

# Producer country file

## Berries in Morocco

by Cécilia Céleyrette

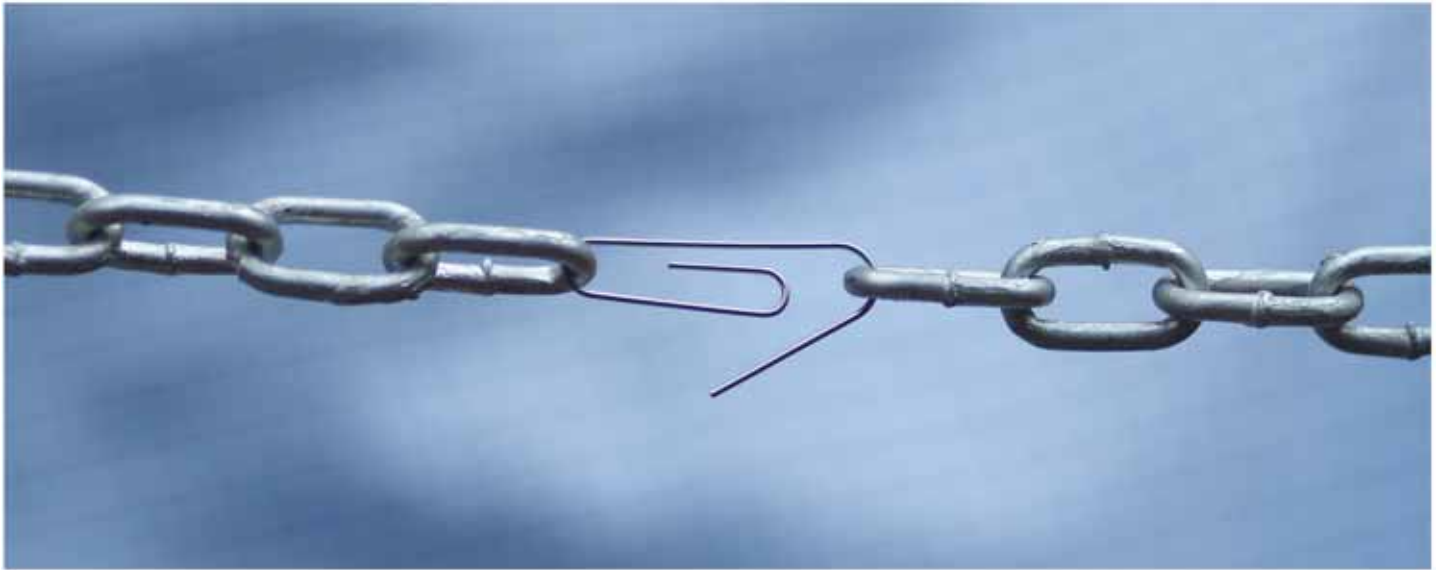
The Moroccan berries industry is making strong progress, with the raspberry and blueberry coming to prominence alongside the strawberry. Initially planted in northern Morocco where they enjoy favourable pedoclimatic and water conditions, berries have now spread as far as Souss. Interest from European consumers in these berries, Morocco's undeniable competitive assets – its proximity to the European market and labour costs – as well as State support mean that even now tomato greenhouses are being converted to these fruits, and that the objectives initially set under the “Maroc Vert” plan are being exceeded.



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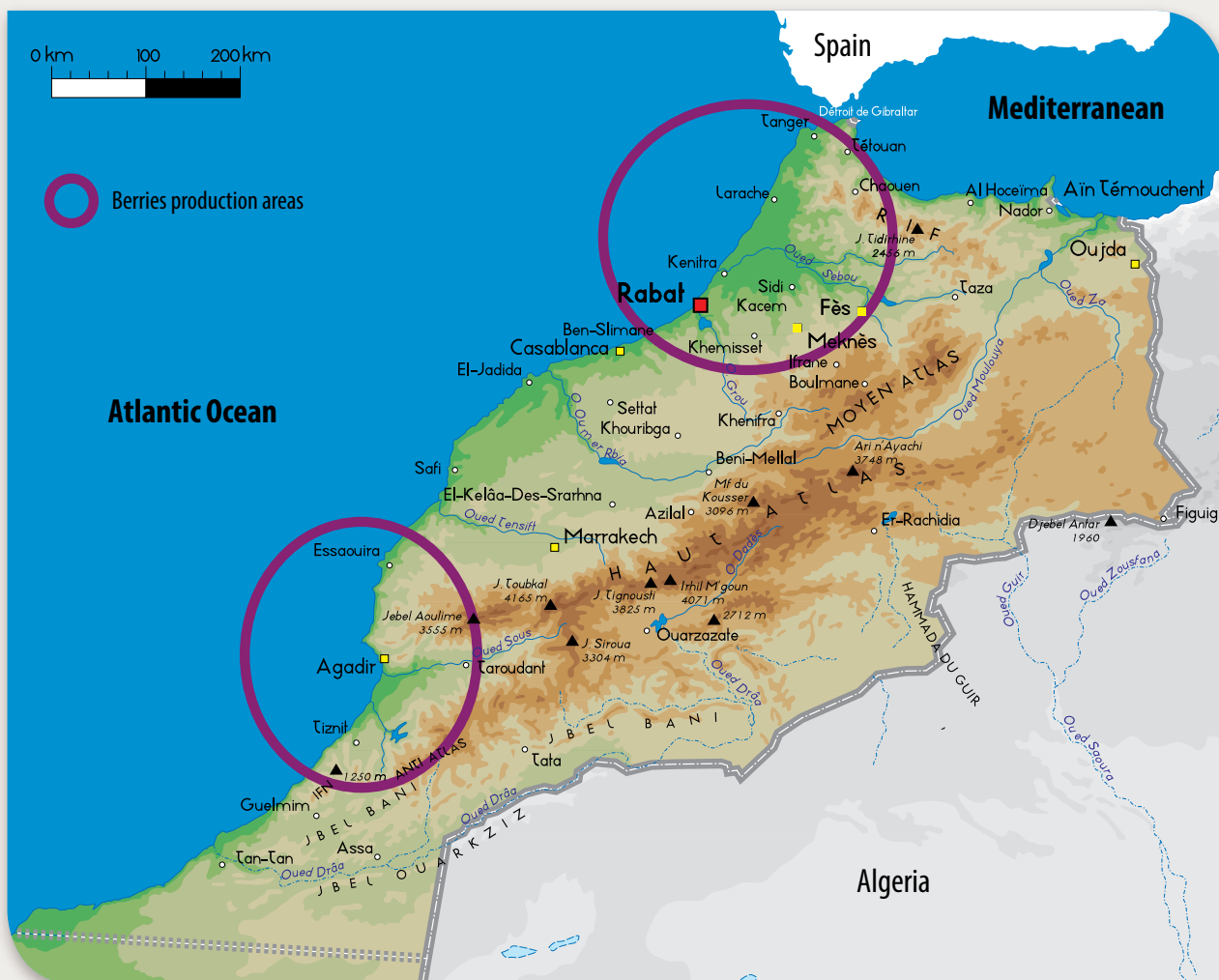
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# Berries – Morocco

## Location

Berry cultivation in Morocco first began in the north of the country, which brings together favourable pedoclimatic conditions, good land availability and abundant water resources with the development of irrigation. Strawberry production is concentrated in the irrigated areas of Gharb (78%), where it spread from the 1980s, and Loukkos (22%), where it was initially introduced. Production is primarily situated around Moulay Bouselham, thirty or so kilometres south of Larache. The first raspberry and blueberry trials also started in this zone, where the majority of production is concentrated at present, though cultivation of these berries is also developing further south (Agadir, Souss Massa). This zone is characterised by a semi-arid climate enabling good performances and rapid adaptation to cropping requirements. Surface areas are partly reconverted tomato greenhouses. Production can be a year-round activity.



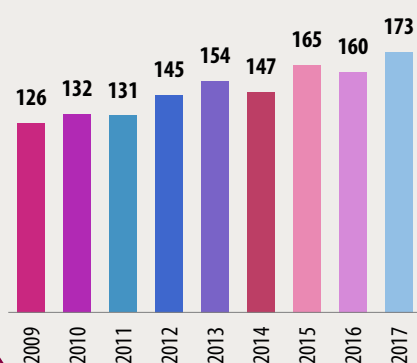
# Berries – Morocco

## Production

The total surface area dedicated to berries in Morocco is 5 700 hectares, divided between the strawberry (3 400 ha), raspberry (1 100 ha), blueberry (1 200 ha) and blackberry (less than 20 ha). Strawberry cultivation began in the 1950s, after irrigation was established on the right bank of the Drader and then R'mel in 1980, yet it really took off from 1985 with continuous development in the northern part of Morocco. Diversification into other berries is more recent. Development was curbed by the adaptation of European varieties to Morocco's climate conditions. So raspberry production was only really launched in 2005, and blueberry production in 2007. This sector was initiated by European companies relocating to set up in the region, but also by the creation of local agricultural companies which have acquired technical know-how. The sector has 593 farms for the strawberry, 20 for the raspberry and 12 for the blueberry, with mainly small surface areas (1 to 5 ha), and some facilities of more than 60 ha (large foreign export groups). The sector has become organised, with sixty or so private shippers and five cooperatives. It is governed by two associations, AMPFR (Moroccan berry producers' association) and AMCEFR (Moroccan berry packers & exporters association), which are both FIFEL affiliates (Moroccan inter-professional federation for fruit & vegetables production and export) and since the beginning of 2018 have been united under a common banner: Interproberries Maroc (IPBM). So production has gradually increased, already reaching 150 000 t for the strawberry and more than 10 000 t for the raspberry and blueberry. The objective for 2020 is to achieve 8 200 ha and produce 360 000 t per year, of which 80 000 t earmarked for export.



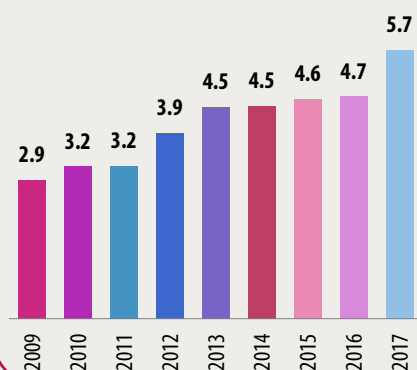
**Berries - Morocco - Production**  
(in 000 t / professional sources / processed by Infofruit)



Berries — Morocco — Production				
in tonnes	Strawberry	Blueberry	Raspberry	Total
2008	126 950	139	949	128 038
2009	124 239	623	879	125 741
2010	129 468	1 250	1 010	131 728
2011	127 985	1 420	1 500	130 905
2012	139 683	1 780	3 100	144 563
2013	145 233	4 500	4 000	153 733
2014	137 388	4 950	4 200	146 538
2015	155 200	4 900	4 500	164 600
2016	148 680	6 615	4 800	160 095
2017	150 000	12 000	11 000	173 000

Professional sources

**Berries - Morocco - Planted areas**  
(in 000 ha / professional sources / processed by Infofruit)



# Berries – Morocco

Berries — Morocco — Production calendar

	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M
Strawberry								
Raspberry								
Blueberry								

Professional sources

as Cardinal, Sevillana, Carmina, Alicia, Maravilla, Marabia, Glen Lyon, Brillance, but also new varieties with low cold requirements such as Adelita. For the blueberry, the most sought-after varieties are those able to bear fruit outside of the season, such as Sharp blue, Misty, Biloxi, Gulf Coast, Emerald, Jewel, Star, Sapphire, Blue Crisp, Millenia and Windsor. As for the blackberry, it is the cultivars with an upright habit which represent the best choice for commercial production in Morocco, with Brazos, Rosborough and Tupi offering big potential. New varieties such as Stella Blue and Violeta are also being planted.

## Production calendar and varieties

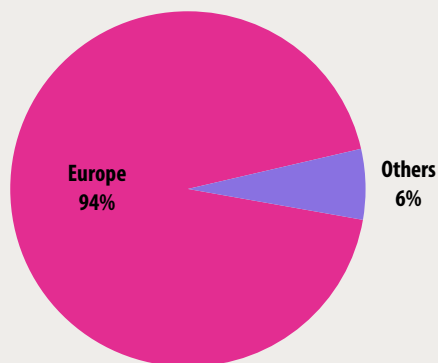
The Moroccan strawberry varietal range is limited by the necessity to produce varieties suited to both the fresh and deep frozen segments. Although this range has developed, from Chandler or Oso Grande to Splendor or Sabrina, varieties such as Camarosa with double-purpose characteristics remain essential for the moment. Conversely, the range is wider for the raspberry, driven by big foreign groups, with varieties such

## Exports

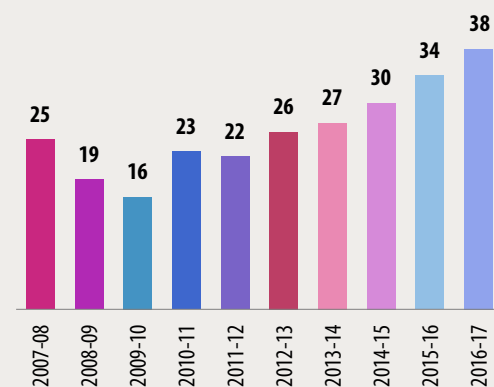
Overall fresh exports have seen renewed growth since 2010-2011, with the strong demand for the blueberry and raspberry offsetting the fall in strawberry volumes, highly exposed to competition from European produce. These exports are made primarily by big farms, and by foreign investors with the necessary logistical means in terms of production, value earning and exporting. They are aimed above all at the European market. The strawberry is still the main export, with nearly 20 000 t. However, raspberry exports are rapidly increasing, already in excess of 10 000 t in 2016-2017, with blueberry exports hot on their heels.



Berries - Morocco - Exports breakdown in 2016-17 (professional sources, COMEXT / processed by Infofruit)



Berries - Morocco - Fresh exports (in 000 tonnes / professional sources / processed by Infofruit)



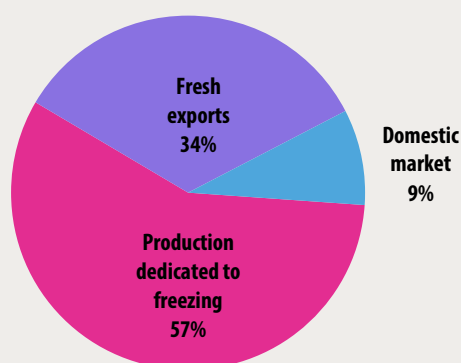


# Berries – Morocco

## Outlets

Berries are for the moment above all aimed at the export sector, with the exception of the strawberry. Hence 90 % of raspberry volumes and 100 % of blueberry volumes are currently exported. Conversely, the strawberry is mainly produced for processing, with approximately 65 % of tonnages aimed at the deep frozen segment and 25 % exported fresh. The domestic market for its part absorbs 10 % of volumes. The fruit is sold fresh at the beginning of the season (November to March), and is then sent to the deep freezing units from April to July.

**Berries - Morocco - Outlets in 2016-17**  
(professional sources / processed by Infofruit)



## Logistics

Morocco enjoys a privileged position for the European market by virtue of its proximity and the tariff conditions negotiated. Strawberry imports in particular enjoy a customs exemption with no quantitative limit between 1 November and 31 March, and then a duty-free quota of 3 600 t in April, plus a quota subject to 50 % customs duty from 1 May to 30 June. There is no preferential agreement for other berries, which are subject to the EU Common Customs Tariff. Transport is mainly by road-freight, with sea-freight primarily out of Tangiers for the northern produce, and out of Agadir for the southern produce.

**Berries — Morocco — Sea-freight logistics**

Port of departure	Port of arrival	Transit time
Tangiers, Agadir, Casablanca	Algeciras, Port Vendres	3 days
	Rotterdam, Dunkirk, Le Havre, Antwerp	4 days

