



Pomegranate growth driven by health-conscious consumer and high-end chefs

Demand for the Australian pomegranates is slowly growing as its health benefits and taste gain more exposure, according to one of the nation's largest growers and producers of the fruit.

PomLife was established in 2008, and is dedicated to growing pomegranates and making "value-added" products from its arils (kernels), which the business' General Manager of Sales and Marketing, Joshua Reuveni says is becoming more and more popular in the Australian market.

"The growth is driven by the health-conscious consumer, and the fact that high-end chefs, such as Gordon Ramsey and his Pomegranate Risotto, are creating amazing healthy recipes that not only look great, they are also very tasty," he said. "Whilst our value-added products are relatively new to the Australian market, they are being very well accepted and adopted by local consumers, head chefs - both locally and overseas - and general local delis and supermarket chains with a steady growth as the love affair with this unique healthy fruit grows bigger."



Also known as Australian Pomegranate Growers P/L, PomLife is based in Ardmona, on a 110 hectare property in Victoria's Goulburn Valley. It also has a dedicated storage, packing shed and production plant.

The fresh fruit is available between March and September. But the company also supplies fresh pomegranate arils in various size punnets, IQF (frozen) pomegranate arils, cold pressed juice with no additives or



preservatives, freeze-dried pomegranate arils and powder in both consumer packaging as well as bulk for the food service industry.



With the increasing demand for high-end, quality-controlled Australian products in Asia, PomLife started a value-add export program to countries such as Hong Kong, Indonesia and is even looking at Japan and South Korea.

Mr Reuveni says the farm is not at peak yield so it still has some growth to go through, and PomLife is involved in a Research and Development project to develop exciting and healthy products which will be available next year.

"There are numerous articles available on-line describing the pomegranates as an ancient super-fruit being high in anti-oxidants, polyphenols and other minerals which can provide cures for numerous health conditions," Mr Reuveni said. "PomLife is collaborating with Monash University exploring the fruit's attributes and already we identified some amazing results such as the essential oil that can be extracted from the actual pip and the potential health benefits that can be drawn from it."



There are a few varieties of pomegranates with different peel colour, from red to yellow. Consumers are advised to choose a fruit that is heavy for its size, even if the peel may not look perfect on the outside, and for easy aril extraction, it's recommend leaving the fruit out for two weeks. PomLife is also involved in promoting many uses for the fruit in recipes.

"The arils go with just about any cooked dish, salad smoothie," Mr Reuveni said. "One can simply decorate a desert or a salad with the ruby red "jewels" and create a master chef like dish without much of an effort. Most importantly, because PomLife does the harder bit of the job by extracting the arils from the fruit, the general consumer can have it easily accessible and ready to consume, leaving the mess to us. It would be important to note that all our products are 100 per cent natural and carry the amazing fruit attributes, as we use no heat or any special processing."

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