



freshfel

EUROPEAN FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION



**ACTIVITY
REPORT
2012-2013**



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Foreword by the President



I am honoured to present you the latest activity report of Freshfel Europe. This report witnesses the wide range of topics on the agenda of the Association to best defend the general interest of the fruit and vegetables sector, while duly taking into account the various perspective of the membership across the chain. Despite the limit resources, the support of the members is the best guarantee that all the relevant topics are satisfactorily handled by the organisation. It also makes sure that the membership receives the necessary support to cope with the various hurdles of the day- to-day challenges of the business or of the legislation.

Since its election during the June 2012 AGM, the Freshfel Board has guided the activities of the Association and set priorities. In this time of a complete revamping of the business environment, it is of paramount importance to stimulate the competitiveness of the fresh produce sector, confronted with a fierce competition with other food items and rough economic conditions.

The driving line of the Freshfel activities remains geared towards increased consumption of fresh produce facilitated by the unique properties that our products are offering to consumers. Fresh fruit and vegetables have a very wide diversity of assets which are either unexplored to enhance its marketing or positioning on the market, or more alarmingly, those assets are successfully used by competing industries for their own commercial benefit to attract consumers. We need to make sure that our industry re-appropriates its own assets and takes the full benefits of its features for the moving consumers into healthy diets. The Association initiated several actions to improve communication and image, focusing more on the pleasure, the taste, the fun, the diversity of fresh produce.

Finally, in the last months, we now seen all the benefits both for the secretariat but also for the members of the new Freshfel Europe's office location at the heart of the European district, next to the European Commission, Parliament and other institutions as well as other associations with whom Freshfel is closely collaborating. All of this provides new opportunities and reinforces Freshfel's position and that of the industry.

Many thanks to all of the members and associated members for their support and commitment to the activities of Freshfel Europe!

Philippe Henri
President Freshfel Europe

Governance

Freshfel Europe

Freshfel Europe, the European Fresh Produce Association, is the forum for the fresh fruit and vegetables supply chain in Europe and beyond. Its members and associated members are associations and companies that have an interest in the European fresh fruit and vegetable sector, including production, trade, logistics, retailing and other services providers. Freshfel is a non-profit association under the Belgian law of 1918. The seat of the association is in Brussels, the headquarters of the European Union. Freshfel Europe is registered in the EU register of interest representatives, a European Commission initiative to increase transparency within the European environment. The Freshfel register n° is 1637225479-02.

To organise its work, Freshfel Europe is structured around a General Assembly for statutory and corporate matters, a Board for the overall management, cohesion and coordination of the Association and several segments Divisions and Committees to cover the various political and technical aspects of relevance for the sector. Freshfel organises its work in a flexible manner according to the evolving needs of its members and to better respond to these emerging expectations. Besides the Board assignments which are *ad personam*, Freshfel operates in an open manner, inviting all its members and associated members to attend the meetings organised by the association such as the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the division meetings, the committees, the working groups and teleconferences. Board representatives can be viewed on the Freshfel website (www.freshfel.org). The daily work of Freshfel Europe is conducted by the secretariat of the association based in Brussels. The secretariat acts as a team, and the five staff representatives coordinate the activities of the association covering a wide range of skills.



Members of the board

Philippe Henri - President Luc Clerx - Vice-President				
Jérôme Fabre (Treasurer) - Compagnie Fruitière				
Treasurer	Stephan Weist	Landgard	Hans Van Es	DPA
	Marc de Naeyer	Trofi bv	Herbert Scholdei	Kölla Hamburg Overseas Import
Production	Paco Borrás	Anecoop	Daniel Corbel	Cardell / ANEEFEL
Import	Vincent Holveck	Pomona	Jürgen Boruzewski	Cobana Fruchtring
Export	Francisco Contreras	Edeka AG Fruchtkontor	Jack Enevoldsen	Coop Trading A/S
Wholesale & Distribution	Vincent Dolan	Total Produce plc	Saida Barnat	Interfel / Aprifel
Retail	Andreas Brügger	Deutscher Fruchthandelsverband	Axel Moehrke	Dole Europe Import bvba
Promotion & Communication	Francis Kint	Univeg	Nigel Jenney	Fresh Produce Consortium
Food Quality and Sustainability	Salvo Laudani	Oranfrizer - Fruitimpresa	Jose Antonio Garcia Fernandez	Ailimpo
Convenience	Antonio Orsero	GF Group	Ann Duffy	Fyffes Plc
Citrus committee				
Banana committee				

Freshfel closely cooperates with other organisations hosted in the same premises, namely WAPA (World Apple and Pear Association), SHAFFE (Southern Hemisphere Association of Fresh Fruit Exporters), and Europatat (European Potato Trade Association). In December 2011, Freshfel also joined forces with SACAR which incorporates FRUCOM (Dried Food Importers), Union Fleurs (International Flowers Trade) and Assuc (Trade in Sugar).



Guiding principles

Freshfel vision and mission

The fresh fruit and vegetables sector faces global challenges to move towards sustainable production and consumption. Freshfel Europe cooperates with all its members to stimulate the supply of healthy and tasty products that comply with strict quality, environmental, social and safety requirements. Freshfel's mission is to be a platform for the European fresh fruit and vegetables sector. As part of this mission, it works to achieve the following objectives:

- Improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the sector
- Facilitate international trade of fresh produce
- Assist members to comply with the highest safety, environmental and CSR rules/standards
- Secure a favourable environment to promote the benefits of fresh produce, increase the efficiency of promotion activities within Europe and beyond, and share best practices
- Position the sector in new research and innovation policy
- Stimulate the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables by defending the image of the product and emphasising its healthy assets, as well as its huge diversity of taste and texture

Freshfel core values



Freshfel operates within important principles which are key to its good functioning and image:

- Leadership to move the category to success
- Cooperation across the supply chain
- Transparency of lobbying and industry representation
- Responsibility, accountability and ethical conduct
- Professionalism and quality of services towards its members

Representing the sector

Freshfel Europe regularly cooperates with the European Commission, the European Parliament and other EU institutions as well as with other European representative organisations with an interest in the fresh produce sector. The Freshfel secretariat and members participate in EU Advisory and Expert Groups of DG AGRI, SANCO and Trade on a regular basis.

Freshfel currently holds the chair of two EU Advisory Committees which serve as liaison committees between the European Commission and the representative organisations of the sector, namely COPA-COGECA (producers), Freshfel Europe (fresh f&v), Frucom (dried f&v), PROFEL (processed f&v), BEUC (consumers) and EEB (NGO for the environment). Pino Calcagni from Besana Group/Fruit Imprese chairs the EU Advisory Committee for Fruit and Vegetables while Luciano Trentini (CSO) chairs the EU Advisory Committee on Promotion of agricultural products. Both terms ends in 2013 and Freshfel will field candidates for the positions again.

Connecting the sector

Freshfel is a unique place for professional networking. Freshfel meetings are consistently well attended, in particular the Annual General Meeting, but also the well-established Trade Division meeting in Berlin on the eve of Fruit Logistica. Besides, throughout the year Freshfel holds regular meetings for its members to discuss matters of common concern and to set the Freshfel priorities and positions. Together with Eurofruit magazine, Freshfel has also been the organiser of Fresh, the leading conference for the fresh produce sector, since 2003. In 2012, Fresh took place in Copenhagen. This year, it moves back to Paris. The conference takes place back-to-back with the Freshfel AGM and focuses on the latest development in the fruit and vegetable sector.

Membership Benefits

Representing the European fresh produce sector

Freshfel Europe is the platform for the fresh fruit and vegetables supply chain, representing the interests of the fresh produce sector at European level. In its day-to-day work, the association keeps regular contact



with all relevant European institutions, and the secretariat and members participate on a regular basis in EU Advisory Groups and EU expert committees. Freshfel represents the voice of the sector at European level together with other organisations such as COPA-COGECA, AREFLH, PROFEL, AIJN, Food&Drink Europe, EUROCOMMERCE, EPHA, ECPA, etc. and is accredited with the United Nations organisations such as FAO, WHO, UN/ECE and OECD.



Freshfel's strength is built on its membership. Freshfel Europe incorporates around 100 companies and national associations of producers, importers, shippers and exporters, distributors, wholesalers, retailers and their service providers such as logistics and reefer transportation as well as also seed and crop protection companies. Counting subsidiaries, Freshfel's membership exceeds 200 entities around the globe. Freshfel's core membership is from EU Member States, but also counts many associated members from around the world.

Information

Information flow is key for building policy positions, for networking and for accountability. Freshfel Europe has therefore developed several tools to communicate with its members and the outside world in the most efficient manner:

- The **Freshfel Newsletter**, disseminated to members on a weekly basis each Friday, includes the latest information on crucial legislation and important developments within the fruit and vegetables sector. It also informs members about actions undertaken by the Association.
- The weekly **Freshfel Press Review** published each Monday features summaries of international press articles that are of interest to the fresh produce business.
- Freshfel has introduced **Thematic Fact Sheets** for its members on a series of topics. The Fact Sheets are compilations of available information in an FAQ-style on key issues, such as climate change, pesticides, consumer attitudes and obesity, as well as on statistics such as trade trends and production figures.
- Every two months, Freshfel issues a **Fresh Times**, summing up latest best practices and other initiatives undertaken to stimulate the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables. The Fresh Times publication is disseminated to around 1.000 contacts within Europe and beyond.
- Freshfel also publishes its **Freshfel Headlines** on a bi-monthly basis to outline key activities and positions to the public and private sector. The Headlines are also disseminated to around 1.000 contacts within Europe and beyond.
- Throughout the year, Freshfel issues a large number of **Press Releases** to communicate its positions. They include communication on policy issues (trade, promotion, climate change, etc.), on Freshfel's activities (committees, conferences, presentations, etc.) or on statistics (trade and production). They also aim at creating more visibility and acceptance for the association and the whole fresh produce business as well as their respective viewpoints.

Website and Social Media

Internet, media and social networking are also on the Freshfel agenda to facilitate communication and increase the transparency of its activities. The main communication tools are the following:

- ✓ The association's official website is accessible at www.freshfel.org. It is linked to an Extranet for improved communication with members. The Freshfel website is visited by around 11.000 people per month and is the point of reference for the sector on the internet.
- ✓ The "Enjoy Fresh" website launched by Freshfel in 2011 is a unique source of information dedicated to the assets of fresh produce. This website is accessible at www.enjoyfresh.eu. The website is the central point of a coordinated industry effort to stimulate the consumption and raise awareness on the benefits of fresh produce. Freshfel has decided to bring in 2012 the "Enjoy Fresh" concept to the youngest, their parents and teachers, with a newly created website, called www.kidsenjoyfresh.eu.
- ✓ Freshfel also runs the on-line Fresh Quality Guide accessible at www.freshquality.eu. Launched in February 2004, this website constitutes a unique compendium of all EU food quality and safety legislation applicable to fruits and vegetables, and interpretative guides thereof. In 2012, it has been completely revamped to take even more the expectations and requirements of the sector into account and be also more user-friendly. The website has over 3.500 visitors per month.
- ✓ Members have also access to the [Freshfel Extranet](#), which contains all Freshfel publications. The extranet is a unique archive of documents, including meeting reports, newsletters, position papers, presentations, etc.
- ✓ In cooperation with Eurofruit Magazine, Freshfel organises a conference for industry leaders each year. The Fresh Congress rotates across Europe and is the opportunity to exchange on the latest topical issues, industry trends and other matters of concern. Information on the conference is accessible on www.freshcongress.com
- ✓ To adapt to social media developments, Freshfel has its own [Facebook](#)-page. This is being used as a tool to stay in touch with stakeholders, policy and decision makers and, more generally, to connect Freshfel with people interested in the sector and the work Freshfel is doing. The Facebook page is accessible at www.facebook.com/FreshfelEurope
- ✓ It is also possible to follow Freshfel activities on [Twitter](#) by following @Freshfel
- ✓ The Secretariat has also created a [Wikipedia](#) page for Freshfel, which gives the most important information about the association at a glance.
- ✓ Finally, an [RSS-feed](#) on the Freshfel website keeps subscribers updated on all public communications published by Freshfel.



Business trends

Fruit and vegetables are high-value crops with a wide diversity in species grown in relatively small production areas. While fresh produce represents 3% of the EU's cultivated area, it accounts for 17% of the value of the EU's agricultural production. The total production value is estimated to be more than 50 billion EUR. The fruit and vegetables supply chain has an estimated turnover of more than 120 billion EUR with approximately 550.000 employees and 1.4 million farm holdings. A large part of the production is consumed locally in the Member State where the produce has been grown, while consumer choice is being further complemented by fresh fruit and vegetables coming from the other Member States or third countries. Consumers outside the EU are also more and more developing preferences for high quality European produce, as European exports are growing.

Production: Based on 2011 data, European fresh fruit production is at 38.1 million T. The apples and pears category represents 33.8% of the production, citrus almost 20%, stone fruits around 19%, melons about 13% and table grapes a little less than 7%. Fruit production increased by 5% in 2011 year-on-year and rose marginally (+0.9%) compared to the average of the previous five years. Fruit production remains vulnerable to climatic conditions. Italy and Spain are the leading producing countries, representing close to 24% and 23% of all EU production respectively. Meanwhile, European vegetable production has increased by 4% to 42.9 million T. Cabbages and cauliflowers are the largest product group with about 18 % of the volume followed by onions, shallots, garlic and leeks which represent around 15%, and carrots & turnips about 13%. The leading vegetable producing countries are Italy (20%) and Spain (19%), followed by Poland (9%), the Netherlands (9%) and France (8%).

Consumption: On the basis of the above data, Freshfel Europe releases its '**Consumption Monitor** each year'. The Monitor has become a well-established tool for the F&V industry, analysing the latest trends in the production, trade and supply of fresh fruit and vegetables across the EU-27. Findings from the Consumption Monitor show that there has been an on-going decline of fresh produce consumption throughout the last decade. In 2011, the EU-27 total net supply of fruit per capita stands at a daily basis of 71.9 kg (compared to an average of 74.4 kg over the previous five years), while the total yearly net supply of vegetables per capita stands at 67.7 kg (compared to an average of 69.8 kg over the previous five years). This represents a decrease of net supply in 2011 of 3.4% for fruits and a decrease of 3% for vegetables when compared to the average of the previous five years.

Intra-EU Trade: While a significant part of production (80% for vegetables, 65% for fruit) is marketed or processed on the local market of the Member State where the product has been grown, consumer choice is complemented by fresh fruit and vegetables originating in other Member States. The intra-EU trade of fruit and vegetables represents around 27.8 million T of produce exchanged in 2011 between Member States out of a total production of 81 million T. In 2012, intra-EU trade declined slightly to 26.3 million T. Germany is the single largest receiver of intra-EU produce with 6.8 million T in 2011, although imported volumes declined over the last five years. This trend was also confirmed in 2012 where intra trade flow of produce from other Member States into Germany were at 6.3 million T.

Import: The import from third countries into the EU have continued declining, falling by 2% in 2011. Total fruit imports in 2011 represented 10.9 million T worth 8.8 billion EUR, while vegetable imports represented 1.75 million T worth 1.9 billion EUR. Bananas remained the largest fruit category imported into the EU with 4.7 million T, followed by pineapples (919,000 T), oranges (800,000 T), apples (551,000 T) and grapes (538,000 T); while tomatoes are the largest vegetable category imported into the EU with 461,000 T, followed by onions (335,000 T).

Export: Exports increased by 6.2% in 2011 mainly due to continued demand from the Russian market. The exports to Russia of fresh fruit increased by 4.2% and of fresh vegetables by 2.1% compared with the previous year. Furthermore, demand for European fresh produce in Belarus increased by almost 50% and in Brazil by more than two thirds. Total exports amounted in 2011 to 5.2 million T worth 3.9 billion EUR. The main exported categories included apples and pears (1.6 million T), and onions & shallots (335,000 million T).

As one of its services, Freshfel provides the **Consumption Monitor** to its members free of charge. Non-members can order the document from the Freshfel Secretariat at a cost of 500 EUR. This year, the electronic edition of the "Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Production, Trade, Supply and Consumption Monitor in the EU-27" is the tenth edition of the report, covering the period 2006 to 2011.

Competitiveness, sustainability and growth

The fresh produce sector is confronted with uncertainties, questioning its long term sustainability and competitiveness, while potentially endangering business growth. Consequently, the Freshfel Board, which will operate for the period 2012-2014, decided to prioritise in its activities for the next two years, steps that could contribute to reversing this trend and guide the industry towards sustainable development. The current challenges are the result of a combination of complex and diversified factors which could be on a non exhaustive basis identified as follows:

- A sharp decline in consumption (ca 17% in the last ten years)
- A steady rise in costs (labour, energy, inputs, certification...) combined with deflated prices at consumer level
- Increased exposure to food safety havoc, while too many grey areas and uncertainties in EU food safety legislation persist
- Disparities of structure in the chain (fragmentation v. concentration) and heavy competition among operators
- The lack of strong collective communication and failure to address consumers fresh produce misperception (price, safety etc.)
- Insufficient ability of the sector to reap benefits from its strong assets (health and diet, nutrition, environment, climate change, diversity of production, role on labour and rural development), often taken on board by the competing agro-food industry.

These key drivers could affect the wealth of the sector and potentially endanger its profitability. Given the diversity of issues, solutions have to be identified at various levels. The Board therefore suggested that each of the divisions and committees of Freshfel should contribute to identify, from their own perspective, actions and key communication axes for Freshfel to address the current situation, create the most efficient framework of operation for business growth and secure sustainability and competitiveness of the sector. More specifically, several axes of works were identified:

- **Production:** Issues that are relevant include the finalisation of the CMO reform, the clarity on policy issues such as interbranch, competition legislation and agri legislation, the sector positioning in innovation and research, the setting up of clear and coherent rules on production method (conventional, IPM, organic), a positioning of the sector *vis-à-vis* new technologies (plant breeding, irradiation etc.) and secure a good functioning of the supply chain.
- **Export:** Moving EU external trade policy for fresh produce towards greater reciprocity in exchange with third countries with clear tools to address SPS issues (more EU cooperation), the availability of an efficient promotion policy including brand recognition and more EU coordinated action while securing better policy coordination (bilateral negotiations and promotion policy, duty and SPS). Overall, this should help diversify exports to new destination other than the classical destinations in Russia and other neighbouring countries.
- **Import:** Food security is more and more emerging as Europe becomes less attractive for third country suppliers (competition among retailers, increased and non-harmonised private requirements, and certification duplication). Besides, in recent months new challenges emerged in regard to EU requirements on plant health and food safety, as well as new concerns related to the reduced number of active substances registered in the EU. These lead to difficulties for third country suppliers as MRL are often lowered to the detection level as a result.
- **Wholesale and distribution – convenience:** Several aspects are relevant from this perspective, including the role of the value chain and addressing the debate on short supply chain. Moreover, several aspects relating to the safe handling of fresh produce (packaging, waste, hygiene) need to be carefully followed. The sector needs to provide responses to issues linked to proximity (seasonality, SFS...) and local transport issues.
- **Retail and supply chain:** From this perspective, several areas need to remain on the radar screen such as the confidence in safety of produce, eliminating food safety legislation loopholes, etc. It is also of paramount importance to keep pace with development in regard to the better functioning of the supply chain with the development of the EU B2B platform debating on matters such as best practice on contractual relation, on competitiveness in the agro food industry (CSR), food price monitoring and others. Finally and importantly, Freshfel within this divisions and related committees should continue to address matters relating to consumption by generating a favourable environment for communication, for promotion, marketing and image of fresh produce while having a better insight into consumers' expectations.

Research and Innovation

From fundamental research into practice

Research and innovation are of key importance to any industry in maintaining competitive advantage, addressing new consumer needs and improving the supply chain. The fresh produce sector can only fulfil its pivotal role in supplying to consumers tasty and healthy products of the highest quality if it remains an innovative sector. Therefore, it is crucial for research to be strengthened and to be translated into practical steps for day to day business. Whereas research and innovation primarily falls within the remit of individual companies or groups of companies, Freshfel fully acknowledges the need for collective actions in certain areas. In this light, Freshfel has taken in the last years a more active role with regard to the EU research funding. Freshfel has been approached regarding a number of relevant projects for the fresh produce sector and has participated or is participating in some of them.

Seventh research programme: Acropolis

Freshfel has for example decided to be part of the Acropolis project, which operates under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), which itself is running for seven years (from 2007 until 2013) with a total funding of more than 1.9 billion EUR in the area of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology. The Acropolis project aims at developing models and strategies for assessing risks arising from cumulative and aggregate exposure to pesticides with a similar mode of action, suspected additive or synergistic effects, or complex mixtures, contributing to improve the European policy and regulatory basis and benefit the international community.

Horizon 2020

The years ahead will mark a significant step forward for all activities in the area of research and innovation: The Europe 2020 strategy put forward by the European Commission has defined clear and ambitious goals to deliver growth that is smart, sustainable and inclusive focusing on key areas such as employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy. As a cornerstone of this strategy, the European Commission envisages its Horizon 2020 framework programme for research and innovation. Running from 2014 to 2020 with an 80 billion EUR budget, it will combine all research and innovation funding currently provided through a set of different frameworks. European agriculture will need to become knowledge-based and it is research and innovation that will achieve this. That is why the European Commission has proposed to double the budget for agricultural research and innovation from 2014, up to over 4.5 billion EUR. The European fresh produce sector is ideally positioned to positively contribute to this strategy via the economic, societal, environmental and innovation benefits it can provide to society. Indeed, our sector has many assets to contribute when it comes to human health and wellbeing, the environment and sustainability, food security, etc.



European Innovation Partnership on agriculture productivity and sustainability

To represent the interest of the fresh produce sector in the area of research and innovation Freshfel is seeking partnerships, e.g with AREFLH. Freshfel also became involved in the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) platform for agricultural productivity and sustainability and productivity. Hans Van Es was appointed as Freshfel representative to the EIP Board and Florence Rossillion to the SHERPA group. The main responsibility of these two groups is to elaborate a Strategic Implementation plan. This plan should guide the sector in developing results towards innovation in the agri-food sector, while improving the links between all stakeholders, private and public as well as from the research and from the business. In this process, the Freshfel representatives made sure that the specific interests of the sector are duly taken into account in the elaboration of such a framework. Separately and anticipating this new policy development, the Freshfel Board has opened a discussion on the legal tools that are needed for the sector to best position Freshfel members in this new policy and budget opportunities.

European agriculture policy

CAP and CMO

As this report is released, the EU is finalising political discussions on the CAP 2020 reform and is also seeking agreement on its Multiannual financial framework (financial perspective 2014-2020). For the fruit and vegetables sector, this CAP reform will have limited implications, as most of the planned instruments are already implemented by the fruit and veg CMO. The main novelties for our sector would include:

- ✓ An increased budget for the school fruit scheme, increasing the EU contribution up to 75% and allowing for co-financing of the accompanying measures (see below)
- ✓ A revision of the entry price provision, allowing the Commission to adopt additional provisions for import value check
- ✓ The transfer of the scheme of pre-recognition scheme of the producer organisations to the second pillar of the CAP
- ✓ All orchards will become available for direct payment

Besides, a reform of the fruit and veg CMO is also in the pipeline, but its timing is more uncertain. The Commission might release a report in September 2013 including an evaluation of the functioning of the CMO since 2007, an impact assessment with some options and possible as well some legislative proposals. At this point, it is still unclear if a Commission proposal could still take off before the closing of the legislative term of the European parliament in May 2014. The weak involvement of producers in POs in the Eastern part of the EU remains the main point of concern for the EU Commissioner and the reason for the delays.

School fruit scheme

The SFS is an important part of the CAP 2020 for fresh produce and Freshfel is strongly advocating for maintaining its specificities and further reinforcing it through the CAP reform and the increased budget included in the multiannual financial perspective of the EU for 2014-2020. In the last months Freshfel coordinated several initiatives with MEP and Commission services. Based on Commission data, more than eight million children and 54.000 schools currently benefit from the SFS. Of the 27 Member States, only Finland, Sweden & the UK have chosen not to implement it. The short-term results of the national and regional evaluations indicate that it has led to an increase in the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed by children and the report concludes that, if the scheme is given long-term continuity, it can be seen as an appropriate tool to exercise positive influence on children's eating habits. As part of the CAP 2020 Reform package, the Commission proposed to raise the budget to 150 million EUR (from 90 million EUR) and increase the rate of EU co-financing, which has been seen as an obstacle to a higher uptake of funds.



In the meantime, the Commission adopted in March 2013, the final distribution of EU funds for the fifth year of the scheme (2013/2014 school year), allocating 88 million EUR. Some 24 Member States (plus Croatia upon accession) have decided to participate in the programme with only Sweden, Finland and the United Kingdom opting out. The main beneficiaries of the Scheme in 2013/2014 will be Italy, who is set to receive over 20.5 million EUR, followed by Poland (13.6 million EUR), Germany (12 million EUR), Romania (4.9 million EUR), France (4.7 million EUR), Hungary (4.5 million EUR), Spain (4.4 million EUR) and the Czech

Republic (4.2 million EUR).

Besides, at the end of January 2013 the European Commission launched a public consultation on the review of the SFS and the European School Milk Scheme (SMS) which provides dairy products and fruits and vegetables to children in schools. Freshfel believes that taking into account the main objective of the SFS – that is to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among children in a context of stagnating consumption across Europe and the epidemic rise of obesity – further extending the scope of the products will dilute its efficiency and it will become more difficult to measure the results. Therefore, Freshfel responded to the consultation in favour of a status quo of the situation, which will keep the schemes separate as it is the case at the present (while awaiting the changes already proposed under the discussions of CAP 2020, mentioned above).

Growing responsibly

Sustainable and quality production

Throughout the year, Freshfel have been assisting and advising its membership to cope with stringent production legislation, granting full confidence to consumers about the safety and quality of the products placed on the market. Integrated production methods more and more dominate production practices, while conventional and organic production represent only a limited segment of the products placed on the market. The implementation of sustainable growing practice is part of the responsibility of the sector to match expectations of both supply chain and consumers. Freshfel also follows the evolution of quality certification schemes which could witness the efforts undertaken by the sector in this respect. Freshfel has also kept following the different aspects of European quality policy, such as marketing standards or Geographical Indication or Designation of Origin. The new European Quality Regulation (Regulation 1151/2012) which entered into force at the end of 2012 was also an important new step.

The Association has also kept a close eye on the evolution of research which could move the sector towards new varieties, better matching consumers' expectations and the need for convenience. These new techniques could also be a tool to reduce the application of substances and/or the use of water further improving the position of the fresh produce in regard to environmental parameters.



Reforming organic legislation

Organic production of fruit and vegetables in the EU is governed by regulation 934/2007. The Commission launched a revision process of the regulation this year, saying that quick evolution of the sector makes new rules necessary. Freshfel responded to the Commission consultation with input from the fresh produce sector, where organic represents around 5% of the market.

In general, Freshfel would like to see Commission incentives to stimulate generic consumption of fruits and vegetables (e.g. through promotion policies or the school fruit scheme) rather than positive discrimination in favour of organic produce. Fresh produce consumption is highly based on trust, and trust is quickly lost if fraud occurs in parts of the sector. As a result, there is a role for the Commission to ensure that a strong control regime (currently with one inspection per year and holding) is in place for organic produce. This should incorporate a centralised alert system, as the Commission is currently dependent on national or private reporting without a centralised EU scheme. However, Freshfel does not see a role for the Commission to interfere with consumers' free choice in favour or against certain products. While supporting clear labelling of organic produce, Freshfel would also like to minimise confusion between different European logos. A proliferation of different logos may bring more confusion than information to consumers. This is particularly true for local produce, which is often wrongly associated with organic production. A logo for organic produce should therefore be precise and include the word "organic".

Following the public consultation, the Commission presented three options for new legislation. The first option ("improved status quo") would be to replace the existing regulation 834/2007 with a new regulation that marginally extends its scope, adjusts labelling rules, introduces electronic certification and improves the control system. The second option ("quantitative option") aims at boosting the quantity of sold produce by making current exceptional rules permanent and introducing a threshold for non-allowed substances under which the product could be labelled as organic. The third – and most likely – option ("qualitative option") aims at reinforcing the quality of organic produce by eliminating exceptions, obliging organic holdings to respect organic principles throughout the production and phasing out national logos. Using the collected feedback, the Commission will come up with a legislative proposal in the upcoming months. This will then be debated by the Parliament and the Council of Ministers before it can enter into force.

Food and plant safety

Plant protection products and MRL

Food safety focus in fresh fruit and vegetables is traditionally linked to active substances, minor uses and their residues as well to matters relating to food additives and contaminants. The last year's activities have been no exception to the rule, demonstrating once again all the relevance of these matters, their impact on business and very often the pending gaps in the EU legislative framework given the evolution of technologies and consumer expectations. In this respect, the Freshfel food safety and sustainability working group has done a lot to clarify matters, to be a platform for discussion among members and to network with Commission officials. One way to bring clarity is also to anticipate gaps in existing legislation. This is one of the reasons why Freshfel was actively involved in the ACROPOLIS project under the 7th EU research programme, being the industry's voice. The project addresses one of the remaining gaps in the legislation environment e.g. the cumulative and aggregate effects of pesticides residues. The project will conclude in mid-2013 with a closing conference in Brussels hosted by Freshfel.

Microbiological contamination

As a follow up of the EHEC crisis, microbiological contamination was also on the agenda. While the European Commission has now finalised a set of legislation for sprouted seeds, an evaluation is being undertaken under the auspices of EFSA as risk assessors to allow the Commission to evaluate the need of further extension to other categories of fresh produce namely fresh vegetables. EFSA first provided in December 2012 a ranking of the food/pathogen combinations most often linked to food-borne outbreaks and is now in a second stage assessing the risk of pathogens in food of non-animal origin. Freshfel is associated with its members to this exercise for vegetables and will closely monitor developments for sector and in particular its convenience part of the business.



Plant health and official controls

Besides, a number of complex matters relating to plant health and official controls were also on the Freshfel agenda. In May 2013, the Commission released its legislative proposals for the reform of the plant health regime as well as the provision on official controls. These dossiers will now be discussed by the Council and the European Parliament, before moving into implementation. The new framework should cope with the new challenges keeping crops while not unnecessarily impairing trade. Still relating to plant health, Freshfel has closely monitored and advised its members on the development of the citrus black spot issue. While not interfering on the scientific merits of the dossiers – as this will be subject to an opinion by EFSA (covering both citrus black spot and citrus canker), Freshfel has been eager to clarify the modalities of operation based on existing legislative requirements.

Fresh Quality Guide

Acknowledging the importance of raising awareness on the continuously evolving EU regulatory landscape, Freshfel keeps its Fresh Quality Guide updated. The Fresh Quality website was revamped in 2012 and represents a user-friendly source of all general fresh produce legislative requirements covering quality standards, the food safety dossier and all topics related to labelling and nutrition, but also hygiene requirements, product packaging etc. These legal requirements cover all fresh fruit and vegetables, are easy accessible and are continuously updated to provide up to date information for everyone involved in the fresh produce supply chain. This initiative is granted with the support of several members seen below.



Societal and environmental questions

Sustainable development has rapidly shifted upwards the political agenda, as well as those of NGO and consumers groups. Public authorities are now actively promoting the consumption of 'green products'. Acknowledging the scope and complexity of the debate, EU food chain partners, have set up a joint initiative, the Food Chain Sustainable Consumption & Production Roundtable, in order to collectively address the challenges regarding assessment methodologies and communication tools, while also exchanging best practices.

A European supply chain approach or even an international approach is a must to avoid the proliferation of solutions and schemes which will ultimately add confusion and cost to the chain. The European Commission has made recommendations for the use of voluntary communication tools (adopted by EU in 2011), while in 2012 a harmonised framework assessment methodology for the environmental assessment of food and drink products (ENVIFOOD Protocol) was adopted as well. The protocol is currently undergoing pilot tests. There are several matters included in such a debate. Fruit and vegetables are often put in the spotlight, despite positive records. Freshfel pays attention to several:

Environmental footprint: Fresh produce is the most sustainable element in a person's diet even if it is not locally sourced. Research on the environmental impact of fresh fruit and vegetables (e.g. by the Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition) shows that for carbon footprint, water footprint and ecological footprint (land degradation), fruits and vegetables have the lowest detrimental impact among all foodstuffs. This means that fresh produce supply chains can incorporate a high degree of sustainability into their daily routine even if they do not only rely on local sourcing. It will however remain important to get easy methodology to measure the carbon footprint.



Food waste: The Commission currently assesses how best to limit food waste throughout the food chain, and halve the disposal of edible food waste in the EU by 2020. No direct and immediate legislative implications are to be expected, but the perception of "waste" created by certain data on fresh produce needs to be addressed. Freshfel participated in brainstorming at EU level with other associations and is evaluating actions that can be taken to value actions undertaken by the sector. Therefore, Freshfel organised a technical visit with Commission officials to highlight the sector's best practices. A key issue in future discussions will be the definition of food waste and the development of a food waste hierarchy.

Local agriculture and short supply chain: The Commission last year opened a debate on local agriculture and short supply chains. Freshfel follows the issue and was active to put local agriculture in perspective of expectation. The fresh produce business is already primarily a "locally oriented" business sector which grants a significant part of its opportunities to growers within a local context. However, given the urban structure of European society, efforts to facilitate the distribution of fresh produce within a local environment do not give growers access to a large consumer base. Growers will always need access to trade and logistic services which make sure that produce is delivered within the right timing while coping with consumers' safety and logistics expectations. The emphasis on local products should not lead to any derogation in regard to food safety or hygiene for products that are locally distributed. The debate on local sourcing is also closely associated with the concept of short supply chain, another misleading initiative by the Commission service, disregarding the fact that the fresh produce sector already operates within tight and sophisticated supply chains, providing logistics expertise and appropriate information solutions (origin, seasonality, safety, handling, packaging, etc.).

At a moment of stagnating consumption, consumers should have the final word and decide about their sourcing preference in particular in regard to origin, production method, quality or taste. Meanwhile, the role of the authorities should be limited to generically stimulating consumption and securing a healthy diet for European consumers. A narrow focus of public authorities on local seasonal products might undermine the selection of fresh produce offered to consumers and be detrimental for a healthy balanced diet.

Trade and market access

The European fresh produce sector should position itself to keep pace of worldwide evolving consumer demands and to open up to new markets. A favourable trade environment should be built on the basis of fair and reciprocal trade opportunities both for imports and exports.

Import

Over the last three to four years, imports from third countries into the EU have declined and importers had more and more difficulties to convince suppliers to send their produce to the competitive and highly demanding European markets. Freshfel closely followed up in 2012/2013 the implementation of the FTA with Central and Andean Countries and the phasing in of new duty conditions for import of bananas. Besides, Freshfel also looked at specific dossiers such as the garlic tariff-rate quota in the EU. The scheme progressively erodes import allowances of some of traditional importers. Freshfel also looks at several aspects associated with EU food safety legislation and the impact on third countries of non-registration of several actives substances.

Export

New market opportunities emerge in other regions of the world such as Asia, Middle East or Latin America. The fresh produce sector has seen export growth of almost 50% between 2007 and 2012. European exporters are prepared to respond to growing demand in the developing economies of the world. Export conditions to the Russian market remain at the centre of all the attention of Freshfel, given the on-going growth of European exports to its eastern neighbour. Last year, Russia has moved into the WTO and implemented a customs union with Belarus and Kazakhstan. Several adjustments of the market are still ongoing, including the status of the safety certificate, the progressive harmonisation of MRLs with international or EU standards, or some aspects relating to custom valuation. Some of these issues remain complex and require close cooperation between Freshfel and the EU authorities. Although Russia and Eastern Europe are the biggest recipients of EU exports, efforts to diversify exports should continue. Early 2013, Freshfel released a report on export barriers and highlighted the lack of reciprocity and the complexity of signing up SPS protocols such as it is the case with the apples and pears protocols to export to the USA.

Bilateral Free Trade Agreements



To boost international trade, Freshfel closely follows the efforts of the European Commission to negotiate bilateral free trade agreements (FTA) with third countries. In the last year, a number of FTAs were concluded and several others launched. Thus, an agreement with Peru has entered into force last year, even though European fresh produce exports remain constrained due to SPS requirements in Peru. An FTA with Ukraine was initialled last year and should be adopted in November this year. Other agreements negotiated in the last months with Canada, Central America and Colombia should also soon come into force. They might provide new tariff reductions both ways, while some modalities to frame the additional duty reductions to go beyond the MFN duties are being considered and closely monitored by Freshfel. New comprehensive free

trade negotiations have been launched with the United States and Japan, both of which should be concluded two years from now. Other negotiations remain open, namely with India, Mercosur, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and the EPA countries, as well as the upcoming revision of the GSP scheme in 2014. These are dossiers that will remain on Freshfel's agenda in the coming months.

New technologies and logistics

IFPS

Since 2011, Freshfel is part of the IFPS, the International Federation of Produce Standards. The Association is providing an international platform for cooperation on a wide range of matters:

1. **Product identification:** PLU codes have been used by supermarkets since 1990 to make check-out and inventory control easier, faster and more accurate. PLU codes are used to identify bulk produce (and related items such as nuts and herbs). They tell the supermarket cashier whether an apple is a conventionally grown Fuji apple which may sell for \$1.29 per pound versus an organically grown Fuji apple which may sell for \$2.29 per pound. IFPS is the global organisation that assigns PLU codes to produce items. Besides, IFPS is currently working with GS1 on their Databar project with regard to PLU reference/inclusion. The GS1 system is a series of standards designed to improve supply chain management, and as such, the GS1 aims are compatible with IFPS.
2. **Chain information management:** The Information Management Committee's principle role is to advise the IFPS Board on opportunities in the management of electronic information exchange in the global fresh produce value chain.
3. **Food Safety:** IFPS is committed to Food Safety and has established a Board Committee to channel that commitment and focus. Its position on Food Safety is as follows:
 - a) establish a single set of internationally recognised criteria against which food safety programs are benchmarked
 - b) outcome must encompass the total fresh produce supply chain
 - c) move towards one global benchmarking system is preferable for the fresh produce sector

Besides, IFPS' work in this area will be enhanced through having been granted liaison status with the International Standards Organisation (ISO) on their Food Safety Management Committee - ISO/TC 34/SC 17 Management systems for food safety, and observer status with Codex. The Codex Alimentarius Commission was created in 1963 by FAO and WHO to develop food standards, guidelines and related texts such as codes of practice under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. The main purposes of this Programme are to protect health of the consumers, to ensure fair trade practices in the food trade and to promote co-ordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organisations.



Freshfel hosts the IFPS Board meeting in June 2013 in its premises and organised a technical visit in the port of Antwerp with its members based in the port.

E-certification

In line with the Commission efforts towards the setting up of a digital community, Freshfel collects expertise and membership input to work towards paperless administration in the chain. This includes several aspects of custom operations, including plant health certificates, quality documents and certificates of origin. A working group is being elaborated to look more into detail of the aspects of this dossier which could lead to more efficiency, less administration and mistakes.

Health and nutrition

Nutrition & Health Claims

The European Commission has now adopted and published (Commission Regulation (EU) No 432/2012) the list of permitted health claims that can be made on foods (other than those referring to the reduction of disease risk and to children's development and health). The list comprises 222 authorised health claims, which are based on sound scientific advice, and that can be used throughout the EU. The Annex of the Regulation details the specific nutrient, substance, food or food category, the authorised claim and the conditions of use of the claim.



The list also provides legal clarity to food manufacturers on the health claims they can or cannot make. The administrative burden will also be reduced, since all enforcement authorities will from now on be able to rely on one list of authorised health claims and their conditions of use to verify if a claim is misleading or not. Food manufacturers had a period of six months to adapt their practices to the new requirements. As of 14 December 2012 non-scientifically backed claims had therefore to be removed from the market and all claims that are not authorised and not on hold/under consideration are to be prohibited and may not appear on any products.

European Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health

Freshfel remains active in this forum, profiling fresh produce as one of the solutions to address the alarming growing rate of obesity and related illnesses. Since its creation in 2005, the main purpose of the platform is to conduct open and informal discussions to examine ways of achieving binding commitments aimed at tackling the obesity epidemic and at addressing diet-related chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease. The platform meets at regular intervals for plenary meetings to monitor overall progress and discuss relevant issues. Over the eight years of the platform, close to 300 commitments have been submitted by its members, covering a very wide range of activities, and including actions in key fields such as consumer information, labelling, education, physical activity promotion, marketing, advertising targeting children and product reformulation. Freshfel's current active commitments are the **Fresh Times**, the **Consumption Monitor** and the support to the EU School Fruit Scheme (SFS). This last commitment entails a unique collaboration between the public health sector (EPHA – European Public Health Alliance, and EHN – European Heart Network) and the fresh fruit and vegetables sector (Freshfel), which has been established to provide Platform members and the Directorate-General for Health of the European Commission with information on their work in relation to implementing the EU SFS.



EU Platform on Diet,
Physical Activity and Health

Marketing and Promotion

Reform of EU Promotion policy

The European Commission envisions a reform of the policy on promotion of agricultural products. Currently, an Impact Assessment is being carried out, and it should be accompanied by a legal proposal before the end of the year 2013. This process takes place in parallel to the report of the European Parliament (resolution adopted on 20 November 2012) which was adopted as a response of the

Parliament following the Commission Communication. MEPs agreed by a large majority, that the EU should significantly increase its budget for promoting food within and outside its borders to open up new markets for its products. MEPs said that a funding boost for promotion should be accompanied by campaigns to improve consumers' awareness of Europe's high production standards, and that the policy should pay equal attention to boosting sales on emerging markets and enhancing the internal market. Responding to the Commission's hints for greater scope for private branding to feature in the schemes, MEPs firmly favoured an indication of European origin as "the main identity in all promotion & information activities".



Programmes under EU Promotion policy

Over the two waves of call for programmes to promote EU agricultural products in 2012, a total of 75 programmes were received corresponding to a budget of 253 million EUR. Out of this, 34 programmes were finally approved for a budget of 124 million EUR. The bulk of the programmes focused on the internal market, in comparison to third country markets. Fruit and vegetables remained the main category, followed by wine. In 2013, so far, the European Commission has approved 22 programmes (out of 36 received) for promotion in the internal market (16 programmes) and in third countries (six programmes). The total budget of the programmes, the large majority of which will run for a period of three years, is 71.94 million EUR, of which the EU contributes 35.97 million EUR. Two of the selected programmes were proposed by more than one Member State. In what regards fresh fruit and vegetables, there were three programmes approved, all for the internal market, all for a three year duration and all proposed by only one Member State (although two target several Member States). Together they amount to 6.9 million EUR, of which the EU will contribute 3.4 million EUR (50%) which represents roughly 9% of the whole EU budget this round.

Freshfel Promotion, Communication & Image Committee

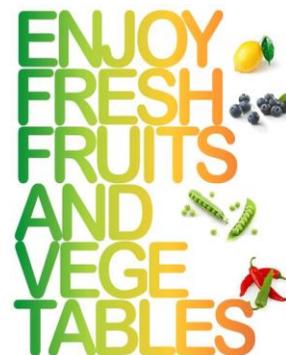
This Freshfel Committee has met on two occasions, on 31 October 2012 and most recently on 6 May 2013. In this last meeting, the group performed a SWOT analysis of fresh produce marketing with the aim of identifying failures and achievements by the sector in this area, as well as advancing new ideas, and best practice examples. The meeting included the following steps: setting the scene, insight on the consumers' perspective through a research performed in Germany, a roundtable discussion to identify current marketing difficulties, a comparison between fresh v. process products (with the help of an external PR consultancy), and finally a SWOT analysis identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for fresh produce. The group finished with a main recommendation to lead the way forward, and that builds on the idea that a better understanding of the consumers is of paramount importance. Therefore, the committee recommended conducting a pan-European study on consumer insight for the benefit of the whole sector.



Communication and image

With its on-going 'media strategy', Freshfel has throughout 2012 and continuously in 2013 aimed at better positioning fresh produce and the sector through increasing awareness and knowledge, enhancing the image and the visibility and finally spreading the message to 'enjoy fresh'. Taking the lead in assisting the industry in gaining consumer confidence and market share, and continuing its efforts to build the most favourable environment to stimulate the consumption of fresh produce in Europe, Freshfel has been active on several levels:

- Comprehensive press activities in 2012, calling for a holistic approach when it comes to promoting fresh produce, including, besides the positive assets with regard to nutrition, health or the environment, also the inherent properties of the product, namely taste, texture, quality and the sheer pleasure of enjoying a fresh fruit or vegetable. Besides, Freshfel has stressed the need for a multidimensional approach in order to stimulate consumption patterns in the long run.
- The "Enjoy Fresh" website (www.enjoyfresh.eu), encompassing all the key data to better profile fresh produce, has been further promoted and is on its way of becoming a recognised and trustworthy source of information for stakeholders, public authorities, the media and consumers.
- Freshfel has also decided to bring the "Enjoy Fresh" concept to the youngest, their parents and teachers in 2012, with a newly created website, called www.kidsenjoyfresh.eu.
- Freshfel will continue to profile its 'Enjoy Fresh' concept to move it to a recognised platform of networking and communication for the sector at European level, gathering the support of the whole chain to work together for the common goal of stimulating consumption. It will be integrated within the Freshfel Committee on Promotion, Communication and Image.
- Freshfel has continued to develop its social media strategy and tools to facilitate communication and increase the transparency of its activities. Freshfel stays in touch with stakeholders, decision makers and, more generally, with people interested in the sector via Facebook. Via Twitter, the association keeps its followers up-to-date on its activities and points of view. Freshfel will continue to develop these media tools further in order to integrate them into its media strategy for the 'Enjoy Fresh' concept.
- The **Fresh Times** and the **Freshfel Headlines** remain also well appreciated instruments of communication both for fresh products and best practices in promotion initiatives, as well as for the image of the organisation.



Besides these external communication activities, Freshfel has also worked on further enhancing its internal communication activities with members. The Extranet has seen some upgrades (e.g. comprehensive search function for Newsletter and Press Review articles) and a facelift has been used to make the regular communications as well as the Extranet even more user-friendly. Finally, the well received Freshfel Fact Sheets have seen some updates as well as new editions on topical issues to further improve the communication and reasoned information available within short notice and to harmonise the industry message on certain topics.

Stimulating consumption

For the last decade, a declining trend has been witnessed and analysed by Freshfel in order to bring the right response to this worrying development. The reasons behind the decline are multiple including price and convenience (mis)perception, lack of penetration in emerging segments such as the food services sector, the severe competition of heavily branded agri-food products, which often misuse the fresh produce image for their own benefit (see Freshfel's "Where is the fruit?" Study), etc. Reasons are also to be found within the sector that should better take benefit of its own assets, rationalise its communication and avoid the proliferation of generic messages while also increasing permanently looking for improvement of the quality, taste and texture of fresh produce.

A close monitoring of consumption trends to allow benchmarking and analysis of the state of play is needed. On this background, Freshfel is evaluating all the necessary initiatives to stimulate the consumption and raise it well above the minimum recommended level of the WHO of 400 g/day. A better analysis of consumers expectation could assist in stimulating consumption, as well as the SWOT analysis of the fresh produce marketing already initiated by Freshfel.



Freshfel actions should also focus on the stimuli of existing policy tools directly influencing consumption:

- **Generic communication on fresh produce assets:** European public authorities have an important role to play and a significant responsibility to encourage consumers to adopt a healthy diet rich in fruit and vegetables. To get the CAP closer to its taxpayer citizens, the agriculture policy must reinforce among its objectives incentive tools to stimulate consumers to adopt a healthy and balanced diet. The EC Commission should reinforce its communication towards healthy eating and a balanced diet and enhance Freshfel's initiative to raise the profile of fresh produce as with its "Enjoy Fresh" website.
- **Promotion:** An efficient promotion scheme at EU level, both for the internal and external market is of significant relevance for the fresh produce sector and should be reinforced by the upcoming reform. The involvement and support of retailers within the promotion campaign to support sales of fresh produce is in this point of high importance. The procedure for the elaboration of pan-European programmes should be facilitated. Within today's environment, it is hardly or not possible given the necessary co-financing of Member States. Existing Freshfel tools such as the 'Enjoy Fresh' website could be further enhanced throughout the EU should the promotion policy facilitate the access to the instruments for information campaigns and get synergies at EU level on actions relating to the benefit of fresh produce consumption.
- **'Enjoy Fresh' platform:** Freshfel has launched this platform to facilitate the pan-European promotion on fresh produce. As the consumption is under pressure, all the stakeholders should join forces for addressing the matter. Freshfel set up the platform to as a catalyst for all stakeholders to cooperate and find long term solutions within a European context.
- **Convenience and food services:** Freshfel will continue to adjust its structure and focus to identify new market segments and facilitate the availability of fresh produce. The Freshfel division on Wholesale, Distribution and Food Services, as well as the new focus on convenience and fresh cut in a new representation at the Board are highlighting the Freshfel interest to explore new avenues for the consumption of fresh produce.

The ongoing CAP reform provides favourable momentum to take decisive steps towards an all embracing policy to stimulate the consumption and support the efforts undertaken by the sector.

Moving ahead

This report provides a summary of the main activities conducted by Freshfel during the last twelve months. Most of the issues are evolving and will remain on the agenda in the coming months. Several subjects are becoming increasingly complex and technical. Collectively much progress can be achieved, and with its increased expertise and know-how delivered by its member community, Freshfel remains the ideal vehicle for handling the dossiers that can advance the fruit and vegetable sector at the European level.



Under the leadership of its President, Mr Philippe Henri and Vice-President Luc Clerx, the Freshfel Board is steering the Freshfel activities for the benefit of the membership and of the industry at large. While the Board is securing cohesion and coordination of the activities, the detailed work of the Association remained done with the input of the different divisions and committees of Freshfel, under the coordination of the various chair/vice chair and the support of the Freshfel secretariat and all the members.

Freshfel, in its eleven years of operation, has opted for a supply chain approach, focusing on the practical aspects that could improve the efficiency of the sector as a whole, improve the confidence in the products placed on the markets and reinforce the image of fresh produce so that consumption could be stimulated.

This ambitious objective could be best reached by an on-going cooperation among all the Freshfel members, one of the guarantees of success. Freshfel will work to provide the most favourable environment for the sector so that all the members can take full benefit of all the assets and diversity of fresh fruit and vegetables and raise the quality and convenience of fresh produce with a view to stimulate the consumption. Besides joining forces on matters of common interest to defend the industry position, many policy issues will remain in 2013-2014 in the pipeline of Freshfel activities. Just to name a few, the following topics will have a prominent role:



- ✓ CAP and CMO: implementation of new provisions (good functioning of PO's, entry price, School Fruit Scheme, competition law and agriculture policy, functioning of interbranch organisations, etc.)
- ✓ Tools for production: revision of the legislation on organic farming, solutions to minor use and other related matters on the use of active substances
- ✓ Trade policy: addressing obstacles in export SPS protocols, achieving better reciprocity in exchange and securing a good implementation of bilateral agreements, leading to a good position of fresh produce in these new agreements to boost trade in both directions, while securing that tariff reductions are not offset by un-dismantled SPS constraints
- ✓ Logistics: moving the industry towards paperless administration and adjusting traceability guidelines to evolving needs
- ✓ Health and nutrition: implementation of the new claims legislation
- ✓ Promotion: reform of the EU promotion policy
- ✓ Plant health and official controls: discussion on the Commission proposals
- ✓ Food safety: dossiers on active substances, MRL, food additives, contaminants with a view of granting better confidence in legislation
- ✓ Hygiene: follow up on new microbiological requirements
- ✓ Sustainability and societal concerns: several voluntary initiatives on food waste, local sourcing footprint, etc.
- ✓ Supply chain: voluntary guidelines on unfair trade practices as under discussion with DG MARKT

The role of the association will therefore remain of paramount importance in the coming months. Freshfel will more than ever require the full support of all its members, and relies on the unique expertise of the members' representatives in its day-to-day work under the coordination of the Board.

FRESHFEL MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATED MEMBERS



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