

Brazil's Orange Juice Exports to Arab World Grow Four-Fold to US\$ 3.3 Million

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Consumption of Brazilian orange juice is increasing in the Arab countries, especially in Saudi Arabia. According to Brazil's Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, the exports volume of frozen orange juice has more than quadrupled during the first four months of 2006, compared to the same period in 2005.

Last year, the accumulated value in the first four months totaled US\$ 777,000. This year, in turn, the value increased to US\$ 3.3 million, where Saudi Arabia alone purchased US\$ 2.2 million in juice. The other countries in the League of Arab States which also bought the product were Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon and Oman.

The exports scenario in the first four months of 2005 was completely different. At the beginning of last year, only Saudi Arabia, Algeria and the United Arab Emirates bought orange juice from Brazil. In the month of April alone, exports went from US\$ 307,000 in 2005 to US\$ 1.2 million in 2006.

This increase, according to Michel Alaby, secretary-general at the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce, could be related to some problem in the harvest in the neighboring countries, Morocco and Egypt, orange producers - though their oranges are more acid than the Brazilian ones. As well as that, says Alaby, the Arab youngster are taking on to the world trend of exchanging soft drinks for juice, in search of a healthier life.

To the president of the Brazilian Association of Citric Products Exporters (Abecitrus), Ademerval Garcia, this increase is not so significant as it is a comparison over a short period (only the first four months of the year). Even so, Garcia highlights that sales to the countries of the Arab League have been increasing in the last few years.

For him, one of the reasons is the growth in tourism in many of these countries and, with this, the migration of westernized customs. "A great advantage is that orange juice goes well with Arab food," says Garcia.

Another reason for the increase in consumption over there is the increase in the use of refrigerators. The supermarket chains as well as the homes are increasingly better equipped, ready to store the juice. Today, the Arab League countries import especially from Europe.

Brazil is the greatest orange juice exporter in the world, responsible for 53% of the juice produced in the world and for 80% of exports. The sector generates revenues of US\$ 1.5 billion per year. The greatest buyer of the Brazilian product is the European Union.

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