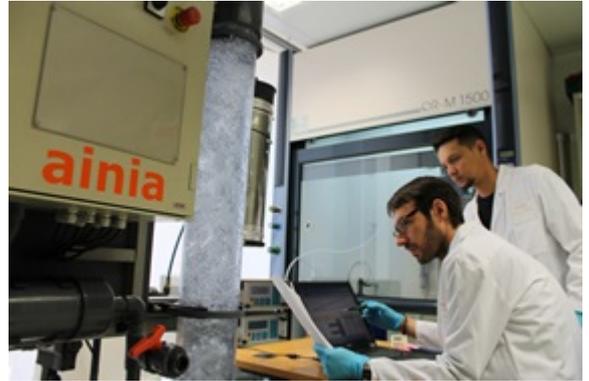


A range of Spanish groups are implementing clean ozone technology to recycle the water used to wash citrus, as part of a three-year trial aimed at making the sector more environmentally friendly.



The Valencian companies IVEM, Instalaciones Industriales Grau and AINIA have formed a consortium that develops sustainable solutions and eco-efficient solutions for agriculture, and have launched the project ECO3WASH.

The consortium will collaborate with produce company Anecoop and the agricultural cooperatives of Bétera, Cheste, Oliva and Lluxent-Otos for the trial.

The clean technology is able to break down organic contaminants that have proven difficult to eliminate through conventional treatment methods, even in cases of very low concentration.

In a release, Anecoop said the use of this type of technology was on the rise in treating industrial water, as it was safe and sustainable for the regeneration of water that could be used again for the same processes.

The company highlighted how fruit and vegetable post-harvest washing processes were associated with high levels of water consumption, with some packhouses using 1-2 cubic meters of drinking water per hour.

"As a result, the washing process generates residual water that is characterized as containing organic compounds derived mainly from the utilization of fungicidal solutions for reducing production losses caused by post-harvest diseases," Anecoop said.

"The citrus sector is conscious of the need to improve the relation between productive processes and the environment, and in this case water resources.

"Also, [this] seeks to get ahead and establish action plans in case of future legislative

restrictions coming from the European Union in terms of organic compounds in post-harvest processes."

The company said it was important to show most markets, both national and international, that the industry was looking for products that not only met their needs but also were produced in a sustainable way.

"Sustainability is a demand of consumers towards the industrial sector," Anecoop said.

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