

UAE's EGFT expands export of blueberries to Asia-Pacific

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Elite Global Fresh Trading (EGFT), a subsidiary of Yas Holding's agriculture division Elite Agro Holding (EAG) and a leading UAE trader of fresh produce, has expanded its international footprint by exporting highly in-demand blueberries to the new destinations of Japan, Cambodia, Thailand and India, adding to its existing export markets of Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

EAG is the first and biggest producer in the UAE to grow blueberries, and the first Emirati company to export to markets like Japan that have a tough requirement for high-quality certifications is an important milestone for EAG and the UAE and a testament to its agricultural capabilities.

Exports of the popular Elite Berry brand began in April and will continue until the end of May. Next year, the company plans to extend the export season from January to May and continue to add new export markets, backed by expanding production at EAG's local farms that leverage sustainable farming capabilities.

"We're proud to see the expansion of the international distribution network for our high-quality and popular blueberries. This is a strategic move that supports the UAE's food security and its vision for economic diversification while placing the country among elite agricultural exporting countries," said Dr Abdulmonem Almarzooqi, Elite Agro Holding Chief Executive Officer and Member of the Board.

Last year, EGFT debuted locally-grown blueberry exports to the international markets of Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

EGFT will be exporting the Mountain Blue Orchards (MBO) varieties of blueberries that have premium qualities, such as jumbo size, long shelf life, increased sweetness, great firmness and texture. The farm employs a two-hand picking technique

and ensures less than 24 hours between picking and shipping to deliver maximum freshness. It implements special temperature control requirements in the post-production process at its packing facility to ensure its high-quality produce stays fresh for longer until it reaches its final international customers. All exports will be by air freight.

EAG grows five exclusive MBO varieties of blueberries at its Al Foah Farm in Al Ain, where the company has doubled its blueberry production capacity by adding 14 hectares of greenhouses dedicated to growing an additional 72,000 plants for the 2023 harvest. Its output capacity has risen over the past two years, from 205 to 280 tons of blueberries in 2022, and from 280 to almost 400 tons in 2023.