



By Maura Maxwell

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HLB unveils organic Formosas

US launch of Mexican-grown papayas comes in response to rising consumer demand for organic, non-GMO products



HLB Specialties has become the first company to supply organic Formosa papayas to the US market. The Mexican-grown papayas are cultivated in a protected microclimate that allows for the right conditions to grow the fruits organically with the minimum amount of pesticides.

"Our organic Formosa papayas have a terrific shelf-life and are very sweet," said sales director Lorenz Hartmann de Barros. "The fruit travels less than a day to reach our distribution centre in McAllen, Texas, and from there we ship orders ranging from a few cases to truck loads."

The fruit can also be conditioned

to achieve a desired maturity, according to customer specifications, Hartmann de Barros added.

Each fruit bears a sticker with a ripeness indicator that shows buyers the ideal colour necessary to ensure it is sweet and ripe. The variety is ready to be eaten with just 2-3 stripes of yellow and doesn't need to be ripened to 100 per cent colour.

"Consumers love the ripeness indicator because it helps them to find the right fruit for them. This is especially useful for people who are trying papayas for the first time," Hartmann de Barros said.

Formosa papayas are a large

variety similar to the Central American Maradol papaya in size, but the variety is known to have a more pleasant aroma, sweeter flavour and longer shelf life.

According to the annual consumer study Fresh Trends 2015 published by The Packer, 39 per cent of people who bought papayas also bought organic produce. Among the 56 commodities studies, papayas showed the second-largest growth of organic purchases.