

Bundesverband der obst-, gemüse-
und kartoffelverarbeitenden Industrie e. V.

German Association of the Fruit,
Vegetable and Potato Processing Industry



BOGK e. V. • Von-der-Heydt-Straße 9 • 53177 Bonn

Büro Bonn

Von-der-Heydt-Straße 9
53177 Bonn

Fon: +49 228 93291-0
Fax: +49 228 93291-20

Mail: info@bogk.org
Web: www.bogk.org

If crops are not growing, there is nothing to deliver

Bonn, 27.09.2018 - German vegetable processors sound the alarm: Europe-wide drought lead to harvest losses in autumn vegetables.

Europa-Büro Brüssel

47-51, Rue de Luxembourg
B-1050 Brüssel

Fon: +32 2 2829446
Fax: +32 2 2804669

Small cabbages, plant diseases and a short harvest season: The harvest of red cabbage, white cabbage and kale is disastrous this year. The quantities produced were at least 25% under the volume of a standard harvest. In some regions, white cabbage losses are up to 40% and losses in red cabbage up to 50%. With a harvest reduction by half, kale is particularly affected. The situation is also severe when it comes to other autumn vegetables: For carrots, beetroot and celery, the industry expects at least 10% lower yields compared to the long-term average.

For any queries, please
contact

Christoph Freitag

Director

Fon: +49 228 93291-11
Mobile: +49 1603694661

For the vegetable processing industry, this situation is an enormous burden as the companies only received a fraction of the expected raw materials. Consequently, the machinery is not operating at full capacity and producers have to drive shorter shifts or to stop production. And what has not been processed cannot be delivered. Food retailers and gastronomy must be prepared for a situation where deliveries need to be cancelled without substitution.

"One can no longer rule out that even consumers will feel the consequences of the drought with retail shelves staying empty," says BOGK Director Christoph Freitag.

The reason for this is that the drought of the year 2018 is not just a weather phenomenon of "national proportion", as the German Federal Minister of Agriculture Julia Klöckner said, but that the autumn crop harvest is equally affected throughout Europe.

Therefore, acquisitions from the neighbouring countries, Netherlands, Belgium, France and Poland are not possible. Long distance transports from Russia or other countries are out of the question. They are too expensive and the distances would be too long for the raw material to stay fresh.



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The sector therefore urgently appeals to the understanding of consumers and retailers: This is a first tangible effect of climate change. This year, farmers, processors and consumers were equally surprised. The task is now to cope with the shortages hand in hand and fair. The German Federal Government affirmed aid pledges for farmers. But also the industry has economic disadvantages, losing major sales opportunities. The industry is not responsible for the fact that the promised product quantities cannot be delivered. This risk remains with retailers and consumers.

During the next few years, the vegetable industry must develop new common rules on how to deal with crop failures. The German Federal Government has already announced that there is no possibility to help farmers on a regular basis. Aid for the industry is not even discussed, although this would be necessary. From the industry's point of view, common bad harvest clauses in contracts must become standard again. The legislators need to ensure this if necessary. The BOGK will focus on this topic during its annual meeting in Munich in 2019, where farmers and retailers will be invited to take part in the dialogue.

This release can also be found under PR
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