

## Challenges of the horticultural sector before the export of products to Europe



As a result of applying high standards of quality and control, the Spanish fruit and vegetable sector is the main supplier of fruits and vegetables in Europe. In the first quarter of 2018, the European Union was the destination of 93% of sales abroad of the Spanish fruit and vegetable sector, with 11.7 million tons and 11,760 million euros, according to data from the [Spanish Federation of Producers Associations Fruit and Vegetable Exporters \(FEPEX\)](#).

To be able to market their products in European markets, Spanish agri-food companies, in addition to the state, community and individual regulations of each recipient country, meet specific requirements requested by the distribution companies of each market and whose objective is to maximize the protection of public health, as well as hygiene throughout the food chain: from the farm to the table.

As explained by the director of technological assistance and analysis of [AINIA](#), Roberto Ortuño: "the legal requirements related to food safety are the same in all the countries of the European

Union, but there are cases in which other exclusive requirements of each market. In these cases, the exporters must prove that they meet the conditions required in the country that will import the products through analyzes carried out in accredited laboratories and recognized by the different private labels of quality and food safety. "

As an example, Germany, the second destination of Spanish fruit and vegetable exports (5,624M) according to MAPAMA, and one of the markets with the most demanding quality and safety criteria in the EU.

A large part of the German distribution companies ask agribusiness companies that want to market their products in the German market, which have been approved by the QS food quality and safety system. A requirement driven by distributors, organizations and companies of the agri-food sector of that country, which implies an integral control of the entire supply chain.

In this sense, Roberto Ortuño has explained that: "the international recognition QS to the work carried out by the laboratories of AINIA, allows us to offer a differential value to the horticultural companies"

### **Ainia is the accredited Spanish laboratory for the analysis of the largest number of pesticides and chemical residues in food products**

In Spain, only eight laboratories are authorized to perform the analyzes required by the QS food safety and quality system. With this recognition, [AINIA](#) has been accredited to perform the detection and quantification of pesticides in fruits and vegetables and specific methods for the detection of: bromide ion, dithianone and fenbutatin oxide; quaternary ammonium-type pesticides (QUATS: chlormequat, mepicuat) and acid pesticides.

In addition, the AINIA laboratories are recognized by the EURL (European Union Reference Laboratory) as one of the five best European laboratories for pesticides in fruits and vegetables.

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