

has more world-class specialized industrial trade fairs than any other country, with marketing opportunities that go beyond the German market. Because of the established international reputation of German trade fairs, the impact of one's exhibit extends well beyond the F.R.G., throughout Western Europe and, in many cases, to markets as far afield as the Pacific Rim. Detailed information on major fairs is readily available from any of the three Canadian trade missions in Germany or from the Western Europe Trade, Investment and Technology Division of External Affairs and International Trade Canada in Ottawa.

Depending on the nature of the product and the schedule of trade fairs, it may be more effective to plan a business visit to Germany or invite German buyers to your facilities in Canada. Canadian export assistance programs are available in both cases. In addition, there are a number of organizations, industrial associations, and trade journals which can facilitate market research. Canadian exhibitors and business visitors to trade fairs are able to obtain VAT refunds for costs of goods and services.

**Channels.** Food products and raw materials normally enter the German market at the bottom of the distribution chain while capital goods and semi-processed materials are well divided between importers and end-users. Consumer products face the broadest spectrum ranging from importers, agents and wholesalers to department stores, mail-order houses and buying co-operatives. Naturally, each intermediary in the chain adds to the total mark-up. For many products, however, the broader market exposure and specialized services provided by intermediaries make their use economically advantageous. The German Armed Forces procure directly through the German Army Procurement Office (BWB) in Koblenz. The Embassy can facilitate contact with this organization.

**When to Visit.** Vacations are important to German businesspersons and offices are often left with skeleton staff during the summer. Consequently, visits during July and August are ill-advised. In addition, established purchasing habits and seasonal considerations, particularly for consumer goods, are important factors to consider in scheduling your visit. The trade office should be consulted for advice in this regard. Where practical, it is often advantageous to pick a time for your visit which coincides with an appropriate trade fair.