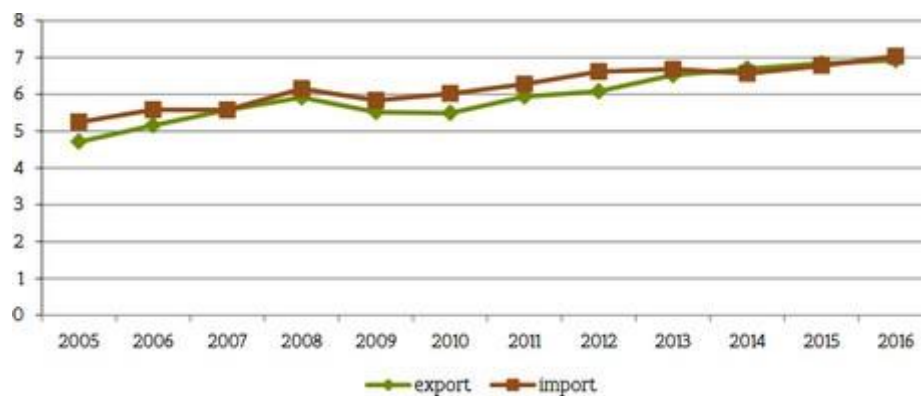


## Belgium exports more vegetables

The Belgian trade surplus in agrarian products continues to rise. In 2016, it was 6.2 billion euro, an increase of three per cent. The export clocked off at 42.9 billion euro, more than two per cent more than in 2015.

In the category horticultural products, we can find fruit, vegetables, ornamental plant products, aromatic plants and olive oil. The Belgian import of horticultural products amounted to around 6.9 billion euro, the export was around 7.0 billion euro, meaning there's a trade deficit of 106 million euro. This figure is obviously affected by the large share of bananas and citrus fruit in our international trade.

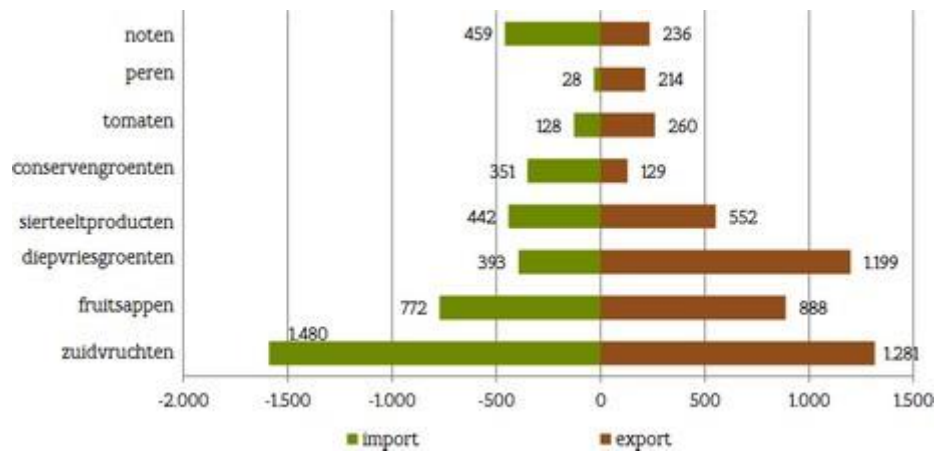


*Import and export of horticultural products, in billion euro, Belgium, 2005-16. Source: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries based on Eurostat (Comext).*

The export of horticultural and ornamental plant products increased to a limited degree (+2%). The group of fresh vegetables had a credit balance in 2016.

	Import			Export		
	2015	2016	evolutie	2015	2016	evolutie
aromatische planten	70	80	+14.2%	38	40	+5.2%
noten	465	459	-1.3%	246	236	-4.1%
rubbers	150	136	-9.3%	111	114	+2.7%
olijfoliën en bijproducten	72	89	+23.6%	16	22	+37.5%
sierteelt	394	442	+12.1%	542	553	+2.0%
vers fruit	2.330	2.506	+7.6%	1.999	2.008	+0.5%
verse groenten	836	906	+8.1%	808	826	+2.2%
verwerkt fruit	1.589	1.408	-11.4%	1.425	1.465	+2.8%
verwerkte groenten	934	1.007	+7.8%	1.593	1.662	+4.3%
<b>totaal tuinbouwproducten</b>	<b>6.840</b>	<b>7.033</b>	<b>+2.8%</b>	<b>6.778</b>	<b>6.926</b>	<b>+2.1%</b>

*Evolution of import and export values for horticultural products, million euro, Belgium, 2015-16. Source: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries based on Eurostat (Comext).*



*Product groups with the highest import and export values, in million euro, Belgium, 2016. Source: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries based on Eurostat (Comext).*

### Import of horticultural products

Approximately 63 per cent of fresh fruit imported by Belgium concerns tropical fruit (1,592 million euro) and 12 per cent concerns citrus fruit (300 million euro). It mostly concerns bananas from Colombia, Ecuador and Costa Rica. Of that, 87 per cent is re-exported within Europe. In addition, 772 million euros worth of fruit juices were also imported.

The import of fruit rose by 7.6 per cent to 2.5 million euro because of increases in, among other products, pears, cherries, citrus fruit and bananas. For apples, plums and strawberries, import decreased. After years of increasing, the import of nuts declined by 4.1 per cent.

For vegetables, the import value decreased by 8.1 per cent.

For the ornamental plant sector, the import increased by 12.1 per cent.

### Export of horticultural products

In the field of frozen vegetables, Belgium is number one globally. With an export value of 1.2 billion, frozen vegetables are also the most important Belgian export product. Eighty-five per cent of exported frozen vegetables is meant for the European market. Germany (290 million euro, +1.7%), France (221 million euro, -1.8%) and the UK (175 million euro, +4.1%) are our most important customers. More than 15 per cent of frozen vegetables is exported to countries outside of Europe.

The export value of ornamental plant products (flowers, ornamental plants, tree nurseries) recovered by two per cent after a sharp decline in previous years as a consequence of, among other things, the Russian boycott. The export increased for houseplants, bedding plants, cut flowers, bulbs and tubers, but decreased for tree nursery products, cuttings and cut foliage. The Netherlands is the most important destination with 52 per cent, followed by France with 32 per cent.

In vegetables, the export increased by 2.2 per cent, from 808 million euro to 826 million euro. That mostly concerned cauliflower, cucumber, celery, onion, chicory and carrot. On the other hand, a decrease was reported for, among other things, tomatoes, bell peppers, cabbages, beans and mushrooms.

The export of fresh fruit remained practically stable (+0.5%), while the import value increased by 7.6 per cent. More than 65 per cent of the export value of fresh fruit is taken up by subtropical fruit (bananas).

The export of fresh fruit experienced a modest increase of 0.5 per cent due to an increase in pears and citrus fruit. For apples, bananas, grapes, cherries and plums, a decrease was noted.

Of our own fruit production, pears are the most important export product, followed by strawberries, and only then followed by apples. For apples and pears, market prices were considerably lower during the entire season in 2016 compared to previous years (source: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries). Pear trees now take up 9,500 hectares of the planted surface, an increase of 6 per cent compared to 2015 (source: FOD Economie).

The export value of nuts decreased by 4.1 per cent.

On a European level, the export of apples decreased each year in the past ten years, but in 2016 it declined by more than nine per cent (source: DG AGRI). Yet the total export balance remained positive, because import also systematically decreased in that same period.

The European export of tomatoes is still much affected by the Russian boycott. The trade deficit increased considerably because import also increased in 2016. Moreover, the production of tomatoes increased, both in Italy, Spain and Portugal.

**Lien article :** <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/186439/Belgium-exports-more-vegetables>