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Driscoll's beefs up Portuguese division



Berry marketer aims to make Portugal its main source of blueberries for EMEA markets

Driscoll's is boosting its operations in Portugal with a €3m investment programme that will double its blueberry production, turning the Mediterranean country into the company's biggest supplier of this product to European, African and Middle Eastern markets.

The Watsonville, California-based company already manages 400ha of farms belonging to 44 producers in the

Algarve and Alentejo, with the latest expansion bringing its total investment in Portugal to €20m.

Director of operations in the Iberian Peninsula and Morocco, Nuno Simões, told Customs Today that the Portuguese climate is "very much like that of California", making it ideal for the cultivation of red berries.

Tiago Andrade of Algarve-based raspberry producer Hubel

said Portugal's production window – between February and May – gave it a commercial advantage over other European countries. Hubel's turnover doubled in 2014 reaching a record €11m.