Maximum demands in plant production by EL PINAR

The EL PINAR high-altitude strawberry plant nurseries are in the middle of the campaign, in an advanced process of issuing runners that will allow them to meet the demands of their customers in the main markets of the Mediterranean arc, with a quality plant and the maximum phytosanitary guarantees.

To achieve this objective, EL PINAR has implemented a productive strategy that covers everything from the planting date to irrigation management, nursery diversification and logistics. "Thanks to this strategy, we are capable of supplying more than 250 million plants and doing so in response to the needs and demands of our customers," Anxo Castro Pérez, director of Nursery Production, tells us.

Early planting date

Given the producer's need to enter the markets earlier with quality fruit, EL PINAR has brought forward the planting date in nurseries to March. This will allow them to continue all the fertilization processes until July, and from that moment on, start the maturation process of the plant.

"With this **we achieve a longer maturation period**, and it can be done in a more leisurely way, stopping vegetative development and strengthening the secondary roots, which is where the starch is stored, which will later allow us to have good vigor in the transplant, being essential due to the

high temperatures that could be registered in the production areas in October”, explains Anxo Castro.

Irrigation, another key piece

Currently the temperatures are being optimal for the correct development of the crop. However, we know that future heat waves can occur and cause water stress to the plant.

To deal with this situation, EL PINAR has been applying an efficient irrigation system, which combines **dripping during the first phase of cultivation in the nursery, and dripping and sprinkling when the emission of runners is already advanced**. "With sprinkling to provide the necessary water to the runners, and with dripping to the mother plant, since its water needs are higher," argues Anxo Castro.

In addition, EL PINAR has **in-depth sensor systems that allow monitoring**, not only of irrigation but also of nutrients, to know at all times how their contribution is being and if there are losses or additional needs.

Likewise, this campaign is in the testing phase with moisture retention systems, which allow slower drainage.

Rusticity of its varieties

The rusticity of its varieties is also being essential in nurseries. **The exceptional use of active materials for soil disinfection forces them to implement other cultural practices**. In this way, they have fully disinfected plots each season by previously leaving them fallow, thus avoiding the hosting of pests.

EL PINAR **has varieties such as Victory, Primavera, Inspire and Renewal in its portfolio, which have low needs in chilling hours**. This is fundamental, since by not ensuring the cold during their cycle, these varieties maintain continuous and constant flowering throughout the production cycle.

Nursery diversification

EL PINAR **currently has strawberry plant nurseries in Ávila, Segovia and Romania**. This diversification allows it, on the one hand, to meet the growing demand of its customers in all the markets where it is present today, but also to adapt these materials to the production areas.

In colder production areas, with more diverse soils such as Italy and Greece, the plant of origin from Romania provides an initial vigor that favors rapid implantation", comments the Production Director.

This diversification and controlled and careful logistics down to the smallest detail, allows them to reach the number of **8 million plants supplied per day**, as was the case last season.

Cost control

With these cultivation techniques, water controls and diversification of nurseries, EL PINAR manages to offer a quality plant, but it also does so by **assuming an increase in costs that has minimal repercussions on customers**. In this way, it shows its commitment to the producer and the sector, to continue adding value in a competitive way.