

*PRESS RELEASE *

NEW AIRLINE SERVICE TAKES GRENADA'S MANGOES TO CANADA

**Expanding export markets for Grenada's exotic fruits has been a goal of the Agency for Reconstruction and Development (ARD), through its collaborative efforts with the Marketing and National Importing Board (MNIB) and other partners.

A first significant step towards this goal was realised during the first two weeks of July when the MNIB made two shipments averaging 2,000 pounds of mangoes per shipment to Canada, using a new passenger and freight service from Network Airlines Services (NAS), operators of Sky Services and Zoom Airlines.

"This new arrangement provides a welcome opportunity for increasing exports of our fresh produce to the Canadian market," MNIB General Manager Fitzroy James said in an interview, noting that the first two shipments of Julie and Celon mangoes were delivered to Toronto on July 1 and July 8. The mangoes were sourced from approximately 200 farmers.

During a meeting with Mr. James and MNIB Officer responsible for exports Mr. Colville Hercules, NAS Regional Manager for Sales and Services Ms. Marrie Ricketta-Scott said the weekly service is available from July to September and is expected to continue through to December. NAS also plans to provide freight and passenger services direct from Grenada to other international destinations. Mr. Rennie Rush of Cargo Consolidators is the NAS representative in Grenada.

Weekly freight capacity to Canada through this service will average approximately 6,600 pounds. More than 1,000 farmers are expected to benefit directly from this service.

In promoting increased exports of Grenada's exotic fruits, the ARD commissioned a study to develop the fruit sub-sector, which recommends the establishment of 2,800 acres of fruit tree orchards, including 1,300 acres of mango, 650 acres of avocado, 90 acres of soursop, 590 acres of golden apple, 130 acres of guava, 20 acres of breadfruit and 20 acres of tamarind established on farmers' 399 holdings and fruit production and export increased.

The ARD study also calls for improved marketing by increasing the capabilities of private exporters and MNIB personnel; improving post harvest and handling facilities; and establishing functional strategic relationship with partners in export markets.

"The MNIB intends to make full use of this facility to move farmers' produce to Canada and projects that through this facility, we can ship more than 10,000 pounds monthly to Canada or 50,000 pounds during the next five months," Mr. James said.

The main fruits shipped to Canada, most of which are destined for the Toronto market, will be mangoes and golden apples. However, based on availability from farmers, other crops such as hot peppers, breadfruit, condicion, yellow plums,

avocados and soursop can also be shipped, due to the strong demand for these crops in the Canadian market.



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