

The Impact of e-Commerce in Developing the Egyptian Herbs and Spices Exports

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English Summary:

E-commerce is gaining increasing attention from governments and businesses alike around the world. Many agricultural countries have benefited from the applications of e-commerce in the development of their agricultural exports, led by Brazil and South Africa. The aim of this study is to measure the impact of using various e-commerce applications on the development of exports of the most important herbs and spices (H&S) in Egypt.

The results of the study indicate that the development of e-commerce indicators in Egypt has steadily increased, as the number of internet users has increased, the ratio of internet users to the population and the number of internet service providers has increased. During the period from 1995 to 2009, the results indicate the significance of all these increases.

With regard to the use of e-commerce applications, the results indicated that 70% of companies exporting H&S connect to the internet through ADSL, 50% of companies did not register in any e-marketplace, while 26% of them registered and had different marketing opportunities. The rest (24%) registered but did not have any marketing opportunity. The results also show that 62% of companies have a website, and the sites varied between sites registered with their own domain (22%) while other sites are hosted on free hosting sites (40%). The results also indicate that e-mail is used effectively, with 92% of companies using it to contact buyers, while 72% use it to accept or reject business transactions. The results show that the internet is used to obtain other services, where 60% of companies use the internet to obtain information on the elements of production, 84% of companies always or often use the internet to obtain instant information on currency rates, 66% of companies use internet access to quality-related information. Finally, the results indicate the role of the internet in creating marketing opportunities, opening new markets and increasing the profitability of companies.

As for the quantitative measurement of the impact of e-commerce on exports, the results indicate a significant difference between the average quantity of exports of Chamomile, Marjoram, Fennel, Mint and Seed Oil during the two study periods (1980-1994, 1995-2009).

The study recommends the following:

- Establishing a portal for Egyptian agricultural electronic commerce.
- Raising the awareness of companies exporting H&S on the importance of using e-commerce applications in promoting these products externally.