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By Maura Maxwell

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Mercadona invests €120 in automation at DCs



The retailer has signed a deal with Cimcorp to automate fresh food delivery at four new distribution centres

Mercadona has signed a €120m deal with turnkey robotic handling solutions provide Cimcorp to automate four of its new distribution centres (DCs).

Under the deal, Cimcorp will automate the delivery of fresh food at Mercadona's new distribution centres located in the provinces of Seville, Valencia, Alicante and Zaragoza.

Together they serve over 600 of the retailer's 1,630 supermarkets, supplying around 2m of the 5m+ households that shop at Mercadona.

"The main objective of these four centres," explained Javier Blasco, warehouse purchasing coordinator for Mercadona, "will be to meet the demands of our stores, secure growth in perishable product sales and eliminate the overexertion that results from the manual handling of orders."

Cimcorp previously supplied automation to Mercadona back in 2013, when it implemented a fully-automated order picking system for fresh produce at the retailer's DC in Guadix, near Granada.

However the new order will be the first time that Cimcorp has acted as system integrator.

"Our previous experience with Cimcorp was positive, and the company's professionalism – along with the support of a strong parent company like Murata Machinery – has led us to put our trust in Cimcorp as a partner for a project of this scale," Blasco added.

Kai Tuomisaari, Cimcorp's vice president of sales, said, "We provide reliable intra-logistics solutions for rapid order fulfilment, and thereby optimise product shelf life. This means that customers get their fruit, vegetables and other fresh products faster, ensuring they stay fresh for longer in the home.

"We are delighted to be working with Mercadona again," he continued. "There is an excellent spirit of partnership, open communication and mutual trust between our two companies."

All four of the new logistics facilities will have two climate zones for fresh food: +3°C for packed meat products and +12°C for fruit and vegetables.

"This order will cover several independent automation modules within each DC," added Tuomisaari, "and all the automation will be controlled by Cimcorp software, which integrates various technologies into a seamless system. If one module is out of operation for a while – such as when cleaning is performed – the others continue in operation to take care of the material flow."

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