

## Chile and Tenerife collaborate to improve avocado production

The avocado fever knows no borders. In the last 20 years avocado production has almost tripled, going from a world production of 2 million in 1994 to almost 6 million in 2017, according to the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO). Due to the increasing consumption of avocado in Spain and in the world, representatives of the Technical Service of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Council of Tenerife (Canary Islands) have created a network of collaboration with the Institute of Agricultural Research (INIA) of Chile.

Tenerife seeks to deal with the exponential consumption of avocado in Europe through more sustainable production, and establish plantations on small surfaces with transfer systems of irrigation technologies, conduction and pruning that are appropriate to its soils and climate. Spain imported 129,287 tons of avocado in 2018, i.e. 32% more than in the previous year, according to data from the Spanish Federation of Associations of Producers and Exporters of Fruits, Vegetables, Flowers, and Live Plants (FEPEX).

To achieve this, Chile and Spain have decided to join forces and share the technical and cultural knowledge they possess. "It is a joint research and technology transfer project, especially of the crop's cultural practices: from irrigation management to the formation of the fruit tree and the harvest," said engineer Domingo Rios Mesa, the head of the Technical Service of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Council and director of the Center of Conservation of the Agricultural Biodiversity of Tenerife.

Rios and Jesus Morales Martinez, the insular councilor of the Council of Tenerife, met in Chile with the regional director of INIA La Cruz, Patricio Fuenzalida, and with specialists Jaime Salvo, Victoria Muena, and Andrea Torres, to determine the terms of the collaboration.

The Canarian production is similar in several aspects to the Chilean one, and it is precisely these similarities that make cooperation



possible (which is not possible with countries such as Mexico that have a different way of producing, with much bigger plots). According to Rios, both countries have a similar terrain -as they both cultivate on slopes-, grow crops with few water resources, and produce, for the most part, the same variety of avocado; the Hass avocado.

However, the Canarian plots are much smaller than the Chilean plots. The Andean country produces this fruit, originating from the center and east of Mexico, as well as from Guatemala, in large raised plots called ridges.

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