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Agriflanders Showcases Belgian Agriculture

Report Categories:
Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights:
Agriflanders, Flanders' largest indoor agricultural show, celebrated its tenth edition in Ghent, Belgium from January 12-15, 2017. FAS Brussels attended Agriflanders as well as a side conference entitled "New Trends in Food: A Market Niche or a Whim of Fashion?" that focused on new development in Belgian agriculture from new crops to the production of insects for food or feed.

General Information:

Agriflanders Celebrates 10th Edition

From January 12-15, 2017, Agriflanders, Flanders' largest bi-annual indoor agricultural show, celebrated its tenth edition in Ghent fair grounds, Belgium. More than ever, the show focused on animal production and related input industries. FAS Brussels attended a conference organized by the Flemish Department of Agriculture and its Flemish Agricultural Research Center (ILVO) entitled "New Trends in Food: A Market Niche or a Whim of Fashion?"

The conference's program included presentations about creating added value to existing products by using special animal breeds or different feeding methods, or simply by developing new marketing initiatives. Furthermore, the organizers explored the potential of new crops for Belgium, like the production of aromatic hops, soybeans and quinoa. Another novelty was the production of insects for food or feed, which faces particular EU regulatory challenges as insects for food must receive approval as a novel food under the EU's Novel Foods Regulation (EU) 2015/2283, while the EU ban on the use of insects as a feed ingredient for farm animals as a result of the animal by-products Regulation (EC) 1069/2009 has yet to be lifted. Despite regulatory and marketing obstacles, the conference organizers managed to have farmers pioneering these novelties testify about their business' successes and challenges. The presentations are available online [1].

Agriculture in Belgium and Flanders

Belgian agriculture in 2014 counted 37,000 farms farming 1.33 million hectares of land. However, farm types differ greatly between Walloon farms in the South of Belgium and Flemish farms in the North. On average Walloon farms are slightly over double in size compared to Flemish farms and mainly specialize in crop production like cereals, sugar beet and potatoes, while Flemish farms specialize in animal production and horticultural crops. The total 2014 Belgian farming turnover was €8.1 billion, down €0.6 billion from 2013. This is 0.8 percent of Belgian GDP, but contributes more than 11 percent to the Belgian export market. About 80 percent of the Belgian agricultural production is processed in Flanders.

From the 24,000 farms in Flanders in 2015, 52.5 percent specialized in animal production, 23.4 percent in crops, 12.6 percent in horticulture and the remaining 11.5 percent had a diverse production. These farms cultivated 610,000 hectares of which 342,000 hectares are for fodder production. Flanders' animal herds included 1.3 million cattle, 6 million pigs and 32 million head of poultry.

The 4,659 companies of the Flemish food processing industry in 2014 had a turnover of €38.4 billion and employed 65,000 staff. The Flemish food industry is heavily export oriented, with 91 percent of food exports going to other EU Member States, especially neighboring Germany, The Netherlands, and France. The Belgian production for pork is 267 percent of domestic consumption, for beef it is 157 percent and for poultry 158 percent. For dairy, Belgium is also a net exporter, with exports valued at €3.2 billion, against imports valued at €3.0 billion.
[1]

http://lv.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/attachments/lv_20170113_presentatie_studienamiddag_voedingstrends.pdf