



Press release

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## **Westfalia Fruit: Pioneering Resilience in Global Avocado Supply Chains**

Westfalia Fruit - the leading year-round multinational supplier of avocados, and an array of fresh produce to international markets around the globe unveils their forward-looking approach in striving to ensure the security of avocado supply chains amidst the formidable challenges confronting industries worldwide.

The entire supply chain is facing immense challenges - no sooner is Covid on the decline than a war in Europe causes huge disruption to the supply chain and to the global economy. Exploding costs for energy make production more expensive, and costs for transport, cooling, storage, and all other links in the chain are increasing dramatically. The effects of climate change, inflation, personnel shortages, and disturbances in the currency market add further pressure on the industry, this 'perfect storm' underscores the urgency of building resilience of the supply chain.

### **How can we address these challenges?**

Westfalia Fruits strategies for addressing these challenges, include diversifying supply chains, investing in new technologies and building resilience through risk management.

### **Diversifying supply chains**

In close memory, the European Avocado market consisted of less than 7 sources for year-round supply. Nowadays, the European Avocado market is supplied by upwards of 17 countries, and numerous regions within source countries. Westfalia Fruit has invested in new sources of supply to bolster these paradigm supply shifts to today having the most diverse avocado growing footprint, with expansions seen globally in recent years.

This diversification of the supply chain reduces risks of disruptions by spreading out production & sourcing across multiple locations. Provides increased resilience, less reliance on any one source or service, improved cost management & competitiveness, increased flexibility to easily respond to changes in demand, staying ahead of trends, enhancing competitiveness, and championing sustainable production.

Matthew Churchill, Global Brand Manager at Westfalia Fruit, underlined the importance of adapting to the ever-evolving supply dynamics: "The patterns of supply to various markets continually shift. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to pioneer new sources and regions of supply in a proactive manner to safeguard unhindered supply."

### **Investing in cutting-edge technologies**

Investing in new technologies & processes can increase efficiency and reduce costs. The use of technology such as precision agriculture & automated packing. Blockchain-based traceability systems - improved efficiency, reduced costs, and increased transparency throughout the supply chain – helps identify and address potential threats. Data management – to detect and mitigate potential supply chain disruptions such as weather and seasonal related. Improved sustainability by investing in new processes and technologies that reduce waste and minimize environmental impact.



Quality enhancement, shelf-life extension and waste reduction are of utmost importance. Westfalia Fruits new patented technology uses short-wave ultraviolet (UV-C), exposed at the final point of contact alongside modified atmosphere packaging (MAP). The benefits are numerous, including extended shelf life, enhanced quality, increased availability & reduced stock loss.

Another example is demonstrated by Westfalia Fruit's total crop use, zero waste strategy. "We use the whole crop, supplying whole-head avocados to leading retailers, food service and wholesale customers. Unsuitable avocados are processed to extract the pulp of which is used into a plethora of value-added products, but we don't stop there – we strive to use everything, with our avocado stones generated from this process being used as an exfoliator in cosmetics replacing harmful micro-plastics – it really is a virtuous circle of production whilst ultimately unlocking value in the supply chain." noted Graham Young, Group COO of Westfalia Fruit.

### **Building resilience through risk management & integration**

Provides improved visibility of systems and processes to identify and respond to potential risks and disruptions rapidly, streamlines the flow of goods and information which can reduce lead times and increase efficiency.

Improved forecasting encompassing data management and 'mining' leads to improved inventory management, reduced waste, and increased sales, improved collaboration, and communication among different stakeholders in the supply chain.

Improved risk management, a holistic view to identify and mitigate potential risks and hazards – from research to consumer, in the short, medium, and longer-term.

A holistic approach is taken through Westfalia Fruits integrated supply chain, from end to end, from research to customer.

"This begins right at the start of the supply chain, through plant material selection and varietal breeding programs, through to supply to customers and each step in between, we have laser focussed approach at all levels" adds Matthew Churchill, Global Brand Manager.

Westfalia Fruit has the world's largest privately funded research institute focusing on sub-tropical fruits – specifically Avocado. The research has commercial relevance with findings being shared with the industry and worldwide scientific community. We offer technical advice and support to growers around the world.

Ultimately this research is crucial to the health and vibrancy of the global Avocado industry and is delivered through the three principles of our founder – Dr Hans Merensky: experimentation, demonstration and only then, commercialization.

An example of this research excellence includes pioneering developments in irrigation systems – reducing water use. Tree planting density and tree architecture, achieving the best from the resources available. The development of disease resistant root stocks – advanced tree health. Enhanced cultivar development – high yielding, improved productivity & climate adaptability. Pest & disease resistance, reduced levels of inputs, alternatives and IPM technology.

Graham Young affirmed, "The importance that this research makes not only to Westfalia but to the entire global avocado industry cannot be understated. The timings involved are lengthy, 25 years for the development of disease tolerant root stocks and a new variety to be released. We as an industry are reaping the rewards today of disease resistant root stock development that started over 35 years ago, taking a longer-term risk management approach. Our commitment extends beyond our own interests; it is a commitment to the vitality of the entire global avocado industry."



Another example of safeguarding the supply chain via cultivar development is the Gourmet GEM® avocado variety. GEM® is a protected avocado cultivar that can only be grown and traded under license. Westfalia holds the world-wide Master Licence to produce GEM®, as well as the exclusive right to trade GEM® in Africa, the EU, and many other regions of the world, offering choice as a 'top tier', 'best' variety.

### **A Global perspective and commitment**

Westfalia Fruit's distinctive contributions extend far beyond its operational boundaries. Graham Young remarked, "What we are accomplishing is profoundly unique and unparalleled. Avocado production, with its inherent adaptability, can thrive in developing regions. We acknowledge the transformative role of avocado production in these communities. Through our investments, we simultaneously serve communities worldwide while upholding the health and stability of the broader industry."

In an ever-evolving global landscape, Westfalia Fruit's comprehensive resilience strategy underscores its dedication to adaptability and proactive risk management. By addressing both internal and external challenges, prioritising collaboration, compliance, and holistic risk assessment, the company is strategically positioned to strive to ensure the continuity and stability of supply chains in the short, medium, and long term. These endeavours fortify business sustainability and elevate the strength and resilience of the entire industry.

"In the world of avocados, the supply chain may seem straightforward, commencing at the harvest. However, from a risk management perspective, we delve deep into the very roots, from developing plant material to producing new varieties, adopting optimal planting techniques and precise irrigation practices. This holistic approach ensures our readiness, not only for today but for the years to come." notes Graham Young COO of Westfalia Fruit.

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### **About Westfalia Fruit**

The multinational Westfalia Fruit Group is a leading supplier of fresh and processed produce to international markets, offering a diverse range of quality fruit and related products via its vertically integrated supply chain. Founded 74 years ago on guiding environmental, social, governance & sustainability principles. These practices, premised on the legacy of Dr Hans Merensky are at the heart of all that is done by the Group – "To Do Good", – of which continue to underpin our approach today.

Today, operating in 17 countries spread over 5 continents, the Westfalia Fruit Group prides itself on advancing sustainable agricultural practices and being a responsible corporate citizen within the communities in which it operates.

As a frontrunner in the avocado industry, Westfalia grows, sources, ripens, packs, processes, and markets accredited avocados across the globe throughout the year. Value-added products include avocado oil, low-preservative guacamole, frozen avocado, and dried fruit.

Westfalia grows fruit in all major origins in the Americas and Africa and sources from partner orchards, giving the Group the most diverse avocado-growing footprint in the world. Westfalia's dynamic and integrated supply chain from research to the consumer benefits all stakeholders. The Group's research division, Westfalia Technological Services, is the world's largest privately funded subtropical fruit research unit. Its dedicated team of scientists and technicians focus on varietal development, innovation, and environmental matters, and provides a pivotal role in defining the future of the global avocado industry.



A supplier of choice to retail, wholesale, and food-service customers, Westfalia operates sales offices in the UK, Europe, North America, Latin America, southern Africa, and Asia. Fruit is packed in diverse formats and expertly ripened to deliver optimal eating quality. For more information visit [www.westfaliafruit.com](http://www.westfaliafruit.com).

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