



European solar greenhouse fruit and vegetable producers respond to growing consumer awareness of healthy eating

-- 70 percent of all Germans eat fruit and vegetables every day and 30 percent are cooking more often than before the outbreak of the pandemic --

-- In southern Spain the production season has just begun, ensuring that European consumers are supplied with fresh, healthy fruit and vegetables during the winter months and helping to meet the increased demand for healthy food during the pandemic --

Munich, Germany (13.10.2020) – The Corona pandemic has led to a new appreciation of healthy food among German consumers. In the latest nutrition report published by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), 98 percent of those surveyed said that food should taste good, closely followed by the 90 percent who said that their second priority is that food should be healthy. The older the respondents are the more important the aspect of health becomes. According to the ministry's nutrition report, 80 percent of 14 to 29-year-olds consider a healthy diet important, compared to 96 percent of those over 60.

Southern Spain's solar greenhouse fruit and vegetables farmers are among the largest suppliers of fruit and vegetables in Europe and are responding to this growing demand for healthy food with particularly sustainable production methods.

Extensive avoidance of pesticide and insecticide use

Solar greenhouse growers largely avoid the use of pesticides and insecticides. Instead, pests are kept away from the plants with pheromones and colour traps, and controlled by beneficial insects, arachnids and other species.

In addition, solar greenhouse production in Southern Europe is a model in land resource-saving and energy consumption. Water consumption is also highly optimized by precise drip irrigation of the plants and by rainwater collection systems. In fact, to produce on open land the 4.5 million tonnes of fruit and vegetables harvested annually in the solar greenhouses in southern Spain would require the use of around 30 times more land.

The high quality and safety standards demanded by European consumers have led a vast majority of solar greenhouse farms in the south of Spain to adopt certification systems and high standards of sustainable agricultural practices in their cultivation. This ensures the traceability and quality of food at all stages of production.

Fundamental for consumers: healthy fruit and vegetables

For German consumers, fruit and vegetables are a central component of a healthy diet. According to the ministry's nutrition report, 70 percent of all Germans and 74 percent of those over 60 years of age eat fruit and vegetables every day.

Numerous scientific studies prove that eating fruit and vegetables prevents many chronic diseases. For example, it can reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers. In addition, a diet rich in vitamins and low in fat, sugar and salt can prevent overweight and obesity.

According to the nutrition report, the corona crisis also affects the cooking and eating habits of Germans, with just under one in three (30 percent) of those surveyed responding that they were cooking more often than before the outbreak of the pandemic.

Fruit and vegetables not only enhance the taste of each dish, but also offer added value for health. Whether baked, fried, cooked, raw, in sauces, juices, smoothies or desserts, as a starter or as a side dish, fruit and vegetables are an integral part of many recipes - either as a staple food or as the basis for preparation.

In the Andalusian greenhouse region (southern Spain) the production season has just begun and the 14,000 or so local family farms are ready to once again ensure that European consumers are supplied with fresh, healthy fruit and vegetables during the winter months, helping to meet the increased demand for healthy food taking place during the pandemic.

About the nutrition report of the BMEL:

On behalf of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), the opinion research institute forsa conducted a representative survey from December 2019 to January 2020, asking around 1000 German citizens aged 14 and over about their eating and shopping habits. Due to the current situation, forsa asked an additional 1000 German citizens in April 2020 what influence the corona crisis was having on their shopping, cooking and eating habits. The results of the forsa survey are available on the BMEL website. The ministry has been publishing the annual nutrition report "Germany, how it eats" since 2016.

About CuTE SOLAR:

The EU co-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 (EUROFEL). The campaign seeks to increase awareness of the specific features of EU fruit and vegetables agricultural production methods (solar greenhouse) and the characteristics of EU fruit and vegetables (varieties, quality, taste) in the EU internal market. Actions will be conducted in three EU countries (Belgium, Germany and Spain) from 2020 to 2022.

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