

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Voluntary Public

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Dates Win Innovation Prize at GIC 2015

Report Categories:

Export Accomplishments - Marketing, Trade Events and Shows

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Report Highlights:

FAS/Canada is pleased to report the Bard Valley Medjool Date Growers (BVMDGA) were voted a Most Innovative Product with their new Pumpkin Pie Spiced and Dark Chocolate Orange Date Rolls at Canada's annual Grocery Innovation Show (GIC). BVMDGA is an active USDA Market Access Program (MAP) partner through the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association and has seen sales grow by 215 percent over the last six years in Canada. Much of this success is attributed to BVMDGA's utilization of an in-country representative, Ken Berger, ever present in the marketplace to carry-out the grower association's marketing and promotion initiatives. As a result, Canada is now a top export market of BVMDGA accounting for 15 percent of annual production.



FAS Canada Minister-Counselor Holly Higgins at the GIC 2015 Show

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The GIC show took place at the Toronto Congress Centre from September 28-29, 2015. The show is hosted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers, who account for approximately 30 percent of the sector, including significant

players such as Longo’s and Overweitea Food Group. It’s location in Toronto also allows buyers from Canada’s biggest chains - including Loblaw, Sobeys, and Metro - to attend.

Each year, industry food experts and media develop a list of the 10 most innovative products featured at the show. The winners selected from new products being launched at show. Included in this year’s list were Pumpkin Spiced Date Rolls and Dark Chocolate Orange Rolls from U.S. brand Natural Delights.

The date brand - created by the Datepac LLC business arm of Bard Valley Medjool Date Growers’ Association - BVMDGA) - has grown by 215% over the last six years in Canada. after year, Nielsen reports that dates continue among the top 10 fastest growing categories produce section throughout grocery outlets.

in large part due to the demographics of Canadian society. Between 2006 and 2011 (the last year a census was completed) 661,600 people immigrated to Canada from Asia, including the Middle East. During the same time period 145,700 immigrants arrived from Canada. These regions include areas where dates are very popular. Dates are also a traditional food during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. In 2011, just over one million residents of Canada identified themselves as Muslim and that number is growing.



L-R Deputy Administrator Christian Foster, Minister-Counselor Holly Higgins, BVMDGA Canadian Rep Ken Berger and Attaché Jeff Zimmerman

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Many people don't know that Natural Delights' Medjool Dates, the 'King of Dates', are grown the United States, between the southeast corner of California and southwest corner of Arizona. BVMDGA has worked hard to raise the profile of U.S. grown dates in Canada and this should help convert even more fans in the market. As the Holiday season approaches, Canadians can now look forward to purchasing favorite dates in 8 and 12 inch gift packs to share with their friends and families.

Bread Valley
NATURAL DELIGHTS
MEDJOOOL DATES

Adding new branches to the Natural Delights family tree:
Two new seasonal date rolls.

NATURAL DELIGHTS
LIMITED EDITION
PECAN PUMPKIN PIE SPICED
DATE ROLLS

NATURAL DELIGHTS
LIMITED EDITION
DARK CHOCOLATE ORANGE
DATE ROLLS

Pecan Pumpkin Pie Spiced available now through the end of September.

Dark Chocolate Orange available in November & December.

**Available only for a limited time,
Pecan Pumpkin Pie Spiced & Dark Chocolate Orange.
Line priced and available in 12oz tubs.**

**Order today: contact kenb@naturaldelights.com / 416-200-7207
Visit us at GIC booth 1609**

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BVMDGA's trade publication advertisements promoting their new flavors