

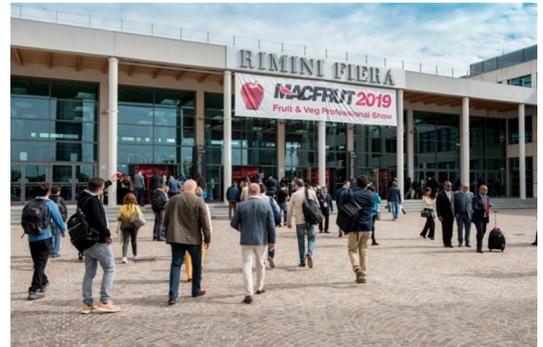
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By Mike Knowles

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## Coronavirus: events opt to delay or cancel



Macfrut 2020 will now take place in Rimini on 8-10 September

Macfrut, BioMesse and Alimentaria Barcelona all postponed, with Freskon cancelled until 2021

**A** number of international events on the fresh produce industry's calendar have been postponed or even cancelled as a result of the developing coronavirus crisis, with planned meetings in Italy, Germany, Greece, Spain and Japan all having at least to delay their plans for 2020.

The directors of Macfrut, Italy's largest international fresh fruit and vegetable trade fair, announced earlier this week that they were moving this year's exhibition in Rimini from 5-7 May to new dates in late summer, 8-10 September.

"We have brought forward a decision that can no longer be put off with the worsening of the coronavirus emergency," Macfrut president Renzo Piraccini told *Italiafruit News*, adding that it was important "to communicate promptly and responsibly to the international exhibitors who had signed up, some of which came from Africa".

In Greece, another international fresh produce show Freskon had been due to take place on 2-4 April at the exhibition and congress centre in Thessaloniki, but earlier this week organiser Helexpo said the next edition would be on 15-17 April 2021.

And in Germany, three spring events have confirmed they will be moving to new dates, all of them yet to be confirmed: BioWest, originally 19 April in Düsseldorf; BioOst, originally 26 April in Leipzig; and Gastro Vision, originally 13-17 March in Hamburg.

"The safety of visitors and exhibitors is our top priority," explained BioMesse organiser Wolfram Müller, who added that postponement rather than cancellation was the goal for both fairs.

"At this point in time, it is clear that acting responsibly means that the events cannot be held in April," added his colleague Matthias Deppe.

### Severe impact

Other food industry events have been affected too. Verona-based exhibition Sol&Agrifood has been postponed from 19-22 April to 14-17 June, Cibus in Parma will now happen on 1-4 September instead of 11-14 May, and Alimentaria Barcelona, due to take place on 20-23 April, will now be held on 14-17 September.

In Tokyo, meanwhile, the 45th annual food and beverage exhibition Foodex Japan scheduled for 10-13 March was cancelled in the final week of February.

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