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Mark Hendricks

PEARS FROM OREGON

Channel 6

4/3/84

5:09

On its trade mission to the Middle East the Oregon delegation has discovered a super market in Saudi Arabia. What's more the store was featuring pears from Oregon on sale. On special assignment Mike Donohue reports from Jedda.

Mike Donohue

In the legends of Scheherazade, bedouin traders were noted for selling rare items from far away lands. In Ryad this street corner merchant offers a hawk for \$100. For several thousand he brags he could get you a fine falcon, and you could play the sport of kings.

That Arabian reputation for delivering exotic goods extends to the produce section of this modern grocery store in Jedda. Here you can buy lemons from Spain, oranges from Morroco, and strawberries from Cyprus, or one of the store's hottest selling items, D'Anjou pears from Hood River, Oregon.

Tony Davy

This is excellent, this is o.k., this is what it's all about.

Mike Donohue

This special display of his pears delighted Tony Davy of Hood River's Diamond Food Growers. Today the D'Anjous are on sale. Only 61¢ a pound. According to Davy you could pay more in U.S. stores.

At this price Safeway of Saudi Arabia sold 50 cases of pears in five days. They're here crisp, thanks to containerized shipping that affords a controlled environment.

But why import pears from Oregon when the wholesale price on those grown in nearby Lebanon is much lower.

Clarence Candy

These pears are crisp, they're fresh and they're sweet.

You can tell that they're picked early in the season, they're still green when they get here, they still have the same freshness and texture as if they were picked right off the tree.

(more)

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Mike Donohue

A few months ago the Washington State Apple Commission took a gamble and sent three untried varieties to Saudi Arabia. They sold 45 cases in 2 days.

Delivering quality and quantity, the Northwest growers are staying alive in an extremely competitive world market. Ten companies from Europe, the Far East and Australia offer apples and pears to Safeway's Middle Eastern stores, yet this is the Diamond Fruit Growers largest market, receiving 40% of their total exports.

Governor Atiyeh

Let's see now. That must say Oregon right there.

Mike Donohue

Canned fruit from Oregon is expensive, but again the demand keeps the product on the shelves. It's popular with foreigners and with the Saudis who shop at night.

They can afford quality, and with that in mind Tony Davy is planning to ship fresh Oregon cherries to the Middle East, promoting their sale by offering Saudi housewives free recipes using bings and lamberts.

You'd have to fly them here at a cost of \$3.50 a pound, but reasons Davy, if honeydews from Holland will sell, so will cherries from the Columbia Gorge. In Jedda, Saudi Arabia, this is Mike Donohue reporting for Newsroom 6.

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