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## **Mango industry imports record-setting spring/summer volume**

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ORLANDO, FL -- The National Mango Board is reporting record-setting mango import volume from April 1 to Aug. 15. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Market News database shows volume that's 15 percent higher than the same period in 2009 and higher than any year on record for the same period.

Favorable growing conditions across multiple regions have contributed to the record-setting volume. The primary source of growth was Mexico, which increased its volume of mangos exported to the United States by 18 percent compared to 2009 for the same period.

"The spike in volume, particularly in the front part of the season, is attributed mainly to the increased production of Ataulfos," Ken Nabal, vice president of sales and logistics for Frontera Produce Ltd., said in an Aug. 19 press release from the National Mango Board. "It's important to note that the yellow-skin mango sales have been mostly incremental as regular mango movement is growing as well."

The board launched marketing initiatives in the consumer, retail and foodservice sectors to help drive demand for this sizable crop. Early in the season, NMB spokesperson and Latin entertaining expert Ingrid Hoffmann appeared on the NBC "Today Show"'s Cinco de Mayo "Guac Off," reaching more than 4 million viewers.

Ms. Hoffmann included mangos in her guacamole recipe and quipped to host Al Roker that she was celebrating Cinco de Mango, the catchphrase for an NMB marketing initiative. Ms. Hoffmann also appeared in the board's Celebrate Summer video segment, which reached approximately 50 million viewers on broadcast TV, cable TV and the Internet. The Celebrate Summer segment featured Ms. Hoffmann demonstrating her Cuban Mango Melt sandwich, and showing viewers how easy it is to select, ripen and cut a mango.

Mango coverage in consumer magazines, newspapers and on-line has grown to an unprecedented level in 2010 due to the board's ongoing media programs coupled with the mango's rising star as a hot food trend. In the first two quarters of 2010, U.S. consumers were exposed to mango messages more than 339 million times, which is a 49 percent increase over 2009 results for the same period, according to the release.

In the foodservice arena, mangos continue to gain prominence. Mangos have been front and center throughout the summer months at Pei Wei Asian Diner, a fast-casual chain with more than 160 locations in 21 states. The Thai Mango Chicken has been its featured limited-time-offer entree, including extensive promotion in stores, on its website and on Facebook, driving the dish to the number one volume position. The chain promoted a large-scale contest with a scratch-off card covered in mango graphics and an on-line cooking class featuring four mango recipes. The board has been working with P.F. Chang's, Pei Wei's parent company, since 2007 to get fresh mangos featured more prominently on its menus.

The retail sector has also shown significant support for mangos with secondary displays and more than 1,800 demonstration events executed so far this year. The board developed specialized point-of-sale materials to educate consumers about yellow-skinned and green-skinned mangos. More than 8,500 of these pieces have been shipped to retailers nationwide.

"The response from retailers this year has been really exciting," NMB Director of Marketing Wendy McManus said in the release. "They are reporting stronger mango sales than in previous years, and they have been more willing to promote mangos."

Early results show a positive trend developing in retail mango sales for 2010. First-quarter mango sales per store per week were up 39 percent compared to first quarter 2009, and second-quarter mango sales per store per week were up 20 percent over 2009, according to data from The Perishables Group's Fresh Facts system.

Preliminary forecasts indicate that volume for the fall-winter season will also be strong. Brazil already began shipping in late July, with Ecuador following close behind with shipments expected to start in late September. Updated information will be posted at [www.mango.org/crop](http://www.mango.org/crop) as it becomes available.

"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 for Vision Import Group, said in the release. "By comparison, a few years back we would have had a severe oversupply situation which would have had an adverse effect on the growers."