

Brazil's Credeal: Exporting Notebooks Is Good Business

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Sunday, 10 December 2006

Credeal, a school supplies factory from the southernmost Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, has already shipped nine tons of notebooks to Lebanon since it started exporting to the Arab country, two and a half years ago.

The factory found in the Lebanese market a faithful client, the store Crisly, which has been buying its products yearly since 2004. According to the technician at the exports department at Credeal, Doani Pavan, sales started after a contact made with the importer in a fair in Europe.

In the first year, the company from Rio Grande do Sul exported three 20-foot containers to Lebanon, in the second year it was four 40-foot containers and this year of 2006 two 40-foot containers have already been shipped.

The products sold to Crisly, according to Pavan, are the high-standard hardcover notebooks. The technician states that Credeal aims at expanding exports to the Arab countries.

Lebanon is only one of the countries in the factory's list of importers. Credeal sells to about 15 countries, amongst them the United States, Chile, Argentina, Honduras, Paraguay and Peru.

Exports, which started in 1999, represented 15% of the company's revenues last year, which totaled R\$ 179 million, the equivalent to US\$ 84.0 million. This year, according to Pavan, external sales should account for 17% of the factory's total revenues, which, according to internal forecasts, will be of around R\$ 200 million (US\$ 93.9 million).

Credeal produces between 30,000 tons and 35,000 tons of products per year. As well as the notebooks, the company produces bags, school backpacks, pencil cases, files and file paper.

The production happens in two industrial units, one in the city of Serafina Corrêa, in Rio Grande do Sul, and the other in Astorga, in the state of Paraná, also in the south of the country.

As well as their own brands, Credeal makes licensed products. In their catalogue there are notebooks, backpacks and bags with the sporting articles brand Mormaii, as well as notebooks with the children's comic book characters Turma da Mônica (Monica's Gang), musical groups Green Day and Iron Maiden, characters from the animated movie Ice Age, and the Mexican sitcom character Chavo del Ocho on the cover. Amongst the brands by Credeal are Abelzinho, Bicho Vivo, Business, Rastro, Happy Adventure and Happy Festa.

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