



**The impact of the EU
measures to face the
COVID-19 pandemic on the
fruits, vegetables and wine
market situation**

Processed Fruit and Vegetables

26 October 2020

PROFEL: introduction

European Association of Fruit and Vegetable Processors



Vegetables

- Canned vegetables
- Frozen vegetables
- Dehydrated vegetables



Fruit

- Canned Deciduous Fruit
- Jams, Fruit preserves, Purees & Compotes
- *Frozen Fruit*



Key figures

- Total Production: 7 Million T
 - processed vegetables: 5.5 Million T
 - processed fruit (excl. frozen fruit): 1.5 Million Ton
- Turnover: around €25 billion
- Employment: more than 80.000 people



- The Covid-19 pandemic created challenges: the lockdown measures had immediate impact on the supply chains (transport logistics, cross-border traffic, customs delays, workers in factories and social distancing, labelling, packaging supply, ...)
- Companies did their best to adapt to the new situation, in order to continue to provide nutritious, affordable, accessible and convenient food to consumers
- 3 examples: impact on companies and EU response
 - Seasonal workers
 - Factory employees
 - Labelling



Impact Covid-19: seasonal workers

- Key concern for the sector: expected shortage of seasonal workers during the harvesting season under Covid-19 containment measures (closure of borders)
- Frequently fruit pickers come from outside the EU (Albania, Morocco, etc.)
- **EU measure**: Guidance on the implementation of the temporary restriction on non-essential travel to the EU, on the facilitation of transit arrangements for the repatriation of EU citizens, and on the effects on visa policy (published on 30 March C(2020)2050)
- Seasonal workers in agriculture were recognized as essential workers and could benefit from the non-application of the temporary restriction of non-essential travel



Impact Covid-19: factory employees

- In Greece: When a number of workers in a factory test positive for coronavirus, the Ministry for Civil Protection orders the complete closing of the factory for 10 days
- Not only the part of the factory where the positive employees work is closed, but also warehouses and logistics facilities
- As a result, the factory cannot ship products to buyers who are waiting for their deliveries
- **EU measure**: Publication “Coronavirus: EU guidance for a safe return to the workplace”, confirming that staff who have not had close contact with the original confirmed case can continue to attend work



- On the 1st of April 2020 Reg. 2018/775* as regards the rules for indicating the country of origin of the primary ingredient of a food entered into force
- Companies reported difficulties in being able to meet the date of 1 April due to Covid-19: suppliers have decreased or stopped their activities and delays are encountered to comply with the regulation on labelling creation, labelling validation, photoengraving, printing and delivery of labelling and packaging
- In order to avoid ruptures, companies had to request identical reprints of “non-compliant” labelling
- **EU measure**: Discussion with Member States and recognition of the need for flexibility in the enforcement of such food labelling provisions, provided it is temporary and justified.



* laying down rules for the application of Article 26(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011

Impact Covid-19: conclusions

- Many practical problems were encountered throughout the whole supply chain, such as availability and protection of workers including seasonal workers, factory conditions, logistical constraints and disruptions
- Most processing factories stayed open, under incredibly challenging conditions, and with great concern to assure safe circumstances and a safe working environment for staff
- The sector of preserved fruit and vegetables in Europe – as an essential sector – met increased consumer demand for safe, nutritious, long shelf life products



Impact Covid-19: conclusions

- However, strict enforcement of COVID-19 hygiene protocols and processes continue to result in increased production costs
- In addition:
 - Consumer behavior changed: stronger demand for fresh -> lack of raw material and higher costs for the processing industry
 - More demand for private label and basic products and less for branded business and added value products
- The EU sector calls upon retailers and consumers for a new appreciation for European processed fruit and vegetable products





Thank you



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