

February 2014 - March 2014

## **FRESHFEL AT FRUIT LOGISTICA**

As in the preceding years, Freshfel hosted a number of well-attended meetings with its members at this year's FRUIT LOGISTICA in Berlin. On the eve of the conference, Freshfel organised a trade meeting and a Freshfel - SHAFPE global citrus meeting. More than 50 representatives from Freshfel's members organisations and companies reviewed the latest trends and developments of the industry. Freshfel was also invited to give several presentations at FRUIT LOGISTICA. General Delegate Philippe Binard presented the implications of Russia's WTO membership for fruit and vegetable trade while Freshfel's Director for Food Law and Health, Raquel Izquierdo de Santiago, gave an overview over the trends on the European and international tomato markets. Throughout the conference, the Freshfel stand was appreciated as a place for information, meetings, networking and constructive discussions.



## **FRESHFEL PRODUCTION DIVISION**



The Freshfel Production division met in February to talk about some of the EU topics that are relevant for fruit and vegetable producers. Discussions focused on new opportunities to participate in the EU's research and innovation programmes, where Freshfel is working in a task force to identify priorities that the fresh produce sector could pursue in those programmes. Several other topics were also discussed at the meeting, including EU plant breeding policy, local sourcing & short supply chains, and the EU proposal to reform the organic farming legislation.

## **FRESHFEL EXPORT DIVISION**

Freshfel's export division came together in March to discuss some of the most pressing issues for European exports. Exporters highlighted in particular the difficulties and cost of setting up and implementing bilateral plant health protocols. These make it very difficult for exporters to react to market opportunities and exposed operators to huge costs. This contrast with the EU market access which does not require such protocols when exporting to the EU. There is therefore a lack of reciprocity in trading conditions, more worryly with partners which have signed bilateral free trade agreement with the EU. Freshfel will prepare a position paper to highlight remedies and way forward. Participants also reviewed the market access conditions in key European partner countries with the participation of European Commission officials (DGs Trade, Agriculture and Health). The Commission is eager to assist the sector and raised matter in the frame with EU trade partners in the different fora, including in the frame of bilateral or multilateral agreements.



### FRESHFEL IMPORT DIVISION

A meeting of Freshfel's Import Division took place in March to review the most recent changes for European importers. Some of the key topics in the discussion were custom-related issues including the recent proposal of the European Commission on the entry price following the single CMO reform. This Commission plans are perceived anachronistic in a simplification policy and will re-introduce provisions previously condemned under WTO for their lack of proportionality, discriminatory effects and for their lack of legitimate expectation. The rules, if introduced, will also breach EU commitment undertaken in several bilateral agreements. Other customs aspects were also reviewed such as the new General Scheme of Preferences (GSP) for imports into the EU. The meeting also discussed at length the upcoming citrus import seasons and the need and action to be undertaken to secure compliance with the EU on Citrus Black Spot (CBS). The new EU envoy from CGA shared with importers the new measures introduced in South Africa for the 2014 season.

### FRESHFEL WORKS TO SUPPORT THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL ON PLANT HEALTH IMPORT REGIME



Europatat, the European Seeds Association (ESA), the International Flower Trade Association (Union Fleurs) and Freshfel are joining forces to support the Commission proposal to reform the EU plant health regime. There have been calls in some Member States and in the Parliament for a reversed import system, introducing a closed regime based on protocols & authorisations. For many years, Freshfel heavily criticised such a scheme imposed by many trading partners for EU exports. The joint position urges the EU to address with third countries the lack of reciprocity through other instruments than a *tit for tat* approach. Reversing the system would imply Member States and the EU to establish new administrative structures to manage authorisations. Given the scarcity of resources, this would be to the detriment of EU export interest. Crucially, Freshfel notes that reversing the European import system may also lead some of its important trade partners such as Russia to switch as well from an open into a closed system, affecting primarily EU export interests. The joint position is also supported by COPA COGECA as it calls - within the existing open regime - for reinforced compliance and control tools for protecting the domestic production from exposure to new pests. A closed system would not guarantee that the EU will be better protected in the future for any new pest outbreaks. Freshfel and its partners therefore calls for effective and harmonised enforcement across all EU Member States of the current plant health rules.



### FRESHFEL CONCERNED ABOUT PROPOSED MERGER OF EU FRUIT AND MILK SCHEMES

Freshfel and the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) have called on the European Commission to rethink its proposal to merge the school fruit and school milk schemes. In a press release, the two associations say that although the proposal now focuses on fresh fruit and vegetables, and reinforces the educational dimension of the scheme, such a lumped programme is premature and will mean a loss of identity for the fruit and vegetables scheme and for the educational measures that underlie the scheme, affecting negatively its efficiency and success.

### FRESHFEL AT COOL LOGISTICS AFRICA

In a presentation at the Cool Logistics Africa in Capetown, Freshfel General Delegate Philippe Binard resumed the last year of talks about Citrus Black Spot (CBS) between the EU and South Africa. He also looked at the way forward for 2014 and stressed the importance of compliance with EU legislation in view of the new citrus season.

### FRESHFEL GIVES PRESENTATION ON CONSUMPTION TRENDS AND PATTERNS AT AREFLH AGM

Freshfel participated in the general assembly of the Fruit and Horticultural European Regions Assembly (AREFLH) in Barcelona in March. Freshfel general delegate Philippe Binard gave a presentation on the latest consumption trends and on tools to stimulate the declining consumption. The meeting also gave the possibility to continue with the identification and coordination of priorities that the fresh produce sector would like to pursue within the European research programmes, the Horizon 2020 Framework for Research and Innovation and the European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs).