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On the road to a greener future

Fruitnet talks to Spanish logistics firm Frío Guerrero about its holistic approach to reducing its environmental impact



The company employs the latest generation of fuel-efficient vehicles

When Christian Guerrero founded Almería-based logistics firm Frío Guerrero in 2006, his goal was to create a transport company offering a fully integrated service to fruit and vegetable companies supplying the European market. It wasn't until almost ten years later, however, that concerns for the environment prompted a radical rethink that was to set the company on a greener course.

"In 2015 we began to make important strategic changes, focusing even more on supporting our clients to face the new challenges confronting the agri-food supply chain," Guerrero tells Fruitnet. "We employed specialist advisors in different areas who were able to provide a more pragmatic vision of the business. Today our policy is simple: to harness the power of technology and other means at our disposal to enable us to minimise our impact on the environment."

In practice this means that as well as

employing the latest generation of fuel-efficient vehicles, the company provides its staff with training on efficient driving methods, uses a route and load optimisation system and offsets its carbon emissions through the Eco-Logistics programme. The goal, says Guerrero, is to provide a 100 per cent carbon dioxide-neutral supply chain.

"Although we strive to equip our trucks with the least polluting technology available, as with all road haulage firms, we continue to emit carbon dioxide which pollutes the environment," he says. "However, we have found a carbon offset scheme that complies with the directives set out under the Kyoto Protocol."

Guerrero was clear that he did not want the offset scheme to be in the form of a tree-planting programme, as doubts have been raised over their efficacy and they are excluded from the mandatory European emissions trading scheme.

Instead, the company opted for a programme designed by Green Summun, an Almería-based consultancy specialising in sustainability.

"Green Summun's Eco-Logistics programme meets all of our requirements, as the projects through which we offset our carbon dioxide are certified by both Verified Carbon Standard and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature's Gold Standard, and they cover many of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals," he explains.

The company delivers throughout the European Union and has exclusive contracts with a number of category managers and distributors serving supermarkets in the UK and the Netherlands, which along with Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg are the main markets it serves.

Guerrero believes his corporate

philosophy chimes perfectly with growing public concerns about the environment, making the firm's value proposition an easy sell to customers. "Every day consumers are more aware of the negative impact of the food industry, be it through carbon dioxide emissions, plastic waste, poor water management and the like, and we therefore believe that the changes in society are driving through acceptance of our business model," he says, adding that the fact that Frío Guerrero does not transfer the extra costs to the client is an added bonus.

However, Guerrero insists that there is still a long way before sustainability becomes a minimum required standard within the industry. "Unfortunately, building sustainability into strategic planning is not yet widespread – in the meantime, it will continue to serve as a point of differentiation for us from our competitors," he says.

This approach appears to have served the company well. Its turnover has grown rapidly over the past five years and it will soon open sales offices in the Netherlands and the UK.

"We have a real commitment to continue looking for economically viable ways to reduce our environmental impact, and not only for the good of the business, but because in my case I have three children under three years old, and I have to do the best I can to leave them a habitable planet," says Guerrero.