

Sector: CONSUMER PRODUCTS

1. Market Opportunity Overviews

The consumer products sector is defined here to include textiles, clothing, footwear, furniture and leisure products.

In general, Canada does not have a strong internationally competitive position in consumer products, particularly those where semi-skilled, labour intensive manufacturing processes are in use. There are, however, a number of product areas where special factors have produced some interesting export opportunities.

Most consumer product exports from Canada are directed to the U.S. market, but some success has also been possible in other developed, industrialized countries, eg. Western Europe, Japan, Australia.

2. Current Access Constraints

Given the extremely wide range of products in this sector, it is difficult to generalize about trade barriers and their impact in various markets.

The U.S. market, in particular, is generally accessible for high quality goods having special features, eg. high fashion clothing, although high tariffs remain.

3. Canadian Export Capabilities

In textiles, there has been some export success in certain sub-sectors, particularly carpets, coated fabrics, and some other man-made fabrics. Exports represented 7% of Canadian shipments in 1983, with the U.S. taking 48% of our textile exports.

The clothing sector exported 5% of its shipments in 1983. In sub-sectors such as designer fashion and outerwear, Canada is able to compete internationally on quality, style and price, particularly in the U.S.

Canadian exports of fur garments have recently accounted for between 30% and 55% of domestic production. Canadian fur garments are recognized worldwide for high quality and value, and domestic producers are continuing to make inroads into the U.S. market, in particular. In Western Europe, anti-fur and anti-trapping campaigns have combined with unfavourable currency exchange rates to result in substantial losses of Canadian fur markets there.

In the footwear sector (non-rubber), Canada has a limited competitive range; in 1983 exports accounted for 7% of total Canadian production, or \$47 million. Rubber footwear exports are extremely limited (\$0.5 million in 1983).