

Plant Export Policy (PEX) 'Flourishing world trade'



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Fact sheet from the portfolio of the Department of Trade and Industry version January 2007

Status

Efforts have concentrated on Russia and Japan over the past year. The extent to which emphasis needs to be placed on priority countries and new countries of particular interest is assessed on an ongoing basis within the PEX framework.

Facts and figures

Export figures for 2005 (in million euros):

- Flower bulbs: US 103.3; Japan 62.4; Russia 9.5; China 24.8.
- Floricultural products (cut flowers, plants, parent material): US 96.2; Japan 20.8; Russia 101; China 2.5.
- Tree nursery products: US 22.2; Japan 3; Russia 2.6 (China 0).
- Fresh fruit and vegetables (in million kg): US 30.7; Japan 5.3; Russia 162.2 (China 0).

Period

Started in 1997. Ongoing.

Parties involved

The Department of Agriculture and the Plant Protection Service are ultimately responsible for the phytosanitary policy; Trade and Industry is involved specifically from the point of view of agribusiness; Department of International Affairs; PT (the whole horticulture sector), HBAG (horticulture), NIVAA/NIVAP (seed potatoes), KBGBB (flower bulbs and tree nursery products), PLANTUM (seeds and young plants), and Frugi Venta (fruit and vegetables).

More information

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@minlnv.nl



agriculture, nature
and food quality

The Netherlands has a considerable interest in the export of plants and plant products. To protect this interest, it is incumbent on the government and the business sector to prevent, remove or reduce structural barriers to the trade of these products. A coherent system of criteria helps to establish structure and priorities when addressing barriers to export. The approach is characterised by close collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) and the organised corporate sector. This results in optimal coordination and planning of the use of human and other resources.

Context

Dutch exporters who seek to sell plants and plant products abroad are regularly confronted with all kinds of obstacles linked to phytosanitary requirements, growers' rights, tariffs and (trade) politics. These obstacles can prevent access to promising markets and disrupt existing trade flows. Yet continuity is essential for companies to operate successfully in a particular market. Following extensive analysis and consultation with the business sector involved, it was decided that it would be best to concentrate on Russia and China (1997). The programme was expanded to include India in 1999, Japan in 2003, and new countries of particular interest to the business sector, such as the US, Canada and Turkey, in 2004.

Effects

The structured approach adopted by programme prevents the development of an ad hoc-policy on barriers to export for the business sector, without compromising on decisiveness when it comes to solving urgent problems.

Particular aspects

Coordination of the plant export policy results in clear prioritisation of countries and product groups and transparent decision-making. The multidisciplinary approach and the use of all of the access instruments available in the market have proved effective. The business sector has expressed its appreciation of the new public-private approach to barriers to trade, the clear communication structure and short lines.

Challenges

It is important to identify existing or possible structural obstructions to regular trade. When setting overall priorities, market potential combined with feasibility is decisive. The problem or country in question also has to be considered in light of the Ministry's (EU and WTO-conform) bilateral and multilateral foreign policy.

Compatibility with Ministry policy

The deliberate approach to barriers to export strengthens the competitive position of Dutch agribusinesses: a key objective of Trade and Industry. The Department is renowned for its collaboration with the business sector. The priority countries are consistent with LNV country policy, which is based on international political administrative relations, LNV involvement in multilateral organisations, market access, economic relations and trade relations in agro sectors.

Benefits

Barriers to export to important export countries are prevented, removed or reduced where possible. The agenda is largely determined by the hold-ups reported by the business sector.