

As can be seen in the above table, there has been a gradual shift in the importation of plastics production machinery. Injection moulding machines, which in 1988 represented 15% of total imports, increased their participation to 23% by 1990. Extruders, on the other hand, fell relatively to other types from 16.8% to 11% during that same period. Blow moulding and vacuum moulding machines also increased their participation and now represent 15.1% and 3.8% respectively as opposed to 14% and 0.8% in 1988. Imports of moulds have also increased in importance, while all other areas have, in general terms, grown steadily and maintained their participation.

Mexico has predominantly used extrusion and injection processes to manufacture plastic products. There are approximately 20,000 machines of these types installed, which can easily cover the demand in this area. Other processes are now becoming more important as well as the use of engineering resins over commodity resins. These innovative areas represent excellent opportunities for Canadian suppliers. Machinery with best sales prospects include blow moulding, lamination, rotational moulding, foaming, compression, thermoforming, coating, calendaring, sealing, metalizing, electroplating, decorating and finishing machines. At present small and medium sized automatic machines are in greater demand than large machines, due to the average size of plastic manufacturing firms and to the high cost of the latter machines. Another area with an excellent growth potential is moulds. At a time when buying a new machine is extremely costly, using existing machinery more efficiently is becoming very important. Moulds are a very effective means to achieve this, as well as screws to adapt the machine to other resins. It is in these areas that a higher growth is expected.

The United States is presently the number one exporter of plastics production machinery to Mexico, but has seen its market share falling from 58% in 1985 to 50% in 1988 and further to 40% in 1990 as a result of increased competition from third country suppliers. West Germany has substantially increased its market share, to approximately 20%, as a result of a very aggressive marketing strategy. This includes establishing representatives in Mexico, making literature available in Spanish, visiting local chambers and associations and keeping them informed on new machines and their applications, demonstrating their products directly at the firms, training personnel in new processes and resins and, in general, having a stronger presence in the sales and service markets. Italy is the third most important competitor, enjoying a stable market share of 10% to 12%. European machines are perceived to be of very good quality, high productivity and versatility, at prices similar to those of U.S. and Canadian machines. The U.S. is particularly known for big machines with high productivity and quality, while European machines tend to be smaller in size. Other countries, such as Spain, France, Canada, Belgium and Brazil also sell to the Mexican market but are not as well established as the U.S.,