

April - May 2015

MEETING OF THE FRESHFEL PROMOTION, COMMUNICATION & IMAGE COMMITTEE

Freshfel's Promotion, Communication & Image Committee came together in May to discuss the latest developments regarding promotion of fresh fruit and vegetables. The committee discussed the new EU promotion policy with a representative of the European Commission. In the future, the EU will gradually increase the annual promotion budget from 61 million EUR in 2014 to 200 million EUR in 2020. It will also increase the scope of organisations which can propose promotion programmes and strengthen promotion of EU products in third countries. The committee also discussed the progress of the Freshfel Consumer Compass, an initiative to obtain detailed information on the factors that encourage or prevent consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables. Additional elements discussed at the meeting were the EU school fruit scheme, the upcoming publication of the new Freshfel Consumption Monitor and the EGEA conference to be held in Milan on 3-5 June 2015.



Freshfel's Promotion, Communication and Image Committee reviewed the latest developments on promotion of fresh produce.

FRESHFEL EXPORT DIVISION DISCUSSES MARKET ACCESS TO THIRD COUNTRIES



Freshfel's Export Division discussed market access efforts in third countries and the EU's trade and promotion strategy.

At its last meeting in May, Freshfel's Export Division exchanged views regarding better access to third country markets and ongoing market access efforts. In conversation with Diego Canga-Fano, Director of Multilateral Relations and Quality Policy in DG Agriculture, Freshfel members discussed the support that the EU's promotion budget can give to the market access efforts of the sector. In a second session, Freshfel members and officials from the European Commission discussed practical solutions to market access barriers in third countries. Participants also reviewed the latest trade trends of fresh produce and talked about the sector's response to the Russian import ban.

MEETING WITH THE CABINET OF COMMISSIONER ANDRIUKAITIS

Within the framework of the Agri-food Chain Round Table on Plant Protection Products, a grouping of agricultural and other related organisations in Brussels, Freshfel participated in a meeting with the head and deputy head of cabinet of Commissioner Andriukaitis. In the meeting, members of the Agri-food Chain Round Table called for a more coherent policy in regard to plant protection products. The current legislation is leading to a scarcity of plant protection solutions, and this situation could even be worsening following the permanent review of registered substances on the basis on new cut-off criteria. The solution to facilitate authorisation (mutual recognition) or address minor use issues have so far failed to deliver their expected outcome.



Freshfel's Food Quality Policy Advisor Egle Eimontaite (4th from left) met with the cabinet of Commissioner Andriukaitis.

FRESHFEL FOOD QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

Freshfel's Food Quality and Sustainability Working Group met at the end of April to discuss the latest developments on plant protection products, food hygiene and microbiological issues, labelling, plant health and several other related topics. The European Commission updated Freshfel members on the latest developments in various dossiers while Freshfel members actively participated and contributed to the exchange of information.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION ON FOOD SECURITY IN BARCELONA

Freshfel's General Delegate Philippe Binard participated in a round table discussion at the High-Level Private Sector Forum on Food Security in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Region (SEMED) in Barcelona in May. The forum was organised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Union for the Mediterranean. Philippe Binard highlighted that food safety rules must be respected by all food operators without derogation, and that this is not an area where shortcuts and competitiveness should be sought. Although the EU's food safety legislation is among the highest in the world, up to now 67 different private standards have proliferated, leading to confusion and additional cost for the supply chain. Binard also stressed that food safety is a responsibility of the entire food supply chain to give the best guarantees to the final consumer of the product.

DISCUSSIONS ON CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS AT MEDFEL FAIR IN PERPIGNAN

The Medfel Trade Fair in Perpignan from 21-23 April brought together almost 6,000 fresh produce professionals from France, the Mediterranean and other countries. Freshfel's Trade & Communication Adviser André Feldhof participated in two roundtable discussions. In a discussion on consumption of fruit and vegetables, he presented the latest consumption trends and outlined the factors behind continued low intake of fresh fruit and vegetables. The discussion also looked at possible solutions and identified more and better promotion measures as one of the ways to increase consumption. A second roundtable focused on phytosanitary market access barriers in many third countries. Freshfel demanded better market access solutions from the European institutions, for example through free trade agreements and multilateral fora like the World Trade Organization (WTO).

FRESHFEL GIVES PRESENTATION ON SUSTAINABILITY AT VBT EVENT

On 19 May, Freshfel gave a presentation about the European and international context of sustainability during an event of the Association of Belgian Horticultural Cooperatives (VBT). The main focus of the event was a B2B sustainability brand called Responsibly Fresh that VBT had launched three years ago. Freshfel's Communication & Agriculture Policy Adviser Daphne van Doorn presented the complex dynamics of sustainability and the aspects connected to this broad term. She also went more into detail on international standards and EU legislation and best practices.

FRESHFEL GETS INVOLVED IN TWO EUROPEAN PROJECTS: FRESH-DEMO & EUROMIX

Freshfel has attended the kick-off meetings of two new research projects in which Freshfel is involved. The FRESH-DEMO project aims to combine an innovative ultrasonic humidification technology with natural antimicrobials to preserve quality and freshness of fruits and vegetables along the entire post-harvest supply chain. Freshfel will be responsible for dissemination at FRESH-DEMO project. Freshfel will also be involved in EuroMix, a project aiming to develop an experimentally verified, tiered strategy for the risk assessment of chemicals from multiple sources across different life stages. The project takes due account of the gender dimension and balances the risk of chemicals present in foods against the benefits of those foods.



Freshfel enrolled in the FRESH-DEMO project that wants to find new solutions to preserve quality and freshness of fresh produce.