

## Brazilian Flag Is Big Star at Iraq Trade Show

Contributed by Geovana Pagel  
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In Iraq, the most sought products at the stand of the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce during the Kurdistan DBX Trade Show, which ended last Friday, November 14, were beef and poultry, sugar, auto parts for Volkswagen, Volvo and Scania vehicles, electric generators and engines, wooden doors, building material, flooring and tiles, and medical and hospital material.

The fair was held in the city of Suleimaniya, in the North of the country.

According to the secretary general at the Arab Brazilian Chamber, Michel Alaby, the fondness that Arabs have for Brazil was evident at the fair. "More than 70 people asked to take pictures standing beside the Brazilian Flag," said Alaby, who participated in the fair alongside the Brazilian ambassador Bernardo de Azevedo Brito.

Alaby stated that, during the days that he spent in the region, he noticed a lack of trustworthy statistical information concerning the Iraqi economy. "There is a strong presence of Turkey and Iran, which are leading suppliers of foodstuffs, kitchen furnishing, household utensils, refrigerators, air conditioners, among other products, including auto parts and leather footwear," he said.

Currently, Kurdistan purchases Brazilian meats and sugar via Dubai, Jordan, Kuwait, Turkey, Syria and Iran. According to Alaby, in the food sector, small and medium Turkish supermarket chains prevail, with strong presence of products from Turkey itself, as well as Iran, Italy, Spain, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. "As for distribution of consumer goods, it centers around some Kurdish-owned stores, with Turkish and Iraqi capital," said the secretary.

According to Alaby, the import tariff for food is 5%, and for consumer goods in general, 10%. "There is strong presence of the State in imports, because it is in charge of issuing the import licenses. The Brazilian businessmen must have a local agent with deep knowledge of the licensing system," he said.

The fair had 270 exhibiting companies. Highlights among products showcased are generators, electric engines and equipment, air conditioners, construction material, flooring and tiles, wood and doors, plastic tubes, vehicles, computer equipment, galvanized steel pipes, food and beverage, medical and hospital equipment, electric cables and wires, geophysical equipment, bullet-proof and security glasses, electric circuit breakers, furniture and pharmaceutical products.

"In terms of rates, 40% were from Turkey, 10% from Iran, 10% from Germany, 5% from Japan, 5% from Italy, 7% from India, 5% from Malaysia, 3% from Spain, 3% from Pakistan, 4% from China, and the remaining 8%, from other countries," estimated Alaby.

In the last three days of the event, the stand received lots of visitors, among them the director general at the Al Khadi Group, Thabit Alkadhi, who was interested in sugar, beef and poultry, and foodstuffs in general. "He owns offices in Alexandria, Baghdad and Jordan, and represents several German companies in the area of machines for food manufacturing," stated Alaby.

Another company interested in chicken meat, furniture, flooring and tiles for households was Shaho Khalid General Trading. The owner, Shaho Khalid, presently imports chicken and construction material from China. Besides, Khalid is also interested in getting to know exporters of auto parts for autos manufactured in the United States and Japan.

"He has been purchasing auto parts for the Brazilian Passat automobile from Indonesia and Thailand, which are in fact copies of the Brazilian parts," explained Alaby. "We were also visited by Salah A. Omer, of company Nawroz For Trading Autoparts, who was interested in purchasing parts for Scania and Volvo vehicles. He is coming to Brazil soon," he said.

On Friday, the stand was visited by members of the board of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Suleimaniya, by the president, Hassan Baqi Hawrami, the vice president, Baban A. Hamasour, and by one of the members of the Board, Othman H. Fatah.

"We discussed imports of sugar, chicken meat and beef. Currently, they import via Turkey, Dubai, Jordan, Syria and Kuwait. They want to import directly, and will probably go to Brazil in March 2009 to meet with exporters of these products," said the secretary general.

The Brazilian stand also attracted the attention of businessmen interested in exporting their products. Such is the case of New Plastic Industrial Co, headquartered in Jordan, which had a stand at the fair, and displayed interest in exporting cloth and proplene bags for packing foods, cement and other raw materials.

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