

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.



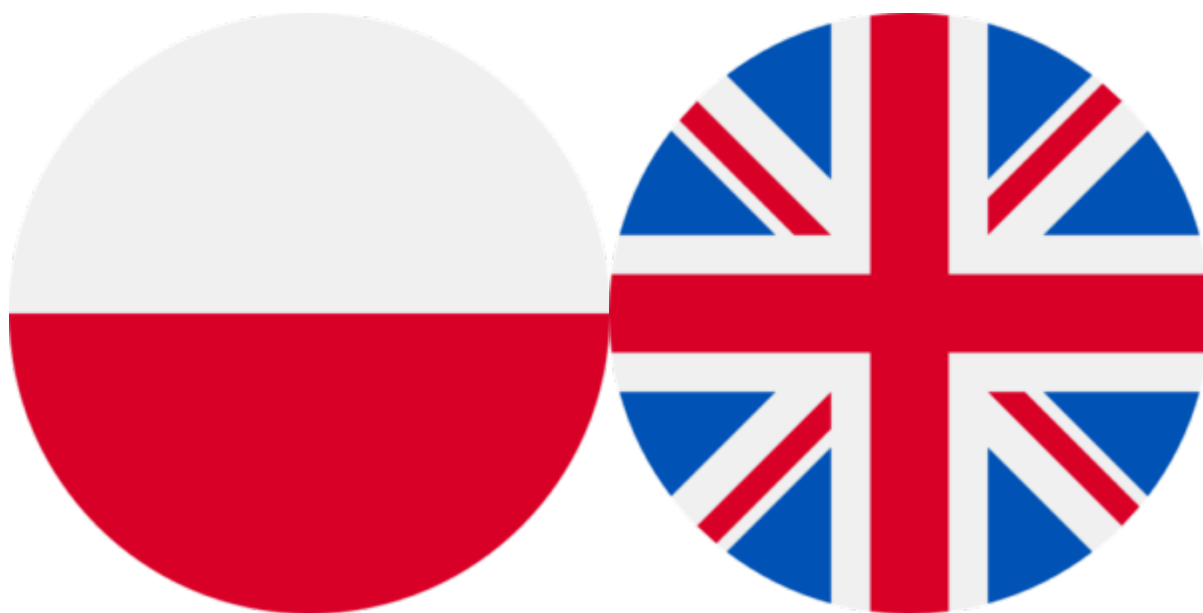
Latvia

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

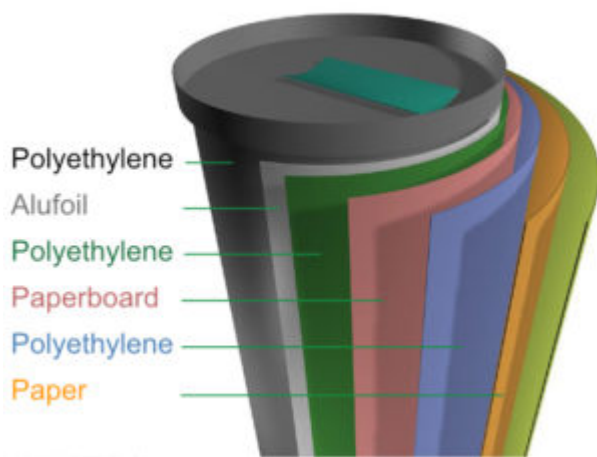


Coming back to the eco cans, we wonder where and how Orskov uses them? “Orskov Foods is a specialist in co-packing drinks. Generally, our customers design their packaging and supply the liquids, we do the packing. This is how Lamican approached us for doing the packaging with their eco cans. It is a 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.

IBA Conference 2020: Let's explore Ukraine!

Very recently, Ukraine has joined the International Blackcurrant Association. Their involvement starts with a huge project: the promise to host the next IBA conference 2020 - in Lviv!

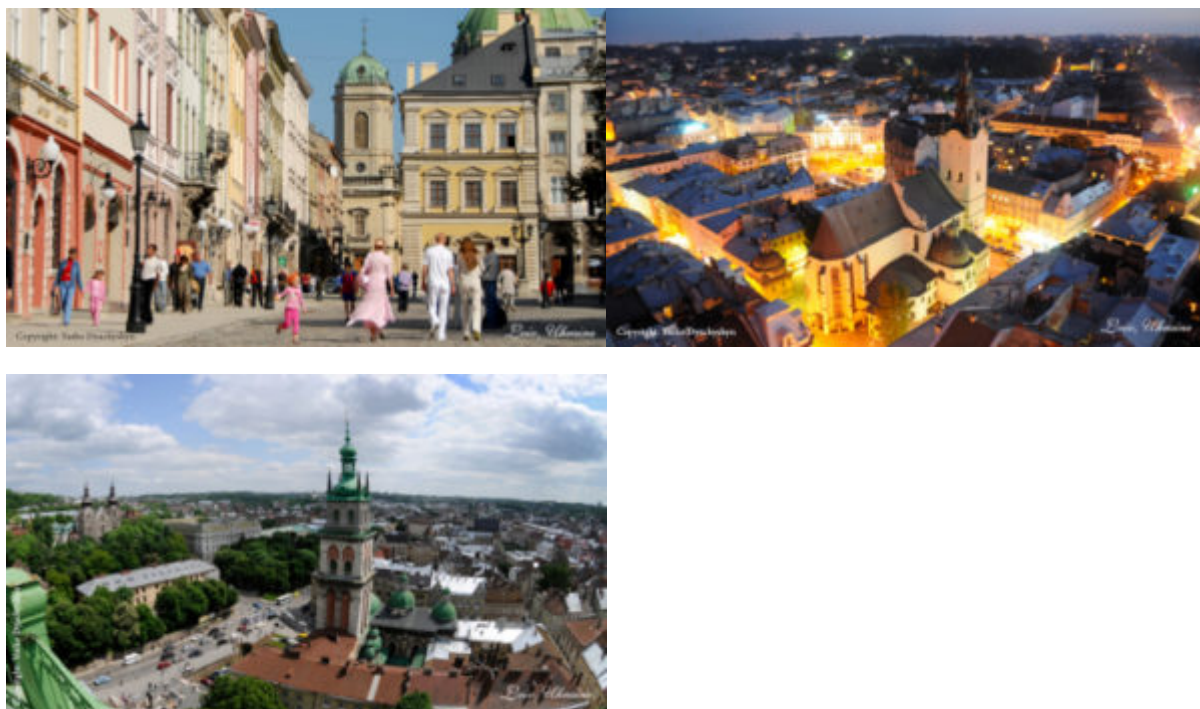
Where are we going?

You may think that we are desperately trying to challenge your linguistic skills when we choose the locations for our international conferences. After Goes, Nyborg, Waldenburg, Bialowieza and Angers (others were easier to pronounce...), we are now off for LVIV (in phonetical writing: [l'viʊ]). This time, we give you another challenge. You will also have to adapt to a new alphabeth for reading: Cyrillic! But luckily, you may find other spellings and

pronunciations for the city, more suitable for your tongue, like Lwow or Lemberg. It is the same place, and it is in Western Ukraine, not far from the Polish border. This is where we will hold the IBA conference 2020, and explore blackcurrants in Ukraine.

Blackcurrants in Ukraine

Western Ukraine is a huge berry growing area. Even though Ukraine also grows blackcurrants around Kiev and further east in the country, the recently created Ukrainian Berries association has chosen Lviv for our conference. The city, with less than a million inhabitants, is the largest in Western Ukraine. It has nice facilities for hosting conferences. And it has a beautiful historical center, which is on the UNESCO world heritage list.



Some bit of history

As you may know, Ukraine has not always been independent. After several hundred years of foreign domination (Kingdom of Poland before the 17th, Habsburg Empire in the 19th, and Soviet Union in the 20th century, mainly), we will visit a young independent country. Ukraine has become a part of the free trade area with the European Union in 2016. Blackcurrant growing is expanding in Ukraine. Most probably, their production will soon largely influence the world's blackcurrant industry.

How to come to the IBA conference 2020 in Lviv

It may be too early yet to make your travel arrangements. But as usual, we will give you all the information you need in one of our website sections. We will update you with useful hints for travelling, for the venue and many more. In the meantime, you may already check out general information on Lviv, on the Ukrainian blackcurrant industry, flights leading to Lviv and administrative information for visas (if requested).

We are looking forward to meeting you in Lviv for the IBA conference 2020!

“Situated just like Rome on seven hills, among the woods, in the valley of the Poltva River, Lviv was always noted for both an advantageous strategic position and an exceptionally beautiful landscape.” is what the tourist office of Lviv says.

Doesn't it sound really exciting?

STEF Dijon - specialists for freezing blackcurrants

A huge majority of the blackcurrant liqueurs of the world come from Burgundy (France). Not amazingly, you can also find special equipments, infrastructures and companies for the same purpose. STEF Dijon is part of the chain, with solutions for freezing blackcurrants.

Special infrastructure for a special production

In 2014, STEF has adopted an important strategy for the whole cassis production chain. They decided to build a warehouse specially for the needs of the cassis industry in Burgundy. A huge cold storage room of 14.000 m³ is only a part of the whole investment. In total, 2.000 m² are dedicated to blackcurrant storage close to Dijon. *Read more in the global press* STEF Dijon has an annual turnover of 28

million Euro and employs 159 people. Of course, not all of it thanks to blackcurrants only. But the existence of this unique site in France is closely linked to the blackcurrants - for the needs of the liqueur manufacturers. Walking through the warehouses, you can also find peaches, apricots, other berries and cherries. And also all kind of other deep frozen foodstuff.

For the needs of “Crème de cassis”



Every year, when the blackcurrant harvest starts in France, not only the growers are most busy. While the farmers get onto their harvesters in t-shirts and shorts, several seasonal workers put on heavy warm clothes and gloves. During the hottest time of the year, they will work in such dresses in the warehouses of STEF, a company specializing in refrigerated logistics. Because out of the 6000 tonnes of blackcurrants harvested in France, half will go into the production of “crème de cassis” (blackcurrant liqueur).



And of course, not all of these blackcurrant

can be used immediately. Therefore, STEF Dijon has specialized in freezing blackcurrants.



The process - explanations from Sylvain Tatreau, branch manager

“We receive blackcurrants over a duration of three weeks here. They come from the producers in Burgundy or from other production places in France. The best solution for our clients was to freeze the blackcurrants as close as possible to the place of their processing (in and around Dijon). We can handle up to 220 tonnes of blackcurrants per day. They arrive in crates of 17kg. In peak periods, there are 320 trucks coming and going per day on this site. We therefore give appointments to the producers.”



“Given the huge amount of

blackcurrants to deal with in a short period of time, we cannot freeze them individually. This process takes too much time, and has to undergo temperatures of -35 to -50°C. In our warehouse, we store between -18 and



-30°C.”

Freezing blackcurrants at STEF Dijon, step by step



Vehicles arrive fully loaded on a weighbridge. The staff present at the reception assigns a batch number for each blackcurrant variety. They put aside a sample of each for analyses. STEF's clients will come and take them to their respective laboratories in order to check the sugar content and residue levels. The staff members bring the crates into the cold room for 48 hours. They can handle 800 tonnes of



blackcurrants per week.

Reconditioning



Once the blackcurrants are frozen, the staff starts to recondition them. This process will last for more than two months. Staff members empty the crates on a selection desk and remove remaining leaves or boughs from the blackcurrants. From the conveyor belt, the blackcurrants fall into big bags, with a weight according to the clients' needs. 76% of STEF's clients are small and medium sized enterprises.



From the reconditioning room back into the cold room, the big bags can now stay at the warehouse for a maximum

duration of 2 years. Whenever the companies now need blackcurrants, they can fetch them from the STEF warehouse and process them.

STEF Dijon - a unique project for blackcurrants

“Storing under such conditions is much more expensive than storing under room temperature.” explains Sylvain Tartreaux. “For a warehouse of the same size than ours, this represents an additional cost of 2 million Euro. We therefore have signed a contract with our partners over 9 years, which allowed us to build up this special equipment for their needs.” Today, STEF is the European leader in freezering logistics.

STEF is present also in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. But the warehouse in Burgundy with its infrastructure and working methods adapted to the blackcurrant industry, under standards of ISO 9001 and 50 001, is unique.

Flashback IBA conference Angers

Another of our conferences is past, and allowed us to meet, talk and learn. We shared great moments of gathering together and listened to a huge lot of interesting presentations. In total, 195 people from 16 countries came the more or less long way to Angers (France) for our favorite little berry: the blackcurrant.

IBA Conference Angers - Day 1

Visit of New Holland

The 6th International Blackcurrant Conference started on 6th June, with a visit of the New Holland plant in Coex. The participants could see where and

how their Braud harvesters (or tractors) are being produced. They enjoyed a very warm welcome by the marketing and commercial staff. A one-hours visit led through the different parts of the factory. Everything starts by huge metal sheets: the workers and most precise machinery cut them, bring them into the right shape, before they go to the welding area. From there, they go through painting tunnels and come out in yellow and blue colors. Final steps: assembling all the pieces of the machine and checking the finished product. An amazing and most impressive visit!

Farm Visit



deep look into blackcurrant
plantations

On their way back to Angers, the participants went to see a blackcurrant farm in Lirè. It is always a great moment for blackcurrant growers to see how others get along. Seeing different varieties, getting aware of similar or totally different problems with the crop and sharing experiences. This is what the participants appreciate and await from every conference. Blackdown, Noir de Bourgogne, Andorine, Andega and Royal de Naples are the varieties that only French growers plant. This is a special need for the producers of the famous French Crème de Cassis (blackcurrant liqueur).



blackcurrant farm visit

Dinner - time to talk

The day ended at the conference venue, the Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture (Higher School for Agriculture) of Angers, with a picnic dinner.

IBA Conference Angers - Day 2

Grower's Day

A day dedicated to the growers and their needs: First of all, a world tour of the blackcurrant production in each country. It allows to share statistics on growing surfaces and yields of the previous year. But most importantly: a representative from each country who talks about the current situation and his forecast for the current year's harvest. Statistics can be viewed [here](#).



(Access restricted to IBA members)

Farm visit, partners, Gala dinner



The following presentations focused on technical and economical challenges in blackcurrant growing. At the end of this morning session, another farm visit led the delegates to “Les Rosiers sur Loire”. There, they enjoyed the Ludeau-family’s hospitality and expertise. The Ludeau’s exemplar farm gave place, of course, to field visits – but also much more. Several exhibitors could present their know-how in weed-control or pollination. The delegates could see the dedicated machines and get precise explanations.



exploring pollination solutions



It was a lovely summer day, which ended up with a relaxing boat ride on the Maine-river. Finally came the delicious gala dinner (where every dish contained blackcurrants in different forms) in a spectacular reception hall in Angers.



Gala Dinner

IBA Conference Angers - Day 3

Blackcurrant Marketing and Consumption

The last day of the conference went in the direction of marketing, health and promotion. It was consumer-orientated and attracted several blackcurrant transforming companies. They could listen to 16 experts in different fields of application. But blackcurrant was always the center of interest. If you couldn't be with us, remember that we collected all the presentations from this conference (and previous conferences). They are available here, but with

restricted access. Some contain sensitive information, and only IBA members can read them.

You want to become a member and access the whole information? Click [here!](#)

Blackcurrant Product Competition 2018



Rock's blackcurrant cordial
wins competition

At the end of the morning session, we came to know about the winners of the 2nd International blackcurrant products competition. The jury of the competition has been very impressed by the range of innovative products presented. Several students from the ESA have worked on the creation of new blackcurrant based products. The result was exciting!

Read more



Blackcurrant Kefir, by Joséphine Morgand, Mathilde Souvestre and Louise Anselme

In the afternoon, the IBA held its General Meeting (minutes available [here](#)) where Jens Pedersen took over the role of President of the IBA after Anthony Snell.

Upon individual choice, the conference ended either with a visit of Terra Botanica, the Giffard liqueur factory, or the meeting of the IBA Agronomy and Plant Breeding sector group.

After reading this, you are certainly keen on joining us for the 7th International Blackcurrant Conference in 2020 in ...? Well, we have not yet taken the decision of the date and place for the next IBA conference - but we will inform you by the end of the year!

**Amazing new stuff at the
Blackcurrant Products Contest**

2018

The second international blackcurrant products contest 2018 revealed an amazing range of new products. This could be possible thanks to the work of a group of students from the Higher School of Agriculture in Angers (ESA).

Blackcurrant products contest 2018: the competition gets regular!

Since 2016, the International Blackcurrant Association organizes a “blackcurrant contest” every two years. Any company manufacturing traditional or innovative products with blackcurrants can take part in these contests. They always take place during our international blackcurrant conferences. The participants can present as much products as they want in different categories.

- Cassis, cordials, juices
- Food products (Preserves, fruit leathers, pies, confectionary)
- Functional food (nutraceutical products which offer proven health benefits, made from all elements of the blackcurrant fruit, backed by hard science)

Angers 2018: New contest, new chances to win!



The second blackcurrant contest 2018 in Angers has put much focus on innovation. The organizers had therefore established a partnership with the

local Higher School of Agriculture. 35 students have worked on the development of new blackcurrant products. They had therefore received basic ingredients from our partners. Then, out of these basics, they prepared an amazing range of 11 tasty and innovative products. These are now only waiting for commercialization by a big transforming company.

Together with these products not yet available in the market, the panel tasted and tested a range of already existing products.



Tough times for the judging panel



Judging panel blackcurrant competition

“We were stunned by the creativity of the students”, said Florent Baillard, president of the judging panel. Together with Yves Gidoïn from Vègèpolys, a competitiveness cluster of companies and research centers around innovative projects, Stéphane Monnier from Giffard, one of the leading liqueur manufacturers, and Ronan Symoneaux from the “Grappe”-lab of the Higher School of Agriculture (ESA Angers), they tested the products one day before the start of the conference. The contest had been coordinated by Driss Ellothmani from the Higher School of Agriculture (ESA Angers).

“They were not only innovative. They also managed to create products which a company could be put into the market immediately. The quality of their work was amazing. Finally, we could decide about the winners with difficulty only”, he said.

Products and winners of the Blackcurrant Products Contest 2018



Blackcurrant Kefir, by Joséphine Morgand, Mathilde Souvestre and Louise Anselme

Blackcurrant kefir, sparkling drinks, cocktails without alcohol, drinkable yogurts, biofilm to be used for makis, dehydrated buds and pastries astonished the panel. On the last day of the conference, they announced their decision.

The kefir presented by Joséphine Morgand, Mathilde Souvestre and Louise Anselme won the first price in the category of drinks.



Guillaume Grousset and François-Xavier Sobczak won the price for other food products with their dehydrated blackcurrant buds.





Rock's blackcurrant cordial wins competition

Out of the 7 company products (jams, liqueurs, beer, cordial, gin), the organic blackcurrant cordial from Rocks convinced the panel. It won the price of the category of company products. The companies submitting these products were:

Le Cassissium (France)

La Piautre (France)

MacKays Scottish Preserves (United Kingdom)

Radnor Preserves (United Kingdom)

Rocks (United Kingdom)

White Heron Drinks (United Kingdom)

Windmill Hill (United Kingdom).



And last, but not least, we want to say THANK YOU VERY MUCH to the sponsors of the blackcurrant product contest 2018. The bank Cr dit Agricole and Giffard were generous and allowed us to reward our winners.



Huge Thanks to all!

the IBA thanks all those who made this contest possible.

**Maybe you, our reader, will have something to present at the
next competition in 2020?**

All IBA conference presentations online: check our library

IBA conference presentations online

You couldn't attend one of our conferences? There is something you would like to check in one of the presentations you listened to? You need documentation on a certain topic?

We can help you!

Difficult to remind everything from 2 days of intensive work. When we have our conferences, you listen to more than 20 different speakers. More than 20 presentations on different subjects. Nobody can expect you to remember everything precisely.

But we are there to assist you: we have collected most of the IBA conference presentations of the past 10 years in our web library.

This allows you to view, read, check whatever information you need. The IBA conference presentations are gathered together by year of presentation. As we index all of them, you can also search by category of interest, name of the

speaker or keywords.  agronomy / plant breeding / horticulture  health
 research  market / demand & supply  supplier & customer information

Restrictions

Only members of the IBA can access the web library. If you want to view the IBA conference presentations, you will have to open a member session. Two possible options:

- *You are a member of the IBA (you already registered individually or you are a member of one of our country associations).*

If you already have a website user account, you will now have to enter your user name and password.

If you don't have an account, please choose a user name and password and submit your request. The IBA General Manager will grant you access as soon as possible.

- *You are not yet a member of the IBA. In this case, you may easily become a member upon registration [here](#).*

If you do not want to register, feel free to contact our General Manager for your request of information: info@blackcurrant-iba.com

Nectars de Bourgogne reveals the blackcurrant

Florent and Emmanuelle Baillard share their passion of blackcurrants in two different ways: Florent produces the fruits, Emmanuelle processes them under the name “Nectars de Bourgogne”.

A success story from Burgundy (France).

Back to the roots



Before it comes to Nectars de Bourgogne, it is a long way to go. At first, like many other blackcurrant growers, Florent continued a family tradition. His father originally had a farm based on both polyculture (vines, cereal crop and pasture) and cattle farming over 40 hectares. In the 1970ies, he started growing blackcurrants on 3 hectares. The blackcurrants were harvested by hand, and traders sold them. In those days, there were 17 blackcurrant growers in the same area - today they are 7!

Huge changes and Socofruits

From the beginning, Florent's father had a contract with one of the blackcurrant liqueur manufacturers, Vèdrenne. This is how it came that other growers wanted him to manage a loose syndication of several blackcurrant farmers, called Socofruits. They finally established a cooperative in 1983. Then, in 1986, they changed into a producers' association. Ten years later, they became a producer organization, with a sort of family management. At most, they were 200 members in the beginning of the 1990ies. Together, they produced 12 tonnes of blackcurrant buds and 800 tonnes of blackcurrants per year. This moment was also a turning point for the whole blackcurrant industry. The harvest got mecanised. Florent's father stopped cattle farming, cereal production, removed the vines, and increased the surface for blackcurrants. In total, he grew blackcurrants over 10 hectares. Socofruits today has 60 members, produces 20 tonnes of blackcurrant buds and 1500 tonnes of fruits.

Florent Baillard's success story



At the same moment, Florent Baillard was finishing his studies in agriculture and agribusiness, specializing in oenology. He started his career as a salesman with Laurent Perrier. His sales area covered central France, and the range of products went from wines over champagnes to whiskeys. "Too much tastings, too much alcohol and parties with clients, and too much driving", is what disturbed Florent after a few years. In 1997, he took over the family's blackcurrant farm (with still some vines), together with the presidency of Socofruits.



Florent Baillard on his farm

Today, he is head of a family business which employs 5 agricultural workers. They grow vines over 10 hectares, blackcurrants for bud production over 20 hectares, and 70 hectares for fruits. Half of their activity is also covered by service delivery: weeding, equipment rental and the like. As head of Socofruits, Florent Baillard extended the geographical coverage over 5 départements (almost 35,000 km²). “This geographical increase helps to share different conditions related to climate and soil”, explains Florent.



Florent Baillard's farm



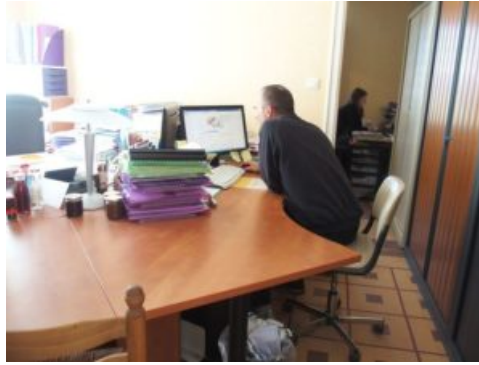
Florent in front of one of his
BC fields



Machines on Florent's farm



The market



Office work

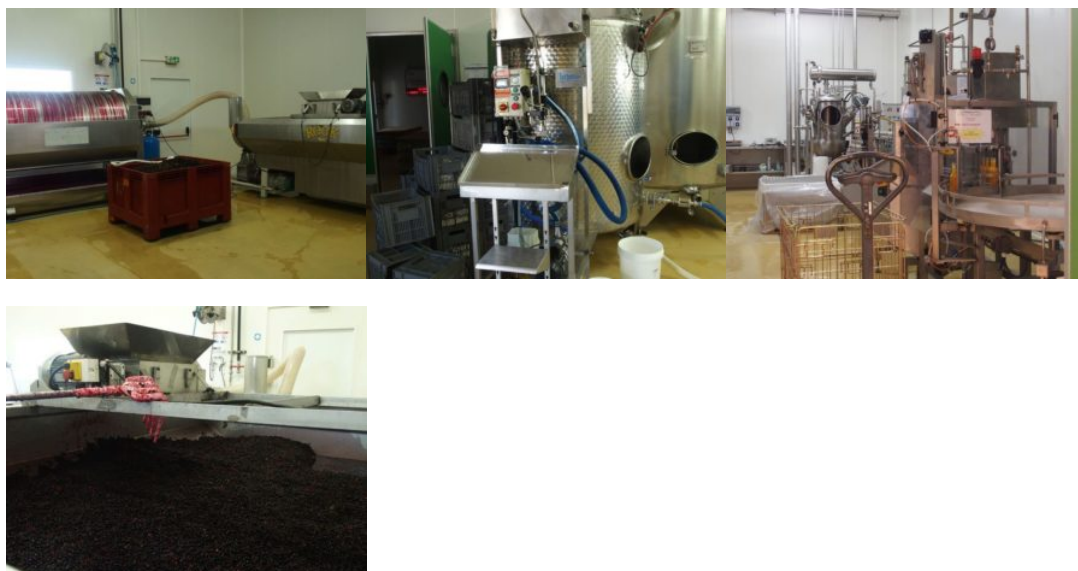
Until the early 2000s, Socofruits delivered all their blackcurrants to the French liqueur manufacturers. Since then, cassis consumption declined, and farmers of other regions of France entered the blackcurrant market. Florent Baillard therefore started to explore new solutions. Unfortunately, there were not much market opportunities for other blackcurrant based products.

The birth of Nectars de Bourgogne

Out of a critical situation came a genius idea. Florent's wife Emmanuelle, also trained in agrobusiness, started Nectars de Bourgogne in 2004. "We were convinced that there was a market, at least a local one, for blackcurrant and other juices and for jams", explains Florent. "Very rapidly, the business started to grow, and we needed to invest. At that moment, Socofruits joined in. This is how today, one third of the fruits produced within Socofruits go into the production of something else than liqueurs."



production site



Open day

Emmanuelle Baillard and her team



Emmanuelle Baillard

Today, Nectars de Bourgogne employs 10 people. They make juices and jams with

the local blackcurrants, but also with other fruits which Emmanuelle selects from the best in the world. She has a watchful eye on market trends (some of her products are organic) and innovation. Together with local chefs and companies, she works on the creation of new products.



innovative products

Finally, Nectars de Bourgogne has not stopped its expansion. Emmanuelle carefully invests little by little in more and more sophisticated material. The products go into a niche market of fine food. Emmanuelle is not afraid of showing Burgundy expertise all over the world. She participates and is successful in trade fairs in Japan or in the Middle East. But of course, France is the first focus. You can find Nectars de Bourgogne products in local hotels and in the fine food area of supermarkets - not to forget the internet.



sparkling
blackcurrant or

lemon juice



blackcurrant
juice, vinegar
and pepper



Emmanuelle with visitors
at Nectars de
Bourgogne's open day



blackcurrant
caramel



shelf of stickers

Perspectives for the future



blackcurrant field with
scales

Although both businesses turn quite well, Florent Baillard does not feel totally secured. “Our fear is mainly related to scales. Last year, we have lost 35% of our yield and plants because of the scales. One third of my farm has been affected by these insects. They destroy a whole field within three years. Therefore, we try a lot, from chemical products to ladybugs, to limit the effects.”



scale damages

To wrap it up, Florent and Emmanuelle Baillard will continue to innovate – in growing methods, market opportunities and products. “Even florists use a small part of our blackcurrants. They cut and buy branches on 2 hectares on my farm. They use them to make floral arrangements!” concludes Florent.

Blackcurrant product competition 2018: GO!!!

After a very interesting and successful first edition of an international blackcurrant product competition, the organizers of the next IBA conference repeat the experience. The second edition will thus take place from 5th to 8th June in Angers, France, in the framework of the 6th International Blackcurrant Conference.

The French currant growers association (ANCG) and the Higher School of Agriculture of Angers (ESA) co-organize the event.



Blackcurrant product competition –
the winners



Blackcurrant product competition

Conditions of the international blackcurrant product competition 2018

Any company or any individual can participate! The products to be presented have, of course, to contain blackcurrants – in whatever form. They must enter into one of the 3 categories:

- drinks
- other food products
- health products and cosmetics

A professional panel will then evaluate the products on criteria like aromatic or nutritional value, commercial relevance, innovative character, suitability of the product with the market etc.

Registration deadline: 10th May 2018.



Blackcurrant product
competition



New elements

What mainly differentiates the blackcurrant product competition 2018 from the previous edition is the award of a prize. The winning product of each category shall bring a financial payoff to its producer.

For this reason, the participation in the competition is subject to a small participation fee. Sponsors shall round off the prize.

If any participant needs raw material to elaborate a new product, the ANCG will provide it free of charge.

The companies or individuals presenting their products may also give an oral presentation to the panel. Although not compulsory, it allows them to talk about their product and strategy and answer potential questions. Of course, like last time, all participating products will be exhibited during the conference. Press coverage and information on our homepage will ensure visibility to the

participants, and we will cover the event in one of the newsletters following the conference.

All in all, the competition is getting more and more professional!

Registration, rules, information

Are you ready to enter the competition? You may find detailed information on the conference website, download the rules, and proceed for registration.

Also, read our article about one of the winners of the first edition and check our website about international blackcurrant competitions.

Printemps de Terra - Terra Spring

“Loire Valley fruits and vegetables” raises public awareness of the benefits of blackcurrants

Blackcurrants were in the spotlight at the “Printemps de Terra” (Terra Spring) festival in Angers on the 1st and 2nd of April 2018. On this occasion, Val de Loire Fruits et légumes led a cooking workshop for children. Val de Loire Fruits et légumes is a label for the promotion of fruits and vegetables from the Loire Valley.

Terra Spring was also a way to promote the blackcurrant sector ahead of the International Blackcurrant Conference of June 2018.



More than 200 people participated in this culinary workshop.

The aim: children learned how to prepare a simple but delicious recipe made with regional products.

The recipe: a combination of “Angelys” pears with blackcurrant puree (from Fruits Rouges & Co), sprinkled with crushed hazelnuts.



This workshop was an opportunity to discover (or rediscover) this generous “superfruit” particularly rich in aromas, flavors and color. Of course, it was also a way of promoting the blackcurrant sector ahead of the International Blackcurrant Conference of June 2018.