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Earlier Mexican table grapes season for MAS

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Unlike last year when Mexican table grapes experienced a remarkable delay, this year MAS Melons & Grapes President Miky Suarez predicts a back-to-normal start to the season, which traditionally gets under way the first week of May.

Mexican table grape production volume is estimated to be between 14 million and 16 million boxes; however, if weather conditions allow, there might be a possibility for a higher volume.



“I expect harvest to start the first week in May but chances are we could see few table grape trucks crossing into the U.S. the last week of April,” Suarez said. “During the first week or so, we are going to see lower crossings than the average we are used to see.”

Mexican table grape production is spread into five growing areas throughout the country. The first one, and still fairly small, Tuxcacuesco in the state of Jalisco, followed by Ciudad Obregon, Guaymas, Hermosillo and Caborca, all last four located in the northwestern state of Sonora, with Hermosillo being, by far, the country’s leading producing region.

According to the Mexican Department of Agriculture, while the state of Sonora represents over 95 percent of the table grapes production in Mexico, nine of every 10 tons of Mexican table grapes are grown in Hermosillo and Caborca.

In addition to Perlette, Flame, Sugraone, Black Seedless and Red Globe, this season MAS Melons & Grapes will start marketing new varieties known as Ivory from the Spanish-based SNFL Group and other ARRA varieties known as Early Sweet. And next year, the production of these new varieties will expand considerably.

“We are proud that, this season, the Ortiz Ciscomani family’s Agricola Orqui, S.A. de C.V. has decided MAS Melons & Grapes to market a reasonable portion of their table grapes production, as we have had the privilege to distribute their honeydew melons and squashes over the past years,” he said.

Regarding quality, Suarez expects Mexican table grapes to improve this season as the size of the berry is anticipated to be larger than average, and consumers typically value and prefer large size berries over the small ones.

MAS Melons & Grapes table grapes are marketed under the Desert Pride brand and come in 18-pound boxes containing either nine two-pound bags each or four-pound and three-pound clamshells, sold mainly to club stores such as Costco and Sam’s.

“Some of our table grape customers here in the U.S. consider our company as a boutique-type distributor, as every single order received is thoroughly customized and consistently delivered under the highest quality and service standards,” said Suarez.

In addition to the United States and Canada, the company's key markets, this year MAS Melons & Grapes is also shipping premium-quality table grapes to New Zealand and Japan, and if market conditions keep promising, to some southeastern Asian countries such as Malaysia and Singapore.

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