



International Green Week 2015: A Leading agricultural event for the traders



International Green Week came to closure on 25th January 2015. With 1,658 exhibitors from 68 countries, more than 70 ministers of agriculture from every continent and a high level of attendance by agricultural and economic policy delegations from Germany and abroad, the world's largest exhibition for agriculture, food and horticulture attracted the largest number of participants in 44 years.

At the end of ten days during which crowds thronged the halls Messe Berlin registered over 415,000 visitors. At 117 euros per capita expenditure was slightly above last year's level and provided exhibitors with sales totalling some 48 million euros. At around 100,000; attendance by trade visitors' remained steady at the same high level as at last year's

IGW. With 113 exhibitors this year's partner country, Latvia, which is assuming the presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2015, provided the largest number of foreign participants. Between 16 and 25 January the Green Week 2015 provided a wide-ranging overview of the food industry all over the world and displayed the products and capabilities of agriculture and horticulture on a display area in the halls occupying 130,000 square metres (2014: 124,000 m²).

Dr. Christian Göke, Chief Executive Officer of Messe Berlin GmbH: "The IGW is firmly established as the world's most important meeting place for agricultural policy makers and this year, to an even greater extent, it confirmed its vital roles as a leading trade fair and a platform for a

dialogue involving all aspects of agribusiness and worldwide agricultural policy".

This was evident not only from the bilateral discussions that took place at the Green Week between Germany's Federal Chancellor Merkel and the Latvian President Bērziņš, or between the Federal Minister for Agriculture Schmidt and his Russian counterpart, Minister Fjodorov, but also from the ten days of meetings between trading partners throughout the entire added value chain. From producers to the retail food trade, this is where they all meet in order to obtain an overview of the market, establish contacts and conduct business.

The Green Week 2015 was attended by over 200 leading politicians and their

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delegations from Germany and abroad. Prominent politicians from all the parties represented in the German parliament came to the Green Week to obtain information. In addition to Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, other members of the German cabinet who attended were the Federal Minister for Agriculture Christian Schmidt, Hermann Gröhe, Federal Minister for Health, Dr. Gerd Müller, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, and Manuela Schwesig, Federal Minister for Families, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

The opening ceremonies in the CityCube Berlin were attended by some 3,500 invited guests, including 1,100 members of delegations from 111 countries. The partner country Latvia played a significant part in these proceedings and was represented by its President, H.E. Andris Bērziņš. The guests from the EU Commission were Phil Hogan, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, and Vytenis Andriukaitis, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety. For the first time royalty took part

in a tour of the Green Week, in the person of H.R.H. Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, Princess of the Kingdom of Thailand. In addition to Berlin's Governing Mayor Michael Müller, the Minister Presidents Torsten Albig, (Schleswig-Holstein), Dr. Reiner Haseloff (Saxony-Anhalt), Bodo Ramelow (Thuringia), Erwin Sellering (Mecklenburg-West Pomerania), Stephan Weil (Lower Saxony), and Dietmar Woidke (Brandenburg) visited their own states' displays. Joachim Rukwied, President of the German Farmers' Union, and Dr. Wolfgang Ingold, Chairman of the Federation of German Food and Drink Industries, represented the non-commercial sponsors of the Green Week.

4,840 media representatives from 68 countries were on hand to re-port on all the activities at the fair. In addition to visitors a daily average of 10,000 other people were also in the exhibition halls, including exhibitors and stand personnel, service staff and media representatives. This year's schools programme, prepared by Messe Berlin, was attended by some 20,000 pupils from Berlin, Brandenburg and adjoining states, who made use of

the Green Week as a practical supplement to their lessons.

The capital benefited from visitors attracted by the Green Week Spending by out-of-town visitors and exhibitors during the Green Week 2013 boosted purchasing power in the Berlin/Brandenburg region by more than 150 million euros. Worldwide coverage of the fair as well as widespread reporting of business news, cultural affairs, leisure attractions and entertainment in the capital helped to promote Berlin's image, providing a long-term boost for the city.

The Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture and the non-commercial sponsors of the Green Week summed up events at the fair in the following statements:

Christian Schmidt, Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture: "For me the Green Week ranks Number 1 in the world. I have been able to greet up to 70 fellow ministers from all over the world here in Berlin during the Green Week. With the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture, taking place parallel with the Green





Week, I have also been able to give an additional, international emphasis to this event. The Green Week pulses with life. It is the consumers who ultimately decide about the foodstuffs to be cultivated, and their quality. And nowhere else can match the Green Week as a place where the contentious dialogue with consumers can be followed at such close quarters."

Joachim Rukwied, President of the German Farmers' Union (DBV): "Consumers and farming families alike continue to take a keen interest in the International Green Week. The 400,000 visitors who throng the halls offer unique proof of this interest, and they come in search of in-depth information about agriculture, to experience an international culture and to enjoy culinary delights. For agriculture and the food industry the IGW is the meeting place for professionals, the forum for the latest discussions about agricultural and consumer policy, and for examining business prospects. The numerous discussions and conferences have focused on issues such as the ongoing developments in the conditions under which livestock is kept, through the animal welfare initiative, the current, disastrous pressure of prices on most agricultural markets, which is intensified by the Russian embargo and minimum wages, the positive situation regarding soil fertility and the protection of soils, and the major challenges facing the need to pro-

tect land and soils in the International Year of the Soil. The German Farmers' Union has submitted concrete proposals to Commissioner Hogan on reducing the levels of bureaucracy in the EU and has adopted an unequivocal position with regard to the negotiations on a trade agreement with the USA (TTIP). The Green Week 2015 was a success."

Christoph Minhoff, Chairman of the Federation of German Food and Drink Industries (BVE): "The Green Week is a show that demonstrates the capabilities and everyday achievements of agriculture and the food industry around the world in their efforts to feed the public. It continues to demonstrate these qualities in an impressive way, and did so again this year. Berlin is the ideal venue for the world's largest food exhibition because the German food industry has the ability to supply foodstuffs that are of a particularly high quality, safe and reasonably priced. The IGW is especially important to us as an association because we can inform the consumer directly about these capabilities and achievements. We have been able to encourage visitors to stay and follow events in the show kitchen, on the dialogue stage and on the interactive media wall, and in this way we have taken a further step in promoting a dialogue, creating greater transparency and providing information."

89 % of exhibitors were satisfied with the way the fair went and the same percentage said they would take part in the

Green Week again or recommend it to other companies. The main goals of exhibitors taking part in the Green Week were "to present the company/cultivate one's image", "to inform the consumer", "consumer sales", "exposure in the media", "to maintain relations with buyers" and "to present new products and gauge public reaction." The vast majority of exhibitors were able to achieve these goals.

83 % gave a positive assessment of the commercial results of their participation and two-thirds expected follow-up business as a result of contacts made at the fair.

95 % of the general public and 88 % of trade visitors were satisfied with their visit to the Green Week. 98 % of the general public and 94 % of trade visitors said the products at the Green Week ranged from "very good" to "satisfactory." Accordingly, around 90 % said they would recommend the fair to others and the same percentage said they would be back for the next event.

Green Week lived up to the expectations in every way. Once again, it was the special shows that were the big attractions. The Livestock Hall, the Floral Hall, the Farm Experience and the Bio Market Hall were particularly popular with the general public. Next event will be held from 15 to 24 January 2016. ♦