



By Tom Joyce

Thursday 13th December 2018, 12:05 GMT

Special Fruit picks up green award

The Belgian importer has been awarded the Lean and Green star from the Flemish Institute for Logistics for reducing its carbon footprint by 20 per cent



At a recent event in Belgium dubbed 'Sustainability is the Future', organised by the Flemish Institute for Logistics (VIL), Belgian importer Special Fruit was awarded the Lean and Green Star for the successful reduction of its carbon footprint by 20 per cent within five years.

According to corporate identity officer Sarah Hellemans, Special Fruit's transport department identified the possibility of switching more ready-to-eat fruit, especially mangoes and avocados, to seafreight instead of sending it by air and ripening it in its own chambers.

"In this way, we've emitted eight times less CO₂ than in 2011," she says. "In addition to our local partnerships, we've also invested in our own berry production in the south, in Spain, Portugal and Morocco. This gives us a production window of around nine months for blueberries and strawberries and means we don't need to bring large volumes from the other side of the world. Berries from southern Europe travel by road, so this has a major ecological benefit."

Project manager Jan Peeters said that the Lean and Green initiative fit perfectly with Special Fruit's sustainability strategy.

"As a manufacturer and importer of fresh fruit and vegetables from all over the world, it is a must for us to keep the logistical impact on the environment as small as possible," he said. "We are very pleased with the outcome of the Lean and Green project. It was a challenge for our transport and purchasing department, but it produced an end result that we are really proud of."