

## Spain: Huelva's strawberry growers expect to harvest up to 400,000 tons

The strawberry harvest has started a month late, but with very positive prospects. Growers expect better figures than those of 2018, when the province already broke all records, with almost 1,000 million Euro of sales abroad.

This month, Huelva is immersed in its main agricultural campaign: the strawberry harvest. The season has started several weeks late, but with very optimistic forecasts. In fact, producers expect to harvest between 360,000 and 400,000 tons of strawberries this year. The pickers have already started harvesting the first fruits, which will hit the market at a high price, exceeding five Euro per kilo; however, as the harvest progresses, the prices will stabilize. Growers are confident that the average price will become more affordable for consumers, but also profitable for the sector.

"At this early stage of the campaign, prices are very high due to the current low production, so it is still too early to assess how prices will develop throughout the campaign and what the average will be," says ASAJA Huelva.

Around 80 percent of the strawberries produced in Huelva are exported outside Spain. The main destinations for this coveted fruit are Germany, France and the United Kingdom.

Last year, the province beat all its records as far as strawberry exports are concerned. Between January and October, the marketing of strawberries in foreign markets generated 994 million Euro in revenue, which is 7.2 percent more than in 2017.

Growers expect these figures to improve further this season. "We hope that strawberry and red fruit exports will continue to grow with the consolidation of traditional markets and the conquest of new ones," said the agrarian organization.

Huelva produces 99.7 percent of Andalusia's strawberries, which in turn accounts for 97 percent of the national total. The cultivation of strawberries and red fruits generates a considerable amount of business in the province, where there are currently more than 1,000 producers and about 100 marketers.

In the current strawberry campaign, it is estimated that some 40,000 people will be needed. To this we'll have to add another 30,000





workers for blueberry-related tasks and approximately 30,000 more to work with raspberries and blackberries.

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