

## **Le système italien distribue les fraises durant toute l'année**

"The new strawberry campaign of Coop. Sole started two days before Christmas, with detachments 10-15 days earlier than usual," explains Pietro Ciardiello, director of the cooperative. "The objective is to supply this product 12 months a year as part of the Italian system."

The rain of the last few days though is not helping as "strawberries are delicate and rain can create shelf-life problems." Spain, the main competitor country, is going through the same thing.

80% of the produce is sold to domestic retailers, the remaining 20% goes abroad. Thanks to 11 processing lines equipped with a rapid cooling system, strawberries are packaged in 250-500 gram flow-packs, 250-500 g and 1 kg single-layers, loose in 250-500 g and 1 kg packets or in 2 kg basket boxes.

"Demand is slightly higher than last year and quality is excellent. We are selling more produce but of course it is not like it is in April/May," says Ciardiello. Sabrina is the most popular variety (70% of the production), followed by Fortuna, Benicia, Primoris, Antilla, San Andreas and Candonga. Other varieties from Spain and California are also being tested.

"We know how important innovation is, that is why we try to find strawberries that taste good but which also have a longer shelf-life."

As regards the Club Candonga, Pietro Ciardiello says that "all the initiatives made to promote made in Italy produce are welcome."

Source: [www.freshplza.com](http://www.freshplza.com), 19/02/2014