

Following news in the second week of July that Colombian mangoes [gained improved market access to EU markets](#), The Colombian Agriculture Institute ([ICA](#)) highlights the details of its new strategy to "focus on systems".

FreshFruitPortal.com spoke with Ramiro Salcedo - Manager of the mango sector within the country's Magdalena Horticultural Association (Asohofrucol) - about the significance of the step for the mango industry and how new fruit fly free orchards are being planted.

As Colombian exporters will no longer need to treat their mangoes with water prior to shipping, new regulations require that farms have a "fruit fly free" certificate before being approved for export.

Speaking to the important new step for the industry, Salcedo explained the problems associated with older phytosanitary methods, primarily water treatment's erosive qualities on harvested fruit.

He explained that water treatment typically strips the mango of its fresh smell and some taste. So, the move allows the industry to keep the fruit at its highest quality taste for consumers.

"Farms have continually improved so that young mangoes don't have to go through water treatment, something that we already began at the beginning of this year and that has gone well. This work has taken nearly a year, in order to address issues of fruit flies," he explained.

Eliminating fruit flies in Colombian mango exports

Understanding that even water treatment didn't ensure that Colombian mangoes arrive to destination markets 100% free of fruit flies, he noted that water treatment did also kill some fruit fly larva found inside of the mango, but not all of them. So, consumers are going to find larva no matter what, Salcedo reminded us.

"In this process, if any fruit flies were left, the fly would have already been dead," he added.

Colombia's mango producers seek alternatives to harsh chemical treatments post-harvest, in part, in response to demand from consumers in European countries who are showing a preference for natural post-harvest practices.

Salcedo went on to add that "we are expecting that the Colombian government to improve the quality of functioning in the ICA in order to support us more,".

"We're still exporting to Canada, Russia and countries that don't have the same restrictions as the EU, which at this point receives a limited amount of volumes," he explained.

Regarding the pandemic's impact on the industry's supply chain, the ICA said that it hasn't run into serious problems despite small logistical challenges with labor and air freight.