



Science For A Better Life

Commitment of all
parties enables
high-quality table
grape production



food chain partnership



How it all started

Grapes are grown on over 50,000 hectares of land in Morocco, with table grapes accounting for around 30,000 hectares of this total. Table grapes are grown in many regions of the country, but those designated for export mainly come from the Marrakech region. Starting in mid-January, table grapes are harvested from the end of May to the end of July. In terms of both jobs and revenue, table grapes are an important crop in Morocco since they are labor-intensive during planting and harvesting and generate higher revenues per hectare than many domestic crops because of the higher prices gained in the export markets.

Moroccan growers usually export their produce through intermediaries, such as Fruchthansa (Germany), and rarely deal directly with supermarket chains. Moroccan table grapes are mainly exported to northern Europe, and in particular to Germany and the UK. The different export standards set by the various import markets are a challenge to the Moroccan farmers, who need to comply with these requirements when

marketing their table grapes. The legally binding rules and regulations on MRLs are one factor, the customers' specific demands with regard to active ingredients another; here, the type and number of active ingredients, produce quality, and food safety are the key factors to be considered. Besides meeting their customers' demands, Moroccan table grape growers also have to comply with certification standards, such as GLOBALG.A.P. and EACCE (*Etablissement Autonome de Contrôle et de Coordination des Exportations*).

The project got under way when Mr. Rachid Benchaib, owner of Les Vignes de Marrakech, was approached by his German partner Fruchthansa about residue levels and the number of active ingredients used in the crop protection programs. When the concept was presented to Mr. Rachid Benchaib along with the tangible results achieved through other table grape projects, he was very keen to collaborate with Bayer in order to further increase the quality of his produce.



Who is involved

Les Vignes de Marrakech is one of Morocco's largest producers and exporters of table grapes with 70 hectares under cultivation. Their grapes are mainly exported to Germany and the UK. LVdM was motivated to get involved in this Food Chain Partnership by the desire to supply high-quality, healthy table grapes to its customers through ensuring traceability and transparency from field to fork.

Fruchthansa is the main importer of LVdM table grapes in Germany, distributing them to German supermarket chains. For more than 40 years its main activity lies in the extensive services on the worldwide fruit supply chain. By maintaining direct contact with global producers and exporters, such as LVdM, Fruchthansa provides and develops production and marketing programs that serve the specific needs of their customers.

Bayer CropScience Morocco has contributed its crop protection expertise and experience to the project, with innovative technological know-how about best agricultural practices proving particularly valuable. In addition, Bayer specialists monitored the project's progress and helped improve the results.



What we aimed to achieve

The main goals of this Food Chain Partnership project have been to ensure the high quality of table grapes exported to northern Europe, optimize the use of agrochemicals in line with ICM/IPM principles, and thus lower residue levels and meet the customer's expectations. Fruchthansa needs to satisfy the demands of its customers in Germany, who expect table grapes to look and taste excellent, be absolutely safe to eat, and be produced by environmentally friendly means.

The integrated solution

Bayer CropScience specialists worked closely with LVdM to establish an optimized crop protection program that would meet the German customers' quality requirements. Bayer developed a spraying program designed to deal with the worst-case scenario and took into account all the pests and diseases that could possibly affect the quality of the table grapes. This mainly meant controlling powdery mildew, mildew, and grey mold, and dealing with the Mediterranean fruit fly. Two plots of land were selected to compare the local spraying program with Bayer's, and test the latter's efficacy. Furthermore, Bayer has conducted the respective residue analyses.

In addition, Bayer CropScience specialists regularly visited the growers and conducted an ongoing dialog with all parties involved in the project. Bayer also provided training on a wide variety of subjects, including good agricultural practices, stewardship, growing techniques, and effluent management. These training measures, which were provided for 20 people three years in a row, helped LVdM comply with certification requirements.

In order to track the various measures implemented in this Food Chain Partnership project the Bayer Sustainability Radar was implemented in with the following indicators:

- Marketability: Compliance with binding EU regulations and Fruchthansa's specific requirements ensured the table grapes could be marketed without any problems
- Safe use and personal protective equipment (PPE): Training courses were run on the safe use of crop protection products and the importance of wearing suitable PPE
- Environmental considerations: Training courses were also conducted on the issues of effluent management (Phytobac®) and disposal of empty containers



What we achieved

One of the key success factors in this project has been the involvement and commitment of the growers in achieving the objectives set. Regular visits to the growers and the ongoing dialog were also important factors. The aims of the project were all met, and this has resulted in the production of high-quality and highly marketable table grapes. Evidence of the success of the project comes from these figures:

- Reduction in the number of active ingredients used from eleven to eight
- Only one active ingredient detected in the Bayer plot (a competitor's product) as opposed to seven in the comparative plot
- Cost per hectare in the Bayer plot reduced by 13%

Through the cooperation with Bayer, Les Vignes de Marrakech was able to further improve the quality and profitability of the produce. Fruchthansa also was satisfied, being able to supply high-quality table grapes to its customers in Germany.

Next steps

This Food Chain Partnership project will be continued for a third year. Having started with just 7% of the area, it grew in the second year to 100% of the area, and discussions are now ongoing to extend this Food Chain Partnership cooperation to include melons.



Rachid Benchaib
Owner of Les Vignes de Marrakech

food chain partnership



Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition. Food Chain Partnerships help to supply consumers with high-quality fresh produce, which forms the basis of a healthy diet. But such partnerships can only succeed if they involve every player in the food chain – from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer. Bayer CropScience has the global experience and cutting-edge expertise to create a successful partnership at every level.



Bayer CropScience

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FCP-14-1586

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