

PEOPLE INVOLVED IN PRODUCTION OF A BANANA

BANANA WORKER

12-14 hours per day of hard physical labour in hot conditions.

Selecting the best bananas.

Washing bananas – you will have your hands in water all day.

Cutting bananas – you will have to carry heavy loads of bananas on your back.

Applying fertilisers and pesticides – can lead to health risks such as cancer and other diseases. Pesticides are also sprayed from planes – they are likely to fall on your home or the local school.

Worry: Will you have enough money to buy food, pay medical bills or to send your children to school? You may not be allowed to meet together with other workers to complain about your pay, the way you are treated at work or where you live. You will be discouraged from joining a trade union.

PLANTATION OWNER

Plantation running costs: You will have to pay for expensive pesticides, fuel for pesticide-spraying aeroplanes, tools and machinery.

Cost of lawyers: In case workers sue you for work accidents.

Waste: Regulations in most countries in Europe and most shoppers want “perfect fruit” – no mark on the skin, nice shape etc. This takes a lot of skill and money to achieve. If any of your bananas don't meet these high standards they have to be scrapped – so you lose money.

Risk factor: You bear the cost if the harvest is bad, or a hurricane or pest destroys your crop.

Modernisation investments: You need money to keep paying for the latest machines and ideas, so your plantation stays up to date and you stay in business.

Cost of land: The longer your land is used to grow bananas, the more the goodness in the soil will be used up and you will need to pay for expensive fertilisers, or buy new land!

SHIPPER

You face the following costs:

Ships: Big cargo ships are very expensive to buy and keep in working order.

Fuel: You need to pay for fuel for the ships – one load between Latin America and Europe may be at sea for up to five weeks.

Insurance: If a cargo is lost or damaged, it may be your fault and you may have to pay for it.

Refrigeration: On board, the bananas are kept in big fridges to prevent them from ripening during the time at sea. If they ripen too soon they will be spoilt by the time they arrive at the shops.

Port fees: You will have to pay for your ships to be in port at both ends of the sea journey.

SHOPS AND SUPERMARKETS

Staff: You have to pay the people who work in your store.

Running costs: Lighting, transport, designing of staff uniforms, carrier bags etc.

Competition: You need to take on new ideas, maybe build a bigger shop, buy new machinery – all to make sure you make more money than other shops and stay in business.

Risk: If the bananas are handled badly or arrive on the shelves over-ripe, your customers will not be happy – they may decide not to shop at your store any more.

Advertising: You will need to advertise what you sell and to show how good your shop is so that shoppers come to buy their shopping at your store rather than going anywhere else.

IMPORTER AND RIPENER

Transport: By truck from the European port to big ripening centres, and from there to the shops.

Contracts: You will have to promise the plantation owner that you will buy a certain amount of bananas each week. You will have to promise the shops you will provide a certain amount of bananas each week. Whatever happens, you will have to keep the promises, even if something goes wrong in the supply chain and you are let down.

Licence fee: You will have to pay for an import license to bring your bananas into the European Union.

Big offices: Importers “need” big, fancy office buildings for the work that their role involves.

Ripening gas: Ethylene is used to ripen bananas.

Repackaging: After ripening the bananas must be repackaged so you will have to pay for the materials and for the workers to do this.