



For immediate release

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CONTRASTING TRENDS FOR FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE IMPORTS AND EXPORTS IN 2010

Freshfel Europe has consolidated the EU fresh fruit and vegetable import and export trade data up to the end of 2010 based on Eurostat data. In 2010 the volume of fresh fruit imports from third countries into the EU decreased by 1.56% compared to 2009, standing at 10.6 million T while the corresponding value increased by 2.72%. Import quantity of vegetables in 2010 decreased by 4.38% and import value increased by 10.13%. In 2010 the volume of fresh fruit exports to third countries jumped by 13.06% to reach 3.2 million T, while the value of fruit exports to third countries also significantly increased by 32.26% compared to 2009. The 2010 export volume and value of vegetables has increased by 8.92% and 36.79% respectively.

Exports of fresh fruits from the EU-27 to third countries in 2010 reached a peak level of 3.181.343 T corresponding to an increase of 13.06% against the volume of 2009, and also corresponding to an increase by 31.20% when compared to the average of the previous five years. At the same time, the value of exported fresh fruits increased by 32.26%, and was worth some 2.6 billion Euros. Likewise to the increase of the fruit category, exports of vegetables to third countries increased in 2010 by 8.92% in volume and by 36.79% in value in comparison to 2009. However, comparing the data from 2010 with the average of the previous five years, the figures suggest a substantial growth by volume (up by 18.08%) and value (up by 42.06%).

With regard to fruit exports, Russia remains by far the largest export market, accounting for 40.13% of the overall exported volume, followed by other neighbouring countries of the EU such as Ukraine (10.45%), Switzerland (9.29%) and Norway (5.75%). The main trading partner of the EU for vegetable exports in 2010 was as well Russia, accounting for 34.11% of the overall volume, followed by Switzerland (10.52%), Senegal (8.21%) and Norway (5.99%).

Looking at the different fruit categories, apples remain by far the most exported fruit in 2010 with more than 1.2 mln T, with volume growing by 5.98% between 2009 and 2010. Pears and quinces are ranked in second place with 345.559 T exported, followed closely by mandarins (291.490 T). Onions and shallots remain the most exported vegetables in 2010, reaching a total of 700.960 T. Tomatoes are ranked as the second most exported vegetable with 158.957 T, followed by cabbages, kohlrabi, kale & similar (127.687 T).

"We are welcoming the on-going growth of our exports, which remain widely influenced by the developments on the Russian and Ukrainian markets, but further development could be expected if solutions would be found in regard to cost, complexity and unnecessary restrictive constraints of phytosanitary protocols" stated Daniel Corbel, chairman of Freshfel's Export Division. *"It is important that EU fresh produce with their assets and specificity could contribute to the growth of consumption in emerging markets and also alleviate through exports the EU market"*, he added.

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Imports of fresh fruits from third countries into the EU-27 decreased by 1.56%, to stay at 10.572.131 T in 2010 compared to 10.739.413 T in 2009. At the same time, the value of the imported fresh fruits increased by 2.72%. Comparing the 2010 data to the average of the previous five years, the volume of imported fruits decreased by 2.45% and the value increased by 2.40%. After the peak year in 2008 when more than 11.6 million T were imported into the EU, the level of imports is therefore declining for the second consecutive year. Besides, imports of vegetables from third countries into the EU witnessed also in 2010 a decrease by 4.38% in volume and an increase of 10.13% in value compared to 2009. Contrasting the 2010 data for vegetables to the average of the previous five years, the data show an increase in volume (by 5.10%) and in value (by 17.74%).

Looking at the different fruit categories, bananas and plantains remain by far the most imported fruit in 2010 with more than 4.5 mln T, but the volume is slightly down by 0.33% compared to the previous year. Oranges are ranked second with close to 922.000 T imported in the EU. Other large fruit categories imported in the EU-27 include pineapples, apples, grapes, lemons and mandarins. In 2010 tomatoes remain the most imported vegetable reaching a quantity of 477.148 T. However, the volume dropped down by 6.46% compared with 2009. Onions and shallots (306.509 T), sweet peppers (227.643 T) and beans (186.567 T) are following as the most imported categories in 2010.

Regarding fruit imports, the main trading partner of the EU in 2010 remains Costa Rica, which accounts for 14.97% of the overall volume, followed by Ecuador (12.21%) and Colombia (11.44%). Southern Hemisphere countries come next with South Africa (10.32%) and Chile (5.71%). Looking at vegetable imports, the main trading partners of the EU are in the neighbouring Mediterranean region, specifically Morocco, accounting for 32.33% of the overall volume in 2010, Turkey (15.55%), Israel (10.10%) and Egypt (6.87%).

"The trends set by the data confirm the main findings of Freshfel's survey on the state of the import and export business released by Freshfel in February" noted Marc De Naeyer, chairman of the Freshfel Import Division. He added: *"62% of importers responding to the survey indeed stated that imports might either stagnate or even decline, which might be a point of concerns for the European market supply in times when one of the growing concerns worldwide is the security of supply"*. The complex MRL legislation, the proliferation of private standards and related costs, the saturation of a market with limited consumption growth and the lack of harmonisation among points of entry for controls as well as exchange rate volatility are some of the key parameters reported by importers as being the limiting factors to businesses.

Philippe Binard, General Delegate of Freshfel, concluded: *"The analysed data confirm the trends set by Freshfel's survey on imports and exports presented at Fruitlogistica during the Import and Export Division meeting. The majority (64%) of the correspondents predicted the moderate increase in exports of fresh fruit and vegetables, and stagnation in imports (43%). More efforts still need to be made at EU-level to move towards greater reciprocity in trade, tackling technical barriers for exports such as complexity and costs in relation to the implementation of protocols and exchange rates. Regarding imports one needs to have a closer look at unstable pesticides and MRL legislations and private standards that go beyond legislation."*

EUROPEAN FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION A.I.S.B.L

Av. de Broqueville 272 bte 4 - 1200 Brussels - Belgium Tel: +32 2 777 15 80 - Fax: +32 2 777 15 81
info@freshfel.org - www.freshfel.org - www.enjoyfresh.eu - www.freshquality.org - www.freshcongress.com

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Summary of import and export variations for fresh fruit and vegetables 2009 to 2010 and in perspective to the average of the previous 5 years:

	Imports		Exports	
	Fruit	Vegetables	Fruit	Vegetables
Volume var 09/10	-1,56%	-4,38%	13,06%	8,92%
Volume var 05-09/10	-2,45%	5,10%	31,20%	18,08%
Value var 09/10	2,72%	10,13%	32,26%	36,79%
Value var 05-09/10	2,40%	17,74%	36,24%	42,06%

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Note to the Editors: Freshfel Europe is the European Fresh Produce Association, representing the interests of the fresh fruit and vegetables supply chain in Europe and beyond. Freshfel Europe currently has over 200 members, including both companies and associations. For more information, contact the association at info@freshfel.org or visit the association website www.freshfel.org.

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