

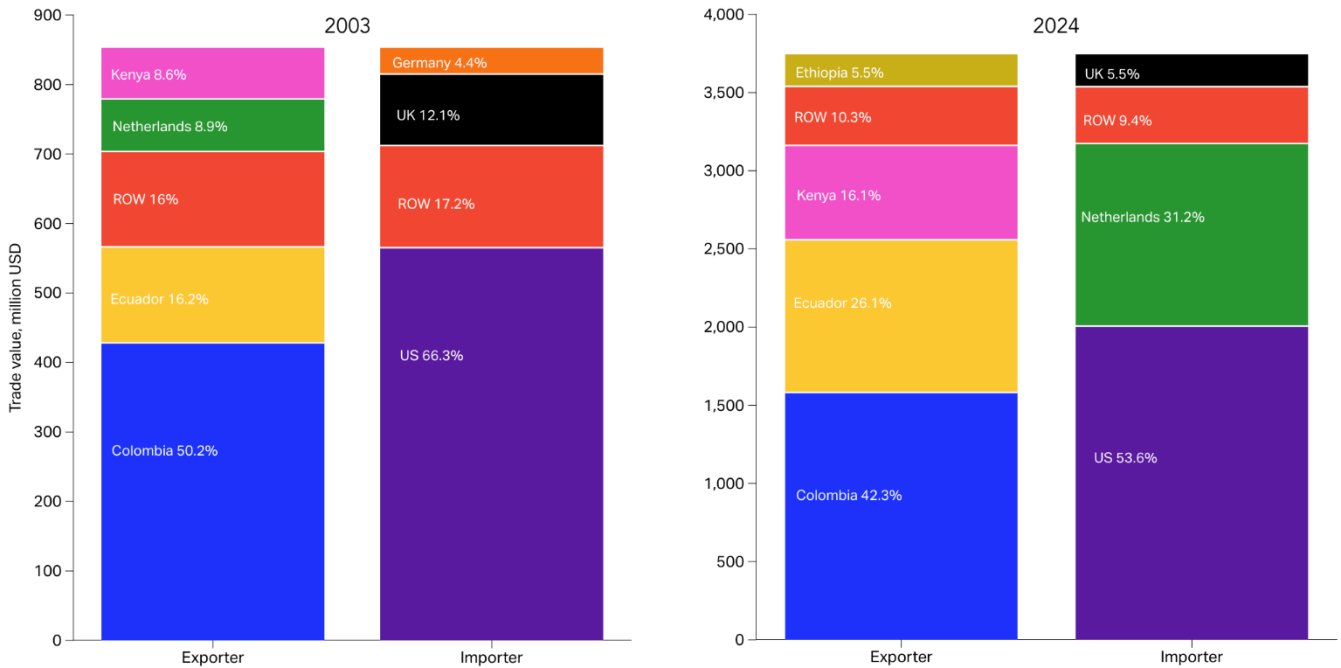


Chart of the Week

Romance on the Rise?

14 February 2025

Market share of air-transported flower trade, by importers and exporters, current USD and % of total, 2003 and 2024



Source: IATA Sustainability and Economics, using data from [Global Trade Tracker](#). NB: ROW = Rest of World

- Is the world getting more romantic? The value of the trade in flowers transported by air has risen in a rather spectacular fashion from USD 852 million in 2003 to USD 3.7 billion in 2024 - a four-fold increase. As this market has grown, there has been a noticeable shift and concentration among its participants.
- Imports were dominated by the US, the UK, and Germany in 2003, with respective shares of total imports of 66.3%, 12.1%, and 4.4%. By 2024, the US imported 53.6% of the total, followed by the Netherlands at 31.2%, a main distribution center for flower re-exports, and the UK now far behind at 5.5%. Colombia was the lead exporter in 2003 with a 50.2% market share, followed by Ecuador at 16.2% and the Netherlands at 8.9%. Colombia has since pulled back to 42.3%. The Netherlands has been knocked off the list in favor of expanded market shares by Ecuador and Kenya, as well as by the newcomer Ethiopia.
- Two key factors contributed to this shift. First, trade agreements reduced tariffs and barriers, increasing exports and opening markets for developing nations. Second, developments in air cargo, including improved refrigeration and logistics, ensured that flowers remained fresh and enabled seamless global distribution of large volumes on time. Air transportation has greatly facilitated the trade in all kinds of perishable goods, including flowers. These evolutions have prompted new specializations in the function of emerging comparative advantages, leading to greater market concentration.
- As these factors embody little to be considered swoon-worthy, we leave our readers to ponder which countries might have a comparative advantage in romance.

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