

Brazil Becomes World's 5th Largest Honey Exporter

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Honey exports from Brazil totaled US\$ 18.2 million in the first half of 2008, representing growth of 70% over the same period last year. The sum placed Brazil in the fifth position in the world exporter ranking. The figures were disclosed last Friday, September 12, by the Sectoral Chamber for the Honey Production Chain.

According to organization's president, José Gomercindo da Cunha, the main reason for the expansion of sales was the resumption of exports to the European Union. In the last two years, Brazil exported only to the United States. Now, the aim of the Sectoral Chamber is to maintain its sales to Europe and, at the same time, seek new markets such as Japan and the Arab countries.

Brazil is the world's 11th honey producer, with an annual output of 36,100 tons of the product. The state of Rio Grande do Sul ranks first, with 7,820 tons, followed by Paraná, with 7,800 tons.

For 2009, the sector expects for domestic honey consumption to rise in Brazil. "To that extent, we are working with the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae), and 25 states are already willing to contribute to nationwide promotional work. The proposal is to raise per capita consumption from 100 to 120 grams," stated the president.

Another goal of the sector is to reduce non-conformities with the regulation for industrial inspection of the product, so as to conquer a larger share of the foreign market. Production of honey and its derivatives, such as propolis, wax and jelly in Brazil is a source of family income in several regions, including the semi-arid.

Currently, 350,000 beekeepers in Brazil answer to 16,000 direct jobs in the industrial sector, as well as 450,000 direct jobs in farms.

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