

Philippines ships first commercial Carabao Mango consignment to Canada

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One-tonne shipment to Vancouver opens a new market for Philippine mangoes, but sustained volumes, quality and logistics will determine whether Canada becomes a durable export destination



The Philippines has opened a new market for one of its flagship agricultural products, shipping its first commercial consignment of fresh Carabao mangoes to Canada as the government seeks to expand higher-value farm exports and create additional income opportunities for growers. The initial shipment comprised 1 metric tonne, packed in 250 cartons, and was sent to Vancouver on 18 September from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Complex in Parañaque City. The consignment was organised through a partnership between Mensch FilAm Corp. and the Department of Trade and Industry's Export Marketing Bureau under its Outbound Business Matching Mission programme.

The mangoes will be imported by Fresh Makers Ltd., a Vancouver-based distributor supplying supermarkets and institutional buyers. Air Canada is handling air transport, while Airspeed Cargo is providing logistics support. The commercial significance of the shipment extends beyond its relatively small initial volume. For Philippine mango growers and exporters, the entry into Canada provides an opportunity to test consumer demand, pricing, logistics and supply-chain reliability in a new market.

That test will be critical. Establishing an export destination is one step; developing a commercially sustainable trade flow is another. For fresh fruit, the economics depend on more than market access. Freight costs, shelf life, consistency of supply, fruit quality, phytosanitary compliance and the ability to meet buyer specifications can determine whether an initial shipment develops into repeat business.

The Philippine government is attempting to strengthen those foundations. The Department of Agriculture has been working to consolidate the domestic mango industry and improve its capacity to meet international market requirements. More than 40 mango growers' groups have been brought together under a single federation, aimed at improving coordination, supply consolidation and access to export markets. Plant health remains another priority. The Department of Agriculture, through the

Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), is addressing disease-related challenges affecting mango production while strengthening plant health measures required for international trade.

BPI has also entered into an agreement with Mitsui & Co. to support the development of the Philippine mango industry, adding a private-sector component to efforts aimed at strengthening growers and exporters and expanding international market opportunities.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. said the shipment forms part of a broader strategy to open additional markets for Philippine agricultural products and increase export earnings. “Opening new markets means opening new opportunities for our farmers,” Tiu Laurel said, adding that greater exports could support investment in agriculture and generate economic activity across rural areas. The potential impact, however, goes beyond growers. A functioning export market can create demand across the wider farm-to-market chain, including aggregation, packaging, cold-chain and logistics services, freight, processing and distribution.

At the send-off ceremony, Trade Secretary Cristina Roque, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Atty. Genevieve Velicaria-Guevarra and FilAm President and CEO Racquel S. Simon highlighted the role of public-private partnerships in connecting Philippine agricultural products with overseas consumers. Simon described the shipment as a reflection of both Filipino farmers’ contribution and the role of public-private collaboration in bringing Philippine agricultural products to international markets.

Canada will need to evolve from a destination for a trial or inaugural consignment into a market capable of supporting repeat orders at commercially viable volumes. That will depend on whether Philippine suppliers can maintain consistent quality, aggregate sufficient volumes, manage air-freight economics and meet the requirements of Canadian buyers throughout the supply season. The first tonne therefore carries significance beyond its physical volume. It is an early commercial test of whether the Philippines can convert market-opening efforts into a scalable export business for one of its best-known tropical fruits.

If repeat shipments follow, the Canada opening could become a useful diversification strategy for Philippine mango exporters and a new channel for higher-value farm revenues. If supply and logistics remain difficult to scale, however, the inaugural consignment could remain more symbolic than transformative.