Abstract

Damiana is a wild, caducifolious shrub growing in arid and semi-arid zones in the area of Los Cabos, the southernmost part of B.C.S., Mexico. It has great socioeconomic importance because it is used as a tea, as a flavoring for liquors, and as an herbal medicinal. In the last few years, production has significantly declined, according to data from the Secretary of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fishing Agency (SEMARNAP), which was, in turn, provided by the local collectors of this plant. According to SEMARNAP, production has dropped from 30 tons in 1992 to 2 tons in 1996 as a result of declines in rainfall and irregular and unsuitable management of the resource. The objective of this study is to identify and analyze factors that give value to damiana and look for strategies that permit resolution of current marketing problems. Methodologies are based on information sources that permitted us to identify and analyze elements that intervene in the marketing process of the product, such as, price, distribution channels, and promotion. An example of marketing problems is the high price of products, such as Damiana-flavored liquor (up to $219 per 750 ml.). With the difficulties of obtaining the wild product, a better option is to develop commercial cultivation. Some advantages of cultivation are: (1) collectors can obtain the product when wild conditions are not favorable, (2) constant availability in the marketplace, (3) stabilization of price, and (4) increasing profit margins by offering the product where and when the demand is greatest. Results of this investigation suggest that it is possible to use arid and semi-arid region soils and plant resources to form new agro-businesses and improve the economic status of residents in rural communities.

Keywords

Damiana, Turnera diffusa, commercialization channels, socio-economic impact.