



FLOWERS NEWS 7  
December 2007



**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**

***Eva Constance Schmitz***

Secretariat in Amsterdam

Nieuwe Herengracht 29, 1011 RL  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 (0) 204 273 986

Mobile: +31 (0) 644730650

[b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com](mailto:b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com)

***Sebastian Odanga***

Secretariat in Nairobi

West End Place building

Mai Mahiu rd, off Langata rd

P.O BOX 2378-00100 G.P.O

Nairobi, Kenya

Telephone: +254-203503753

Mobile: +254 720 538 855

[iuflantic@lantic.net](mailto:iuflantic@lantic.net)

[sirsebby@yahoo.com](mailto:sirsebby@yahoo.com)

**News from FFP bodies:**

**Secretariat – Amsterdam**

• **Fifth Review Committee meeting**

The fifth Review Committee meeting in Sri Lanka will take place from the 14<sup>th</sup> till the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

By Eva Schmitz: [b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com](mailto:b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com)

**Secretariat – Nairobi**

No news

**Board**

• **Next Board meeting**

The next board meeting will take place February 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 in Brussels.

**FFP office – Honselersdijk**

No news

## **News from Africa:**

### **Kenya**

- **Kenya: Concern Over Scentless Roses**

Sales of Kenyan flowers to the European Union may have grown by over 80% until 2005 but it appears that for roses in particular, there are increasing concerns at their lack of smell. Flower farm: Scentless flowers are becoming a major concern. Modern roses have virtually no scent, which experts say, is a legacy of the genetic race to breed hardy flowers that can be imported from countries thousands of miles away. These roses have a long shelf life - up to a week in a vase - and bloom vibrantly. But for many rose lovers, the appearance and texture are of secondary importance to the smell. Modern roses have little or no smell. One of Britain's biggest growers of garden roses is now trying to reverse the trend by engineering a rose that is both long lasting and is fragrant. Mr David Austin, who imports around three million roses a year from Kenya, Columbia and Ecuador, says the lack of scent is becoming a growing concern. "Everybody who picks up a rose, the first thing they do is put it to their noses and they're always disappointed," he told the Independent newspaper. "These are plants; they're not plastic. They need to have character bred back into them," he added. When contacted, Mr Rod Evans, the director of Homegrown, a leading flower exporter, said that they actually sell scented roses. A similar view was expressed by Kenya Flower Council chairman Erastus Mureithi who said that the country indeed exports flowers with scents. It is, however, acknowledged that putting the scent back into roses might be hard. "Putting the scent back in is hard because the chemical ethylene, which rots flowers, lurks in the scent," the Independent report says.

Nevertheless, the new research is being watched with interest by Kenyan flower growers, particularly Oserian, because one of its main UK customers, Sainsbury's, wants their flowers to smell sweet as well as last longer. Ms Amy Stewart, author of Flower Confidential said that one peculiarity of the flower industry was that "the breeders and growers are quite distant from the customer."

By: Paul Redfern and Catherine Riungu, Nov. 3ed 2007, The Nation

Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711021037.html>

- **Sale of shares in the Sher Agencies Ltd. Kenya**

"On October 19<sup>th</sup> 2007 Gerrit and Peter Barnhorn inform that they have sold their shares in Sher Agencies Ltd. in Kenya. They reached a complete agreement with the Karuturi Group on the sale of their shares in Sher Agencies Ltd. in Kenya. The Karuturi Group is a known player in the flower industry. The group has already cultivations in India and Ethiopia, and now also in Kenya. Karuturi is also presently engaged in other take-overs. The, for us very important, 'social aspect' and the 'corporate social responsibility' are also highly important for the Karuturi Group. The present management, including Gerrit and Peter Barnhoorn will remain and will do everything to ensure that the production and quality of the flowers continues at the same high level.

Sher Holland BV / Sher Ethiopia Plc. and all related companies are not part of this deal. These companies will remain complete property of the present stakeholders. Sher Holland BV will continue to take care of the marketing and packing of the Kenyan flowers."

Taken from the Information Bulletin of Sher, for full article (in Dutch) contact Nathalie Van Haren: [nh@bothends.org](mailto:nh@bothends.org)

### **Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania**

No news

## **News from North America:**

### **United States**

No news

## **News from Latin America:**

### **Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica**

No news

## **News from Asia:**

### **India**

- **Floriculture: Internal market can aid growth**

India tops in acreage under flower cultivation, but the distribution system is pathetic, says Nancy Laws, a floriculture marketing consultant from the US. Laws, who was in Coimbatore after attending Florex India 2007, the international floriculture event at Pune, recalled the way flowers were sold on the streets of Delhi and other cities in the morning. "The internal market itself would trigger growth, for export of flowers is still not a priority here," she said. Sharing her perspective about the floriculture congress, Laws said: "The event was devoted to help the producing community. Flowers are mostly used in the making of garlands and for religious purposes in India. While the country has the capacity to produce beautiful flowers, India is still a back-up source, not a major supplier." With over 1.05 lakh hectares under flower cultivation, India has emerged as the largest producer of flowers, but Holland, with flower cultivable area of 5,000 hectares, tops in exports followed by Columbia, Ecuador and Kenya. "India does not figure even among the top 10 exporting countries," she said. She perceives that the country has the capacity to emerge as a major supplier. "There is plenty of scope for shipping products like garlands out of here. Individual farmers are involved but they concentrate on production increase, rather than looking beyond production on quality, certification, logistics issues etc."

According to her, "cut flowers – as an industry has not gained national importance." "Besides that, transport costs need to be addressed, shipping regulations studied and above these, since Indian importers pay duty on flowers, exports turn costly. Only a coordinated approach would help solve these issues," she said. Citing Ecuador, she said the growers and the Government worked hand-in-hand for over a decade to reach the export level of \$300 million at present. The country exports not just roses, but about 200 products. It has captured the Mexican market, among others. Laws stressed on the need for imparting training to farm workers. "There is also a need for applied research. Plan for the long term," she said.

By L.N. Revathy, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> 2007

Source: <http://sify.com/finance/fullstory.php?id=14557613>

- **Sikkim in talks with foreign players for floriculture hub**

If things go well, then Sikkim, the Himalayan mountain state strategically located along the border with China, could get foreign investment in its floriculture industry. The state government is in talks with the Orchid Growers' Society of Thailand to sign an MoU, under which training will be imparted for various aspects of the floriculture industry, ranging from plant material supply to the marketing of the produce.

Although Sikkim, has been trying to promote its floriculture industry, there was no major progress. Despite being declared the Agri Export Zone for orchids in 2002, the state sent a meagre 1,000 cut flowers to test markets in the Netherlands, last year. It expects to export one lakh cut flowers by March 2008,

focusing on Dubai, which is the nearest market.

Apart from inviting foreign investment, the state government is already in the process of funding three export oriented projects, of which two are for cymbidium orchids and one for anthurium. The state is also organising an international flower show in March next year. The geographical location of Sikkim, which allows it to do away with artificial temperature controls for growing flowers, is expected to give it production cost advantage over other orchid growing nations like Holland and Australia. The production cycle advantage could also prove helpful to the state. Traditional orchid suppliers in the international market cannot produce during months of extreme cold, whereas the production season in Sikkim is November-March.

By Jayashree Bhosale Nov, 6<sup>th</sup> 2007, The Economic Times (India)

For article in full see source:

[http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/Economy/Infrastructure/Sikkim\\_in\\_talks\\_with\\_foreign\\_players\\_for\\_floriculture\\_hub/articleshow/2520828.cms](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/Economy/Infrastructure/Sikkim_in_talks_with_foreign_players_for_floriculture_hub/articleshow/2520828.cms)

## China

### • China's budding flower industry makes waves



Seasoned, low-cost labour is not the only thing attracting people like Mr Bartlett, the Australian manager for Finlays' China operations, to set up in this part of China. Companies including Anthura, Windmill and Van den Berg Roses say there is an unbeatable combination of clean fresh water, intense light, mild climate and good infrastructure. This is turning Kunming, laid-back capital of the south-western Yunnan province, into the location of choice for international growers looking east to markets like Japan. But their investments in the region are also set to change the image of Chinese grown flowers globally, raising standards among local growers and helping them achieve their long-term goal of competing with leading suppliers like Kenya or Columbia.

"China's reputation for flowers in the rest of the world is rubbish. But we're aiming to grow Columbian-quality flowers that will be fit for the Japanese," says Mr Bartlett. For the leading horticulture firm, the draw of Japan is too strong to ignore. Japanese consumers are the world's biggest spenders on flowers, paying high prices for top quality. The UK grower has invested US\$2.4 million in its new farm north of Kunming and is about to harvest its first crop of mostly spray-head carnations destined for Japan. China's rich neighbour is just an eight-hour plane journey away, half the time of a flight from Columbia, currently Japan's biggest supplier of high-end flowers. The China-grown flowers should cost a third of Columbia's price, says Mr Bartlett. Sales are still dependent on convincing discerning Japanese buyers of Chinese quality however. China has earned a reputation as a new, but rather low quality, player in global floriculture markets. "We're definitely under scrutiny because we're Chinese grown. Our products will have to be labelled with the Finlays brand but not from China. Otherwise we would immediately be discounted," says Mr Bartlett. In just 10 years, Chinese flowers have made huge improvements in quality, say the experts, but post-harvest handling remains the country's major weak point.

By Dominique Patton, Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> 2007, Business Daily Africa

For full article see source:

[www.bdafrica.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=4599&Itemid=5813](http://www.bdafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4599&Itemid=5813)

## **Sri Lanka, Vietnam**

No news

## **News from Europe:**

- **FIAN meeting in Cologne (October 15<sup>th</sup> 2007)**

On October 15<sup>th</sup> Martin Siecker (FNV-Bondgenoten) and Kees Hoek had a meeting with the FIAN board in Cologne (Germany). The board of FIAN invited us to come to Cologne to talk about our letters in which we announced that our organisations refrained from further cooperation with FIAN Germany.

The main items we addressed were the situation of FLP and Transfair. The fact is that we have already several times noticed the absence of local observers from either the Trade Union and/or local NGOs during audits, although IFC explicitly requires such observers. Some other points regarding FIAN and the Trade Unions were also addressed. And last but not least, we discussed the breach of confidence with regard to the public attack on each others initiatives.

The talks were constructive, but we did not eventually solve any of these problems. There have been no concrete steps taken to solve these problems in future. Kees Hoek promised to replay a synopsis in which FIAN compared the MPS SQ schema to the ICC guidelines.

By Kees Hoek: [keeshoek@olaa.nl](mailto:keeshoek@olaa.nl)

## **Netherlands**

- **Guillermo Touma visit to the Netherlands (October 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> 2007)**

Guilleremo Touma, the president of FENACLE, visited the Netherlands from October 6<sup>th</sup> till 10<sup>th</sup> I had the pleasure of meeting Guillermo on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> in the FNV global office. Guillermo has been elected Aseamblista, which is a member of the constituting committee in Ecuador. We first discussed intended changes within Ecuadorian labour law and how this could improve the position of the trade unions. Later we had a more specific talk on the position and situation in the Ecuadorian flower industry. The situation remains alarming. Mr. Touma had various interesting ideas on how to narrow the gap between the Trade Unions and the local producers. In view of the crisis in the Ecuadorian flower production, it is important to share ideas and to cooperate in order to master this crisis.

By Kees Hoek: [keeshoek@olaa.nl](mailto:keeshoek@olaa.nl)

- **FFP flowers on sale in the Netherlands in 2008**

From January 2008 onwards FFP flowers will be on sale in several shops in the Netherlands. Right now Nathalie van Haren took the initiative to plan an event celebrating this break-through. The FFP office and the Dutch Flower Coalition will plan a media strategy to launch the new label.

By Kees Hoek: [keeshoek@olaa.nl](mailto:keeshoek@olaa.nl)

- **Dutch auction clock announces Fair Flowers**

From January 2008 the Netherlands will join the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Sweden to become the fifth country where consumers are able to buy fair trade flowers and plants, sold under the label of Fair Flowers Fair Plants (FFP). At the moment more than 700 companies are registered under the FFP label. The Netherlands occupies a pivotal position in the global flower market with 80 to 90 percent of all flowers sold world wide passing through two giant Dutch auctions. In the near future distributors can see on the auction clock which flowers carry the FFP label.

By Han van Wiel, in People Planet Profit

For full article see source: <http://www.peopleplanetprofit.nl/artikel.php?IK=1166>

- **Dutch government does not rally behind boycott African flowers**

The Dutch government does not rally behind a call for a boycott of African flowers. This transpired from the reaction of the Dutch economy minister van der Hoven to questions of the lower house after a TV report on working conditions in flower farms in Kenya. The suggestion in the report arose that in some of the farms there was talk of 'modern slavery'. Mr. Van der Hoven replied in a letter to Parliament that the subtitle of the show, 'Modern Slavery', gave a wrong impression. The call to stop buying flowers from Kenya is thus not being headed by the Dutch government. A boycott could lead to the scrapping of jobs and revenues for Kenyans. These jobs give access to facilities like education and health services which a couple of the exporting companies have realised for their workers in line with the 'corporate social responsibility'. Mr. Van der Hoven recognises that flower cultivation is on the rise in Africa. And that it can't be ruled out that bad working conditions appear incidentally amongst the many companies. However, Dutch companies 'clearly belong to the leaders in as well the technological field as in corporate social responsibility which continuously demands attention for environmental and working conditions' according to Mr. van der Hoven. The minister points out that demands are made of companies which want to sell in the European market via programs such as 'Fair Flowers Fair Plants'. Amongst themselves Dutch companies keep a close watch on each other since one slip could have disastrous consequences for the reputation of all companies.

Source (in Dutch): [http://www.vakbladvoordebloemisterij.nl/nieuws/id55394-91119/overheid\\_steunt\\_boycot\\_afrikaanse\\_bloemen\\_niet.html](http://www.vakbladvoordebloemisterij.nl/nieuws/id55394-91119/overheid_steunt_boycot_afrikaanse_bloemen_niet.html)

- **Both Ends issues a information package on pest control**

The information package on pest control in cut flowers, including the use of pesticides, alternatives and cut flowers is available from Both Ends organisation. For full article contact: [nh@bothends.org](mailto:nh@bothends.org)

## **Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, UK**

No news

### **Dear Writers:**

The next deadline to send your news is **February 4<sup>th</sup> 2008**. Don't forget it, this newsletter is for you!!

We wish you pleasant holidays and a happy new year!!!

Thanks,

***Eva Schmitz and Sebastian Odanga***  
Editors