

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



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## Turnover up at Rijk Zwaan

Vegetable seed group sees revenue growth across "almost all its crops and regions"



**D**utch vegetable seed specialist Rijk Zwaan has reported on its financial results for the 2019/20 financial year, showing growth in turnover and a positive performance across the business.

According to the De Lier-based company, turnover increased 8.5 per cent year-on-year, up to €477m, while revenue grew across "almost all crops and regions".

Rijk Zwaan pointed out that its market share stood at 9 per cent, making it one of the top four vegetable seed companies in the world, while its workforce continued to grow, now standing at 3,500 people.

"The final quarter of the 2019/2020 financial year was dominated by the global spread of Covid-19," said Ben Tax, a member of the Rijk Zwaan board of directors. "From an international perspective, this presented us with a number of logistical challenges.

"Governments were quick to realise that vegetable seeds are important for the world food supply," he continued. "Thanks to the 'green lanes' approach,

the international borders remained open for our sector and, as a company, we were able to keep our processes operational – albeit with a few changes sometimes – in order to continue to supply vegetable seeds to our customers around the world."

The group said that it invested €130m in research & development during the 2019/20 period, some 27.5 per cent of its annual revenue, and it now offers more than 1,500 different vegetable varieties.

"We translate the wants and needs in the market into objectives for our breeding programmes," Tax outlined. "In our laboratories, we conduct research in the fields of biotechnology, seed quality and phytopathology to accelerate our breeding activities, to study the genetics of new traits and to be able to supply top-quality seeds."

Last year, Rijk Zwaan's introductions included fusarium-resistant cucumber varieties and the first hairless aubergine variety which is more resilient against pest damage.

The company said that it responded to consumer trends by introducing

vegetable varieties specially tailored for fresh meal kits and for the organic range.

"We are confident about the new financial year," Tax noted. "Different sales channels are reacting to the Covid-19 situation differently, however, and the longer the travel restrictions last, the greater the challenges will be. So that's a threat, of course, but nothing we can't handle.

"There are also opportunities," he added. "We fully support the growing societal focus on making healthy food available to all. As a vegetable breeding company we are keen to contribute to this cause by laying the foundations for healthy and appealing vegetables."

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