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By Mike Knowles

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GBC2015: future trends for berries

The results of a major new survey of the international berry business are due to be published at the Global Berry Congress



The results of a major new survey of leading players in the international berry business will be presented at this year's Global Berry Congress, which takes place in Rotterdam on 23-25 March. The first survey of its kind to focus on berries as a category, the investigation will focus on the European market and aims to identify trends that will shape the market in the future, as well as gauging the sentiment of key movers and shakers working in the category today.

While growth in the berry category has been impressive across a number of different markets worldwide, it remains far from certain how the sector will evolve during the coming years. Will consumer demand remain ahead of supply, even with an anticipated boom in global production? Is there a potential danger that commoditisation will creep into the berry category as it did in the past for others, like apples? Can brands emerge to drive forward sales? What

challenges lie ahead as far as margin pressure and consumer behaviour are concerned?

By collating responses from people across the international berry business, the Global Berry Congress – Annual Survey 2015 aims to provide an accurate assessment of industry sentiment when it comes to these fundamental questions.

This year's Global Berry Congress is set to bring together more than 400 people with connections to the berry category at the Mainport/Inntel Hotel in Rotterdam, a new 4-star design hotel with excellent conference and networking facilities situated close to the city's eye-catching new Markthal food retail development.

Already confirmed on this year's programme are some of the sector's major players. Susanne Hounsgaard, purchasing manager for fruit and vegetables at Dansk Supermarked, will be joined by Wyard Stomp, commercial

and supply chain director for EMEA at Driscoll's, and Laurence Olins, chairman of British Summer Fruits, to talk about how some of Europe's supermarket chains are growing sales of fresh berries by working as closely as possible with their suppliers. The panel will assess the advantages for food retailers and how suppliers can maintain their market position, while at the same time promoting the category and achieving higher sales.

Another session will be dedicated entirely to blueberries, arguably the most exciting area of the berry business in terms of its potential market expansion over the next few years. A panel including Andres Armstrong of the Chilean Blueberry Committee, Carlos Stabile of the Argentinean Blueberry Committee and German marketing expert Michael Roos will look at how blueberry suppliers in the Southern Hemisphere are coping with huge growth in production as well as the challenge of growing sales of quality fruit.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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Technology and its application in the berry trade will feature prominently too, with representatives from companies including Italian packaging supplier **Ilip**, Dutch logistics company **LBP Rotterdam**, shelf-life extension specialist **Perfotec** and Italian technology experts **Unitec** offering their take on how better technology can deliver improvements in the supply chain.

Later in the day, producer brands will come into focus. Can segmenting

the offer using these trademarks offer food retailers a further sales boost? Attempting to answer that question will be Marieke Appel of **Driscoll's**, Jo Lambrecht of **BelOrta** in Belgium and Carmela Suriano of Italy's **Club Candonga**.

Finally, this year's study tour programme will include visits to the world-renowned **Wageningen University and Research Centre**, production sites, retail stores, a logistics centre and the Markthal itself.

To register for this year's Global Berry Congress, [head to the official website and click on Register](#)

[Click here to take part in the Global Berry Congress — Annual Survey 2015](#)

(The survey is confidential and should take no more than five minutes)