

*"Morocco has almost doubled its raspberry shipments to Europe"*

## **Tough competition causes Spanish strawberry and raspberry prices to fall**

22% of Huelva's strawberry campaign has already been completed when it comes to the volumes marketed. At this time last year, the campaign was already at 30%, according to the manager of Freshuelva.

"Until a week ago, the strawberry harvest has been slower than usual and the fruit's supply has been small. In the last week, the production has been reactivated thanks to the warmer weather and the fact that we've had more hours of daylight," says Rafael Domínguez.

As a result, as the volumes have increased, prices have been falling and are currently around 8% lower than at this same time last season, although the available supply is still smaller. One of the main reasons, according to Rafael Domínguez, is the competition from other origins, which, unlike Huelva, have shipped a lot more to the markets.

"While Italy suffered major production losses last year due to adverse weather conditions, this year it has had an abundant production. Portugal and Morocco have also recorded a significant increase in their strawberry and raspberry productions. In fact, Morocco has almost doubled its raspberry shipments to Europe, and this has caused prices to drop by 31% this year."

In March, "if the weather continues to be favorable and there are no sharp temperature swings, the fruit should have a good quality. At the moment, the one being harvested has good consistency and does not present phytosanitary problems," says Rafael Domínguez. According to the manager of Freshuelva, the European markets continue to be the main destination for strawberries and other berries from Huelva, although the Middle East has gradually been demanding more in recent campaigns. The sector is also awaiting progress in the opening of the Chinese market, especially for blueberries, although there are other Spanish products on the waiting list, such as kakis or cherries.

"The demand for Spanish berries is on the rise, although we need bigger and better infrastructures to be able to continue growing." Rafael Domínguez says that this year, the sector's promotions will





focus on blueberries. The goal is to give their consumption a boost in Spain. "Every link in the sector needs to make an effort, including the large distributors."

Freshuelva has been called to attend the meeting of the Spanish-French-Italian Strawberry contact group, convened for March 14 and 15 in Italy. The meeting will serve to discuss topics such as the development of the campaign in these countries, as well as the possible opening of new markets and the regulations on authorized active substances for strawberry cultivation.

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