Spain puts vegetables in the epicenter of promotion

The Government and the Association of Legumbristas of Spain presented promotional activities to highlight the high biological value of its proteins, mineral content and contribution of soluble fiber as well as the environmental benefits of these crops to fix atmospheric nitrogen. FAO has declared 2016 the International Year of Pulses.

Secretary General of Agriculture and Food, Carlos Cabanas, today underlined the ongoing work of the Ministry to raise public awareness about the benefits of legumes, both from the food perspective of sustainable agriculture, and advocated for increased production and consumption of these foods for their agronomic, environmental and nutritional importance.

This one has been raised in the presentation of the International Year of Pulses 2016, organized by the Association of Legumbristas of Spain, it took place at the headquarters of the Department. There has highlighted main objectives of this initiative of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the awareness of the public about the valuable contribution of these foods to food security in the world and the importance of this crop in the fight against change Climatic.

Cabanas recalled that in Spain an average of 3.14 kilos of vegetables per person per year, mainly chickpeas, lentils and beans are consumed. An amount remains constant but it would be desirable to increase, as advised by nutritionists, the high biological value of its proteins, its mineral content, as well as its contribution naturally, soluble fiber, which contributes between other features, reduce cholesterol level.

From the agricultural point of view, the Secretary General highlighted the environmental benefit of these species, to fix atmospheric nitrogen, in what represents one of the best examples of symbiotic relationships that exist in nature, which is what occurs between legumes and Rhizobium bacteria. A natural phenomenon that allows considerable energy savings and therefore a reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases.

Support to the sector

All this has indicated Cabanas has led the Ministry to join the initiative of the International Year of Pulses and FAO, encouraging, within the framework of the CAP, the traditional production for human consumption, by a measurement of direct support to increase 77,000 hectares of vegetables that currently planted in Spain and representing 38% of the total in the European Union.

A surface, he added, giving a production around 66,000 tonnes, while our annual consumption, without being too high, exceeds 140,800 tons, which makes us an importing country.

To reduce the external dependence, the Secretary General recalled that it has launched an aid associated with legumes quality intended for human consumption, endowed with 1 million euros a year, aimed at promoting the cultivation of vegetables under the figures of quality, which in Spain are 8 and 2 Protected Geographical Indications Appellations of Origin.

In addition, he pointed, when we designed the new CAP 2014-2020 and, in particular, the application of practices Greening, have attached great importance to these nitrogen-fixing crops considering them as ecological focus areas so they can receive the called green payment.

As to the challenges of trade, the Secretary General has indicated that, as the FAO suggests, has favored the establishment of commercial channels through the contractualization of the Law of the feed chain and the momentum that is giving organizations producer.
Support measures, which joins the promotion of research and innovation and the participation of the Ministry on information and promotion, as pointed Cabanas, help the sector to face future challenges.

Information activities

In the presentation ceremony today, the Ministry has also announced the initiatives already underway and planned to disclose the properties of these foods and encourage consumption.

Thus, as the focus of the promotion, it was created on the cover of the institutional web of food promotion, a banner that will be available throughout the year, with the image that diffuses through which FAO accessing a page with specific information about our vegetables and links to websites of interest related to this event.

In the same web and in "know what you eat", information on the history of vegetables, varieties, nutritional properties, purchase and maintenance tips and recipes offered.

Moreover, and within the #mediterraneamos campaign, the Department has begun, as every year, in February last, with the participation of 40,000 schools across the country, they have been included Pulses related content. In addition, the workshops in primary and secondary, is placing special emphasis on the importance of vegetables in the diet, and how are you form an essential part of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid.

In addition to social networks, legumes are very present this year in the activities planned in the stands of those themed food fairs in which the Ministry participates. activities aimed at consumers, the media, and experts are scheduled. You will also accommodate companies and industry associations.

The Ministry is also planning to organize for the first time this year, a National Cooking Contest on the Mediterranean diet, in which students may participate Schools of Hospitality of our country. In it, this year also a special prize for the best creation made with vegetables is included. The aim of the competition and the prize is to demonstrate our vegetables in capitalized gastronomy.

Within this framework of promotional activities legumes, the Department will publish a book, which will explain what are the figures of differentiated quality, will present the mandatory European logo on the label since January this year and will address in detail the 10 Spanish vegetables which, at present, they are protected under a figure of quality. Its content is supplemented with recipes from those 10 vegetables, easy to prepare.

Source: MAGRAMA