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## SIFAV KICKS OFF 2025 AMBITIONS

### FOCUS ON THE FUTURE FOR FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES: SIFAV STEPS UP SUSTAINABILITY AMBITIONS IN 2025 PROGRAM

*The companies united in the Sustainability Initiative Fruit and Vegetables (SIFAV), as set-up and hosted by IDH the Sustainable Trade Initiative, have launched their new collaborative sustainability strategy for 2025. The new ambitions focus on reducing the environmental footprint across the supply chain, improving working conditions, wages and incomes, and strengthening due diligence reporting and transparency.*

With a clear objective to actively contribute to a more sustainable fresh fruit and vegetables supply chain for the European market, the SIFAV-partners – among them retailers, brands, traders, civil society organizations and other supporting parties – have set out joint sustainability ambitions and an action plan towards 2025. An online event on March 9<sup>th</sup> marked the kick-off of the new collective action plan that is in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and supports the aims of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy to accelerate the transition to a fair, healthy, and environmentally friendly food system.

The SIFAV partners believe that collaborative action is essential to successfully address the complex risks and issues faced in their shared fresh fruit and vegetables supply chains. By joining forces, companies can achieve more than the sum of their individual efforts.

“As a founding member of SIFAV 2020, we believe sector collaboration is key in structural improvement of sustainable practices”, says Stefanie Vermaesen, Senior Advisor Sustainable Business at Nature’s Pride and Chair of SIFAV. “Working together towards a common goal and using shared solutions helps us truly focusing on improving labour conditions and reducing impact on the environment.”

The value of this partnership has proven itself throughout the past 8 years. As a result of the joint effort of the SIFAV Partners, the adoption of third-party social verification soared from 0.7 million tonnes of socially verified fresh fruit and vegetables imports in 2013 to 3 million tonnes in 2019, coming from 60 different countries.<sup>1</sup> This leverage will now be used to drive a much broader sustainability agenda and further accelerate progress.

“Together with key partners, both customers and suppliers, we have embarked on a journey towards healthier lifestyles and more sustainable food chains”, says Florens Slob, Group Sustainability Director from Greenyard. “Only by partnering in the value chain we can achieve our sustainability targets on overarching topics like climate change or water stewardship. As we did with social sustainability over the past years, we are convinced that our cooperation within SIFAV will support our journey and will propel our efforts in being a driving force in building sustainable food chains.”

Under SIFAV, all private sector partners commit to the following sustainability targets towards 2025:

#### Environmental:

To work together with their supply chain partners to measure and reduce the environmental footprint of priority products by 2025, amongst others:

- 25% carbon footprint reduction in three priority products;
- 25% food loss and waste reduction in three priority products;
- Reduction of water use to best practice levels in 3 jointly selected catchments;
- Implementation of water standards (third-party verification) for 70% of volume from high water risk countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: SIFAV reporting. Most recent 2020 numbers will be available by mid-2021

### Social:

- Implementation of jointly approved social third-party verification, to at least 90% of volume coming from high- and medium-risk countries by 2025.
- Taking a first step in improving towards Living Wages or Living Income, by analysing living wage and living income gaps in one of their supply chains and if possible, also making a commitment towards reducing these gaps.

### Due Diligence:

- Implementing robust Human Rights and Environmental supply chain due diligence policies and processes according to OECD and UN Guidelines.
- Jointly and individually reporting on risks and progress on an annual basis from 2022 onward.

By setting these clear targets, SIFAV is a driver of action. The sectoral and cross-border alignment brings clarity and efficiency, and the jointly developed sustainability policies, approaches, and tools equip SIFAV Partners with practical support to work towards the targets. Examples are a Sustainability Risk Tool to understand and prioritize risks across a diverse fruit & vegetable portfolio and an Environmental Footprint Index to calculate the actual footprint of a product.

With now the first 25 (and counting) partners committed, the time is right to publicly launch the 2025 strategy and reach out to the sector with an invitation to join forces, as Stefan Goethaert, Director Private Label from Colruyt Group points out: "Sustainability is part of our DNA. As a retailer, we are fully aware of the important position we hold in the value chain: by offering sustainable products, we make a positive difference, together with our customers. In order to structurally address challenges in the global fruit and vegetable sector, cooperation with suppliers, fellow retailers and other stakeholders is necessary. That's why we believe in SIFAV's collaborative, action-oriented approach and hope that more key players in the sector will join and help us drive change."

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**ABOUT SIFAV:** The Sustainability Initiative Fruit and Vegetables (SIFAV) was launched in 2012, as a result of the collaboration of 13 Dutch companies and under the umbrella of IDH, the Sustainable Trade Initiative. SIFAV's mission is to drive 100% sustainable trade of fruits and vegetables for the European market. Since its foundation SIFAV has grown into a pan-European initiative with partners from the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. More info: <http://www.sifav.com>

**ABOUT IDH:** The Sustainable Trade Initiative IDH is an international organization that works with businesses, financiers, governments and civil society to realize sustainable trade in global value chains. Funded by different governments and foundations, IDH delivers scalable, economically viable impact on the Sustainable Development Goals and at the same time creates value for all parties along the entire supply chain. IDH brings together over 600 companies and governments to promote and improve new sustainable production and trade models in emerging economies. More info: <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/>

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### **Note to editors**

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