



A response to the Florida Department of Citrus

Alissa Hamilton

<http://yalepress.typepad.com/squeezed/2009/06/a-response-to-the-florida-department-of-citrus.html>

After my interview with Evan Kleiman on KCRW's "Good Food" show, the Florida Department of Citrus (FDOC) sent Ms. Kleiman the following letter:

Dear Ms. Kleiman,

On behalf of the Florida Department of Citrus, I am writing in response to a recent interview with Alissa Hamilton on the "Good Food" show on KCRW radio. Please allow us to share further information.

Approximately 80 percent of America's orange juice is made from Florida-grown oranges. Orange juice is processed in strict compliance with all USDA and FDA regulations. By utilizing state-of-the-art technology, we're able to provide people across the country with a consistent supply of high quality, nutritious orange juice year round.

One hundred percent orange juice is made only from oranges with no added sugars or preservatives. In fact, it's really just a few steps from the orange to orange juice: the fruit is picked at the height of ripeness; fruit that doesn't meet standards is separated out; essential oils from the orange peel are extracted and the juice is squeezed; the juice is pasteurized and chilled, blended for consistent quality and taste; and then packaged in cartons or safe-stored for packaging at a later date.

Orange juice is one of America's healthiest morning beverages. One 8-ounce glass of 100 percent orange juice delivers essential vitamins and nutrients to support good health and counts as almost 25 percent of the USDA-recommended daily fruit and vegetable servings, based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

Please visit www.OrangeJuiceFacts.com for clear, concise information about orange juice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Florida Department of Citrus

The FDOC's description of orange juice leaves out critical processing procedures, such as aseptic storage in the case of most "not from concentrate," and the chemical breakdown of orange oil and essence for reformulation by flavor engineers in the case of flavor add-back to "not from concentrate" and "from concentrate" orange juice products.

The description also masks the central role that Brazil and increasingly Mexico play in the North American market for orange juice. The percentage of orange juice made from Florida-grown oranges in your glass depends on the product you buy. While "not from concentrate," the most popular type of orange juice, is still made mostly from Florida-grown oranges, imports of "not from concentrate" are increasing and almost all "from concentrate" contains



www.foodandsocietyfellows.org



a significant amount of juice from oranges grown in Mexico and Brazil. In the 2007-2008 season the U.S. imported 405 500 000 gallons of orange juice, while the total volume of retail sales was 623 200 000 gallons. Hence the difficulty of finding the "100% Florida orange juice" seal on the cartons of orange juice sold in stores.

It does not help Florida orange growers, whose interests the FDOC is supposed to represent, to ignore the threat that Brazil's juice industry is posing to Florida's orange growing economy. Brazil surpassed Florida in the 1980s to become the world leader in orange production. It now produces almost three times as many orange as Florida. I have written from firsthand experience about how Florida grows a Valencia like no other. I have written about studies that show that Florida's climate and unique geography produce the best juice orange in the world. I have also written about the benefits to Florida orange growers and North American orange juice consumers of the FDOC's "fresh-squeezed citrus juicing program." A truly fresh from Florida orange juice is a product we can all stand by.



www.foodandsocietyfellows.org