

The fruit and vegetable sector

The Spanish fruit and vegetable sector has increased its strategic position for the Spanish economy, both due to its importance for our country's economy and to its relative weight within Europe and the rest of the world, thanks to the high volume of exports of our products in recent years. Other noteworthy aspects are the capacity for job absorption from other sectors that are in recession, as well as increased professionalization and the implementation of important innovations that afford it better added value and improved competitiveness.

It covers a wide variety of activities and products, enabling its presence throughout most of the national territory, both in direct and indirect jobs, and is represented by multiple production and marketing structures, with the features of a great industry:

- ✓ Specific weight in the economy, especially in exports.
- ✓ Large number of commercial connections.
- ✓ Social importance of the activity.
- ✓ Large network of exchanges with various industries: fertilisers, phytosanitary, machinery and equipment, plastic industries, transportation...
- ✓ Trend towards concentration.

The study drafted by the SEPE Occupation Observatory looks at various activities, from the primary agricultural production sector to the food industry, as well as research, marketing and export, in order to find the forecasts for job creation regarding the main technological advances, with the changes taking place in occupations, in the main professional profiles and in the training requirements, in addition to the existing training in the industry.

At the Public State Employment Service (SEPE) we work in liaison with the Autonomous Communities to improve job-related management for citizens and employers.

The Occupation Observatory

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Prospective Study Fruit and Vegetable Sector in Spain

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Situation of the industry

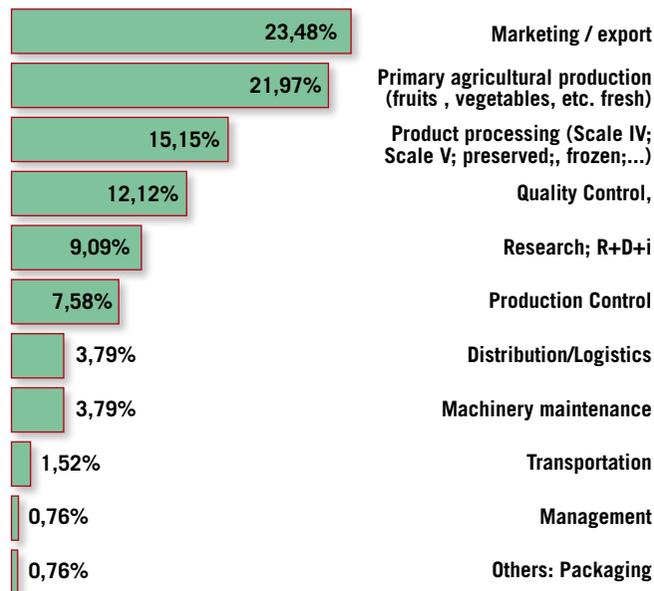
Spain has traditionally been an agricultural country, since agriculture was the main pillar of Spanish economy up until the 1960's.

Other companies such as packaging, food technology, recycling, transportation, agricultural machinery, gauging, etc. are involved in fruit and vegetable production and distribution.

Spain is the second fruit and vegetable producer, after Italy, and the largest European exporter. This industry ranks first in agricultural exports and fifth in total exports.

115 companies contained within the diverse group of activities that make up the fruit and vegetable industry were surveyed to find information on the medium-term employment situation, and the forecast for increase or maintenance of employment in the industry is mostly positive.

Expectations for job creation by department



In turn the experts that were surveyed condition the industry's future to a commitment decided by:

- ✓ Concentration of offer.
- ✓ Market specialisation.
- ✓ Incorporation of new technologies.
- ✓ Industry dimensioning by means of groupings of producers, cooperatives, companies...

Relevant occupations

Main occupations, with the best perspectives, by departments

Agricultural production

- ✓ Production directors at agricultural operations
- ✓ Agricultural engineers and technical agricultural engineers
- ✓ Biologists, botanists, veterinarians
- ✓ Agricultural and livestock technicians
- ✓ Qualified agricultural workers (pruning, grafts, fertigation...)
- ✓ Fumigators and pest and weed controllers
- ✓ Mechanics-operators of mobile agricultural machinery
- ✓ Qualified classifiers and handlers of fruits and vegetables

Fruit and vegetable food industry

- ✓ Industrial engineers and technical industrial engineers
- ✓ Microbiologists, biochemists, food scientists
- ✓ Workers manufacturing tinned products, juices, frozen food
- ✓ Mechanics for machinery and automated systems
- ✓ Operators for food manufacturing machines

Departments for quality, research, laboratory

- ✓ Quality control specialists in food industries
- ✓ Laboratory specialists for food industries

Marketing and logistics departments

- ✓ Sales department directors
- ✓ Marketing department directors
- ✓ Foreign trade specialists
- ✓ Logistics specialists
- ✓ Commercial agents; Key account managers

Training requirements

Main training requirements by areas

Agricultural production and handling

- ✓ Production directors at agricultural operations
- ✓ Automated irrigation. Drip irrigation. Water efficiency.
- ✓ Ecological agriculture; integrated production; biological pest control
- ✓ Pruning, grafting techniques Phytosanitary treatments
- ✓ Hydroponic crops
- ✓ Harvest, collection and handling. Gauging equipment

Technology, research, innovation, quality

- ✓ Automation in greenhouses and in food production
- ✓ Robotics and electronics for agriculture and food industry
- ✓ Biotechnology, entomology and biological pest control Microbiology
- ✓ Food quality and safety. Computerised traceability

Marketing

- ✓ Foreign trade. Marketing, merchandising
- ✓ Internationalisation, new market opening
- ✓ Sales, marketing and negotiation techniques
- ✓ Logistics, e-commerce. Internet and social media for sales

Transversal training

- ✓ Languages: English (and German, Chinese)
- ✓ Occupational safety and health. Environmental protection, hygiene
- ✓ Corporate culture; entrepreneurship
- ✓ General computing; computing for agricultural exploitation

Challenges for the industry

- ✓ Achieve an entrepreneurial structure that is large enough to adapt offer to demand. Concentrate the offer.
- ✓ Alternate crops to cover all seasons of the year, keeping the fields productive.
- ✓ Commit to sustainable environmental techniques, ecological crops.
- ✓ Develop the IV and V class industry to adapt to new consumer habits.
- ✓ Invest in innovation and research.
- ✓ Improve and increase foreign trade.