



The Doñana Strawberry and Sustainable Water Management Group



Spain is the second largest producer of strawberries worldwide, and about seventy percent of Spanish strawberries are grown in the Doñana region. Unfortunately, the recent growth of strawberry production in this province has put a great strain on the quantity and quality of water resources in the region, which is home to an iconic protected wetland. Without measures taken, continued pressure on these water resources will ultimately lead to severe environmental degradation of the protected Doñana ecosystem as well as to a reduction in the long term availability of strawberries from the region.

At SAI Platform's Water Seminar in Seville in April 2014, there was a growing realisation that in order to protect the sector long-term interest in sourcing strawberries from Doñana, urgent work is needed at the watershed level to improve water governance, implement and enforce laws, and adopt the most sustainable and efficient water management practices. It was notably acknowledged through pilot projects that Doñana strawberries can be grown using 40% less water, with no impact on yield or quality. These pilot projects need to be scaled up and replicated across the farming region, along with best water management practices.

The Doñana Strawberry and Sustainable Water Management group coordinated by SAI Platform currently comprises four brands: Danone, innocent and Coca-Cola, and Unilever; six retailers: Ahold, Coop, Edeka, Marks & Spencer, Migros and Sainsbury's; the intermediary companies Eurogroup and Wild Flavors as well as WWF Spain. Also involved as key stakeholders and advisors are the processing company SVZ, and the Ramsar Convention on wetlands. The group is open to other interested groups upon request and approval. It aims to achieve specific outcomes at three levels:

1. **Government:** Work with the National and Regional governing bodies to enforce the necessary framework, regulations and controls to ensure a sustainable rate of groundwater abstraction, the maintenance of good water quality and to ensure compliance with environmental legislation regarding water and soil use.
2. **Industry:** Develop a joint and effective approach to ensure that current water management, land use and broader environmental laws are applied and enforced, along with the most sustainable water management practices.
3. **Farmers:** Encourage and provide support to farmers towards the use of better agricultural practices contributing to saving water.

Since its launch in May 2014, the group has performed the following activities:

1. Develop a 6 page background document explaining the current agronomic and environmental situation, past actions at government, industry and farm levels, gaps, and possible future actions.
2. Identified key stakeholders to be involved in forthcoming activities, including especially suppliers to the group members.
3. Started to elaborate a joint strategy at Government, industry and farm levels.