

BELGIUM

Strawberry imports on the rise

An increase in the number of growers has boosted strawberry volumes for Special Fruit, allowing the company to explore new markets in Russia and Ukraine

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Belgian importer Special Fruit has reported that the quality of its strawberry imports has been very good this season. The supply of strawberries from Belgium and the Netherlands came to an end at the start of January, while imports from Peru, Ethiopia, Egypt and Israel are due to be joined by Morocco and Spain in mid-January.

"We supply strawberries to more than 29 countries," says Special Fruit's François Maes. "New countries that we are sending to include Russia and the Ukraine. We expect to handle more than 4,000 tonnes over the next six months. This marks an increase of some 30 per cent compared with the year before, thanks to the addition of new growers."

According to Mr Maes, the current economic situation is likely to cause strawberry prices to rise. However, he believes that countries outside of the euro currency region will be worse affected than those within it, due to a devaluation of their currencies.

In addition, Special Fruit has begun implementing new



Special Fruit's redesigned cartons are an attempt to drive sales

techniques in Spain, Mr Maes reveals. "Northern cultivars such as Sonata and Elsanta will come onto the market in February," he says, "which will give an extra boost to strawberry sales."

The company is also hoping for a sales push from the new design of its Berry Fresh-branded strawberry cartons.



SPECIAL FRUIT



Berry Fresh

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