Sánchez Haro: "e-commerce is a great opportunity for the Andalusian olive sector to go further"

By Milagros Jurado

The II Business Agro Business on the olive sector, "Olivar: quality and innovation for international markets", held today in Cordoba, was inaugurated with the interventions of the mayor of Cordoba, Isabel Ambrosio Palos, and the Andalusian Minister of Agriculture, Rodrigo Sánchez Haro, who has highlighted the enormous opportunity offered by digitization through e-commerce so that Andalusian olive oil reaches more distant countries.

Sánchez Haro, has also argued that the Andalusian olive sector is more likely to compete for quality differentiation than for volume, and in that sense has highlighted the fact that the value of Andalusian olive exports between October 2016 and August of 2017 have increased almost 25% more than in the same period of the previous year, confirming itself as the highest value in history, without an increase in volume.

Along with the Cordoba mayor and the Andalusian councilor, also participated in the inaugural

session; the general director of SIETE Agromarketing, Gissele Falcón, the coordinator of the Agricultural and Forestry Services Area of ASAJA Córdoba, Eduardo Eraso Ruiz, and the deputy director general of the cooperative group DCOOP, Rafael Sánchez de Puerta Díaz.

Thus, Falcon has emphasized the bet of this framework of debate by the international markets as key for the olive sector to gain in competitiveness. For its part, the representative of ASAJA has ensured that it is time to invest in new technologies to gain profitability, with a view to future campaigns that are not so favorable.

> The deputy director of DCOOP has pointed out as a great challenge in the sector the conversion of rainfed olive groves to irrigation, as "it is difficult to maintain its profitability compared to irrigation olive grove"

For Sánchez de Puerta this necessary transformation facilitates the fact that the olive grove is the crop that can adapt to irrigation with less water.

The first block of this II Tertulia Business Agro on Olivar, Keys to Quality Production, has had the interventions of the head of Quality and Promotion Service of the General Directorate of Industry and Agri-food Chain of the CAPDER, Margarita Villagómez Villegas; the technical director in Spain of Todolivo, Felipe Oliva Abusleme, and the regional director of ADP TECH (Intergal-Grupo Fertiberia), Antonio López.

Thus, Villagómez has referred to the importance of continuing to bet on differentiation and, specifically, the figures of quality in Andalusia, autonomous community in which there are 63 appellations of origin, 12 of which are olive oil.

> The representative of TODOLIVO has emphasized the commitment of his signature for the multivarietales plantations, in order to reduce risks derived from the climatology and to be able to stagger the harvest in order to obtain the oil in the best moment of maturation of the olive for each variety

He also emphasized the key importance of R & D & I for this company which has 207 hectares exclusively for research. In this line, has referred to the genetic improvement trial started in 2008 with the collaboration of the University of Cordoba, which has 38 olive varieties and whose first harvest will take place this year.

> Antonio López has emphasized the sensitivity of ADP towards the quality of production from environmental respect, with a new range of fertilizers for olive trees that avoids the contamination of aquifers and the increase of nitrites in groundwater

Anticipation to be more competitive

Regarding the second Tertulia, Internationalization as a Strategy for Competitive Improvement, the debate has been orchestrated by the head of the Department of Agri-food, Extenda-Foreign Promotion Agency-Andalusian Agency for Foreign Promotion, Pablo Lería; the international strategic consultant and collaborator of the World Olive Oil Exhibition (WOOE), Juan Vilar Hernández, Bureau Veritas Southern Region Director Francisco Martín Santamaría and DCOOP Commercial Director Manuel Pérez.

For Pablo Lería, the same marketing strategy should be applied, regardless of the price paid for the oil, to be reinforced when market conditions are not favorable. Along the same lines, Francisco Santamaría has urged companies in the Andalusian olive sector to prepare for a less favorable external context during times of greater prosperity. For the Bureau Veritas representative, the product not only has to be good, "we have to know how to put a link to that value", coinciding with the vision of Juan Vilar for which "it is necessary to look for the sufficient differentiating circumstances of our product that allow us to sell it at a better price. " He also said that "the best strategy is a vertical integration from source to destination, fostering good relations with distribution."

> In relation to those elements that allow to compete in quality rather than price, Francisco Martín Santamaría has insisted on the importance of quality certifications, to generate confidence to give the guarantees demanded by the international markets

Regarding the "threat" represented by emerging countries in olive oil production, such as China, Juan Vilar has encouraged them to become opportunities in the short and medium term, while Francisco Martín has warned that in order to be competitive in the long term in front of these new producing countries, it requires anticipation and unity of action and not lose sight of the fact that "the mill of the neighboring village is not competition." Along the same lines, Pablo Lería has pointed out that the key seems to be to "continue betting on emerging markets, where in many cases we have already surpassed Italy, and in traditional markets do not give up, even though it is a more complicated and slow. "

For his part, Manuel Perez has pointed out that the sales strategy is conditioned by the channel through which olive oil is marketed, and that much remains to be done in relation to the promotion of the Spain brand, associating with this country with a quality olive oil and that allows to take more advantage of its quality and value, especially in the domestic market.

This event was organized by SIETE Agromarketing and e-Comercio Agrario (ECA) together with ASAJA Córdoba, the cooperative group DCOOP, and the strategic collaboration of Extenda-

Andalusian Agency for Foreign Promotion and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development of the Junta de Andalucía (CAPDER). It has also been sponsored by ADP Tech and Todolivo, and has also had the collaboration of Bureau Veritas and World Olive Oil Exhibition and the magazine Fruticultura as a specialized press and Integral Media.

The 2nd Tertulia Business Agro on Olivar has been closed with an invitation to the attendees of a Spanish -Neworkink farewell wine, with the special collaboration of the five Protected Denominations of Origin (PDO) of the province of Córdoba (BAENA, PRIEGO DE CÓRDOBA, MONTORO-ADAMUZ, and LUCENA), and the Wine Designation of MONTILLA-MORILES.