

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Organic and Blueberries Trendy in the German Fruits and Vegetable Market

Country: Germany

Post: Berlin

Report Category: Fresh Deciduous Fruit, Stone Fruit, Strawberries, Vegetables, Special Certification - Organic/Kosher/Halal, Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional

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Report Highlights:

The growing demand for organic products as well as for berries and the increasing importance of the hotels, restaurants, and institutional sectors were key topics at the recent German Fruit and Vegetable Congress in Duesseldorf.

General Information

About 550 participants convened in Duesseldorf on September 16/17, 2019, for the German Fruit and Vegetable Congress (Deutscher Obst und Gemuese Kongress, DOGK). Topics discussed included market trends, e-commerce in the fruit and vegetable trade, the impact of technical innovations, artificial intelligence on purchasing trends beyond the year of 2025, and sustainability in the transport sector. This report focuses on market trends.

Increasing Demand for Organic Produce

Helmut Huebsch with GfK Consumer-Panel and Services¹ reported that German consumers increased their spending on organic products in all categories except pet food and alcoholic beverages in the first seven months of 2019 compared to the same time span in 2018. This applies both to volume as well as value. Fruits and vegetables show the highest increase on a value basis with an increase of 23.7 percent and came second in a volume basis (plus 21.7 percent) after sweets which increased by 26.1 percent.

Johannes Bliestle with Reichenau Gemuese eG² cited statistics showing that Germany has a self-sufficiency for organics of 37 percent for vegetables and 22 percent for fruits. He described how consumer demand for organic produce prompted his cooperative to increase their share of organic production from two percent in 2009 to over 27 percent in 2019. In his opinion, organic produce perfectly fits the current public debate on, “food, environment, and climate change.” However, he calls for an honest communication about the fact that organic production also uses crop protection and fertilizers, and for stopping the “black and white” debate. Bliestle argued that organic production must also be economically viable and cannot do without research and technical innovations.

Soft Fruits are “a Thing”

Sabine Dziallas with Nielsen³ market research stated that with a share of 58 percent fruits and vegetables are the main driver of retail sales in the perishable products category, way ahead of meat and sausages (24 percent) and bread and bakery products (6.7 percent). Within fruits and vegetables, she viewed so called “superfoods” and ready-to-eat bowls as the biggest growth trends. Blueberries saw a value-based sales increase of over 20 percent; strawberries and raspberries, as well as ginger increased by over 10 percent, all from July/June 2018/19.

¹ <https://www.gfk.com/about-gfk/about-gfk/>

² Reichenau Gemuese is a vegetable growers' cooperative in the Lake Constance region

³ <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/>

Growing Importance of the HRI Sector for Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

Dr. Hans-Christoph Behr with AMI⁴ highlighted how demographic changes contribute to an increase in food consumption taking place outside of homes. For example, from 1985 to 2015, the share of one-person households increased from 34 percent to 41 percent while at the same time the share of households with five and more members halved from six percent to three percent. In addition, from 1997 to 2017, the share of working women increased from 55 to 72 percent. From 2006 to 2018, the number of children in daycare and preschool that provide lunches increased from 1.2 million to 2.3 million. All of the above is reflected in an increase total consumer spending on food eaten outside of the home, from 4.3 percent (or 56 billion Euro) in 2006 to 4.6 percent (or 78 billion Euro) in 2018. This also has an impact on fruit and vegetable purchases. In 2017, on a volume basis, consumers purchased 21 percent of their vegetables and 11 percent of their fruits at hotel, restaurants, and institutions (HRI). In 2018, 44 percent of frozen vegetables and 62 percent of frozen fruits were sold through foodservice as opposed to retail.

Comment: The demand for organic products is fueled by the ongoing public debate on sustainability and biodiversity in Germany. Within the EU, Germany is the largest market for organic products but is far from self-sufficient in organic fruit and vegetable production. This creates opportunities for U.S. exporters. Likewise, U.S. exporters could potentially benefit from the growing importance of the HRI sector, especially as this sector uses a larger share of frozen products.

Background: DOGK is an annual event jointly organized by

- Fruchthandel Magazin, a weekly publication on fruit and vegetable trade www.fruchthandel.de
- GS1 Germany, a standard/barcode issuing company www.gs1.org/about/what-we-do
- AMI, a Germany based market and price reporting company www.ami-informiert.de/ami-maerkte.html

Next year the DOGK will be on September 14/15, 2020. For more information, please see: www.dogkongress.de

⁴ <https://www.ami-informiert.de/ami-english/ami-about-us/about-us>

Attachments:

No Attachments.