

Brazilian Amazon Natural Products Win Arab Women Hearts and Bodies

Contributed by Marina Sarruf
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Arab women have a new Brazilian brand of hair products made from Amazon fruit and seeds at their disposal: Nunaat. The company, based in the southeastern Brazilian state of São Paulo, began exporting to the Arab market last year, and up until now has shipped more than 50 tons of products.

"It is an expanding, highly disputed market, which is open to try the Brazilian products," said the director at Nunaat, Alexandre Vasto.

The first contacts of the São Paulo-based company with Arab importers took place in 2005 at cosmetics trade fair Beauty World Middle East, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

In the following year, the company participated in the fair again, and managed to close orders placed by distributors in Lebanon, Egypt, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, the latter with orders placed by a chain of stores. According to Vasto, the leading countries in terms of exports are Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Presently, the Arab countries answer to 15% of total exports by Nunaat. In order to increase the company's market share, Vasto will travel to the Middle East in December.

"I will wait until the Ramadan (religious period for the Muslims) is over to go there. I will take catalogues of the new products, set new goals, and talk to the importers," he said.

According to Vasto, a new factor that will increase trade relations between Brazil and the Arab countries is the new route by Emirates airlines, to be inaugurated on October 1st, with direct flights from São Paulo to Dubai. "This time I will head straight to Dubai, which will function as a hub to the other Arab countries," he stated.

The most shipped products to the Arabs are shampoos, conditioners, and hair masks. All items are made using typical Brazilian raw materials, such as cupuaçu, buriti, açaí, cashew nut, guaraná, and Surinam cherry.

Besides the raw material, the feature that most attracts the attention of Arabs when it comes to buying, according to Vasto, is the products' quality and pricing.

"We offer a high quality product at a competitive price. This is what appeals most to the Arabs," he said. Another exclusive feature that Nunaat offers to Arabs is the packages, which count on labels translated into Arabic.

In addition to the Arab countries, Nunaat already exports to countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and to the United States, which answers to 40% of the company's total exports.

Different from most Brazilian companies, Nunaat was born with a vocation for exports. "From the very start, we focussed on the foreign market," said Vasto.

Currently, the company is present in 15 different countries, and owns a laboratory in São Paulo, where it develops and produces all of the formulas for its cosmetics.

Nunaat belongs to the Brazilian group M. Cassab, which has been in the market for 75 years, and operates in many different sectors, such as animal nutrition and health, industrial chemistry, human nutrition, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, toys, domestic utensils, hotels, household appliances, real estate developers, and trading, besides owning Spicy, a chain of domestic appliance stores.

The Cassab family left Abadie, a small town near Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, and arrived in Brazil in 1910. The first activities of the family were working with machines for processing coffee, cotton, and rice. Little by little, the company grew, and in 1949 it had already incorporated a new commercial field, namely imports of pharmaceutical products.

In the 1950s, J.Cassab, as the company was called at the time, envisioned another market opportunity: the Cassab laboratory for cosmetics manufacturing and commercialization, established in partnership with the Max Factor brand in Brazil.

Currently, the M. Cassab group owns six industrial units across Brazil, and has 550 employees.

Service

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