

# Promoting blackcurrants: a remarkable Polish initiative to be copied

A campaign to promote blackcurrants - this kind of initiative had already been taken by the French association of blackcurrant producers (ANCG) in 2009, and another one has been ongoing in the UK for several years now: [www.blackcurrantfoundation.co.uk](http://www.blackcurrantfoundation.co.uk) and [www.britishsummerfruits.co.uk](http://www.britishsummerfruits.co.uk). The goal is of course to try and drive demand for blackcurrants by bringing its wonderful taste, various uses and extraordinary health benefits to the better knowledge of consumers.

This time, a Polish campaign has been started in 2015 for a three-year period for a total cost of almost 4 Million €, - with a difference to the other initiatives: it is promoting berries in general (blackcurrant, blueberry, raspberry and strawberry), and in five countries (Poland, Austria, Sweden, Finland and the Czech Republic) at the same time. Driven by Polish organizations of fruit growers (Association of Polish Fruit Growers - ZSRP, Blueberry Growers Association - SPBA, Strawberry Growers Association - SPT, the National Association of Blackcurrant Growers - KSPCP), the campaign is funded for half of its cost by the European Union, 30% have been brought up by the Polish government, and the four grower associations contribute for the remaining 20%.



The campaign is running under the slogan “Extraordinary properties of ordinary fruit”. With a series of informational and promotional activities on two websites ([www.power-fruits.eu/en/](http://www.power-fruits.eu/en/) and [www.owocejagodowe.pl/](http://www.owocejagodowe.pl/)), it aims at familiarizing consumers with the high quality, richness in minerals and vitamins and the unique taste of berries from the European Union. The development of our domestic markets and the education of consumers are a priority, and every blackcurrant growing country may go for similar initiatives.

And hopefully, this is how we can manage the reconciliation of supply with demand.

Read more and more.

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## **Blackcurrant price disaster 2015 - what's up for 2016?**



The blackcurrant harvest has now been completed in New Zealand - and this is how the season 2015/16 ends for the blackcurrant growers worldwide. While growers in Europe are now harvesting buds or preparing for a new fruit harvest season and new chances, 2015 had brought a great deal of frustration and

has left a bitter taste in their mouths:

Overall, the harvest was good, but prices too low to reach the break-even level. Several countries already announced a decrease of their acreage, and we will hear about it in detail at the next conference in Ashford.

Everybody wonders what happened to the biggest European producer: Poland. From last year's IBA-conference in Vilnius, we remember that their national blackcurrant association KSPCP wanted to ask the Polish government to compensate growers who would decide to limit their production by partially or totally liquidating their plantations. The initiative has been taken, and the KSPCP was hoping to have an elimination of 20% of the blackcurrant growing surface in their country. This would have been a long-term solution to overproduction and low prices, and was highly expected and appreciated by other European country associations. But not very surprisingly (parliamentary elections in October 2015

in Poland!), the Polish government decided instead to give each blackcurrant grower 150 Euro per hectare in compensation of the low market prices. Not the kind of solution to help limiting production and persuade farmers to change crops... But we do not know yet how Poland's 4000 growers have reacted to the price disaster in 2015 - and their reaction is decisive for the evolution of growing surfaces.

Growers all over the Northern hemisphere are now looking anxiously towards budspring and harvest in summer: Will there be spring frost and nip everything in the bud? Will there be hail? Will prices climb this year thanks to less offer than demand, with probably lower acreage in total?

We have to wait until June and our bi-annual international meeting to have a few answers.

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## **Innovative blackcurrant product competition**



The 5th International Blackcurrant Conference in Ashford, Kent, is launching a competition for blackcurrant products in three categories: drinks, food products and functional food. Through peer evaluation and an expert panel, the Blackcurrant product of 2016 will be elected.

You have an interesting product to present? Register now!

Or maybe you know someone who might have an interesting product to present?

Share the information!

*More information and registration*