

Premium MD2 pineapples propel Philippine agricultural expansion in Middle East

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The latest export initiative highlights the Department of Agriculture's efforts to open new markets and enhance the global competitiveness of Philippine high-value crops



The Philippines is steadily strengthening its agricultural presence in the Middle East, marked by the arrival of an 18-metric ton shipment of premium MD2 pineapples in the United Arab Emirates on June 28. The latest export underscores growing international demand for Philippine fresh produce and the government's strategic push to diversify agricultural export destinations.

A ceremonial launch at Dubai's Al Aweer Fruit and Vegetable Market brought together representatives from the Philippine Embassy in Abu Dhabi, the Philippine Consulate General in Dubai, the Philippine Trade and Investment Center-Dubai, and the Department of Agriculture's Office of the Agricultural Attaché (OAA)-Dubai, alongside private sector partners spearheading the export initiative.

The shipment comprised 1,500 boxes of fresh MD2 pineapples sourced from farms in Tampakan, South Cotabato. After arriving through the Port of Khor Fakkan, the produce was distributed across the UAE market, where demand for premium tropical fruits continues to rise.

The export initiative forms part of the Department of Agriculture's continuing efforts to open new markets, strengthen trade linkages, and promote Philippine agricultural products throughout the Middle East. Working in close coordination with Philippine foreign service posts and industry stakeholders, the OAA-Dubai facilitates market access, links exporters with overseas buyers, and assists in meeting market-entry requirements.

Officials noted that regular shipments are expected every two weeks, indicating sustained demand for high-quality Philippine pineapples in one of the region's fastest-growing food import markets.

The latest development reflects a broader national strategy to reduce dependence on traditional export destinations by expanding the country's footprint across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, where growing populations, robust tourism, and limited domestic agricultural production continue to drive demand for imported fresh produce.

The shipment was organized by Davao-based exporter Mensch Fil-Am Trading in partnership with Avante Agri-Products Philippines Inc., with distribution support from UAE-based Octagon General Trading LLC. The company also collaborates with partners in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf markets to distribute a range of Philippine fruits, including bananas, mangoes, durian, and pomelo.

The initiative aligns with the Department of Agriculture's strategic agenda under Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr., which prioritizes expanding agricultural exports, improving logistics and post-harvest systems, and enhancing the global competitiveness of Philippine high-value crops.

It also complements President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s vision of modernizing Philippine agriculture and raising farmers' incomes through expanded market access and stronger agricultural value chains.

As global appetite for premium tropical fruits continues to grow, the Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Attaché Office in Dubai is poised to play an increasingly pivotal role in deepening the presence of Philippine produce in the UAE and the wider Gulf region, translating greater market access into higher-value export opportunities and improved livelihoods for Filipino farmers.