

7.3 Offers

Products for sale must be identified with their French and Latin names, and the quantity must be indicated. Confirmation of the customs category and the duty applicable to the product should be obtained before the sale is concluded. In the case of frozen products, the quantity will frequently be a 20-foot or 40-foot container. It is important to determine what type of presentation (e.g. cartons) is desired. Offers should be made in whatever currency the two parties have agreed on. The conditions of payment that we recommend are letter of credit (in the case of an initial transaction) or documentary credit (for subsequent transactions).

Much longer-term payment conditions (30 days, 60 days, on occasion 90 days) than in Canada are the rule in France, but we advise Canadian exporters to beware of accepting overly extended payment terms, as any disagreement over the goods or delivery conditions is then fraught with much greater difficulties. Prices should be quoted CIF Le Havre in accordance with the Incoterms in effect.

The metric system is the rule. However, in the case of certain products which have traditionally been obtained from English or American suppliers, American units (lb) may be used for purposes of commercial transactions.

As a rule, an exporter should avoid assuming too many obligations *vis-à-vis* the purchaser. Similarly, offers should include time and quantity limits.

Furthermore, offering prices should not be lower than those indicated in the EEC's fresh product price guidelines.

7.4 How Canadian exporters can upgrade their image

Very few French speak foreign languages, and accordingly it is preferable to communicate with them in French. For purposes of an initial contact, we recommend a formal letter of introduction, sent by mail and accompanied by a brochure in French if at all possible. If the brochure is in English, it is essential to enclose a typed sheet containing a translated summary of its contents.

Most firms now have fax equipment, but not all of them are in the habit of using it. French firms should be encouraged to communicate with you by fax.

French businessmen expect to receive replies to their requests, and we encourage Canadian exporters to provide them. This is an inexpensive means of initiating a business contact, either for the present or a subsequent sale. As a first step, the Canadian exporter might ask the French firm for references and make enquiries of the Embassy regarding the firm's reputation. The Embassy can also provide, on cost recovery basis, a Dun and Bradstreet credit report on the firm in question.