

# Supply of Organic Tropicals Expands



According to Organic Consumer Trends 2001, a study conducted by the Natural Marketing Institute, Harleysville, PA, and the Organic Trade Association, Greenfield, MA, 43% of U.S. consumers use organic products, with sales projected to approach \$20 billion by 2005. In response to the growing need for certified organic ingredients, iTi tropicals has expanded its line of tropical fruit products to include a variety of all-natural certified-organic tropical juices and purées.

“Sourcing organic ingredients is not easy,” says Don Giampetro, vice president of sales. “Disease can decrease crop yield, for instance, resulting in reduced availability. With the latest additions to our product line, we can help food processors maintain adequate supplies of organic tropical ingredients.” Initially, the certified organic line consisted of banana purée, produced by Borja in Ecuador and coconut cream from Sambu in Indonesia. Recently, Columbian-based Asprome was approved to supply pineapple juice and mango, guava, papaya and passion fruit purées.

Today’s health- and environmental-

conscious consumers are fueling the demand for organic foods, distinguished for their lack of pesticide and chemical residues, and for their production practices that promote ecological balance and social benefits. “Asprome is an association of about 300 small-scale fruit growers,” says Matthias Jaeger, managing director, Asprome. “All of the profits are reinvested into the local communities to improve education and living conditions. We manage the entire production chain, from the farm to the packaged product, which enables us to ensure that all organic requirements are met.” The company is certified organic by BCS Öko-Garantie, Nuremberg, Germany. Additionally, the products are GMO-free and kosher-certified.

“Given the limited availability of organic-certified ingredients, processors often settle for products that vary from the nonorganic standards,” states Giampetro. “We work closely with our suppliers to provide organic ingredients that are similar in quality to nonorganics. For example, both conventional and organic mango purée are about 15° Brix. And just like stan-

dard banana purée contains an acid to maintain color, the organic product is prepared with an organic-approved ascorbic acid.” Typical shelf life is 1 year for aseptically packed products and 2 years for frozen items. Applications include beverages, ice cream and frozen novelties, dairy products and bakery items.

“As the organic market grows, we can efficiently and reliably meet our customer’s requirements,” adds Giampetro. “For instance, Asprome’s juices and purées are single strength, which is in demand for ‘not from concentrate’ beverages, plus, it only takes 2 to 3 weeks to receive product from Columbia. And as the demand for variety increases, we can supply organic versions of other fruits.” ■

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