EU ONE STOP SHOP

SUPPORTING GREEN LINE TRADE & BUSINESSES

Access to EU agri-food markets

Introduction

Two key aspects of access to EU agri-food markets:

- Compliance with mandatory agri-food market requirements in the EU
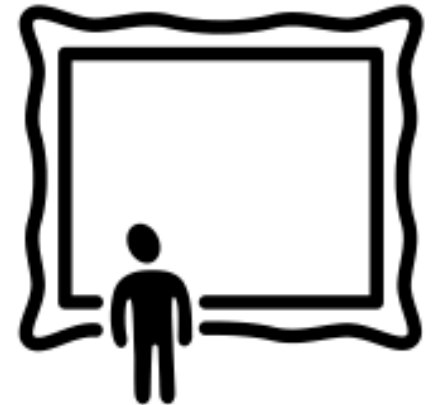- Meeting the demands of the EU consumer - the role of standards

Two relevant systems:

- Official Control – compliance with regulation
- Quality Infrastructure – conformity with standards

Other presentations of specific elements

e.g. (Traceability, Contaminants Pesticide residues GMO (GM) & labelling etc

My presentation on the big picture – systemic view.

Access to the EU agri-food market

Gaining and maintaining access to and penetration of the EU agri-food market requires consideration of various factors including:

- Meeting the mandatory EU food safety requirements – e.g. chemical, microbiological and physical.

- Complying with the mandatory EU animal and plant health trade requirements

- Meeting the consumer / market quality requirements

- Proving compliance with the EU food safety, animal and plant health requirements

- Demonstrating conformity with the consumer / market quality requirements

EU food safety requirements

Meeting the mandatory EU food safety requirements – to protect the health of consumers

- Farm to fork along the food chain – all food business operators and inputs

- Process (not product) - based food safety systems and control e.g. HACCP

- How HACCP works in the system

- Horizonal and vertical – generally applicable and product specific

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Plant and animal health requirements

- **Complying with the mandatory EU animal and plant health requirements – to protect animal and plant production from disease and pest threats from outside of the EU**

➢ Phytosanitary import requirements and certification to be presented separately.

➢ For the sake of completeness Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases ('Animal Health Law'):

- regulates the Health requirements for the import and trade of animals in the EU and
- lays down detailed animal health requirements for the trade in animals, semen, ova and embryos in the EU,
- including import rules with specific rules apply to particular groups of animals.

Safeguarding animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy

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SPS rules on import requirements

Rules on mandatory food safety import requirements

- In accordance with WTO rules all checks and decisions on import should be transparent and be based on international standards and science.

Science for import controls – e.g. risk assessment.

SPS agreement - constraints on free trade may only be imposed if based on a risk to the life and health of animals, plants and humans.

Consumer / buyer / importer demands

Meeting the consumer / market quality requirements

In addition to the mandatory requirements imposed by the state / EU, the consumer and therefore the importers / traders, buyers, wholesalers may also make specify demands in respect of quality but also higher safety demands.

- Production processes e.g. Organic

- Context – cultural and locational e.g. geographical indication or traditional specialities

- Sourcing – local / small / family farms

- Conscience – social responsibility / fairtrade

EU marketing standards - Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 – (separate presentation)

- There are general and specific marketing standards applied to fruit and vegetables about which a separate presentation will be made.

- Up-to-date database of traders and an inspection body - a certificate of conformity

Proof of compliance - certificates

Proving compliance with the EU food safety, animal and plant health requirements

- As above, proof of compliance with animal and plant health requirements is carried out by state or state authorised official certification in accordance with international agreements (OIE and IPPC) and agreed certificate templates

- The traceability of products is compulsory and defined by the General Food Law Regulation to be explained in detail by another presentation, but you will need to provide your buyer / trader with documentation to prove the origin and traceability of your product.

IN CONTRAST:

- **Food safety certification not obligatory** under European legislation, however it is required by almost all European food importers.

- Most established importers will not work with potential suppliers without **proof of conformity with a recognised food safety standard** through certification.

Organic

Proving Organic compliance.

EU strict system of control and enforcement:

- EU Farmers, processors or traders must be checked by a control body or control authority before they can market their products as organic.

- Once they have been checked and found compliant, they receive a certificate

As of January 2022, the **new European Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848** came into force and producers in non-EU countries will have to comply with the same set of rules as those producing in the EU:

All organic products imported into the EU must have the appropriate electronic certificate of inspection (e-COI). These certificates are managed through the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES). If you do not have an electronic certificate of inspection, your products will not be released from their port of arrival in the European Union.

Contents

Private standards

European buyers often have specific requirements, depending on their sales channels and product segments. Common buyer requirements include **GLOBALG.A.P.** certification, and compliance with social and environmental standards.

Most important certifications requested by fresh fruit and vegetables buyers
Source: Autentika Global, modified by ICI Business

Name of certification	Type	Most used in European end-market (s)
GLOBAL G.A.P.	Agricultural practices	Europe in general, in particular northern Europe and supermarket segments
International Featured Standards (IFS)	Food Safety	Germany, France, also recognised in many other European markets
British Retail Consortium Global Standards (BRCGS)	Food Safety	The UK retail market; also very common in mainland Europe
Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit (SMETA)	Social audit focused on working conditions	The UK Germany Most of the European buyers recognise the SMETA audit as a valid assessment
Business Social Compliance Initiative (amfori BSCI)	Social audit focused on working conditions	Germany The Netherlands
Rainforest Alliance	Environmental	Large retail chains in northwest Europe
Fairtrade	Sustainability and ethics	The United Kingdom Germany Benelux
Organic	Sustainability, environmental	European Union All European countries have their own national organic labels

Frozen Vegetables

Food safety requirements for Frozen vegetables are the same as for fresh

- One reason frozen vegetable may be rejected at the border or withdrawn from the European market is the presence of microorganisms such as *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella* or histamine.

Frozen Vegetables Quality requirements

- Frozen vegetables must meet the following quality requirements:

- Reasonably uniform colour, texture and crispness;

- Fresh, clean and free of foreign matter;

- Virtually free of pests and associated damage;

- Free of artificial or peculiar flavours and odours, with specification of other added ingredients.

Optional ingredients permitted in specific frozen vegetables are salt (sodium chloride), sugar, edible oils, aromatic herbs, stock or vegetable juices and vegetable garnishes, up to a maximum of 10% m/m of the total drained vegetable ingredient.

Food safety certification – voluntary

- Although food safety certification is not obligatory under European legislation, it is required by almost all European food importers. Most established importers will not work with potential suppliers without proof of food safety certification.

- The majority of buyers in Europe ask for certification recognised by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).

For frozen vegetables, the most popular certifications are:

- International Featured Standards (IFS)

- British Retail Consortium Global Standards (BRCGS)

- Food Safety System Certification (FSSC 22000)

Additionally EurepGAP and Safe Quality Food 2000: SQF 2000

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Specific labelling regulations for frozen vegetables

The label should state:

- the name of the vegetable and the words 'quick-frozen' or 'frozen' and

- any additional ingredients used (salt, spices, etc.).

- the style, as appropriate (for example: IQF-whole, block, sized/unsized).

If the frozen vegetables are cut, the cutting style should be on the label as well (diced, halved, julienne, trimmed, rings, chopped, etc.).

- Although widely recognised, the Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance certification schemes are little used in frozen vegetable production.

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Average prices for some frozen vegetable categories

Below are average prices for some frozen vegetable categories in Europe:

- Type of vegetable   Average €/100 kg net weight
- Frozen carrots   €59.03
- Frozen asparagus   €332.97
- Frozen cauliflower   €89.29
- Frozen mushrooms   €213.79
- Frozen onion   €60.93
- Frozen sweet peppers   €66.36

Average prices of some sample categories of vegetables in different European countries in 2020.

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Conclusions

- Agri-food access requirements and market demands are many and multi-faceted.

- BUT they are mostly online and freely available

- E.g. https://www.cbi.eu/market-information

The GL OSS website / portal and team can facilitate access to this and other relevant information to facilitate access to the EU agri-food market

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