



Sustainability Report
Responsibly Fresh



2012-2018





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Foreword

The Association of Belgian Horticultural Cooperatives (VBT) hereby presents its third collective sustainability report, describing the efforts made towards sustainable development within the Responsibly Fresh project. This sustainability project by VBT, its member marketing cooperatives and the associated fruit and vegetable producers was launched in 2012. The challenges around sustainability facing the cooperatively organized fruit and vegetable sector have been addressed collectively. The collective character of Responsibly Fresh is unique and important.

The use of the Responsibly Fresh sustainability label is subject to conditions. Participants must make demonstrable efforts towards sustainable development. Individual producers must hold a certificate issued by GLOBALG.A.P. and/or Vegaplan. Their joint progress by reference to a series of sustainability criteria is tracked via a collective dossier. In addition, the marketing cooperatives must sign up to a Sustainable Business charter. A parallel focus is also being directed towards supporting the incorporation of sustainability criteria into existing quality systems.

Within the project, the five marketing cooperatives, namely Belgische Fruitveiling, BelOrta, Coöperatie Hoogstraten, Limburgse Tuinbouwveiling and REO Veiling, along with their associated producers, have made various efforts towards sustainability. Marketing cooperatives and producers alike have participated in initiatives around sustainable development.

This report gives a snapshot of the situation after six years of Responsibly Fresh, detailing the efforts made by the participants between 2012 and 2018. The marketing cooperatives have earned the certificate for the Sustainable Business charter for several cycles in succession. The actions taken are described here. The progress made by the producers against the sustainability criteria is recorded within the collective dossier. This report compares the 2017 results from the collective dossier against those from 2013 and 2015. The data on the Responsibly Fresh project are presented jointly. This report also looks at the incorporation of the sustainability criteria in the quality systems.

Over the past few years, the cooperative fruit and vegetable sector has made strides together, and shouldered its responsibility for making the chain more sustainable. The initial mission statement, namely the pledge to tackle sustainability on a collective basis, is being clearly delivered. However, sustainable development is a dynamic affair. New insights and social expectations stimulate us to adapt our course towards sustainability. By the beginning of 2019, our revised approach will be rolled out. VBT, the marketing cooperatives and their producers will therefore continue with their collective commitment to sustainable development in the years ahead.

Rita Demaré
President

Philippe Appeltans
General Secretary



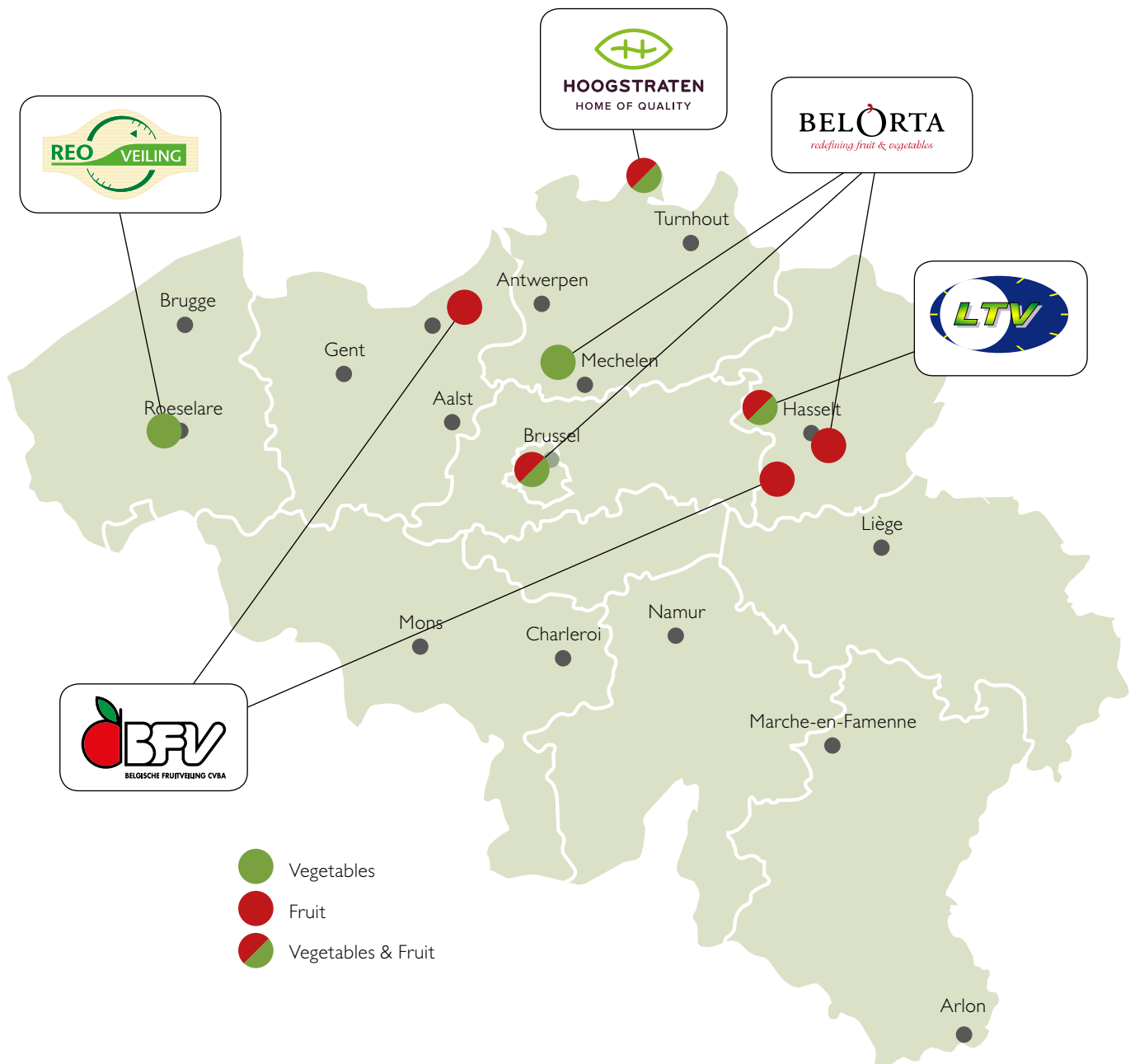
Responsibly
Fresh



Participants

Responsibly Fresh is an initiative by the Association of Belgian Horticultural Cooperatives (VBT), the sectoral organization of the Belgian fruit and vegetable marketing cooperatives. The five participating VBT member marketing

cooperatives and their associated producers are: Belgische Fruitveiling (BFV), BelOrta, Coöperatie Hoogstraten, Limburgse Tuinbouwveiling (LTV) and REO Veiling. These marketing cooperatives bring together more than 3,100 active producers.



Participating Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives



Themes

Sustainability is a very broad concept. When Responsibly Fresh was set up, four themes were identified which are of relevance to the sector in terms of sustainable development. Within these themes, we can distinguish various different

material aspects of sustainability. This sustainability report takes a look at the efforts by the Responsibly Fresh participants on each of these material aspects.

	PRODUCERS	MARKETING COOPERATIVES
<p>LOW IMPACT Careful use of means of production and the application of the principles of integrated production.</p>		<p>ENERGY WATER</p> <p>PACKAGING</p> <p>MOBILITY</p>
<p>BIODIVERSITY Opting for crop diversity and supporting scientific research into new varieties and cultivation techniques.</p>	<p>INTEGRATED PRODUCTION</p>	
<p>FOOD THRIFT Implementing rational storage techniques, providing portions tailored to the customer and reacting constantly to market demand.</p>		<p>FOOD THRIFT</p>
<p>PROXIMITY Ensuring a short, integrated chain via the structure of marketing cooperatives, resulting in transparent pricing for producers, one stop shopping for customers and affordable quality for consumers.</p>		<p>ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE</p> <p>EMPLOYMENT</p> <p>EMPLOYEE WELFARE</p> <p>DIVERSITY AND OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>PRODUCT RESPONSIBILITY</p> <p>LOCAL COMMUNITY</p>

● Ecological impact ● Economic impact ● Social impact
Material aspects of Responsibly Fresh

Conditions for the use of the collective sustainability label

The use of the Responsibly Fresh label is subject to strict conditions. The participating producers and marketing cooperatives must make demonstrable efforts by reference to various sustainability criteria. Producers and marketing cooperatives alike must participate in external

initiatives relating to sustainable development. The associated independent inspections make the project more transparent and credible, ensuring greater ownership among various stakeholders. There are three conditions.



THREE CONDITIONS FOR USE

1. The individual producers must hold a valid certificate issued by a quality system: Vegaplan and/or GLOBALG.A.P. Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA). After external inspection by a specialist independent certification body, the producers are awarded a certificate which is valid for a limited period. Provided that a subsequent inspection shows that the requirements imposed are still being satisfied, the certificate will be renewed.
2. The individual marketing cooperatives must sign up to a Sustainable Business or Corporate Social Responsibility charter (CSR), as offered and inspected by external bodies.
3. The marketing cooperatives must track the progress of their producers by reference to a series of sustainability criteria in the collective dossier.



Stakeholders

Consultations with stakeholders, both internal and external, form a central plank within the Responsibly Fresh sustainability project. This process is an effort to incorporate the concerns of the various stakeholder groups into the project.

Internal stakeholder consultations between the participating marketing cooperatives focus on the collective character of Responsibly Fresh. In the meetings of VBT's Board of Management and its General Assembly, the strategy behind the project is developed and policy decisions

taken. The elaboration and technical aspects are addressed in VBT working groups attended by marketing cooperatives' staff. Within the marketing cooperatives, discussions are held with the producers via meetings of the Board of Management, the General Assembly, product groups and ad hoc.

Externally, VBT is involved in various sustainability initiatives and takes part in dialogues with the stakeholders about relevant sustainability issues.





Communication

The Responsibly Fresh label is a way for the producers and marketing cooperatives to indicate to the forward links in the chain that they are producing and marketing fruit and vegetables with a concern for sustainable development.

The label is used on promotional material and packaging, sometimes in co-branding with other brands. From the outset, the conscious decision was taken to concentrate on business-to-business communication.

LOGO, STYLISTED G

The logo has the shape of the earth as the basis for the production of fruit and vegetables. The mix of colours, reminiscent of a rainbow, further emphasises what sustainability is all about: uniting or balancing the seemingly incompatible elements of people, planet and profit. The letter G is also visible in the logo. This stands for global, green and good citizenship, but also groovy. The leaf in the seed of the G symbolise greenery and flowering, bringing it all back to fruit and vegetables.



RESPONSIBLY FRESH, WHAT'S IN A NAME

Fresh refers to the fresh products, fruit and vegetables, while Responsibly evokes socially committed businesses and social involvement.





Reporting

Since the start of the Responsibly Fresh project, VBT has drawn up a sustainability report every two years on the efforts made by the participants. The first report was published in 2014 and described the efforts made by the participating marketing cooperatives and producers over the period 2012-2013. In 2016, the second report came out, based on the evolution in the period 2014-2015. The present report gives a snapshot of the situation after six years of Responsibly Fresh.

The report makes use of information from both within marketing cooperatives and outside, and information from the data from the collective dossier and from the Sustainable Business charter. All data are reported jointly. The figures from the marketing cooperatives and the collective dossier are reported by reference to the three Ps (profit, planet and people), tying in with the operation of the marketing cooperatives and their producers. This clearly highlights the economic, the ecological and social impact of the efforts made. The actions taken under the Sustainable Business charter are covered in a separate chapter. The actions are reported in line with the prescribed topics in the charter.

The marketing cooperatives track the entire progress of their associated producers. The collective dossier for 2017 includes 52 sustainability criteria. At the prompting of the marketing cooperatives, it has been decided to limited review the list by reference to 2013 and 2015. The first revision has been the scrapping of a number of sustainability criteria which since the inception in 2012 have either become legally compulsory or have been incorporated more explicitly in the Vegaplan and/or GLOBALG.A.P. Standard. A second change is the focus on innovations. Producers were asked about concrete applications of new techniques and technologies.

The responses from the producers are collated by the marketing cooperatives. The target group selected is the producers with annual product turnover of more than €25,000 in their marketing cooperative. Other producers were at liberty to complete the survey. In total 2,428 producers have completed the survey and reported the efforts they had made or were planning. The actual composition of the group has changed over the years as producers have closed down and new producers have joined. Given specific farm situations and production plans, some sustainability criteria are relevant only for a particular segment of the target group.

The producers can choose the following answers with regard to each criterion:

	I was already doing this (last three years)
	I was already doing this but have made improvements
	I have been doing this recently (since 2017)
	I intend to do this (next three years)
	I don't do this

The option 'I was already doing this but have made improvements' is a new addition to the 2017 dossier. It gives producers the opportunity to indicate improvements with regard to particular measures.

The results of the 2017 collective dossier are compared against those from 2015 and 2013. The full overview is given at annex.

The sustainability report is drawn up at Core level as per the GRI Standard from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the international reference for transparent communication about the ecological, social and economic performances of an organization.



Timeline

- Introduction of the collective label Environmentally Friendly Cultivation (MBT – 'Milieubewuste Teelt') symbolised by the green bow and yellow butterfly



- Framing of collective sustainability strategy

- Launch of Responsibly Fresh at FruitLogistica in Berlin
- Responsibly Fresh wins the first GLOBALG.A.P. GAP Award



Launch of Responsibly Fresh at FruitLogistica

- Event for stakeholders about Responsibly Fresh and sustainability within the sector

- Publication of the second sustainability report



Handing over the second sustainability report



1995

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

- VBT and its members adopt an initiative for the adaptation of the label as part of a broader approach to sustainable development

- One year of Responsibly Fresh – an update of the efforts made is provided in a press release

- Publication of the first sustainability report
- Addition of an area devoted to Activities in the South



Presentation first sustainability report



- Internal evaluation of the sustainability project and the prospect of future approaches

- Publication of the final Responsibly Fresh report
- Announcement of a new sustainability strategy by VBT and its members



Sustainable Business charter



The basic condition for marketing cooperatives wishing to take part in Responsibly Fresh is that they have to earn the certificate for a Sustainable Business charter every year. Holding this charter offers the marketing cooperatives the opportunity to deliver in concrete terms on a sustainable business and to work on continuously improving their ecological, social and economic performances.

Since 2012, the marketing cooperatives have been taking part every year in a Sustainable Business or Corporate Social Responsibility charter (CSR) such as those offered by the provincial governments and/or VOKA. To earn the certificate for the charter, or to extend it, the marketing cooperatives must each be externally audited. Within their business structure, new and challenging action points are imposed and achieved year on year around fixed topics. As from 2017, VOKA is operating a joint Sustainable Business charter within which it applies the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals as the universal framework. The marketing cooperatives are thus also helping to contribute to the achievement of these goals.

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were set by the UN. Over the next 15 years, the 17 SDGs, which are linked to 169 targets, are intended to form an action plan to liberate mankind from poverty and to get the planet back on course towards sustainability. These goals reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and ecological. The SDGs can be subdivided into five broad topics: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.

In past years, the five participating marketing cooperatives have earned the certificate for the charter for several cycles in succession. By the beginning of 2018, three Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives were already completing their fourth or fifth cycle of the charter. The other two marketing cooperatives are still being audited in mid-2018.

Since Responsibly Fresh started, the marketing cooperatives have defined no fewer than 349 actions within the set topics in the charter. In all, 269 actions have been successfully conducted. As of mid-2018, there are still 27 actions underway. Where actions have not been conducted, an alternative has been sought wherever possible. In the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 cycles, the marketing cooperatives set up a total of 127 action points, of which 69% have been successfully completed and 20% are slated to be carried out in the short term. The other 11% have been evaluated but have ultimately been deemed not to be achievable within the lifespan of the cycle.

Through these actions, the marketing cooperatives have been working in recent years on ecological, social and economic criteria. In this way, they are seeking to bolster their leading role vis-à-vis their producers and the stakeholders.



Sustainable Business charter Set topics	Actions by Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives 2012-2018		
	Conducted	Ongoing	Not conducted
Corporate governance	27	1	4
Rational energy use	38	4	9
Renewable energy	6	0	3
Sustainable material management	31	1	3
Rational water use	5	1	2
Quality of direct environment	9	2	1
Mobility	19	1	3
Communication and dialogue	44	6	4
Integrating sustainability into the business infrastructure	25	5	12
People-friendly entrepreneurship	65	6	12
Total	269	27	53

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Several marketing cooperatives have drawn up a statement on environmental policy and incorporated sustainable entrepreneurship within their corporate vision. Performance indicators have also been devised for planet and people in order to pursue continuous improvement. Cooperative collaboration across national borders is an example of an action completed. This opens new prospects for more sales opportunities for products. Other concrete examples are the institution of an ombudsman service for

producers and the provision of information to producers about sustainable development in the course of producers' meetings. For the retail side, information campaigns have been staged around sustainability. An example of a not completed action is the conduct of an initial GAP analysis to explore whether ISO14001:2015 can be integrated into the existing quality management system. The marketing cooperative has chosen to switch to ISO22000.



RATIONAL ENERGY USE

The starting point when seeking to deliver improvements is often an energy audit to indicate possible energy savings. Various projects around optimising the use of lighting have been successfully completed. One action which all the marketing cooperatives have been pursuing is relighting. This means replacing existing lighting systems with new, energy-efficient versions. In the most recent cycle, various actions have been carried out or are underway with regard to the use of LED lighting both within operational structures and on sites and in car parks. To stimulate this, group procurement of LED lamps by the marketing cooperatives and producers has been organized. Halls and sheds on various

sites are being fitted with sustainable lighting as well as movement sensors and electric switches. In addition to lighting, the marketing cooperatives have also been continuing to give priority to making refrigeration installations more efficient. Rapid-access doors between cold rooms and sheds are cutting refrigeration losses. Work is constantly underway to investigate screens or insulating flaps for cold rooms. Energy optimisation of crate washing is another example of an action that has been completed. One that has not been completed is the fitting of skylights to get more sunlight into the sheds. The feasibility study was negative, leading to a concentration on other ways of relighting.



LED lamps in sorting rooms



Rapid-access doors between cold storage and sheds



Photovoltaic cells on the company building

RENEWABLE ENERGY

The marketing cooperatives have explored various ways of increasing sites' own production of energy. All the marketing cooperatives have fitted photovoltaic cells on their buildings. Wherever possible, some sites have also been adding extra cells in recent years. The installation of CHP or cogeneration at two of the marketing cooperatives is another success story. The marketing cooperatives have also been looking into the feasibility and possibilities of wind power to generate electricity. The effective siting of windmills has not been carried out, because no environmental and building permits could be secured.



SUSTAINABLE MATERIAL MANAGEMENT

The actions relate to the marketing cooperatives' packaging and waste policy and procurement policy. It is important for products to be efficiently packaged, with due account to the demands of the product, the market and the legislation. The marketing cooperatives have been focusing more intently in recent years on trialling and evaluating new types of packaging. New packaging focuses on more environmentally friendly packaging materials, lighter packaging and packaging with a higher recycling value. Following a positive evaluation, the switch to the new packaging is now actually underway.

Encouraging producers to use more sustainable trade packaging is an action point which has been pursued by all the marketing cooperatives. In concrete terms, the introduction of plastic palloxes is ensuring that they can be used for longer than the wooden kind. To support this innovation and promote their use as much as possible, several marketing cooperatives have organized joint procurement. In tandem with more efficient use of packaging, more efficient waste management is a constant action point. One concrete example of this is the purchase of a compactor. The volume of waste is reduced and the number of loads of waste to be transported drops. Optimisation of logistics and traceability on the packaging department is another action point that is being successfully implemented. Where possible, digital documents are also being routinely chosen in preference to paper ones. For example, electronic invoicing, trade documents, meal vouchers and payslips are being brought in. Info sheets for members are always printed on recycled paper. The marketing cooperatives also attach great importance to raising staff awareness about the correct sorting of waste. The marketing cooperatives' procurement policy takes account of the efforts made by suppliers in terms of sustainability.



Waste compactor

RATIONAL WATER USE

The marketing cooperatives have been looking in recent years for ways of limiting the amount of water used. A start has been made on an inventory of water management on the sites. One action which has been successfully completed by several marketing cooperatives is to drive down water consumption in their washing facilities. The provision of a circuit and sufficient storage capacity for rainwater in the

construction of a new infrastructure has been achieved. Several marketing cooperatives now use rainwater for sanitary purposes. In addition, a feasibility study carried out to explore the reuse of rainwater in heat exchange for refrigeration purposes has been carried out. This reduces consumption of tap water. The action point relating to the siting of a water purification installation was not carried out.



QUALITY OF THE DIRECT ENVIRONMENT

The marketing cooperatives are evaluating the possible influence of their activities on the environment. They are firmly committed to ensuring that the impact on the environment

and on their neighbours in the area around the sites is kept to the bare minimum, for example by relocating the loading docks and parking areas so as to reduce the noise nuisance caused by loading and unloading. When modifying or renewing refrigeration installations, the marketing cooperatives seek to prevent greenhouse gas emissions, noise nuisance and ammonia leakages into the environment. The marketing cooperatives engage in positive consultations with local residents and local authorities to try to find solutions to environmental nuisance and to resolve complaints. Complaint handling is another action point which has been addressed. Several marketing cooperatives have installed bee hotels and sown flower meadows on their sites to increase the biodiversity of the area. The proposed action point relating to a sustainable solution for dealing with rats and pigeons has not yet been put into practice.



Loading docks

MOBILITY

One action which has been implemented has been to encourage workers to opt for sustainable transport for their journeys between work and home by offering them a bike allowance. Several marketing cooperatives have purchased new (electric) bikes for use on sites or for visits

to producers. In addition, efforts are being ploughed into making business vehicles greener and buying hybrid or electric cars. The marketing cooperatives have also developed various actions to reduce the impact of the transport operations associated with their activity. Freight traffic between different sites is being optimised, resulting in a decrease in the number of journeys. In addition, stacking has become more efficient. Schemes whereby buyers can collect their purchased products direct from the producer are also being explored and rolled out increasingly widely. Actions are also being undertaken to raise workers' and producers' awareness of traffic accidents. For instance, proficiency courses are being provided for lorry drivers. Actions are underway on and around the sites of the marketing cooperatives such as resurfacing access roads and improving their access, as well as setting up safe traffic plans with consideration for the local residents.



Safety on and around the marketing cooperatives' sites



COMMUNICATION AND DIALOGUE

Concrete actions include the regular publication of articles about sustainable development in in-house magazines and on websites, plus the production of an proper sustainability report. The marketing cooperatives track the progress of their producers with regard to various

sustainability criteria by drawing up a collective dossier. They communicate on this in collaboration with VBT. One action carried out by a marketing cooperative has been to improve consumer satisfaction by optimising reactions to consumer enquiries. In addition, the marketing cooperatives strive to add value to their local community. School tours, educational exhibitions, school projects and road safety days are some of the ways in which the marketing cooperatives are teaming up with schools to address topics such as how the auctions work, how fruit and vegetables are produced, healthy eating and the importance of an active lifestyle. Involvement in the Youca project, which used to be known as Zuiddag, is also a relevant example here. The marketing cooperatives are committed to communicating openly with the local residents and offering them the opportunity to visit the marketing cooperatives and gain a better insight into how they work.



School tours on a marketing cooperative

INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY INTO THE BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE

When building new business infrastructures, the marketing cooperatives always look into how this can be done in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way. The focus is on a pleasant working environment and on integration into the locality. Other examples include opting for energy-efficient heating, sensor applications, high-performance lighting, accurate lighting, sustainable equipment and the sinking of heat pumps. The marketing cooperatives also promote safety on the sites through appropriate road signage. Delays to building projects have meant that various actions lined up have not yet come to fruition. The delays have been caused because permits have not been secured in time.



New shed with focus on sustainability



PEOPLE-FRIENDLY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Welfare and involvement of staff, and the ambience among them, is important. The marketing cooperatives therefore provide opportunities for this to be reinforced. These include such events as New Year's get-togethers, annual staff parties, activities outside the work environment and open days. As well as staff welfare, the marketing cooperatives are strongly committed to training and education for their staff and their producers. In the past cycles, several marketing cooperatives have set up a training matrix to track staff training and development. On top of this, investments are being made in projects to improve staff health and safety. Some market-

ing cooperatives offer staff the possibility of benefiting from flu jabs, fitness and active lifestyle programmes, and programmes to help them stop smoking. Actions are run to improve staff ergonomics. These include the purchase of stacking machinery, mobile work platforms, special inspection tables and the organization of a course on working ergonomically. The marketing cooperatives are constantly concentrating on building a safe working environment, which is why the emergency procedures are updated and evacuation drills organized. Finally, some marketing cooperatives have run first aid training courses for their producers.



Stacking machinery



Staff get-together

CONCLUSION

In recent years, the marketing cooperatives have been making more rapid progress towards sustainable development by signing up to the Sustainable Business charter. Both large-scale and smaller projects have been successfully conducted. The independent control which forms part of the charter scheme ensures

transparency and credibility. After five cycles, there are no obvious new relevant actions points to be defined within the strict framework offered by the charter. But the marketing cooperatives will continue with their strong commitment to sustainable development.



Sustainability in
quality systems



When Responsibly Fresh was first set up, VBT and the marketing cooperatives decided to address a second issue in parallel with their own project, namely the incorporation of sustainability criteria in existing quality systems. Via representation at administrative level, VBT, along with other stakeholders, can help to shape the design and development of the quality systems in policy terms. In technical terms, VBT is also represented and is part of the work on the maintenance and concrete elaboration of the quality systems towards sustainable development. In recent years, VBT has taken a leading role in various working groups looking at sustainability within the Vegaplan, GLOBALG.A.P. and QS quality systems.

VEGAPLAN

The Vegaplan Standard is a national normative document which assures the quality of primary crop products and guarantees food safety, traceability and quality. This document offers market access and attests that the producer is complying with the legal and extra-legal requirements. The Vegaplan Standard applies to all crops (www.vegaplan.be).



At national level, the Integral Chain Quality Management (CQM) Standard was introduced by Vegaplan in 2004. The focus was on food safety and product quality. Sustainability was already being given some attention through a number of environmental aspects and stipulations to do with employment and worker safety. In 2011, a working group was set up within Vegaplan tasked with integrating the issue of sustainability into the standard more deeply. On the basis of an inventory of sustainability requirements, imposed by the retailers and food companies, an examination was conducted to discover which ones were already covered within the standard. Relevant sustainability requirements which were not covered were added as new requirements in 2014. In addition, Belgium opted to include the implementation

of the European Integrated Pest Management (IPM) directives on the sustainable use of pesticides in the standard. These amplifications enable certified producers to offer buyers the guarantee that they are producing sustainably with a constant eye on food safety, quality, the environment and social engagement. The name was also changed in 2014 to Vegaplan Standard.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a careful system of balancing all available crop protection methods, followed by the integration of appropriate measures. The objective is to counter the development of populations of harmful organisms and keep the use of plant protection products and other forms of intervention down to economically and environmentally responsible levels. This also minimises the risk to human health and to the environment. Integrated Pest Management focuses on growing healthy crops, with minimal disruption to the ecosystems on farms and with natural pest control being encouraged. IPM is part of European Directive 2009/128 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides.



Version 1 of the Vegaplan Standard had been in force since mid-2014. The updated version 2 has applied since April 2017. A third version is in the pipeline. In 2017, Vegaplan published the report on Sustainability in agricultural businesses. This report gives an overview of the efforts made in terms of sustainable development by the certified producers.

To give the Vegaplan Standard an international character in terms of sustainability, the standard is compared to the Farm Sustainability Assessment tool (FSA). This tool has been developed by the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform), a non-profit organization which provides resources and assistance for the

development and implementation of sustainable farming practices. The tool includes a hundred or so demands which question various social, economic and ecological aspects. The questions are split into three groups, namely essential, basic and advanced. Depending on the percentage which is met within each category, a score is awarded. The growing demand for sustainability in arable crops means that the Vegaplan Standard has been expanded for these crops to include extra questions in order to earn the highest FSA score. This is less relevant in the specific case of fruit and vegetables for the fresh market, given that the GLOBALG.A.P. Standard plays more of a role here.

GLOBALG.A.P.

GLOBALG.A.P. is an international standard for primary production based on the principles of Good Agricultural Practices (G.A.P.), which guarantees product quality and food safety as well as sustainable farming. In the case of fruit and vegetables for the fresh market, this is the global standard (www.globalgap.org).



Within GLOBALG.A.P. the focus has traditionally been on good agricultural practices and food safety, but requirements in terms of worker health, safety and welfare were also already covered in earlier versions. In the preparation of version 5 and partly in response to a question from VBT, relevant sustainability criteria have been devised by technical working groups, including Responsible Water Management, Sustainability and GRASP. Version 5 of the GLOBALG.A.P. Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA) Standard has been expanded to include

these extra sustainability criteria. This version has applied since mid-2016. In recent years, GLOBALG.A.P. has also been looking into the drafting of a specific sustainability module to supplement the GLOBALG.A.P. IFA certification and thus achieve an FSA equivalent. This module was published early in 2018 under the name GLOBALG.A.P. FSA Joint Solution.

GRASP is the abbreviation of GLOBALG.A.P. Risk Assessment on Social Practice. This add-on module is specifically designed to explore the social aspect within sustainability. The module assesses whether a producer is complying with a number of requirements regarding employment. Compliance with GRASP by VBT and the Responsibly Fresh participants follows in the chapter on Social impact.



QS

QS stands for *Qualität und Sicherheit* and is the German system for quality control of fresh food (meat, fruit and vegetables). The system looks at process quality and traceability in all relevant phases of production, processing and retail (www.q-s.de).



Within QS, a sustainability project in the fruit and vegetable sector was started at the end of 2013. The research was intended to identify the critical points requiring specific attention in

the context of sustainable development in the sector. The research was completed by early 2016. On the basis of the critical points in this external study report, the technical working group Arbeitsgruppe Nachhaltigkeit looked at how the QS system can be further expanded. The hotspots were examined and worked out in more detail internally, the concrete objective being to identify criteria which can be incorporated into the QS Standard. The VBT participates in this working group and is involved in examining the possibilities for the integration of sustainability criteria.

CONCLUSION

VBT's commitment to the extension of sustainability criteria within the quality systems is definitely bearing fruit. Both Vegaplan and GLOBALG.A.P. have integrated sustainability criteria into the standards. QS is also taking steps in this direction. By achieving certification from one or more quality systems, the Responsibly Fresh producers are demonstrating their

commitment to various aspects of sustainability. VBT's participation in the three quality systems makes it possible to constantly monitor whether the extra sustainability demands are realistic, achievable and affordable for the producers. VBT will continue to keep an eye on this in the future.

COLLECTIVE DOSSIER

The Responsibly Fresh producers almost meet all the sustainability criteria included in the standards. In 2017, 91% of the producers held a certificate for both the GLOBALG.A.P. and Vegaplan standard. Almost 7% are certified only for Vegaplan and 1% only for GLOBALG.A.P.

Because of the mutual recognition, the producers certified for Vegaplan also qualify for delivery within the QS system. The remaining producers (<1%) were working through the certification process at the time of the survey for the collective dossier.



Economic
impact



Their place at the start of the value chain means that producers of fruit and vegetables have to contend with specific, often difficult, production and market circumstances, and much of the pricing pressure lands on them. To counter these conditions, the producers join forces into marketing cooperatives in order to sell their products jointly and thereby strengthen their position in the market. The producers are the owners of the marketing cooperatives and exercise democratic control over them. Working together within and with marketing cooperatives is a unique way of doing business. The prime objective of the marketing cooperatives is to earn the best price on the market for a given product under the prevailing circumstances at the time. In pursuit of this aim, the marketing cooperatives offer various services, both for their member producers and for their customers. This approach has helped the marketing cooperatives participating in Responsibly Fresh to evolve into unique, trustworthy partners in the fresh fruit and vegetable value chain.

Value chain

The fruit and vegetable marketing cooperatives – better known as the auctions – occupy a unique place in the value chain. Transparent sales systems and support services have been developed to market the products from the member producers. From the buyers' point of view, the marketing cooperatives aim to be a trustworthy commercial partner, which makes the chain more efficient by offering one stop shopping.



Value chain



Quality control at a marketing cooperative

The marketing cooperatives assist the producers with advice and support in various areas. Marketing cooperatives support producers in the implementation of quality systems and provide quality control during production and harvesting. Advice is also provided with regard to production planning. In addition, the cooperatives provide packaging to producers doing their packing on their own farms.



The marketing cooperative itself carries out residue monitoring when product arrive, as part of food safety and quality control, after which the products are offered for sale in uniform quality blocks. Products are stored pending the sale. They can also be graded and packed by the marketing cooperative. For the actual sale, the marketing cooperatives operate an optimum mix of sales systems.

After the sale, the products are immediately made available at the buyer's loading docks. This offers buyers a one stop shopping system. Marketing cooperatives also work to expand commercial activities in order to offer products as efficiently as possible to clients and consumers. The main thrusts here are to distinguish premium quality via quality labels and to engage actively in the search for new markets.

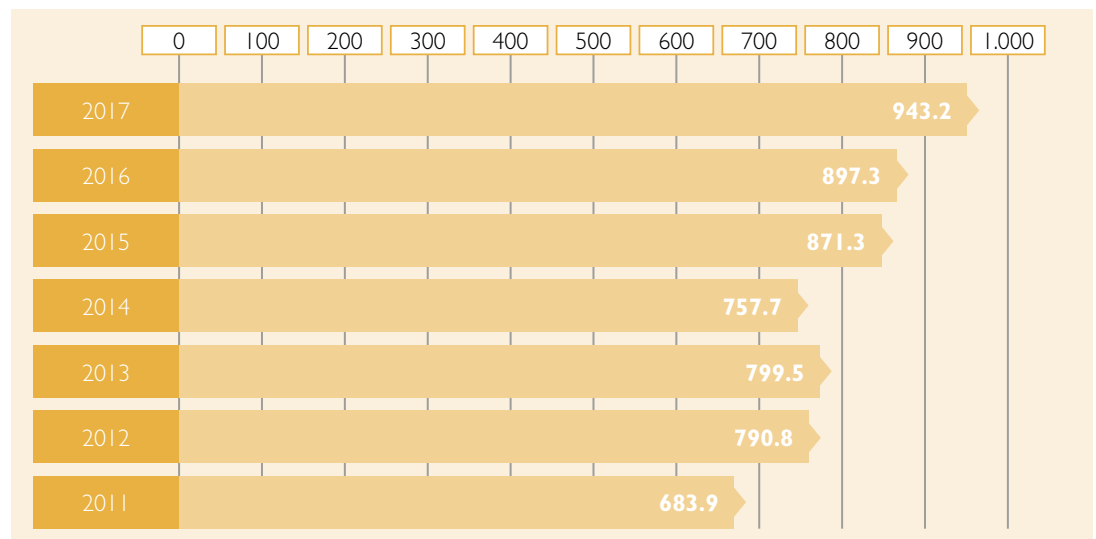
Turnover and export

The collective marketing translates into the marketing cooperatives' turnover figures. The marketing cooperatives involved in Responsibly Fresh deal in a wide range of fresh fruit and vegetables. They strive to market in the entire range of products from the member producers on the fresh market. Product turnover have risen by almost 40% since 2011. Only 2014 showed a downturn, mainly as a result of the Russian import ban.

The Belgian fruit and vegetable sector is strongly export-oriented. The total export value (inclusive of re-export) in 2017 amounted to €827 million for fresh vegetables and €662 million for fresh fruit. The most important export destina-

tions are still Belgium's neighbouring countries: France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Focusing on a limited number of markets can lead to negative consequences, something which became clear in 2014 following the Russian import ban. Any sustainable economic development in the sector has to involve exploring new export markets and continuing to actively exploit the existing ones, both within the EU and outside. The marketing cooperatives have a major role to play here. VBT ensures a sectoral approach and representation within various initiatives designed to create access to new markets.



Turnover of the Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives (in million €)



Cooperative added value



Auction room of a marketing cooperative

The Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives vary widely, but the cooperative business model is a shared factor. The producers own the marketing cooperative and exercise democratic control over it. The aim of the cooperative is to improve the income of the members by carving out a larger part of the added value in the food chain. Achieving this goal is paramount. Another ambition is to maintain the cooperation over the long term and thereby to provide producers with stability. For this reason, any profit from the operational management of the marketing cooperative itself is paid out as a cooperative refund to the owners-producers or is added to the capital of the cooperative. Sufficient capital needs to be built up in order to be able to invest in tackling current and future challenges.

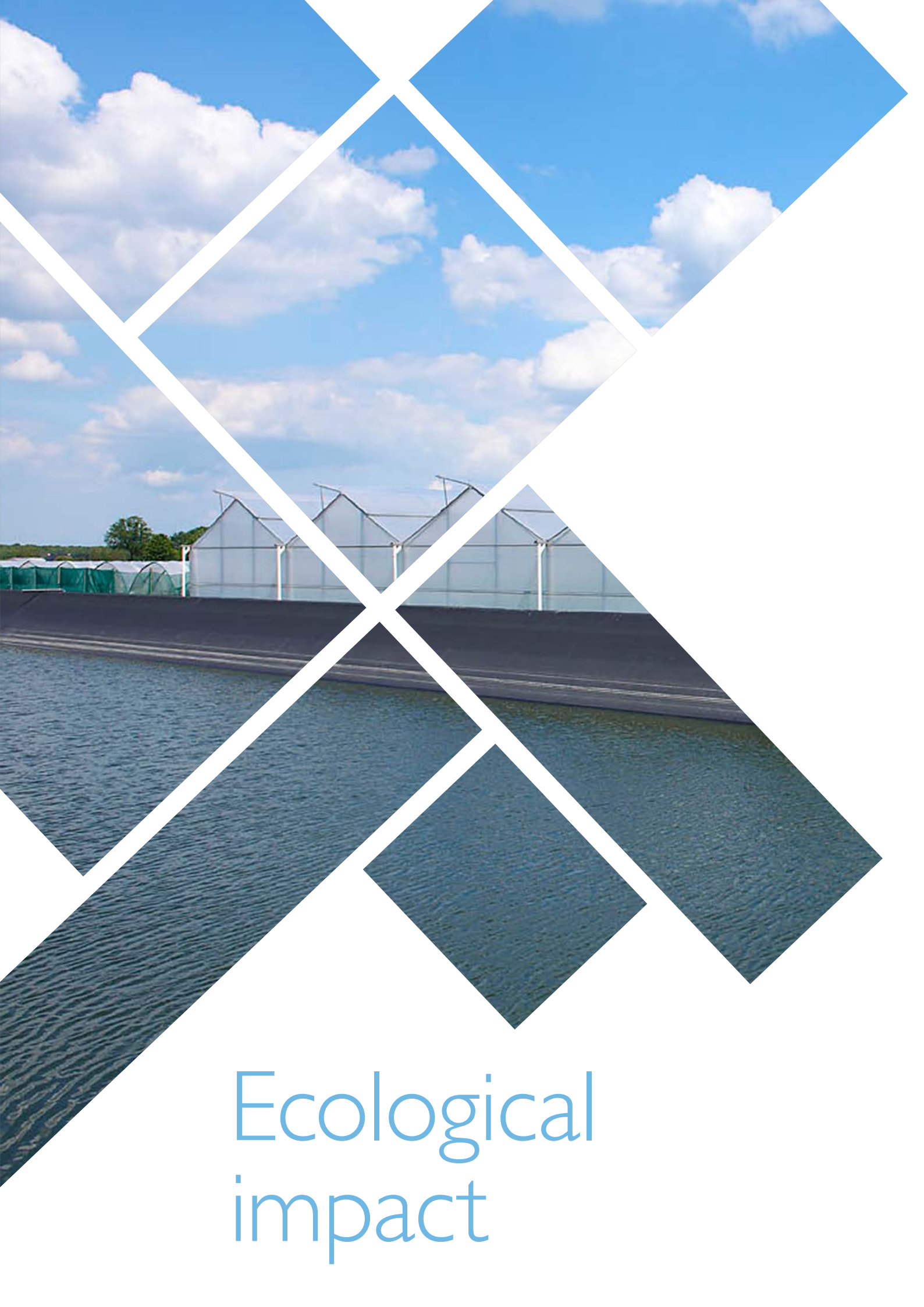
ICA principles

The cooperative approach follows the seven ICA (International Co-operative Alliance) principles. The Responsibly Fresh participants apply these principles in their day-to-day operation. These principles implicitly encompass certain sustainability aspects. In this way, the principles contribute towards the autonomous, transparent operation of the marketing cooperatives. Economic participation and democratic control by the members mean that the cooperatives think in the long term and investments are ploughed into a sustainable business. Training and education are likewise important in the cooperatives, and the member producers and staff are supplied with regular information about sustainability issues. Collaboration and commit-

ment within and between cooperatives make it possible to tackle sustainability aspects and act on them jointly. Cooperatives have firm local roots, meaning that a concern for the community and the environment are essential in any case.

ICA PRINCIPLES

1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic member control
3. Member economic participation
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Education, training and information
6. Cooperation among cooperatives
7. Concern for community



Ecological impact



The production and marketing of fruit and vegetables have an impact on the environment. The Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives and their member producers have long striven to minimise the consequences of their activities on the environment. Centralising the marketing effort into marketing cooperatives works more efficiently than if each one were operating on an individual basis. Organizing into marketing cooperatives makes it possible to control processes, monitoring them and adapting them in order to collectively reduce the ecological impact.

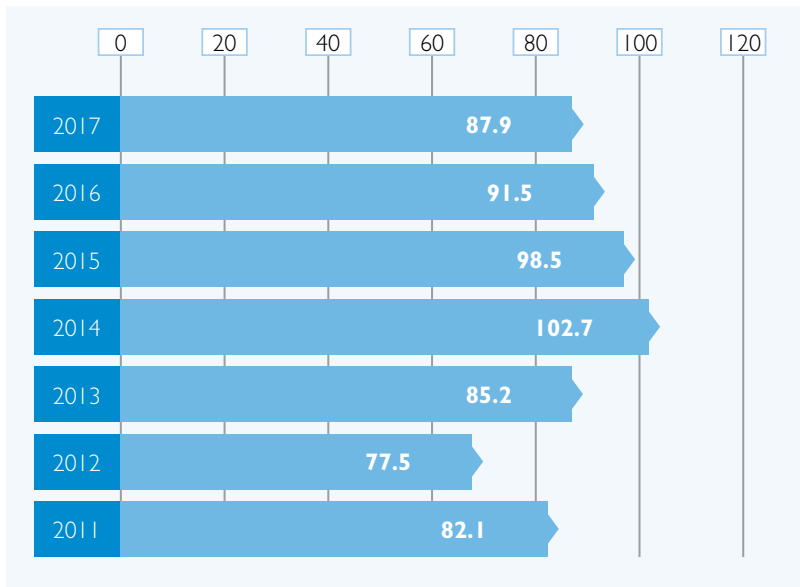
Energy

Producing and growing fruit and vegetables takes energy. Marketing cooperatives and producers alike are increasingly aware of this, and seek to make rational use of energy by ensuring that energy consumption is closely monitored, recorded and assessed. The use of (renewable) energy which they produce themselves is on the increase.

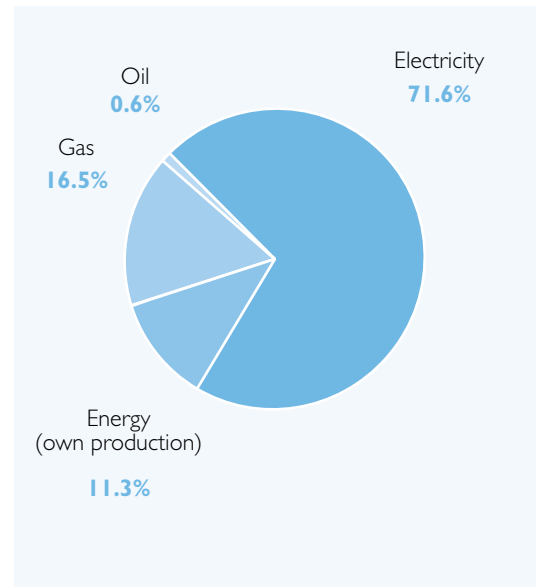
MARKETING COOPERATIVES

The amount of energy that the marketing cooperatives use depends heavily on the amount of product they are selling, logistics and product storage and grading. In 2016 and 2017, energy consumption was lower than in the two previous years. On the one hand this was due to the application of energy-saving measures in the buildings. On the other, less refrigeration capacity was used in the autumn of 2017 because of the relatively low pome fruit harvest following the spring frost. In 2014 and 2015, the entire capacity of grading and packaging facilities and refrigeration installations was virtually saturated on the sites.

The share of self-generated energy in total energy consumption has risen over the years. In 2013, this share stood at 7.9%, in 2015 10.8% and in 2017 it rose to 11.3%. All the marketing cooperatives produce energy from photovoltaic cells. Various sites have added extra cells in recent years. Energy from CHP (cogeneration) by two marketing cooperatives ensures a growing share of self-generated energy.



Energy consumption at Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives (in 1,000 MWh)



Energy consumption according to source at Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives in 2017

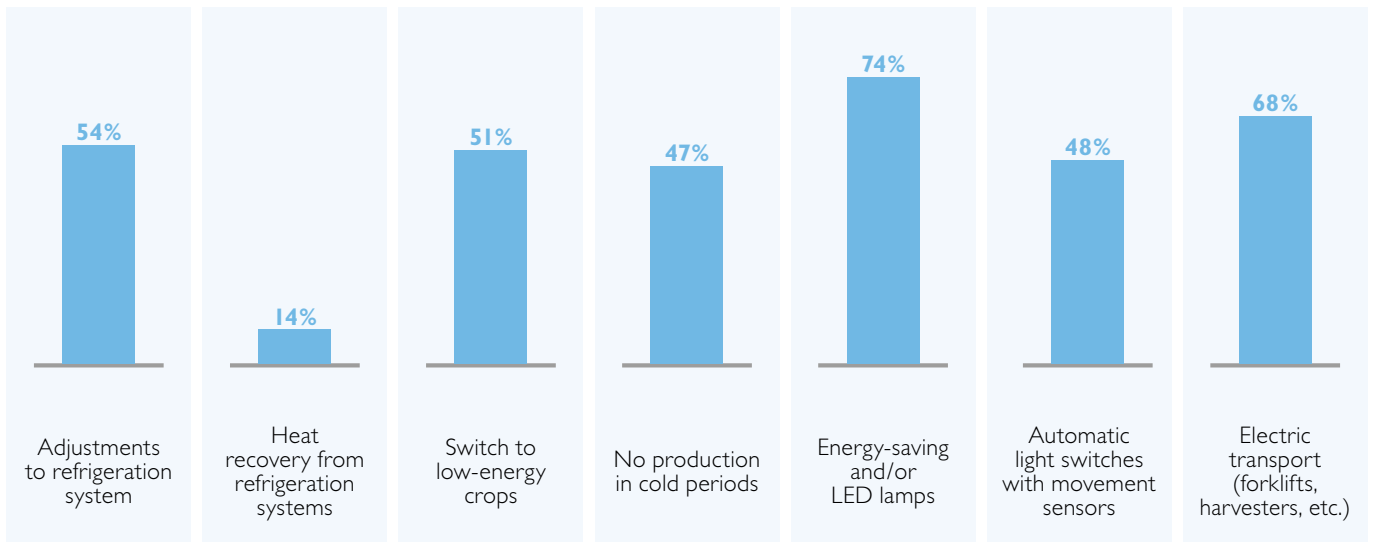


COLLECTIVE DOSSIER

Responsibly Fresh producers use energy rationally. Indeed, the Vegaplan and GLOBALG.A.P. standards require producers to record and evaluate their energy consumption. Producers' energy consumption is heavily dependent upon their business situation, their cropping plan and weather conditions. More and more Responsibly Fresh producers are taking measures to limit their energy consumption. In 2013, 63% were taking measures, in 2015 it was 69% and by 2017, 76% of producers were taking energy-saving measures. One fifth report that they have

improved this over the past two years. Some 9% of producers have conducted an energy audit for this purpose.

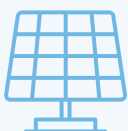
About 44% of the Responsibly Fresh producers generate energy themselves, an increase of 8% over 2013 and 4% over 2015. Most energy is produced by photovoltaic cells (38%), and CHP (6%). In addition, 4% use residual heat and 6% of producers make land available for siting windmills.



Measures applied by Responsibly Fresh producers to curb energy consumption in 2017

Annual energy production from photovoltaic cells and CHP by Responsibly Fresh participants

Producers



Photovoltaic cells

930 producers (38%)
production of 22,630 MWh



CHP

184 producers (6%)
production of 2,185,000 MWh

Marketing cooperatives



Photovoltaic cells

5 marketing cooperatives (100%)
production of 9,927 MWh



CHP

2 marketing cooperatives (40%)
production of 1,833 MWh

Total annual energy production = 2,219,390 MWh

This electricity production is the equivalent of the annual energy consumption of 639,963 households.



Cucumber production



Perneel Nico



Cucumber

On our 9-hectare cucumber farm, we have installed 3 CHP units. Each one consists of a motor which is linked to a generator which produces electricity. The electricity is either used in the greenhouse or fed into the grid. The cooling water from the motor heats the greenhouse. The smoke emitted is 100% scrubbed. The CO₂ emitted is used to fertilize the cucumbers. So using CHP in horticulture offers several advantages. The three CHP units on our farm each have 2 MW of electrical capacity. They operate on the basis of the demand for heat and CO₂ in the greenhouse. In summer, for instance, they run from sunrise to sunset to meet the greenhouse's demand for CO₂. The heat produced is stored in buffer tanks for use at night. Every year, the units each run for 5,000 hours. This means we produce a yearly total of 30,000 MWh.



Dendauw Filip



Lettuce

Because energy and heating oil are so expensive, my farm has been looking for an alternative way of producing energy and heat. We have planted 1.3 hectares of Miscanthus, also known as elephant grass, and this is now replacing 8,000 to 10,000 litres of heating oil. This represents a quarter of our farm's annual heating oil consumption. We harvest the Miscanthus in the spring with a maize chopper and store it in a shed. Burning the chips delivers enough heat in the greenhouse to ensure optimum lettuce production.



Miscanthus or elephant grass replacing heating oil



“



Vaes Luc



Pome fruit

Storing our apples and pears is very expensive. That's why we have taken measures on our farm to drive the costs down. The cold rooms have switched from freon to ammonia cooling. This is more energy-efficient and more benign for the environment. Some rooms have also been fitted with extra insulation and the frequency-controlled condensers use less energy as well as making less noise for our neighbours. In some rooms, flaps have been fitted near the evaporation to improve ventilation inside and optimise the cooling. The heat that is produced from the refrigeration systems is used to heat our shed, the staff canteen and the house. Our sheds also all have solar panels.



”

Flaps to improve ventilation in cooling

“



De Cloedt Steven



Leek



Being on a mixed farm with pretty high energy consumption, we decided, when we were building our new dairy barn, to fit a 9.7 kW microdigester. This means we can use the fresh manure from the cows to generate some of the energy needed. The manure is collected and digested in the microdigester. This releases biogas which is burned in a gas motor. This motor drives a generator which produces electricity. This supplies the farm with about 60,000 kWh of electricity a year, or 75% of our annual consumption. The digested manure or digestate is used to fertilize the leeks. The digestion process makes the manure easier for the plants to uptake, which helps the leeks to grow better.

”

Leek



Water

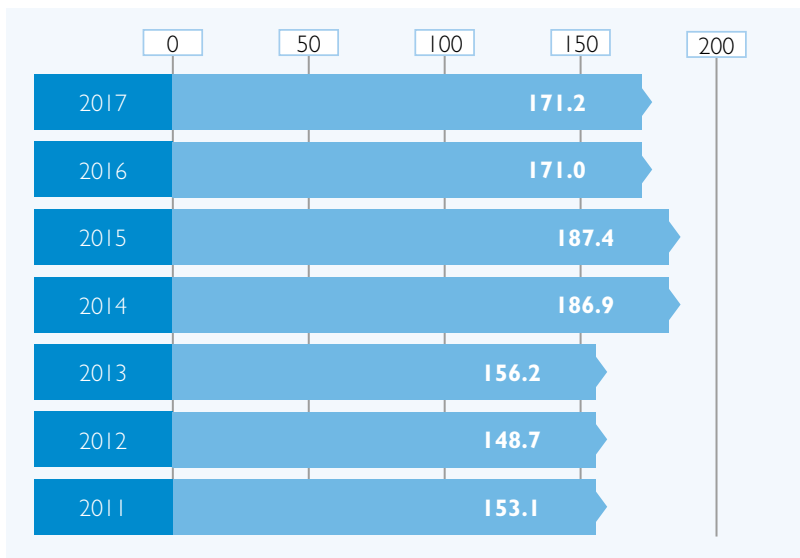
Alongside energy, water is also needed to grow fruit and vegetables. Water is of course also a valuable but scarce resource, which the participants in Responsibly Fresh use thriftily.

MARKETING COOPERATIVES

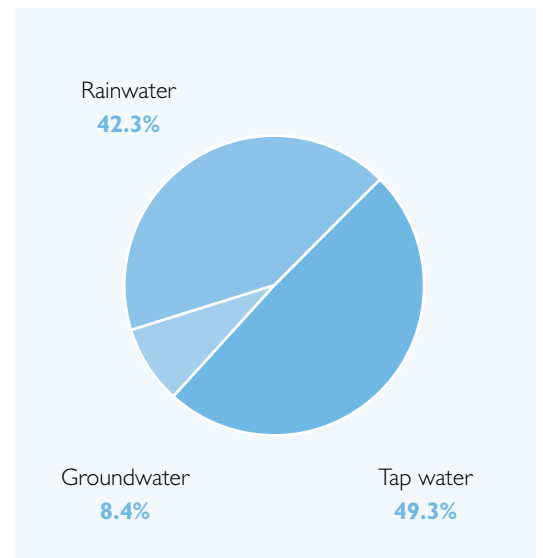
Annual water consumption at the marketing cooperatives fluctuates to a limited degree. In 2014 and 2015, consumption was higher because extra sorting lines were installed on various sites and a new crate washing facility came into service. Because these processes were now optimised, water consumption dropped again in 2016 and 2017.

Where available, rainwater is used as much as possible. In 2017, the share of rainwater in the total water consumption by the marketing

cooperatives stood at 42.3%, a sharp increase over previous years (28.3% in 2013 and 34.2% in 2015). The marketing cooperatives have been investing in recent years in the rainwater collection and storage capacity. Rainwater is already used as standard in the cooling and conditioning processes. Sorting processes, on the other hand, use tap water for food safety reasons. But the marketing cooperatives do use this thriftily, and recirculate it with close monitoring of water quality. The percentage of tap water fell to 49.3% in 2017.



Water consumption by Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives (in 1,000 m³)



Water consumption per source by Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives in 2017



COLLECTIVE DOSSIER

The producers' water consumption is heavily influenced by the farm situation, the cropping plan and the weather. With the support of the marketing cooperatives, producers have been investing in rational use of water over recent years. Over 83% of producers were taking measures in 2017 to limit the use of tap and groundwater on their farms, an increase of 8% over 2013. In addition, 65% take measures to reuse water, an increase of 14%. Also 82% of producers collect rainwater on their farms.

Among producers of open field vegetables, 68% report that they take measures to reduce the consumption of washing and rinsing water when preparing produce for market.

Almost 70% of the producers resort to irrigation or fertigation. Of these, 87% take measures to limit water use, for example by using water-saving systems or by adapting the cropping plan. Some 17% of producers purify the waste water on their farms.

The producers are increasingly aware of water consumption. The registration and evaluation of the consumption are included in the GLOBALG.A.P. Standard.



Storage of rainwater



 **Sterkens Bert**  **Strawberry**

We have had a tray field for seven years now. The water shortage two years ago gave us the idea to collect and reuse the water from the tray field on our farm. Now, the water from the tray field is collected in a 4,000 m³ tank and then purified. The water we collect, with its nutrients and plant protection products, passes through a slow sand filter and is then reused in our substrate cultivation. As well as collecting our tray field water, we also have a 9,000 m³ rainwater collection tank. This means our farm does not depend on groundwater, and at the same time we can meet the stringent requirements in terms of emissions of effluent.





Leenaerts Peter



Cucumber, kiwiberry and blueberry

We grow three crops on our farm. In our greenhouse, we produce cucumbers year-round, plus we grow blueberries and kiwiberries. The blueberries are covered over with polytunnels for five to six months per year. To reduce consumption of tap water and groundwater on our farm, we collect as much rainwater as we can from our greenhouse and tunnels, and use it to irrigate our crops. We have a 2,100 m³ ring silo to collect the rainwater, and in addition, we collect the drain water from the cucumber production site, scrub it with a UV scrubber and reuse it. Our farm strives to make the very most use of the rainwater that we collect. We only use groundwater when absolutely necessary.



Blueberry production under polytunnels with collection of rainwater

Integrated production and biodiversity

COLLECTIVE DOSSIER

Fruit and vegetables need nutrients in order to grow, so fertilization is essential during production. Nutrient management is influenced by the type of farm and the cropping plan. Fertilization in accordance with advisories and analyses, which was already being pursued by 95% of the producers when the 2015 collective dossier was drawn up, is mandated in both the GLOBALG.A.P. Standard and the Vegaplan Standard. Both standards also include recommendations about the application of organic fertilizers. When it comes to open field crops, 96% of producers report taking measures to prevent leaching of nutrients, an increase over previous years.

The soil is a crucial means of production for open field crops. Retaining the soil type,

structure and nutrient content is essential if production is to be sustainable. GLOBALG.A.P. and Vegaplan standards impose various requirements to stimulate the producers to retain the soil quality. Producers take measures on the one hand to retain the soil structure and on the other to curb erosion. Crop rotation is also strongly recommended.

The marketing cooperatives have long supported their producers in the correct application of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The measures for prevention, observation and intervention are set out in the GLOBALG.A.P. Standard as well as the Vegaplan Standard. Given their legal character, these criteria are no longer covered in the 2017 collective dossier:



COLLECTIVE DOSSIER

Where (chemical) intervention does become necessary despite the preventive measures, the plant protection products must be applied in accordance with advisories. Because almost all producers (97%) in the 2015 collective dossier reported that they were doing this, the question has not been repeated in 2017.

When applying plant protection products, the producers strive to minimise the impact on the environment. For example, 92% of producers deliberately take measures to avoid point-source pollution. This is 11% up on 2013 and 4% up on 2015. Residues of plant protection products are collected when filling and rinsing equipment by 40% of producers, while 14% report that they will be doing this in the year ahead. Over a fifth of producers (21%) have systems to break down

residues of plant protection products (such as a phytotank or biofilter) and 14% plan this in the years ahead. Measures to achieve uniform spreading during spraying are being taken more and more commonly by the Responsibly Fresh producers (85%). Examples of such measures include the use of electronically controlled nozzles, spraying apparatus fitted with computers and maintaining a constant speed. Weeding is handled mechanically by 70% of the Responsibly Fresh producers.

Biodiversity is another focus for the Responsibly Fresh producers. Concrete measures for biodiversity preservation are influenced by the farm situation. For example, 80% of open field producers are maintaining small landscape elements on their farms, such as ditch sides, woodland edges and wild flower meadows. More and more open field producers utilize thereto field boundaries or maintain the natural vegetation there. This percentage is up from 64% in 2015 to 79% in 2017.

Natural pollination is essential for successful fruit setting and production. Most of the producers (77%) are improving natural pollination by installing insect hotels, introducing bumblebees and sowing flower meadows or working with beekeepers. The percentage of producers currently involved in a nature development plan has slipped slightly of late (15% in 2013, 17% in 2015 and 12% in 2017). It should be noted that not all municipalities offer a nature development plan. On the other hand, the GLOBALG.A.P. Standard does recommend proper on-farm nature development plans.



Drift-reducing nozzles according to IPM



Meyers Wim



Soft fruit

The main crop on our farm is strawberries, which we grow under cover on a substrate. Ten years ago we decided to diversify. So as well as strawberries, we are now growing various kinds of soft fruit, such as blackberries, red currants and raspberries, also under cover. To keep ourselves in a strong economic position in the market and to be able to offer products on the market for as long as possible, we spread the harvest of our crops. During cropping, we try to use the minimum of plant protection products. We are also heavily committed to using beneficials for pest control and bumblebees for pollination purposes.

Because we collect rainwater and reuse drain water, our farm uses no tap water or groundwater. The drain water is reused after being purified by a filtering system. Our farm is also committed to producing sustainable energy and heat. We recently installed a CHP unit which we use to produce electricity. In order to make efficient use of the heat that we generate, we have an insulated tank as a heat buffer. So the heat is stored and used as necessary to warm the greenhouses. Our greenhouses are also fitted with energy shields to reduce heat and energy losses.



Pollination



Costermans Gert



Pome fruit and cherry

To achieve good yields of pome fruit and cherries, proper pollination is essential. Because the pollination of the blossoms has been more and more difficult in recent years, we decided to take part in the project 'More nature for flavoursome fruit'. As part of the project, we planted a 300-metre long mixed hedge in our apple and cherry tree orchard. The aim was to shield our trees from the wind and to encourage beneficials and wild bees. All the many species in this hedge come into flower at different times, so that there is forage for the wild bees even after the flowering season. We have put out boxes for the wild bees to nest in, enabling them to build up and maintain a sustainable population in our orchards. We use selective plant protection products in our orchards so as not to harm the environment or the insects.



Nest boxes for wild bees





Packaging

Fruit and vegetable packaging has various purposes. It ensures smooth logistics and the necessary traceability. It enables to work hygienically and helps to guarantee that the fresh products do not suffer any loss of quality in the chain. Packaging means that the products can be presented in the best possible way, and consumers can be given appropriate information. In this way, packaging contributes towards food thrift; however, it also has an environmental impact. The Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives and producers remain on the look-out for the best ways to manage packaging and prevent product waste.

MARKETING COOPERATIVES

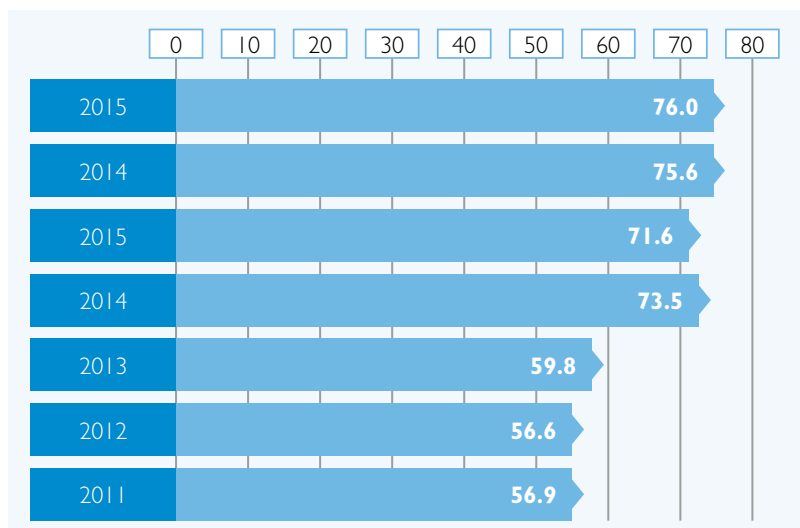
The marketing cooperatives are under a legal obligation to draw up a sectoral waste prevention plan every three years to record their efforts and the challenges facing them in terms of the rational use of packaging and to reduce packaging waste as much as possible. In 2016, the fifth joint sectoral plan was drawn up, coordinated by VBT. The plan was approved in 2017 by the Interregional Packaging Committee (IVC) and is being implemented by the marketing cooperatives.

The marketing cooperatives draw a distinction between business packaging and consumer packaging.

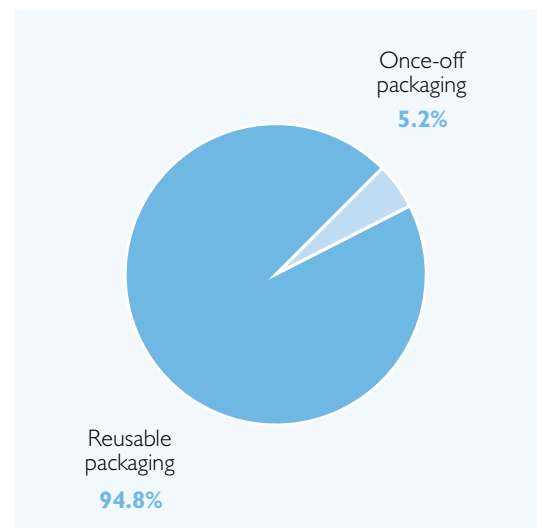
Business packaging is divided into transport and trade packaging and does not ultimately reach the consumer. In 2016 and 2017, the total weight brought on to the Belgian market was higher than in the preceding years, mainly because more products were being supplied. Out of the total of 75,979 tons of business packaging, across all the Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives, 94.8% is reusable and 3,982 tons or 5.2% is once-off packaging. Depending on the products being sold, and their intended destination, the decision is only occasionally taken to opt for non-reusable packaging.

VBT SECTORAL WASTE PREVENTION PLAN 2016 – 2019 , WORKING POINTS

- Avoid repackaging
- Invest in innovative packaging materials
- Increase the percentage of reusable packaging



Weight of business packaging (once-off and reusable) brought on to the Belgian market by Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives (in 1,000 ton)



Business packaging according to type brought on to the Belgian market by Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives in 2017



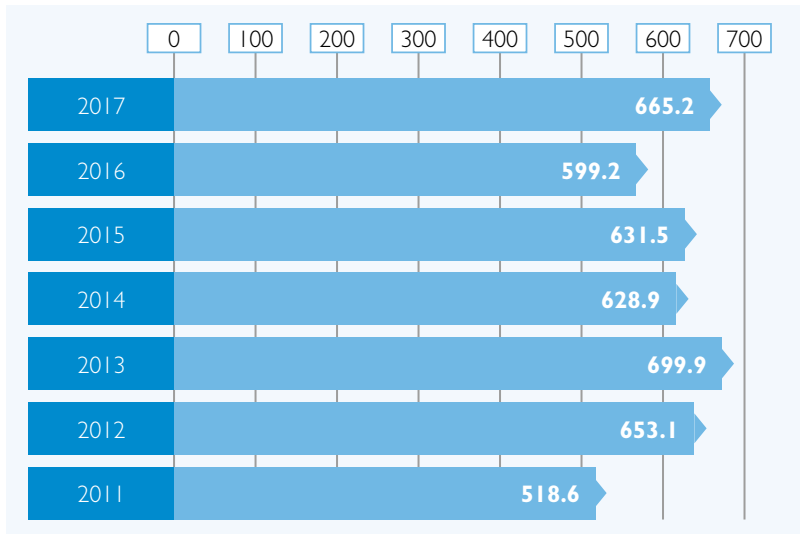
MARKETING COOPERATIVES

Consumer packaging is what ultimately reaches the consumer, and is generally once-off packaging. This is mainly where specific types of packaging, at the request of customers and above all retailers, are becoming more and more important compared to uniform, standardised types of packaging. The total weight of consumer packaging fluctuates year by year. This is partly because of the weight of the product being sold and partly because of specific demands from customers.

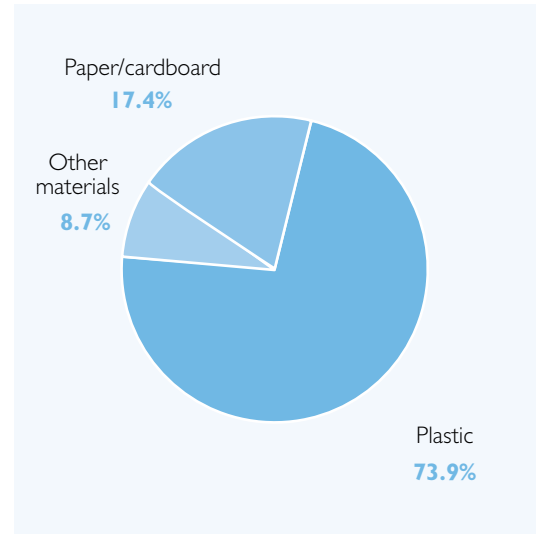
The composition of the packaging has changed greatly in recent years. More paper and card-

board packaging is being used (17.4%). The use of plastic packaging (73.9%) fell sharply in 2017 compared to 2015 (89.7%).

With an eye to sustainability of one-way consumer packaging, VBT has for some years now been urging that fruit and vegetable punnets, made from mono-material PET plastic, be included in the selective sorting, collecting and recycling system for PMD waste. Fost Plus has evaluated its trial projects in this area and announced in late 2017 that as from 2019, PMD collection will be extended as far as possible to include all waste plastics including punnets.



Weight of consumer packaging brought on the Belgian market by Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives (in tons)



Consumer packaging according to type brought on the Belgian market by Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives in 2017



Waste

COLLECTIVE DOSSIER

In 2017, 73% of producers were recording and evaluating their business waste, an increase of 13% over 2013. In addition, virtually all producers (98%) sort their business waste and separate it for disposal, an increase of 7% over 2013. One example of this is that agricultural foil is

sent off separately (97%). Actually, 85% of the producers using substrate recycle it themselves or have it recycled by third parties. Almost half of producers (47%) use biodegradable business materials, almost twice the level in 2013 and 2015.



Tomato production on an organic substrate



Vlaemynck Dirk



Tomato

We strive on our farm to minimise our business waste. For example, when we grow our tomatoes we use an organic substrate and biodegradable cover. The planting process and fertigation are different from when a rock wool substrate is used, but the production is the same. The substrate is easy to compost. To make the plant waste easier to use, our farm no longer uses any plastic clips to support the tomato plants; instead, the plants are wound round the strings by hand.

We are also taking measures in social terms. Because growing tomatoes takes so much manual work, we try to make the work as pleasant and ergonomic as possible for our workers. The processes are automated as far as possible, including with self-driving harvesters. The vehicles used for crop maintenance are fitted with ergonomic rubber mats for extra comfort, and their height can also be adjusted. A proximity switch instead of a foot pedal puts less strain on the workers.

Our farm also boasts a unique example of cooperation between greenhouse crops and fish farming. We supply electricity, heat and the necessary water to the fish farm and we receive the (waste) water from the fishes, which is full of nutrients. We use this for our tomatoes. This saves us fertilizers, which is better for our farm and for the environment.





Food thrift

Market situations, economic fluctuations and seasonal production conditions, can lead to mismatches between supply and demand. Occasionally, part of a day's supplies of fruit and vegetables may go unsold by the marketing cooperatives. As part of the drive towards food thrift, the Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives and their producers strive to ensure that as much product as possible is actually sold on the fresh market. Among the important instruments in this effort are good storage conditions, responding to demand from the market and the running of promotions in accordance with supplies.

MARKETING COOPERATIVES

The marketing cooperatives apply the value retention cascade in the case of unsold products to help find an alternative use for them. In 2017, 1,045,624 tons of product was supplied to the five Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives, of which only 1.1% (11,059 tons) went unsold. Surpluses are in the first instance free distributed to charitable institutions (1,273 tons in 2017). The likes of food banks, CPAS and Poverello help to distribute food to the needy all across Belgium. Such charitable donations are subject to legal regulations. Some sixty recognised institutions can come and collect the product from the marketing cooperatives, up to 150 kg per registered person in need per year. In addition, unsold products are used in line with the value retention cascade. They are used for animal feed (8,556 tons), fertilizer (518 tons),

or to be digested (712 tons). The bulk of the unsold products was taken off the market in 2015 under the European regulation on market intervention. The sector is still suffering the effects of the Russian import ban which came into force in August 2014. Before that, less than 1% of the products supplied to the marketing cooperatives went unsold.

In collaboration with the Koepel van Milieuondernemers in de Sociale Economie (KOMOSIE), the marketing cooperatives have been undertaking various campaigns to curb food losses and optimise distribution. As well as supplying fruit and vegetables, they pass on information on food safety and packaging. One example is the project to convert unsold vegetables into soup. This creates social and economic value on the one hand by providing social employment and on the other, the soup can be served to children at favourable cost. In addition, the marketing cooperatives have supported various campaigns around fruit and vegetables in schools.

Products which fail to meet the required quality find their way into the market via alternatives such as industrial processing. Depending on the quality of the products and the conditions on the market, a good combination between the fresh market and the processing industry can be chosen. Typical examples would be cauliflower and leeks being processed by the frozen vegetable companies, apples and pears being made into compote and juices, and strawberries and soft fruit being made into jam.



Free distribution to charity institutions



COLLECTIVE DOSSIER

Various by-products can exist between production and delivery to the marketing cooperatives when products are being harvested, graded and packed. The Responsibly Fresh producers are working increasingly on deriving value from these by-products. Harvest waste and other unsaleable products are used as animal feed (22% of producers), green fertilizer (63%),

compost (46%) or sent to a biogas installation (5%). Use as animal feed and for biogas installations is broadly consistent with previous years. Composting of by-products and using them as fertilizer on the farms themselves or on a fellow farmer's land has risen by 9% and 6% respectively since 2013.



 **De Paepe Joost**  **Belgian endive**

On our farm, we invested some years ago in a biogas installation. This means that we can put the chicory roots after the forcing process to good use. When we harvest the endive we end up with about 12 tons of waste roots every day. These roots are chopped up and go to the biogas installation for six weeks. In the digester, the chopped roots are converted from solid form into a liquid mass which produces methane gas, about 30 m³ per ton of chicory roots. The methane is passed into a cogeneration unit with a 100 kW gas motor which generates electricity and heat. The heat that is produced warms the farm, the grading and packaging areas and the forcing rooms for the chicory. The remainder is sold on to third parties. The electricity is mainly used on the farm, and provides about 30% of the energy we need every year.



Biogas installation



 **Schietecatte Kevin**  **Vine tomato**

We grow vine tomatoes on our farm. When we are harvesting and grading them, we always end up with a few loose tomatoes. These tomatoes are fine from the quality point of view, but they have come loose from the vine and sell for a lower price. The challenge for our farm was to add some value to these loose tomatoes. We gradually developed the idea of making these by-products into puree and selling them like that. We now sell gazpacho and vegetable sauce as well as tomato puree. Starting the processing operation was a risk, and you have to know a lot, but it's really satisfying to be making a by-product into something valuable.



Valorisation by-products



Mobility

MARKETING COOPERATIVES

Getting products to and from the marketing cooperatives involves a lot of logistical activity. Deliveries by the producers are tailored to the operation of the producers, the handling at the marketing cooperatives and the mobility in the surrounding area. Grouping the supply in one place at the marketing cooperative means that provisioning can be organized more efficiently

via one stop shopping. The Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives are aiming for a certain degree of flexibility, so that buyers can come and pick up their purchases at practically any time, day or night, via secure access systems. These measures ensure efficient transport and thus less of an impact on the environment.



Logistic activities at a marketing cooperative

COLLECTIVE DOSSIER

When surveyed, 25% of the Responsibly Fresh producers report that they transport their products collectively to the marketing cooperative, in collaboration with other producers or transport companies. This is another way of reducing traffic on the roads and on the sites.



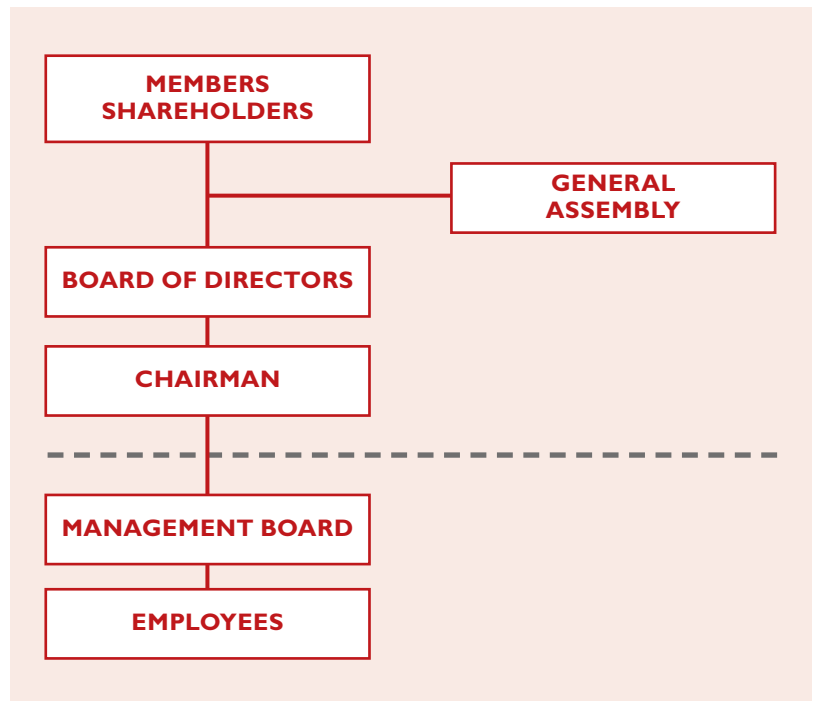
Social
impact



Democratic decision-making

Because the producers own the marketing cooperative, they control the cooperation democratically. The General Assembly is made up of the member producers of the marketing cooperative, and its role is to determine the global vision and objectives. The General Assembly elects a Board of Directors, which in turn elects a chairman from among its ranks. The daily management of the cooperative is carried out by a professional management board and employees.

The cooperative organization requires confidence on the one hand between the member producers themselves, and on the other, between the member producers and the board and employees of the cooperative. Democratic decision-making contributes towards transparency for the member producers, and ensures that the members feel a genuine sense of involvement in their cooperative.



Structure of a marketing cooperative



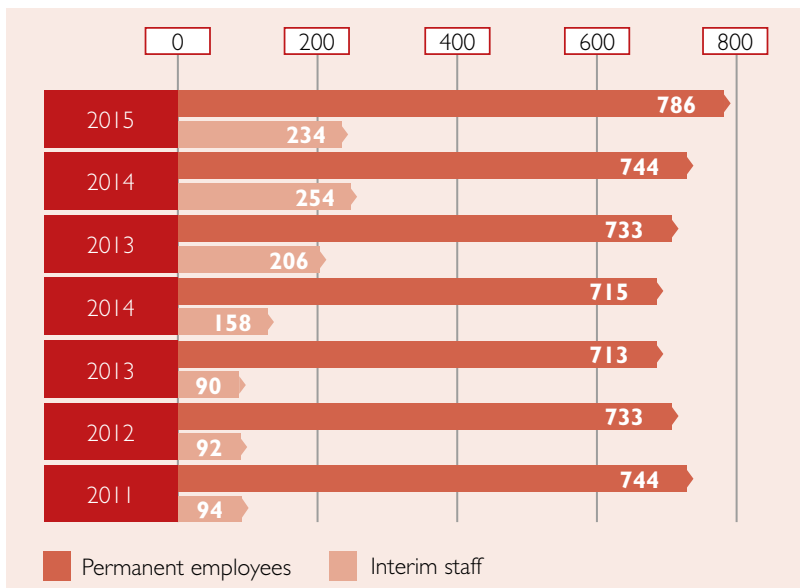


Employees

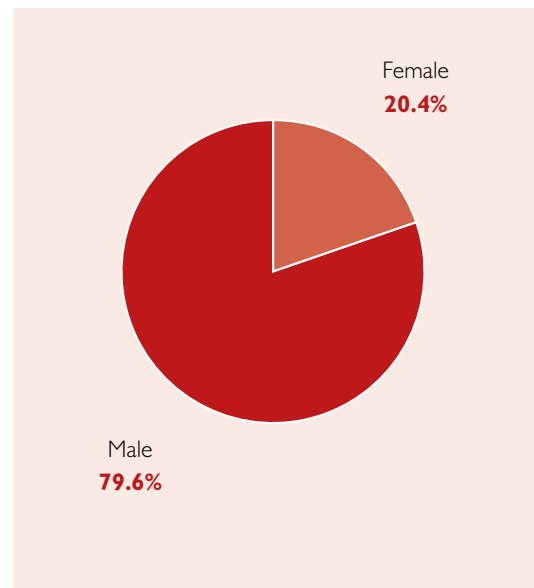
MARKETING COOPERATIVES

The Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives create employment. The number of people employed on a permanent basis rose in 2017 compared to previous years. The increase can be put down to the further market-oriented developments by the marketing cooperatives involved. Interim staff is also called upon to cope with the pressure of work at peak supply times; the number of such interim staff rose in 2016 and 2017. The presence of a marketing cooperative in the local area also creates employment in businesses whose activities are linked to the marketing cooperative.

Within the marketing cooperatives, the aim is to achieve a diverse workforce within which everyone can build a sustainable career with scope to develop skills and to face challenges. Of the 786 people employed at the Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives in 2017, 20.4% were women and 79.6% men. This ratio has remained fairly constant. The significant gender imbalance is mainly due to historical reasons and the nature of the work.



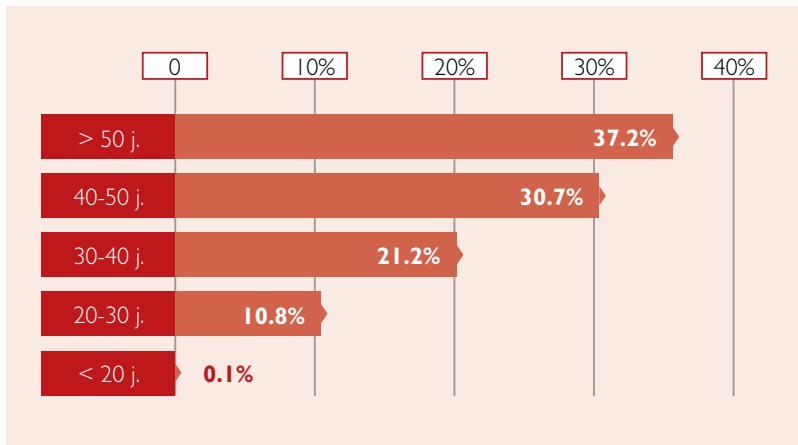
Permanent employees and interim staff at Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives



Employees by gender at Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives in 2017



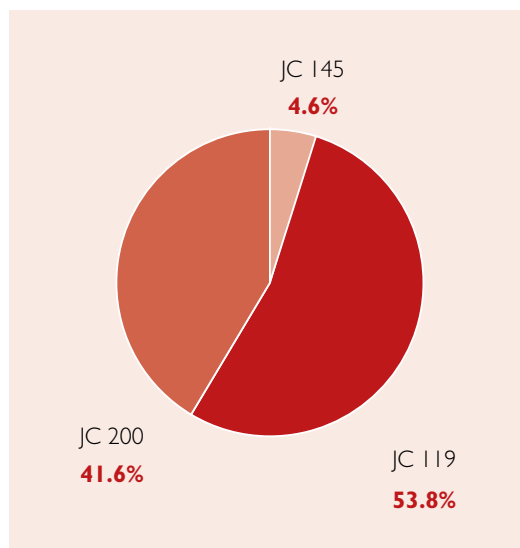
MARKETING COOPERATIVES



Employees by age group at Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives in 2017

The shift towards older age groups which was recorded in 2015 continued in 2017; almost 40% of the management and employees are aged over 50. So employees are opting for an ever-longer career within the marketing cooperatives. This shows that the marketing cooperatives create a stable working environment.

The majority of the employees (53.8%) fall under the Joint Committee for trade in foodstuffs (JC 119) and 41.6% under the Additional National Joint Committee for clerical employees (JC 200). The remaining 4.6% belong to the Joint Committee for horticulture (JC 145).



Employees by Joint Committee at Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives in 2017

As well as a sustainable career path, the health and safety of the employees is an important focal point. Constant efforts by the marketing cooperatives over the years have ensured that the number of occupational accidents has been showing a downward trend. Absenteeism at the marketing cooperatives shows a fluctuating pattern, but the general trend in recent years has been downwards. Moreover, it can be stated that this is lower than the average. According to research by SD Worx, an HR service provider, the absenteeism rate in the Belgian private sector in 2017 is 5.54%.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Absenteeism	4.5%	4.0%	4.2%	3.7%	3.8%	4.3%	3.5%
Occupational accidents	27	25	28	30	22	17	18

Absenteeism and occupational accidents at Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives



COLLECTIVE DOSSIER

Over half of the Responsibly Fresh producers (56%) call on external workers. This is an increase compared to past years (51% in 2013 and 52% in 2015). The rest (44%) run their farms without external workers, although perhaps with the help of family members. One third of the producers (30%) report that they employ people with limited opportunities on the labour market.

Workers' health and safety is a priority factor on a farm. Accordingly, the quality systems include

directives and obligations on this point.

Certification for Vegaplan and/or GLOBALG.A.P. standards involves an assessment of whether the applicant satisfies the mandatory provisions for the workers and/or works on prevention and protection for workers in terms of safety. The provision of training courses for workers is also evaluated. Given that these points are externally monitored, these elements are not included in the Responsibly Fresh collective dossier for 2017.

Just 87% of the Responsibly Fresh producers report that they take measures to ensure good ergonomics and working conditions during the production process (from planting to harvesting and packing). One third of producers (32%) also provide an annual health check for their employees.

When it comes to achieving smooth collaboration between farm managers and employees, communication is crucial. More than three quarters of producers (77%) speak and understand their employees' own language. Farm managers are putting more and more effort into this (63% in 2013 and 67% in 2015). On top of this, 89% of the producers provide their company documents in the employees' own language.

In social terms, more and more producers (58%, up by 7% over 2013 and 2015) organize social and leisure activities for their workers, such as a staff party or outing, to promote good relations between them.



Producers' employees



Diversity of staff

“

 **Vanhellemont Mario**  **Pome fruit**

As a fruit farm, we are very attentive to the diversity of our workforce. For some years now, we have been employing people who live in Belgium but originate from elsewhere. To help the workers to communicate with each other, we have been involved in the government diversity plan. For instance, we have run three Dutch-language courses and a course in intercultural communication, as well as the usual first aid courses and courses in ergonomic lifting techniques. As farm managers, we have also undergone training about delegating and running a group. We operate a mentoring/buddy scheme for new workers, so that they always have someone they can ask. We have also brought out a visualised welcome booklet, and we hold a team-building activity for our staff every year.

We are keen to be part of our local community. We organize various activities to integrate the farm into the surrounding area. One example is the annual street party and the neighbourhood barbecue that we hold on our farm. We are also happy to throw the doors open to interested groups and schools, and we gladly run tours.

Alongside our social focus, our farm is also investing in environmentally friendly farming techniques. For example, we were among the first to use anti-drift nozzles, and we are committed to preserving the population of solitary bees in our orchards. We have placed nest boxes around our farm to help sustain the regional bird populations.

”



Social engagement

PRODUCT RESPONSIBILITY

Food safety is a basic requirement in the food chain. The marketing cooperatives and the member producers manage and control the processes on their sites in order to guarantee food safety, and the products themselves are also systematically inspected. The Responsibly Fresh participants also aim to ensure that their processes and products are of exceptional quality, striving to improve them continuously through the application of quality systems which are inspected by independent, external bodies. For the marketing cooperatives, these are the

quality systems run by BRC, IFS, QS and quality guarantees via ISO standards and FSSC22000. Achievement of the comparable Vegaplan and/or GLOBALG.A.P. certification by producers is a basic condition for participating in Responsibly Fresh.

Finally, labels are used to distinguish top-quality products. The labels may be carried only when the products meet the requirements stipulated in the relevant specifications.

GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS

Both the marketing cooperatives and the member producers have strong local roots, meaning that they can influence their local surroundings in various ways.

COLLECTIVE DOSSIER

The Responsibly Fresh producers are committed to integrating their farms into their local environment and getting involved in the local community. Over 62% communicate openly with their neighbours, for example by organizing farm visits or open days. Many producers (63%) are also active in the sociocultural life of their local area or surrounding area. This is how the Responsibly Fresh producers demonstrate their social engagement. The percentage of producers who are members of a trade or farm organization rose by almost 10% to 84% in 2017 (76% in 2013). The vast majority (91%) regularly take part in technical or commercial meetings

and training courses, an indication that they are eager to brush up on their skills and therefore keep themselves up to date with new developments in terms of sustainable development.

Almost three quarters of producers (72%) take care to ensure their farms are well integrated into the environment and the landscape, for instance by planting green screens or adapting their building materials and building style. Accordingly, 80% of the producers who use assimilation lighting in their greenhouses take measures to shield the lighting, for instance by installing side and roof screens.



ACTIVITIES IN THE SOUTH

Starting from the point of view of the cooperative template, and with a holistic look at sustainable development, VBT and the participants in Responsibly Fresh expanded the sustainability project in 2015 by adding a section devoted to Activities in the South. In concrete terms,



VBT visit to ANPE producers

a sponsorship arrangement is being built up, in collaboration with Trias, with a member organization in the South, ANPE (Asociación nacional de productores agroecológicos del Perú), an organization of organic farmers in Peru. Because producers in the South often work under difficult conditions, and are not always paid a fair price for their products, organizing into cooperatives is a way of improving their position within the chain. Responsibly Fresh is endeavouring via this scheme to transfer knowhow to help towards the expansion of a quality label and the marketing of products from ANPE members at regional and national level. The logistical activities and the collective operation of a marketing cooperative have also been examined. The project indicates that if production is to be sustainable, even in the South, cooperative marketing is a valuable way to counter possible difficulties in production and marketing conditions. Various individual Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives and producers are teaming up to work on initiatives around development and support for farmers' organizations worldwide.

GRASP

In tandem with its classic IFA Standard, GLOBALG.A.P. also offers retailers the opportunity to apply a specific GRASP module to assess suppliers via a 'Risk Assessment on Social Practice'. This add-on module is specifically designed to explore the social aspect within sustainability. The module assesses whether a producer is complying with a number of requirements regarding employment.

Back in 2013, VBT and the marketing cooperatives looked into Belgian compliance with the control points. Although the unambiguous labour and social legislation and inspection schemes mean that their relevance to Belgium may be questioned, VBT started the VBT-PO project in 2017. On the one hand, VBT has devised a proposal for Belgian interpretation with regard to GRASP. The interpretation was

approved by GLOBALG.A.P. in 2017. On the other hand, VBT and its members have been working out alternatives for the assessment of GRASP of producers. This is conducted efficiently and offers the necessary guarantees. The VBT-PO project relies on self-assessment by the producers, under the supervision of the marketing cooperatives and on the basis of the Belgian national interpretation. The pilot phase of the project includes obligations imposed by GLOBALG.A.P.. The quality management system of all marketing cooperatives and the GRASP assessment by means of a sample from producers must be verified externally. The end of 2017 saw the completion of the first year of the pilot phase, with the GRASP assessment of almost all producers involved from the five VBT marketing cooperatives. The second year of the pilot phase will be 2018.



Conclusion

Since 2012, the VBT marketing cooperatives and their producers have clearly made progress towards sustainable development within the context of the joint Responsibly Fresh project. From the economic, the ecological and social points of view alike, a strong trend can be observed. This report indicates how far they have come towards sustainability within the project.

Through their involvement in the Sustainable Business charter, the Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives have made tangible efforts and striven to make constant improvements to their performances in ecological, social and economic terms. Since 2012, the marketing cooperatives have earned the Sustainable Business charter every year. This continuous participation in a series of campaigns means that it is no longer so easy to define new and relevant action points within the strict framework of the charter.

The Responsibly Fresh producers emphasize the efforts that they have made towards sustainability by earning certification under the Vegaplan and GLOBALG.A.P. standards. These quality systems include various sustainability criteria. Repeated certification indicates that the producers are consciously focusing on sustainable development. The collective dossier also shows that the producers are making progress against several sustainability criteria.

Working with the entire cooperative fruit and vegetable sector gives the Responsibly Fresh project an impact and enables the sector to shoulder its responsibility for sustainability all along the chain. Sustainable development implies progress, which is why the marketing cooperatives and their producers will continue to address the challenges in the years ahead.

The sector as a whole will continue to strive collectively towards sustainability. After an in-depth evaluation of the Responsibly Fresh project and discussions between VBT, the marketing cooperatives and the stakeholders, a new approach will be adopted in order to continue to work on sustainability.



GRI Content Index

The GRI standards set out indicators which must be reported. The selected specific indicators for the relevant material aspects must also be included in the report. The indicators are described and the location within the report given.

GRI STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE	PAGE
GRI 102 GENERAL DISCLOSURES			
ORGANIZATION PROFILE			
102-1	Name of the organization	Cover	1
102-2	Primary brands, products and/or services	Value chain	24
102-3	Location of the organization's headquarters	Back-cover	59
102-4	Location of operations	Turnover and export	25
102-5	Ownership and legal form	Responsibly Fresh Democratic decision-making VBT: vzw (non-profit association); marketing cooperative: cvba (cooperative company with limited liability)	4 44
102-6	Markets served	Turnover and export	25
102-7	Scale of the organization	Turnover and export	25
102-8	Information on employees and other workers	Employees	45
102-9	Supply chain	Value chain	24
102-10	Significant changes to the organization and its supply chain	See VBT annual report and the annual reports of the Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives	
102-11	Precautionary Principle or approach	Conditions for use of collective sustainability label	6
102-12	External initiatives	Conditions for use of collective sustainability label Sustainable Business charter Sustainability within quality systems	6 11 19
102-13	Membership of associations	Participants See also VBT annual report	5
STRATEGY			
102-14	Statement from senior decision-maker	Foreword	3
ETHICS AND INTEGRITY			
102-16	Values, principles, standards, and norms of behaviour	Conditions for use of collective sustainability label	6
GOVERNANCE			
102-18	Governance structure	Democratic decision-making	44
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT			
102-40	List of stakeholder groups	Stakeholders	7
102-41	Collective bargaining agreements	Employees	45
102-42	Identifying and selecting stakeholders	Stakeholders	7
102-43	Approach to stakeholder engagement	Stakeholders	7
102-44	Key topics and concerns raised	Stakeholders	7



GRI STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE	PAGE
REPORTING PRACTICE			
102-45	Entities included in the consolidated financial statements	Responsibly Fresh	4
102-46	Defining report content and topic boundaries	Reporting	9
102-47	List of material topics	Themes	6
102-49	Changes in reporting	Reporting	9
102-50	Reporting period	Reporting	9
102-51	Date of most recent report	15/06/2016	
102-52	Reporting cycle	Reporting	9
102-53	Contact point for questions regarding the report	Cover	1
102-54	Claims of reporting in accordance with the GRI Standards	Core	
102-55	GRI content index	GRI content index	52
102-56	External assurance		N/A
SPECIFIC INDICATORS - MATERIAL ASPECTS			
ECONOMIC			
Economic performance			
103	Management approach	Turnover and export	25
201-1	Direct economic value generated and distributed	See Responsibly Fresh marketing cooperatives' financial statements	
Indirect economic impact			
103	Management approach	Cooperative added value ICA principles	26
203-2	Significant indirect economic impacts		26
Procurement policy			
103	Management approach	Cooperative added value ICA principles	26
204-1	Proportion of spending on local suppliers		26
ENVIRONMENT			
Materials			
103	Management approach	Packaging Food thrift	37
301-1	Materials used by weight or volume		40
Energy			
103	Management approach	Energy	28
302-1	Energy consumption within the organization		
Water			
103	Management approach	Water	32
303-1	Water withdrawal by source		
Biodiversity			
103	Management approach	Integrated production and biodiversity	34
304-2	Significant impacts of activities, products, and services on biodiversity		
304-3	Habitats protected or restored		
Effluents and waste			
103	Management approach	Waste	39
306-2	Waste by type and disposal method		



GRI STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE	PAGE
Supplier environmental assessment			
103	Management approach	Sustainability in quality systems	19
308-2	Negative environmental impacts in the supply chain and actions undertaken		
SOCIAL			
Occupational health and safety			
103	Management approach	Employees	45
403-2	Types of injury and rates of injury, occupational diseases, lost days, and absenteeism, and number of work-related fatalities		
Local communities			
103	Management approach	Social engagement	49
413-1	Operations with local community engagement, impact assessments, and development programs		
Supplier social assessment			
103	Management approach	Sustainability in quality systems GRASP	19 50
414-2	Negative social impacts in the supply chain and actions taken		
Customer health and safety			
103	Management approach	Social engagement	49
416-1	Assessment of the health and safety impacts of product and service categories		



Collective dossier 2013-2015-2017⁽¹⁾

	2013				2015				2017				
	I was already doing this (last three years)	I have been doing this recently (since 2013)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this	I was already doing this (last three years)	I have been doing this recently (since 2015)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this	I was already doing this (last three years)	I was already doing this but have made improvements	I have been doing this recently (since 2017)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this
Energy													
Recording of energy consumption	34%	8%	7%	51%	66%	7%	5%	22%	-	-	-	-	-
Evaluation of energy consumption	35%	9%	8%	48%	59%	9%	6%	26%	-	-	-	-	-
Measures to limit energy consumption	53%	10%	6%	31%	61%	8%	6%	24%	53%	19%	4%	4%	20%
Conduct energy audit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9%	0%	0%	0%	91%
Proper generation of renewable energy	32%	4%	2%	62%	39%	2%	4%	55%	41%	1%	2%	4%	52%
Generation of electricity by photovoltaic cells (solar panels)	32%	0%	0%	68%	37%	0%	0%	63%	38%	0%	0%	0%	62%
Generation of electricity by cogeneration (CHP)	7%	0%	0%	93%	8%	0%	0%	92%	6%	0%	0%	0%	94%
Use of residual heat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4%	0%	0%	0%	96%
Making land available for siting windmills	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%	0%	0%	0%	94%
Adaptations to refrigeration system for energy saving	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41%	8%	5%	6%	40%
Heat recovery from refrigeration system	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12%	1%	1%	4%	82%
Switching to low-energy crops	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44%	5%	2%	3%	46%
No production in cold period	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	43%	3%	1%	3%	50%
Use of economy and/or LED lamps	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56%	11%	7%	9%	17%
Automatic light switches with movement sensors	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38%	6%	4%	8%	44%
Use of electric transport	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61%	5%	2%	3%	29%
Water													
Recording of water consumption	57%	6%	5%	32%	72%	5%	5%	18%	-	-	-	-	-
Evaluation of water consumption	49%	6%	7%	38%	63%	6%	6%	25%	-	-	-	-	-
Measures to limit the use of tap water and groundwater	71%	4%	4%	21%	75%	4%	3%	18%	75%	7%	1%	3%	14%
Measures to reuse water	42%	4%	4%	50%	47%	4%	4%	45%	58%	6%	1%	4%	31%
Rainwater collection	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	82%	0%	0%	0%	18%
Measures to limit the use of washing and rinsing water (reuse excluded) ⁽²⁾	48%	4%	3%	45%	52%	3%	4%	41%	62%	5%	1%	2%	30%
Application of irrigation or fertigation	54%	2%	2%	42%	64%	0%	0%	36%	70%	0%	0%	0%	30%
Measures to limit the use of irrigation water (reuse excluded) ⁽³⁾	80%	4%	2%	14%	82%	4%	3%	11%	76%	10%	1%	2%	11%
Treatment of waste water	12%	1%	4%	83%	15%	1%	4%	80%	15%	1%	1%	6%	77%



	2013				2015				2017				
	I was already doing this (last three years)	I have been doing this recently (since 2013)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this	I was already doing this (last three years)	I have been doing this recently (since 2015)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this	I was already doing this (last three years)	I was already doing this but have made improvements	I have been doing this recently (since 2017)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this
Soil and nutrient management													
Fertilisation according to analyses and advice	92%	2%	1%	5%	93%	2%	1%	4%	-	-	-	-	-
Use of organic fertilisers (manure included)	74%	2%	1%	23%	76%	1%	1%	22%	-	-	-	-	-
Measures to prevent nutrient leaching ⁽⁴⁾	77%	3%	1%	19%	80%	3%	2%	15%	86%	8%	2%	1%	3%
Measures to preserve soil structure from soil compactness ⁽⁴⁾	68%	2%	1%	29%	70%	3%	1%	26%	-	-	-	-	-
Erosion prevention ⁽⁴⁾	57%	2%	2%	39%	58%	3%	2%	37%	-	-	-	-	-
Application of crop rotation ⁽⁵⁾	79%	1%	1%	19%	79%	1%	1%	19%	-	-	-	-	-
Crop protection and IPM (Integrated Pest Management)													
Crop protection according to advice	94%	2%	0%	4%	96%	1%	0%	3%	-	-	-	-	-
Preventive IPM measures (excluding crop rotation)	64%	2%	2%	32%	68%	2%	2%	28%	-	-	-	-	-
IPM observations	63%	3%	3%	31%	70%	2%	2%	26%	-	-	-	-	-
IPM intervention	82%	3%	1%	14%	86%	3%	1%	10%	-	-	-	-	-
Application of drift-reduction measures ⁽⁴⁾	56%	4%	7%	33%	60%	4%	8%	28%	-	-	-	-	-
Prevention of point pollution	78%	3%	4%	15%	86%	2%	4%	8%	84%	7%	1%	3%	5%
Use of spray equipment fitted with a computer or electronically controlled nozzles or sections	34%	2%	2%	62%	39%	2%	3%	56%	-	-	-	-	-
Collection of residues of plant protection products at filling and rinsing locations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34%	5%	1%	14%	46%
Use of system to break down residues of plant protection products	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18%	2%	1%	14%	65%
Measures to achieve uniform spreading of plant protection products	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75%	8%	2%	3%	12%
Application of mechanical weed control	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	63%	6%	1%	2%	28%
Biodiversity													
Maintaining small landscape elements ⁽⁴⁾	74%	2%	1%	23%	78%	2%	2%	18%	74%	5%	1%	3%	17%
Using field boundaries and/or maintaining natural vegetation ⁽⁴⁾	58%	2%	3%	37%	60%	4%	4%	32%	72%	6%	1%	4%	17%
Improvement of pollination and fruit setting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	72%	4%	1%	3%	20%
Participating in nature development plan	14%	1%	5%	80%	15%	2%	5%	78%	12%	0%	0%	0%	88%
Implementing proper nature management plan	48%	2%	5%	45%	48%	4%	6%	42%	-	-	-	-	-



	2013				2015				2017				
	I was already doing this (last three years)	I have been doing this recently (since 2013)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this	I was already doing this (last three years)	I have been doing this recently (since 2015)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this	I was already doing this (last three years)	I was already doing this but have made improvements	I have been doing this recently (since 2017)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this
Waste prevention and valorisation of by-products													
Recording of sources and disposal of farm waste	56%	4%	4%	36%	63%	4%	4%	29%	66%	6%	1%	3%	24%
Evaluation of sources and disposal of farm waste	48%	4%	6%	42%	54%	5%	6%	35%	66%	6%	1%	3%	24%
Sorting according to fraction and separated disposal of farm waste	88%	3%	1%	8%	89%	3%	1%	7%	90%	7%	1%	0%	2%
Separated disposal of agricultural foil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	93%	3%	1%	1%	2%
Recycling of substrate on the farm or by third parties	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	81%	3%	1%	1%	14%
Use of biodegradable production means	27%	2%	2%	69%	26%	2%	3%	69%	42%	4%	1%	4%	49%
Use of harvest and by-products as animal feed on own farm or by fellow livestock farmers	21%	1%	1%	77%	24%	1%	0%	75%	20%	2%	0%	0%	78%
Use of harvest and by-products as fertilizer on own farm or by fellow farmers	54%	1%	1%	44%	58%	1%	1%	40%	59%	3%	1%	0%	37%
Composting biological waste on the farm or by third parties	35%	2%	1%	62%	37%	2%	1%	60%	44%	2%	0%	1%	53%
Disposal of biological waste to biogas facility	4%	1%	1%	94%	5%	1%	1%	93%	5%	0%	0%	1%	94%
Mobility													
Collective transport of products to auction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24%	1%	0%	1%	74%
Employees⁽⁶⁾													
Employment of persons with limited opportunities on the labor market	39%	2%	1%	58%	33%	2%	2%	63%	27%	2%	1%	2%	68%
Providing sufficient facilities for employees	91%	2%	2%	5%	92%	2%	2%	4%	-	-	-	-	-
Making employees aware of hazards and risks and providing proper protection	95%	2%	0%	3%	95%	2%	1%	2%	-	-	-	-	-
Offering internal (technical) training for employees (on farm)	54%	2%	3%	41%	57%	3%	3%	37%	-	-	-	-	-
Offering external (technical) training for employees (off farm)	13%	1%	3%	83%	13%	2%	4%	81%	-	-	-	-	-
Measures to improve ergonomics and working conditions from planting to packing	80%	2%	2%	16%	81%	2%	2%	15%	77%	9%	1%	1%	12%
Providing annual health check for employees	33%	2%	2%	63%	34%	2%	3%	61%	30%	1%	1%	3%	65%
Speak and understand the language of employees	59%	4%	4%	33%	63%	4%	5%	28%	55%	21%	1%	4%	19%
Providing corporate documents in employees' own language	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	81%	7%	1%	2%	9%
Organising social and leisure activities for the employees	49%	2%	1%	48%	50%	2%	2%	46%	52%	5%	1%	2%	40%



	2013				2015				2017				
	I was already doing this (last three years)	I have been doing this recently (since 2013)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this	I was already doing this (last three years)	I have been doing this recently (since 2015)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this	I was already doing this (last three years)	I was already doing this but have made improvements	I have been doing this recently (since 2017)	I intend to do this (next three years)	I don't do this
Social commitment													
Open communication with local residents	52%	1%	2%	45%	58%	1%	2%	39%	57%	4%	1%	2%	36%
Participating in the sociocultural life of the local community	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70%	0%	10%	2%	18%
Membership of a trade or farm organisation	58%	1%	1%	40%	60%	1%	2%	37%	63%	0%	0%	0%	37%
Participating in technical or commercial meetings	75%	1%	1%	23%	79%	1%	1%	19%	84%	0%	0%	0%	16%
Fitting farm in landscape and the environment	82%	1%	3%	14%	85%	2%	2%	11%	91%	0%	0%	0%	9%
Measures for shielding of lighting in greenhouses (where assimilation lighting is used)	62%	2%	3%	33%	65%	2%	3%	30%	68%	4%	1%	4%	23%

⁽¹⁾ To compare the percentages of previous years, for the answer option "I was already doing this" the sum should be taken of the percentage under "I was already doing this" and "I was already doing this but have made improvements"

⁽²⁾ Only applies to producers growing vegetables in open field

⁽³⁾ Only applies to producers using irrigation or fertigation

⁽⁴⁾ Only applies to producers growing vegetables or fruit in open field

⁽⁵⁾ Only applies to producers growing vegetables or soft fruit in open field

⁽⁶⁾ Only applies to producers employing external workers



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