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Online

August 20, 2010







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### Mangoes see record imports, increased promotions

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By Chloe' Robbins

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Published on 08/20/2010 12:13PM



This year is looking to be record-breaking for mangoes being imported into the U.S.

Volume so far is 15% higher for April 1-Aug. 15 than the same time last year, mostly from Mexico, which increased American exports by 18%, according to a news release from the National Mango Board, Orlando.

Conditions are helpful all around: Growing conditions have been favorable and mangoes sales are up in various sectors. The board is partly responsible for increasing mango visibility.

This year has seen a 49% increase in mango messages in the first two quarters, including print articles, videos and retail promotions, according to the release. The group's spokeswoman, Ingrid Hoffman, was on the Today Show on Cinco de Mayo to demonstrate a guacamole recipe with mangoes. The NMB has also been working with Pei Wei Asian Diner's parent company to increase mango recipes and promotion.

"The work of the NMB has really been changing the industry as a whole and helping to increase the consumption, especially in these high volume periods," Ronnie Cohen, vice president of sales, Vision Import Group, River Edge, N.J., said in the release. "By comparison, a few years back we would have had a severe oversupply situation which would have had an adverse affect on the growers."

The promotions have helped. Retail sales have increased from last year by 39% in the first quarter and 20% in the second. Stores' using the board's displays and educational materials has led to over 1,800 demonstrations so far in 2010. The board reported that it has shipped more than 8,500 point-of-sale resources.

"The response from retailers this year has been really exciting," Wendy McManus, National Mango Board director of marketing, said in the release. "They are reporting stronger mango sales than in previous years and they have been more willing to promote mangoes."