

## EXPORTING AFGHAN JUICE TO JUICY MARKETS

### Afghanistan's first fruit processing plant exports to a leading UK juice company.

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Afghanistan's pomegranate juice is renowned for its flavor within the country, but its benefits have largely been unavailable in other countries. That changed on November 21, when Omaid Bahar Processing Company, a modern juice processing facility established with the support of USAID, secured its first export deal. The deal marks the first export of any kind of Afghan juice to an international buyer.

In mid-November, Omaid Bahar sent out samples of its main product – pomegranate concentrate – to juice distributors in Europe and India. The company received positive feedback from Pomegreat, a leading pomegranate juice company in the United Kingdom. Pomegreat subsequently placed an initial order for 40 metric tons of pomegranate concentrate.

“Having received the sample in the UK, I was not disappointed,” said Adam Pritchard, Pomegreat's Director. “The quality of Afghan pomegranate is very high. Due to the excellent climatic conditions, the fruit flourishes, and the quality of the juice is testament to that. For us, as the leading European brand in pomegranate juice, not to want to buy pomegranate juice from the country where the fruit was first grown would be impossible.”

Pomegreat currently buys approximately 600 metric tons of concentrate per year and sells around nine million liters of juice drinks and juice each year in the UK. Pritchard noted that Pomegreat has been looking for an opportunity to source Afghan concentrate since his business was founded in 2003. “I was in Peshawar as far back as that [2003] trying to source fruit from Afghan farmers who were prepared to bring it over the border into Pakistan. Unfortunately, at that time there was no factory in Afghanistan capable of processing the fruit and making it into juice.”

Now, the Omaid Bahar Processing Company has changed that and offers Afghanistan's farmers the opportunity to sell their fruit profitably. Omaid Bahar's fruit processing factory was inaugurated in Kabul on October 15 and has the capacity to process up to 50,000 metric tons of fruit every year.

“We're proud to be the first UK company importing pomegranate juice...from Afghanistan,” added Pritchard. “We are very keen to support where we can anything positive that is happening in Afghanistan.”



**In the OMAID Bahar juice factory, a worker shows how pomegranates are turned into juice concentrate.**

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