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## QUALITY OF THE AVOCADO EXPORTING COMPANIES TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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The intense and constant increase in sales of organic food registered during the last half of the nineties has provided those products a viable market position and, sometimes, an added value. One of the factors involved in this increase is the change in nourishing habits of many sectors of the population in developed countries due to the increasing concern on the sanitary aspect of nourishment as well as the increasing demand of higher product diversity, including those of easy preparation. Due to the panic that arose in the alimentary sector in several Western European countries at the end of the nineties and the beginning of this century, consumers have become more critical when they buy food and also more demanding on the information related to production and elaboration (including commercialization) aspects. In many of the principal markets for organic food (for example, United States, the European Community and Japan) the sales of horticultural organic products have been expanded rapidly. However, the market share of organic products is still small (1 to 3%) respect to the total food sales. The economies of many developing countries depend on the exportations of a relatively small number of products (mainly agricultural), and it is likely that some of those products (such as banana and sugar) will suffer in the next future a further pressure due to market liberalization. Therefore, the importance of the diversification of agricultural production is increasingly important. Diversification oriented towards crops of higher value can contribute to the reduction of the vulnerability of many farmers from those countries, especially the small farmers with scarce resources. Despite of the conversion to more sustainable cultivation methods in developed countries and the support of the governments to impulse organic production, it is expected that the consumption of organic foods in developed countries will continue to exceed their production, resulting in the need of significant imports of organic products, at least in the short and medium terms, and, probably in the long term. Moreover, tropical and out-season products will continue to give interesting possibilities to many developing countries with comparative advantages in this area. Customs and regulating organisms have not made a distinction between organic and conventional products, resulting in a lack of reliable information on the evolution of the organic horticultural products market and international trading volumes. Consequently, the decision-makers in the public and private sectors of developing countries do not have the necessary information to decide over the conversion to organic production. For this decision, several questions, such as the evolution of organic product demand, the kind of products and the forecast of prices, are important. The objective of the present work is to contribute to fill that gap of information. Thus, detailed information on market evolution and global trade of organic horticultural products is provided. This study offers quantitative and qualitative information about the demand in the main developed markets, the organic production and the numbers related to the imports. Case studies from seven developing countries that have already established an export sector of organic products or have possibilities to do so are also discussed. In those studies it is possible to find useful ideas about the way to achieve an organic export sector, and the analysis of possible difficulties that must be overcome. The Michoacan State in Mexico is an important player in this field, because it is the national leader in the production and exportation of an ample variety of fruits, such as avocado, with its increasing and endless expansion to the entire world due to its outstanding properties. Export, trading and competitiveness are hand-bound, because these concepts will define strong from weak economies and the countries with low living standards from developing and welfare countries.