

MSU Product Center

For Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Minimally processed fruits - Overview

Products included in the product line

- Minimally processed fruits are prepared and handled fruit products designed to improve shelf-life and convenience to the consumer while minimizing changes that would alter the product's freshness. Example: fresh peeled, fresh-cut or pitted fruits.

General market trend and information

- Per capita consumption of minimally processed fruits has been on the rise in recent years.
- In 2002, retail sales of fresh fruits consumed as snacks in the U.S. were worth \$15.5 billion. In 2003, sales of fresh-cut fruits through supermarkets, mass merchandise stores and food service outlets have shown an increase of 18%, 13%, and 10% respectively.
- Minimally processed fruits have partly emerged from product line extensions of canned fruits.

New product trends

- The product line has displayed a consistent growth of new products in recent years. In 1999, 42 new products were introduced in major global markets. This number has grown to 216 in 2004.
- Most of the new products are introduced as ready-to-eat healthy snacks. There are also products introduced for use as side dishes or as fresh products that can easily be added to one-dish meals as salads, casseroles or stir-fry dishes.
- Most packages for these products are suitable for snacking. These include resealable plastic bags, plastic trays or individual wrappers. Some packages are designed to meet demands by specific groups, for example, fruits in tub or bowl designed for children.

Manufacturing and distribution issues

- On the supply-side, marketing fresh fruit products is becoming less fragmented and the number of fruit growers, shippers and wholesalers is declining from year to year. Consolidations and merges have also altered the traditional market relationships on the retail side.
- Supermarkets have the highest share in marketing fresh fruits. The food service channels (restaurants and fast-food chains) and mass merchandisers have also increased sales in recent years.

Overall assessment of opportunities

- Minimally processed fruits are highly regarded for their variety, convenience and health benefits. The products are well positioned to benefit from this trend. Product innovations to extend product lines and new packaging designs will be key in raising sales from these products.

Sources

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