



امكانية تصدير زيت الزيتون العضوي السوري

Export Potential for the Syrian Organic Olive Oil

A. Diab⁽¹⁾

B. Gennaro⁽²⁾

R. Callieris⁽²⁾

(1). Office of international cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, Syria.

(2). Prof. of Department of agro-environmental and territorial sciences, Faculty of Economic, Bari University, Italy.

(2). Dr. of Department of organic, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, Italy.

الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة حالة إنتاج وتسويق زيت الزيتون العضوي السوري وإمكانية تصدير هذا المنتج إلى الأسواق العالمية ، أجريت التجربة في المعهد المتوسطي الزراعي في باري في إيطاليا خلال الفترة من 2006 حتى 2011 . أجريت لقاءات دورية مع المصدرين الأساسيين لزيت الزيتون العضوي والعضوي في سورية عبر استخدام طريقة (Case Study Methodology) ، هذا بالإضافة إلى جمع بيانات حول موقع سورية في السوق العالمي لزيت الزيتون وذلك من المصادر العالمية التالية: (منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة، المجلس الدولي لزيت الزيتون، Uncomtrade, Eurostat). أظهرت النتائج أن هناك إمكانية لتصدير الزيت العضوي حيث توقع المصدرين السوريين زيادة واضحة في إنتاج الزيت العضوي في السنوات القادمة وابدوا رغبتهم الكبيرة في تصدير هذا المنتج، ولاسيما إلى ألمانيا بسبب زيادة طلبها على زيت الزيتون العضوي الممتاز (الأكسترا) من دول العالم الثالث ، وفنزويلا كنتيجة للعلاقات القوية مع سورية، ولاسيما على صعيد تصدير زيت الزيتون ، والهند والصين حيث يمثلان الأسواق الأكثر احتمالية للزيت السوري وذلك لان القدرة التنافسية للزيت السوري أكبر في تلك الأسواق بالمقارنة مع الدول المستهلكة تقليدياً بالإضافة الى العلاقات الجيدة مع الحكومة السورية، واخيراً دول الخليج العربي وذلك نتيجة لزيادة طلب تلك الدول على المنتج العضوي والمنافسة القوية للزيت العضوي السوري في تلك الأسواق وانخفاض الضرائب الجمركية. إن أهم المشاكل الأساسية التي يمكن إن تعترض طريق تصدير هذا المنتج هي التكاليف العالية للحصول على الشهادة، والضعف في الخبرة التسويقية للمنتجات العضوية. وبكل الأحوال فأن هناك جهود كبيرة يجب على الحكومة السورية أن تقوم بها وذلك بغية تطوير قطاع الزراعة العضوية والذي يعد بمثابة المفتاح الأساس لضمان الأمن الغذائي المحلي والتوازن التجاري في المرحلة القادمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية : سورية ، زيت الزيتون العضوي ، إمكانية التصدير ، دراسة حالة.

Abstract

The objective of this work is to examine the production and marketing of Syrian organic olive oil and possibility for its export to the international market. Experiment was performed in the Mediterranean agronomic institute Bari in Italy, during the period 2006 to 2011. Exploratory interviews were conducted with the main Syrian exporters of conventional and organic extra virgin olive oil by using the case study methodology. In addition, to collect data about the Syrian position in the international market where collected from international trade statistics databases (Faostat, Uncomtrade,

looc and Eurostat). Results showed that there is potential for exporting Syrian organic olive oil. Syrian exporters expect a significant increase in the production of organic extra virgin olive oil and they are strongly motivated to export this product mainly to Germany because the increase of its demand of organic extra virgin olive oil from third countries, Venezuela because there are strong agricultural relations with Syria, especially in terms of export of olive oil, India and China represent interesting potential markets because in these countries Syria is more competitive than in traditional consuming countries and because of good relations with the Syrian government. Lately Gulf States because of the increased demand of organic products, competitiveness of Syrian organic olive oil, lack customs duties. Main problems are the cost of certification and lack of marketing experience. Further efforts of the Syrian government are necessary to support the development of the organic sector as a key factor for improving both domestic food security and food trade balance.

Key words: Organic olive oil, Case study, Export potential, Syria.

Introduction

Organic agriculture in developing countries increased in past decades especially due to the high demand of organic products in developed countries (Karki et al., 2011) and the organically managed land area increased from nearly 15 million hectares in 2000 to 37 million hectares in 2009 (FIBL, 2011). At the same level the growth of the organic land area in developing countries was mainly based on increasing exports of organic food to developed countries (Parrott, 2006) and the two most important factors influencing the development of organic farming are developing market for organic products and the influence of policy.

Syria is one of the third countries which finally has developed its national law of organic agriculture through the Ministry of Agriculture to develop this sector and support its growth and it has been able over the past years through the project in collaboration with the Italian Government and FAO to carry out a number of steps which contributed to some extent to enter into the world of organic farming. This project focused on training technical staff, contributed to raise awareness among consumers and farmers about the importance of organic farming, created many organic field farm schools in the different provinces and for different crops, especially the olive tree, which is one of the earliest crops and the easiest in Syria to be converted to organic agriculture. As mentioned previously Syria found itself at the very early stage of development for a few organic commodities like cotton and olive oil, which are already produced and marketed abroad (Santucci, 2010).

There are many justifications for our research, which will be summarized as follows : Olive is one of the most important agricultural crops in Syria with around 92 million trees and Syria is one of the major producers of olive oil at the level of the world with a production around 180 thousand tons in 2011 (IOOC, 2011). But right now the export quantities of this product is limited in comparison with the available quantities for export and that is for several reasons: lack of a sufficient number of researches that examine the reality of olive oil export and its development and finally the lack of marketing staff at the level of government. On the other hand the olives is one of the most important crops which began the shift to organic agriculture in Syria, where the estimated quantities of extra virgin organic olive oil reached to 156 tons in 2007, but until now there is a lack in the researches related to the future of organic farming in Syria and the evaluation of export of Syrian organic products at the international market, especially with respect to olive oil. In addition to that there is lack in research related to study the possibility of using the same markets where Syria export to them conventional olive oil as potential markets for Syrian organic olive oil.

The main objective of this research is to explore the true reality of Syrian organic olive oil and the possibility of exporting this product to international markets under the circumstances surrounded at both the local level including the export laws and available production to export in addition to subsidies also at the regional and the international level including the competition with the producing countries in addition to conditions of quality and reputation of Syrian organic olive oil .

Materials and Methods

A case study based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained through extensive description and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context is a method for learning about a complex instance. (Morra et al., 2009). There are three types of case study methods: explanatory; exploratory; descriptive and it can be single or multiple also it can be qualitative, quantitative (Yin, 1994). Case study research, through reports of past studies is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter et al., 2008). There are two key approaches that guide case study methodology; one proposed by Robert Stake (1995) and the second suggested by Robert Yin (2003, 2006). Both seek to ensure that the topic of interest is well explored, and that the essence of the phenomenon is revealed. Particularly case study research is considered useful to study processes (Patton, 1990), and has been widely used in research on organic farming (Vogtmann, 1983).

The purpose of this paper is to study the possibility of export Syrian organic olive oil, which Syria began its production from a few years and trying to discover the details of Syrian olive oil sector, especial at the level of export, where Syria occupied the fifth exporter of olive oil at the worldwide level (IOOC, 2011), as well as the possibility of investment markets which Syria is exporting its olive oil as potential markets for organic olive oil in addition to understand the export olive oil process because the case study research is very useful to study processing (Patton, 1990). And the way used for this paper is multiple case studies by making in depth – interviews with small number of Syrian exporters with consider that each export as the individual case study because in this way someone will have the ability to discover the real situation of the Syrian export of olive oil by gathering information from each case and finally make comparison between all as the one case study and which is depends on what the Yin researcher recommended in 1989.

Therefore we worked to prepare a list of all Syrian exporters of olive oil and collect as much as possible information about their companies, their work , their experience , their activities and the ways to communicate with them , after that we have developed a set of criteria which help us to identify main exporters for our case study research and these criteria are as follows: Long experience, Different markets, good background about organic olive oil , different Syrian region, different size of companies and type of olive oil exported. Based on these criteria, we selected a number of exporters with attention to divide them into three categories: Exporters who are working only in the export sector, exporters who are having other activities like farmer or in packaging and the last one is the exporters who are exporting organic and conventional olive oil in the same time. The next step in this research was to prepare the guide of interviews with the Syrian exporters (questions), in this step we have divided the guide of interviews into five categories: the first was centered about the experience of the exporter and his activities and the problems encountered in his work at the local level, in addition to his relationship with the local and global markets and the type of relations that links him to these markets, and his future plans for his work. The second category was about the olive oil sector in Syria and the questions focused on production and the possibility of increasing it in the future and its impact on the export sector, this impact from the standpoint of exporters. Also there are questions regarding the characteristics of Syrian olive oil and the extent of proximity to the specifications of World olive oil, in addition to questions about olive mills in Syria and the impact of its work on the quality of olive oil. The third category is for the most important partners of Syria current and suggested from the perspective of Syrian exporters, and questions about the problems facing them in global markets and the solutions adopted. There is a range of questions in this category revolve around the key competitors for Syria at the level of export of olive oil and how to strengthen the competitive ability of Syria from the perspective of exporters.

The pre-final group was about the Syrian laws supporting or parked barrier either the progress and development of export sector for Syrian olive oil in addition to questions that revolve around the view of exporters about the conventions signed by the Syrian government in the past and the extent of facilitating the work of them. The last category is very important, we want to achieve benefit from the experience of exporters to find out the real situation of organic agriculture in Syria and the possibility of development of this sector under the current circumstances, especially at the level of

export. We also want to know the importance of organic olive oil and its role in improving the capacity of Syrian olive oil to enter the global markets and improve competitiveness. On the other hand, we tried to investigate the importance of organic agriculture in improving the quality of Syrian olive oil and its specifications to adapt to the requirements of the global market, a set of questions revolve around the importance of the new released law about the organic agriculture and its importance in terms of export. The final set of questions within this category centered mainly on the export and the possibility of using markets that Syria exporting to them conventional olive as potential markets for organic olive oil, and what are the potential problems that may face exporting Syrian organic olive oil, and expectations of the Syrian exporters for the future of Syrian organic olive oil and its importance. Also some questions are directed only to exporters of organic olive oil, which revolves around the their relationship with foreign markets, and their information about laws of exporting organic products to EU markets and the problems faced them in these markets .

SWOT analysis methodology:

A SWOT analysis describes current conditions and tries to comprise the regional situation in terms of strengths (internal, should be stabilized) Weaknesses (internal, should be reduced), opportunities (external, should be used) and threats (external, should be fight against). The purpose is to isolate key issues and to facilitate a strategic approach (Mindtools, 2006).

The SWOT analysis as an instrument for strategic management dates back to the 1950's when planning issues in business management have been sorted in program planning categories (Business balls, 2006). It can be part of a regional marketing process as described; it helps to define the main goals of a development strategy and alternatives (Veres, 2006). The aim of any SWOT analysis is to identify the key internal and external factors that are important to achieve the objective. And SWOT analysis key groups piece of information into two main categories:

Internal factors – The strengths and weaknesses internal factors of the case study.

External factors – The opportunities and threats presented by the external environment of the case study.

Results and Discussion

Report of Comparison between case studies

Comparison between the profiles of companies:

Though interview held with some Syrian exporters, we found out that most exporters of olive oil in Syria do several activities in addition to their work as exporters such as packaging; in addition to that some of them work as a producer of olive oil (farmer) most of them are owners of small fields. We have noticed that the companies which are exporting organic extra virgin olive oil started newly its activities compared with the companies exporting extra virgin olive oil. Moreover the annual volume exported by conventional olive oil companies ranged from 2500 tons to 5000 tons which is very high with respect to organic extra virgin olive oil companies whose export volume ranged from 5 to 20 tons.

With regard to the method of packaging, we found that all organic companies are exporting by small bottles ranging from 15 ml, 25 ml, 250ml, 500ml, 700 ml, which are imported from international markets, such as Turkey, also most of conventional companies are exporting in the same way but sometimes conventional exporters export virgin olive oil and pomace olive oil in bulk in order to compensate the low profits coming from the core business and the desire of some countries importing olive oil without a brand to mix it with the national product and sell it as a national product, to take advantage from the reputation of their product, such as the case of Italy .

We have seen that there is diversity in the markets where Syrian companies are exporting olive oil such as Gulf countries, USA, China, Japan and European countries mainly Italy and Spain.

With respect to the marketing methods we noticed that most of Syrian exporters rely on their personal experience gained in international trade without having any professional marketing team to help and advise them.

In relation to the price of Syrian bottled extra virgin olive oil exporters said that Italy is the most profitable country, other profitable countries for Syrian organic extra virgin olive oil export are Germany, Saudi Arabic, Qatar and Turkey.

Finally it is worth to mention that some export companies of Syrian olive oil began applying the regulations related to quality such as ISO 9001, the system of Food Administration ISO 22000, and the system of risk management HACCP with the help of foreign companies such as German company TUV CERT because they have an high interest to improve their product and consequently to increase confidence in their product and to facilitate its entry into the global market (Table 1).

Tab 1. Comparison between the profiles of Syrian exporters.

		Companies to export conventional olive oil				Companies to export organic and conventional olive oil		
		Al-Dura	Al-Hesnawey	Zeno	Zirtoon	Al-khateb		Al-Maslmah
						conventional	organic	organic
Profile	Start of export activities	1989	1990	1992	1991	1990	2006	2010
	Annual export volume (tons)	4000	4500	5000	2500	3000	20	5-Apr
	Destination markets	Italy , Spain ,USA, , South Africa	Italy , Spain, India and China,	Saudi Arabia, Qatar , Iran, Venezuela, India ,China	China, Japan, Canada and North Korea	Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Italy, Spain, Venezuela	Turkey, Italy, Spain	Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Germany
	Packaging	Bottles	Bottles and bulk		Bottles			
	professional marketing team	Yes	No					
	Location	Damascus	Adlib	Aleppo	Aleppo	Tartous	Tartous	Draa
	CIF Price of Syrian bottled extra virgin olive oil	2 € in Spain 2.2 € in USA 2.3 € in Greece 3.2 € in Italy	2 € in Spain 3.2 € in Italy	2.5 € in Gulf States	2.2 € in Canada 2.5 € in Gulf States	2 € in Spain 3 € in Italy	3 € in Spain 3 € in Greece 6 € Turkey	3.2 € in Italy 4.5 € in Germany 5.5 € in Saudi Arabia, Qatar

Source: personal elaboration

Comparison between the strategies of companies:

It was clear through our interviews with Syrian exporters of olive oil, that most of them depend on their personal capabilities for the development of their business strategies and they benefit from their personal experience in the international markets and constant communication with those markets through participation to foreign exhibitions, in fact most of them participated in many International exhibitions specifically in Lebanon, China and Germany.

With regard to the way that Syrian exporters provide with the olive oil product, we noticed that the majority of them make long-term relations with producers, especially with small farmers, for several reasons: a) avoid transaction cost derived from buying from dealers, b) to obtain a product with high quality and standard specifications, c) to ensure access to production annually and, finally, d) avoid monopoly played by some traders.

With respect to sales most of Syrian exporters established long-term agreements with import companies, which will help them to market their product for several years and give them confidence and ability to continue and develop their business. In addition to that some of Syrian exporters benefited from large numbers of Syrian migrants which are working as importers in the international market and they are able to communicate with them through the websites of companies.

With respect to type of olive oil exported most of Syrian exporters focused on the extra virgin olive oil, because of many reasons: a) 50% of Syrian olive oil is extra virgin, b) most import companies are looking for high quality although its price is high compared to other olive oil types, c) to enhance their competitiveness, d) contribute to the establishment of long-term agreements with the import companies (Table 2).

Tab 2. Comparison between the strategies of Syrian exporters.

		Companies to export conventional olive oil				Companies to export organic and conventional olive oil		
		Al-Dura	Al-Hesnawey	Zeno	Zirtoon	Al-khateb		Al-Maslmah
						conventional	organic	organic
Strategies	Suppliers	Farmers						
	Buyers	Importers						
	Contract	Long term		Annual term	Long term		Annual term	
	Promotion	Public relations, Exhibitions, Web site						
	Product type	Extra virgin olive oil	Extra virgin and virgin olive oil	Extra virgin, virgin and pomace olive oil	Extra virgin olive oil	Extra virgin olive oil	Extra virgin organic olive oil	Extra virgin organic olive oil

Source: personal elaboration

Comparison between the exporters' opinions about the Syrian olive oil sector:

All Syrian exporters confirmed that they expect a great increase of olive oil production due to many reasons, which are detailed as follow: a) support from the Syrian government to farmers of olive tree which is about 200 Euros per hectare in addition to continue the policy of land reclamation which allows the farmers to invest their land with low cost, b) establishment of the High Council of olive oil to supervise on the development of policies that will contribute to the growth of olive oil sector and link between farmers and exporters on one hand and the Syrian government, c) increase

turnout of farmers for the cultivation of the olive tree, in fact not only about 3 million trees are planted annually but also about 2 million trees per year enter into the stage of production.

Syrian exporters also stressed that olive oil export will increase for many reasons such as: a) establishment of an institution for the development of Syrian exports including olive oil to support exporters and create the national export strategies which will contribute to increase the volume of annual exports of olive oil, b) more than 50% of Syrian olive oil is extra virgin, its acidity is not more than 0.8 so that is what will contribute to accelerate the process of entry into foreign markets and to increase confidence in its product quality .

In relation to the olive processing, Syrian olive oil exporters say that Syria has a sufficient number of mills around 1200 mills but there is no production of specific bottles for olive oil packaging.

With regard to the problems faced Syrian exporters in the international markets we noticed that all exporters suffer from following issues : a) high cost of olive oil because they have to buy glass bottles from over Sea markets and this is what push them to ask the Syrian government to establish advanced plan for packages that will reduce the burden on exporters, b) big competition with the main producing olive oil countries in the world such as Italy ,Spain, Turkey and Tunisia because Syrian olive oil is quite unknown in comparison with Italian and Spanish olive oil, c) lack of experience of Syrian exporters, d) inability to control the price of Syrian olive oil at the local level due to the import ban announced by the Syrian government, e) customs duties levied on Syrian olive oil as the case of EU which imposes 1.5 Euros per 1 kilogram of olive oil in order to protect the local product and consequently Syrian exporters go away from European markets and prefer other markets such as China, Japan, Venezuela and the Arab countries(Table 3).

Tab 3.Comparison between the opinions of exporters about Syrian olive oil sector.

		Companies to export conventional olive oil				Companies to export organic and conventional olive oil	
		Al-Dura	Al-Hesnawey	Zeno	Zirtoon	Al-khateb	Al-Maslmah
Opinion of the exporters in Syrian olive oil sector	Olive oil Production	Expectation of great increase (Subsidies to farmers, new large tracts)					
	Processing activity	1200 mills , lack of bottles production					
	Syrian prospective partners	Saudi Arabia, Qatar , Iran, Venezuela,India, China					
	Problems of export olive oil at the international level	Cost of packaging, competition, customs duties, Lack experience of organic marketing , No accordance between world and local prices					
	competitors	Tunisia, Turkey, Italy ,Spain					

Source: personal elaboration

Compassion between the Exporters' opinion about Syrian organic olive oil sector and future expectation:

Comparisons between the views of all interviewed exporters, we found that they expect a great increase of organic olive oil production in Syria for various reasons: a) Increased awareness among farmers of the importance of organic agriculture, b) good species of olive trees that can adapt with all Syrian environments therefore there is no need for chemical fertilizers or pesticides which will facilitate the process of transition to organic agriculture, c) increasing number of olive farmers who switched their system to a system of organic agriculture, in fact most farmers do not use chemical fertilizers and pesticides and thus what they need is only the certificate and some steps that move them to the organic agriculture, d) a large turnout of frames into the cultivation of olive trees, in fact planted trees are about 2 million per year, e) the desire of farmers to get good prices for olive oil which will push them to switch to organic agriculture and satisfy the increased demand of organic products at local level, especially by the large hotels such as 4 Seasons Hotel.

With regard to problems faced in organic olive oil production, all exporters agreed that the most important problems are the following: a) the high costs of production due to the high cost of the certificate, b) the cost of imported glass bottles, c) inexistence organic olive oil mills, d) lack subsidies from the Syrian government to organic farmers which is considered a big problem especially in the first years of conversion e) no national inspection system and finally f) a lack of communication between farmers and international inspection companies.

With respect to problems faced Syrian exporters of organic olive oil or perhaps will face them at the global markets, all exporters confirmed that difficulties concern the big competition especially with the traditional producers of this product such as Italy, Spain, Turkey, and Tunisia because of

- Significant experience of these countries in the marketing methods
- Great support to organic farmers in these countries
- Syrian production of organic olive oil is still small and not famous

At the level of potential partners for Syrian export of organic extra virgin olive oil the exporters suggested Germany because the increase of its demand of organic extra virgin olive oil from third countries, Venezuela because there are strong agricultural relations with Syria, especially in terms of export of olive oil, India and China represent interesting potential markets because in these countries Syria is more competitive than in traditional consuming countries and because of good relations with the Syrian government. Lately Gulf States because of the increased demand of organic products, competitiveness of Syrian organic olive oil, lack customs duties (Table 4).

All the data collected, including information and data obtained through references and publication papers concerning on the status of the organic olive oil sector, as well as the results of our case studies addressed to Syrian exporters and discussion it, we have a SWOT analysis and got the following results in the (Table 5).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Syria is still in its infancy in terms of organic agriculture, but there are a lot of indicators we have mentioned previously refer to a promising future in terms of increase production.

With regard to the possibility to increase the export of Syrian organic olive oil this may be realized for many reasons such as:

- Syrian exporter desire to start exporting organic extra virgin olive oil to increase their export value and volume.
- Expected great increase of organic extra virgin olive oil production
- Increase demand of organic extra virgin olive oil in the global markets

At the level of potential partners for Syria to export organic extra virgin olive oil, we found that Germany is one of the most important potential partners for Syria in the future because the increase of its demand for organic extra virgin olive oil from third countries and Venezuela because there are strong agricultural relations with Syria, especially in terms of export of olive oil in addition to India and China because they represent the biggest potential markets with low competition and good relations with the Syrian government and finally Gulf States because of the increase of demand

Tab 4. Comparison between the opinions of exporters about Syrian organic olive oil sector.

			Companies exporting conventional extra virgin olive oil				Companies exporting organic and conventional extra virgin olive oil	
			Al-Dura	Al-Hesnawey	Zeno	Zirtoon	Al-khateb	Al-Maslmah
Opinion of the exporters in organic olive oil sector	Olive oil production	Future	Expectation of great increase (Easy to convert new olive plantings, awareness of famers)					
		Problem	Cost of certificate, No subsidies					
	Processing activity		No mills, limited production of bottles, low experience with quality					
	Syrian prospective partners		Gulf States, Germany Venezuela.	Gulf States, Germany	China, India and Venezuela	Germany, China, India Japan,	Gulf States, Italy, Venezuela	Gulf States, Germany, Italy, Turkey
	Export problems		Competition, low marketing expertise					
	Competitors		Tunisia, Italy, Spain, Turkey					
	Organic national law		First step for the sector development, and the establishment of a local inspection system					

Source: personal elaboration

Tab 5. SWOT analysis.

		Beneficial	Harmful
		Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal	Syrian organic olive oil sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New regulation for organic production ➤ Qualified team of organic product ➤ Motivation of exporters to export organic olive oil ➤ Establishment of office for organic sector ➤ Establishment FFS for increase the awareness ➤ Easy to convert from conventional to organic ➤ Initial demand of organic product at the local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No mills for organic olive oil ➤ No national inspection system ➤ Cost of certificate ➤ Lack experience of farmers in biological control ➤ unqualified team of marketing organic product ➤ Lack of reliable official statistics ➤ No subsidies to organic farmers and exporters ➤ Lack knowledge about international law of organic production ➤ Low awareness of quality and limited quality control ➤ Lack production of small bottles
		<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All Syrian organic farmer are certified by international CBs ➤ Increasing global demand of organic products ➤ Syria good cooperation with international organization and foreign countries. ➤ Strong relationships between exporters and importer companies. ➤ Establishment of many agreements at the level of export Syrian olive oil 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack confidence of consumer in the international market in the new products ➤ Big competition faced Syrian organic olive oil ➤ Worsening of the political situation in the Middle East ➤ Growing freight and transport cost worldwide.
External			

Source: Personal elaboration

of organic products ,more competitiveness, no customs duties.

The final results from the international databases and interviews with Syrian exporters indicate that there is high potentiality to export organic extra virgin olive oil to Germany, Gulf States, Venezuela, India, and China if the Syrian government made the following conditions:

- Develop a strategy by the Syrian government include: Training at all levels of the olive oil chain to explain “global quality” and “integration” concepts, renewing technical processing plants to assure better quality, improving harvesting, modifying oil specifications in order to meet international standards, renewing legislation regarding individual trademark, label and packaging, encouraging agreements and merging among firms to achieve economical sizes, promoting cooperative-mills of farmers to involve farmers in trade and the improvement of quality, financing a refinery to avoid business losses, achieving a marketing agreement with the EU based on some new criterion, and developing the international market, developing a promotion plan.
- Establishment of national inspection system to facilitating the mechanism of obtains the certificate by farmers and reduces the costs.
- Subsidies to the organic farmers, especially in the first three years to help them if there are reduce in the production and encourage them to continuing in this system.
- Subsidies to the organic olive oil exporters and that is because the big competition in the international market and high price of Syrian organic olive oil.
- Establishment of the factories of small glass bottles to reduce import costs from global markets and the increase of the competitiveness of Syrian organic olive oil.
- Establishment of civil associations for organic olive farmers to be link with the Syrian government and participation in the development of strategies that contributes to the development of the organic sector and solving problems.
- Training courses for the organic olive oil exporters because, currently, the prices of organic olive oil are not competitive enough (in comparison to other Mediterranean countries) to export to the EU and only a political agreement can open this market for a certain quota, and Syrian olive prices seem to be competitive in some international markets outside the EU, but the exporters do not have enough experience in international trading and lack marketing information. Moreover, the size of the firms is too small to effectively face international markets.

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