

Newsletter Date
September 2, 2009

WATERMELON

PROMOTING THE CONSUMPTION OF WATERMELON



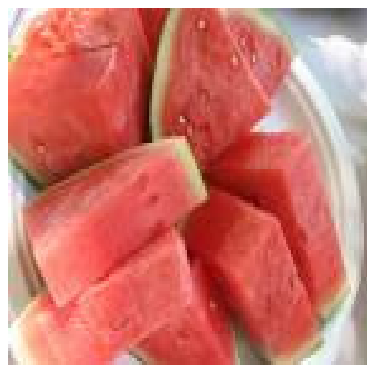
Introduction

Watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*) is an important fruit in the diet of Jamaicans. In 2008, total consumption was 12,305 mt, while local production of 12,230 mt contributed 99.4% of the country's watermelon demand.



Prices

On the week ending August 28, 2009 the average retail price of watermelon was \$133/kg while the farmgate price range was from \$33 to \$66/kg.



Supply Availability

Watermelon is cultivated islandwide. In 2008, 91% of the island's production came from St. Elizabeth and Manchester. The fruit is available all year round.

Target Markets

In 2008, agro-processors utilized approximately 35,094 kg of watermelon or 0.29% of total demand.

New Market Opportunity:

National School Feeding Programme

The Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries in collaboration with Nutrition Products Limited and Jamaica Exotic Flavours and Essences Company Limited will introduce locally produced fruit juices, including watermelon in the National School Feeding Programme for the 2009 to 2010 school year. Initially, the programme will provide fruit juices once per week which eventually will be increased to four (4) days per week.

Approximately 33,524 kg of fresh watermelon (20,114 kg of puree) will be required initially on a monthly basis for the National School Feeding Programme.

For further details contact:
Ministry of Agriculture, Marketing and Credit Div. Hope Gardens, Kingston 6
Tel: 927-1731-50
Fax: 927-1792
Email: marketing@moa.gov.jm
pdlyttle@moa.gov.jm

Uses

The watermelon is consumed as a dessert, snack or beverage. The fruit can also be included in many recipes such as smoothies, sherbets or salsa.

Nutritional Benefits

Watermelon is practically a multivitamin unto itself since it is high in Vitamin A, B6 and C.

The fruit is certified by the American Heart Association as being heart healthy because it is low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

Health Benefits

- Energy production
- Protects against muscular degeneration
- Fights heart disease
- Loaded with anti-oxidants
- Reduces the risk of cancer
- Prevents erectile dysfunction
- Good source of Vitamins and Minerals