

An eye on the chain

Horticultural produce



An eye on the chain

Horticultural produce

Fact sheet from the portfolio of the Department of Trade and Industry version January 2008

The Netherlands cultivates large volumes of vegetable and plant products, and acts as the turntable for the international trade. Two-thirds of all ornamental plants are marketed via the Netherlands. The country is the market leader in many segments. The chain achieves a suitable balance between supply and demand. Collaboration and innovation enhance the international competitive position. The Department of Trade and Industry is familiar with the chain, identifies and places relevant items on the agenda, and maintains a comprehensive network.

The chain

The horticultural-produce chain encompasses glasshouse horticultural holdings, outdoor horticultural holdings, and suppliers and producers of plant material. This substantial chain cultivates numerous varieties of vegetables, fruit, bulbs, ornamental plants, trees, mushrooms, cabbage, and ware potatoes. These products are marketed or processed immediately following harvesting. This processing relates to packaging subsequent to sale at the auctions or, for example, to the production of fruit juices. Trade in horticultural produce is largely liberalised, and is offered little protection or EU support. The chain is increasingly gaining recognition as a major and innovative element of the economy. Increases in scale are a current theme. Suppliers in the glasshouse-construction industry play a special role; they respond quickly to growers' problems, and they devise solutions that can be implemented both at home and abroad. Innovation is achieved by direct contacts, and for this reason it is important that a substantial part of the production capacity is retained in the Netherlands.

Trade and Industry's specific role

Trade and Industry focuses on bringing the various links in the chain into contact with each other. The Department maintains an overall view of the chain, and acts as a lubricant when so required. The Department acts as the contact point for all parties, and refers those parties to other bodies where relevant. Since many of the players are members of the SME sector, a specific approach via trade organisations is often required. The implementation of EU regulations falls outside Trade and Industry's focus.

Incentives for innovation

The horticultural sector is extremely innovative, and the chain arranges for many of these innovations in autonomy. Trade and Industry supports broad initiatives in those areas in which the Department sees challenges confronting the chain.

Assistance

Collaboration within the chain furthers the sector's ability to remain in the vanguard of developments. One effective method is the demand-driven approach: the grower knows why the consumer buys something and adapts his product accordingly. Trade and Industry participates in reviewing areas that may offer opportunities.

Mediation

Current issues, such as shortage of space or improvements in agrologistics, are not addressed by a single player. Trade and Industry retains an overall view of the chain, in which any problems are formulated in explicit terms and assigned to the relevant parties. For example, Trade and Industry participates in the discussions relating to the EurepGap issue, i.e. the criteria to be met for horticultural produce for sale in supermarkets. The Early Warning Response System (EWRS), a databank of residue standards for pesticides which is managed by the Horticultural Marketing Board, offers a helpful resource.

Key words for the chain

- turntable
- market leader
- increases in scale
- innovative
- global sales

Key figures

- The Netherlands accounts for 15% of the global horticultural exports (flower bulbs 90%, flowers 60%).
- Almost one-quarter of Europe's vegetable exports originate from the Netherlands.
- The value of horticultural products is nearly 7 billion euros, while the export value is 14 billion euros.
- The supply of investment goods amounts to about 1 billion euros annually.

Network

The Department of Trade and Industry maintains contacts with various departments, ministries, knowledge institutes, and umbrella and trade organisations.

Related fact sheets from the portfolio of the Department of Trade and Industry

- Bilateral Economic Co-operation (BES)
- CLIENT – Streamlining import and export procedures
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Knowledge and Innovation
- Long-Term Energy-Efficiency Agreements
- Market Access for Developing Countries
- Organic Agriculture Market Development
- Plant Export Policy (PEX)
- Platform Agrologistics
- Sustainability Labels and Indicators

Contact

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

- Jan Water
telephone +31 (0)70 378 40 76
e-mail j.k.water@minInv.nl
- Chantal Baas
telephone +31 (0)70 378 57 67
e-mail c.n.baas@minInv.nl



agriculture, nature
and food quality