

COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE

Solar Greenhouses in Southern Europe are an efficient and sustainable model for feeding the planet

The Solar Greenhouses of Almeria and Granada have been qualified by the United Nations as a very good example of efficiency and sustainability for the global supply of quality and healthy food

The growers of the Solar Greenhouses in southern Spain can guarantee a year-round supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to the European population. Thanks to the warm microclimate specific to the greenhouses, the growth of the plants comes entirely from solar energy. This is one of the main fundamentals on which the sustainability of this production model is based.

Energy self-sufficiency thanks to the sun

The operation of the greenhouses on the coast of Almeria and Granada is optimal thanks to the extensive experience in the latest agricultural and environmental technologies on the one hand and the benefits of a mild and sunny climate on the other. The growth and production of fresh and delicious fruit and vegetables are due to the primary function of plants: photosynthesis. The abundance of sunlight captured by the plantation converts CO₂ from the air, water and nutrients absorbed by the roots and foliage into healthy and nourishing energy. And this takes the form of peppers, tomatoes, aubergines, courgettes, cucumbers, melons or watermelons. In this way, the fruit and vegetables in the solar greenhouses grow naturally and are rich in vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants. This natural process also releases enormous amounts of oxygen into the atmosphere, which contributes to a significant improvement in the air people breathe.

In total, 96% of the energy used in the greenhouses in Almeria and Granada comes from the sun, without the need for other energy sources or fossil fuels. This model differs significantly from the production methods of other greenhouses, which require artificial heating and lighting systems.

The value of the Spanish microclimate

The coast of Almeria and Granada enjoys an average of over 3,000 hours of sunshine per year. This optimal climate, combined with efficient structures to protect the plants, has allowed the region to develop self-sufficient agriculture, becoming one of the world's most successful and innovative production systems. As the CNUCED¹ study recognises, this model applied by the Solar Greenhouses of Almeria and Granada is one of the most efficient in the world for the production of food in sufficient quantity and quality because it uses few resources and can contribute to the fight against climate change

According to Francisco Góngora, president of the Interprofessional HORTIESPAÑA, *"At the level of international institutions and organisations, everyone recognises that solar greenhouses play an important role in the sustainable production of quality food. But we must continue to*

¹ "Wake up Before It Is Too Late, make agriculture truly sustainable now for food security in a changing climate", est un rapport établi pour la Conférence des Nations unies sur le commerce et le développement (CNUCED), Trade and Environment review 2013.

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inform the consumer and make them aware of its benefits, as we are doing through the campaign "Cultivating the Taste of Europe in Solar Greenhouses - CuTE Solar".

What is a solar greenhouse?

A solar greenhouse is a closed structure covered with a plastic film through which the sun's rays shine, giving the plants the light they need to maintain the right temperature for their development during the winter months so that they can carry out photosynthesis. In the process, the plants produce nutrients from the CO₂ they absorb from the air and release enormous amounts of oxygen into the atmosphere. Solar greenhouses are very different from the production methods used in other greenhouses, which use fossil fuel-based heating and lighting systems that consume up to 30% more energy and are therefore harmful to the environment.

About CuteSolar

CuteSolar is a promotion programme funded by the European Union (EU) and supported by a consortium of Andalusian fruit and vegetable growers' associations (APROA), the Spanish inter-branch fruit and vegetable association (HORTIESPAÑA) and the European fruit and vegetable trade association FruitVegetablesEUROPE (EUCOFEL). The aim of the information and promotion campaign, which will run until 2022, is to inform consumers about the sustainable and environmentally friendly production and cultivation methods of EU fruit and vegetables, the high standards of greenhouse technology and the quality of fruit and vegetables from southern Spain.

The programme, with a total investment of €1.95 million, is co-financed by the proposing organisations and the European Union, will run for three years (2020-2022) and will be implemented in Spain, Germany and Belgium.

Disclaimer

The content of this promotional campaign reflects the views only of the author and is the sole responsibility of the author. The European Commission and the European Research Executive Agency (REA) do not accept any responsibility for any re-use of the information contained therein.

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