

Europe Gets a Taste of Northeastern Brazil Fruits

Contributed by Carlos Laerte
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About 20 million reais (US\$ 12.7 million) and the participation of fruit farmers from the whole of Brazil, businessmen in the input sector and buyers from Brazil and countries like Germany, France and the Netherlands guaranteed the success of business roundtables at Brazil's International Irrigated Agriculture Fair (Fenagri 2008).

The event took place in the city of Petrolina, in the northeastern Brazilian state of Pernambuco, on July 24.

Sponsored by the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae) with the intent of bringing closer producers and buyers to establish trade agreements and exchange of information and technologies, the meeting brought to the São Francisco River Valley 25 international buyers, as well as representatives of Brazil's largest supermarket chain.

To the executive manager of the Brazilian Fruit Institute (Ibraf), Valeska de Oliveira, the business roundtables were extremely positive. "Foreign buyers who came from France and Germany were greatly impressed with the quality of the fruit and the figures of local production. Apart from that, we also brought 10 fruit producers from São Paulo who could make an exchange of information and close deals for the whole of the year with several supermarket chains present at the event."

Flávio de Carvalho, the representatives of G. Barbosa, the fourth largest supermarket chain in Brazil, with 42 shops in the northeastern Brazilian states of Sergipe, Bahia and Alagoas, participated in 15 meetings with producers during the whole of the day and also made a positive analysis.

"This is the first time that I participate in the Fenagri, but I had already traded fruit from the Valley. The perspective after these roundtables is for our purchases of fruit to rise around 35%, with the acquisition of eight tons a month of grapes, three tons a month of mangoes and one ton a month of guava," stated the businessman, who discussed annual and renewable contracts.

One of the fruit producers who negotiated with G.Barbosa, Antonio Rosa da Silva Neto, the chairman of the Mango Chamber at the Association of Rural Farmers of the 06-Aprn-06 Nucleus (Nilo Coelho Project, in Petrolina), also participated in six other business roundtables. He is confident regarding the future trade of 200 tons of mango, as he already has market for another 300 tons due to certification by the Fair Trade Market.

Antonio Neto also approved the format of the business roundtables. "The buyers asked for information about production, trading period, price and forms of payment. Our 36 associates will most probably soon be selling mangos to bands like Zerres and Co, in Germany, and Desmetre, in France."

To the Sebrae Sertão do São Francisco Business Unit coordinator, Maria Cândida Moreira, the business roundtables, which were coordinated by J&B Consultores, should also allow for the inclusion of the name of producers and buyers in the catalogue of opportunities, a mechanism for business prospecting that is available all year round for the follow through of contacts made.

"We also made a positive evaluation of the roundtables due to the great participation of small producers from associations and cooperatives in the Valley. The Sebrae is also present in the Fenagri through a series of talks that are offered for free at our stand, certainly a meeting point and support for the generation of business and opportunities," she finished off.

Sebrae