

Despite Crisis Brazil's Textile Beats Ethanol Two to One in Revenue

Contributed by Débora Rubin
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Showing the world what textile goods Brazil produces - from fiber to clothes. That is the mission of TexBrasil, a Brazilian Textile and Apparel Industry Association (Abit) program in partnership with the Brazilian Export and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex), whose aim is to insert Brazilian textile production, and Brazilian fashion, on foreign runways and windows.

Established in 2001, the program has already trained and aided 980 companies in the export process.

"Our work covers from sensitization to export and foreign sales themselves," explains Rafael Cervone Netto, the program manager.

The Brazilian textile sector, although in crisis (this year the Abit estimates that 208,000 of the two million work posts in the chain will be cut), had revenues of US\$ 33 billion in 2006.

"That is double what ethanol generates, and it is in fashion," pointed out Cervone. In terms of exports, last year they totaled US\$ 2.3 billion.

"This year the same volume should be maintained," stated the TexBrasil manager. To him, the Brazilian government lacks desire to fight for better bilateral agreements with the main markets like the United States, Mexico, the European Union and Japan. "Nowadays, Brazilian jeans pay import fees of 17% to enter the United States. Colombian jeans pay 0%."

TexBrasil started the second half of the year with a new face. An advertising campaign entitled "From Brazil" is already decorating the folders, banners and stands of the project and of companies that participate in events abroad.

In September alone, there will be six, four of them in France. Over the next year, there will be 15 participations in international exhibitions and another four trade delegations. Apart from that, Abit will bring foreign journalists to 18 events. For the Fashion Rio alone, they brought 38.

This month, TexBrasil participated in the Russian CPM - Collection Première Moscow for the first time. Russia is a new market that is being explored. Between 2005 and 2006, the country increased its sector imports by 48%, but Brazil supplies just 0.10% of the total.

In the new campaign, the same model, Brenda Queirós, chosen due to her well-tanned skin and for a typically Brazilian face, so to speak, was photographed wearing six different garments. In the background, cotton, a raw material that Brazil exports large volumes of.

The idea is to present a lighter image of Brazil, but not losing its sensual and happy characteristics. According to Cervone, the campaign was made based on research with foreigners, who see Brazil for its musicality, grandeur and diversity.

Next year, Cervone says, TexBrasil should arrive in the United Arab Emirates. "It is not yet 100% certain, but we are preparing a trade mission there," he said. The Emirates are the first Arab country to be included in the project targets.

According to Cervone, the association is in the negotiation phase with a consultant in Dubai and with buyers in the Emirate. "We work in the following way: first we bring a consultant to learn about the country and to do a quick 'fashion tour', to see the streets and important fashion centers, like Oscar Freire and Bom Retiro.

After that, he gives a talk to potential exporters explaining what his country tends to buy," explained the project manager. "Finally, we set up a showroom and he evaluates the products, saying what is viable for sales and what needs to be improved." Cervone stated that it is possible for a group of buyers from the Emirates to come to Brazil this year.

Between January and July this year, Brazil exported US\$ 3.8 million in textile products and garments to the United Arab Emirates, an increase of 77.91% over the same period last year. To Saudi Arabia, the increase was 39.6%. And to Morocco, 24.3%. In future, Cervone forecasts missions to the two other countries and also to Egypt, Qatar and Algeria.

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