

# First Crop Of Oranges By '08: Pepsi Foods

OUR CORPORATE BUREAU

*New Delhi, June 11*

Pepsi Foods India expects its commercial groves of sweet oranges in Punjab to produce the first crop by 2008.

This is part of the company's efforts to cut back imports of ingredients of its Tropicana range of juices and cut cost for the consumer.

At a press conference on Wednesday, Pepsi India executive director (new business) Subroto Chattopadhyay said, "We have been importing fruits, like oranges from Brazil and pineapples from Phillipines, for Tropicana

juices which takes the cost of the final product up due to incidence of freight and customs duties.

Our effort is to increase sourcing from within the country to be able to lower prices."

In India on a visit, Tropicana USA head of research and development Rocco Simonetta said, "We are creating nine high-tech demonstration groves, each two acres in size containing about 250 trees, across Punjab. These will be managed by Pagrexco, Punjab Agricultural University and Pepsi. These will showcase modern methods of land preparation, tree irrigation and tree

care practices."

"We have already commissioned a citrus screen house at our nursery in Jallowal in Punjab in February this year to quarantine all imported plant materials. 1,600 finished trees have been imported from California and Florida in USA and will be planted in the nine sites during the fourth quarter of '03. We have also imported 3,800 rootstock seedlings from California.

These trees will be grafted to sweet orange and used for budwood production. Budwood from these trees will be used to produce disease-free commercial trees," he added. ♦