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European Vegetable Processors express concerns on consequences of extreme weather conditions

The extreme weather conditions in Belgium, the Netherlands and big parts of Germany are impacting the harvesting and sowing of several vegetable crops.

The heavy rainfall of the past days has caused a lot of problems in these countries. The pea harvest has seen serious damages and in some cases total losses. Entire hectares have been washed away and other fields are too wet to harvest. Exact losses will be registered in the coming weeks.

Consequences also extend to other vegetable crops like broad beans and carrots, which complicates the situation for processing companies who combine peas and carrots at the same moment for canning. The sowing of green beans and flageolets is delayed or impossible because of the wet circumstances over the last weeks. This situation entails more risks given that beans are very sensitive to early frost conditions. This year's weather-impact is made even more challenging by the fact of declining availability of crop protection products. Crop damages by e.g. flights from the bean fly which is very present this year.

Climate change has become a very serious issue for the industry all across Europe, as several consecutive years of extreme and volatile weather have led to falling yields, and field losses which have consequently resulted in reduced and irregular deliveries of raw material to the processing factories. Since 2017 we face the proof of this, when parts of Europe were confronted with water scarcity or seasonal droughts, whilst others experienced flash floods. This year we face again extreme weather conditions with late spring frosts and heavy rainfall affecting European vegetable crops.

It goes without saying that we need to take care of our planet, for current and for future generations. Although our industry is now impacted by the events of these last weeks, fruits and vegetables are actually an important part of the solution towards a healthier planet.

Following the heavy rainfall, the industry is now looking into potential measures to limit the losses and in the long run the entire chain will have to make investments to find solutions and adapt to this situation in order to secure the availability of high quality and sufficient products to consumers. PROFEL will monitor the situation very closely and will provide an update when more details on the impact will be known.

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PROFEL is the European Association of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Industries, representing over 500 companies in 11 EU countries, producing canned vegetables, frozen vegetables, dehydrated vegetables, jams and fruit preserves, frozen fruit and canned fruit. The members of PROFEL employ more than 80.000 people.