

By Super Mercado Zona Sul senior produce manager Carlos Cury

✘ Brazil has witnessed a real revolution of its economic classes, aroused by curiosity with the desire to consumer more sophisticated products and different flavors that bring new sensations to an assembly of better prepared products. New spices, cuts of meat, seafood, and of course special fruits - even exotic fruits for our tropical production standards - are high in our imports. There is a strong tendency to have savory dishes with fruits, and desserts that mix sweets with fruits.

This situation opens up a good export market where tonnage is losing space to small loads with high added value and more precise logistics, because the level of perishability is a factor for the success of these shipments, which are generally by air. Small producers with specialty products have a great chance of profiting through this form of business.

To export to the Brazilian market, it is worth knowing a bit about the country itself - its geography, its people and its trends. Brazil is a nation of continental dimensions with a total area of 8,514,876.59 square kilometers.

According to the latest census, the population is 192 million, making it the 5th most populous nation in the world, but habitation is still sparse at 22.43 people per square kilometer, which is below the international average. For example, Japan has 337 people per square kilometer. Brazil's population distribution is uneven, with concentration in the south-eastern coastal zone and the north-eastern forest zone. The southern region is also an important center.

According to the Global Competitiveness Report 2011-12, published by the World Economic Forum, Brazil is ranked 53rd in the world among 142 nations, having risen by five positions.

Here are a few indicators of the country's economic growth:

- GDP expected to grow by 5% in 2012
- Growing consumption, driven by "C Class" the expansion
- Depreciation of the dollar, which encourages imports
- Inflation is under control, with expectations to stay between 5-6% in 2012.

Fruit and vegetable statistics

Brazil produces around 17 million metric tons (MT) of fruit and vegetables annually, with a value of US\$2.5 billion. Between 1999 and 2009 production grew by 110% while the population grew by 25%. The increase in availability per capita was 85%.

But the annual post harvest losses are quite high at between 35-40%, occurring at all stages from the harvest through to the exposure of products in retail outlets.

Surveys indicate that around 50% of final horticultural sales to consumers in Brazil are carried out by supermarkets, that source through their own supplying centers. The crops most produced in Brazil in tonnage are tomatoes (34%), potatoes (30%), melons (17%), onions (12%) and carrots (7%).

Imports in 2010 were US\$246 million with garlic, potatoes, onions, peas and tomatoes as the main imported products, while exports were US\$173.5 million.

Recommendations in Brazil

The Brazilian consumer wants to spice up their table with more elaborate recipes, and this situation helps accelerate the import of differentiated products. Here are a few recommendations for those wanting to make the most of these opportunities:

1. Packaging that stimulates sales in quantity and added value, such as zip bags and clamshells.
2. Labels that are private or exclusive to exporters.
3. The release of new fruit, vegetable or legume varieties, with interesting colors such as purple broccoli, different sizes like baby carrots, fruits without seeds, minimal processing, frozen, etc.
4. Seasonal products, where the short seasons affects consumer expectations.
5. Small agricultural production to harvest special or differentiated products.

Aside from specialty products, the market is also very receptive to commodity imports, for products such as garlic, onions and potatoes, which complement Brazil's production and can still reach the shelves with lower prices than the domestic product.

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