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## **Costa Rica: Standard Fruit Company & Private Cooperatives To Expand Banana Production**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Aug. 5, Standard Fruit Company manager Alfonso Munoz told reporters in San Jose that Standard and a group of independent producer cooperatives plan to invest \$10 million in expanding banana cultivation by 600 ha. on the Atlantic coast and in the southern region of the country. In 1989, Standard Fruit banana exports from Costa Rica totaled 28 million boxes. Major importers were the US (12.3 million boxes or 44%); Germany (10.6 million, 38%); and, Italy (5.1 million, 18.2%). Agriculture Minister Juan Rafael Lizano said the government is promoting a plan to bring 3,000 ha. in southern Costa Rica into banana production. The area in question was abandoned in 1985 by a subsidiary of the US transnational Chiquita Brands International. More than 5,000 workers lost their jobs. The former plantation region remains economically depressed. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 08/05/90)

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