



Doñana Strawberry and Sustainable Water Management Group

Position statement

10 March 2016

Doñana Strawberry and Sustainable Water Management Group

- Coordinated by the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform)
- Members of the group: Albert Heijn, Coop, Edeka, innocent, The Coca-Cola Company, Marks & Spencer, Migros, Sainsbury, SVZ and Unilever
- With support from WWF Spain and the Ramsar Convention

The Doñana Strawberry and Sustainable Water Management Group strongly supports the Land Use Plan (Plan de Ordenación de la Corona Forestal Doñana) issued by the Government of Andalucía and calls for its urgent implementation.

We, a consortium of retailers, food companies and processing companies buying 20% of strawberries produced in Doñana, together with WWF Spain and grouped under the name of “Doñana Strawberry and Sustainable Water Management Group”, with support from the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance – strongly support the Land Use Plan (Plan de Ordenación de la Corona Forestal Doñana) issued by the Government of Andalucía and urge all parties involved to cooperate on its urgently needed implementation.

Growth of berry production in the Doñana region has brought the region numerous jobs and considerable economic value, equalling 400 million EUR in export revenue in 2013 for strawberries alone. For international food companies and retailers, the region is an important one for sourcing their strawberries.

At the same time, however, this growth has put additional strain on the quantity and quality of water resources in the region. We believe that without measures taken, continued pressure will ultimately lead to severe environmental degradation of the ecosystem and in particular the Doñana National Park, as well as to a reduction in the long term availability of strawberries from the region.

To protect these water resources while securing the very continuation of strawberry production and associated jobs in the Doñana region, urgent work is needed in the form of improving water governance, implementing and enforcing laws, and adopting sustainable and efficient water management practices.



In our view, the Land Use Plan issued by the Government of Andalucía –the result of a multi-year process of comprehensive analysis, planning and stakeholder involvement- provides the much-needed basis, measures and legal certainty for doing this work.

For the companies in our group, the Land Use Plan creates the legal clarity and certainty we need to ensure successful and legally compliant businesses operations. In addition, its helps us to show to increasingly environmentally conscious consumers that we source our strawberries sustainably. This will in turn also further improve the good image of Spanish strawberries in other countries.

On our part, we are committed to helping achieve a sustainable management of water resources by working with key players in the region to develop concrete and efficient solutions. The Land Use Plan issued by the Government of Andalucía enables the companies of our group to buy from, and support legal producers of strawberries in their sustainable agriculture and water saving practices. As an example, we have learned from pilot projects that Doñana strawberries can be grown using significantly less water, with no impact on yield or quality. We plan to initiate a program involving producer organisations, irrigation communities and practitioners, and research institutes to stimulate and support the scaling of these practices across the farming region. We invite all farmers and all other parties interested in hearing more about growing strawberries economically with reduced water to get in touch with our group.

Finally, we acknowledge that implementing the Land Use Plan also brings concerns and anxiety about its impacts on individual farmers' lives and futures. Implementing the plan cannot happen in isolation and has to take into consideration long-term socio-economic interests.

For more information, please contact:

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