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By Mike Knowles

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Fruit Logistica explains decision to move



Madlen Miserius, senior product manager at Fruit Logistica

Exclusive: Fruitnet speaks to the event's senior product manager Madlen Miserius about its new format for May 2021

Why has FRUIT LOGISTICA decided to hold its 2021 event as a Special Edition?

Madlen Miserius: Fruit Logistica will take place as a Special Edition on 18-20 May 2021 in Berlin. I don't need to tell you that Covid-19 has presented us with challenges that none of us can ignore. That's why, as event organisers, we've asked what our customers need from us and what are the factors that we can control for them. We want to offer a much needed opportunity to meet buyers face to face; and we want to do it in a manner that's safe, flexible, and encourages effective business.

Can you tell us a little more about this special Fruit Logistica? What will be the key differences with this new concept?

MM: Sure, we have decided to name the 2021 event Fruit Logistica Special Edition in order to reflect two key changes. The first is a shift of the trade show dates to

May and the second is the fact that we have adapted our participation concept to be more flexible and simple. Although we know the timing might not be convenient for some of our customers, we also know that hosting the event in spring offers a better opportunity than hosting the trade show in winter. It simply makes it more likely that a higher number of buyers from many parts of the world will be able to attend.

The revised concept includes an on-site event where exhibitors will be asked to choose a turnkey package. There will be three pre-defined stand sizes and packages will include the stand space, stand construction and access to robust internet access. This new concept will reduce investment and lead time for our customers. It will also give them the opportunity to meet and reconnect in a very safe, business-friendly environment.

How are you going to convince retailers and other important customers and visitors to participate?

MM: Yes, let's take a look at the important presence of produce retailers. Certainly, we will focus on securing the attendance of key German and European buyers who regularly attend our event. What we must not forget is that the aim of Fruit Logistica Special Edition is to offer the first opportunity in a long time to meet produce suppliers face to face since Covid unfolded early this year. By adapting our concept, our Special Edition is designed to maximise the number of first-rate, international fruit and vegetable suppliers that are present, encouraging productive visits in a more compact hall footprint. Buyers and trade visitors will find planning their business meetings far more convenient, and they will find excellent conditions for their visit including special meeting areas, guidance through latest innovations, and much more.

In more practical terms, what measures will you take to ensure Fruit Logistica 2021 is completely safe and

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Covid-secure for those who exhibit and attend in person?

MM: The turnkey exhibition packages reduce the amount of time and number of staff needed on the fairgrounds, so exhibitors will be able to travel to Berlin with a smaller team. There are three different stand sizes – 18, 36 and 54 square metres, each with a limited number of staff permitted on the stand. For example, an 18 sq m stand allows for two staff members and two customers, so a total of four at a time keeping their distance. This structure is part of our effort to rethink how exhibitions work under the current circumstances and part of our safety and hygiene concept. The health and safety of our exhibitors, trade visitors, service providers and colleagues is our top priority.

We know you've been keeping a close eye on what other trade exhibitions have done in order to cope with the disruption caused by the Coronavirus pandemic – especially to business travel. What has Fruit Logistica learned from this and what lessons have you applied in formulating your own response?

MM: That is true. We are keeping

a close eye on what is going on in the German, European and global trade show industry and have taken that learning into consideration when adapting our own concept. In addition, we have already gained some valuable experience with on-site events under new conditions here in Berlin, which makes us confident for the upcoming Fruit Logistica Special Edition.

Given the various changes you plan to make for this May edition, do you expect any of those adjustments to result in longer-term changes to the show?

MM: Our ambition now is to allow the fruit and vegetable community to meet on site in Berlin and connect online, in this order. The extended digital offer may well continue over the years – it focuses on two elements, the first being inclusion of exhibitor staff, trade visitors and buyers who may not be able to attend, and the second a productivity tool for arranging business meetings in person and finding your way to the meeting room, which is physical and virtual if need be. Fruit Logistica's comprehensive content programme, meanwhile, will be made available for live streaming and on-demand viewing as well.

Finally, could we perhaps expect Fruit Logistica to remain in May after 2021, or will it revert to early February in 2022?

MM: Well, that depends first of all on how customers respond to this new time slot in the fresh produce trade's calendar of activities, especially when it comes to the annual pattern of buying and selling in the sector. Then we need to consider the different bookings at our Berlin expo venue over the next years. Right now, we need to focus fully on delivering this Fruit Logistica Special Edition and collecting feedback from the market. We invite your readers to get in contact with us, to send their comments on the timing and let us know how they want to take part in Berlin.

[For more information about Fruit Logistica Special Edition, visit the official website at fruitlogistica.com](https://www.fruitlogistica.com)