

Antonio Maldonado, once a Guatemalan baby vegetable grower and more recently a very successful real estate developer in Central America, considered new agricultural opportunities.

Considerations of the global landscape revealed aloe vera as a crop with vast markets. He notes that aloe vera is an ingredient in everything from beverages, pharmaceuticals to shaving cream, yogurts, shampoo, hand sanitizers and...don't forget the toilet paper. Its leaves are sold fresh for drinks and as an ingredient in other consumables.



Aloe vera was produced by three companies in south Texas, Maldonado told Fresh Fruit Portal on Nov. 21. But freezes in three consecutive winters forced those production operations across the river into warmer weather south of the Rio Grande.

Given the wide markets, Maldonado decided to produce aloe vera, but he bought land in the scenic - and safer - coastline of the Southern Mexican state of Campeche. In early 2016, he started his plantation and started the firm, InterAgro Campeche, in San Francisco de Campeche. The town is also, more simply, known as "Campeche." The new farm brought experimentation in production techniques. InterAgro launched its own seed program, which is now the basis of its organic product, produced on 625 acres (250 hectares). Along the way, InterAgro survived two years of the Covid pandemic.

A year ago, the company began trucking fresh aloe to McAllen, TX, for a U.S. retailer, United Natural Foods, Inc., which is based in Providence, RI. The fresh aloe leaves each weigh a pound and a half and are 24 inches (60 cm) long. They are packed 12 to a box.

Maldonado's aloe vera production, packing, and future processing facilities are fully certified organic, pursuant to U.S., Japanese, European Union, Mexican, and Canadian regulations, as well as being Kosher Certified and compliant with GlobalGAP.

On Jan. 1, 2023, the firm will begin operation of its first facility to manufacture organic aloe gel in both liquid and concentrated forms, serving the U.S, European and other

international markets.

Maldonado is already eyeing greater manufacturing objectives, planning on producing an organic aloe powder, which has broad international uses. Maldonado foresees a significant competitive advantage of InterAgro, in the Western Hemisphere by slashing transportation costs, being the leading vertically fully integrated organic aloe vera company in Mexico, bringing strong commitments to quality, community development, and innovation.