Web platform generates higher income for producers

Direct purchase of agricultural products from farmers in order to improve freshness and quality is being increasingly demanded by the international fruit trade. And so the Spanish internet portal naranjasyfrutas.com was set up in order to deal with this demand. Naranjasyfrutas.com is an online platform where fruit producers can sell and buyers could request produce directly from the producer at a mutually agreed price.

It came to the founders of the websites attention that a number of wholesalers from outside Spain were interested in buying directly from Spanish producers. They also noticed that specific markets were interested in the guarantee of fresh products which haven’t been subject to chemical treatments for their conservation.

New networking technologies

Naranjasyfrutas.com (orangesandfruits.com) was set up in 2012 as a way to respond to this market need. It was also seen as a way to boost the fruit producing sector in rural Spain. The web portal was created by a team of professionals from the fruit-producing sector (technical specialists and farmers) and from the IT sector (programmers, web designers and computer specialists). Together, they have launched a website where farmers can advertise their crops along with their contact information so that wholesalers interested in their products can easily and quickly get in touch.

So from the very beginning of the fruit season, farmers now have a tool that allows early trading with international markets, leading to an increase in their income of 20% to 50% as exporting agricultural products leads to better prices.

Increasing the offer

Currently, the platform is aiming to encourage as many farmers as possible to register, as the power of a network lies in its members. This is based on the principle that the larger the network, the greater the resource for buyers and therefore more foreign business will use the webpage.

The platform began with only citrus producers, but now apricot, peach, kiwi, cherry, plum, persimmon and pomegranate producers have also signed up. Currently the platform offers 260 million kilos of fruit from the regions of Valencia, Murcia and Andalusia. There are about 1,900 farmers registered, 80% of them aged between 40 and 50 years old. This is the farmer profile that the platform will mainly support.
Providing support for export

Starting to export produce can be a difficult decision for farmers for fear of a number of uncertainties and unknowns. Naranjasyfrutas.com gives the farmers support and advice on their first shipments outside Spain.

The more active the farmers are and the more information they provide via the platform, the more chances of selling they have. For example, the producer can indicate the date of collection and if the crop is sold or available. Usually, the export of agricultural products is a process in which the farmer begins exporting a small proportion of produce and then sales increase up to the point where he or she can choose his or her own customer.

The platform does not mark the prices, but the price is fixed as a result of the several offers that farmers get. This is why it is so important to display as much information as possible on the platform. So the customer is able to select the products that better fit his or her needs.

Advantages for farmers and buyers

The platforms sets out the following advantages for farmers:

- Advertising their crop according to variety and production
- Offering their fruit to a greater number of professionals in the sector
- Receiving the greatest number of offers to buy their products
- Publishing information on their crop’s special treatments (organic, for the USA, etc.)
- Benefitting from a free service

The platform also sets out the benefits for buyers:

- Quickly and easily locating the products that they need
- Searching for the area of harvest that better suits them
- Locating the amount of products that they need
- Finding new varieties of fruits
- Being able to select fruits that have had special treatment (organic, for the USA, etc.)
- Getting information by email or telephone
- Seeing pictures of the orchards
- Benefitting from a free service

Looking to the future

The platform aims to become the go-to reference portal for the promotion of fruit crops in Spain. In early 2016 it will also include vegetables. The overall project aim is to contribute to the modernisation of a traditional sector and to fight against the abandonment of rural areas due to lack of profitability in agriculture.

Web platform:
http://www.orangesandfruits.com/