

February - March 2015

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FRESHFEL DEFENDS THE EU SCHOOL FRUIT SCHEME

The European Commission launched an evaluation of the EU school fruit scheme (SFS) in February 2015 with a focus on its relevance, subsidiarity, proportionality and simplification. Freshfel and other organisations believe that the evaluation is a pre-text of the European Commission to abolish the SFS. In fact, the programme has already been thoroughly evaluated many times since its creation in 2009. Freshfel and 11 other organisations from the fresh produce and health sectors (see logos) sent an open letter to the European Commission (available at <http://goo.gl/uK6ixR>) calling for the maintenance of the SFS. At a stakeholder event with the European Commission on 2 March 2015, Freshfel and many EU member states also confirmed the importance of keeping a strong European SFS.

The school fruit scheme is an important contribution to reverse the trend of increasing obesity rates among children. At present, there are 22 million overweight children in the EU of which 5.1 million are obese - an EU-wide trend set to make another 1.2 million children overweight and 300,000 obese each year. The SFS has proved to be a remarkable instrument to help children discover taste, texture and diversity of fruit and vegetables and increase consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables among kids. This can greatly help tackle the growing problem of child obesity in the EU.



fighting heart disease
and stroke
european heart network

FRESHFEL BOARD DISCUSSES PRIORITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Freshfel board came together on 26 February 2015 to discuss the latest developments in the fruit and vegetable sector and identify priorities of the association. The main focus of the discussion was on the reform of the common market organisation (CMO), the EU school fruit scheme, the Russian import ban and the marketing standards. The board also held a discussion with Mr Jens Schaps, recently appointed director of DG Agriculture for the Single CMO and economic and analysis of agricultural markets. The discussion with Mr Schaps focused among others on the CMO and the Russian import ban. The board furthermore discussed a number of issues including promotion and consumption issues, food safety, research & innovation and the organic agriculture reform.



The discussions in the Freshfel board focused on the common market organisation (CMO), the EU school fruit scheme, the Russian import ban and many other recent developments in the fruit and vegetable sector. Board members also held a discussion with Jens Schaps, recently appointed director in DG Agriculture (picture in the middle).

FRUIT LOGISTICA 2015

With more than 65,000 visitors from 135 countries and almost 2,800 expositors from 83 countries, the Fruit Logistica fair held in Berlin from 4-6 February 2015 was the meeting point of the global fruit and vegetable once again. In a press conference before the fair, Freshfel presented the latest trade figures of the fruit and vegetable sector following the Russian import ban. The figures show that volume of exports during the first months of the Russian ban remain stable compared with 2013, but export value decreased by 15%. During the fair, Freshfel staff gave visitors and expositors an update on trade of exotics and the reform of the organic farming legislation in the EU.

As in previous years, the traditional Freshfel trade meeting and the Freshfel-SHAFFE global citrus meeting on the eve of Fruit Logistica were much appreciated by the membership. During the fair, the Freshfel stand was a welcome meeting place for discussions between its members and to learn about the recent activities of the association.



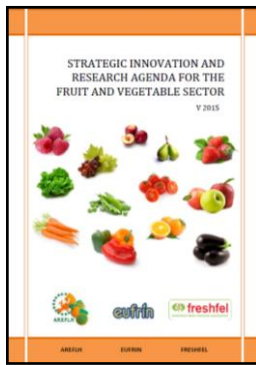
FRESHFEL MEETS CABINETS OF EUROPEAN COMMISSIONERS

Freshfel met with members of the cabinets of the European Commissioners Phil Hogan (Agriculture) and Cecilia Malmström (Trade) in February and March. In both meetings, discussions focused on improving access for EU products to third country markets. The EU and the United States are currently in the final stage of market access negotiations for apples and pears from eight European countries to the US. The negotiations are considered a high priority by the EU, especially since the European fruit and vegetable sector is the most affected by the Russian ban while the sectors in the other embargo countries (US, Japan, Norway, Australia) are less affected. Both cabinets listened carefully and affirmed to Freshfel that its SPS market access concerns were shared by other agricultural sectors and taken seriously by the European Commission. Agriculture Commissioner Hogan raised the subject of the apple/pear protocol for the United States in discussions with his American counterparts during a trip to Washington in February 2015. The Commission is currently launching a review of its trade policy strategy and Freshfel will contribute to the discussion.

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION WITH HEALTH COMMISSIONER ANDRIUKAITIS

During a stakeholder meeting of different organisations with EU Health and Food Safety Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis, Freshfel presented several positions with regard to nutrition and healthy diet, as well as on market access issues in relation to phytosanitary requirements. Freshfel highlighted that the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables is fundamental to prevent obesity, cancer, heart problems and other non-communicable diseases. EU policy should reflect this by defining specific targets to increase fresh produce consumption, and encouraging this through more public information campaigns. Freshfel also noted that restrictive sanitary and phytosanitary measures in third countries are a huge obstacles for EU exporters to diversify their export markets after the Russian import ban. Freshfel also sent a letter to the Commission to provide a description of current issues faced by the fruit and vegetable sector.

LAUNCH OF THE STRATEGIC INNOVATION AND RESEARCH AGENDA FOR THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SECTOR



During an event hosted by AREFLH (Assemblée des Régions Européennes Fruitières Légumières et Horticoles) and AREPO (Association of European Regions for Products of Origin), Freshfel together with AREFLH and the European Fruit Research Institutes Network (Eufri) launched the Strategic Innovation and Research Agenda (SIRA) for the fruit and vegetable sector. SIRA is a fruit of the task force on research and innovation that the three organisations had created in January 2014. The document identifies the main challenges facing the fruit and vegetable sector in Europe and proposes a list of priorities for public and private research investment in the period up to 2020 and beyond. The priorities are related to the contribution of the fruit and vegetable sector to

FRESHFEL WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

In the last few months, Freshfel has welcomed a number of new members: Special Fruit, Belorta, Bayer CropScience, Roveg Fruit, Port of Koper, MABA, Afrucat, TWI, Bell'aroma, Freshtime, It's Fresh, EOSTA, Green Giant Fresh, Rijk Zwaan and the Lithuanian Growers Association.



EVENTS OF FRESHFEL MEMBERS AND PARTNERS WITH PARTICIPATION OF FRESHFEL

Freshfel was invited to a number of events by its members and other stakeholders during the last two months:



Freshfel General Delegate Philippe Binard gave a presentation about the impact of the Russian import ban at the General Assembly of the French National Association of Fruit & Vegetable Packers & Exporters (ANEEFEL) in St. Malo.



Freshfel Communication Advisor André Feldhof was present at the General Assembly of the French Fruit and Vegetable Wholesaler Association (UNCGFL) in Budapest. In the picture: Christian Berthe, UNCGFL president.

Freshfel General Delegate Philippe Binard gave a presentation at the Apple Economic Forum in Warsaw about the state of play, perspectives, challenges and new opportunities of the European fresh apples and pear sector.

Freshfel Communication Advisor André Feldhof gave a presentation to the association IDFel Val de Loire about the decision-making structure in the European Union.

