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Bayer to launch innovative strawberry variety

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Bayer announced the launch of Baya Solara, the first commercial strawberry variety from Bayerâ??s De Ruiter brand. The launch is a vital part of the companyâ??s strategic expansion into the strawberry market and follows Bayer's acquisition of the strawberry assets from UK-based NIAB in 2023. The introduction of the new variety reinforces Bayerâ??s commitment to providing innovative solutions to protected culture growers and sets a new standard in soft fruit cultivation. Strawberries are among the fastest-growing fruit crops, with year-round demand exceeding supply.

â??Our new variety, Baya Solara, is an exciting June-bearing cultivar and delivers impressive productivity and strong resistance to diseases like Phytophthora cactorum without compromising fruit quality. With this launch, we are targeting Northern Europe's rapidly growing protected cropping sector and offer growers new opportunities,â? said Swanny Chouteau, Portfolio Lead for the Europe, Middle East and Africa region at Bayerâ??s Crop Science division.

Baya Solara is characterised by its large, uniform fruits and is designed to reduce post-harvest darkening, meeting the growing consumer and retail demand for high-quality strawberries. The fruit also offers a pleasant sweetness with a balanced sugar-acid ratio, making it an attractive option for consumers. In addition, this early-mid season June-bearer variety is designed to show significant improvement against common diseases, including Phytophthora cactorum, a fungal disease that causes the strawberriesâ?? crown to rot. This genetic resistance is vital for ensuring the long-term viability of strawberry production.

â??Baya Solara is a strawberry that offers many benefits. For growers, it means a more productive and reliable harvest. For retailers, it delivers consistent, large, firm fruits with excellent shelf life, reducing waste and ensuring dependable quality. For families, it offers delicious strawberries that stay fresh longer, helping them reduce waste and enjoy every berry,â? said VK Kishore, Head of Global Product Innovation for Vegetables at Bayerâ??s Crop Science division.

Baya Solara will be available to growers in the UK, Germany and Benelux. The June-bearer is the first one to be commercially launched since the NIAB acquisition, and complements six other strawberry varieties, including Malling Ace, a highly versatile and productive everbearer that has been increasingly favoured by growers and consumers, and Malling Centenary, a June-bearer market-leading variety, highly regarded for its standout fruit quality.

With more than 20 different crops and thousands of seed selections, Bayerâ??s Vegetable Seeds business supports a diverse range of growers with seed varieties tailored to the tastes and preferences of consumers around the globe. Key crops include Tomato, Cucumber, Broccoli, Carrots, Cauliflower, Eggplant, Lettuce, Melon, Onion, Pepper, Spinach, Sweet Corn and Watermelon.