
A Push to Spread Brazilian Limes Overseas

Contributed by Isaura Daniel
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The southeastern Brazilian state of Minas Gerais wants to export limes to the United Arab Emirates. The state is developing a project to increase the export of fruit produced in the city of Jaíba, in the North of Minas Gerais, and plans, through the Exportaminas center, an export fostering program connected to the local government, to open market in the Arab world.

According to Juliane Whyte, joint director at the Exportaminas center, the region already exports limes, but the objective is to expand the foreign market for producers. The project is also aimed at further professionalizing the produce from Jaíba, like, for example, obtaining international certification. In the area, cultivation is irrigated, and has so been since the 1970s, and the lime is therefore produced all year round.

The choice of the United Arab Emirates, and specifically of Dubai, as focus markets to expand exports came after the state promoted an official trade delegation to the Arab country early this year. "We have analyzed it. There is market and the demand is great. Dubai is also a trading market, a middle point for other markets," said Juliane.

The lime that Jaíba produces is generally called Tahiti lime. According to the joint director at Exportaminas center, this lime is very well accepted on the foreign market. Whereas in Brazil the preferred limes are the softer ones, for juice, abroad the product is used in rings, placed in drinks, for example, so Tahiti limes are more adequate.

According to the Exportaminas center, the city of Jaíba produced 6,000 tons of lime in 2007. Around 33%, or 2,000 tons, were exported. In the region, the production is in the hands of 344 farmers, with the assistance of the Exportaminas center, but the project also includes another 30 so-called business producers, who are larger.

The area used by the farmers is around 470 hectares. The partners of the government of Minas Gerais in the lime project are state-owned company Emater, which operates in the area of technical assistance, the Supply Company (Ceasa) and the Agriculture and Livestock Federation of Minas Gerais (Faemg). Each works and assists the producers in its area of specialty.

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