

## Germans increase fruit and veg spending

Amid cold weather and shortages right now in Europe, Fruit Logistica has kicked off in Berlin with one very encouraging statistic.

In a release provided at the event's opening press conference, consumer research specialist Helmut Hübsch of the Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung (GfK – Association for Consumer Research) said private households in German increased their food and beverage spending by 1% last year.

In contrast, GfK reported the increase in spending on fruits and vegetables (including potatoes) was up by just under 6%.

“This means that fruit and vegetables once again belong to the most important categories in the retail trade,” Hübsch said.

“Households purchase fruit and/or vegetables an average 86 times per year: 86 times in 52 calendar weeks means that households buy fruit, vegetables, or both more than once a week.”

GfK said vegetable sales at the retail level in Germany are expected to have risen by almost 5% to €6.9 billion, which mainly reflects higher prices as purchase volume rose by just 1%.

The higher price is due in part to “real” price increases for comparable products and also due to “trading up” within product ranges, demonstrating a growing preference for more highly-priced goods.

In fresh fruit, a retail sales record was set by rising 5% to €7.2 billion, with purchase volumes remaining ‘constant at best’.

The group said sales in fresh potatoes rose dramatically by 11% to €1.1 billion, despite purchase volumes falling by 4%.

Germany's Agricultural Market Information Company (AMI) said data would probably show a continued slight increase for fresh fruit imports in 2016 to reach almost 5.4 million MT, with tropical fruit as the “main factor”.

“The market for fresh fruit and vegetables is heavily influenced by weather conditions. It is impossible to control all of the production conditions for these natural products, even when they are grown under cover,” AMI said.

“The recent frosts in Italy and Spain illustrate the impact of weather conditions on produce. In contrast to dry foods, fluctuations in supply and price are unavoidable.

“This is less a sign of non-transparent manipulation than it is of a functioning market.”

### **European produce harvest**

According to AMI, the EU fruit harvest in 2016-17 was expected to be down 3% at 38.2 million metric tons (MT), while the vegetable harvest was up 1% at 63.5 million MT.

With the exception of citrus, all fruit crops were down slightly in the EU, with a 5% fall in stonefruit, pears down 9% and even a 2% drop in apples, albeit down on a very high year in the previous season.

“After a marked increase last year, EU table grape production fell slightly again,” AMI said.

“Although there was a pause in the upwards trend in soft fruit for 2016, this does not indicate a reversal. Production capacity, particularly for blueberries, continues to increase.”

The group added that poor kiwifruit harvests in Italy meant the crop for that fruit was down by 13%, while Spain was set for a “considerably larger” 2016-17 citrus harvest.

“But excessive rainfall in mid-December 2016 and frosts in mid-January are likely to affect the stability of goods,” the group added.

In vegetables, the slight increase was driven more by onions, cabbage varieties and carrots, which are more important in central and northern Europe.

“Poland in particular reported a good harvest,” AMI said.

“The larger vegetable harvests in northern and eastern EU member states was primarily a result of a larger area under cultivation, and to higher yields.

“The EU potato harvest rose by 5% to around 57 million tonnes.”

## Encouraging stats for Fruit Logistica itself

As industry event Fruit Logistica heads celebrates its 25th anniversary, the event has cracked the 3,000-exhibitor mark with 3,107 stands.

Event organizers are expecting 70,000 trade visitors from more than 130 countries, of which 86 nations will have stands.

Italy continues to have the most stands with 516, followed by Spain (367), the Netherlands (318), Germany (283) and France (249).

“Fruit Logistica was launched in 1993 in response to an industry demand and has seen impressive development ever since,” said Messe Berlin GmbH CEO Christian Göke.

“We started the first year with 100 exhibitors. In 2017, for the first time, the number of exhibitors will top the 3,000 mark. As a leading global trade fair, Fruit Logistica is a don’t-miss event for players across the entire value chain.

“Not only does the trade fair offer outstanding business opportunities, it has also gained a solid reputation as a platform for information and innovations.”

**Lien article :** <http://www.freshfruitportal.com/news/2017/02/07/germans-increase-fruit-veg-spending/>