The current situation regarding imports of selected horticultural products from India into the European market in general, and the UK market in particular, is examined. The products selected for review are mango, melon, pomegranate, sapodilla, onion, and various Asian vegetables (okra, tindori, kantola and parval). The potential for either beginning or increasing volumes of sea-shipment is also investigated.

In 1994, India exported about 3000 tonnes of mango to Europe, 1000 of which went to the UK. There have already been some sea-shipments of mango to the UK, but it is noted that although mango has the potential of all the products examined for increasing volumes of sea-freight, the very fragile Alphonso variety may not survive the long transit time. The Kesar and Pairi varieties may have some promise in this respect, but the low demand for the Rajapuri variety in the UK may limit its potential. Indian exports of melon to Europe are insignificant and accounted for only 0.001% of the European market in 1994. The market for melon in the UK is growing substantially, but few traders are optimistic about the possibility of sea-freighting Indian melon, partly because the Indian season coincides with that of Spain against which it has little chance of competing, and partly because many believe that the fruit could not be preserved for the 30 or so days of transit.

There is some optimism about the development potential of papaya on European markets. The UK is attracted to good 'eating' papaya with good 'visual quality', but the sources are limited. The main suppliers are currently Brazil, Jamaica and Costa Rica. If the technical problems associated with importing papaya could be overcome, this could be a fast growth area. No disaggregated data are available on the supply of pomegranates to Europe, but small volumes are imported into the UK both by sea and by air. It is generally felt that the UK demand is too low for pomegranates to have much potential. An improvement in the visual quality of the fruit would probably have the greatest impact on its expansion in the UK market.

Sapodilla is only traded by Asian wholesalers. It is a very low volume product in the UK and its extremely short shelf-life means that its potential for sea-shipment is not high. Speciality bananas occupy a niche market with small sales. Although there is some potential for market growth, traders feel that the process is unlikely to be rapid. There is little enthusiasm amongst traders for the import of Indian onions. Demand is very low and India would not be able to compete against the high domestic and European supply. There is also a low demand in the UK for the other Asian vegetables reviewed. Of them all, okra (ladies finger) has the most potential for expansion on the UK market. Sea-shipments of okra are currently imported into the UK but small volumes are imported into the UK both by sea and by air. It is generally felt that the UK demand is too low for pomegranates to have much potential. An improvement in the visual quality of the fruit would probably have the greatest impact on its expansion in the UK market.
For identifying markets for organic ginger, it will be advisable to campaign aggressively in European countries as well as in U.S.A, Canada and Japan. Moreover, states producing ginger in North East region, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, etc. need to be geared up for producing quality ginger by providing good planting material, technical backup in cultivation, etc. (viii) Turmeric: There is excellent potential for exporting organic turmeric. National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF) at Nasik have already developed a variety which is suitable for cultivation in Maharashtra, M.P and Orissa States during late kharif season. Thus, export of Arad (H) variety through electrically ventilated containers could be explored to Europe and Japan during February to May.