



# An eye on the chain

## Margarine, fats and oils



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

*The margarine, fats and oils sector is highly international in orientation. In 2006, the total import and export value of products from the sector totalled 2.9 and 2.4 billion euros respectively. The Dutch sector also ranks amongst the European top. The Department of Trade and Industry provides advice, as required, to ensure that trade in this sector is conducted as smoothly as possible and that the Netherlands retains its powerful competitive position.*

### The chain

The Dutch margarine, fats and oil chain encompasses vegetable and animal fats and oils. Animal fats are used in foods and by the animal-feed industry, the technical (oleochemical) sector and, in recent years, in the generation of energy. Vegetable oil and meal are obtained from oilseeds such as soybeans, rape seed, and sunflower seed. The Netherlands also processes imported tropical oils (particularly palm oil). Further processing yields products such as sauces, margarines, and special fats. The chain encompasses all the companies engaged in the production, processing, further processing of or trade in these raw materials.

### Trade and Industry's specific role

The Department is the contact point for the Margarine, Fats and Oils Marketing Board and the companies falling under the Board's jurisdiction for issues in which feedback from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) is required. Trade and Industry assesses issues and introduces political items. The Department is familiar with the dossiers and maintains contacts within the Ministry and with other ministries and parties to provide answers to questions raised by the business community. Where necessary, Trade and Industry acts as a lubricant in the chain's operations.

### Encouragement of innovation

Trade and Industry is aware of innovation in the chain. For example, energy is increasingly generated from residual materials, and software is finding increasing use in the conservation of energy during the production process. In addition, companies continually endeavour to further optimise their operations, minimise the use of raw materials and consumables, and avoid unnecessary transports. For example, one company has opted for new premises on a sustainable industrial park in which a sophisticated network of pipes links companies receiving long-term supplies of each other's products. This has resulted in an immediate 50% reduction in the energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Various links in the chain are also taking bio-based economy initiatives. Trade and Industry advocates innovation, and provides the necessary incentives.

### Mediation

Trade and Industry's comprehensive network enables the Department to submit issues to the relevant parties. The business community can raise issues directly with Trade and Industry, or via the Marketing Board. The Department prepares a summary of standpoints and, where relevant, submits them to the senior civil servants. For example, Trade and Industry is a member of the Veterinary Export Policy (VEX) Working Party. Companies confronted with export impediments in the animal-fats trade can notify the Veterinary Information Point (VIP); VEX then adopts an active approach to the resolution of the problem. Trade and Industry's contacts with embassies and LNV councils in the relevant countries can assist in the elimination of these trade barriers. Trade and Industry also participates in the Energy Conservation Consultative Group, where energy efficiency improvements achieved by the participating companies and the entire chain are discussed with the Marketing Board and SenterNovem.

### Key words for the chain

- nutrition and health
- saving energy
- trade policy
- sustainable palm oil
- quality and food safety
- biofuels

### Key figures

- At 23%, the Netherlands is the second most important soybean processor in the EU after Germany.
- In order to reach international agreements on sustainability criteria for palm oil and soybeans respectively, the Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil and the Round Table on Responsible Soy were instituted.

### Network

Trade and Industry collaborates with the Marketing Board for margarine, fats and oils in representing the company interests of major players in the chain. Trade and Industry also maintains contacts with LNV's Agriculture, Fisheries and International Affairs departments, and with the Ministries of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), Economic Affairs (EZ), and Health, Welfare and Sports (VWS).

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

- Bio-based Economy
- Market Access for Developing Countries
- Long-Term Energy-Efficiency Agreements
- Platform Agrologistics
- Information Exchange between Government and Business
- Veterinary Export Policy (VEX)

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