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Argentina

FRESH DECIDUOUS FRUIT SEMI-ANNUAL

2009

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Report Highlights:

Argentina's CY 2009 apple production is forecast to increase to 940,000 MT, and fresh pear production is expected to remain stable at 720,000 MT, primarily as a consequence of higher yields resulting from good weather conditions (both crops were expected to be larger but some fruit was lost due to low prices and a salary conflict with harvesters). Table grape production is estimated to decrease to 120,000 MT due to excess rain during harvest. CY 2009 apple exports are forecast to increase less than expected, while pear exports are expected to decrease due to fruit losses and the impact of the global crisis. Table grape exports are estimated to decrease due to lower production. The Argentine Government cut in half the export tax on fresh fruits and vegetables for 2009.

Executive Summary:

For CY 2009, Post forecasts an increase in fresh apple production to 940,000 MT. Fresh pear production will remain stable at 720,000 MT, and table grape production will decrease to 120,000 MT. Apple exports are expected to increase slightly, while pear and table grape exports are estimated to decrease. The GOA reduced the export tax on fresh fruits and

vegetables by half on December 31, 2008. Fresh deciduous fruit and stone fruit currently pay a 5 percent export tax, while citrus fruit and vegetables pay 2.5 percent). See the Import and Export Regulations section for additional information on the change in the export tax.

Commodities:

Apples, Fresh
Apple Juice, Concentrated
Pears, Fresh
Grapes, Table, Fresh

Production:

CY 2009 fresh apple production is estimated to increase to 940,000 MT, and fresh pear production is expected to remain stable at 720,000 MT, as a result of higher yields resulting from good weather conditions in 2008, and new plantations entering production. Both the apple and pear crops were expected to be larger but over 80,000 MT of fruit (mainly pears) were reportedly lost due to a labor dispute over salaries and very low prices paid to producers, which resulted in fruit remaining unharvested.

Although weather conditions in 2008 favored blossoms, table grape production in CY 2009 is expected to decrease significantly to 120,000 MT due to excess rain during the harvest season.

The CY 2008 fresh apple crop decreased to 850,000 MT, compared to the previous year, and the fresh pear crop dropped to 720,000 MT, due to frost damage in 2007. The CY 2008 table grape crop increased to 145,000 MT as younger plantations entered production.

Note: Post is revising apple production for CY 2008 based on lower exports and less fruit for processing than previously estimated. Post is also revising pear production, as exports were higher than expected.

Apple juice concentrate (AJC) production in CY 2009 is forecast to remain stable at 45,000 MT, compared to CY 2008. Although apple production was larger, there were significant volumes of fruit which were not harvested due to low prices and increased harvest costs, particularly during the labor union conflict with harvesters. AJC production in CY 2008 decreased significantly as a result of less fruit availability for the following reasons: lower production; high international prices paid by Russia -- which favored exports of fresh apples usually used for processing; and China's oversupply. Moreover, during the past few years, area planted to apples was devoted to new pear plantations.

Table 1. Apple Production						
	CY 2007		CY 2008		CY 2009	
	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)
Mendoza Province	5,000	110,000	4,000	85,000	4,500	94,000
Southern Valley	30,000	990,000	27,000	765,000	27,500	846,000
Total	35,000	1,100,000	31,000	850,000	32,000	940,000

Source: FAS Buenos Aires

Table 2. Pear Production						
	CY 2007		CY 2008		CY 2009	
	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)
Mendoza	4,000	100,000	5,000	110,000	5,000	110,000
Southern Valley	22,000	630,000	22,000	610,000	22,000	610,000
Total	26,000	730,000	27,000	720,000	27,000	720,000

Source: FAS Buenos Aires

Table 3. Table Grape Production						
	CY 2007		CY 2008		CY 2009	
	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)
San Juan Province - Total	9,500	140,000	9,500	145,000	10,000	120,000

Source: FAS Buenos Aires

Organic fresh apple and pear production, destined for niche export markets, has been growing steadily during the past few years -- despite 30-percent higher production costs compared to conventional fruit production (production costs for organic apples and pears have increased by over 300 percent since 2001). This trend is expected to continue, primarily to supply high-value export markets, such as the U.S. and E.U. A local company recently sent the first shipment of organic apples for processing to Spain. The industry expects that this export will facilitate the opening of other export markets for organic fruit for processing.

Conventional fruit production costs in CY 2008 increased by about 35 percent and, in CY 2009, they are estimated to go up another 25 percent. Except for international freight costs, all of the other costs of the fruit activity increased significantly during the current season. The highest increases were for labor (+26 percent during the past twelve months), followed by energy. The industry is hoping that the GOA will further devalue the Argentine peso to become more competitive in international markets. The reduction of international freight costs, due to lower oil prices and a decrease of international trade, may partially compensate for the loss of competitiveness caused by higher costs.

Varieties

Among the bicolor apples, only some Gala and Braeburn clones have succeeded in Argentina. Others, like Fuji, Jonagold and Elstar, did not adapt well to local conditions. Among yellow apples, Golden Delicious is the classic variety. Although it adapted well to Argentina's production conditions, this variety has lost popularity due to marketing problems. Among the red varieties, Red Delicious is the most widespread variety in Argentina. Since it is sterile, it must be crossed with other varieties such as Gala, Fuji, Elstar, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Jonathan and Ozarkgold. In Argentina, many Red Delicious clones such as Starkrimson, Red Chief, Hi Early, Top Red Delicious, Oregon Spur, or Red King Oregon and Cooper 8, have been adopted. The second most important apple variety in Argentina is Granny Smith with 20 percent of the planted area.

Among the most popular pear varieties, Bartlett accounts for 35 percent of the Argentine pear production followed by Packham's Triumph. Other varieties are: Red Sensation, Red Bartlett, Beurré D'Anjou, Red Anjou, Abate Fetel (Abbé Fetel), Conference, General Leclerc, and Forelle.

The most popular table grape varieties are Superior Seedless and Red Globe (mostly exported), while the varieties Cherry and Moscatel are devoted to the domestic market.

Other Factors Affecting Industry

As mentioned previously, at the beginning of CY 2009 harvesting season, over 80,000 MT of apples and pears were lost as a consequence of low prices and the trade union conflict over salary increases with Alto Valle harvesters, followed by an 11-day strike by packing plant operators. The Argentine Chamber of Integrated Fruit and Vegetable Producers (CAFI, in Spanish) estimates that the Alto Valle fruit sector lost over \$30 million as a result of the labor dispute.

Fruit shipments in 2008 were disrupted during the Argentine farm strike, which affected transportation throughout the country for extended periods during March to June of 2008. Transportation has returned to normal since the end of the farm strike.

Consumption:

Domestic consumption of apples and pears in CY 2009 is expected to increase as less fruit will be demanded from international markets as a consequence of the global economic crisis. Table grape consumption is expected to decrease due to lower production.

Although the harvest in CY 2008 was poor, apple domestic consumption increased significantly to the detriment of fruit for processing. Pear domestic consumption decreased in CY 2008 due to lower production and larger exports. Table grape consumption increased due to larger production.

Trade:

CY 2009 apple exports are estimated to increase slightly to 250,000 MT, and pear exports are expected to decrease to 450,000 MT, compared to CY 2008 due to fruit losses and the impact of the global crisis. Despite larger production, apple exports are forecast to grow less than expected due to various reasons, including: 1) the current international crisis, which has been reducing world demand; 2) the devaluation, vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar, of local currencies in several export markets, such as Brazil, Russia, and the E.U.; 3) large apple production in the Northern Hemisphere countries; and 4) the labor union conflict in Argentina between producers and fruit harvesters, followed by another conflict with packing plant operators during the harvest season (as a result, over 80,000 MT of fruit was lost).

Table grape exports for CY 2009 are estimated to decrease due to lower production and the impact of the international economic crisis.

CY 2008 apple exports decreased due to lower production and the first signs of the global crisis. Pear exports increased slightly, despite a shortage in supply, as a consequence of strong demand and high international prices which encouraged exports. Table grape exports increased due to high international prices and strong demand.

CY 2009 AJC exports are expected to decrease slightly due to lower supply. Local processors do not foresee a significant decrease of the demand in the U.S., the largest (and almost only) export market for Argentine AJC, as a consequence of the current international economic crisis. CY 2008 exports decreased significantly to 43,000 MT, compared to CY 2007, due to less fruit availability for processing.

Partner Country	2006		2007		2008	
	USD	MT	USD	MT	USD	MT
World	116,646,444	237,290	157,929,159	283,067	174,025,382	235,738
E.U.	49,828,508	95,759	64,446,296	110,365	61,088,205	79,107
Russia	22,640,406	51,498	34,771,599	67,319	47,442,969	72,100
Brazil	30,681,084	58,591	35,143,923	58,352	39,471,166	45,210
Algeria	3,903,410	9,055	9,045,923	17,601	12,676,797	18,589
United States	812,718	1,471	283,3851	4,499	1,745,044	2,119
Other	12,683,728	29,971	20,733,490	42,532	11,601,201	18,613

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Partner Country	2006		2007		2008	
	USD	MT	USD	MT	USD	MT
World	210,816,662	395,945	269,499,810	454,005	336,526,670	463,809
E.U.	76,187,738	145,160	90,083,694	157,224	113,946,401	162,872
Brazil	59,218,653	104,061	73,359,061	112,901	98,864,616	121,605
Russia	35,722,831	77,097	49,521,368	94,991	75,555,129	116,088
United States	25,082,905	45,476	35,480,243	59,967	26,974,389	38,444
Other	14,604,535	24,151	21,055,444	28,922	21,186,135	24,800

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 6. Fresh Table Grape Exports						
Partner Country	2006		2007		2008	
	USD	MT	USD	MT	USD	MT
World	73,638,021	72,963	62,038,753	60,000	88,640,188	69,657
E.U.	50,636,776	46,792	37,155,831	33,000	51,665,653	38,947
Brazil	4,712,302	5,918	7,312,167	8,000	10,209,443	8,925
Russia	15,393,972	16,958	12,345,464	12,000	23,442,506	18,663
United States	1,8218	27	163,808	180	259,740	216
Other	2,876,753	3,268	5,061,483	6,820	3,062,846	2,906

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 7. Apple Juice Concentrate Exports						
Partner Country	2006		2007		2008	
	USD	MT	USD	MT	USD	MT
World	53,887,628	60,168	63,651,830	57,857	72,515,799	42,931
United States	50,585,170	56,646	59,860,102	54,494	69,965,988	41,431
Russia	1,494,426	1,679	672,006	686	1,090,672	734
E.U.	325,707	258	625,959	382	579,952	247
Trinidad & Tobago	337,230	378	472,106	477	409,989	280
Other	1,482,325	1,585	2,493,763	2,295	469,198	239

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

During January-March 2009, Algeria imported about 27,000 MT of fruit, of which apples accounted for about 24,000 MT. This alternative market has proved to be very useful to compensate for the lower demand in most export markets, primarily Russia.

During CY 2008, there were virtually no fresh deciduous fruit imports into Argentina as the country is a net producer and exporter of apples, pears, table grapes, and AJC. In CY 2008, Argentina imported 100 MT of AJC from Brazil, valued at \$177,884 (GTA).

Policy:

Export Tax Reduction:

On December 22, 2008, President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner announced a new package of stimulus measures for the Argentine agricultural sector. The measures affecting fruit and vegetables were published in the Official Bulletin, Decrees Nos. 38/2008 and 40/2008, on December 31, 2008. They established that the export tax for pears, apples, peaches, citrus fruit, grapes, blueberries, strawberries, onions, frozen potatoes, beans and pulses were reduced by 50 percent (i.e. fresh deciduous fruit and stone fruit currently pay a 5 percent export tax, while citrus fruit and vegetables pay 2.5 percent).

Fruit exporters were pleased with the export tax reduction which, in the case of apples and pears, is expected to add around \$0.35 to the value of each kg of fruit shipped. While the decree did not establish any special incentives for fruit producers, producers expect the GOA to take additional measures to ensure that they receive part of the benefits of the export tax reduction.

Post does not expect the changes announced to have a significant impact on overall fruit production. Export taxes for these products were already relatively low (5 percent to 10 percent) and a reduction by half does not amount to a significant alleviation of tax burden.

Part of Argentina’s 5 percent export tax on apples, pears, and table grapes is rebated depending on the size of the container. The export tax for AJC is 5 percent, with part of the tax also rebated depending on the size of the container.

Government Support to Producers

In 2002, the Government of Neuquen Province implemented a voluntary Compensation Fund for Fruit Producers for producers who want to insure, at least, part of their harvest against hail damage. If over 50 percent of the harvest is damaged, the fund will cover the full harvest. Over 90 percent of producers have participated in this Fund. The Government of Rio Negro Province has a similar system to help fruit producers face challenges affecting the sector.

Export/Import Restrictions and Phytosanitary Issues

Russia (second largest market for Argentine fresh fruit) implemented a “temporary import restriction” for Argentine apples, pears, table grapes, and citrus fruit until they complied with lower pesticide MRLs, starting October 1, 2008. As a result of negotiations between phytosanitary authorities in both countries, the Russian phytosanitary authorities agreed to postpone for 60 days the implementation of this new requirement. The new MRL levels are more stringent than those required by the E.U., Japan, Canada, and the U.S, among other countries. The local industry was concerned about this new measure as, in CY 2008, Russia accounted for about 30 percent of total Argentine fruit exports. However, local producers have been adjusting well to the new measure during the current season.

About two years ago, the GOA phytosanitary authorities implemented a National Carpocapsa Eradication Program, which has managed to keep the plague under control.

Table 8. Fresh Apples (0808.10) & Pears (0808.20)	
Outside the Mercosur area	
Import Tariff (%)	10.00

Statistical Tax (%)	0.50
Export tax (%)	5.00
Export Rebate (%) Bulk (apples)	3.40
Export Rebate (%) Bulk (pears)	2.70
Export Rebate (%) Cases containing between 2.5 Kg. and 20 Kg.	5.00
Cases containing 2.5 Kg. or less	6.00
Within the Mercosur area	
Import tariff (%)	0.00
Export tax (%)	10.00
Export Rebate (%) Bulk (apples)	3.40
Export Rebate (%) Bulk (pears)	2.70
Export Rebate (%) Cases containing between 2.5 and 20 kg.	5.00
Cases containing 2.5 kg. or less	6.00

Source: Tarifar

Table 9. Fresh Table Grapes (0806.10)	
Outside the Mercosur area	
Import Tariff (%)	10.00
Statistical Tax (%)	0.50
Export tax (%)	5.00
Export Rebate (%) Bulk	2.70
Export Rebate (%) Cases containing between 2.5 Kg. and 20 Kg.	4.05
Cases containing 2.5 Kg. or less	6.00
Within the Mercosur Area	
Import tariff (%)	0.00
Export tax (%)	5.00
Export Rebate (%) Bulk	2.70
Export Rebate (%) Cases containing between 2.5 and 20 kg.	4.05
Cases containing 2.5 kg. or less	6.00

Source: Tarifar

Table 10. Concentrated Apple Juice (2009.79)	
Outside the Mercosur Area	
Import Tariff (%)	14.00
Statistical Tax (%)	0.50
Export tax (%)	5.00
Export Rebate (%) Containers larger than 1 liter	5.00
Containers of 1 liter or less	6.00
Within the Mercosur Area	
Import tariff (%)	0.00
Export tax (%)	5.00
Export Rebate (%) Containers larger than 1 liter	5.00
Containers of 1 liter or less	6.00

Source: Tarifar

Marketing:

Prices

In CY 2008, international prices for fresh deciduous fruit and AJC reached very high levels due to world sustained demand (apples: \$898/MT in September, pears: \$1,000/MT in October; table grapes: \$1,723/MT in June; and AJC: \$1,935/MT in February). However,

prices decreased at the end of the year due to China's oversupply and devaluation of local currencies in some of the most important export markets. AJC international prices fell from US\$10/gallon in August 2008, to US\$4.5/gallon in January 2009.

The following tables show average export prices for CY 2007 and 2008:

Table 11. FOB Prices (US\$/MT) Fresh Apples		
Month	2007	2008
Jan	546	691
Feb	548	688
Mar	536	672
Apr	544	713
May	569	765
Jun	556	793
Jul	555	828
Aug	562	862
Sep	579	898
Oct	627	887
Nov	647	862
Dec	673	859
Average	579	793
Exchange rate	3.70	Local currency/US\$1
Date of Quote	04/20/2009	

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 12. FOB Prices (US\$/MT) Fresh Pears		
Month	2007	2008
Jan	553	678
Feb	550	650
Mar	564	672
Apr	566	706
May	560	749
Jun	643	828
Jul	714	925
Aug	735	918
Sep	746	998
Oct	845	1000
Nov	972	992
Dec	996	994
Average	704	843
Exchange rate	3.70	Local currency/US\$1
Date of Quote	04/20/2009	

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 13. FOB Prices (US\$/MT) Fresh Table Grapes		
Month	2007	2008
Jan	1034	1289
Feb	1031	1208
Mar	967	1167
Apr	930	1221
May	679	1179
Jun	737	1723
Jul	211	0
Aug	0	0
Sep	0	0
Oct	0	0
Nov	0	1518
Dec	1261	1405
Average	856	1,339
Exchange rate	3.70	Local currency/US\$1
Date of Quote	04/20/2009	

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Table 14. FOB Prices (US\$/MT) Apple Juice Concentrate		
Month	2007	2008
Jan	924	1070
Feb	895	1935
Mar	969	1328
Apr	979	1906
May	1021	1759
Jun	1104	1784
Jul	1100	1751
Aug	1168	1565
Sep	1196	1738
Oct	1114	1552
Nov	1328	1702
Dec	1266	1511
Average	1089	1633
Exchange rate	3.70	Local currency/US\$1
Date of Quote	04/20/2009	

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from the Global Trade Atlas

Average export prices for January 2009 were as follows:

	US\$/MT
Fresh apples	860

Fresh pears	734
Fresh table grapes	1,287
AJC	1.048

The following table illustrates retail prices for apple, pear, and table grape varieties most widely sold in Argentina:

	Variety	Price (US\$/Kg)
Pears	Packam	1.21
	William's	1.21
Apples	Red Delicious	1.49
	Granny Smith	1.28
	Gala	0.9
	Golden	1.35
Table Grapes	Red Globe	2.16

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from local supermarkets

The following table illustrates wholesale prices for all varieties of fresh apples, pears, and table grapes:

	2006		2007			2008		
	Pears	Apples	Pears	Apples	Grapes	Pears	Apples	Grapes
January	0.43	0.57	0.52	0.49	0.58	0.71	0.85	0
February	0.32	0.50	0.40	0.53	0.44	0.53	0.89	0.65
March	0.29	0.34	0.34	0.38	0.37	0.48	0.83	0.59
April	0.28	0.33	0.36	0.40	0.45	0.49	0.88	0.61
May	0.30	0.41	0.42	0.45	0.51	0.56	0.89	0.69
June	0.37	0.44	0.38	0.46	0.49	0.60	0.99	0
July	0.41	0.50	0.42	0.52	0.56	0.67	0.99	0
August	0.49	0.49	0.43	0.50	0	0.71	1.10	0
September	0.63	0.53	0.48	0.54	0	0.81	1.11	0
October	0.65	0.55	0.54	0.59	0	0.79	1.02	0
November	0.68	0.62	0.59	0.65	0	0.98	1.29	0
December	0.00	N/A	0.62	0.72	0	1.06	0.60	0
Annual average	0.44	0.48	0.46	0.52	0.49	0.70	0.95	0.64

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data provided by the Buenos Aires Central Market

Wholesale prices for 2009 are as follows:

US\$/KG.

	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09
Fresh apples	0.51	0.54	1.22
Fresh pears	0.89	0.67	0.63
Fresh table grapes	0.67	0.62	0.61

Production, Supply and Demand Data Statistics:

Apples, Fresh Argentina	2006			2007			2008		
	2006/2007			2007/2008			2008/2009		
	Market Year Begin: Jan 2007			Market Year Begin: Jan 2008			Market Year Begin: Jan 2009		
	Annual Data Displayed		New Post	Annual Data Displayed		New Post	Annual Data Displayed		Jan
		Data			Data			Data	
Area Planted	35.000	35.000	35.000	31.000	31.000	31.000	32.000	32.000	32.000
Area Harvested	30.000	30.000	30.000	26.000	26.000	26.000	26.000	26.000	26.000
Bearing Trees	21.000	21.000	21.000	27.000	27.000	27.000	27.000	27.000	27.000
Non-Bearing Trees	3.000	3.000	3.000	4.500	4.500	4.500	5.000	5.000	5.000
Total Trees	24.000	24.000	24.000	31.500	31.500	31.500	32.000	32.000	32.000
Commercial Production	1.100.000	1.100.000	1.100.000	940.000	940.000	850.000	970.000	970.000	940.000
Non-Comm. Production	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Production	1.100.000	1.100.000	1.100.000	940.000	940.000	850.000	970.000	970.000	940.000
Imports	90	0	0	107	760	760	459	0	0
Total Supply	1.100.090	1.100.000	1.100.000	940.107	940.760	850.760	970.459	970.000	940.000
Fresh Dom. Consumption	187.090	190.000	190.000	257.107	240.760	260.760	250.459	240.000	280.000
Exports, Fresh	283.000	280.000	280.000	253.000	270.000	240.000	250.000	260.000	250.000
For Processing	630.000	630.000	630.000	430.000	430.000	350.000	470.000	470.000	410.000
Withdrawal From Market	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Distribution	1.100.090	1.100.000	1.100.000	940.107	940.760	850.760	970.459	970.000	940.000
TS=TD			0			0			0

Pears, Fresh Argentina	2006			2007			2008		
	2006/2007			2007/2008			2008/2009		
	Market Year Begin: Jan 2007			Market Year Begin: Jan 2008			Market Year Begin: Jan 2009		
	Annual Data Displayed		New Post	Annual Data Displayed		New Post	Annual Data Displayed		Jan
		Data			Data			Data	
Area Planted	26.000	26.000	26.000	27.000	27.000	27.000	27.000	27.000	27.000
Area Harvested	22.000	22.000	22.000	23.000	23.000	23.000	23.000	23.000	23.000
Bearing Trees	22.000	22.000	22.000	23.000	23.000	23.000	23.000	23.000	23.000
Non-Bearing Trees	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.500	4.500	4.500	5.000	5.000	5.000
Total Trees	26.000	26.000	26.000	27.500	27.500	27.500	28.000	28.000	28.000
Commercial Production	730.000	730.000	730.000	710.000	710.000	720.000	720.000	720.000	720.000
Non-Comm. Production	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Production	730.000	730.000	730.000	710.000	710.000	720.000	720.000	720.000	720.000
Imports	0	27	27	0	30	0	0	0	0
Total Supply	730.000	730.027	730.027	710.000	710.030	720.000	720.000	720.000	720.000
Fresh Dom. Consumption	110.000	110.027	110.027	80.000	80.030	80.000	80.000	80.000	90.000
Exports, Fresh	450.000	450.000	450.000	480.000	480.000	460.000	490.000	470.000	450.000
For Processing	170.000	170.000	170.000	150.000	150.000	180.000	150.000	170.000	180.000
Withdrawal From Market	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Distribution	730.000	730.027	730.027	710.000	710.030	720.000	720.000	720.000	720.000
TS=TD			0			0			0

Grapes, Fresh Argentina	2006			2007			2008		
	2006/2007			2007/2008			2008/2009		
	Market Year Begin: Jan 2007			Market Year Begin: Jan 2008			Market Year Begin: Jan 2009		

