

Venezuela is a resource rich country with extraordinary potential for economic growth. It is already the wealthiest country in Latin America in per capita terms. These factors combine with Venezuela's democratic system of government and vigorous, stable economy to make it one of the leading political and economic nations in Latin America. It is also one of the most attractive, dynamic markets and the most promising potential supplier of industrial goods on the continent.

1.20. AGRIFOOD PRODUCTION

Venezuela has good natural climatic conditions and land appropriate for agriculture, especially the cultivation of: corn, coffee, cocoa, cotton, rice, sesame seed, tobacco, plantains and for cattle raising. Its 2,816 kilometres of open coast provide immense fishing resources, as well as excellent condition for aquaculture. The foreign investor is encouraged to investigate these areas. Foreign ownership of farmland is permitted.

The Venezuelan Agrifood industry infrastructure is probably among the best in Latin America, however it was developed under intensive and frequent political intervention which limited Venezuelan agrifood potential in terms of volume and quality. Consumers grew accustomed to stable food prices; due to massive state subsidies to the sector, which favour local production of food goods with major components of imported raw materials.

2. AGRIFOOD MARKET DATA.

2.1. GENERAL OVERVIEW.

Opportunities abound in the Caribbean for Canadian exporters of high-value food products (deli) and alcoholic beverages due to the significant increase in tourism and the expanding hotel and restaurant trade in the area. Geographic proximity to Canada (through U.S.-Florida), favourable import policies since countries accession to GATT and moderate freight rates makes Venezuela and the Netherlands Antilles (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao) an easily penetrated market.