

By Cristobal Aguado, President of [AVA-ASAJA](#).

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Valencian agriculture has certain warm areas where the subtropical cultivation of avocado is gaining prominence.

Farmers are brave people who always try to produce what consumers demand. In recent years, avocado has skyrocketed in world consumption because of its extraordinary nutritional properties and, thanks to demand, it offers a fairly decent return for the producer. Because of this, it is logical that more and more producers explore this, until recently, atypical alternative.

Regions such as the Camp de Morvedre - especially the Les Valls area -, La Plana de Castellón, L'Horta, La Ribera, La Safor or La Marina planted the first avocado fields after replacing other commercially difficult crops such as citrus and stone fruit.

Avocado's introduction is not comparable to what happened with oranges or more recently, with persimmon, because it is very limited by low temperatures. But at its smallest scale, avocado is leading a reevaluation of agriculture and once again raises a renewed vision within the sector.

Hundreds of families benefit from the performance of this crop, helping to turn the economic wheel in many towns, which has been suffering recently.

However, in the midst of this good news, we foresee, with growing indignation, the emergence of Pharisees who defame avocado by speaking of the enormous consumption of water resources and other negative messages that don't happen in our producing areas.

These radical ecologists, the media and even cooks who reject avocado to prepare their ideological recipes, would do better to objectify their ideas for the benefit of caring for the planet by going to other places where forests and natural habitats are being destroyed to direct their criticism.

Including Valencian farmers in the demagogic persecution against avocados is irresponsible and an unfair way of creating a bad image for this crop that scientific evidence describes as a superfood.

Farmers don't waste even a drop of water; we water the trees with exactly what they need

and we know that excess water is harmful to the crop so we put effort into achieving optimal irrigation.

We have modernized almost all the irrigation of the Valencian Community to work more efficiently regarding water use. The amount used is similar to that required by a citrus farm, in fact, many times the same resources are allocated through the same drip line to both the orange groves and the avocado fields, which are usually next to each other.

As it is a new crop on Valencian lands, avocado still lacks serious pests and diseases, so farmers are hardly forced to use active ingredients to combat them. There is also a clear trend towards organic avocado production.

As occurs in all European agriculture, management and different cultivation techniques are absolutely respectful of the soil, diversity, territory and environment. We can ensure that our avocado meets the highest sustainability guarantees in the world.

We know that we are still learning about this subtropical crop and that is why we're in constant contact with top experts from Malaga and South America, where there they have much more extensive experience.

I want to especially thank the collaboration with our colleagues from ASAJA Malaga. We are jointly carrying out the Operative Group "Innovation in Avocado" whose purpose is to increase productivity, promote the correct expansion of cultivation in new areas as well as share technology related to techniques, plant material and biological control.

We are also working towards making Spain Europe's leading supplier of quality avocado from sustainable production with a low carbon footprint.

From AVA-ASAJA we have promoted the launch of the Avocado Producers Association (ASOPROA) in order to bring the sector together, promote collaboration among professionals to face future challenges, unify criteria of both a production and commercial areas, and even differentiate the national product through a distinctive brand, or where appropriate, a Protected Designation of Origin.

As marketing is a matter to which we should pay attention, there are businesses in Malaga that come to Valencia to buy avocados with 21st-century rules that allow farmers to receive decent prices.

Spanish production only covers around ten percent of European demand and it is essential to differentiate it from foreign imports in order to strengthen our market share.

If we manage to improve in all of these areas and guarantee reasonable profitability in the medium and long term, more young people will immediately emerge in the Valencian countryside, as more attractive possibilities in the rural environment evolve and depopulation will stop, ultimately creating a future.

Just the opposite of those who denigrate the avocado's image and throw dirt on people who want to be entrepreneurs. I would suggest to these people that they take an avocado, remove the skin, split it in half, put a few drops of oil and a pinch of salt on it then taste it. They'll experience reality in a more positive way and even a smile will show up on their faces.