

Date fruit international trade could be a challenging opportunity for fruit export diversification for Chile.



L. Antonio Lizana

Werther Kern

Marco Schwartz



CEPOC, College of Agricultural Science. University of Chile.

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Introduction

In the last years, Chile has become a impressive fresh fruit exporter, being first in the Southern Hemisphere and third in the world after USA and Spain, totaling over 2.4 million MT, to close to 70 different countries. Diversification plays an encouraging role in handling new fruits. Best example is Blueberry, inexistent in Chile around the 80's and today becoming the world main exporter. Chile is not a date fruit producer, but in the north of the country climate conditions are exceptional for its production, as described Weellman et al (ISHS, Acta Hort. 735) "optimal conditions of luminosity, active photosynthesis and absence of rain fall and frost". Also, shown in some tree collection in the Esmeralda Experimental Station, in the Pica Oasis, and some others trees scattered in the northern area of Chile and grown for ornamental purpose.

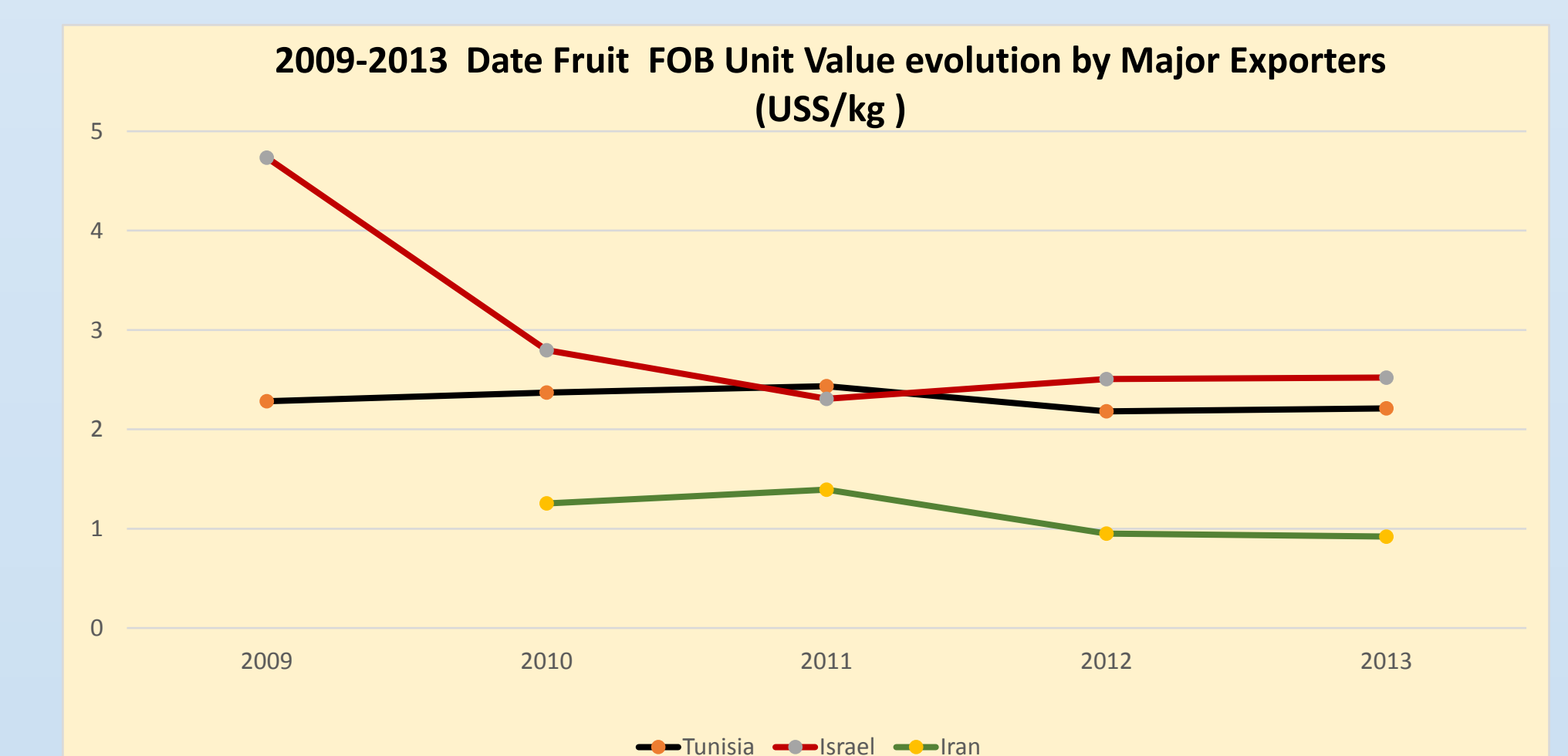
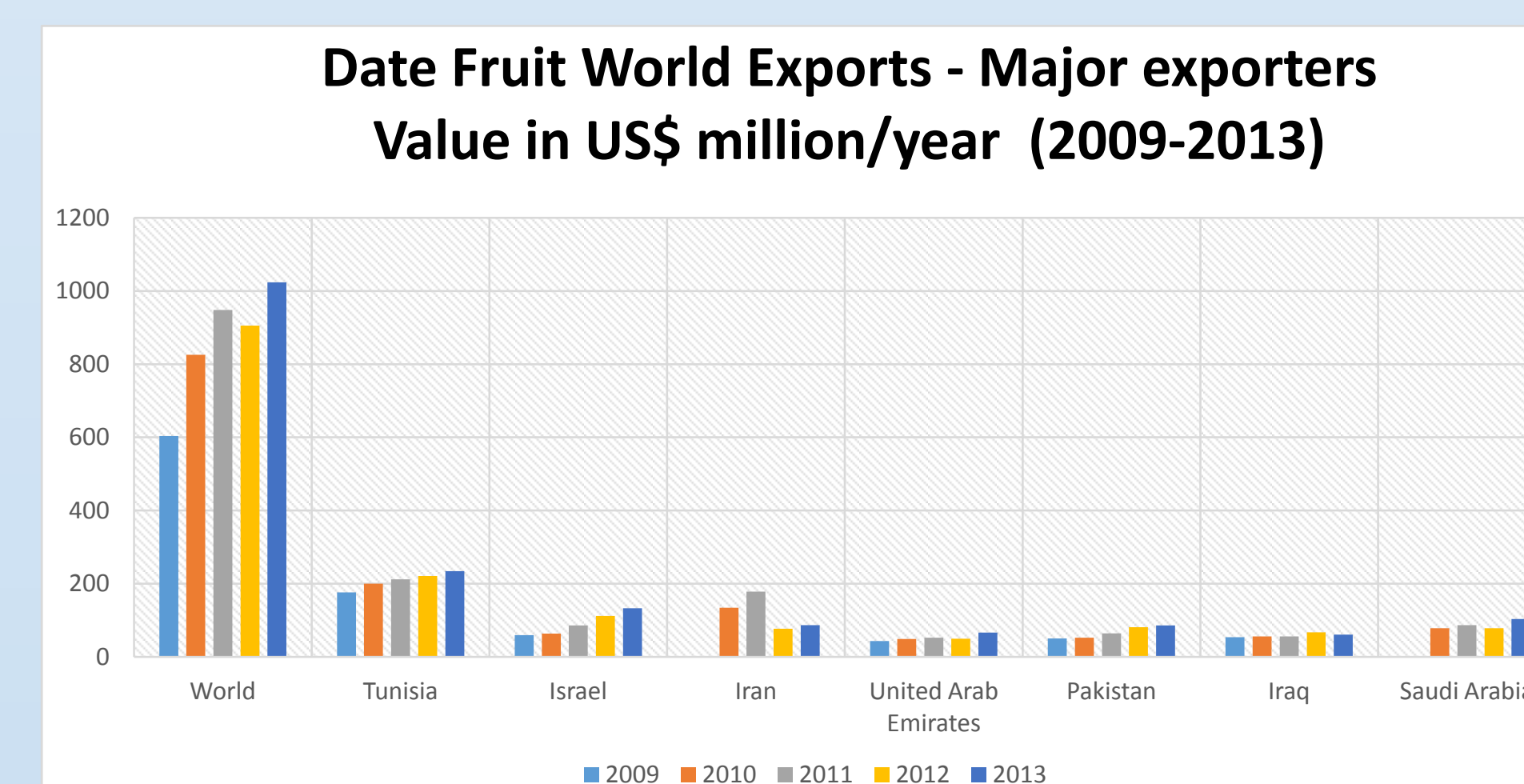
Method

Dates (*Phoenix dactylifera* L.) are produced and consumed in the world in great volumes at attractive prices. A study was conducted for the 2009-2013 period to analyze volume and prices of world import/export countries. Careful consideration was given to transaction prices for each of the countries that export and import dates. The data obtained was analyzed regards its competitiveness followed by their offer, and attractiveness by import countries. The source of data was Trademap of the International Trade Center.

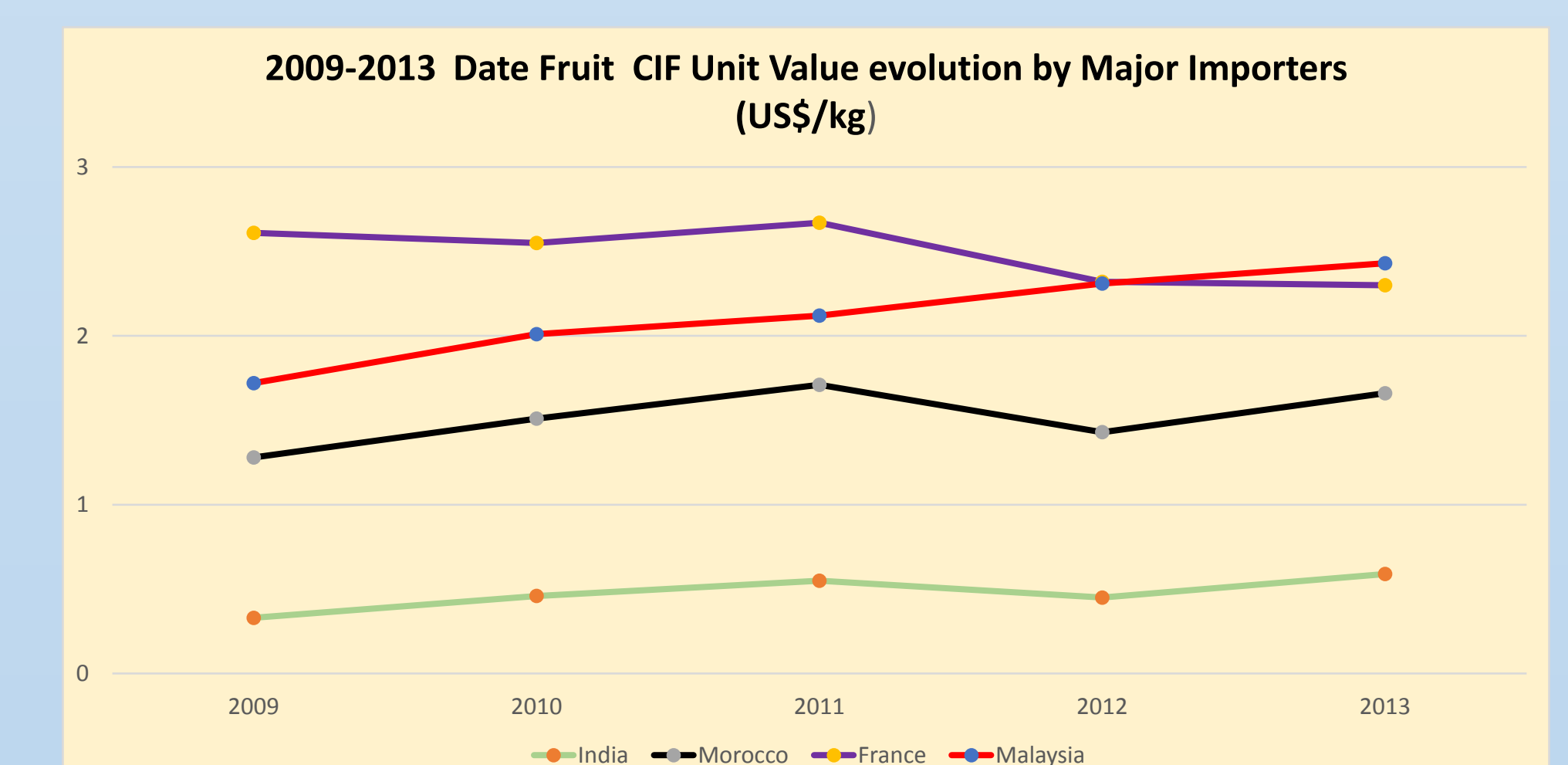
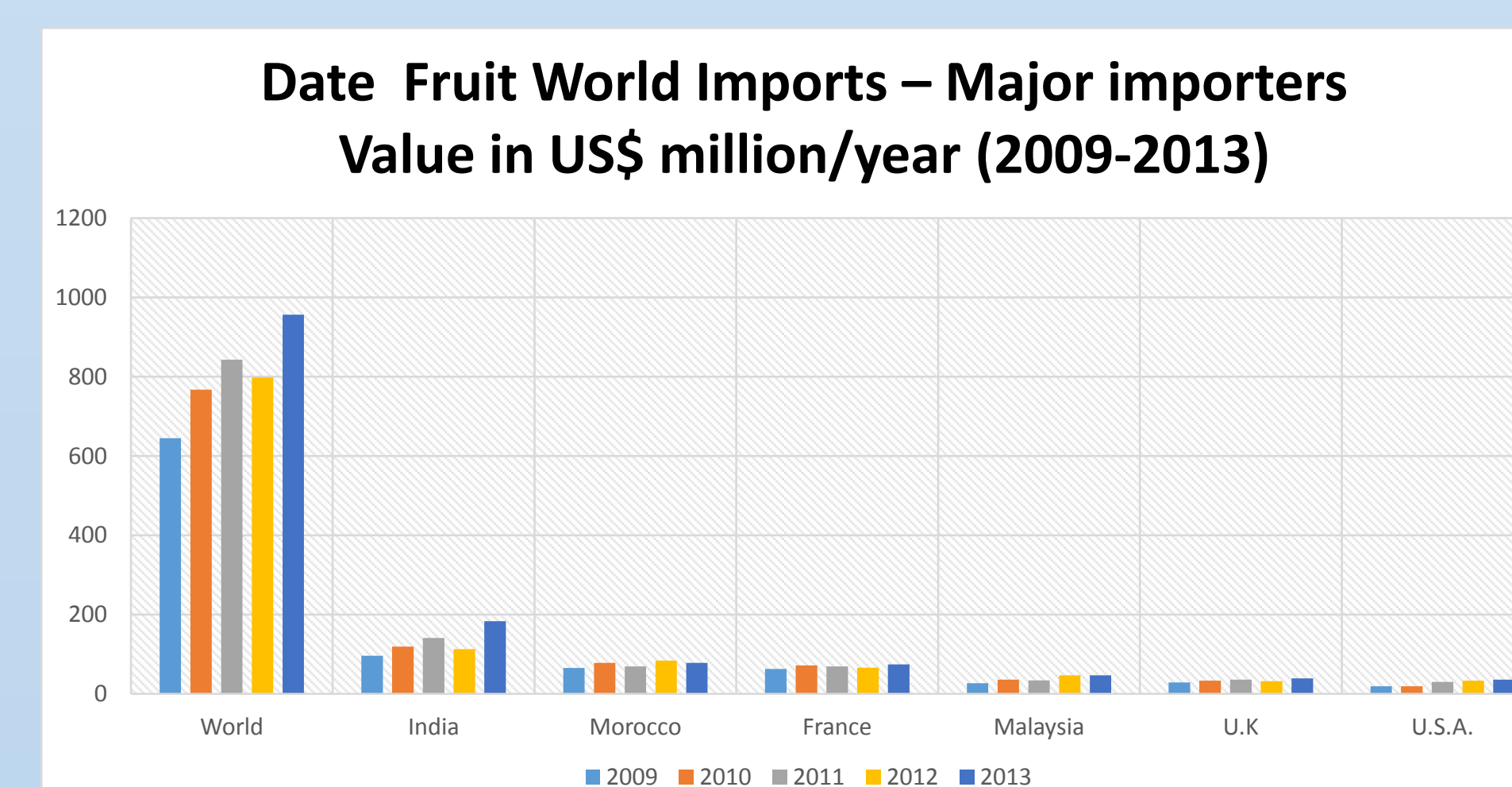


Results

During the period of this research the world exports of dates reach an average of 772 thousand ton/year, mainly from Tunisia; Israel and Iran, with an average FOB value of US\$ 1.1/kg for an average total value of US\$ 861 million/year.



Their imports averaged 742 thousand ton/year with a CIF value of US\$ 1.1/kg and a total value of US\$ 776 million/year, mainly from India, Morocco and France.



Both, imports and exports grew during the research period (2009-2013) 8,3% and 11,5% respectively as an annual average.

We detected that the date import/export trade increases during the last 5 month of a year, showing higher unit value, mainly due to Ramadan and New Year's festivities. In this context, the processed information showed that Tunisia unit value and volume of exports date fruits, showed during 2009-2013 period higher values than world average, becoming, as a consequence, the most competitive exporter. Malaysia appears as the most promising importer showing an average CIF value of US\$ 2.1/kg and an average rate of growth of 8.3%.

Conclusion

The analysis conducted in this work, presents an attractive possibility of date fruit producing and export from dessert areas of Northern Chile.