

December 2015 - January 2016

FRESHFEL AT FRUIT LOGISTICA 2016

Freshfel was present at the Fruit Logistica in Berlin, as every year. One of the major events was the trade meeting held on the day before the start of the fair from the import / export division. This meeting provided the members with an update on Freshfel's priorities for the coming year, trade flows, market developments, but also food and plant safety and sustainability. The secretariat also always asks the members to fill in a questionnaire with their views on the market. Interestingly, the responses were far more positive from last year and it seems like the sector is expecting a normalisation regarding the trade trends for 2016.



Not only was Freshfel present, but also the President and Vice-President contributed to some press attention for the European Association of the fresh produce sector, Freshfel. First of all, the President, Luc Clerx from Prominent was published with a long and extensive article in one of Fruchthandel's special editions for the Fruit Logistica. The article touched on many of the important issues for our sector such as the lingering effects of the Russian embargo, new market developments, increasing consumption as well as other important issues such as the limited amounts of plant protection products that can be used in production of fresh produce. The full interview can be found in the Fruchthandel Magazin nr.3/2016. A few paragraphs [can be read here](#).



Freshfel Vice-President, Stephan Weist from REWE held a press conference on Tuesday 2 February on the premises of the Fruit Logistica, discussing the 'sexy products' that are fruit and vegetables. During this press conference, he emphasised that fresh produce are great products and that many people actually want to consume more fresh fruits and vegetables. However, consumption is unfortunately still going down and often

replaced by processed products. According to Stephan Weist, there are not enough incentives for consumers to eat more fresh produce, for which promotion can be a great tool, particularly since the sector is not spending much on promotion. For the sector, an increase of consumption by only 10 grams per day would mean 20 million T of more fruit and vegetables being sold in the EU. The press conference [can be viewed here](#) (3rd video).

Thirdly, Freshfel also received Head of Unit C2 in DG AGRI from the European Commission, Mr. Jesus Zorrilla. Freshfel's General Delegate, Philippe Binard took Mr. Zorrilla on a tour on Wednesday 3 February to talk to many of the Freshfel members. It is highly important for the European Commission to talk to the stakeholders directly and by visiting a fair, also gaining some more practical insights into the fresh produce sector.



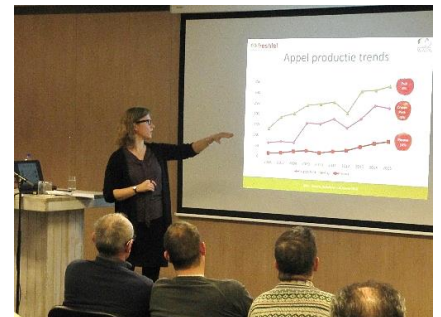
FRESHFEL'S GENERAL DELEGATE JOINS COMMISSIONER HOGAN ON TRADE MISSION



The opening of new markets and the improvement of market are a major goal of Commissioner Hogan. As such, several trade missions are planned over the year such as the current mission to Colombia and Mexico, as well as others to China and Japan in April and Vietnam and Indonesia later this year. This week's trade mission includes Commissioner Hogan with a delegation of 34 companies, producers and business associations from 14 member states. Also Freshfel's General Delegate Philippe Binard as representative of the fresh produce sector is joining the mission. The aim of the mission is of course to further the trade relations, in particular by raising topics such as non-tariff barriers to trade and the promotion of the high quality agricultural products from Europe it is intended to improve the balance of trade. In particular, trade relations with Mexico are characterized by enormous imbalance. More information about the trade mission of the coming week [can be found here](#).

FRESHFEL PRESENTATION ON APPLES AND PEARS IN NETHERLANDS

Daphne van Doorn gave a presentation at a meeting of the NFO (Dutch Fruit growers' Organisation) at the Expo in Houten, the Netherlands. The presentation of Freshfel (with WAPA) focused on the production, trade and consumption of apples and pears. The production trends for example included trends of new varieties. In apple production the club varieties are going up and for pears the Conference are clearly going up as well. For trade there still is a clear effect of the Russian embargo (which in 2013 was 52 and 57% of the EU exports for apples and pears respectively). However, new markets are already opened and also expected for 2016. Consumption is still decreasing, although the campaigns for apples and pears after the Russian embargo seem to pay off quite well and created an increase in consumption. As such, targeted promotion campaigns are having a clear effect. The presentation ended with an overview of the trade flows and new market developments, where a clear interest in Middle East, Asia and South America is seen for opening new markets.



MEETING WITH MEP HILDE VAUTMANS

Freshfel's President, Luc Clerx, together with Philippe Binard and Daphne van Doorn from the Secretariat met with Member of the European Parliament Hilde Vautmans (ALDE, Belgium). During the meeting with Ms Vautmans, the Freshfel team discussed several issues including the decreasing consumption and the misleading Greenpeace report on 'the poisoned apple'. MEP Vautmans also expressed her interest in table parliamentary questions on these two topics, which she did at the end of December (Question E-016044/2015 and E-016043/2015, which can be found [here](#)).

FRESHFEL CONTRIBUTES TO RE-OPENING OF INDIAN PORTS AND GENERAL IMPROVED MARKET ACCESS

As reported in the Headlines in September 2015, Freshfel took immediate stand on Notification 21/2015-2020 of the Indian authorities, issuing the closure of five out of six seaports for the import of apple. Freshfel submitted an official position paper to Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström, urging to take immediate action. Consequently, the issue had been raised in several bodies of the World Trade Organization without result, since the Indian authorities refused to give further explanation about the measure. Additionally, the European Commission took this occasion to reflect the general market access to India, where Freshfel contributed essential information about the market access for fresh produce to India as well as on the economic impact of the notification on the export of apple for the European businesses. This resulted not only in a newly founded working group, aiming to discuss and to fix key hurdles in trade with India on a bilateral level, where Freshfel will actively participate, but also in the suspension of the Notification and the reopening of the seaports for the import of apple in January 2016.

FRESHFEL REQUESTED THE REVIEW OF THE NORWEGIAN APPLE-IMPORT QUOTA

Based on Article 19 of the agreement of the European Economic area, the EU and its Norwegian partners have regularly the opportunity to revise conditions for trade in agricultural products among them. Freshfel requested a review of the apple import conditions to Norway. At the present time, the import of apple is restricted by a set of quotas. First, a bilateral quota limits the duty free import of EU apple to Norway to 2.000 T between the 1st of May and the 31st of July. Second, a set of WTO-quotas limits the import of apple between May and July to 7.000 t, between August and November to 750 T and in November itself to 250 t of duty free entry. For the whole referred period (May - November) a duty of 4.83 NOK/kg will be calculated on every kilo passing over this line. Freshfel estimates, that from 35.000 T of exported apple to Norway with a value of € 34 mio., roughly 11.000 t are affected by this mix of quotas, causing an additional economic burden of € 5.5 million of custom duty for getting access to the Norwegian market. Freshfel therefor requested the European Commission, to insist on an increase of the Norwegian quota for apple originating in the EU between May and July in line with the current trade flows and additionally to negotiate upon a preferential arrangement for the time period between September and November.

FRESHFEL MODERATES DEBATE ON THE DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR IMPORT OF APPLE & PEARS TO THE U.S.

Freshfel and its members have been accompanying the negotiations for an alternative market access for apple and pears to the U.S. without the costly measure of pre-clearance inspections since the beginning of the debates in 2008. After submission of the operational work plan to the United States Department of Agriculture in December 2014, Freshfel regularly followed up on the progress with the responsible European authorities. A draft proposal has been issued by the U.S. authorities on the 20th of January 2016, abolishing the measure of pre-clearance and substituting the process with a systemic approach, which includes a set of rules such as the registration of orchards and pack houses, regular monitoring and inspection visits and the establishment of individual work plans for each of the eight involved countries. The proposal caused debate about the practical procedural application as well as its still complex setting of rules. Freshfel has already moderated the first commenting process in January and will continue to harmonize the stand of the industry on the draft proposal by facilitating dialogue between the stakeholders and collecting comments for submission to the European Commission.



FRESHFEL FOOD QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

Freshfel's Food Quality and Sustainability Working Group met in late 2015 to discuss the latest developments on plant protection products, contaminants, food hygiene, plant health, official controls, labelling and several other related topics. Thanks to the input from the members of the working group there is good exchange and active participation. Freshfel team will continue working on the matters related to food quality aiming for more coherence within the sector.

