



By Mike Knowles

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Fruit Logistica remains confident in 'Plan B'



Madlen Miserius, Fruit Logistica

Fruitnet catches up with Madlen Miserius, senior product manager at Fruit Logistica, to discuss May's planned return

Madlen, given the current situation in Europe and the new lockdowns in many countries, how are things looking for Fruit Logistica 2021 in May?

Madlen Miserius: It's very clear to everyone that in the current conditions it simply wouldn't have been possible to hold Fruit Logistica as an on-site event in February as always. So when it takes place in May, our Fruit Logistica Special Edition 2021 gives the global fresh produce business the first opportunity in almost 18 months to meet face-to-face in a safe, Covid-secure environment.

We're keeping our fingers crossed that the situation in May, when combined with our new concept, will make it possible to meet on site here in Berlin.

Do you have a Plan B? Would you think about having an online-only event, in case holding it physically in May is not possible?

MM:

This new concept of Fruit Logistica Special Edition is our Plan B. At this stage, we are not planning a purely digital event. We plan an on-site event with digital elements. We all know that trust between buyer and seller plays an essential role in the fresh produce business. And to build that trust it is clear that face-to-face meetings are essential. That's why we want to make them possible.

How many exhibitors have been registered to date? What number are you expecting?

MM: As we speak, more than 500 companies from more than 50 countries have registered. Even though Fruit Logistica Special Edition 2021 is reducing the total space available, it still offers the opportunity for a maximum number of registered companies to showcase their products on site.

Look, it's clear that the number of

participants at Fruit Logistica Special Edition does not bear comparison with the numbers that came to Fruit Logistica in February 2020. But our focus isn't on huge numbers in 2021, it's on the quality of the people and businesses that will attend. And that's always our top priority at Fruit Logistica.

From which countries, continents or sectors are the most exhibitors coming? Are you seeing any big changes?

MM: Fruit Logistica Special Edition 2021 brings together every area of the fresh fruit and vegetable value chain in a completely new way. Our more compact format divides the business into seven separate segments or product areas, namely: fresh produce, packaging, logistics, seeds and fertilisers, machinery and technology, greenhouse technology, and cultivation equipment.

Almost half of the registered companies are from the fresh produce sector, and more than 20 per cent are from the machinery and technology sector. Due to the current situation, there is certainly a much sharper focus on Europe. But we also have registrations from every other part of the world, just like at every edition of Fruit Logistica.

The country pavilions will be divided in a different way. How have exhibitors responded to the revised format?

MM: We have received very positive feedback from the organisers of national pavilions. They are aware that this new situation needs them to make adjustments. We are in close contact with each of them to find the solution that guarantees the best business result for them at Fruit Logistica Special Edition 2021.

When everything is back to normal, will you go back to the old format?

MM: What I can already say for certain is that Fruit Logistica 2022 will take place again in February. When preparing an event, our premise is always to facilitate the best

business, show the best innovations, and give the best information. And this will also be our focus in preparing for Fruit Logistica 2022.

Can you give us an idea of the digital elements you are adding?

MM: Fruit Logistica Special Edition will be supported by a series of online tools within our redesigned Virtual Market Place. It is designed to help participants better plan their visit, connect with key players of the industry, and strengthen business relationships.

Our exhibitors will benefit from our new digital package: it includes online scheduling of business meetings, online presentation of participating companies, and chat functions. Furthermore, access to the full event programme will be live and on demand. The new Virtual Market Place will be online in February.

Can you also tell us more about the innovations features you're planning?

MM: Fruit Logistica Special Edition 2021 showcases the latest innovations in one central space on the fairground at Messe Berlin. Every innovation

at every part of the value chain is highlighted within an exclusive area called The Innovation Club.

The new format consists of two areas: The Innovation Zone, and Innovation Insights & Awards. The Innovation Zone includes dedicated exhibitor stands for companies that want to showcase their new products or solutions live.

Innovation Insights & Awards features every nominee of the Fruit Logistica Innovation Award. It honours outstanding fresh produce innovations from farmgate to supermarket shelf that have entered the market in the 12 months before the event.

Spotlight highlights the latest product launches and premieres featured at Fruit Logistica Special Edition, even before the start of the event. And the The Future Lab is an event programme of expert presentations about the future of the industry. This focuses on the products and solutions that will hit the market before 2025.