

# Brazil Opens Fair Season with LatAm's Largest Shoe and Fashion Trade Show

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Franca, the largest fair of shoes, fashion accessories, machinery and components of Latin America, expects to receive 3,000 international buyers from all over the world.

The trade show, which starts tomorrow, July 4, and follows on until Friday, July 7, in São Paulo, will count on 1,000 exhibitors and roundtables with more than 30 importers from eight countries.

The meetings will be promoted by the Brazilian Association of Shoe Manufacturers (Abicalçados) in partnership with the Brazilian Export and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex).

The roundtables, which will take place during the fair, are part of the buying project Brazilian Footwear, program to promote the brand Brazil abroad. In the last edition, Abicalçados brought a delegation of nine Syrian importers to participate in the fair.

The participation of importers should increase Brazilian exports in the sector, which last year added up to US\$ 1.8 billion, an increase in 4% in relation to 2004. There were 190 million pairs of shoes shipped to 123 countries, 12 of these Arab nations.

The greatest Arab buyer were the United Arab Emirates, which imported US\$ 15.4 million, corresponding to shipments of 1.6 million pairs of shoes. Next came Saudi Arabia, with imports of US\$ 9.3 million, and Kuwait, with US\$ 2.3 million. In the first five months of the year, external sales in the sector are already at US\$ 749.7 million.

According to the president of the fair, Abdala Jamil Abdala, Franca should contribute to the increase in the sector's sales in the second semester. Business made during the trade fair and as of that moment represents three to four months of production and up to nine months of sales for the exhibiting companies.

At the 38th edition of the fair there will be novelties presented in the spring-summer collections of shoes and fashion accessories. In an area of 46,000 square meters, more than 60,000 visitors are expected.

## Investments in the Sector

To promote Brazilian exports of leather and shoes, the Apex signed last week agreements with three entities in the sector: Abicalçados, the Brazilian Association of Shoe and Leather Components Industries (Assintecal) and the Center of the Tannery Factories of Brazil (CICB). The three projects added investments worth US\$ 20.1 million.

The project with Abicalçados foresees investments of US\$ 11.9 million in the next 12 months in many promotional activities. One of them is the entity's participation in 19 international events. Currently the companies participating in the project export the equivalent to US\$ 43 million per year, but the expectation is to reach US\$ 98 million up to June 2008.

The agreement with Assintecal, in turn, will receive investments of US\$ 5.3 million. The aim is to increase exports of components for leather, shoes and artifacts produced by the participating companies from US\$ 360.9 million to US\$ 416.5 million up to the end of the year.

The partnership with the CICB will have investments of US\$ 2.9 million. The aim is to work with 163 companies and reach exports of about US\$ 17.8 million.

## More Fashion

Brazil is the third greatest producer of shoes in the world. With an annual production of 725 million pairs, it loses only to China (8.8 billion) and India (850 million). The Brazilian shoes industry has more than 8,400 factories and is one of the sectors that generate most jobs in the country.

As well as Franca, other fashion and beauty events are programmed to take place up to September in São Paulo. One of them is the São Paulo Fashion Week, greatest fashion show in Brazil, to take place between the 12th and 18th of July. The fashion week attracts more than 80,000 visitors and generates a turnover of about US\$ 34.7 million in the city.

Still on the subject of fashion, between the 4th and 7th of July happens the 31st Meeting of Women's Fashion, national event directed at shop keepers and buyers. Last year, the meeting generated about US\$ 3.2 million in business. In the cosmetics sector, in turn, there is the Cosmoprof, international beauty fair, in September.

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