

# Spain: Algae-based biostimulant for melon cultivation

The Catholic University of Ávila (UCAV) has carried out a research project that improves the yield of melons using a microalgae-based biostimulant.

This is the conclusion of the Final Master Project presented by M<sup>a</sup> Carmen Cabellos Arroyo, student of the Master in Agro-Food Biotechnology, under the supervision of Dr Cristina Lucini and Dr Federico G. Witt (Algaenergy). The subsequent biotechnological advances have made it possible to open new research channels in the use of these microorganisms on an industrial scale.

Microalgae are photosynthetic microorganisms that generate high protein biomass, with great potential for biotechnological use in different industries (agro-food, pharmaceutical, energy, agrochemical, etc). One of its applications is the obtainment of biostimulants for use in agriculture from the enzymatic hydrolysis of micro algal biomass.

The project has been carried out in the framework of the agreement signed between the company AlgaEnergy S.A. and the Madrid Institute for Rural Research, Development and Food (IMIDRA), specifically by its Agro-Food Research Department. The main objective has been to conduct agronomic trials of a biostimulant product based on microalgae and to compare its effects on melon crops with those of other biostimulants made from different raw materials.

The effect on the crop's productivity, as well as on the fruit's organoleptic quality, was assessed. The results reveal that the plants treated with the microalgae-based biostimulant achieved better yields, with larger average fruit sizes, as well as the highest average tasting scores.

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