has varied around 20% of total exports. Almost 90% of these associations are in the province of Alicante. The average exports have varied from 171 MT in the 1991 season to 547 in 1996, even though in the last season, the average value rose to 340 MT. In general, the average volume supplied by the producers' associations is higher than the average value of the whole of the export sector. An increase is also observed of the volumes placed on the market by the main exporting producers' associations. This increase is higher than the increase occurring in export companies. This increase does not mean a lower number of producers' associations involved in the pomegranate sector.

Within the segment of producers' associations, the characteristic *increase in volumes exported by the main producers' associations of the Alicante province* can be observed, although *the number of producers' associations involved season after season remains more or less constant.*

Table 11. Characterization of export sector[†]

Metres	1987-88		1988-89		1989-90		1990-91		1991-92		1992-93		1996-97		1997-98	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<50	15	3.01	20	4.23	14	5.74	27	3.02	27	2.9	37	4.76	20	2.19	55	3.89
50-100	8	7.25	5	4.67	5	4.51	3	1.85	3	2.88	8	5.33	6	3.52	6	2.35
100-150	6	9.05	4	6.02	6	7.03	4	3.85			4	4.65	3	3.5	2	1.66
150-300	8	21.79	8	21.11	7	21.96	7	14.54	8	17.71	6	13.38	3	5.83	2	3.03
300-500	4	18.09	4	19.12	6	29.12	8	27.16	10	38.96	8	32.25	2	7.04	7	17.02
500-800	1	7.45	1	6.37	2	14.45	4	18.39	2	13.24	1	5.23	4	23.43	3	14.64
800-1000	3	33.36	1	11.41	2	17.19					1	9.83	1	7.85	1	5.48
1000-1500			2	27.06			3	31.18	2	24.31	2	24.57	3	32.47	3	24.94
1500-2000													1	14.09	1	13.21
>2000															1	13.78
Total	45	100	45	100	42	100	56	100	52	100	67	100	43	100	81	100

[†]N = number of firms; % = % of volume exported.
Source: own elaboration based on data from SOIVRE, Alicante (General Secretariat of Foreign Trade) (1998).

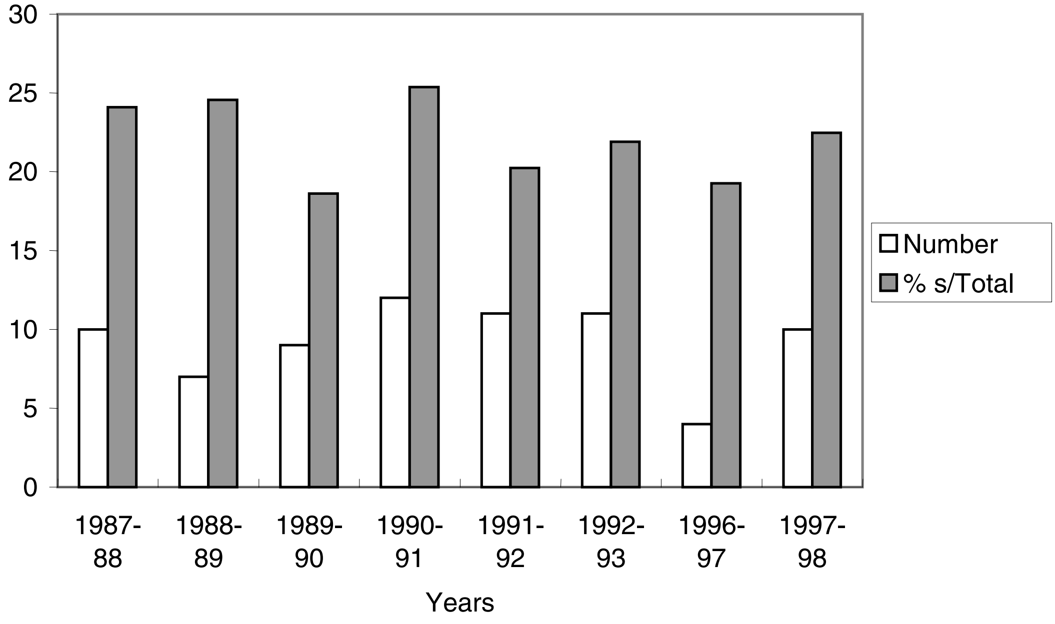

Fig. 5. Significance of producers' associations. Source: own elaboration based on data from SOIVRE, Alicante (General Secretariat of Foreign Trade) (1998).

Conclusions

This analysis made of the statistical information available from the 1986 season until the season that ended in February 1998, could be summarised in the following aspects:

(i) The pomegranate growing area that increased at the end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties has remained stable in recent years, although the production surface area has gradually increased.

(ii) The increase of productive surface and its existing differential with the total surface destined to this crop envisages increases in production in forthcoming years, weather permitting.

(iii) In spite of the increase in growing area in the Murcia province at the end of the eighties, it still makes up 10% at most of the total surface in Spain, maintaining a ratio of 1:10 with the growing area of Alicante.

(iv) In the 1990s the Alicante province has recovered the percentage of the whole Spanish production that it held in the early eighties. Given that the surface dedicated to this crop in the provinces of Alicante and Murcia accounts for more than 92% of the Spanish total throughout the period considered, the pomegranate crop has the feature of spatial concentration in surface area.

(v) Although the surface in the province of Murcia accounts for between 10 and 12% of the surface in the Alicante province, on considering the production data provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the production of the Murcia province represents only between 5.5 and 7% of the production obtained in Alicante. If there is a spatial concentration of this crop in surface area, the spatial concentration of production is even more evident, as the production of Alicante lies between 85 and 90% of the national total since 1990.

(vi) In spite of the increases in production that have been registered during the nineties, the percentage of this production dedicated to exports has been oscillating between 50 and 60% in the period considered. This defines the export characteristic of this crop and has remained constant in spite of the fact the official production of 1996 is double that of 1989.

(vii) Leaving aside the insufficient statistical information available as a consequence of the simplification of the tariff lines in the EU, the data available, which does not cover 100% of Spanish exports, shows a clear rising trend of the quantities of pomegranates sent from Spain.

(viii) The increase of Spanish exports, despite taking advantage of the global increase of the Spanish fruit and vegetable exports, has not been as significant as that of all of the citrus fruits sent abroad. This lesser increase could perhaps be attributed to the previous lack of statistical information, but does show that there is potential for growth.

(ix) The EU continues to be, as a whole, the first destination of Spanish pomegranate exports, even though their significance throughout the period considered has decreased from more than 90% to about 80%. Although it is still the main traditional market for the Spanish pomegranate, from 1995, a certain diversification in markets can be observed.

(x) This diversification is mainly motivated by the increases in volumes exported to countries of South East Asia and to the appearance of exports to Eastern Europe.

(xi) Although the Eastern Europe countries for Spanish pomegranate exports have been increasing steadily in volume over the last three seasons, this should be confirmed in the forthcoming seasons. This confirmation will be determined by the increase in the standard of living in these countries and by the maintenance or improvement in the quality of the exported product, as well as the actual evolution in these markets of the whole Spanish fruit and vegetable supply.

(xii) In spite of the fact that the EU is the main destination, the significance of the different countries has evolved throughout the period considered. Both France and the United Kingdom have lost their almost hegemonic position to The Netherlands and to a lesser extent to Germany and Belgium. This must be interpreted as a shift in purchasing power from the pomegranate consumers to the commercial distribution in Europe. The shift has occurred in other products and sectors but nevertheless this should condition future actions of the export sector.

(xiii) If in the 1986 season, the shipments to the United Kingdom and France accounted for 80% of the global export in the EU, this percentage in the last 1997 season was reached between the shipments sent to France, United Kingdom, The Netherlands and Italy, which means a greater diversification of the destination markets within the EU itself.

(xiv) The export of pomegranates to countries outside the EU has been characterised by an important increase over the last few years. This increase was staggered in 1993 and 1996. These increases have meant that the present volume exported outside the EU is four times the volume that was exported only five years ago.

(xv) In the 1997 season, shipments were sent to 24 countries outside the EU - double the number of countries in the 1994 season and triple the number of countries of 1988. This determines a greater diversification of the destination markets outside the EU.

(xvi) The diversification, due fundamentally to the appearance as destination market of countries such as Poland, Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Russia.

(xvii) Increase in volumes exported outside the EU that should be attributed, besides the factor mentioned previously, to the boom and consolidation of markets such as Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

(xviii) The commencement of production of pomegranate plantations which correspond to non-traditional varieties, together with the disappearance of export commencement dates have been the reasons why exports of pomegranates began in August. This started to gain significance in the 1997 season.

(xix) This, together with the fact that the export sector has opted for self-regulation of their shipments through cold-storage, has meant that the marketing period for the pomegranate has extended from the customary 90 days in 1991 to almost 140 days in recent seasons.

(xx) This extension of the marketing period has meant a greater diversification in time since the season of 1993, in comparison with the characteristic concentration of shipments in the months of October and November.

(xxi) Monthly distribution of shipments is nowadays much less erratic than in the eighties. There is a more uniform distribution in the EU countries than in the countries outside the EU. In this case the monthly distribution of shipments continues to be concentrated in two or three months of the season which used to occur for all destinations without exemptions.

(xxii) Greater uniformity in time of the dispatches to the countries of the EU which does not happen in all markets, since the United Kingdom and Italy remain the same or almost the same in the last twelve seasons analysed.

(xxiii) Both prices paid to farmers and the prices obtained at destination in the traditional European markets, have experienced very few variations during the period considered. In any event, these variations have had a downward trend and the differences between sizes, qualities and presentations have been maintained.

(xxiv) This stability of prices means less sales margins and that the exporter is required to specialise when they are no longer used to exporting significant quantities in a short period of time.

(xxv) As with the growing and production area, pomegranate exports can be characterised by their spatial concentration, as 85% of the total exports are sent from the province of Alicante.

(xxvi) In spite of this spatial concentration, the number of export firms has increased remarkably throughout the period considered. This increase can be attributed to the consideration of the pomegranate as a supplement to other fruit and vegetable products, especially citrus products.

(xxvii) In spite of the increase of export companies, most have little significance in global exports, as shipments are small. This has been the case for the last twelve seasons.

(xxviii) Between 16 and 22 export companies which, in different seasons have sent more than 150 MT of pomegranates abroad, send between 80 and 95% of the exports in each season. This means that exports are concentrated among a small number of exporting companies.

(xxix) The evolution of exporting companies that send more than 500 MT abroad and their significance in global exportation, have led to a certain specialisation in the last few seasons.

(xxx) The pomegranate export sector can be characterised by a high degree of concentration in traditional companies that increase their specialisation and the volumes marketed season after season.

(xxxi) The evolution of the degree of concentration does not occur among the producers' associations involved in pomegranate exports in spite of the increase in volumes exported and their geographical proximity, most being located in the province of Alicante.

Final considerations

In accordance with the conclusions reached as a consequence of the corresponding statistical data for the export of pomegranates from the 1986-87 season to the present, the marketing of this product abroad is characterised by an involution which is shown in the maintenance of: (i) both source and destination prices; (ii) the traditional markets; (iii) the distribution in time of shipments sent to traditional markets; (iv) the proportion of production occupied by exports; (v) the degrees of spatial concentration in production and exporting; and (vi) the significance of the producers' associations in global exports.

In the light of this involution, marketing of this product abroad is characterised by an evolution shown from the 1993 season onwards, but especially after the 1995 season. This evolution is shown through: (i) a greater diversification of destination markets beyond the EU; (ii) a greater diversification of destination markets outside the EU; (iii) a greater diversification in time of shipments; (iv) a higher degree of concentration of exports in traditional exporting companies; (v) a higher degree of geographical concentration of exporting companies; and (vi) an increase of volumes marketed by the main-exporting firms.

This involution and evolution should be contrasted with: (i) the increasing supply of fruit and vegetable products in the destination markets; (ii) the pomegranate production from different countries that can cover a marketing period from July to March; (iii) an increasing concentration of commercial food distribution in Europe; (iv) a growing significance of superstores in Europe; (v) the decrease in the proportion of the total food expenditure in the household budget in Europe; (vi) the change in consumer behaviour; and (vii) the changes in shopping habit.

Appropriate responses should arise from this contrast to define the future of pomegranate marketing. A future that should come about from the quality of the product and the maturity of the exporter sector. This future in trade should be built up of: (i) elements which permit the differentiation of the supply of pomegranates from the supply of other products; (ii) elements which allow a continuous service to the demand, both as regards quality and volume; and (iii) marketing measures to position and enhance the consumption of this product.

The commercial future of the pomegranate requires active and dynamic co-operation both internally and between the other links of the marketing chain, of the producer sector, of the export sector and even the actual trade distribution. This co-operation should lead to an approach of their interests in order to defend, consolidate, promote and enhance both the consumption of pomegranates in the Spanish market and in the destination markets, being or not consumers of this product. This co-operation should not only bring about the well discussed and debated designation of origin and protected geographical indication for the pomegranate of Alicante, but it should also permit common action for its positioning on the destination markets and its reaching the final consumer. In the near future, this co-operation should lead to a type of Interprofessional Export Association or export consortium so that, whilst conserving their individual identity, they may retain their trade margins and act in markets which are difficult to enter as individuals.

The co-operation described is necessary in a product whose production and exporting activity is increasingly more geographically concentrated and which, in spite of its inherent limitations, has permitted and should permit its evolution in order to obtain benefits at production and at trade level, whilst at the same time guaranteeing competitivity and furthermore striving towards quality, the real differentiating factor and driving force of the evolution experienced in pomegranate marketing.

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