

High production with sustainability

The Association of Lime Producers and Exporters (ABPEL) is a private non-profit organization created to assist and bring together lime producers and exporters.

Headquartered in Itajobi (State of São Paulo) and created by the sector's leaders in 2003, the ABPEL's members account for almost 90% of the country's total lime exports.

The Association's main objectives are the dissemination of information about lime market in order to advise its members, becoming an intelligence center, besides acting in defense of their interests and needs.

BRAZIL EXPORT Magazine (BE) interviewed the chairman of ABPEL, **Waldyr Sérgio Promícia**, who told about the work developed by the Association and gave details

on foreign market of Brazilian Tahiti lime.

BE - The lime export volume remains stationary near to 65,000 tons. What should be done for increasing that volume? What are the works that ABPEL has developed towards that aim?

Promícia - Brazilian Tahiti lime exports don't remain stationary. Our lime is the fruit that has got the highest growth in recent years. It is worthwhile to highlight that Brazil exported only 2,500 tons in 1998 and this year we should attain 65,000 tons, what means a growth of 2,500%.

Between the years 2008 and 2011, the lime export volume has remained about 65,000 tons, due to the crisis in foreign markets and mainly to domestic market, which has been paying higher prices than those of international market. Those facts have kept that fruit in Brazil.

For increasing lime exports is necessary that Europe ended the tariff barrier on this product, which is currently of 8.75%. This barrier is not imposed on our competitors. Another important factor that has restricted our exports is the phytosanitary barriers imposed to our fruit by the Americans.

The ABPEL, besides the Tahiti lime international marketing work, has been struggling

in the main forums in Brazil and abroad on the possibility to cancel these barriers and, thus, become our fruit more competitive.

BE - How is the current situation of the international price of Tahiti lime? It's worth

to increase lime production for exporting a larger volume?

Promícia - Brazil does not need to increase lime production to export a larger volume. It needs the extinction of the phytosanitary and trade barriers for increasing its international sales.

The international lime price has remained almost the same in recent years.

BE - The Netherlands is a distribution center for Brazilian lime in Europe. What should be done to export directly our fruit to the interested European countries thus increasing our gains?

Promícia - For logistics reasons, the most part of lime exports is shipping to Netherlands. Last year, 63% of our fruits entered in Europe through the port of Rotterdam and were redistributed to Europe. New routes and more competitive freight values, besides the reduction in phytosanitary and trade barriers, may increase the market diversification, as well as our international lime sales.

BE - In a restricted foreign market as the current one, is necessary to make a significant work for our lime promotion. Could you tell us about the 2011/2012 Citrus Promotion in Europe? What has been done in 2011 and the prospects for 2012?

Promícia - First, we chose to work with opinion makers. We are doing promotions in culinary schools, showing to the future chefs and helps the flavor, versatility and health benefits of our Tahiti lime, so they can promote our fruits.

In addition, the project involves the distribution of lime kits (kit with lime and folder with receipts) in areas with high people circulation in target countries with receipts that encompass from our traditional

ABPEL



Waldyr Promícia

“caipirinha” to more elaborated dishes, in which our fruit can give a tropical flavor and new taste to local culinary.

For 2012, the promotion will focus on Germany, which, although is the fourth largest Brazilian export destination with 4% of the total, is the leading country of our lime purchases considering its imports from the Netherlands.

BE – It seems that a strong promotional campaign in another market than the European could be a good decision, since there already is a heavy concentration of our lime sales to Europe. Don't you agree?

Promicia - Our exports are focused on the European market, since we believe in the growth potential of our fruit consumption in this market. This can be proved by the growth of 2,500% from 1998 to 2011, a period in which we developed a promoting work in the international market through the project “Brazilian Fruit” in partnership with the IBRAF (Brazilian Fruit Institute) and Apex-Brasil (Trade and Investment Promotion Agency).

Another point is that our fruits do not enter in the American market, a market that we expect to open in the coming years, since we believe in its high consuming potential and because the sanitary barriers imposed to Brazil were made specifically for the orange. Some pests of the orange or its producing region are



not present in our Tahiti limes. That fact indicates a good chance for this market opening.

BE - How is evolving the Brazilian lime presence in the Arab and American markets?

Promicia - The U.S. market is closed to Brazil. The Arab market presents great opportunities and today already represents 4% of our exports, with an upward trend. The Brazilian companies interested in this market have participated in the Gulfood trade fair in Dubai, through the project “Brazilian Fruit” that aims to promote Brazilian limes, thus increasing their sales to this market.

BE - Brazilian lime (Tahiti) is appreciated and competitive abroad? Why?

Promicia - The Tahiti lime is produced in few countries in the

world and only Brazil can offer it all year long. Our product can be used in preparations from drinks to sophisticated dishes. It has a high juice content, which makes it highly appreciated. It also gives a tropical flavor to dishes and drinks.

BE – Is there anything else you want to add?

Promicia - The Brazilian production of Tahiti lime reached 1 million tons. The State of São Paulo accounts for 60% of this volume, but the states of Bahia, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Norte have been increasing their production, thus, Brazil increased its sale volume in the second half, when the state of São Paulo has a smaller volume to offer. The Tahiti lime is, therefore, available all year long, following the most demanding production models with sustainability. 

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