Spain: Improvement of Crimson Seedless with reduced irrigation

The grape variety Crimson Seedless can be grown with substantial water savings while improving the fruit's size and colour, as demonstrated by a doctoral thesis presented this month at the Polytechnic University of Cartagena (UPCT).

Research conducted by María del Rosario Conesa has demonstrated the suitability of this variety to be handled with techniques such as a regulated deficit irrigation (RDI) and partial rootzone drying irrigation (PRD), achieving average water saving of around 35% while keeping production volumes and crop quality stable and boosting essential attributes, such as size and colour.

Studies carried out for three years in a commercial plantation have also managed to improve the fruit's antioxidant capacity and increase the content of beneficial bioactive compounds, such as resveratrol.

The thesis, funded by a research project of the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness and directed by Dr Alejandro Pérez Pastor and Rafael Domingo Miguel, of the research group Soil-Water-Plant of the School of Agronomics of the UPCT, was also a pioneer in the use of Information technology and Communications in commercial plantations through wireless data loggers distributed by the technology company WIDHOC.

These studies, conducted with table grapes, will move to other major crops in the Region of Murcia, such as extra-early nectarines, apricots, peaches and Paraguayo peaches through the European project LIFE+IRRIMAN (LIFE13 ENV/ES/000539), currently in progress.

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