

Brussels, 20th December 2011  
Sug/11/033

## **Sugar market situation: fruit processors' competitiveness at stake**

The fruit processing companies inside PROFEL<sup>1</sup> feel the serious impact on their businesses as a result of the high sugar prices and supply shortages on the EU market during the 2010/2011 marketing year. The critical sugar situation was the single most important issue discussed by the sector at its recent autumn meeting in Brussels.

Fruit processors (producing jams and similar products, fruit spreads, compotes and canned fruit) are important users of sugar: the average sugar content of

- jams and similar preserves is 55% and more,
- fruit spreads between 25% and 60%, extra jams and jellies between 40% and 55%
- and for canned fruit in syrup between 9% and 15%

Depending on the product, sugar represents between 15% and up to 40% of the costs of the final product. Compared to 2009, the sugar price increased by around 30-40%.

While the reasons for the supply shortage and price development are complex, the EU failed to take early warnings seriously and to introduce timely measures. Many fruit processing companies – among them many small and medium-sized companies - call it the worst sugar situation they have ever seen.

EU fruit processors need supply security and a stable and sustainable EU sugar market in order to remain competitive and secure employment – not only at the factories but along the whole chain.

The EU's emergency measures in the marketing year 2010/2011 came too late and for many businesses were not sufficient to make a difference. There is fear of a repetition for this year's market situation - despite the measures adopted by the Commission for 2011/2012.

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<sup>1</sup> PROFEL represents the interests of EU manufacturers of processed fruit and vegetables. Over 500 companies affiliated via our national associations produce each year approximately 650.000 t of fruit preserves, 1,2 million t of canned fruit, 2,3 million t of canned vegetables, 2,5 mill t of frozen vegetables, and about 35.000 t of dried vegetables.