

Save the date: IBA conference 2020 in Ukraine

It has been fixed: our next meeting will take place from 2nd to 5th June 2020.

Save the date for the IBA conference 2020 in Ukraine.

The organizers of the IBA conference 2020 in Ukraine

Together with the IBA General Manager Stefanie Sharma, a team of four people from the Ukrainian Berry Association has started tough work. We want to offer you interesting presentations as usual, as well as farm visits and industrial discovery in a blackcurrant growing country which most of you don't know yet. But first of all, let us introduce those who will be in the front line for the organization.



Irina Kukhtina

She is the creator of the new professional Ukrainian Berries Association, which was officially registered on May 22, 2017 as a professional association for the berry industry.

Irina takes an active part in the promotion of Ukrainian berries in international

markets (international trade fairs, B2B meetings and trade missions, advertising campaigns in Ukraine, etc.). Within the UBA, she now manages a team of 8 people. “Ukraine’s berries industry is booming, demonstrating immense growth and providing one of the most attractive returns on investment in Ukrainian agriculture”, Irina says.



Elena Kaijen

Since 2018, Elena Kaijen has been working as the Executive Director of the Ukrainian Berries Association (UBA). Members of the Association are companies operating in the berry sector (soft and stone fruits): producers, processors,

nurseries, research institutions. She took an active part in the development of a roadmap for the Berry market development in Ukraine.

Elena Kaijen helps companies to enter new sales markets by preparing certification and export requirements training, participating in international exhibitions and organizing B2B meetings during exhibitions.



Tetiana Smirnova

In May 2019, Tetiana joined the team of Ukrainian Berries Association. At the moment, her main tasks are information support of the UBA and members of Association and the management of UBA`s events.

She sincerely believes that the berry sector of Ukraine has great potential and that this country has chance to take its rightful place in the ranking of leading

players in the world market.



Liubov Pavlenko

Liubov is the project manager of the Ukrainian Berries Association, a young specialist who is interested in further development in the field of berry business, with a focus on the development of the berry industry in Ukraine. She has been working for the Association since September 2018.

She is a project manager of “Eastern Partnership: Ready to Trade – an EU4Business initiative”, which is funded by the EU and implemented by the ITC (International Trade Center) and Ukrainian Berries Association.

More about the organizers on the website of the conference.

Place and dates

Where?

As already announced in one of our previous newsletters, the IBA conference 2020 in Ukraine will take place in Lviv. It is the seventh largest city of the country. Lviv is situated in the Western part of Ukraine, some 70 kilometers from the Polish border. Far, far away from the Donbass area, if some of you are afraid. But close to the blackcurrant growing area of the country – and that is what matters! We will be able to offer easy access by plane, as Lviv has its own airport, or by car for those who come from Poland.

The venue?

However, we haven't fixed the venue yet. The organizers have several proposals, and will decide on the best solution before Christmas. It depends, of course, on

the capacity of the hotel, the services offered, and the conference facilities that we need. We will keep you updated!

When?

As for the dates, we have decided to start in the evening of 2nd June 2020. An IBA Board meeting and a meeting of the agronomy working group will take place before the official start of the conference. For those concerned, you will receive invitations later. Presentations and visits will then take place from Wednesday 3rd until Friday 5th late morning. Everybody will then be able to leave around noon on Friday and reach back home before the week-end. Of course, you may also stay for another day or two to discover the region!

Expected programme

Visits

Like usual, we are trying to make the best of your time during the IBA conference 2020 in Ukraine. No doubt we will visit at least one exemplar blackcurrant farm and plantations, as well as a company.

Presentations - Focus on Eastern Europe and Central Asia

As for presentations, they will focus on what is unknown to most of the participants: blackcurrant growing and processing in Ukraine and other countries further East. The Ukrainian production kept growing over the past years, and processing further shifts from Poland to the East. But also other markets. Therefore, we found it most interesting to try and have presenters from this part of the world. They will share their knowledge of an area widely new and unexplored by the huge majority of the participants.

Any volunteers?

If any of our readers wants to bring in a presentation, has suggestions or questions, please feel free to contact us. We will do our best to include your wishes and knowledge!

Registrations for IBA conference 2020 in Ukraine

Registrations are not open yet. The website dedicated to the IBA conference 2020 in Ukraine is under construction. You can access it, as usual, [here](#). Links to reservations for the venue, registration, sponsorship packages, programme and participation in the 3rd blackcurrant product competition will work shortly.

Blackcurrant harvest 2019

We had no chance of personally exchanging estimations for the blackcurrant harvest 2019 this year, as we did not have a conference in June. Yet, everybody involved in blackcurrants is interested to hear how it was for the others. Find some information [here](#)!

Globally less

Although we do not have the figures of all our partners from the blackcurrant growing countries worldwide, one thing is sure: the growers have harvested less blackcurrants in 2019 than in the previous year. This is certainly due to the fact that last year's harvest was particularly good. In comparison, it could hardly be better or even as good. As a consequence, last year's prices were in general rather low. 2019 brought a decrease in tonnage, and stability or increase in the prices. Still, happy are those who get more than 40 cents per kilo of blackcurrants for processing. Organic blackcurrants are of course more expensive: at least 20 cents per kilo, but everyone knows how difficult and costly it is to produce organic. The same is true for IQF, where prices are higher - but production costs are also.

A tendency to a little decrease

Whereas the global blackcurrant market seems to be saturated, the consequences are simple for many growers: they pull out their blackcurrant bushes and plant another crop. When asking for the statistics for the blackcurrant harvest 2019, this is a tendency in almost every country. As usual, the growers in the United Kingdom and France produce blackcurrants according to the needs of their long-term processing partners. Anywhere else in the world, many growers have a range of buyers. They produce what they think they are able to sell. As many of them have been unable to sell their crop in a good price over the past years (that is, reach the break-even point), they think of stopping – or have already stopped. The growing surface continuously decreases in the traditional growing countries Austria, Germany, Denmark and in the Netherlands. Lately also in New Zealand.

This can be seen as the consequence of around ten years of increase in the growing surfaces in Poland – after the country joined the EU in 2004. But for the first time this year, Poland reports a decrease in their growing surface. Obviously, low prices made an end to the frenzy for this crop.

We therefore hope that the smaller area (and thus the smaller amount of blackcurrants) going forward will lead to a matching of production and consumption. It should then be possible in future to fix a reasonable price for blackcurrants.

A few reports from countries about their Blackcurrant harvest 2019

We cannot report details from every country, but here are a few examples of what



happened in 2019.

France

The blackcurrant growing surface stays stable, with a little increase though. The past harvests have been difficult, and the need for French grown varieties in the industry stays at the seem level. Therefore, several growers have increased their surfaces. On the other hand, after two or three years of bad harvests, some growers had to stop their businesses. The situation is currently difficult because of visible climate changes. Spring frost happens almost every year, drought periods in June have become standard today. This year's harvest has seen a decrease by half for most of the growers at the very last minute. The heatwave of early July, where temperatures peaked at over 40°C, brought the blackcurrants to drop just a few days before harvest.

Germany

The blackcurrant harvest in Germany decreased by half compared to 2018. Whereas prices stay at a just acceptable level, some of the big growers have stopped or drastically decreased their surfaces. Here also, climate problems led to difficulties in the past three years at least: drought, spring frost and heatwaves



make the grower's lives difficult.



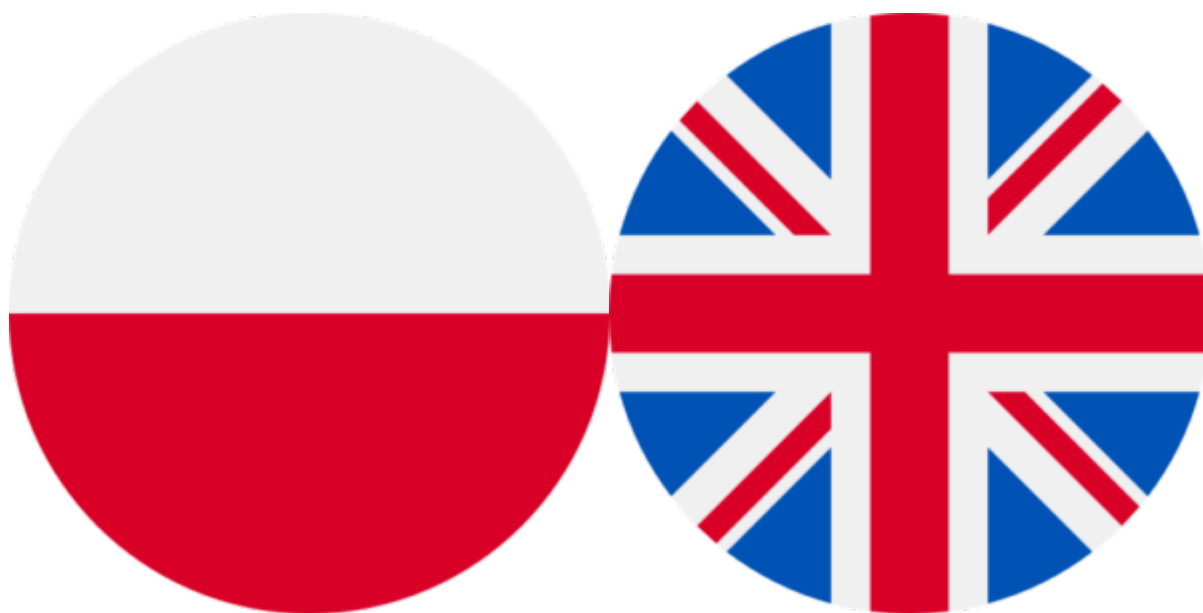
Latvia

The country got strong spring frost: temperatures were below -6°C in most of the territory of Latvia. As a consequence, with little results to await, many farmers even didn't harvest at all. The blackcurrant harvest 2019 in Latvia therefore accounts for not even 25% of last year's harvest. Prices are unchanged, though.

Poland

Poland reports that the national grower association's estimates will differ from official Central Statistical Office data. According to these, the harvest estimation is about 93.000 tonnes. KSPCP, though, believes that this estimation is too high. According to KSPCP, the harvest did not exceed 80.000 tonnes. These are only

preliminary estimates that may change. Generally, a decrease in production is visible, partly due to frost damage and drought.



United Kingdom

The growing surface in the United Kingdom K is roughly the same as in the past years. The country only produces to contracts and demand. Unlike most of the other countries, this year's climate didn't influence the blackcurrant harvest 2019 here. Certainly, this is also thanks to a well managed policy of developing varieties continuously according to the needs of the UK growers.

The COMPLETE STATISTICS of the blackcurrant harvest 2019

Our members may consult the complete statistics of the blackcurrant harvest 2019 in the IBA global production table, as usual. The previous statistics, including the figures for 2018, can be read by anyone [here](#).



The IBA updates it according to the data they are able to collect. However, they

are based on the good faith of those who provide the figures. The IBA cannot be held responsible for the absolute accuracy of the data.

Open Farm Day at the "Krogzeme" organic blackcurrant farm in Latvia

Hartwig Mathias Ebert has followed an invitation from the last IBA newsletter for one of the summer events 2019. He actually participated in the Open Farm Day in Latvia on 17th August. It took place at the "Krogzeme" organic blackcurrant farm, around 100 km North of Riga. He is happy to share his impressions in this article.



The Krogzeme organic farm - a few figures



The Open Farm Day started in the morning of Saturday, 17th August 2019. Owner and manager Andris Krogzems welcomed his visitors. The Krogzeme farm is 99 ha land, out of which 56 ha are planted with blackcurrants, 5 ha with sea buckthorn and 6 ha with seedlings for blackcurrants. As an additional business, Andris is selling machinery for berry growing in the Baltics for several brands. The farm hires permanently 7 employees, has a

turnover of up to 500.000 EUR per year and is a fully organic family farm. In the morning, Andris could welcome around 10 blackcurrant farmers, mainly from Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. The day was divided into a theoretical part with presentations and discussions in the morning, and a practical field part in the



afternoon, after a lunch break.

Experiences with organic blackcurrant growing

First of all, Andris explained his business in blackcurrants. Latvia produces over 2.000 tons per year. He himself produces 15-20% of it. As I understood he's one of the bigger organic farmers in the country and selling organic seedlings to many others. His strictly organic planting and the experiences that Andris made on the Krogzeme farm during the past ten years were the most interesting points of the morning session. Even more because none of the guests has ever done it so far. Nobody had any experience with handling an organic plantation.

Weeding - a major issue for organic growers

Given the fact that almost no pest protection with pesticides and herbicides is possible, the main issue in organic berry production becomes the mechanical weeding after planting the bushes. This is mainly done by a wide range of machines. As a matter of fact, it makes it very labour intensive and expensive. Andris vividly explained the operations of several machines and his experiences with them.

Economic aspects



Further items of the morning theoretical part were the economic aspects of organic production. This does not look so bad in the country. Prices are 50-70% higher than conventional blackcurrants. And in general, Andris is able to sell his whole yield with a margin, as he told us. This is not only a question of the scale of his production. For the guests of the Krogzeme farm, it was interesting to hear about the cost of his organic plantation in comparison to conventional production. In fact, growers in Latvia receive a payment of approximately 775 EUR/ ha for organic blackcurrant planting.

Latvia vs other markets

Then, Andris showed us a second presentation about his sea buckthorn production. It is under the management of his daughter, a few kilometers from his farm. The last part of the theoretical session were discussions about the Polish and the global blackcurrant market. We based our discussion on a short presentation I made. In comparison to the other markets, Latvia is a marginal market. But it feels the pressure of the Polish production and suffers from the Russian embargo.

Out in the fields of the Krogzeme organic farm

After a short break, with a very tasty lunch which Diana Krogzems had well prepared, the group went to the fields. There, the tractors were already waiting, armed with several machinery, to show us how they work.



As a seller of machinery, Andris keeps himself very well informed. Mainly, he looks for all available technology to do an effective weeding of the organic bushes. He therefore showed the machinery parts according to his best experience in the fields. As an example, one tractor was weeding a row. This demonstration allowed the guests to immediately evaluate the effects of this operation. At the end, he showed us machinery for planting seedlings, for fertilizing with manure and of course for mechanical harvesting.

Thank you, Andris!

I would like to thank a lot Andris Krogzems and his wife for this intensive, very interesting day in Latvia and their warm hospitality. It was worth the long travel to meet him and learn about organic blackcurrant growing at his farm.

Hopefully we will meet him in Ukraine at the next IBA conference in 2020.

Mathias Ebert

Further reading:

Mathias Ebert has given a presentation of the Polish blackcurrant market at our last conference in Angers 2018.

You may consult it [here](#)

Orskov Foods - Processing blackcurrants (and more!) in Denmark

When the IBA Executive met in Denmark last April, we were invited to visit one of the privileged partners of our Danish grower members: Orskov Foods. A most interesting and pleasant visit.

Welcome at Orskov Foods!



Highly modern equipment, cleanliness, tidiness - and the warmest welcome at Orskov Foods. While we are choosing among a whole range of sandwiches (bigger than any burger in the world!) and drinks (from smoothies over juices to cold coffees), we are waiting for Per Moller Andersen. He is one of the 4 owners of Danish company, which still belongs to the

families of its founders. The shelves of the meeting room are full of several non alcoholic and alcoholic cold drinks from the range of products that Orskov Foods packs for their customers. One of them contains a mix of oat milk, apple puree and coconut. It would certainly also taste very nice with a bit of blackcurrant puree or concentrate in place of the coconut...



But I have to interrupt my thoughts when Per arrives after finishing his phone call. Immediately, he has to face our questions, because a new sort of packaging caught our eyes. “They are eco cans, from Lamican, a Finnish company. We have started using this new packaging two and a half years ago. I’ll show you how it works when we’ll have a walk through our production unit.” smiles Per. Definitely, tripping Scandinavia is worthwhile!

Products and production units

“We have two production sites here in Denmark. Actually, Orskov Foods A/S is the result of a merge between Ørskov Frugt and Ørbæk Mostfabrik in 2012. Both companies had been founded 80 years ago, and we still have both sites. One packs around 10.000 tons of fresh apples and pears for the Danish retail market yearly, the other one produces between 8 and 10.000 tons of IQF, purees and juices in total.” Orskov Foods doesn’t make any concentrate. They process 60.000 tons of fruit or fruit products with 300 employees. Most amazingly, they still hold 120 hectares of land, where they grow apples and pears. But of course, around 250 growers in Denmark, Chili and Poland are their partners. With facilities in Poland and Chile for a total of 300 employees, they have a storage capacity of 18.000 m² for fresh, cold and chilled products. Orskov Foods sells fresh fruit in retail (apples, pears and strawberries). But of course, they also produce and sell

their own retail juice products in 300, 500 or 1000ml packs.



Three activities at Orskov Foods

Orskov Foods stands on three legs. The production of liquids represents between 5 and 10% of the turnover. “80% of the drinks we produce are apple juices, cold pressed and sterilized”, explains Per Moller Andersen. Fresh apples for the retail

market count for 25%. Frozen berries for the industry make up the rest of the turnover. Blackcurrants account for 3000 tonnes in total, out of which less than half stays Danish, the other half comes from Poland. Orskov Foods, Poland was established in 1990 and has now two facilities in the country for soft fruits and vegetables. Another Orskov Foods unit in Chile is still very young: it opened in 2012. It allows to be present with IQF soft fruits in America and opposite season.

Products and production units

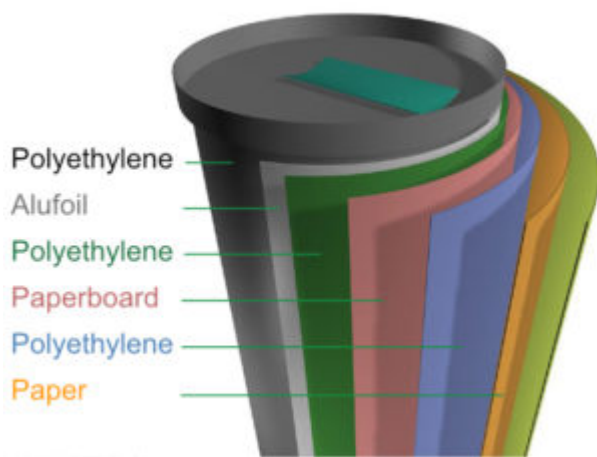


Coming back to the eco cans, we wonder where and how Orskov uses them? “Orskov Foods is a specialist in co-packing drinks. Generally, our customers design their packaging and supply the liquids, we do the packing. This is how Lamican approached us for doing the packaging with their eco cans. It is a highly sophisticated way of packing liquids, an alternative and sustainable solution. And thus a tendency in the market”, says



Per.

Focus on “Lamicans”



Lamican packages are made up of three

materials:

- Paperboard,
- Plastic,
- Aluminum

Lamican is 70% paperboard which is made from wood fibre - a natural and renewable resource when sourced from forests that are responsibly managed, like PEFC.

The cans are fully recyclable with other household cartons, at the recycling plant. Aluminium is the only material at the moment which can prevent oxygen transmission in the long run. Therefore, it is necessary in the production of the cans."A LamiCan is clean package that reflects its contents. An aseptic package which has a positive effect on your product. You need less additives, it is risk-free, retains vitamins and other nutritional values for its entire shelf life, and it retains good taste and appearance/colour. Finally, our packages help to reduce everyone's carbon footprint by avoiding the need for refrigerated transport and storage. In fact, the 'Lamican' enables drinks to be stored ambiently and has the lowest carbon footprint when compared to aluminium and PET", says Tanja Väisänen from the marketing department at Lamican. (More information on alternative packages [here](#).)

"We deliver longer shelf life (6-12 months), distribution without cold chain and



retailing without cold chain.” This system is really impressive. Unfortunately, no blackcurrant product is available in eco cans yet.

After this highly interesting visit, we could return to our Executive meeting refreshed and inspired. Hopefully, you will soon benefit from the decisions we took and from the work we could accomplish after being perfectly refreshed at Orskov Foods.