

## Brazilian Small Mango Farmers Get a Place at Europe's Table

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Small farmers from the Associação Manga Brasil (Mango Brazil Association) are optimistic about selling the fruit to Europe after working for a year to obtain a Fair Trade certification enabling exports of mango produced in the municipality of Juazeiro, in the northeastern Brazilian state of Bahia.

It is the fifth container loaded with mango, in the second half of this year, shipped to the European market, totaling 100 tons.

According to the president of Associação Manga Brasil, Josival Nascimento, many associates did not believe that they could make direct exports.

"A window is opening up to the international market. We are optimistic regarding the possibility of selling our production to Europe every year. In that way we will no longer have problems selling in the second half of the year, as in the first half it is guaranteed to the domestic market," said Nascimento.

He also claimed that the association sells a significant share of its produce without intermediaries, most of it to the domestic market. Manga Brasil is located in the Irrigated Perimeter of Maniçoba, 35 kilometers away from downtown Juazeiro.

The Fruit Farming Hub of the São Francisco River Valley has approximately 23,000 hectares of active mango trees, with perspectives of increase in area, especially due to favorable climate conditions and the establishment of new irrigated perimeters. Presently, the Valley accounts for more than 90% of the country's mango exports.

The 62 associates in Manga Brasil cultivate an irrigable area of 440 hectares, being 330 of mango and 110 hectares of coconut, passion fruit, and lemon. The owner of a packing house with a 660-square-meter built area, Manga Brasil is in an advantageous position in comparison with other associations, especially as it is located within the Irrigated Perimeter.

According to Josival Nascimento, the packing house will have capacity for processing 3,200 kilograms of mango per hour. At a regular shift of 8 hours worked per day, the daily processed volume should be 25,600 kilograms a day, the equivalent of little more than a container.

"When the plant is functioning at full capacity, we will be able to double our daily output, processing 51,200 kilograms per day, or two containers," said Nascimento. He also said that the packing house will create 37 direct jobs, which may reach 66 when fully operational.

The association's portfolio of clients includes large wholesalers in the states of São Paulo, Brazilian capital Brasília and Minas Gerais in the Southeast and has been seeking to develop new partnerships with supermarket chains.

"Sebrae and Codevasf are being very important partners to us, both in commercialization and training of our farmers. We managed to make some of these supermarkets into customers during missions and caravans promoted by the Sebrae, and also by participating in fairs and events turned to fruit sales," stated Nascimento, who also said that the association has already sold nearly 700 tons of mango this year, 120 of which were shipped to Europe.

The regional manager at Sebrae, Rinaldo Moraes, explained that the work with the Manga Brasil group is the result of a partnership between the São Francisco and Parnaíba Valley Development Company (Codevasf), Sebrae and Agrofair (a fruit importer company based in Holland that operates with Fair Trade).

"Its main goal is to establish direct contact between farmer and buyer, and to free them of their dependence from intermediaries and market instability. By means of fair trade and solidarity, Sebrae has been seeking to promote, among small rural producers in the São Francisco River Valley, a fair and well-balanced knowledge in comparison with large farmers, thus contributing to sustainable development, in addition to offering better commercial conditions," said Moraes.

Sebrae