

IBA President's outlook into 2016



Predictions are always difficult, especially when they deal about the future. Luckily, I have a crystal ball which shows the future (it is a very interesting and powerful tool, only presidents can borrow it). Working with it is not easy, because it shows blurred pictures. But there are future trends which are not surprising: for example that we get older and work longer - or that everything goes digital.

The evolution shaped our bodies: moles got the best hands for digging, other animals got a long throat to get the best leaves in high trees. We humans have the biggest brain - which is often useful, but all the other parts of our body are still a very ancient construction with old fashioned needs. The fittest survive - and today, it seems the fittest may be those who sit in front of their computers. I was curious to see how it would affect our being in many generations? Is evolution still working? I therefore switched my crystal ball into the long range mode, scared to discover humans consisting of only two parts: a bottom to sit on, with a finger for wiping displays. But as far as I could see, it seems a bottom with a finger is not our appearance in the future.

After this very relieving discovery, I continued to look into the ball - and was very pleased to discover that health is among the future mega trends! Pleased, because health and nutrition belong together; and we blackcurrant people are lucky to make the best natural food available. That is good news!

Unfortunately, the short range mode was more serious. It showed a world in disorder: extremists, climate change, refugees, just to name a few. There are big tasks ahead. Luckily, we have political recipes which enabled us to live in peace and wealth for the last decades. Nationalism, separation, fencing and other dividing forces played no role in it. My crystal ball told me that the political recipes we experienced will work again in future.

It also showed me that our IBA is small and without big influence - for the

moment. But as we understood that working together is better than working against each other, I could see that our future is bright. And this future is not so far away.

Best wishes to all of you for a Good Year 2016 !

Dirk Herdieckerhoff,

IBA President

Blackcurrant - the stress hero



There is enormous health potential in our superfruit: the blackcurrant. Stress hero is how it can be defined generally. Therefore, the motto of the last European Blackcurrant conference in Vilnius in 2015 has been “Blackcurrant - the stress hero”. And not surprisingly, the emphasis of the next International Blackcurrant Conference in Ashford will also be on the health benefits of the blackcurrant.

Various institutes all over the world carry out extremely interesting research work. Of course, you may want to know more about it.

We have summed up the health benefits claimed for the blackcurrant - covering a wide range! - on our website here.

But this is just a small insight into the wonderful potential of the superfruit blackcurrant. More to come...

The IBA web-library online again

Conference presentations online again! After a few weeks of transition and development of this section, the IBA web-library is now once again fully available for our members!

We have collected the presentations of our annual conferences over the past few years. Therefore, you can view whatever information we have got from the researchers, marketers and partners here. You need to register for accessing this section. Also, you can only access it if you are a member of the IBA.

By now, almost 100 presentations are classified in 4 categories of interest. They are recognizable with their icons:



agronomy/plant breeding/horticulture



health research



market/demand & supply



supplier & customer information

For those who have been present at the conferences, you may of course search by conference. You can also enter keywords, like the name of the presenter, title of the presentation etc.

We are looking forward to adding much more highly interesting presentations into this library after the next conference in Ashford.

China - a new market for blackcurrants?



More than 1.3 billion inhabitants - all likely to use any kind of product made of blackcurrants! China, the second biggest economic power of the world, has become a major export market for many countries and all sorts of products. Even if its economic growth has started slowing down over the past five years: let's see what is going on for blackcurrants in China.

China itself is growing blackcurrants (varieties Botrop, Ben Lomond, Han Feng mainly) in the North West (Xinjiang) and North East (Heilongjiang) of the country. China has its own research institute in the university of Jilin. The researchers of this institute were very kind to give us more information about the blackcurrant situation in China.

A limited local production covers 3000 hectares. Here, blackcurrants growing is part of family businesses. Most of the times, people work in small farms without any employees: the size of the blackcurrant fields are less than 1/2 hectare.

The local food industry uses blackcurrants in yogurts, juices or cordials, jams, sweets and blackcurrant wines. Nevertheless, the production is very limited: the Chinese food tradition does not really include the consumption of jams, of example. Finally, it is evident: blackcurrants do not yet delight the Chinese taste buds. The fruit is rather unknown to the biggest part of the population. There is not much promotion of the health benefits of the blackcurrant yet. And this results in a very low demand for our superfruit.

BUT: we keep getting requests for blackcurrants and pomace because of their high anthocyanin content. The deep red colour of blackcurrants (red is a lucky colour for the Chinese) and blackcurrant extracts seem interesting in China.

We therefore have reason to think that this huge country will soon become a market for blackcurrants. As it has already become for wines or other products. Let's keep it in mind!