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Hortifrut builds Chile's first floating solar plant



Plant marks latest stage in the company's project to convert farms and packhouses to renewable energy sources

Berry giant Hortifrut has inaugurated its first floating solar panel plant at its farm in Santa Teresa de Agrícola Mataquito in Chile's Region V.

This is the company's eighth solar farm and the first floating facility in Chile to be connected to the electricity grid. In all, the company plans to have 18 solar farms in operation by the first quarter of 2021.

The inauguration marks the latest phase of a project initiated in 2019 with Solarity, a company specialising in the delivery of clean energy, to convert Hortifrut's electricity consumption at farms and packhouses to solar energy

with the aim of promoting renewable energy sources.

The opening of the new solar farm means 53 per cent of the energy consumed in Santa Teresa will now be renewable, while the farm's CO₂ emissions will also be reduced.

"This is the eighth active solar plant installed in the different operations of Hortifrut Chile, as our goal is to replace at least 50 per cent of the energy used in our fields and production plants," said Juan Ignacio Allende, general manager of Hortifrut.

The scheme is part of the company's commitment to

the environment and communities, ensuring progress in the development and implementation of renewable energy in its operations throughout the country.

According to Hortifrut, the floating solar plant provides additional benefits compared to conventional installations, such as helping to reduce water evaporation from the reservoir and saving space. It also increases the efficiency of the solar panels, since being in contact with the water reduces their operating temperature.