

An eye on the chain

Beverages



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The beverage chain operates in a dynamic market in which the flourishing trade in alcoholic products is countered by a stringent alcohol policy. The Department of Trade and Industry helps companies in the chain conduct their business in accordance with the prevailing trading standards.

The chain

The beverage chain consists of all companies involved in the markets for beer, spirits, wine, cordials, and mineral waters, i.e. manufacturers, importers, bottlers and wholesalers. The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) serves as the contact point for the entire chain; Trade and Industry focuses on the chain's processing and trade.

Trade and Industry's specific role

Trade and Industry monitors developments in the beverage chain and their consequences for the business community. The Department is the contact point for issues relating to Dutch trade or the competitive position. The Department often collaborates with the Centraal Brouwerij Kantoor (the Dutch Brewers' Association, CBK), the Beverages Marketing Board, the Wine Marketing Board and the relevant trade organisations, as well as with the STIVA Foundation for Responsible Alcohol Consumption. The various LNV councils in Trade and Industry's network also identify relevant issues. The Department is the spider in the web of a market with a wide range of differing interests. Trade and Industry devotes continual attention to the companies' competitive position. The Department poses critical questions to trade departments, bringing topics to the attention of the political arena or the EU as needed.

Assistance

Trade and Industry assists companies in modifying their operations to accommodate new regulations and existing policies. The environmental policy, in particular the packaging policy, has a major impact. An Order in Council came into force on 1 January 2006 in which the authorities laid down producers' responsibilities and set targets for the reuse of packaging materials and the reduction of litter. The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) is responsible for the implementation of this Order, in which LNV and the Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ) also cooperate. The business sector can raise issues either directly with Trade and Industry or via the CBK, the Marketing Boards, or the relevant trade associations.

Mediation

Where necessary, Trade and Industry plays a role as mediator. Trade and Industry addresses international trading issues either directly or via LNV councils. Trade and Industry's comprehensive network enables the Department to submit issues to the relevant parties or take the requisite action. Subsequent to the determination of the Department's standpoint, Trade and Industry tackles the issue or, where relevant, raises the question with the EU. For example, one current issue relates to more stringent labelling requirements. The timely identification of relevant issues is essential to successful lobbying. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) keeps LNV informed about proposed new legislation relating to issues such as the Licensing and Catering Act and the policy on alcohol and young people. In addition, the Ministry of VWS organises the Regulier Overleg Alcoholbeleid (Standing Alcohol Policy Consultations, ROA), which is comprised of some 30 civil society organisations and market parties.

Key words for the chain

- excise duty
- national and European alcohol policy
- responsible consumption of alcoholic beverages
- packaging policy
- sounding board
- labelling

Key figures

- The Netherlands is the world's largest beer exporter, with an export of 1.8 billion litres in 2006, equivalent to two-thirds of the country's total beer production.
- The Netherlands has 17 soft-drink manufacturers, exporting mainly to Germany, Belgium and France. Exports in 2006 reached over 330 million litres. Imports in 2006 totalled over 454 million litres.
- Dutch gin (genever) accounts for 30% of the total consumption of spirits.

Network

Major players are the CBK and the Beverages, Wine and Arable Products Marketing Boards, as well as LNV's Food Quality & Animal Health and International Affairs departments, the Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (VWA), and the Ministries of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) and Economic Affairs (EZ). STIVA, the Foundation for Responsible Alcohol Consumption, coordinates the Advertising Code for Alcoholic Beverages. The STIVA's members are comprised of the Dutch manufacturers and importers of beer, wine and spirits.

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Contact

Ministry of Agriculture,
Nature and Food Quality
Department of Trade and Industry

- Cornelis Mijnders
telephone +31 (0)70 378 41 76
e-mail c.mijnders@minlnv.nl
- Arie Veldhuizen
telephone +31 (0)70 378 47 17
e-mail a.veldhuizen@minlnv.nl



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