

EXPORT MARKETING STRATEGY

The purpose of formulating a strategy for the export marketing of value-added food products is to assist Canadian exporters to take advantage of their competitive strengths, recognize their weaknesses and, from there, select export markets which offer the greatest chance of success.

This approach to export marketing of "following the path of least resistance" is especially important for companies who are not financially able to invest heavily in developing new markets.

In order to assist exporters in determining which markets may be best suited to their particular product, Foreign Affairs and International Trade (FAIT), through contact with the trade posts, has determined certain characteristics that tend to be present in market where Canadian value-added food exporters have been successful. These are: aggressive marketing, import restrictions not significant in sector, strong sectoral capability in Canada, provincial export promotion, competitive pricing, trade fair activity, fairs and missions support, PEMD support, and Canada is one of few sources of supply. Conversely, when Canadian exporters have not been successful in specific markets, reasons for that failure include, in addition to a lack of the positive features mentioned above, market prospects not adequately explored, limited understanding of distribution systems, import restrictions, duties, regulations standards, supply continuity problems/limited Canadian capabilities.

Although FAIT, other government departments and industry trade associations all play very important roles in supporting Canadian exporters, they do not, themselves, export anything. The exporting company must ultimately make the decision to export, decide on the market, develop an individual strategy, make contacts, get the orders, deliver the product and collect payment. Decisions made at this level will determine the eventual success of an export programme. Breaking into foreign markets is a difficult process and Canadian exporters are well advised to make use of all the assistance available to them. They can be sure their foreign competitors are making good use of their own government assistance programmes.

CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIVES

Developing stable foreign markets in order to increase exports of value-added food products, while generating the maximum return to the producer for the minimum outlay of resources, is the objective of this export marketing strategy. Each level of the industry has a role to play in accomplishing this objective. It is important that each decision-making unit is clear on its role vis a vis the other participants in the industry to avoid duplication of services and to insure that the exporter receives as much support as possible with the available resources.