

Nile Green on the Egyptian strawberry season “I expect competition between Morocco and Egypt to be really fierce”

In just one month, the harvest for Egyptian strawberries will begin. The season is shaping up to be very similar to last year, where weather was good and the season filled the gap between the Dutch, Belgian, German and Spanish seasons. This gap leaves quite a lot of demand, resulting in fierce competition between the Moroccan and Egyptian strawberry exporters.

Due to similar weather conditions, Mohamed Shehata - Operations Manager Europe for Egyptian exporter Nile Green - predicts the strawberry season in Egypt will progress about the same as last year. “Weather had been really good this year, just like the previous season. We grow our strawberries on open soil, but everything went really well. This is why I can say that harvest will start precisely on the 17th of November, if the situation does stay as similar to 2018 as we predict.”



The Egyptian strawberry season lands right between the Dutch and the Spanish season, giving Nile Green a month to export as much produce as they can. “It’s a great gap to be in, as demand in the Netherlands always remains high. It’s almost like a hub for strawberries. Since Morocco also has their season in our gap, I expect competition between Morocco and Egypt to be really fierce,” Shehata explains. We have until the 10th of January,



which is when the Spanish season will start. After that the remaining produce will be used for IQF-freezing. Any fresh strawberries we have left are distributed locally or in the Middle-East.”

Transporting the strawberries is done exclusively by air-freight, says Shehata. “Sending by air freight comes with its own set of challenges, as the timing of shipping is very important. Shipping by air-freight costs a lot of money and once you book in a shipment you have to pay the full amount in advance. If a transport is delayed and does not make it to the plane in time, we lose money. It’s our goal to ensure this process is done as accurately as possible.”

“On top of that we’re trying to solidify our agreements and show that we are committed to this accuracy by abiding to the quality standards of EU, meaning the Global Gap + Grasp and FSSC /ISO22000 certification. But we also see value in our employees and see our social responsibility towards them, and thus have acquired the SMETA social certificate. Finally it’s important for us to get our brand name out there. By increasing our after-sales customer service we hope to show our clients that we aren’t cowboys and are reliable as a source of strawberries. If we, as Nile Green, cover our expenses while working on our brand, we’ll count the season as a successful one.” Shehata concludes.

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