



**MARKET SURVEY AND WEBINAR REPORT
ON DATES IN
FRANCE**



BY:

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WEBINAR ON DATES MARKET OF FRANCE (24TH NOVEMBER 2020)

In order to explore the export potential of the Pakistani dates in the French and EU market, a webinar was organized by the Trade development authority of Pakistan (TDAP) in collaboration with Embassy of Pakistan on 24th November 2020.

The webinar was attended by senior officers of Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Commercial Section, Paris, Chamber of Commerce Sukkur, Pakistani exporters of dates and leading importers of Food products in France. Keynote speakers of the event included

- i. Mr. Abdul Kareem Memon (Director General, TDAP, Karachi)
- ii. Mr. Moin Uddin Ahmad Wani (Trade and Investment Counsellor, Paris)
- iii. Mr. Sardar Zahoor (CEO Shama International)
- iv. Mr. Saeed Chaudhary (CEO AH Foods)
- v. Mr. Mohsin Bullo, Product Manager, TDAP, Sukkur

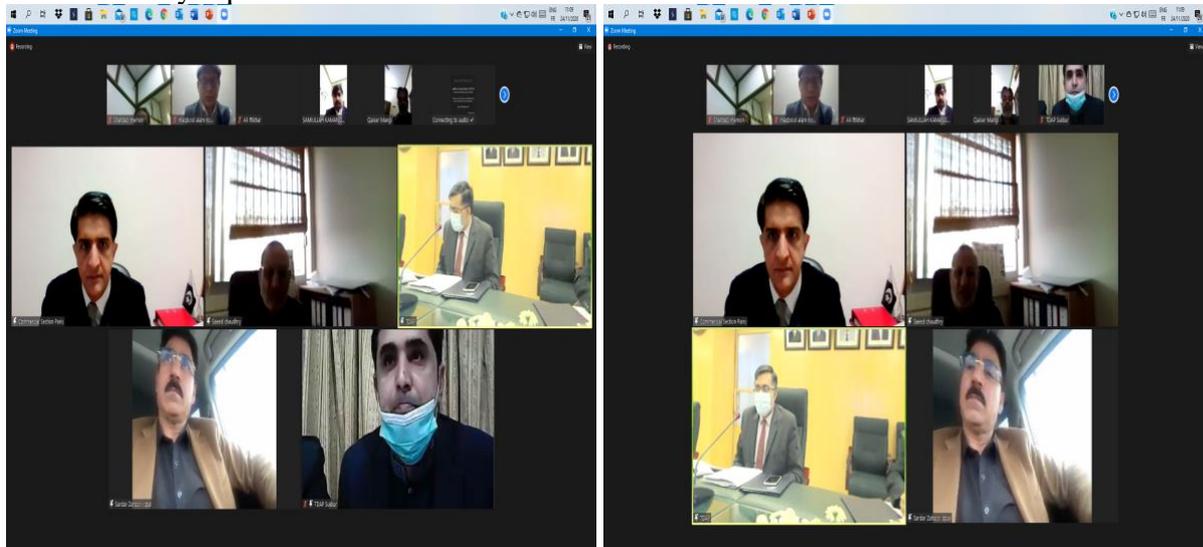
At the beginning the the Director General, TDAP, Mr. Abdul Kareem Memon informed that Pakistan has been traditionally exporting its dates to many countries, however, its main trade was with Indian and owing to suspension of trade with India a sharp decrease in exports has been observed. Therefore, Pakistani exporters in with assistance of TDAP are exploring nontraditional markets.

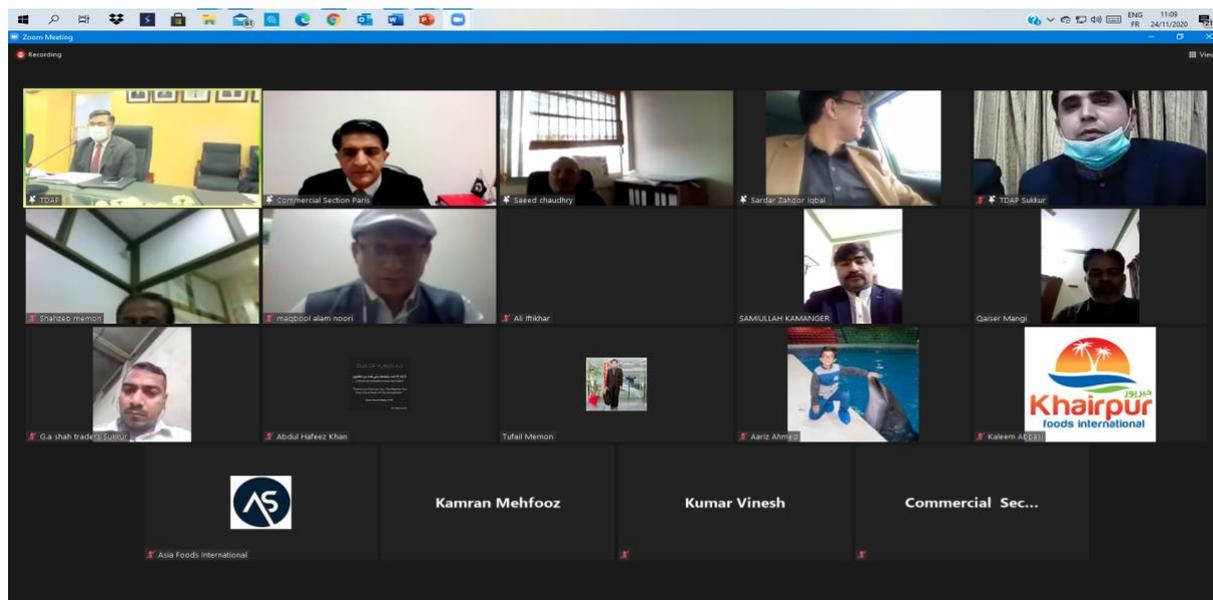
The undersigned while presenting the market survey, highlighted that France has immense potential in this sector, however, share of Pakistan remains almost negligible. It was assured that every possible assistance will be done to link up Pakistani exporters with the importers of dates in France. Subsequently, Mr. Sardar Zahoor (CEO Shama International) & Mr. Saeed Chaudhary (CEO AH Foods) shared their knowledge about the dates market assured that they are keen to examine the possibility of importing Pakistani dates.

During the interactive session, the participants inquired about opportunities, potential importers. There were brief interventions by the Chairman Chamber of Commerce Sukkur, exporters and dates growers.

The webinar ended on a note of thanks to the Chair.

Market survey report on dates in France is enclosed.





INTRODUCTION:

Dates, fresh or dry, are the 1649th best-selling product and the 4,126th most complex product, according to the Product Complexity Index (PCI)¹. The date is the edible fruit of the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*,).

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION:

On average, more than 5 million tonnes of dates are harvested worldwide each year. Egypt is the biggest producer, but dates do not travel much - 90% of the production is consumed in its country of origin, especially as feed for livestock. Dates are mainly supplied to Europe by North Africa (mainly Algeria and Tunisia).



DIFFERENT TYPES OF DATES:

There are over 300 varieties of dates around the world. The shape, color and taste change from type to type. Fresh or dried following are the most popular types of dates. Some of most common varieties include;

- Deglet En-Nour, nicknamed the queen of dates or the date of shining light, is one of the most important agricultural assets in North Africa and accounts for 95% of American production. Known with its blonde color of transparent appearance with a sweet and juicy taste with a natural aroma of old rum, vanilla, orange blossom.
- Medjool called the Cadillac of dates, they are large, sweet, moist, meaty, with a semi-sweet combination and a firm texture. Medjool dates have a creamy dark brown skin color with a caramel flavor.

¹ <https://www.waystocap.com/blog/fr/importation-des-dattes/>

- Hayani Dates is eaten fresh like other varieties such as Sphinx and Bahri dates, unlike other types of dates which are naturally dried, hence their very sweet taste. Hayani dates are less sweet and lower in calories. The oblong fruit has a smooth, ripe texture with a shiny black skin. Usually are presented fresh in branches, the Haryana is available all year round. Each fresh date weighs 12-20 grams.
- Allig and Khouat Allig : these dates are characterized by their elongated shapes and dark mahogany colors ; long in shape, soft to the eye and particularly tasty.
- Dates Halawy and Khadrawi, they are quite similar in shape and color. These sweet dates are thick, caramelized and have a sweet taste. Their appearance is wrinkled and the skin varies from yellow to amber.
- Al Ajwa: These dates are the most popular among Muslims. Not only were they described as a fruit of paradise, but it was also believed that the prophet used to plant his seeds himself where his spiritual value comes from. Also, they are deliciously sweet and fruity, quite dark in color and tend to be more of a dry variety, Al Ajwa is a strain cultivated at Madinah Munawwara in Saudi Arabia.



The desiccation of dates begins on the tree and continues in the sun or in an oven, taking care to preserve the fruit's taste qualities: the date must keep its fragrance and remain sufficiently soft.

PRODUCING COUNTRIES:

Algeria and Tunisia are known for their exports of deglet nour, produced mainly in the regions of Biskra (Tolga) and Tozeur. Similarly, Morocco has long produced Medjoul (a term meaning "unknown" or "anonymous" in Arabic). But in the XIXth century epidemic has ravaged more than ten million date palms. A few plants have nevertheless been saved and reinstalled in southern California in the 1970s, the Jewish Agency imported a few for planting in the Arabah Valley. This is why the European market is now supplied with American and Israeli Medjoul dates. Tunisia is the leading date exporter (by value). The leading importer in Europe is France (in value).



The gulf region accounts for almost a little over 33% of world date production. The culture of planting dates is a common heritage in the region, besides being one of the oldest economic and agricultural practices in the Arab nation.

The largest basin of date cultivations is in the emirate AL-AIN with 120 varieties of dates and 8.5 million palm trees. The total palm population accounts for 40 million. The Emiratis are famous for producing the Dabbas, Khenazi and LuLu. In Saudi Arabia, palm trees produce more than 157,000 hectares which cultivate more than 300 types of dates, let's name the date far est the date Al Ajwa for its religious value. In addition, Iraq and Oman contribute to the region's diverse date yields with varieties such as Amir Hajj, Diary and Khashawi. Nonetheless, some countries in sub-Saharan Africa are making notable efforts to produce dates such as Chad, Niger, Somali, Benin, and Kenya.



Export in dollars. 2018 figures			Imports in dollars. 2015 figures	
1.	 Tunisia	280,129,000	 India	183,169,000
2.	 Saudi Arabia	201,393,000	 Morocco	78,519,000
3.	 United Arab Emirates	197,553,000	 France	72,090,000
4.	 Israel	160,726,000	 Malaysia	47,208,000
5.	 Iran	138,814,000	 UK	38,532,000
6.	 Pakistan	112,731,000	 Indonesia	37,495,000
7.	 Iraq	95,562,000	 United States	35,688,000
8.	 Algeria	91,030,000	 Germany	31,872,000
9.	 United States	66,141,000	 Canada	30,165,000
10.	 Egypt	49,729,000	 Russia	29,527,000
11.	 France	42,133,000	Other countries	362 134,000
12.	Other countries	262,862,000		

Source: <https://www.ciheam.org/om/pdf/a28/96605884.pdf>

INTERNATIONAL TRADE:

The main date exporters Tunisia (\$ 247 million), Pakistan * (\$ 139 million), Iran (\$ 137 million), Israel (\$ 126 million) and Saudi Arabia (91.8 million) millions of dollars). The main importers are India (\$ 238 million), France (\$ 85.1 million), Morocco (\$ 67.1 million), Germany (\$ 61.9 million) and the United Kingdom (57, \$ 9 million).

On the other hand, the countries with the largest annual production of dates are Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia. The table below shows the countries with the largest annual production of dates around the world.

Rank	Country	Annual production of dates in tonnes
1	Egypt	1,084,529
2	Iran	947,809
3	Saudi Arabia	836,983
4	Iraq	675,440
5	Pakistan	556,608
6	United Arab Emirates	533,701
7	Algeria	485,415
8	Sudan	435,668
9	South sudan	432,100
10	Oman	239,397

Source : <https://www.waystocap.com/blog/fr/importation-des-dattes/>

* <https://www.rungisinternational.com/produit-de-saison/la-datte/>

However, different attributes differentiate dates from each region and country.

DATES IN FRANCE:

France is also the European leader in the consumption of dates (around 300 grams per year and per inhabitant). Outside the industrial segment, France consume three types of dates: extra-dry, dry and fresh. At varietal level, ‘Deglet Nour’ dominates the dry and extra dry segment. The ‘Medjoul’ is the top of the fresh market. Finally, note the rebirth of one origin, that of Morocco. Production, relaunched in particular under the "Green Morocco" plan, is starting to score modestly for exports to France and Europe. The objective is to reach 5,000 tonnes exported by 2020. To achieve this, operators are betting on high-end products with the ‘Medjoul’. In 2015, 700 tonnes were exported, including 70 tonnes to the European market.

Dates import by France		In \$ million
		95.9
Sr.No	Main Suppliers	
1	Tunisia	37
2	Algeria	33.5
3	Israel	13
4	Palestine, State of	4.6
5	Netherlands	1.4
6	Turkey	1.3
7	Iran,	1.06
8	United States of America	0.93
9	Jordan	0.85
10	Saudi Arabia	0.65
25	Pakistan	\$ 7 thousand only

PAKISTANI DATES EXPORTS STATISTICS:

Pakistan`s total export of Dates Product		2019 \$ Million
8041020	Fresh or dried dates: dried	53.1
8041010	Fresh or dried dates: fresh	17.5
Total		70.6

Top 10 Export destinations of Pakistan		2019 \$ Million
1	United Arab Emirates	18.7
2	India	15.3
3	Nepal	10.8
4	Oman	1.6
5	Singapore	1.1
6	Thailand	1.1
7	Bangladesh	0.997
8	United Kingdom	0.950
9	Germany	0.518
10	Canada	0.348

TARIFS & DUITES :

Pakistan enjoys preferential access to the European market since 2013, In December of 2013, Pakistan acquired the GSP plus status from the European Union, granting member states duty-free access to 96 percent of Pakistani exports to the EU. Date is also among the list of product which benefits from GSP plus status. Otherwise the rate of tariff on import of dates in around 7.7 percent.

DATE PRODUCTS:

Dates are ambiguous in the sense that, depending on the stage of maturity, they can either be classified as a fruit, comparable to any other fruit consumed between meals, or alternatively, as a food source as part of the daily meal, in particular in the rural areas of the date producing countries. Though not a true staple food by definition like rice, potatoes or cassava, dates, on occasion, have been forced to play this role for lack of other staples. There are several ways where dates are consumed in day to day life:

1. Home-made date preparations:

Include those dishes and foods for which whole dates are acquired

- i. Fresh dates are often found in combination with milk (fresh and sour) and milk products, such as yoghurt, curd, butter and cheese. Dates are also stewed in fresh milk or thoroughly mixed with milk powder (513).
- ii. A refined delicacy consists of dates, butter and honey, named Khabis,
- iii. Ground dates mixed with sesame oil is a well-known dish and probably most effective with which to pass the cold desert nights.
- iv. A typical example of complementarity in the consumption of fruits and vegetables is the combination of dates and either cucumbers or water melons, in which the

sweetness of the date is diluted and the taste of the cucumber or water melon is reinforced. In more recent times these combinations are extended to recipes for date fruit salads, using pineapple, citrus, apples, pears, celery and lettuces.

- v. Date and starch preparations are frequently found and normally need cooking or frying.
- vi. Dates are frequently used in homemade pastry
- vii. Dates and nuts (walnut, pistachio, almonds), and also sesame seed, are a well-appreciated combination and frequently prepared in different forms for home use
- viii. It is clear that this list of homemade date preparations in the traditional date producing countries is far from complete because so many variations are possible depending on local availability of other foodstuffs and prevailing traditions and customs.
- ix. Dates used in cooked foods are even more rare as witnessed by the paucity of recipes to this effect in the European cook books.
 - a) for sandwich spreads
 - b) for party snacks
 - c) for salads

2. Semi-finished Date Products and Mixtures:

- i. macerated chips
- ii. date paste:
- iii. extruded date pieces:
- iv. diced dates:
- v. dehydrated dates:
- vi. Dehydrated Dates in Powder Form
- vii. Breakfast Foods Incorporating Dates
- viii. Date Cookies
- ix. Date-muesli Bar
- x. Dried Fruit and Nuts Mixtures including Dates
- xi. Different Types of Pickle incorporating Dates

CONCLUSION:

Pakistan dates are regularly exported in the European Union (EU) including France, however, the share of Pakistani dates is almost negligible. The Major competitors of dates are Tunisia, Algeria and Saudi Arabia.

After background interaction with various importers of food products it transpired that there is market for Pakistani dates provided the same is exported in good packing and at a competitive price. Some of the exporters in fact agreed to explore the possibility of importing dates from Pakistan and requested for provision of contacts of reliable dates exporters.

