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**Dates Market in Turkey**

Turkey is a growing market for the consumption of dates since last few years primarily on account of migration of a large number of Syrian refugees from 2015 onwards. At present, Turkey is hosting more than 4 million Syrian refugees whereas its own population is 80 million.

Dates are not produced in Turkey and all its requirements are met through imports. Following table shows the import of fresh/dried dates during last five years both in value and quantity (Turkish National HS Code is up to 12 digits – HS Code for Fresh & Dried Dates is same. FY in Turkey is January-December):

Value in $000 and Quantity in MT

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **HS Code** | **Product** | **2014** | | **2015** | | **2016** | | **2017** | | **2018** | |
| **VAL** | **QTY** | **VAL** | **QTY** | **VAL** | **QTY** | **VAL** | **QTY** | **VAL** | **QTY** |
| **080410000000** | **Fresh or dried dates** | **19,003** | **23,371** | **20,176** | **25,657** | **36,475** | **26,771** | **51,309** | **34,214** | **47,738** | **39,309** |

Above table shows that there has been a significant rise both in value and volume terms for import of dates. The Average Unit Prices in regard to above imports are mentioned in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **HS Code** | **Product label** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Unit value, US$/KG** | **Unit value, US$/KG** | **Unit value, US$/KG** | **Unit value, US$/KG** | **Unit value, US$/KG** |
| **080410000000** | **Fresh or dried dates** | **0.81 or 810/MT** | **0.79 or 790/MT** | **1.36 or 1360/MT** | **1.50 or 1500/MT** | **1.21 or 1210/MT** |

The data shows that there has been a gradual increase in AUP of dates over a period of last five years. Following table depicts the major countries who export dates to Turkey:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Exporters** | **imported value in 2014** | **imported value in 2015** | **imported value in 2016** | **imported value in 2017** | **imported value in 2018** |
| **World** | **19,003** | **20,176** | **36,475** | **51,309** | **47,738** |
| Saudi Arabia | 3,974 | 4,254 | 8,778 | 13,972 | 14,244 |
| Israel (FTA with Turkey) | 3,297 | 2,971 | 7,894 | 11,913 | 12,400 |
| Iran (PTA with Turkey) | 4,268 | 4,982 | 8,676 | 11,446 | 6,312 |
| Tunisia (FTA with Turkey) | 3,822 | 4,959 | 5,668 | 5,522 | 5,446 |
| Palestine (FTA with Turkey) | 2,297 | 2,285 | 3,281 | 4,232 | 4,379 |
| **Pakistan** | **182** | **234** | **519** | **1,871** | **1,784** |
| Algeria | 168 | 1 | 86 | 964 | 1,171 |
| Jordan | 545 | 223 | 681 | 708 | 836 |
| Iraq | 30 | 90 | 534 | 517 | 410 |
| United States of America | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 295 |
| United Arab Emirates | 6 | 26 | 14 | 67 | 273 |
| Libya | 22 | 0 | 64 | 62 | 144 |

Above data shows that KSA has been a traditional and leading exporter of dates to Turkey with 30% share in Turkish global imports followed by Israel, Iran, Tunisia and Palestine. Pakistan’s share in 2018 was 3.7%.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Exporters** | **Value 2017 US$000** | **Share in Turkey Imports (%)** | **Quantity MT** | **Unit Value US$/MT** |
| **World** | **51,309** | **100** | **34,214** | **1,500** |
| Saudi Arabia | 13,972 | 27.2 | 7,411 | 1,885 |
| Israel | 11,913 | 23.2 | 2,322 | 5,130 |
| Iran | 11,446 | 22.3 | 18,123 | 632 |
| Tunisia | 5,522 | 10.8 | 2,745 | 2,012 |
| Palestine | 4,232 | 8.2 | 863 | 4,904 |
| **Pakistan** | **1,871** | **3.6** | **1,198** | **1,562** |
| Algeria | 964 | 1.9 | 440 | 2,191 |
| Jordan | 708 | 1.4 | 181 | 3,912 |
| Iraq | 517 | 1 | 802 | 645 |
| United Arab Emirates | 67 | 0.1 | 70 | 957 |
| Libya | 62 | 0.1 | 42 | 1,476 |
| India | 33 | 0.1 | 18 | 1,833 |

According to our discussion with leading Turkish importers of dates (list of companies along with contact details is attached), the usage of dates is mostly for Consumption directly by the end-users (consumers) and NOT for Industrial Purposes (Baking, Pastes, Jams, Confectionery etc.) as dates have never been a traditional fruit. Moreover, agriculture in Turkey is highly protected and this sector is very well looked after by the Turkish Government. Turkey is famous for its fruits esp. pomegranate, grapes, oranges, strawberries and exotic fruits like peaches, figs, apricots and also for a variety of dry fruits. These dry fruits are considered as substitute of dates in local baking, confectionery and other delicacies etc.

Most of the variety of dates produced in Pakistan are not liked by the local population including Aseel. The Turkish market is for Medjool dates. Today, around 50 types of dates are available in the local market. The cheapest ones are produced in Iran - those are very soft and have a muddy colour. Tunisian dates, which are light and bright and have thin skin, are quite valuable. In terms of price and quality, Median (Medina) dates are between Iranian and Tunisian dates, but they are the most consumed in Turkey. It is because people in Turkey consider dates a sacred staple and Medina was Prophet Muhammad's birth place. It is difficult to find Sudanese dates, which have a solid skin, good smell and are delicious. However, dates grown in California and Israel are also found in Turkey.

As mentioned before that Agri Sector is highly protected and is mostly outside the purview of FTAs undertaken by Turkey (23) and is excluded from its customs union with EU. The import duty rate for dates during 2019 are as below:

**Duty Rates**

Import Regime for the year 2019 - List I: Agricultural Products

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **HS Code** | | **Product Description** | **VAT(%)** | **SCT** | **Duty Rates (%)** | | | | | | | |
| **EU, EFTA, FAROE** | **GE** | **BOS-HERZ** | **South Korea** | **MYS** | **SNGPR** | **D-8** | **Other Count.** |
|  | **0804.10.00.00.00** | **Dates** | **8** | **-** | **15** | **0** | **0** | **9** | **15** | **15** | **15** | **15** |

For Georgia, its import is duty free and for South Korea its 9%. Pakistan falls in the D-8 countries and accordingly import duty applicable is 15%.

Following are requirements for import of dates to be undertaken by the Importer:

**Import Requirements**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Letter of Conformity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry/ Single Window System - E-Government (Annex 2 of Product Safety and Inspection 2019/5) |
| 2 | Commercial Quality Inspection on Export and Import/Single Window System - E-Government (Product Safety and Inspection: 2019/21 - Annex 1) |
| 3 | D-8 proof of origin certificate required for preferential tariff |
| 4 | Inspections for food products, products used in vegetal food and feeding industry and substance and materials in contact with foodstuff |
| 5 | This item is among the items listed as controlled cabotage goods. |
| 6 | Items warehousing of which requires special mechanisms |
| 7 | No permission for inward processing (a DTRE type scheme) |

**Recommendations**

In view of our discussion with local market importers and retailers and keeping in mind given trade data and statistics, following course of action is recommended:

* TDAP may send us complete details (type/variety of dates, technical details including size, nutritional value, colour etc., process of drying/de-hydrating before export shipment, both FOB Karachi and CnF Istanbul/Mersin ports prices) as demanded by the local suppliers. It would be appreciated if 100-200 samples are also sent along with the said information.
* TDAP may like to send a small 3-5 members delegation who could visit for themselves the local dates market, distribution system and competing varieties. This Consulate would arrange all the desired meetings and local facilitation.