

Board letter, November 2015



Market situation

This is the second year where many blackcurrant growers did not create an income from their orchards. It is a painful experience if the product can't be sold. This is due to a general oversupply. Growers have to react to this. Successful ones will look for new partners, develop other products, search for contracts or serve market niches. Some will reduce the acreage or go out of the business.

Ashford conference - Sponsors, speakers, subjects

Thank you very much to Anthony and Sarah, excellent work so far !

I know that organizing and financing is a big task, and I am very pleased that the UK offered to do it without long hesitation. The last German conference created a little surplus, (3000â,-) which we used to support the members of the association when travelling to blackcurrant events. We took the fees and adjusted the program to the expected income. Every lunch or journey had its own etat, there is a difference between caviar and soup. The sponsors payed 500 to 1000â,- to display products on the field. If you allow sponsors to be speakers during the conference, it is risky because the audience doesn't want to hear one hour about tractor models.

As you know, there is a Channel between the UK and the other European countries. These waters are very effective, for example to control the immigration of refugees. It also worked excellent against rabies. Unfortunately, it failed completely to keep German discount stores out of the country! These stores, Aldi or Lidl, sell half the fruit juice volume on the German market. The blackcurrant juice drink (25% fruit juice) is offered for 0,80â,-/l. And that for months, the products are placed in the ground shelf. But shadow and light belong

together, there should be a way to return back into the gourmet shelf.

Would it be a good idea to get a speaker from those companies (I could be helpful there)? They could talk about the UK fruit juice market. It could also be possible to ask some Tesco people how they maintain their 3% aim (profit from turnover). Anthony, Sarah, what do you think ?

How about Suntory, are they sponsoring or speaking? There is a well proven contract growing system in the UK, and we should do whatever possible to maintain it! One thing we should focus on are the excellent marketing and information activities of the UK blackcurrant association. I think this work is far ahead, compared to other European countries.

EU aroma regulation

There are still "žflavoured waters" on the market. They use the picture and the name of blackcurrants – but there is nothing from our berries in it. It is a clear falsification. Unfortunately, the customer is not allowed to pay these products with home printed fake money. There is a strong lobby of the aroma industry working, which does not care to destruct the last bit of credibility the industrial food producers may have. The EU aroma regulation, which describes the labeling requirements, passed with the positive votes of UK parliament members. Would that be a subject for a speaker?

Manager

Stefanie is working well, the homepage is online, and she establishes connections. She needs more support and response for her activities! Getting Sponsors is not easy, Bill helped us, but on the longer run, we can pay only one manager. He offered assistance work for the conference in exchange to the participation fee. That's up to the organizers to decide. I hope he can come.

Marketing

We had a request for blackcurrants from China. That happens sometimes, but normally this is not a professional approach, and therefore not serious. If you need a car, you don't ask the automobile association. But in this case, I passed it on to the European associations, because the request was particular for European berries. Denmark responded, but the trade was not a complete success. Generally, I think it is a waste to use blackcurrants to gain anthocyanin

color.

Hope for comments ,

Regards

Dirk Herdieckerhoff

IBA President