

# *Summary*

## **Branch Plan Sustainable Packaging**

### **Fresh Produce Centre**

**Fresh fruit, vegetables and mushroom growing and marketing  
sector going forward to 2022**

Period 2019 – 2022



Fruit and vegetables are synonymous with sustainability. The Dutch fruit and vegetable sector ensures continuity in the availability of healthy and sustainable food and works actively to increase its sustainability, which includes increasing the sustainability of packaging. Based on the final monitoring of the Branch Plan Sustainable Packaging (2013 – 2018), Fresh Produce Centre has decided to establish another plan for the fruit and vegetable sector for the period spanning 2019 – 2022. You can read more about the Branch Plan Sustainable Packaging in this summary.

## About the Branch Plan Sustainable Packaging

The [Branch Plan Sustainable Packaging 2019 - 2022](#) is a plan that describes how the fruit and vegetable sector can jointly take further action to increase the sustainability of packaging used for fruit, vegetables and mushrooms. The Branch Plan offers companies a framework within which sector goals and ambitions can be used to take their own approach to increasing sustainability.

The Branch Plan Sustainable Packaging was established by the Fresh Produce Centre in collaboration with a working group formed by members and with support from Partners for Innovation. In Q1 of 2019, the Branch Plan was [reviewed](#) by the College of Independent Experts of the Netherlands Institute for Sustainable Packaging (KIDV).

### *Use of packaging by the Dutch fruit and vegetable sector*

The fruit and vegetable sector in the Netherlands is a key branch with substantial production that accounts for a major share of import and export flows (*see figure 1 on page 4*). Various trends and developments are visible in the field of packaging. Factors, including the needs of consumers, impact on the sector, its products and the forms of packaging used. The growth of the convenience segment, new sales channels such as on-the-go-consumption and the resistance of society to the use of plastic packaging materials continually pose new challenges to the sector.

The fruit and vegetable sector uses various types of packaging for diverse purposes. In addition to attractive presentation, packaging ensures that products have a longer shelf life, retain their flavour and are easy to transport and carry. Packaging can be categorised into primary (consumer) packaging for processed and unprocessed products and secondary and tertiary packaging for transport and distribution. The fruit and vegetable sector is part of a chain, whereby cooperation between the (international) links is vital to enable steps to be taken in increased sustainability.



### *What is the guiding principle?*

The guiding principle in the Branch Plan Sustainable Packaging 2019 – 2022 is that the Dutch fruit and vegetable sector packs its products if this leads to a reduction in the total environmental impact of the product and/or makes a necessary contribution to food safety, shelf life, protection, quality, handling or traceability of the product.

When fruit and vegetables are packed, a product-packaging combination with a minimal environmental impact should be sought, for example by applying the principles of the circular economy.

### *Which sustainability goals will be used to take action?*

The Branch Plan Sustainable Packaging has established goals based on five pillars:

**1. Reduce the use of packaging materials and use alternative forms of packaging**

The fruit and vegetable sector aims to reduce the amount (weight) of packaging material used per kilogram of product sold by 15% in 2022 (and 25% in 2025) compared with 2017, with the goal of reducing the total environmental impact.

**2. Design for recycling (end-of-life)**

The fruit and vegetable sector aims for 90% of the packaging used to be recyclable in 2022 (and 100% in 2025), using the waste collection and recycling processes available at that time.

**3. Usage of raw materials and resources**

The fruit and vegetable sector uses mono materials made from raw materials with the lowest possible environmental impact for its packaging. The materials used can be sorted by waste processors and the material is suitable for recycling. In 2021 the choice of material is based on an objective measuring methodology that assesses the environmental impact.

**4. Transport packaging**

The fruit and vegetable sector should preferably (within the Netherlands) use reusable transport packaging that is filled as efficiently as possible.

**5. Communication and perception**

The fruit and vegetable sector wants to convey the efforts it makes regarding increased sustainability of packaging and the purpose of packaging to users/ consumers.

### *How do we approach increasing the sustainability of packaging?*

Increasing the sustainability and reducing the use of packaging marks a clear break from the prevailing trends in current developments, with more processed and packed convenience products being sold each year and the growing volume of packed unprocessed products. Breaking this trend can only be accomplished by packing fewer products and by reducing the amount of packaging material used per product(unit). In this respect, the fruit and vegetable sector strives for a sectoral-wide approach and more knowledge on consumer behaviour and needs. By sharing knowledge on innovations, alternative materials and new applications with other chain parties, the sector can scale-up sustainability.

*The Dutch fruit and vegetable sector is happy to make a concerted effort  
with you to increase the sustainability of packaging.*

## About Fresh Produce Centre

The Branch Plan Sustainable Packaging 2019 – 2022 was established by Fresh Produce Centre and is part of the sustainability programme of Fresh Produce Centre. [Fresh Produce Centre](#) represents the interests of businesses involved in the sale and marketing of fruit and vegetables and is a source of knowledge and inspiration. Fresh Produce Centre has around 320 members that are specialised in the domestic wholesale, import, export, treatment, processing, packaging, storage and transshipment of fruit and vegetables.

### *The Netherlands: global player in fruit and vegetables*

The Netherlands imports fruit and vegetables with a value of €7.6 billion from 128 countries, produces a total of € 3.5 billion and exports produce with a value of €11.3 billion to no fewer than 152 countries (see figure 1). With turnover totalling approximately €18 billion (commercial sales), the Netherlands is a major player in terms of the production, import and export of fruit and vegetables. The members of Fresh Produce Centre members account for approximately 80% of the total turnover of fruit and vegetables.

### *Sustainable Development Goals*

Through its sustainability programme, Fresh Produce Centre aims to contribute to increasing the sustainability of the chain and, as a sector, to make a valuable contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. The figure below shows the central goals of the fruit and vegetable sector (see figure 2).

Packing is one of the focus areas of Fresh Produce Centre's sustainability programme. This is in line with, among other things, SDG 12: sustainable consumption and production patterns.



Figure 1: The Netherlands: a global player in fruit and vegetables



Figure 2: Sustainable Development Goals (Fresh Produce Centre)