

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD



*Nigel Garbutt
Independent Chairman*

Welcome to our first newsletter, a regular publication which has been specifically created to enhance the understanding of the vital work that EurepGAP carries out as its global reach increases.

Firm foundations have been built since our inauguration in 1996 and it now embraces the complete spectrum of the industry.

But change continues to sweep through the structure of the fresh fruit and vegetable sector itself. Additionally, there is increasing legislation which sets the parameters within which it must operate. For these reasons I believe we must become increasingly active as well as vigilant. New challenges are already leading to new disciplines. In many cases they have been brought about by the demands of consumers themselves.

Against this background your Steering Committee recognises the importance of increased communication to members. Providing news and case study reports illustrating the practical progress being made is something we have now addressed through our new publication.

I am often asked how it is possible to

achieve harmonisation when growers can vary so much in type, structure, scale and geographical location. This does not even account for the diversity and growing conditions of crops.

On the surface they all present different scenarios, but growers, packers and distributors share a common goal embodied in EurepGAP, and can learn from each other.

Our newsletter can thus become a further benchmark of our progress, and an asset towards encouraging more individual companies, both large and small and even total industry bodies to join with us.

Its success will strengthen our already respected voice when influencing discussions alongside national and international governmental organisations or explaining our role to NGOs.

The months ahead are already marked with several milestones, including our own fourth conference being held in Madrid on 10-12 September.

The highlight is something which will affect us all - the presentation of the revised Protocol - itself a major step forward in extending the level of international harmonisation of good agricultural practices.

Members will also be voting for representation on our two committees which will play a critical role in determining future policies such as a possible road map to harmonisation of crop protection products.

This newsletter itself is part of our pledge to make the EurepGAP voice heard even more strongly.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Every two years EurepGAP members vote for their Industry representatives on our two main committees.

Equal numbers of seats are available for growers/suppliers and retailers.

Committee members represent their sector (growing/production or retail) and not individual companies.

Have your say on the membership of the new committees - Here's how:

Any grower/retailer EurepGAP member is eligible to stand for election.

All that is required is the time to attend about four meetings per year, an election proposal and two other EurepGAP members to act as your proposer and seconder.

An election proposal consists of name, organisation and address, short professional background and intended contribution to the SC/TSC. It should be accompanied by an electronic portrait.

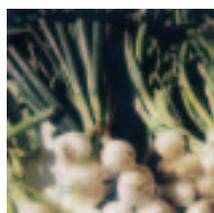
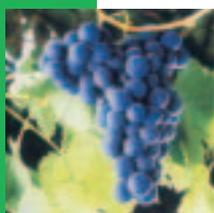
Proposals must be received by 31st July 2003.

Voting will be by closed ballot at the Madrid Conference on 10th September.

Members will be sent ballot forms in advance and they may post or fax their votes.

Results will be announced at the Madrid Conference and a posting on the EUREP website.

The first meeting of the newly elected steering committee will be on 2nd October in Rotterdam.





Jan van Staalduinen is a member of the steering committee of EurepGAP. He is a Dutch tomato grower, and also chairman of the VTN, the co-operative which has shares in The Greenery. He has been an advocate of food safety and environmental issues for many years, and because of his commitment was appointed chairman of the MBT.

DUTCH PROGRESS PROVES EUREPGAP CERTIFICATION IS POSSIBLE DESPITE THE SIZE OF AN INDUSTRY

Dutch horticulture has a proud tradition and an excellent reputation across the world which can trace its commercial history back over a century.

Today times have changed to meet the demands of modern retailing, embodied in The Greenery BV, whose shares are owned by the horticultural co-operative Voedings Tuinbouw Nederland (VTN).

The Greenery is the distribution, sales and marketing company responsible for selling the produce of over 2,500 growers affiliated to the VTN. Its turnover is over 1.6 billion Euros, and there are 2,200 employees of which 400 work outside the Netherlands.

FOOD SAFETY AWARENESS

Dutch growers go back a long way as far as awareness of food safety, good practice and environmental systems are concerned, before EurepGAP was in place. Now 75 percent of crops grown on more than 2,000 nurseries and farms in the Netherlands comply with certification and this will rise to at least 2,500 by the end of the year accounting for 90 percent.

The message is clear. Certification is possible, even despite the scale of any industry.

Dutch achievement began before EurepGAP. In 1988 the MBT scheme (which translates as Environmental Conscious Cultivated) was introduced giving growers the opportunity to apply common guide lines.

Most of them did, and when the project ended in 2000, other systems benefited from its success and could be widened. One of these was the DPA Quality Assurance System, which has the same criteria as EurepGAP.

"This allowed us to prepare for EurepGAP's implementation as Dutch growers were used to working within guidelines, knew how to keep records, had the discipline to maintain them and understand the value of external auditing," says Jan van Staalduinen.

The result has been particularly beneficial, and in one sense a further recognition of the Dutch awareness of market forces.

"Since EurepGAP was developed mainly at the instigation of the retail trade we no longer have to convince our customers that the system is sound and meaningful.

"They tell us what to do, which

enhances our drive to fulfil their wishes. In short it has become highly relevant.

"Looking at the broader issue outside the Netherlands, EurepGAP in essence is a wonderful system as it provides the framework for all types of production.

However many requirements needed interpretation. Two years ago in the Netherlands we started pilot schemes to introduce the certification system to many other types of farming.

Of course not all areas were covered by the previous Dutch systems, such as maintenance records, nature policy and conservation, but it did allow us to find practical less costly solutions."

Each group consisted of between five to eight growers, representatives from certification bodies, consultants and quality controllers.

It became clear almost immediately how EurepGAP could be implemented.

Another positive development is that that the Dutch government is getting more and more interested and involved in EurepGAP, meaning that as a consequence, its regulations and legislation will be taken into account and even be based on information already made available by such systems.

SO FAR SO GOOD

"For any system to remain strong and viable we recognise that it must continue to develop, and our role in EurepGAP allows us to progress this," he says.

"Some of its aspects are based, for example, on national legislation, and because this differs between countries we feel there still some anomalies to iron out. EurepGAP, food safety and the environment can all gain through different approaches."

There is also the question of market value. As retailers are not paying more for certified produce, growers will always be concerned with the cost of the scheme.

Van Staalduinen admits that participation in EurepGAP will not lead to better prices, but stresses its importance is that it will ensure access to world markets and create a sound basis for expansion.

"These are perfectly healthy and reasonable concerns which the Dutch organisations are fully aware and will continue to monitor," he concludes.

"In the meantime EurepGAP has proved its worth."



INDEPENDENT ASSESSOR FOR BENCHMARKING

In a major step forward for the industry the EurepGAP Steering Committee has agreed changes to the way benchmarking is carried out. From May 2003 all benchmarking applications will be assessed by JAS-ANZ, which maintains offices in Canberra and Wellington fully staffed with administration, technical and program development expertise.

JAS-ANZ was established by the Australian and New Zealand Governments in 1991 for the purpose of being the recognised accreditation body for the two countries to facilitate trade.

It is currently the only accreditation body outside of Europe that has the bi-lateral arrangement with the European Co-operation of Accreditation. This is a strict peer review process for gaining confidence in accreditation bodies.

The company has wide experience in the agrifood sector, and is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and is signed up to the Multi-Lateral Agreement (MLA).

It meets the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 61:1996, General Requirements for the assessment and accreditation of

certification bodies, and as such is uniquely placed to ensure impartiality and independence in the processing of schemes for assessment of equivalence against EurepGAP.

JAS-ANZ currently accredits 45 Certification Bodies in Australia, New



Zealand, China, India, Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam who provide services for some 90 accredited programmes.

These include EurepGAP, ISO 9000, ISO 14001, food safety, occupational health and safety, information security management systems, training course providers, personnel certification, product certification, regulatory sector schemes, industry sector schemes, and inspection bodies.

Growers can choose to receive their certification in one of 3 ways:

Option One: Growers apply directly to any approved certification body.

Option Two: Certification through a Produce Marketing Organisation

Option 3 and 4: via being members of an EurepGAP recognised national or regional scheme.

Option 3, or benchmarking as it has become known, is popular where existing or new schemes wish to demonstrate equivalence with EurepGAP.

Full details on the revised benchmarking procedure can be seen at <http://www.eurep.org/sites/benchmarking-procedure.html>

Schemes wishing to apply should contact:

Ms Kylie Sheehan
Manager Business and Programme Development.

JAS-ANZ, 6 Phipps Close,
Deakin Act 2601, Australia
Telephone +61 (02) 6282 1299
Facsimile: +61 (02) 6282 6818
Email ksheehan@jas-anz.com.au

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THERE CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT IS A VITAL INGREDIENT



Deirdre Hutton is chair of the National Consumer Council, one of the leading UK and European consumer organisations. The Council covers all aspects of the market economy and the public sector as they interact with consumers.

Areas she has focussed on include regulation, financial services and food. In the food area, Deirdre is vice-chair of EFSA and the chair of the Food Chain Centre which was set up in the UK following a recommendation of the Curry Commission into the Future of Farming and Food to undertake value chain analysis in the food chain.

EurepGAP has set itself the commendable task of co-ordinating assurance schemes across the globe. While this is a considerable undertaking, it is not before time. Research undertaken by the National Consumer Council shows that consumers are completely baffled by the range of schemes, logos and claims that surround the food industry.

Consequently, they are just as likely to see such schemes as purely marketing hype with nothing substantial behind them.

The National Consumer Council believes that assurance schemes should have clearly stated objectives, rules and procedures and be transparent.

Those objectives need to be identified through consultation with consumers and there should be a strong independent consumer representation on the governing body. Compliance procedures should be explicit, independently verified and backed up by full traceability. There should be effective and implemented sanctions for non-compliance.

If this seems a high hurdle, it is worth considering that building confidence in

an assurance scheme can be compared to building confidence in a branded product.

It is also the case that some key definitions vary across Europe. For example, consumers believe that the word 'organic' has one meaning when applied to food.

The new arrangements in Europe will also be important in helping bolster the confidence of consumers. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has the duty to undertake risk assessments and to communicate risk, while the European Commission will manage risk. The way in which each of those bodies carries out their roles will be very important as for consumers transparency is vital. They will need to be able to SEE that the Food Safety Authority is operating in the interests of public health.

As a member of the Management Board of EFSA, I believe it has a great opportunity to establish new ways of working which are more transparent than in the past, which enhance risk assessment and will allow us to harness scientific expertise across Europe.

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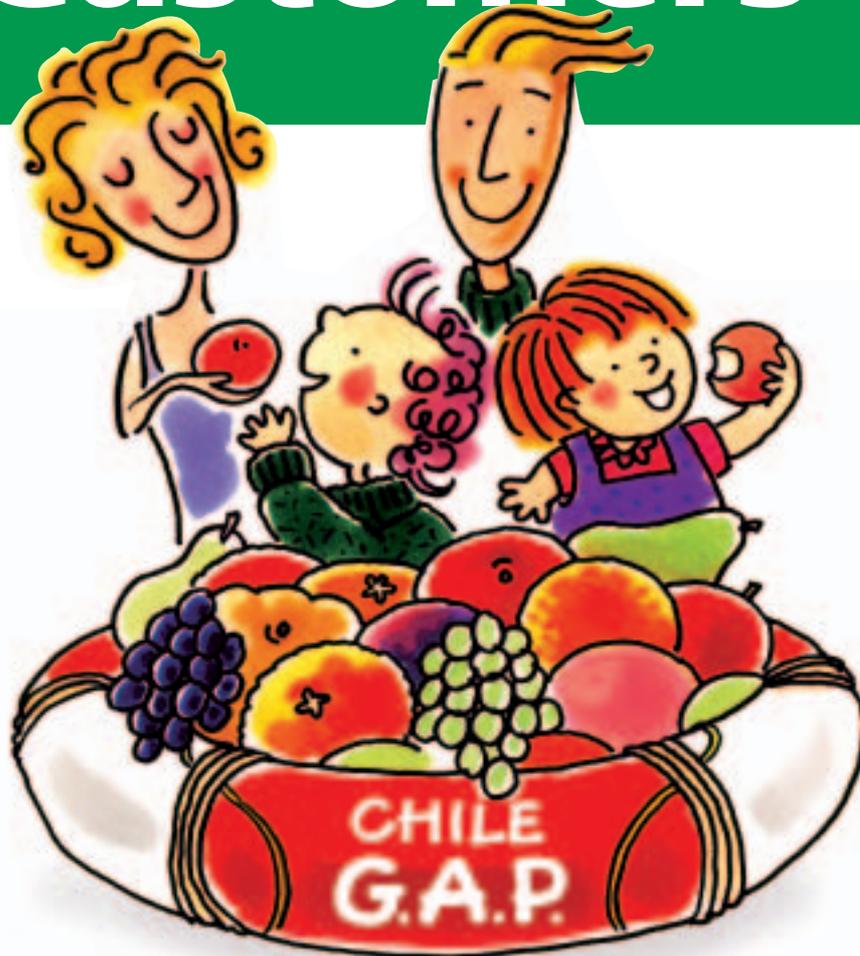
A BREAKTHROUGH FOR MAINTAINING QUALITY IN
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES RIGHT THROUGH TO THE CONSUMER

For more information about SmartFresh,[™] contact us at **+33 1 40 02 53 25**
or visit our web site at www.smartfresh.com

AgroFresh Inc. supports the principles and practices of EUREPGAP
to give assurance from farm to consumer



Caring For Your Customers



The Chilean Fresh Fruit Industry is now actively introducing its Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) initiative on a nationwide scale.

Chile's GAP programme is a proactive voluntary development of the industry aimed at protecting consumers and retailers alike.

Our membership and participation in the main initiatives related to food safety world wide such as; CIES – Global Food Safety Initiative, Eurepgap and 'United' Fresh Fruit And Vegetable Assoc. (USA), runs alongside our

own comprehensive Chile – Good Agricultural Practices scheme.

This means, that the fruit farmers of Chile are complying with their own comprehensive GAP programme as well as strict domestic regulations, which reflect global requirements.

So now more than ever consumers everywhere can be even more confident and reassured about fresh fruit from Chile.

Grown with care, by the fruit farmers of Chile



Chile – World Class Fruit

The Chilean Fresh Fruit Association-Europe,
2 Northfields Prospect, Putney Bridge Road, London SW18 1PE

Tel: 0044 208 875 2340 • Fax: 0044 208 874 5020 • Email: info@cffae.com • Web: www.cffae.com





Deciduous has been.....joined by citrus.....and now tropical fruit

SOUTH AFRICAN PROGRESS KEEPS GATHERING MOMENTUM

More and more growers representing the core of the South African fruit industry are seeking certification. This is the good news from a country which plays such a significant role in supplying deciduous, citrus and tropical fruits in the spring and summer to the northern hemisphere.

Lindi Benic, manager of trade and market access affairs at the Deciduous

Fruit Producers' Trust reports that the momentum which became apparent three years ago was initially taken up by some of the best known names in the country. This made others aware, who are now following suite.

"Deciduous growers were the first to recognise the value possibly because the industry has a history of being well organised when it came to international marketing," she says. "But citrus growers quickly followed suite, and the scheme is now embracing crops such as mangoes, avocados and lychees."

Actual numbers are still being assessed, because certification organisations are constantly processing new recruits. But consultant Bekker Wessels who has been the forefront of spreading the message since he attended last year's workshop estimates that between 200 and 300 producers are now committed. "In practical terms it is more effective to think in terms of hectares," he says. "This would mean that around 50 percent of fruit is represented.

"There was somewhat of a slow start," he admits. "But since producers realised the importance of the scheme to keep them in the forefront of the market, the pressure has been on the certification bodies to keep up."

The fact that some multiples are looking for even higher standards does not concern him. "We always have to remember we all operate on a free market, and in this sense EurepGAP has to be considered as a highly effective, but nevertheless minimum international standard."

"Growers have always had to think about proving that little bit extra to customers to stay ahead of the competition. At present we are now all on the same starting blocks," he adds.

There may also be a case for further rationalisation as far as certification is concerned. Lindi says that there may be an umbrella role for the newly

established Fruit South Africa organisation.

The fact that the South African industry is already thinking about the next step remains a healthy sign whatever the outcome.



VALUABLE SPANISH CONTRIBUTION

Exactly one year ago, the Spanish EurepGAP Working Group was created.

It contributes to make EurepGAP more accessible to the growers by explaining those requirements which in turn helps to increase the number which can successfully implement its disciplines.

The group has held regular meetings chaired by FEPEX (The Spanish Federation of Producers and Exporters of Fruit, Vegetables, Flower and Plants) with most of the Spanish EurepGAP members participating.

The role of FEPEX is to co-ordinate the meetings and communicate to the Secretariat or TSC. The aim is harmonisation.

"There is currently good uptake of the scheme," reports Rebeca Navarro with many individual certified growers and with important national schemes that have been benchmarked.

"We are sure that the Spanish Working Group will have a positive effect on future numbers and that its input to the general normative documents will be useful worldwide."



MILESTONE DOWN UNDER

An important milestone occurred in Australia in March with the Ausgrape vineyard at Irymple (near Mildura) becoming the first local producer to achieve EurepGAP certification.

The Ausgrape vineyard is a supplier to Ausfresh Produce, an Australian exporter from Melbourne who supplies table grapes to Sainsbury's.

Max Tolson, a Mildura based horticultural practitioner, facilitated the certification process. Melanie Dingle of Certenz (New Zealand) was the auditor.

For Max and the Ausgrape team, the path to certification has been a long learning curve, however it paves the way for other Australian horticultural businesses to follow.

Max presented to the Madrid Protocol Workshop last October on the experience in Australia.

Further information – Max Tolson +61 3 5023 0644; tolson@ncable.com.au



ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE NOW WITHIN EUREPGAP SCOPE

In March the ornamental horticulture Protocol, based on similar GAP principles to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Protocol, was finalised by the Ornamental Horticulture Technical and Standards Committee, chaired by Steve Homer of Zwetsloots UK.

The approach has been to encourage harmonisation and adoption of standards in this increasingly important sector.

Amongst the members of the working group and those with an interest in progressing benchmarking with EurepGAP are ASOCO Flores, Colombia, Florimark and MPS in the Netherlands.

Should you wish to be involved in this work or have more information please contact Valeska Weymann, weymann@foodplus.org

THE OTHER SCHEMES

Growers we should congratulate (reference benchmarking) are Naturane, Natursense and UNE which are all in Spain.

UK ASSURED PRODUCE SCHEME ACHIEVES EUREPGAP STANDARD

Members of the Assured Produce Scheme (APS), the UK national assurance scheme for UK produced fruit, vegetables & salads, can now claim equivalence to the international EurepGAP standard alongside their APS (version 1/2002) certification.

The EurepGAP standard promotes similar standards to those of APS, and reflects the desire to incorporate Integrated Crop Management (ICM) practices within commercial horticulture in international fresh produce production.

APS made the first moves towards gaining EurepGAP equivalence for its members by revising its scheme standards and technical crop protocols earlier this year to incorporate the EurepGAP standards.

Assured Produce has now been benchmarked against the EurepGAP Protocol and it received confirmation of equivalence with this standard last November APS can, therefore, now provide grower members with joint APS and EurepGAP certification. APS have ensured that grower members will not have to pay anything additional to get the joint certification.

It is one of the founding schemes within Assured Food Standards, which is also known as the Red Tractor Scheme.

"The award of EurepGAP equivalence enhances the global credibility of APS which was the first horticultural-based assurance scheme in the world and is a



Professor Chris Payne has been Professor of Horticulture and Landscape at the University of Reading since October 1999.

His career included nine years as chief executive of the Horticultural Research Institute. He was awarded the OBE for services to horticultural research in 1997.



reflection of the dedication and commitment of UK growers," say APS Chairman, Professor Chris Payne.

APS now has approximately 3,600 members and covers over 75 percent of the UK horticultural crop area valued at over £1bn.

The new Assured Produce standards are available on the web at www.assuredproduce.co.uk

WHY RETAILERS BACK EUREPGAP

Consumer confidence has become an important challenge to all retailers, confirms Nigel Williams, technical services for Asda.

Like other retailers Asda supports EurepGAP because it encompasses traceability, crop protection, waste, pollution, worker welfare and environmental issues. This ensures that a level playing field is established and maintained.

Before growers could have had many audits as warranted by the various retailers driving up costs. EurepGAP's website enables access of multiple language Protocols supporting a consistent message.



SUPERMARKET MEMBERSHIP WIDENS

ASDA/Walmart	Kesko	Safeway
Albert Heijn	KF	Spar Austria
COOP Italia	Laurus	Superunie
COOP Norge	Marks and Spencer	Superquinn
COOP Switzerland	McDonalds Europe	Somerfield
DelHaize	Metro	Tesco
Eroski	Migros	TSN
Fedis/D.R.C.	Pick 'n' Pay	Waitrose
ICA Handlarna	Sainsbury	

EUREPGAP CONFERENCE

"TOWARDS GLOBAL HARMONISATION"

10th - 12th September 2003
Hotel Auditorium, Madrid, Spain

Convention Programme

Day 1: Industry Working Groups - Integrated Farm Assurance

(Recommended for those interested in Livestock, Feed and Combinable Crops)

Learn from your industry partners and peers how to:

- Implement the new EurepGAP Reference Standard for Integrated Farm Assurance
 - Benefit from global harmonisation
- Facilitate multilateral recognition of programmes via benchmarking

Day 2: EUREPGAP Stakeholder Day

(Recommended for those interested in Fresh Produce/Ornamental Horticulture, Livestock, Feed and Combinable Crops)

Learn how retailers, food service, consumers, Government and NGO's support the principles of EurepGAP

- Learn more about their incentives, intention and commitment
- Learn more about the revised high integrity benchmarking procedure

Day 3: Fresh Produce and Ornamental Horticulture Day

(Recommended for those interested in Fresh Produce/Ornamental Horticulture)

Learn about the current steps the industry is taking towards global harmonisation of GAP:

- Hear the latest statistics on EurepGAP world-wide implementation
- Receive the presentation of the revised protocol for fruit and vegetable 2004
 - Identify and solve emerging issues

Election and announcement of new Steering Committee and Technical and Standards Committee members

For more information and to register on-line visit www.avantel.de/eurepgap



EUREPGAP'S MEMBERSHIP AND CERTIFICATION NUMBERS ARE GROWING!



This year has already proved to be a landmark with the significant increase in the numbers of growers certified to EurepGAP.

"We have come a long way since 1996" says Kristian Moeller, EurepGAP's Secretary.

"The biggest achievement we have seen has been the world-wide uptake of good agricultural practices and the willingness of producers to open themselves up to independent verification. So far this year

more than 10,000 growers have been registered/certified in 32 countries."

Kristian leads FoodPLUS GmbH (a German registered limited company) which is the non profit making company established by the industry to run the operational side of EurepGAP.

"Our company membership has grown to in excess of 200 reflecting the partnership nature of EurepGAP along the whole growing, distributing and retail chain."

EurepGAP is supported through its fee structure, but Kristian adds a vital

ingredient is the enthusiasm and involvement of members in our working groups backed by our team of Hugo Hayes, technical manager based in Madrid and Heike Anna Rauber and Nuray Üstün, our administration coordinators in Cologne.

For details on how to become a EurepGAP member please contact Nuray Üstün e-mail uestuen@foodplus.org.

She would also welcome comment and opinion on our newsletter. www.eurep.org



Countries with members and/or EurepGAP certified growers or benchmark schemes.

