Advances in Environmental Biology, 8(9) Special 2014, Pages: 363-372

AENSI Journals

Advances in Environmental Biology

ISSN-1995-0756 EISSN-1998-1066

Journal home page: http://www.aensiweb.com/aeb.html

Resume of Iran Date Market And Its Potential To Enter The Eu Market

Saeid Ghane

Department of Industrial Engineering, Masjed-Soleiman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Masjed-Soleiman, Iran

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 15 March 2014
Received in revised form 9 April 2014
Accepted 2 May 2014
Available online 5 June 2014

Key words:
Date Market, Import and Export of date, European Date Market.

ABSTRACT

Though the EU import of dates is only 10 percent of world imports but they account are further than 30 percent in value. This represents the fact that EU import prices for dates are relatively much higher than the world average. Therefore Europe and specific the European Union (EU) is a significant market for date exporters. From the below paper it can be concluded that any country hoping to enter the EU date market would need to turn to "non-traditional methods". However Iran Due to many ups and downs in the export of this product, it does not have a stable and permanent market in the overseas but there is opportunity for increased exports of Iran's dates with provided high standards of quality and packaging. Especially The successful development of; mejool dates is rely on suit packing and the willingness of market chains to carry this product.

To Cite This Article: Saeid Ghane, Resume of Iran Date Market And Its Potential To Enter The Eu Market. ***Adv. Environ. Biol., 8(9)**, 363-372, 2014*

INTRODUCTION

The accurate beginning of the date palm is considered to be lost in ancient times. Though, it is definite that the date palm was cultivated as early as 4000 B.C. date palm is maybe the most ancient cultivated tree in the world. It could be all right assumed that the explanation for citing dates and date palms in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions. The increasing of the date cultivation occurred in the past centuries following two distinct directions: One starting from Mesopotamia to Iran, to reach the Valley of the Indus and Pakistan and another starting from Egypt towards Libya, the Maghreb and Sahel countries. Also date palm is found in both the Old World (Near East and North Africa) and the New World (American continent). In order to have a general viewpoint on the geographical distribution of date palm, In Asia, 32° north, in the Indus Valley, is the northern limit of date palm cultivation. It follows the southern edge of the Perso-Afghan Mountain mass, till it reaches the 35° north in Iraq and turns south west to the Mediterranean Sea at the Gulf of Gaza. Date palm then follows the Mediterranean coast as far as Tunisia and skirts the southern edge of Morocco to the Atlantic Ocean.

The world total number of date palms is about 100 million, distributed in 30 countries, and producing between 2.5 and 4 million tons of fruit per year. Asia is in the first situation with 60 million date palms (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Yemen, etc.); while Africa is in the second situation with 32.5 million date palms (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Somalia, Sudan, Chad, Tunisia, etc.).Iraq is leading with 22 million palms, followed by Iran 21 million and Saudi Arabia with 12 million, Algeria 9 million, Egypt and Libya 7 million each, Pakistan and Morocco 4 million each. The remaining date growing countries have less than 1 million palms each. Date growing countries located in the southern area of the Mediterranean Sea have approximately 35 million palms (35% of world total).

One of most important markets for date exporters is Europe. Though the EU (European Union) imports of dates set for only 10 percent of world imports in quantity, they financial credit for some 30 percent in value. This proofs the actuality that EU import prices for dates are comparatively much upper than the world average [8].

Date Marketing In Iran:

Though Iran is one of the greatest producers date in the world but in field of revenues earned from this product hasn't any suit rank. In recent years Iran with 24 percent of universal exports has only 20.6 percent of export value of world and this pointer low price dates Iran in world , average price export date in world is 800 dollars for one ton and while that average price export Iran dates in world is 400 dollars, beside studies about types Iran dates show that near 70 present of dates products in Iran are types 2 and 3 degree that almost 500

Corresponding Author: Saeid Ghane, Department of Industrial Engineering, Masjed-Soleiman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Masjed- Soleiman, Iran.
E-mail: Ghane_saeed @yahoo.com

thousands at year that can have various utilizable industrial but in the country is not suit way for production that and at the present great parts of date surplus country use for eat and few parts of that use for industrial's conversion and this is while at the base of statistic FAO show some countries such as Tones and Algeria that have a few product with suitable management and proper investment in production with packing industrial have too revenue , besides Iran situation is between four country first producer but Iran date revenue is very low level [18].

Date marketing in Iran by Variety: By Dates characteristic and appearance and texture can be identified three types: soft, semi-dry and dry. The type of fruit depends on the glucose, fructose and sucrose content. This division is based on the texture or consistency of fruit under normal conditions of ripening.

• Fresh Dates have a soft flesh, high moisture content with high sugar content. e.g. Khastawi and Barhee varieties

• Semi-Dry Dates feature a tough flesh, fairly low moisture content and high sugar content. e.g. Halawi and Khadrawy varieties

• Dry Dates hard flesh, high sugar content, low moisture content and dry. e.g. Zahidi and Sayer varieties

There are well over 400 varieties grown in Iran, although the exact number of varieties of dates is not known. Production is dominated by the Zahidi variety (dry) followed distantly by Khastawi (fresh), Sayer (dry) and Khadrawy (semi-dry). The Kabkab, Khasseh, Zahedi and Shavi dates of Bushehr and Fars as well as the Piarom and Ghasb dates of Kerman plus the Rabi date of Sistan-Baluchestan are processed for export.

Mazafati is one major species of fresh date with huge annual yield. The majority of this product is consumed in domestic markets, but through the recent years due to production growth works have been down for exporting this product.

Mazafati date is mostly packaged with the traditional technique. Directly after harvesting in the orchards the product is packed in small boxes (1 kg) and carried to air-conditioned warehouses. A small part of the crop is harvested using the industrial method and storage in cold storage from where they are to be transported to the processing workshops for processing and packaging.

The major consumers and importers of Iranian Mazafati date are North European countries including England, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Germany, the Persian Gulf littoral states, the North American countries, especially Canada, East Asian countries plus Australia. As a matter of fact Iranians living abroad are among. Due to many ups and downs in the export of this product, it does not have a stable and permanent market in the overseas. There are no clear-cut statistics obtainable from the Customs documents on the amount of export of this product, however; it is estimated that Mazafati date enjoys 20 percent of the nation's total export of dates.

Iran is very talented of producing large quantities of premium “industrial grade” dates, namely Sayer and Zahidi(especially Sayer). Iran's main competitors in producing “industrial grade” dates are Iraq and Pakistan. Iraq grows both Sayers and Zahidis,. Pakistan grows the Aseel and BJ, dry varieties that compete with Sayers and Zahidis.

Nearly all of the Sayer crop and part of the Zahedi date produced in Khuzestan Province are processed in Packaging workshops. The dried and fresh-to-dried (semi-dried) dates, which naturally lack moisture, are easily storable in cool storage. On the other hand, they are subject to stored food pest thus requiring on-time pesticide spraying, disinfecting and sanitation of the store. Sayer and Zahidi are the mainl varieties for “industrial grade” dates. These dates are classified as “dry” or “semi-dry” dates due to their relatively low moisture content.

Date industry in Iran: Dates are a staple of the provinces producer date and specially the South Iran diet and per capita consumption is considered high. Figures on domestic consumption run from 100,000 to 350,000 tons, although there are no reliable figures by market share or by total domestic consumption.

Higher-end, fresh dates are sold in bulk in local markets in Iran. The prices for fresh dates in the domestic market have not been reliably collected, but can be approximately estimated to be USD 500 to 1000 per ton bulk. The prices of fresh, processed, value-added dates (pitted, stuffed, packaged) would be considerably higher.

The lowest-quality dates are sold as animal feed to the dairies, sheep herders and companies making dibis (date syrup) and other fermented products. Low-quality dates are sold in the domestic market for approximately USD 200 per ton. Low-quality dates are also exported at prices of USD 150 to 250 per ton. Small shops, roadside vendors, and markets of all sizes sell packaged and bulk date products throughout Iran.

The recent form of the Iran date industry and limitations facing the Iran date industry divide into topics related to Rural and production practices, Cropping and post-crop handling, processing harvests and Marketing Date processed [17].

Rural and production practices: There are near 120,000 date farmers in Iran. The majority of date farmers also grow other cash crops. The number of commercial date farmers is imprecise, but we guess that some 15,000 to 20,000 date farmers could be classed as “commercial producers.” The popular of Iran's farmers do not own the land they farm. The majority of date farmers are sharecroppers: in exchange for tending to an orchard, they get a percentage of the crop and are often allowed to live on the land.

In Iran, date farms are usually small so the average size of a date farm is 3 to 10 acres. By contrast, in California 20 acres is a very small orchard and larger orchards are in excess of 100 acres. In Iran there are larger commercial date farms, mainly in the south and some provinces. Most dates grown in the central provinces, east and west areas are not commercial. Commercial date farming are mostly in the southern country. The size and number of commercial date farms in Iran is unknown.

Often farmers themselves do not have enough money for processing date as fertilizers, insecticides and they have not suit tools or equipment. Given that the sharecroppers are without funds for farm inputs and are lacking supervision or oversight, they often pay little to no attention to the condition of the date trees. More money is made by allowing herders to graze sheep in the orchards and growing row crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers and onions, which can be sold in local markets. Therefore, date orchards suffer extremely in terms of quality of fruit produced and yield per hectare. Often the commercial date farmers do have a tie to a date buyer or packer who provides financing for inputs.

Cropping and post-crop handling: Due to lacking even the most fundamental knowledge of harvesting practices, sharecroppers revert to the easiest way of harvesting fruit, yield harvest is unsuitable.

It would seem there are minimal tools and equipment such as human hoists like “cherry pickers” or a suit basket to lift workers into the top of the palm to carry out insect control, pruning and harvesting of the dates. Lacking adequate and appropriate cold storage, fruit is exposed to the elements and pest infestation occurs within a few days, more often within several hours.

Usually whole clusters of ripening or ripe fruit are simply cut off at the stem and allowed to drop to the ground palms. Some fruit outside of the clusters is destroyed and much of the remaining fruit is engulfed in a cloud of sand and dust that becomes surrounded in the fruit. Fruit in this condition cannot be processed for export to Western markets apart from of the technology or equipment in the processing workshop.

Least effort is made to correctly store the harvest. Fruit is sometimes stored in sheds or storage concrete buildings. Often the fruit is stored uncovered in open spaces, though it is sometimes stored under plastic sheeting. Under such conditions, the fruit quickly becomes infected by insects, rapidly ferments or quickly deteriorates in the hot climate.

Processing harvests: The date processing and packaging industry is generally existed in the provinces: Khuzestan, Bushehr and kerman.

Khuzestan Province has processing and packaging industry mostly on its Sayer product, which is a semi-dried date. As far as production is concerned, this product falls in two packaging methods: Balak and Consumer Packaging.Workshops of Sayer Date in Khuzestan are 60 years old. Historically this system was established upon feasibility studies accomplished by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and with the support of England and USA more than half a century ago. The method made desirable progress in a way that before the occurrence of Iran-Iraq war the total output of these workshops adds up to 40-50 thousand tons per year. But after the war and due to severe damages imposed on Abadan and Khorramshahr, and the darkening of relations with the western countries (main consumers of dates), the processing and packaging industry suffered weaknesses and limitations. It should be noted that these workshops mainly package Sayer stoneless dates in big cartons (above 10 kg) for export to Western countries, where they are used as raw material at foodstuff factories.After the revolution a number of capital-intensive date processing and packaging units came to being in Khuzestan Province under state-run companies or using governmental subsidies. However, because of weak marketing and lack of sufficient feasibility studies the products of these units could not find their way into the world markets. As a matter of fact, to date, no opportunity has risen to make the best use of their capacities

Bushehr Province Producer after the revolution, using governmental support, Bushehr Province, likewise, enjoyed the creation of a number of capital-intensive processing and packaging units for dates and the by-products. However, due to same reasons cited for Khuzestan Province, these units failed to make great success.

Kerman Province Before the victory of Islamic Revolution a processing and packaging unit was established for Mazafati date but could not obtain the expected results for the already mentioned reasons. However, in recent years, the private sector pushed this industry forward and new date processing and packaging units were established one after another. It is hoped that these efforts will be beneficial in the future.

Sistan And Baluchestan Province One of important its advantages is have free trade zoon Chabahar and access to Oman sea, it is provided excellent situation for improvement export opportunities dates harvest and organize packing industries. However, in recent years, the private sector uses suit subsides. It is seem that these efforts will be useful in the future.

Anyway there is currently no date processing facility in Iran that meets Western standards. The current facilities lack the quality to process and store dates in a hygienic and suitable environment: there are no qualified vacuum fumigation chambers, sorting equipment, grading equipment, machine-pitting equipment, macerating equipment, paste-making equipment, dicing equipment or cold storage adjoining processing facilities in which to store dates [14].

Marketing Date processed and rivals:

The market for dates is separated into dates consumed fresh, which are usually the highest quality dates found in retail packs in international markets, and industrial dates with low quality that are destined for further processing as ingredients in bakery, confectionary and other products. Sayer and Zahidi are the main varieties for “industrial grade” dates in Iran. These dates are classified as “dry” or “semi-dry” dates due to their relatively low moisture content which ranges from 10 to 14 percent. “Fresh” dates, namely Deglect Noors and Medjools found in international markets, are classified as such due to their high moisture content of 18 to 26 percent [16].

On the other hand as previously noted, Iran has not exported dates proportionate with Western standards. Therefore much of the low-quality fruit is exported to other countries such as India for conversion to animal feed or as raw material for fermentation. Under existing conditions, there is little opportunity that Iran will be able to ship any fruit to profitable Western markets where quality products receive premium prices.

Date harvest in Iran is mainly traditional except for the Sayer date of Khuzestan, which is wholly industrial and also part of the Mazafati (majestic) date of Kerman, which is partially industrial.

It should be noted that during the recent years, due to a new export market for Bushehr Province's date, part of the date crop is harvested industrially. Doubtless this process will be developed in the province in the future.

Market Players and rivals: The main competition in the domestic market is local and provincial supplies of dates sold or direct exchanged in the informal market. Local markets exist for fresh dates, pressed dates (date bricks) and date syrup. In the international fresh dates California, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Egypt mainly produce varieties appropriate for the fresh market. Fresh variety dates are table fruit and packed hence for retail sale. They are not satisfactory or acceptable for use as ingredients or industrial grade dates due to the high moisture content. Even though they were, the price of secondary or cull fruit of fresh variety dates is far in excess of the cost of premium dry-variety dates. As such, it is not economical to replace the market for dry-variety dates with fresh-variety dates for use as ingredients or industrial grade fruit [15].

On the other hand whereas Iran is currently capable of producing large quantities of premium “industrial grade” dates namely Sayer and Zahidi. Iran’s main competitors in producing “industrial grade” dates are Iraqi and Pakistan. Iraqi grows both Sayer and Zahidis, especially Sayers. Pakistan grows the Aseel and BJ, dry varieties that compete with Sayers and Zahidis.

Pakistan knowing the opportunity presented by the ongoing political and economic problems of Iran and Iraq, Pakistan began growing industrial grade dates on a marketable basis. The result has been one of mixed achievements, Pakistan does not have the optimal climate for industrial date production and catches the rear end of the monsoon season in most years. Dates grow best in areas where temperatures are high, moisture is very low and enough water is available. High humidity and especially rainfall during and/or immediately after harvesting cause a rapid spike in mold and insect infestation and raises the moisture content of the dates to unacceptable levels.

Western buyers have approached to Pakistan as a supplier of last resort. Pakistan has known the limited success of commercial production of dry-variety dates and has ceased new plantings of date palms. Western buyers are looking for a supplier capable of reliably shipping dry-variety dates of regular quality. Although Pakistan remains a competitor, they are viewed as unreliable due to seasonal weather situation.

About Iraqi the wars, sanctions and general turmoil within it’s over the past 25 years has led to the demise of the date industry during a period when other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, UAE and Pakistan, were investing heavily in both date production and modern processing facilities, often with the assistance of government subsidies. Many of the Iraqi date gardens remain and can be rehabilitated by a series of interventions that will provide appropriate farming, post-harvest and processing, as well as marketing technology, facilities and skills to the industry [14].

Algeria and Tunisia are Iran's indirect rivals for the production of semi-dried stone date in small packages. These countries have made vast investment and conducted wise marketing in the European countries allowing them to catch the best share of the date market. For these crops Saudi Arabia and Egypt are next in ranking. They both have had considerable marketing during the recent years and made fast progress in their date exports. The United States is another top-quality producer and exporter of dates with captured consumer markets in Northern America and part of the world markets.

The Marseilles Port in France was one of the dried and semi-dried date small-package processing and packaging centers in the past but progressively this industry was transferred to date producing countries - Algeria and Tunisia - which had close relations with France. These two countries now have date processing and packaging industry with the investment and contribution of French companies.

As previously discussed, producers in Iraqi and Pakistan have improved a market for dry dates. The market for dates as an part in cereals, trail mixes, confectionary and bakery products needs further development, as well as emphasis on Iran as a provider of quality product. Therefore Iran is now faced with an important opportunity to improve its position as the world’s largest producer and exporter of dry-variety dates. It is reported that Western buyers will even pay somewhat more for quality Iran fruit to avoid buying Iraq fruit due to the risk and potentially negative market connotation or buying from such an unreliable supplier as Pakistan.

Advances in Environmental Biology, 8(9) Special 2014, Pages: 363-372

Resume of date imports and exports in the EU:

The key customers of dates in Europe are establish in the large and growing Muslim community that mainly consists of nation who emigrated from North Africa, South Asia and the Middle East. Traditionally, date fruits are consumed for the period of Ramadan. The Muslim schedule is based on the moon cycle and hence the times of Ramadan differ in every year. In follow give details imports and exports in EU:

Imports Survey: Imports of dates into the EU are exceedingly seasonal and cyclic. They tend to take place at the end of the year, for Christmas and New Year's Eve. The EU is a significant market of value, even if it imports comparatively small quantities of dates. Comparison with over half a million metric tons imported every year in the world, the EU accounts for 10 percent of the total with some 50 000 tons (without intra-EU trade). However, it accounts for about 30 percent of international date imports in rate with a grid average of US$85 million per year in the 2002-2012 periods [8].

Exports Survey: Apart from Spain with very little quantities products; The EU countries do not produce dates, a number of them, especially France, re-export dates. Most of the re-export trade happens between EU associate countries. Net exports from the EU to the other countries are very low.

Average Price Date: The EU is an important market for exporting countries, as it principally imports dates of high value. In 2002-2012, the average unit value of dates imported ranged between US$1.9 and 3.1 per kg, while at the global level the unit value was only US$0.8/kg [2].

In general date prices depending on variety, origin, packaging and quality the difference in import prices may be almost tenfold.

Main markets for dates in the EU:

About 85 percent of total EU imports of dates in account assigned to the France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Spain (Table 1 and Figure 1). The study of these markets presents therefore a good estimate of the total EU market [3].

Table 1: Average gross date imports 2002-2012

	Tones	Percentage
France	25348	38
UK	13702	20
Italy	6467	10
Germany	7424	11
Spain	5974	9
Other EU	8327	12
Total EU	64896	

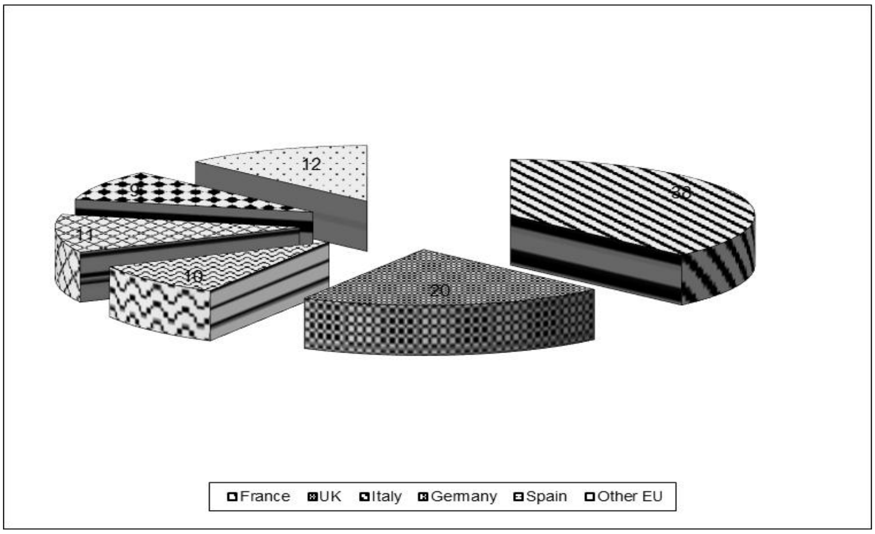

Fig. 1: EU gross imports in 2002-2012(volume %)

The differences in net imports over the last decade (Figure 2) show two different phases: throughout the first half of the 2002s viewed a moderate although stable growth. On the other hand, the second half of the 2007s. This growing trend is stable mainly observable for United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Italy and France [9].

Advances in Environmental Biology, 8(9) Special 2014, Pages: 363-372

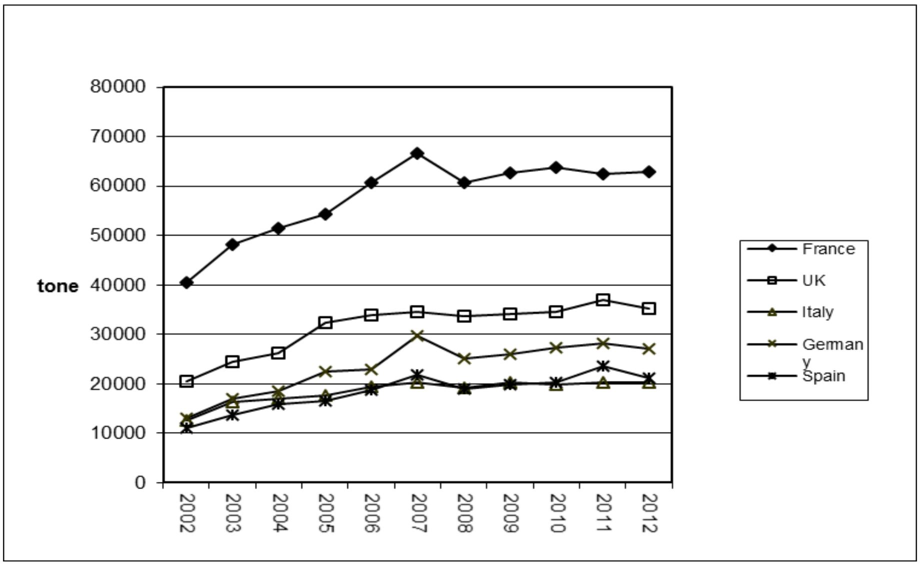

Fig. 2: Set Net Import in Selected EU Countries

Imports by the other 10 EU associate report for 15 percent only. However, studies shown. Through EU countries Denmark and Sweden have increased their imports since the mid-1990s. Even if these markets are small, they are active and consumers have a high purchasing influence. They may recommend some opportunities for date exporters. Their most important external provider is Iran, pursued by Pakistan, but they also import considerable quantities from other EU countries [13].

France: In the EU France is the leading market for dates. Tunisia and Algeria are its main suppliers, which account for over 85 percent of its date imports. France's gross imports have increased progressively, growing from an annual average of 18 600 tones in 1990-92 to 23 557 tones in 2002-2012. It is the world's main importer of deglet nour. France is the merely EU country in which consumption of common dates is insignificant. France is also one of the main suppliers of the other EU countries through its re-exports [6].

The United Kingdom: Further France the second largest EU market for dates and consumes large quantities of common dates is The United Kingdom. Through the Christmas time it imports deglet nour packed in 227g boxes. Supermarkets have the main share for date distribution, with demands for high quality and low prices. Recently initiated, mejool dates are selling well and at high prices. Their sales are increasing swiftly because of their distribution by supermarket chains.

Germany: The third main EU market for dates jointly Germany. Its Imports of dates have grown from some 5182 in 1997s to over 10790 tones in 2007 [4].

Germany principally imports common dates. These are packed in 200g-ravier and sold by supermarkets at reduce prices. Though, consumption of higher quality dates (such as deglet nour) tends to increase. The main variety is deglet nour and greater than 80 percent of the dates are supplied from Tunisia [5].

Italy and Spain: The forth main EU market for dates jointly with Italy and Spain. For Italy Imports of dates have grown from some 5000 in 2002s to over 7500 tones in 2012 and for Spain from 4500 to 7300 tones have grown in the same period [10]. . However, Spain is the country where imports are growing at the highest rate. As in France, Spanish importers interest natural deglet nour in 5-kg bulk over processed[2] dates. Common dates are packed in 250g boxes but their consumption is gradually decreasing. There is also a small market for the hayani diversity.

Suppliers:

Tunisia: It is the major world-market producer of deglet nour. It has around 50 percent of the world's deglet nour palm trees. Considerable investments in modern deglet nour farms and an insistent marketing strategy have led to a stable increase in exports. As grew from 68621 in the 2002 to 91563 thousand dollars in 2006 (Figure 3) and even reached a record level of 119086 thousand dollars in 2012.

Even if Tunisia accounts for only 2 percent of world date production, its share of international exports in value is 21 percent. It almost explanatory 48 percent of EU imports in value (Figure 4). Tunisia exports inclusive of the same quantity of processed and natural dates. The recent liberalization of the export date segment has led to the appearance of a large number of smaller exporters [11]. According to some importers, this development has had an adverse effect on prices. Tunisia's main clients in order of decreasing importance are France, Italy, Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Advances in Environmental Biology, 8(9) Special 2014, Pages: 363-372

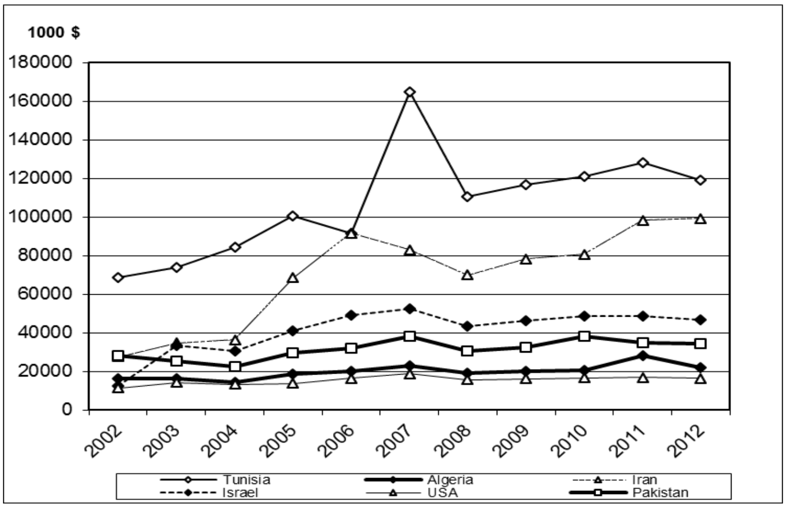

Fig. 3: Export Supplier Date 2002-2012

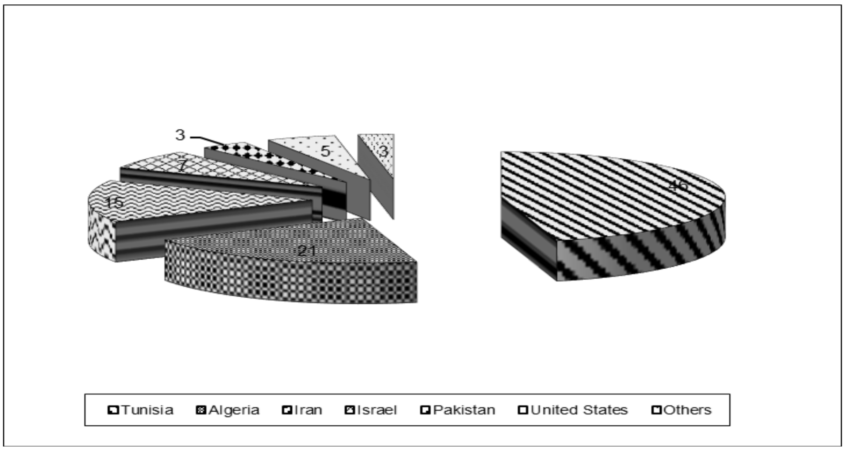

Fig. 4: EU Gross Imports In 2002-2012(volume %)

Algeria: The world second main producer of deglet nour is Algeria with about 1 million date trees. Its production in 2005 was 470 000 tones for all varieties. Algeria accounts for 17 percent of EU imports in value [1]. The liberalization and other hand privatization of the date sector have had a positive impact on exports. Algeria exports more natural dates than processed dates, because there is a lack of processing capacity. The mejority of Algerian dates is destined for France.

Iran: The third traditionally supplier EU has been Iran, just behind Algeria. However, it took over Algeria as the second largest EU supplier in 2007 with over 14 000 tones. It is the most important date supplier in the United Kingdom (the UK imported 8 600 tones of Iranian dates in 2007). Its other two largest purchasers are Germany and Denmark. Iran is the second largest date producer in the world with some 900 000 tones, just after Egypt. It exports common dates (mozafati, sayer and zahedi) with very low prices. It accounts for 6 percent of EU imports in value. It has taken advantage of the fall in Iraq's exports after 1991 to increase its deliveries to Europe.

Israel: Even if Israel produces very small quantities of dates (production was estimated at 14500 tons in 2005) but it is the main supplier of mejool and the only supplier of hayani. Meanwhile Israel exports the mejool, deglet nour, hayani and bahri varieties [7].

The United States: Mainly exports deglet nour and mejool dates to the EU are United States. Their consignments to the EU have been declining since 1995 as their deglet nour dates face strong competition from North African sources. Exporters interest to replace deglet nour with mejool, which positions less competition and gets higher prices.

Pakistan: Pakistan is the fourth largest date producer with over half a million tons in 2005. It compete directly with Iran on the same markets (mainly the United Kingdom, Germany and Denmark exports common dates to Europe and) and export exports common dates to EU. Pakistani supplies to the EU have been relatively stable and low over the late, as Iran increased its market share in the UK, Germany and Denmark.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Turkey are other suppliers of smaller quantities to the EU include.

Inside of EU trade:

There are important trades currents between the countries of the EU, as a number of countries re-export dates. They are anticipated at over 10 000 tons per year. France excels its important role as an interior supplier to the EU, mostly Northern European countries. Its major markets are the UK, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium. France imports (from Tunisia and Algeria) considerable quantities of natural dates (not packaged) which are then processed, packaged and re-exported.

The United Kingdom and The Netherlands are the other EU countries re-export much smaller quantities.

Product types and packaging:

In EU processed dates are usually more accepted than natural dates. It is anticipated that 55 percent to 60 percent of the imported dates are processed. In France and Italy, consumption processed and natural dates are mostly equal. In Germany and the UK, processed dates are major while in Spain consumption of natural dates is further.

There are many various kinds of packaging in the EU. There is not a real uniquely of packaging and weight. Apart from the 5-kg bulk, which is general packing to every country, different types of packaging can be found: punnet, bags, ravier, tubs, glove boxes, and window boxes. There are also many various package weights, from 150g to 2kg. While supermarkets prefer to carry small packaging, wholesalers mostly sell in bulk,

Date Varieties:

Deglet Nour: Even so there are some differences between southern and northern Europe It is the most general variety in EU. .Southern EU countries mostly consume this kind of dates. Because of their history and culture, France, Spain and Italy have special trading relations with Tunisia and Algeria. Almost 90 percent of the deglet nour produced in the world are exported from these countries and remaining of its produce in Israel and the United States.

Germany and the United Kingdom have less trade relationship with Maghreb countries; therefore they import smaller quantities of deglet nour. Though, it seems that consumption this kind of date has increased.

Common Dates: Common date includes several varieties dates such as kenta, alligh, kouat alligh, sayer and zahedi. The United Kingdom and Germany together import around 10 000 tons of common dates annually.

Many traders in Germany and The United Kingdom are interested in the low price of common dates. In The United Kingdom, the population of Asian origin is thought to have a big influence on the consumption of common dates. These kinds of dates are also used by the foodstuff industry in the UK.

While imports of common dates to EU are important, this quantity has not sufficient increased over the past years. This seems to indicate that demand is changing towards higher quality dates such as mejool or deglet nour. Only the foodstuff industry keeps a steady demand for common dates. The low and declining prices of common dates; shows in Figure 5, where the unit value of common dates imported from Iran and Pakistan has declined to approximately US$0.5 per kg [9].

Mejool**:** In Europe, mejool dates have been known since the early 1990s and it is only in the last three to four years that they have really taken off. They are to be found on the market of the main European countries. Imports of mejool are very low but they have been rapidly increasing.

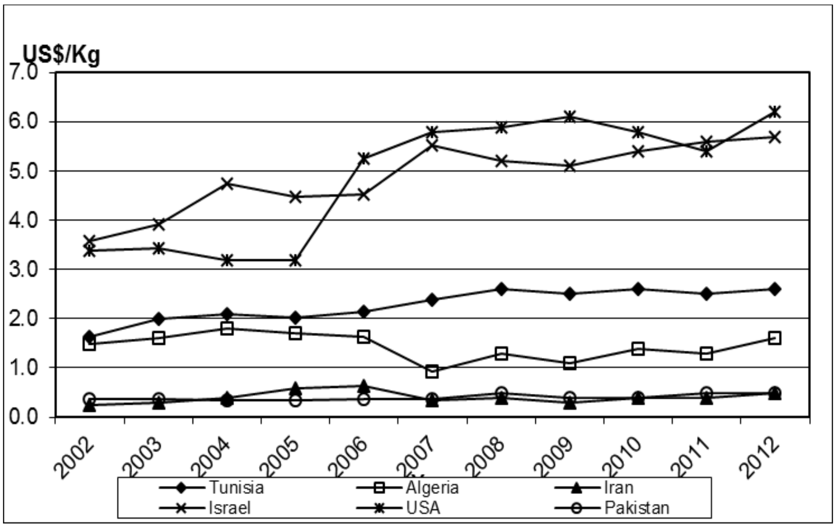

Fig. 5: Unit Value of Date Exports by Origin

These dates are arousing interest and hopes among importers. On a market in which there is seldom any innovation, the promising beginnings of mejool give some reason to think that, in coming years, it could be a major product in the range of dates on offer. Countries producing mejool are The United States and Israel today share the European market. The United States is the foremost producer. Located in California; this source has improved its quality; it guarantees the traceability of products and continues to be less expensive by virtue, in particular, of lower transport costs. Some other countries (e.g. Namibia) have also started producing mejool.

Current limits on the development of mejool**:** The low quantity currently produced is the first limit on the development of mejool. The direct consequence of this small volume of supply is the high price of the product, which, after the succession of margins applied to it within the distribution system and to which taxes are to be added, reaches the consumer at €13 or 15 per kilo. Paradoxically, the high price is one of the current driving forces in the development of mejool [10],

As consumption stands at present, it seems impossible for exporters to contact the European market on their own. They need a logistical and commercial base in order to be able to supply and invoice the different outlets and central buying offices.

Hayani: Hayani is very distinct from other dates as its texture, taste and storage characteristics, is very different. It is a fresh fruit in its own right. Familiar in Israel, where it is sold practically throughout the year, the marketing of this product in Europe has been received for ten years but limited commercial development; reasons for this commercial failure are manifold. Firstly, it is because of the centralizing of purchasing decisions in large-scale retailers.

Establishing a new product requires a strong commercial effort to encourage the new decision-makers, from the top of the organization downwards. Secondly, buyers are uneasy with the nature of the product, which is both frozen and fresh, since it straddles two types of regulations and health rules. It does not integrate well in the merchandising organization of the fruit and vegetable department since it has to be sold loose where it would be preferable to see it in pre-packaged form and it has to be put in freezing display cabinets which are usually used specially for salads and prepared products. Finally, it does not fit into the organization of purchases, which is based on types of products, under which frozen products are generally stored disjointedly from fruit and vegetables.

Bahri: Israel exports kinds of bahri. Its main markets are in France and small amounts are consumed in Europe. Bahri date is a special product and reserved for a small clientele of consumers who know the product. Its particular taste and the bitterness of the fruit do not count in its favor with someone tasting it for the first time.

Organic dates: Several producers have diversified into organic production of dates. For example, Israel and Tunisia export certified organic dates to the European countries.

Conclusion:

- Iran has not exported dates proportionate with Western standards. Therefore much of the low-quality fruit is exported to other countries such as India for conversion to animal feed or as raw material for fermentation. Under existing conditions, there is little opportunity that Iran will be able to ship any fruit to profitable Western markets where quality products receive premium prices.
- statistic FAO show some countries such as Tones and Algeria that have a few product with suitable management and proper investment in production with packing industrial have too revenue , besides Iran situation is between four country first producer but Iran date revenue is very low level .
- While imports of common dates to EU are important, this quantity has not sufficient increased over the past years. This seems to indicate that demand is changing towards higher quality dates such as mejool or deglet nour. Only the foodstuff industry keeps a steady demand for common dates.

From the above paper it can be concluded that any country hoping to enter the EU date market would need to turn to “non-traditional methods”. The successful development of, mejool dates will rely on the willingness of supermarket chains to carry this product. On the producer side, it will need a strong marketing organization in order to assurance timely deliveries and high product quality.

The potential for hayani and bahri seems limited because of the pretty small number of people who know and like these varieties. Moreover, in the case of hayani, large-scale retailers seem reluctant to carry this type of dates due to the fact that it is a frozen product.

REFERENCES

[1] Eurofruit, D., 1999. Increased interest in Europe boosts dating game for Agrexco, London, UK. pp: 14-17.
[2] Eurostat Trade Statistics CD-ROM, 2002. European Commission, Brussels.
[3] FAO, 2011. FAOSTAT Statistical database.

[4] FAO, 2007. World markets for organic fruit and vegetables: opportunities for developing countries in the production and export of organic horticultural products, Rome, Italy, pp: 56.
[5] FAO, 2010. Study of the main European markets for dates and of the commercial potential of non-traditional varieties, Rome, Italy, 99324-331.
[6] Fruitrop Dates, 2008. Montpellier, France, pp: 87-90.
[7] Fruitrop Tunisia, 2010. date exports increasing, pp: 6-8.
[8] Fruitrop, 1996. Dates, a well-oriented world market, p.8, n.26, January 2002, Montpellier, France.
[9] Greiner, D., 2004. Le marché de la datte, produit de rente des oasis : enjeux, diversité, tensions. in Sécheresse, Special issue on Oasis, vol. 9 no. 2, June 1998 John Libbey Eurotext Limited, Montrouge, France, pp: 123.
[10] Greiner, D., 2011. Les pays méditerranéens et les échanges internationaux de dattes. In Options méditerranéennes, Le Palmier dattier dans l'agriculture d'oasis des pays méditerranéens, CIHEAM, IAM, Zaragoza, Spain, pp: 119-125.
[11] Liu, P., 2005. The markets for dates in the European Union, internal report, Horticultural Products Group, Commodities and Trade Division, FAO, Rome, Ital, pp: 534-541.
[12] Ghane, S., 2010. Glancing Survey of European date market, Yerevan , Armenian State Agrarian University Bulletin, pp: 140-144.
[13] Ghane, S., 2011. Strategic Analyses Date Industries In Iran With ISM Approach, Yerevan, Armenian State Agrarian University Bulletin, pp: 183-190.
[14] Hashempoor, S., 1995. Strategic total design and improvement production process for packing date Journal of Ramin Research Center Agriculture, Ahwaz, Iran (in Persian), 7: 225-245.
[15] Hashempoor, S., 2006. Dates And Industries, Journal of Shahrakhaye sanati ,Khozestan, Iran.
[16] http://faostat.fao.org/site/339/default.aspx
[17] Karimi, N., M.R. Nazari, 2006. Problems of improvement lateral date industries, Journal of Ramin Research Center Agriculture, Ahwaz, Iran (in Persian), 54: 251-267.
[18] Mosavi, A., 2011. Analyses Iran' date markets, Ahwaz Chamran University, Reports of Jahad Keshavarzi research Center, Iran, 14: 112-142.