

Spain: Monterosa tomato expands from 1.5 to 120 hectares in three years

After only three years in production, the fruit and vegetable group, Gavà Grup, is talking about the success of its new tomato variety Monterosa. While three years ago the company cultivated 1.5 hectares in Almeria, at present the acreage has already reached 120 hectares, with prospects to harvest 10,000 tonnes. But what is the secret behind this new variety?

It is a hybrid of two tomatoes from the Mediterranean: the pear of Girona and the Costoluto genoveso, a typical Italian variety. Developed by the company, Semillas Fitó, after eight years of research, this tomato has characteristics that "make it unique," explained sources from Semillas Fitó. "It has achieved the perfect combination in terms of shape, colour, flavour and texture. Moreover, it is a tomato whose taste is not very sweet, but has a low acidity and also a very good post-harvest," adds Jordi Ballester, head of Semillas Fitó.

The expansion of the Monterosa, whose production is marketed between November and July, is comparable to that of a drop of oil in water. In our country, this tomato will soon be available in the hypermarket chain Alcampo, in Gadisa, Caprabo, Bon Preu and in all central markets of Spain. Gavà Grup is very satisfied, since the sale of this tomato entails some difficulties, as it is a unique variety which doesn't replace others on the supermarket shelves, but actually needs to be given new space. The Monterosa is also enjoying great success abroad, especially in countries like Poland and Romania. In fact, Gavà Grup has a strong presence in these countries thanks to its subsidiaries.

Fransec Llonch, export director at Gavà Grup, assured us that in two or three years we may be talking about an acreage totalling 400 hectares. "This will be possible because the Monterosa is a tomato for high consumption, and whoever tries it usually repeats." The Catalan horticultural group is so strongly committed to it, that the cultivation of this tomato is already being carried out in 95% of its own farms. "In the past we worked with about 12 tomato varieties, but we have abandoned them all," he adds. With a market price of between 4 and 7 Euro per kilo, the Monterosa is here to stay, "because it brings the taste of a Mediterranean summer tomato, but in winter," affirms Llonch.

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