

Arabs' Sweet Tooth Gives Brazilian Gum a Boost

Contributed by Isaura Daniel
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The Arabs are chewing more Brazilian gum. Brazilian exports of chewing gum to the Arab market rose 86% in the first eleven months of this year when compared to the same period last year.

They rose from US\$ 463,500 to US\$ 852,400. The volume sold also rose. It grew from 340 tons between January and November 2004 to 647 tons this year. The growth was 90%.

Behind the growth in exports are Brazilian companies like Peccin, a sweet maker from the city of Erechim, in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, and Kiuti, a company based in the city of Marília, in the interior of the state of São Paulo.

Both exported chewing gum to the Arab countries. "Among the Arab clients, the custom of chewing gum is even greater than in Brazil. The Arabs like sweets very much," explained the market development manager at the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce, Ely Dawly.

The largest Brazilian chewing gum buyer among the Arab countries was the United Arab Emirates. The country in the Middle East spent US\$ 379,000 with Brazilian chewing gum in the first eleven months of this year.

This value means an increase of 80% over the same period last year. "The Emirates do not have large chewing gum factories," recalls Dawly. The country, according to him, is also a distributor of products to other countries in the region.

After the Emirates, the second largest importer in the Arab world is Lebanon. The country purchased US\$ 124,700 in Brazilian chewing gum between January and November.

Sudan was the third largest importer, with US\$ 99,000, and Saudi Arabia came in fourth place, with US\$ 46,200. Algeria was the fifth main buyer in the region, with US\$ 41,000.

In all, 14 countries imported Brazilian chewing gum, according to the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade Foreign Trade Secretariat (Secex).

Sukest in the Arab World

If it depends on Brazilian companies, chewing gum exports to the Arabs are going to grow next year. Sukest, from the city of Bauru, in the interior of the southeastern Brazilian state of São Paulo, a maker of sweets, chewing gum and soft drinks from the interior of São Paulo is one of the companies that plans to start selling to the Arab countries next year.

In January, the company intends to participate in ISM, the International Sweet and Biscuit Fair, in Cologne, Germany, with the objective of finding new importers, among them the Arabs.

"The Arab market is a great consumer in this sector," stated the Sukest trade manager, Rodolfo Sassi. The fair in Cologne is famous for receiving commercial representatives from various parts of the world.

Sukest already exports to countries in South America, on the Southern and Western coast of Africa, and to Canada, but they want to enter new markets. The factory's current production is around 500 tons per month and foreign sales represent less than 5%. The Sukest chewing gum is turned to the children's market.

Exports of Brazilian chewing gum to the Arab countries grew well above the national average. Brazilian foreign sales of chewing gum as a whole reached US\$ 32.4 million in the first eleven months of the year, presenting growth of 4.4% over the same period in 2004, when the sector had US\$ 31 million in export revenues.

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