



Price is somewhat lower than around the same time last year

Product quality of early-season grapefruit from South Africa is stable

Most of the imported grapefruit in the Chinese market comes from South Africa, Israel, Egypt, and Morocco. "The production volume of South African grapefruit is the largest among them. These grapefruit enter the market during the Chinese summer, between May and November, when consumer demand for grapefruit is the strongest." This is according to Mr. Qiu, a grapefruit importer, who recently talked about current conditions in the import grapefruit market.

"The fruit peel of South African grapefruit is smooth and glossy. The color and luster are perfect. The flavor is great too. Moreover, the grapefruit comes with a stem, and buyers give preference to fruit on the stem because that makes it easier to see how fresh the fruit is. Apart from South African grapefruit, Israeli grapefruit sells quite well too. Israeli grapefruit enters the market between November and April. The fruit peel is almost as lustrous, and the flavor almost as good, as South African grapefruit, but Israeli grapefruit does not come with a stem and the fruit peel is not as glossy. Last year the Chinese market also sold imported Chilean grapefruit, but this year the grapefruit from Chile has been absent," said Mr. Qiu.

"Grapefruit is different from most other fruits, because the flavor is not sweet, but rather fresh." According to Mr. Qiu, the best way to eat grapefruit is to take a large bite, so that the freshness of the juice mingles with the tartness of the fruit flesh. Only then can you truly experience the fresh flavor of grapefruit.

"The price of grapefruit is not influenced much by which production area the fruit came from. The price is primarily shaped by market demand." Mr. Qiu described various factors in the formation of grapefruit prices. "There are two reasons for growing demand: first, summer weather. When temperatures rise, the sales volume of grapefruit grows. Second, certain holidays such as the first of May stimulate demand for grapefruit because during the holidays consumers purchase drinks in restaurants or beverage shops that are made with pressed grapefruit juice. At the same time, sales in supermarkets and fruit shops are rather slow. That is not the case in some areas where certain dates in the moon calendar are celebrated with traditional offerings that include citrus fruits like grapefruit. The grapefruit is rather large and endures storage well. Moreover, the Chinese pronunciation of grapefruit sounds similar to such phrases as 'have money' or 'have everything you desire', which makes grapefruit a popular offering. For this reason some companies purchase grapefruit when they open for business. Finally, pregnant women often consume grapefruit products to replenish folic acids."

This year the first container of South African grapefruit arrived in April. The product quality is not bad, and compared to the same period last year the product quality is quite good. The supply volume is more or less similar to last year. Shipping periods are currently stable. The overall price is slightly lower than last year. The current price is around 280 yuan [41.83 USD] per box of 16 kg. Last year the price was around 370-380 yuan [55.28-56.78 USD] per box. So the price dropped by around 25%. "There are several reasons for this development. The supply season of Israeli grapefruit ended later than usual this year. The sales season of Israeli grapefruit is almost over and so their price is at its lowest around 120-130 yuan [17.93-19.42 USD] per box. These low prices naturally pulled the price of early-season South African grapefruit down as well. Last year the sales season of Israeli grapefruit ended early."

When talking about product movement, Mr. Qiu replied: "Product movement is rather slow at the moment, but that is normal for this time of year. And grapefruit is not a fast-moving product. In addition, there is currently more than enough market supply, so product movement is slow. Still, conditions are better than last year, but not better than the years before. Grapefruit sales rely on the beverage industry, and when beverage shops push for another grapefruit variety from Guangxi, then the product movement of import grapefruit slows down. Moreover, a new kind of domestic grapefruit flavoring appeared on the market two years ago. This product is very convenient for beverage shop owners when they prepare fresh grapefruit-flavored drinks, and the cost price is low. That has been a heavy blow for the import grapefruit market."

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Publication date: Mon 23 May 2022

