

Kees Rijnhout (Jaguar): "Important to give sustainability a place" **Dutch environmental quality label for South African Fruit**

Jaguar in Ridderkerk, the Netherlands, is an importer of fruits and vegetables. The company does business with producers in many countries and supplies Dutch retail companies. In 2015 Jaguar received the Milieukeur, a Dutch environmental quality label, for citrus fruit and grapes from South Africa. The importer co-signed the covenant SIFAV2020, in which agreements have been made about sustainably produced fruits and vegetables.

In 2014, under the name of SIFAV2020, supermarket chains, importers of fruits and vegetables, government, and CSOs including Frugiventa and Solidarad, agreed to market only sustainably produced fruits and vegetables from 2020. It concerned imported fruits and vegetables from Africa, Asia and South America. The goal was for 30 per cent of imported fruits and vegetables to be sustainable in 2014, and in 2015 this percentage had to be increased to 50 per cent.



Importer signs SIFAV2020

Fresh company Jaguar co-signed the SIFAV2020. "For us it was the starting signal to start working with sustainably grown fruits and vegetables," says manager Kees Rijnhout. The company contacted Stichting Milieukeur (SMK) in The Hague. "In consultation with SMK the criteria for sustainability were drawn up. They concerned the environment, such as less pesticides, and working conditions, such as no child labour."

South Africa is one of the countries Jaguar imports fruits and vegetables from, and then supplies to Dutch retail trade. Jaguar chose to start with this country. "We mainly import citrus fruits and grapes from South Africa. Citrus fruits are available in Dutch supermarkets from April, grapes from mid-December. We managed to make agreements with our supplier to introduce these products to SMK," according to Rijnhout.

Registration of pesticides

The South African supplier had to start registering the use of, among other things, pesticides and fertilisers. It was then determined, on the basis of criteria established by SMK, whether the citrus fruits and grapes could receive the Milieukeur label. They succeeded and in 2014 Jaguar received the Milieukeur for these product groups from South Africa for this particular grower. The company met the requirements as drawn up in the covenant SIFAV2020. Minister Ploumen then received the first SMK grapes from Jaguar manager Rijnhout.

It was only the start for Jaguar. "It was not all as simple as that. Firstly it was quite the administrative burden for the supplier. He had to start keeping track of everything just for us, and what we buy is a relatively small part of his production. In addition, the SMK products had to be kept separate from all other products in the entire chain," Rijnhout describes the process.

Control and cost-increasing

The procedure of the supplier and, among other things, transport are monitored by local certification authorities. Local auditors 'mark' the SMK products intended for Jaguar. Rijnhout: "The procedure is cost-increasing, both for us and the supplier. We pay the supplier a little more. However, we do not charge extra from our buyers, as supermarkets do. Because they are still relatively low costs, we settle it in the total chain, so over all our products. Additionally, at the start of the project, part of a subsidy was made available by the Ministry of Economic Affairs."

Rijnhout sees the additional costs of the SMK as an investment. "We, as a company, think it is important to give sustainability a place. We have also gone further with other suppliers. Our products from Egypt and South American countries either have or should have a sustainability label." Importers are free to shape the sustainability, though. Choosing an organisation such as SMK is not obligatory, but the sustainability should have a basis (criteria) and so-called accredited organisations should monitor these. Importers are therefore free to pick their own approach, as long as the requirements from the SIFAV2020 are met.

Size of sustainable production

Jaguar's progresses in the field of sustainable products were monitored by consultancy company PwC. According to Rijnhout Jaguar is currently meeting all, and more, of the requirements for imported fruits and vegetables. "They are not all going through the SMK system. For example, we are using a different way of certification in Peru. By now other products such as avocados, plums and mangoes have also been provided with a sustainability stamp."

Jaguar supplies to various supermarket chains in the Netherlands. Jumbo and Albert Heijn, two large supermarket chains, co-signed the SIFAV2020. Other parties include The Greenery, Super Unie (which includes a large number of chains, such as Emté, Coop and Deko) and Lidl. All of these parties have committed themselves to providing consumers with a complete range of sustainably grown fruits and vegetables from Africa, Asia and South America by 2020.

Source: Stichting Milieukeur

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