

HLB Specialties, North America's largest importer of Brazilian papayas, has been able to find the upside from El Niño through exceptionally sweet flavor in smaller-sized fruit.



The group is reporting an unusually large volume of small golden papayas, as unprecedented drought in the growing region has limited growth in the fruit, which have shown a high sugar content and intense flavor due to the small size.

According to HLB's main Brazilian papaya supplier Caliman Agricola, the state of Espirito Santo normally receives between 900-1200mm of rain per year.

But in 2015 rainfall did not even reach 600mm, putting strain on production.

"In spite of our growers' sophisticated irrigation system, nothing replaces natural rain fall, and the fruits are ripening before they grow to the usual size," HLB Specialties sales director Lorenz Hartmann de Barros said in a press release.

Commercial Golden Papaya production concentrates in sizes 8, 9, and 10, with fruit weighing on average between 15-12oz respectively.

"Those sizes normally make up 80% of the production, but currently the growers are seeing over 50% of the crop yield in sizes 10 and 12, which weigh between 12-10oz," Hartmann de Barros said.

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