



FLOWERS NEWS 12 October 2008



Newsletter by the Secretariat of the Review Committee FFP

Dear readers:

This newsletter is designed to inform you about the latest news in the flower industry around the whole world. Our writers are the members of the Review Committee of FFP and sympathising organisations. Below each article you will find the name of the writer and his/her e-mail address in case you would like to know more about the subject.

Enjoy it and don't hesitate to contact us if you have any comment and/or question about this newsletter.

King Regards,

Editors

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News from FFP bodies:

Secretariat –Brussels

• Benchmark application (October 2008)

In October 2008 the certification organisation FGP (Forest Garden Certification) applied to the Secretariat of the Review Committee of FFP to be benchmarked against the FFP standards.

The benchmark will take place during the next Review Committee meeting.

By Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

• Review Committee meeting (29 September – 3 October 2008)

The Review Committee meeting took place in Brussels, Belgium from September 29th until October 3rd 2008.

The agenda items were:

- ⇒ Intranet application
- ⇒ DVD Behind the Flowers
- ⇒ Addressing the plight of the coco peat workers
- ⇒ FFP New acceptance rules
- ⇒ Future of FFP
- ⇒ Ecuadorian farms
- ⇒ Draft protocol on FFP audits
- ⇒ Outsourcing and sub-contracting
- ⇒ Small flower producers
- ⇒ Memorandum of Understanding between trade unions and NGOs in the RC

- ⇒ FFP list of participants
- ⇒ PPE Guidelines in Cut flower industry
- ⇒ Benchmark of Fiore Giusto and RINA SpA

Next Review Committee meeting: on January 2009.

By Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

Secretariat – Dar-Es-Salaam

• RC Secretariat in Africa

Yahya Msangi is responsible for the secretariat of the Review Committee for Africa and Asia since October 1st 2008. His postal address is P.O Box 15482 Kariakoo, Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania and his e-mail address is aishamaulid@hotmail.com

Board

• Board

The Board meeting took place on October 13th 2008 in Aalsmeer, The Netherlands.

The agenda items were:

- ⇒ Concept Business plan
- ⇒ Update action list
- ⇒ Side letter
- ⇒ State of play FLP
- ⇒ Ecuador
- ⇒ End of 2 projects: EU + DGIS
- ⇒ FFP organisation as from 1 Sept. 2008 (a.o. function description Operational manager)
- ⇒ State of play acquisition
- ⇒ Board liability insurance

The next board meeting will take place on January 28th 2009 in Essen, Germany.

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

FFP office – Honselersdijk

• Horti Fair (14th – 17th October 2008, Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

The theme of Horti Fair this year was all about Sustainable Growing, a theme very close to FFP as our fair flowers and plants consumer label stimulates sustainability throughout the whole chain.

FFP had two stands in Horti Fair, one for information, questions and promotion material for sales and the other with concrete sustainable retail concepts with the FFP-material.

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

• FFP participants

On 10 October 2008 FFP counted in total 3587 participants registered: 165 producers, 235 wholesalers/exporters and 3187 florists and other sales outlets.

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

• Results after 3 years of campaign

The subsidy campaign FFP has finished successfully and as from the 1st of September the FFP Foundation will continue independently with a smaller additional subsidy from the sector. The first goal was realized and the label recognition in the horticultural sector is big.

The number of participants for the past year has increased 5 times (414%). Beginning of September the number has reached 3442 members. Sales of FFP flowers and/or plants now take place in Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom, Austria, France and Holland.

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

- **More demand in sales countries**

The first FFP products were introduced on the German, French and English market in October 2006. After this, Sweden, Austria and Holland launched their first sales. In Sweden a big demand developed and several Dutch export companies and local wholesalers are actively working to satisfy this demand. Currently, FFP has 180 florist members in Sweden. However, at the moment preparations are going on to ensure that all Interflora and EuroFlorist florists in Sweden start selling FFP flowers and plants as from January 2009. This will result in 2000 FFP florist shops where the Swedish consumer can go to.

In the beginning of September the company Rewe in Germany started a sales action with FFP products, which caused a lot of publicity and name recognition.

On 15th October Botanics in France started with an action selling FFP bouquets in 30 branches.

On October 24th the sale of FFP Flowers started in Denmark in 30 supermarkets from 4 different chains.

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

- **Plans 2009**

The coming period Fair Flowers Fair Plants will focus on the assortment extension and activating and expanding the number of Fair Flowers Fair Plants points of sale in several countries. Moreover, more effort will be taken to strengthen communication between FFP and consumers. Beginning of 2009 Fair Flowers Fair Plants will be present at the IPM in Essen, Germany.

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

News from Africa:

Kenya

- **Kenya adopts FLP criteria in new collective labour agreement**

On July 17 2008 the Kenya Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union and the Agricultural Employer's Association signed a new collective bargaining agreement. The new agreement adopts the rules for maternity leave that are prescribed in the FLP-guidelines since 2000. (Expectant) mothers have the right to three-month period of maternity leave which must not be compensated with their annual vacation. This issue has been under discussion for many years without consensus among the negotiating partners. Thus, the new regulation for maternity leave in the collective bargaining agreement can be seen as a significant achievement. The agreement also coincides with FLP Standard in many other points like work time, overtime rules and annual vacation. In some cases the agreement is even stricter.

Source: FloraCulture International, P.O. Box 82, 1850 AB Heiloo, The Netherlands.

Article provided by Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda

No news

News from North America:

United States

- **Dole Food Company Inc announced the selling of flowers division. (September 23rd 2008)**

Dole Food Company announced that it had signed a binding letter of intent to sell its flowers division. Dole's fresh flower division has production sites in Colombia and imports through Miami. They have not announced who the buyer will be.

Article provided by Nora Ferm: nora.ferm@ilrf.org

- **Fair Trade flower certification in the US (August 2008)**

- On August 21st a formal announcement was made to all TransFair USA Licensees that the Fair Trade premium for Fair Trade Certified flowers would change on October 31st to 10% for all countries.

- In September, Paul Rice, CEO of TransFair USA was a guest speaker for the Clinton Global Initiative. He outlined the successes of Fair Trade Certified flowers.

Article provided by Nora Ferm: nora.ferm@ilrf.org

- **Nora Ferm of ILRF visited South America (August 2008)**

Nora Ferm travelled to Colombia and Ecuador in August for meetings with Expoflores, Cactus, FUNDESS, Untraflores and the CUT. She also met with Fundacion Natura, the local Rainforest Alliance certifier in Colombia, and visited a Rainforest Alliance certified farm.

Article provided by Nora Ferm: nora.ferm@ilrf.org

News from Latin America:

Colombia

- **Towards union organisation in the flower sector (September 24th, 2008)**

Upon direct action of the IUF, with the invaluable support of its Latin American Regional Secretariat and UNAC (National Union of Agriculture and Food Colombia), we managed as SINTRAINAGRO (National Union of the Industry) that the Dutch trade union FNV has decided to support our proposal for the promotion of principles and rights at work, to advance the process of trade union transformation and strengthening in the flower industry in Colombia.

For SINTRAINAGRO this work has become now an urgent need, since the effect of conditions of competitiveness and increasing productivity imposed by international trade the implementation of policies for relaxation and casualization of labour relations in Colombia has been deepened, with the consequent weakening of the existing trade union structure, with dominance of businesses unionism.

This determines the need to improve levels of training for union leaders and partners, and to adopt mechanisms of protection and extension of labour rights and social security, as well as strengthening the structure of the union by branch economic (agrofood) sector, which has in the UNAC its best expression.

SINTRAINAGRO is the union with the largest number of affiliates (18,000) among the 95 agrofood sector organizations that comprise the UNAC, and it also has the merit of having achieved sectoral collective bargaining, indisputable product of the organization and development of a syndical and political training program in association with its partners.

Original in Spanish by Hernan Correa Miranda, SINTRAINAGRO.

Article provided by Sue Longley: sue.longley@iuf.org

- **The 1233 Act does not prevent CTA evade rights and precarious work. (Agencia de información laboral, Escuela nacional sindical)**

The 1233 Act of 2008 had as its origin the bill proposal introduced by the government when the U.S. Congress's decision on The FTA with Colombia was approaching; a project that was limited to create the obligation of paying parafiscal taxes in Associated Work Cooperatives (CTA). During the discussion of this proposal in the Congress of the Republic many proposals were made, resulting in a law that considered other additional items.

However, the Government may not present this law as an improvement with regard to the international demands on the subject, because it clearly ignores

recommendations made by the ILO bodies of control. The 1233 Act does not recognize the rights of the CTA associates, of association, negotiation and strike, nor provides sufficient measures to prevent the CTA being used as a form of theft of labour and union rights. In sum, we can state that this law allows CTA to remain tools to evade labour rights and continue the precarious living conditions of the workers.

Source: Informativo, Bogotá Cundinamarca No. 48, September 2008.

- **Decent work in the field of flowers (Manuel Tellez G., Secretario General CUT, Bogotá Cundinamarca)**

Undoubtedly one of the sectors of our economy with fastest development in recent decades is that of the flowers; despite the vagaries of our economy, permanent subsidies to an industry that handles sales records abroad (in the first quarter of 2008 billion pesos in exports, representing 90% of all the flowers cultivated in our territory, with destiny mainly to the United States).

To achieve this figure in sales a workforce of approximately 120,000 loose posts is employed, especially women, many of them heads of households, despite the fact that recent years the use of labour from men has increased significantly; one of the reasons is the diversification of tasks that are required to develop large-scale production and a greater physical demand, despite the delicacy in its process.

The conditions in the area where production is mostly concentrated are in many cases extreme:

- Exhausting days that exceed 10 or 12 hours to meet quotas exports.
- Linking through Associated Labour Cooperatives and outsourced labour for specific tasks.
- High turnover of the workforce to evade payment of at least minimum wages and thus contributions to the Social Security system.
- There is no control by the health authorities to the use of fungicides and pesticides in the cultivation process and PPE implementation.
- Although there are special protection rules in occupational health, employers ignore, with the connivance of the Local authorities, compliance and say that it is the role of the respective Labour Inspectors of the Ministry of Social Protection.

One theme that has preoccupied the union movement as a whole, are adverse conditions for the organization of these workers, with absolute denial by flower employers to accept the existence of union organizations, developing practices that go contrary to a true social state Law, despite the fact that there are rules such as the ILO Convention 87 and 98 (right to unionize and Collective bargaining) ratified by the Colombian government, generating similar practices to those used in the nineteenth century as:

1. Intimidation by employers
2. Immediate dismissal to serve as an example to those who persist in organizing the union.
3. Discriminatory treatment by obliging to perform tasks above normal.
4. Economic incentives to other workers desisting from organizational action.
5. Through supervisors, coordinators, agronomists, people of higher rank or confidence in the company "disputes" are set that lead to sanctions that serve as an example for others.
6. Constrain the right to attend medical appointments or casual leave permits to the founders of the union.
7. Calls for public attention.
8. Mass layoffs
9. When there is awareness of massive meetings, employers are implementing extra hours of work for organizers that call for unionization.

There is an intensification of anti union practices whereby a good example is an incidence which occurred in the early months of the year 2006 when the multinational Dole Flowers took the decision to close farms to undermine the

organization of workers, dismiss and deny workers' rights. Similarly, in 2008 in La Ceja, Antioquia, the respective plantations were closed due to attempts to organize workers.

There are more than enough reasons to encourage participation in the World Day for Decent Work, demanding:

- Equal treatment, fair treatment and conditions and for the workers.
- Establishing a living wage.
- An appropriate workday.
- Establish programs for Health and Safety industrial.
- Control the use of pesticides and chemicals.
- Environmental protection.
- No use of forced labour.
- Do not use child labour.
- Establish mechanisms for generating job stability.
- Conservation of ecosystems.
- Protection of wildlife.
- Conservation of Water and Soil.

Despite the huge profits generated by this industry, the economic incentives that the government permanently contributes to this sector, due to the frequent frost in the early months of each year; preferential tariff protection for export; incentives due to the recent revaluation of the dollar; these are not reflected in the income of the workers. To the contrary, these are moments ostensibly used to trim personnel with contract of indefinite term, being replaced overnight by cooperative members.

Not for nothing the opposition of the Colombian people and international voices, especially in the U.S., not to accept the signature of the Free Trade Agreement, an action that is being developed at initiative of the Central Union AFL-CIO.

For the branch CUT Bogota Cundinamarca it is a priority task to organize this line of the economy and workers; slow but steady this goal is being pursued.

Source: Informativo, Bogotá Cundinamarca No. 48, September 2008.█

Costa Rica

• Pastoral Social Limón

During the last Review Committee meeting in Brussels the Review Committee took the decision to suspend the membership of Pastoral Social Limón from the Review Committee, due to the fact that for more than two years no official reactions were recorded on our questions or invitations.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

• Observers' training in Costa Rica

The Secretariat of the Review Committee responsible for Europe and Latin America will organise training for observers in Costa Rica the first week of November, because we were informed by MPS-ECAS that there are two producers in Costa Rica interested to get the FFP label.

By Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras

No news

News from Asia:

India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam

No news

News from Europe:

The Netherlands

- **Visit of Ms. Lone from Denmark (August 13th, 2008)**

The members of the Review Committee of the Netherlands with the Secretariat of the Review Committee in Europe met Ms. Lone Riisgaard from Denmark. The aim of the meeting was to inform each other on the most recent developments of FFP. Lone Riisgaard for her PhD. has been studying amongst other commodities, labelling in the cut flower industry. We on our hand got interested to involve Danish civil society organisations in the flower campaign, because we got indications that Danish producers are interested in getting FFP certified.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

- **Training of observers (August 28th, 2008)**

A meeting with observers from the trade union FNV Bondgenoten and OLAA planed on 28 August was scheduled to 25th November. The main topic of interest is the explanation on certain items within the updated CBA.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

- **More foreigners exploitation (September 22nd, 2008)**

Agriculture and horticulture is the sector where unscrupulous employment agencies hiring foreigners most frequently operate. This is evident from a report by a research agency for policy research, which has been commissioned by SNCU (the Foundation for Collective Bargaining Agreement Compliance).

The number of unscrupulous businesses is fairly constant in recent years to about 2,000. But the number of people - often from Poland, Bulgaria and Romania - that is exploited by those agencies is growing. According to the investigation last year more than 100,000 people become victims of unscrupulous employment agencies. Malpractices are low wages, non-payment of social contributions, lack of a reservation for holiday pay, no levy for pensions, inadequate housing and high payments for housing and transport.

Chairman of SNCU Wouter Waleson said that improved inspection by the labour inspectors can help to combat the abuses. He welcomes that this hiring agencies can be held financially liable, as the government has proposed. Waleson advocated better cooperation between various departments which control the distribution sector.

Source: [agd.nl Nieuwsbrief van het Agrarisch Dagblad.](http://vedm.net/click2?l=xaKKa&m=lLxQ&s=LdGc82)
<http://vedm.net/click2?l=xaKKa&m=lLxQ&s=LdGc82>

- **Visit of a delegation of COLSIBA (October 7th, 2008)**

Eva Schmitz from Both Ends, Kees Hoek from OLAA and Betsabé Lugo from the Secretariat of the Review Committee met Ms. Doris Garcia from Nicaragua and Mr. Gilbert Bermudez from Costa Rica, both from COLSIBA. Among other things Mr. Gilbert expressed the interest of COLSIBA to support FFP providing observers for future audits in Costa Rica.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

- **DHP, certification of substrate (October 16th, 2008)**

During the Horti Fair Kees Hoek spoke with Mr. Boon from an organization called DHP, specialized on certification for substrate, regarding the wish of the Review Committee to look into labour and health and safety conditions for workers in the coco peat industry. Mr. Boon was very interested and open to discuss social in health and safety conditions within the existing certification scheme for substrate, which now is mainly oriented towards the quality of the substrate and not on social and health and safety issues during the production process.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

Denmark

- **Visit to 3F and MS (October 8th, 2008)**

Eva Schmitz from Both Ends, Kees Hoek from OLAA, René Kouwenhoven from FNV Bongenoten and Betsabé Lugo from the Secretariat of the Review Committee visited Denmark to meet with Mr. Peter K. Holm, representative of 3F, local IUF affiliated trade union and Ms Maja Andersen, from MS (Mellempfolkeligt Samvirke). The main of the visit was to know if both organisations were interested to support FFP providing observers to future audits in Denmark. The representative of 3F knew about the flower campaign and he showed interest in participation, especially when he heard that Danish producers are showing interest to get certified by FFP.

Ms Maja Andersen showed interest in the flower campaign, but local participation and providing observers for FFP audits is something new and it is not within the scope of activities of the organisation. Nevertheless she showed interest in support us with capacity building making use of their network in south countries and raising consumer awareness.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

Sweden

- **Visit to Kommunal, Fair Trade Center y SSNC (October 9th and 10th, 2008)**

Eva Schmitz from Both Ends, Kees Hoek from OLAA and René Kouwenhoven from FNV Bongenoten visited Stockholm with the intention to get more familiar with logistical problems with regard to FFP flowers and to learn about raising consumer awareness. The delegation visited first Kommunal, the Swedish IUF affiliated trade union, which already has showed interest in the flower campaign.

After this visit we visited a flower shop in Stockholm town. We spoke with the owner of the shop on logistical problems, the availability of FFP flowers and the market changes for FFP flowers in Sweden.

After this meeting we visited the Fair Trade Center. This NGO worked last year on cut flowers and consumer awareness in Sweden. They were interested in the recent developments of the flower campaign. Whether or not they will continue to work on the flower items depends on local funding. The next day we visited SSNC (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation) an organisation involved in ecological certification in Sweden. The fact that FFP flowers are not ecological is a reason for SSCN to don't promote actively our flowers; nevertheless we had an interesting exchange of ideas and experiences on consumer campaigns and raising awareness.

After this visit we visited a wholesaler who gets his FFP flowers directly from the Aalsmeer auction in The Netherlands and who confirmed us that there is a market for FFP flowers.

After this visit we looked for another flower shop in Stockholm. This was a rather upmarket flower shop, where the owner inform us that their customers were mainly interested in special quality and varieties of flowers which you do not seen everywhere in Stockholm. If FFP matches the criteria they sold FFP, but it was not something their customers were aware of or particular interested in. When a steady supply could be guaranteed FFP could become interesting for business clients.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

Italy

- **Fiori e Diritti**

On the last Review Committee meeting held in Brussels, the no governmental organisation Fiori e Diritti, represented by Cristiano Calvi, was accepted as member of the Review Committee of FFP.

By Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

UK, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland

No news

Dear Writers:

The next deadline to send your news is on **December 1st 2008**. Don't forget it, this newsletter is for you!!

Thanks,

Betsabé Lugo and Yahya Msangi