



PRESS RELEASE

Belgian food industry goes for renewed growth in the US

Brussels, 2 June 2022 – The United States remain by far the main overseas export destination for the Belgian food industry, representing 700 million euros in turnover. Unfortunately, the corona pandemic has stymied the soaring rise of export sales. To reverse this trend, thirty food companies will be joining HRH Princess Astrid on a mission to the US from 4 through 12 June. In New York and Rhode Island, the federation of the Belgian food industry Fevia is putting them in touch with purchasing managers, a renowned food innovation institute and a business incubator that launches foreign brands on the American marketplace.

Biggest overseas export market needs to get back to being a growth market

Coming second only to the United Kingdom, the American market is the main overseas export destination for the Belgian food industry. Exports of Belgian food and drinks to the US went up from 459 million euros in 2014 to 764 million in 2019, i.e. a 66% rise in 5 years.

Sadly, this consistent upward trajectory was thwarted by the corona pandemic. But that has not diminished the Belgian food industry's belief in the growth potential of the US market. Belgian frozen vegetables and potato products for instance are enjoying a sharp rise, starting out small in 2017 and climbing to reach 87 million euros in 2021. In addition, American consumers are very much taken with Belgian chocolate products and cookies.

From global player AB InBev to smaller Belgian brewers

It will come as no surprise that our beers too remain highly prized by American consumers. On Tuesday 7 June, HRH Princess Astrid will be visiting AB InBev's American headquarters in New York. Host and Anheuser-Busch CEO Brendan Whitworth will show the official delegation how AB InBev is working towards sustainable growth. Beer producers such as Verhaeghe-Vichte, Val-Dieu, De Halve Maan, De Brunehaut and Neobulles are set to take this opportunity to develop and expand their export potential.

On Wednesday 8 June, Fevia and VLAM (Flanders Agricultural and Fisheries Marketing Board) - in association with the three regional foreign trade agencies (FIT, AWEX and hub.brussels) - are set to host a networking event in Manhattan's highest open air lounge café where American purchasing managers and distributors will be able to sample the products of the Belgian food companies taking part.

Rhode Island as hub for the American interior

On Thursday 9 June, the food delegation will be heading to Rhode Island. Strategically located between New York and Boston, this state offers a favourable ecosystem for foreign food companies wishing to start or expand their activities in the US. Governor Dan McKee, along with Rhode Island

Commerce Corporation, will explain the Belgian food companies on which strategic support they can count. Lisa Raiola will demonstrate the services of food incubator Hope & Main, going from training courses and market advice to connecting businesses with local retail and distribution. Jason Evans, the dean of the College of Food Innovation & Technology at Johnson & Wales University, will explore with them possible collaborations in food innovation. The companies will also pitch their products to local retailers.

Press contact
Nicholas Courant
Spokesman
nc@fevia.be
+32 (0)478 24 31 49

Fevia contact person in the delegation
Tine Vandervelden
International Business Director
+32 (0)478 26 74 72

About Fevia

Fevia, the federation of the Belgian food industry, is committed to building a more sustainable food system, in consultation with all stakeholders. As the mouthpiece of the Belgian food industry, Fevia represents over 4,000 companies that produce innovative quality food and beverages in Belgium. In fielding the “Food.be – Small country. Great food.” brand, we are showcasing the quality and diversity and innovation of Belgian food around the globe.

The food sector is the undisputed frontrunner of the overall Belgian manufacturing industry, accounting for close to 98,000 jobs and representing 61 billion euros in turnover, of which 30 billion euros derives from export sales. Fevia represents 27 sub-sectors and over 700 businesses which jointly account for nearly 90% of all jobs and 90% turnover of the turnover generated by the Belgian food industry. Fevia’s mission is to assist and support the Belgian food industry in creating sustainable added value.

About the food companies taking part in the mission

For a full list of the food companies taking part in the mission, including their contact details, please go to <https://www.food.be/belgian-economic-mission-united-states>