

## Successful export of Moroccan melons

With 52,000-56,000 tons of melon exported annually, Morocco is the world's 12th melon exporter.

Melon production is developing hugely in Morocco with acreage reaching over 12,000 ha. Charente melons are the main variety (produced in greenhouses around Marrakech, Agadir and Dakhla) covering 1,800 ha and mainly aimed at the European market (80% of export is sent to France).

Harvest is carried out by hand and a major difficulty is determining the optimal time to harvest. In order to keep the fruit's internal temperature low, it is necessary to harvest early in the morning when it is still cool and they must not be left in the sun.

The export period is very short so they try to start production as early as possible. Charente melon production begins mid February (Dakhla) and continues until the end of March/end of May (Marrakech).

Morocco faces competition on the export market from Senegal, Central America, Spain (Almeria) and Italy (Sicily). The amount of melon imported by Europe has doubled over the last decade, reaching 186,000 tons/year - mainly Holland (34%), the UK (32%) and Spain (23%).

Global melon production is at 28.3 million tons. The main producers are China (50% of global production) followed by Turkey with almost 1.7 million tons and Iran with 1.2 million tons. European production is apparently at 2.3 million tons, of which 43% comes from Spain (1 million tons), Italy (580,000 tons) followed by France. Spain is the leader in export with 360,000 tons.

Source : [www.freshplaza.com/](http://www.freshplaza.com/) 21/05/2014