

Spain: Agrupalmería expects to reach 70 million kilos of vegetables in 2014

The balance of the first year after its return to the headquarters of La Cañada is positive. Rosa Belmonte, manager of Agrupalmería, says that growers have adapted perfectly to the facilities, which, despite being in an urban area, are equipped to facilitate the movement of vehicles and prevent traffic problems and queues at their docks.

No data is available yet, as the figures from last season still have to be evaluated, but the firm expects to reach the volume marketed during the 2012-2013 season, which ranged between 65 and 70 million kilos, while the number of collaborating growers is of around five hundred. As for the future, Belmonte explains: "We expect everything to continue working as this year, which has been pretty good, and continue to increase the volumes marketed, opening new sales lines."

The company is a leader in the sale of green and Raf tomatoes, whose production reaches around 35 million kilos. Both varieties are the flagship products under the Agrupalmería brand. The trading continues to focus on tomatoes, without neglecting courgettes, cucumbers, peppers, aubergines, melons and watermelons. To achieve this, they increased their activities in the production centres, especially in La Cañada, as well as Nijar (focused on tomatoes and courgettes), El Solanillo (specialised in peppers, cucumbers and aubergines) and Vicar (focused on vine tomatoes).

As regards the diversification of products and formats, until now Agrupalmería mainly focused on daily auction sales in plastic boxes, but this past season it launched new marketing lines with different formats to suit the new demands of both growers and markets (tubs, cardboard, nets, etc.). These lines of marketing have enabled the company to gain more presence in all European markets.

The final stretch of the agricultural campaign has been marked by a sharp drop in prices affecting the entire industry, and for start of the new one another drawback has come into play: the Russian ban. This, as is also the case for other agricultural companies in Almeria, worries Agrupalmería, which just like other firms had only just started to venture into this market. "The sector is concerned about the situation with Russia and how it can affect the supply and prices of products in the future," stated Rosa Belmonte.

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