
Brazil's Bel Chocolates Planning a Sweet Attack in the Middle East

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Of the 20 countries to which the company Bel Chocolates, located in the city of Marília, in the interior of the state of São Paulo, Brazil, exports, nine are Arab countries. The company's aim for this year is to dedicate 15% of the exports to the Arab market, which is currently below 10% of Bel Chocolates foreign sales.

According to Fabiano Lombardi, exports manager at the company, the Arab countries are a potential market, in spite of the logistics difficulties Bel Chocolates finds when exporting to the region.

The total of their production destined to the foreign market varies between 15% and 20%. Amongst the main products shipped to the Arab countries are the peanuts and coconut filled chocolates.

The company has been exporting to the Arab market for three years. Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Morocco, Palestine and Sudan are the nine Arab countries in the list of importers from Bel Chocolates. The company's first exports happened in 2000.

According to Lombardi, the wrappings of the chocolates shipped to the Arab market have the brand's name in Portuguese or English, but the names of the ingredients are written in Arabic.

Amongst the products manufactured by the company are chocolates with strawberry, condensed milk, coconut, peanuts with caramel, rice flakes or almonds fillings. The latest novelties are the boxes with assorted chocolates and the marshmallow filled chocolates.

The origin of the name Bel was a homage paid by the founder of the company to his wife, called Isabel, in 1974.

The first products manufactured were not chocolates, but salted peanuts, peanut brittle candy and popcorn. In 1984 the company was transferred to a new industrial unit in Marília, with 11,000 square meters. Currently Bel Chocolates employs 600 workers.

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