



Cooperating with the
whole value chain
– ensuring
exceptional
quality
for table grapes



The Spanish
Table Grapes Project



Increasing consumer confidence in Spanish table grapes

How it all started

The Murcia region of Spain is a major supplier of fruit and vegetables and Germany is one of the key export markets. Table grapes are a focus crop in quality terms. Different trading standards established for table grapes in the various import countries provide a major challenge for the Spanish producers and create a high level of complexity at growing level.

Increasing levels of awareness about food safety have led, for example, to German media criticism of supermarkets selling table grapes with excessive residues, which obviously undermines consumer confidence in table grapes.



What was the aim

The key to improve consumer confidence in Spanish table grapes was to address the issue of sustainability and introduce the principle of traceability – so that each bunch of grapes could be seamlessly traced from field to fork. But sustainability and traceability are only possible if an effective partnership is established along the whole food chain. Therefore Andretta, Bayer CropScience and Frutas Esther, one of the key Spanish producers and exporters of table grapes and other fruit, decided to implement a food chain partnership to guarantee the quality of Spanish table grapes. The plan was to develop a grape protection programme that optimised the use of agrochemicals based on sustainable agriculture by using the outstanding expertise of the different food chain partners.



Who got involved

The producer Frutas Esther is a very market-oriented organisation, keen to prove the transparency and traceability of the production process. Through close cooperation between Frutas Esther's field technicians and Bayer CropScience's specialists it was possible to develop a grapes protection programme for the entire season. This programme ensured that the harvested table grapes stayed in the best possible condition by practising sustainable agriculture.

The trader Andretta has to cope with consumer sensibility towards the appearance and perceived healthy qualities of fresh food. That is why it is not just tangible quality criteria like taste and appearance of fruit that are important, but also consumer confidence that the produce is safe and produced according to the highest environmental standards.

The input provider Bayer CropScience wanted to prove that a concept based on a food chain partnership, innovative sustainable crop solutions and traceability could achieve the best possible grape quality.



Integrated crop management from field to fork

The confidence-building solution

As the programme developed, it soon became apparent that the task was more complex than had been expected. After all, the partners wanted to establish a programme that was integrated into the entire grape production process and did not just involve crop protection products. This involved adapting the programme to suit the local soil and weather conditions in Murcia and adding physical barriers as well as pheromones in line with the “Region of Murcia Clean Farming” Programme. However, thanks to the very professional technical assistance provided by Frutas Esther and regular consultations with specialists from Bayer CropScience, it was possible to develop the best solution for this crop.

Grapes protection programme: The treatment programme, a crucial factor in the entire process, was not only adapted to the specific table grape growing area, it was also made compatible with all the integrated control programmes and alternative crop protection systems.

Follow-up: During the campaign, visits by Bayer CropScience specialists to, and conversations with, Frutas Esther technicians proved crucial in adjusting the initial programme to the real conditions encountered and dealing with difficulties met on the way.

Quality control: Analyses were carried out at several stages of the growth process. During harvesting several analyses of residues were made to carry out regular checks on the quality of the production.

What was achieved?

**Proof of the first-class quality
of export table grapes through
the Bayer CropScience
food chain partnership programme**

Relationships: By building up relationships and keeping in touch with all members of the value chain, the partners in the programme were able to tackle the specific challenges facing growers in Spain.

At the end of the season, the results of several months of hard work were evident to retailers and consumers. The visible proof of healthy, top-quality table grapes was the biggest achievement.

This food chain partnership project also brought other benefits. First, there was the interest shown by other food chain agents who visited the grape-growing areas. Although not involved in the project, they asked for information and results. All of them stated their support for this kind of project and showed an open mind on possible future collaborations. Second, the customers’ confidence in Bayer CropScience products increased as a result of what was achieved. Besides, they saw that Bayer CropScience was not only interested in selling crop protection products but also in helping them to guarantee the quality of Spanish table grapes throughout the food chain.



**“Sustainability + Traceability + Quality = Added value
for every partner in the food chain.”**

Jesús Gómez, Managing Director, Frutas Esther, S.A.



Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition. Food chain partnerships help to supply consumers with high-quality fresh produce, which forms the basis of a healthy diet. But such partnerships can only succeed if they involve every player in the food chain – from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer. Bayer CropScience has the global experience and cutting-edge expertise to create a successful partnership at every level.

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