

Fruit and vegetables from EU solar greenhouses meet the highest quality standards and are certified several times.

- Every season 14,000 family farms in Andalusia undergo several audits from different certification systems in order to prove compliance with the European quality and food safety regulations as well as with the even stricter food traders' specifications.

- Around 15 % of the products meet the strict criteria of the German and EU organic seal.

Munich, November 18, 2020.- The southern Spain fruit and vegetable growers from Almeria and Granada, on the Andalusian coast, are among the largest suppliers in Europe, meeting the highest EU standards of quality, food safety, freshness and taste. Not only do they largely avoid the use of pesticides and insecticides but also, the high quality and safety standards demanded by European consumers have prompted the vast majority of the 14,000 family farms located here to comply with certification systems and high standards of sustainable agricultural practice in their cultivation. This guarantees the traceability and quality of food at all stages of production.

Peppers, tomatoes, aubergines, cucumbers, courgettes, melons and watermelons grown in the extreme south of Europe under solar greenhouses do meet all or part of the following certifications:

- **The QS test mark**

The QS testing system for food, labels fresh food such as meat, sausage, fruit, vegetables and potatoes. The inspection is carried out seamlessly along all stages of production from the producer to the retailer. The aim is to achieve continuous traceability of the goods from the producer to the food retail trade. Participation in the QS inspection system is voluntary for the companies.

- **GLOBAL G.A.P.**

The abbreviation GAP stands for Good Agricultural Practice. GlobalGAP is a quality assurance and certification system for agriculture that is applied worldwide. Its objectives are to improve food safety, promote sustainable production methods, use water sparingly, use chemicals responsibly, and integrated pest control, as well as to consider the welfare of workers and animals.

- **IFS - International Food Standard**

The IFS (International Food Standard) defines precise requirements for the quality and safety of food along the entire value chain. The certification is carried out every three years. It is a standard recognised by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) for auditing food manufacturers.

- **BRC - Standard for food processing**

The "Global Standard for Food Safety" was developed to specify the safety, quality and operational criteria that food producers must meet to comply with all consumer protection legislation. The BRC certification is recognised by many retailers, foodservice companies and manufacturers around the world when assessing the capabilities of their suppliers.

In addition, part of the land in and around Almeria and Granada in southern Spain is also cultivated in organic quality. These products are clearly labelled for consumers with the EU organic seal and in some cases also with the German organic seal.

- **Organic labels of the European Union**

The best-known certification in Europe is the "Bio-Label" in accordance with the EC Organic Regulation. It was introduced throughout the EU in July 2010 as a binding new organic seal. The term "organic" is a term protected by the EC Eco Regulation.

Foods labelled with the seal may, among other things:

- not be exposed to ionising radiation for preservation
- not be produced by and with genetically modified organisms
- not be produced with the use of synthetic plant protection products
- contain no more than 5 % conventionally produced ingredients
- not contain sweeteners and stabilisers, synthetic colourings, preservatives and flavour enhancers

Some even meet the strict guidelines of the Demeter Organic Farming Association, which impose requirements that go beyond the regulations of the EC Organic Regulation fitting in the so-called biodynamic agriculture concept.

Around 4.5 million tonnes of fruit are harvested annually from the coast of Almeria and Granada solar greenhouses. Three-quarters are exported to the European Union. The region ensures the supply of healthy fruit and vegetables to around 500 million European consumers, especially in the winter months.

About CuTE SOLAR:

The EU financed CuTE-SOLAR is a promotion program that brings together a consortium made up of the Association of Producer Organizations of Fruit and Vegetables of Andalusia (APROA-Spain), the Spanish Fruit and Vegetables Interbranch Association (HORTIESPAÑA) and FruitVegetablesEUROPE (EUCOFEL) The campaign aims to raise awareness of the specific characteristics of agricultural production methods in the EU solar greenhouses, especially in key areas such as sustainability and respect for the environment and people, and the safety, quality and traceability of crops... Actions will be conducted in three EU countries (Belgium, Germany and Spain) from 2020 to 2022.

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