



We preserve nature's gifts

# Ardo Corporate Responsibility Report



 Planet

 Product

 People



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

Making a business operate in a sustainable way across all its activities is a complicated task with many twists and turns, and goes far beyond simply buying off-the-shelf quick-fix sustainable solutions. For Ardo, it involves breaking down the component parts of the company's activities, collecting information about the possible environmental, social and economic costs and benefits and searching for ways to improve each area. It also involves finding long-term solutions and establishing mutually beneficial partnerships with our growers, our customers, our suppliers, and of course our employees. If we get these things right, then profitability should follow automatically.

**This Corporate Responsibility Report illustrates our approach to sustainability, and documents the steps that we have taken to date.**

## SCOPE OF THE REPORT

Our fifth Corporate Responsibility Report covers the entire Ardo Group with its 21 production and packing units in nine European countries and its headquarters in Ardoe, Belgium (all entities are fully or partially owned by Ardo Holding).

A selection of our most relevant activities on sustainability are covered in this report, borrowed from the Sustainability Action Plans from sites across the Ardo Group and completed with the input of employees from a variety of different departments across Europe.

The report provides information on the company's 'sustainable' performance during 2013, 2014 and 2015, and details our progress since our previous report, published in 2013 (available on our website [www.ardo.com](http://www.ardo.com)). We intend to publish our Corporate Responsibility Report every three years.

For the first time, our Corporate Responsibility Report is compiled in accordance with the **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G4-guidelines, Core level**. The GRI framework is internationally recognised for its credibility, consistency and comparability, and is widely considered to be the de facto standard for reporting on sustainability. Both the general GRI G4-guidelines, together with the GRI food processing sector supplement, provided invaluable guidance when compiling this report. The GRI G4-reference table is printed at the end of this report.

We were delighted to discover that several areas of activity described in this report have been recognised as priorities by the United Nations in their recently published Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs). A link between Ardo's improvement activities and the UN's SDG's can be seen on page 46.

September 2016

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# FOREWORD & STRATEGY

We are passionate about our People, our Planet and our Products, and we are inspired to maintain all three elements in an optimal state of balance ...



Bernard Haspeslagh, COO  
Rik Jacob, CEO  
Jan Haspeslagh, Managing Director

Several years ago we set out on a journey **to grow and freeze our products in a sustainable way, with respect for the planet, our employees, our suppliers, our neighbours and our customers.** Not content to simply do the right things ourselves, we felt the need to motivate and guide our upstream partners. On our journey we have reached out to our growers and our suppliers of services and goods, and have worked with them to maximise areas of common interest and develop our shared values, where sustainability takes centre stage. Starting with the seed and the soil and finishing with the freezing and packing of our finished goods, sustainability is an integral part of the food that we sell.

*'We are committed to the frozen vegetable, herb and fruit industry and we do our utmost to make a strong contribution to the sector. We believe in the future of our industry, and we are confident that the sector's outlook is bright as a provider of nutritious, affordable products, that will help to assure food security and reduce food waste. We are determined to play a leading role in sustainability, recognising that we need to confront tomorrow's issues today.'*

ARDO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

## We make our path sustainable by walking along it ourselves ...

For Ardo, Corporate Responsibility means meeting the economic, environmental and social needs of our employees, local communities and the business, whilst preserving opportunities for future generations.

## Protecting the future, by being ready to confront tomorrow's concerns today ...

The ability to produce enough food for an increasing global population, will represent a different set of challenges than the ones we see today. Our ingenuity and our ability to adapt, through sustainable innovation, must remain ahead of the challenges that we face.

## Ardo is a family business ...

Whilst each quarter year's financial results are fundamentally important to the Ardo business, they are not the only compass from which our course is set. As a multigenerational family business with a long-term vision, Ardo considers sustainability to be of pivotal importance for the company and its stakeholders.

Executive Committee:

Rik Jacob, CEO

Bernard Haspeslagh, COO

Jan Haspeslagh, Managing Director



# ARDO: THE BUSINESS

*‘Our expertise makes the difference’*

The family-owned Ardo Group is the leading **European producer of freshly-frozen vegetables, herbs and fruit for Retail, FoodService and the Food Industry.** The Group markets 762.000 tonnes of freshly-frozen vegetables, herbs, fruit, pasta, potato products and rice worldwide under its own brands as well as under private labels.

**Ardo controls the entire production chain**, from the selection of seed to packing and distribution. Ardo’s market-leading expertise in Crop Production and Processing gives us a unique advantage, and this, together with the flexible structure of our business, supports the development of new products that meet market needs and trends.

With **sales offices throughout Europe and beyond**, a member of the Ardo sales team is always close at hand, to react quickly to local market requirements.

Ardo supports **long-term relationships with growers, suppliers and customers**, which provide stability for all parties and which are necessary to generate the confidence for sustainable investments.

*Ardo’s aim is to excel in the worldwide frozen food market via an integrated network of growing regions, freezing units, storage centres, packaging equipment, appropriate logistics, thorough quality control and a personal customer approach.*

## TIMELINE



*Edouard Haspeslagh started growing vegetables on the family farm in Ardoonie.*

**1960**



**1977**

*Ardovries was founded to process and freeze the vegetables. The company expanded and further growth was ensured by the acquisition of factories throughout Europe.*



**Dujardin**

**1968**



*Richard Haspeslagh started trading fresh vegetables.*

**1974**

*Unifrost was founded to process and freeze the vegetables. The company expanded and further growth was ensured by the acquisition of factories in France and the UK.*



We preserve nature’s gifts

## KEY FIGURES 2015



TURNOVER

**€841 MILLION**



VOLUME

**762.000 TONNES**



EMPLOYEES

**3.800**



GROWERS

**3.500**



CROPS

**87 DIFFERENT CROPS  
ON 49.000 hectares**



EXPORT  
WORLDWIDE  
TO MORE  
THAN

**60 COUNTRIES**

**2000**

*The company name  
was changed to Ardo.*

**2013**

*The company  
name was changed  
to Dujardin Foods.*

**2014**

*Ardo and Dujardin Foods sign a merger  
agreement. This brings both Haspeslagh  
families together in one business, under the  
corporate name of Ardo.*



# ARDO IN EUROPE

 **ASHFORD**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*packing and distribution site*

 **EYE**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*herbs: parsley, chives, mint, cress, coriander..., packing of smoothies, fruit*

 **LOWESTOFT**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*peas*

 **KOOLSKAMP**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*peas, beans, root vegetables, spinach, Brussels sprouts cauliflower, celeriac*

 **ARDOOIE**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*cauliflower, peas, beans, endive, root vegetables, cabbage, leek, courgettes, celery, rhubarb*

 **GEER**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*spinach, peas, beans, Brussels sprouts, root vegetables, sugar snap peas, rice, pasta, potatoes, pulses*

 **KORTEMARK**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*packing of herbs, prepared vegetables*

 **SAINT-SEVER**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*sweetcorn, peas, beans*

 **GOURIN**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*spinach, peas, beans, cauliflower, root vegetables, broccoli, purees, prepared vegetables, soups*

 **LA GARDE-ADHÉMAR**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*Mediterranean herbs*

 **VIOLAINES**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*natural & fried onions, peas, bean-sprouts, fried vegetables*

 **LE MOUSTOIR**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*herbs: parsley, chives, mint, cress, coriander,...*

 **BENIMODO**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*sweetcorn, peas, spinach, turnip leaves, rice, sauces, prepared vegetables*

 **MARCILLA**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*distribution site*

 **BADAJOS**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
*fried & grilled vegetables, cherry & date tomatoes, olives*

 **ZUNDERT**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
spinach, cabbage,  
curly kale, prepared  
vegetables

 **NYBORG**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
distribution site

 **OREHOVED**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
peas, sauces,  
butter portions



 **ALPIARÇA**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
broccoli, peas, tomatoes,  
peppers, courgettes,  
broad beans, butternut  
squash, sweet potatoes

 **VINKOVCI**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
corn, peas, peppers,  
onions, chestnuts, cherries,  
plums, raspberries

 **GROSS-ENZERSDORF**



**MAIN PRODUCTION**  
peas, beans, cabbage,  
spinach, root vegetables,  
butternut squash, soybeans,  
prepared vegetables,  
fried vegetables

# SUSTAINABILITY IN AN INTEGRATED VALUE CHAIN



## PEOPLE

### Safe and healthy working conditions

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- Fit@Ardo, p. 18

### Professional work environment

- Mosaic, p. 20



## PLANET

### Controlled use of resources

- Evolution of energy & water use, p. 30
- Intelligent use & reuse of water, p. 31
- Sustainable palm oil, p. 31

### Closing the loop

- Using vegetable waste to generate green energy, p. 32



## PRODUCT

### Preserve Quality

- Supplying our customers with consistently high quality products every time, p. 40

Field



Agronomy



Production & packing



Logistics & sales



## PEOPLE

### Partnerships with growers and suppliers

- Safety in the field, p. 21
- Interactive communication with our growers, p. 21
- Grower Days Badajoz/ Alpiarça, p. 21



## PLANET

### Responsible & Local Sourcing

- MIMOSA, p. 25



## PRODUCT

### We believe in organic

- Organic is a way of life, p. 37



## PLANET

### Positive environmental actions

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- Corporate Sustainability Award for Ardo Ardoeie, p. 35

# Customer



## PRODUCT

### Safe and healthy Food

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- Freshly-frozen vegetables, herbs & fruit, p. 44

### Knowledge exchange

- Sharing knowledge with stakeholders, p. 42

### Reduce waste

- International Food Waste Coalition, p. 41



## PEOPLE

### Customer partnership

- Strong stakeholder relationships, p. 11



## AGRONOMY – FIELD MANAGEMENT

Ardo works together with over 3.500 growers, to grow 87 different crops, on 49.000 hectares, in nine countries across Europe.

All our crops are grown outside, in open fields, in their natural seasons. Our vegetables, herbs and fruit are grown with the maximum respect for nature and the environment, balancing the introduction of more sustainable agricultural production methods, with the need to remain commercially competitive. **We strive to minimise the impact of our growing and processing activities on the environment.** This approach is summarized in our **MIMOSA programme, Minimum Impact & Maximum Output Sustainable Agriculture.**



## 21 PRODUCTION, PACKING & DISTRIBUTION SITES IN 9 COUNTRIES

Ardo's production, packing & distribution sites are located from North to South and from East to West in Europe's most fertile growing regions. The close proximity of our freezing factories to our crop production areas is one of our key strengths, as it ensures minimal transport time between the harvest and the locking in of the product's natural goodness in our freezers.

**Our aim is to deliver our ingredients in the same state that Mother Nature intended: fresh, nutritious and picked at peak ripeness in the crop's natural season.** Applying integrated crop management and production techniques, and focussing on quality assurance and high ethical standards, we control the product from seed to customer.



## QUALITY AND SERVICE ARE KEY FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

Using our local sales teams to gain knowledge and a deep understanding of our customers' expectations, **we are able to offer customised products and a precise response to each and every customer, regardless of sector or location.**

Product quality is a cornerstone of our business, providing a real point of difference for Ardo. We employ 53 agronomists, and 148 quality technicians working 24/7, to ensure that our products look and taste good, and are healthy, safe and legally compliant.

# COMPANY STRUCTURE

## OUR CORPORATE BUSINESS PRINCIPLES CONSIST OF :

- Management & Leadership Principles
- Code of Conduct
- HR Policy
- Health & Safety at work

We consider them to be fundamental cornerstones for the sustainable development of our business.

Ardo strives to create the optimal balance between local autonomy and Group support to ensure that we continue to excel in the European frozen vegetable, herb and fruit market.

**Ardo's mission is to preserve the gifts of nature as purely as possible for our customers and consumers.**

To reach this goal, the Group applies integrated production methods and quality monitoring with the greatest respect for nature and for people. Ardo is committed to developing truly sustainable ways of growing crops and producing products that take into consideration the crop's requirements, the activities of our growers, the capabilities of our employees and the demands of our customers.



# STRONG STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

We work with all our stakeholders to ensure that they are able to access the potential synergies that exist, and we encourage their ambitions in working towards the same goals as Ardo.

Our objective is to **build on our existing strong relationships and to develop partnerships with like-minded stakeholders**, who share Ardo's appreciation for mutual respect and have the capacity to understand and to commit to making a partnership work.



## OUR EMPLOYEES

**Open communication** is fundamental to the operation of the Ardo Group. Our management structure is flat and their doors are always open.

In our Ardo employee newsletter 'Connect', we keep our employees informed about things that are happening within the Group. In addition to the group communication, we also support local country initiatives and communications featuring events and personnel information.

Most Ardo factories have set up **environmental working groups** that challenge their site's green credentials and work to develop new approaches which are better for the environment. Our sites have **idea-boxes**, providing our employees with the opportunity to put forward their suggestions.

We have our feet 'firmly on the ground', and follow a practical approach without formalities. This enables everyone to contribute their ideas for improvement, and to be part of Ardo!

*See example later in this report: Fit@Ardo, p. 18*



## OUR SUPPLIERS

Our objective is simple: to **create a stable supplier base which is committed to delivering the goods that we require, produced in the manner that we require**. Our suppliers must be dedicated, open to change and must strive for continuous improvement. Ardo's team of Compliance Managers located around the globe, guided by our Group Purchase and Quality departments, visit our suppliers on a regular basis, performing supplier inspections and providing guidance and instruction, to ensure that Ardo's standards are met each and every time. We see our suppliers as an extension of the Ardo business, and we consider it to be of fundamental importance for our supply partners to be provided with the economic returns and the technical support that enable them to develop their business in line with Ardo's expectations.

## OUR OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

We value our relationships and work to maintain close contacts with many different stakeholders, including our neighbours, our agricultural suppliers, our contractors, transport companies, research centres, suppliers of machinery, packaging, financial institutions, industry networks, government institutions,... and we do our best to keep all our stakeholders informed and involved.

*See example later in this report:*

- *Vredeseilanden: working together on sustainability, trust, and fair business, p. 22*
- *The Social Programme at our Alpiarça site, p. 23*

### *Ardo Sustainability Competition*

*Ardo employees are asked to approach Sustainability as one big inter-country team, a team that understands and sees the whole picture, where individual objectives do not get in the way of the collective goal.*

*Each year our sites **exchange their Sustainability Action Plans**. Action Plans really come to life when you see sister sites adopting each other's ideas.*

*We are all on the same side; however a little friendly rivalry between the sites helps to generate innovation. Every two years we hold a **Sustainability Competition for the best Action implemented in the three separate categories of People, Planet and Product**.*

*All Ardo sites are encouraged to enter the competition, and entries are judged by members of the Ardo Corporate Sustainability Committee. Winning sites are awarded a wooden plaque to commemorate their victory. Photographs and a description of the winning actions are reported in the company's newsletter.*

## OUR GROWERS

In relying on locally grown vegetables and herbs to supply our freezing **factories** day-in and day-out, year-in and year-out, we have spent years identifying the optimal growing areas. Our factories are situated **in the middle of the most fertile growing lands in Europe**.

With the investments made and the factories constructed, it is crucial for us to secure the supply of our fresh produce and to provide an operating framework which ensures that our growers, and the fields surrounding our factories can continue to grow environmentally and socially sustainable, premium quality crops, from one generation to the next.

**At Ardo, we place a huge importance on our relationships with our growers.** These relationships are built on respect, trust, understanding and mutual benefit. A team of more than 50 agronomists maintain links with our growers to improve the understanding of each others' businesses and shared objectives.

Ardo and the vast majority of our growers are partners in **Producer Organisations** that have clearly defined rules established by the European Union. These organisations provide the perfect platform for coordinated investments in research, in introducing the latest on-farm technology, in maintaining and improving yields and product quality, and in implementing environmentally-friendly measures to reduce the impact of farming operations and support the biodiversity of our natural landscapes.

The professionally-managed Producer Organisations provide structure and support, and deliver the information necessary to ensure that our agronomists and our growers are positioned at the cutting edge of European agriculture. The creation of these groups makes it easier to maintain perspective and to identify priorities that will benefit both our growers and Ardo in the future.

*See example later in this report:*

- *Let's meet in the field, p. 28*

- *Growers' Day in Ardo Badajoz and Ardo Alpiarça, p. 21*

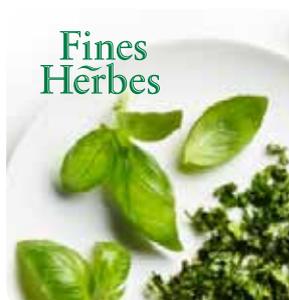
## OUR CUSTOMERS

Ardo supports long-term relationships with our growers, our suppliers and our customers. Long-term relationships facilitate a **higher level of mutual understanding**, provide stability, enable easier planning, and create the necessary confidence for investments. These ingredients are essential to remain sustainable for our Retail, FoodService and for our Food Industry partners.

Ardo has a stand at our sector's main trade fairs, and we regularly invite customers to our fields and factories so that they can experience the product lifecycle first-hand. We also keep our customers informed via newsletters, our website, social media, ...

*See example later in this report:*

- *Sharing knowledge with our stakeholders, p. 42*



# PEOPLE



Ardo is a company where employees matter. **Our success depends on them!**

We are aware that everything we create is performed by people and for people, and we believe that our company has a broad social responsibility, with priority to our employees, but also to our surrounding community and society as a whole.





# SAFE@ARDO

## SAFETY IS NON-NEGOTIABLE.

At Ardo, we devote all the energy and attention necessary to protect our employees, external contractors working on site, and all other visitors to our factories.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Our local Health & Safety management systems are based on the concept of continuous improvement. **We are constantly developing and improving our performance by designing and adapting processes, work practices and systems for better ergonomics and a higher level of safety.**

We encourage all employees to be on the lookout for unsafe situations (machinery or working practices) that could lead to workplace accidents, and we commit to eliminating identified risks.

Employees are empowered to:

- Challenge any unsafe acts
- Put a task on hold until appropriate risk reduction measures have been taken, if they consider safety to be compromised

Safety is taken into consideration from the design phase to the implementation and working practices, for all modifications on site.

*In a highly mechanised production environment, it is not possible to eliminate all risks and all potential dangers, but every risk can be managed. By providing safety training and personal protective equipment, by designing safety into our production lines, and crucially, by developing a culture where every employee takes responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others, we create a safer place to work and a safer place to visit.*



BERNARD HASPEFLAGH  
COO

EMPLOYEES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WORKING IN A SAFE MANNER TO PREVENT INJURY TO THEMSELVES, FELLOW WORKERS AND OTHER PERSONS. THEY ARE ASKED TO BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN PROGRAMMES TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE IN THE WORKPLACE.



## COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Ardo builds a proactive safety culture by:

- Continuously improving local Health & Safety Management Systems through communication with employees, contractors and other stakeholders
- Educating, training and empowering employees to avoid unsafe situations and to respond to unexpected events
- Obliging our contractors and suppliers to respect Ardo's Health & Safety standards and requirements, and when necessary, demanding improvements
- Informing local communities of any potential risks and explaining measures to mitigate these risks
- Promoting Health & Safety discussions at corporate level, coordinated by the Group Engineering department.

Ardo has launched independent Health and Safety audits on all sites. The purpose of these three-yearly audits, is to create a picture of the actual situation, to evaluate and measure the evolution across the Group, and to identify areas that require attention.



ROB TEUNISSEN  
MANAGING DIRECTOR ARDO ZUNDELT (NL)

*'A fantastic and important initiative! The Health & Safety Audit provided us with a host of useful insights and served as a good incentive to further refine our safety policy and increase our collective level of awareness. It also helped to reinforce the work of our SHE (Safety, Health & Environment) manager. When it comes to safety, you must never cut corners.'*

## NEW INITIATIVES

Common Group hygiene and safety rules for visitors are being introduced at all sites. A set of 'Cardinal Rules' is being developed, with the help of all Ardo sites, supported by a common safety avatar.

### SAFE @ARDO

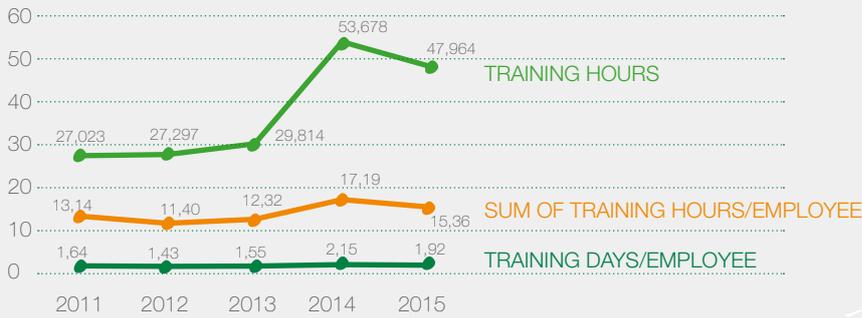


**AT ARDO NO JOB IS SO IMPORTANT & NO SERVICE IS SO URGENT THAT WE CANNOT TAKE THE TIME TO WORK SAFELY.**

## HUMAN RESOURCES STATISTICS

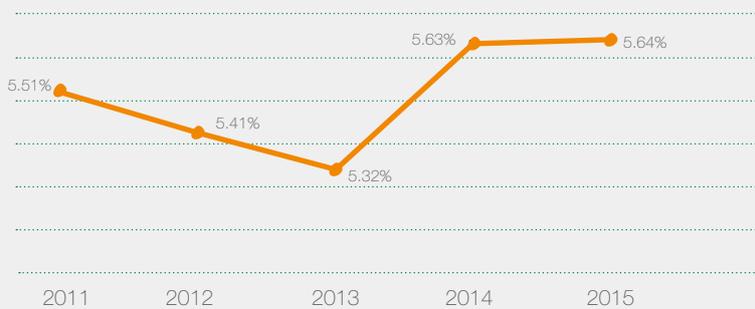
We actively monitor Health & Safety performance, analysing incidents and accidents, and workplace activities where the cumulative effects may lead to illnesses or injury.

### TRAINING HOURS



Training hours have increased steadily over the years, with a small drop in 2015. With the roll-out of our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, we are investing in more training in the years to come, to future-proof our business and to continue the development of our employees' skills.

### ABSENTEEISM\*



Figures for absenteeism have been stable for the last two years, and sites are implementing programmes to reduce those percentages going forward.

### INJURY FREQUENCY INDEX\*\*



We are seeing a positive evolution in the injury frequency index, bringing the figure down considerably. Our H&S audits, as well as local initiatives in this area, are showing results.

\* Absenteeism percentage = number of hours absenteeism (=hours lost own staff) divided by hours worked (Ardo staff only) x 100

\*\* Injury Frequency Index = A x 1.000.000, divided by T

A = Total number of work accidents for the entire company (all departments), during a given period of both own staff and external staff.

T = Hours worked total (real worked normal & overtime hours Ardo own staff) + hours external staff (agency workers etc).

# FIT@ARDO

At Ardo, the focus is on our employees, which is why we consider it essential to encourage them to live life in a healthy and active manner. With this in mind, different working groups 'Fit@Ardo' were set up.

## The working groups focus on two pillars: exercise and healthy eating.

Firstly, we want to encourage our employees to exercise more, both at home, at work, and if possible, during their commute. The second pillar of Fit@Ardo focuses on motivating our employees to adopt a balanced diet. We want to help them to learn more about healthy eating, and that is why we organise a number of initiatives.

Each year, Ardo Ardoie (BE) takes part in a number of sporting events, including running competitions (Wings for Life, Urban Trail), triathlons and so on.

The annual **Ardo Cycling Day** in Ardoie is always a big hit. All colleagues who cycle to work on the day, are rewarded with a healthy breakfast. It is ideal for encouraging interaction with other colleagues and is an excellent way to start the working day.

The Discover Ardo programme delivers a combination of exercise and discovery. Every month, a **guided walk** is organised on and around the site, providing the opportunity for employees to get to know the site in a fun way. So far, employees have had the chance to visit the biomethanisation plant, the production department and the distribution centre during their lunch break.

We also organise an annual **Ardo Run/Walk**, where colleagues can run or walk 5 or 10km at their own pace. They can also support other colleagues along the route. At the finish line, all the participants can enjoy a healthy bite to eat and something to drink.



Healthy eating is promoted in Ardoie by offering soup, fruit or a smoothie on a three-monthly basis. Employees also receive a **monthly healthy recipe** that can be prepared using Ardo products. And we issue 'Did you know?'-factsheets, containing tips such as how to barbecue food in a healthy manner or with information about seasonal fruit and vegetables.

**A range of initiatives are also organised at other sites.**

The ladies at Ardo **Benimodo** (ES) took part in the **Women's Race** of Valencia, a solidarity running event intended to raise money to help beat cancer.

In addition to attending information sessions where the participants learn about how to stop smoking, how to move correctly (correct posture for lifting heavy objects) and about relaxation exercises, colleagues at Ardo **Badajoz** (ES) are **encouraged to cycle to work**. Each month, they count up the kilometres that they have cycled. At the end of the challenge they will work out which city they would have managed to reach by bike. Besides discovering the number of calories burnt, the amount of petrol saved and the volume of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions avoided, the participants are rewarded with a typical regional dish from the city to which they would have cycled. Perhaps they will make it all the way to Ardoie (2.184km) – then they can sample the tasty dish of Belgian endive wrapped in ham and covered in a cheese sauce.



At Ardo **Denmark**, all employees are given **a piece of fruit each day**. Our Danish colleagues also take part in a **Cycle and Run** event, in which five colleagues work together to cycle and run the distance of a marathon. They do not shy away from other competitions either. In the **Adventure Run**, participants from Ardo and other companies have to run 5 or 10km as fast as possible.

Our colleagues at Ardo **Zundert** (NL) also offer monthly tips and facts, including information about vegetables, smoothie recipes, tips on how to stop smoking, workout secrets, and so on.

Not only that, but they organise **mini workout sessions**, **cooking workshops** and take part in major **walking events** in the Netherlands.

In Ardo **Gourin** (FR), a few colleagues use their lunch break to go running together twice a week. The team spirit will hopefully encourage other colleagues to take part too.

Our sites pick up ideas from one another and copy some of these initiatives.

The Fit@Ardo mascots are ready to get started...





The key projects to be implemented in the coming years are streamlined processes, common master data and Group software systems, which will be consolidated within the Mosaic programme.



A mosaic is a work of art which is created by precisely fitting together a number of separate pieces. Each piece is essential for achieving the perfect outcome. Creating a mosaic requires a lot of effort, planning, skill and patience. It is important to keep a clear overview of the process, whilst at the same time placing each piece with surgical precision. When it all comes together, the result is fantastic. The programme name reflects what we are aiming to achieve: **we are bringing together people, expertise and departments from across the entire Ardo Group. Ultimately, we want to implement Ardo's operations more effectively.**

A **BPS-team** (Business Processes & Systems Department) has been set up at Group level in Belgium, and the team, consisting of IT and master data employees, will provide support to colleagues at the local sites during the implementation of upcoming projects. We believe that close cooperation with local sites is paramount, and around **140 colleagues representing the Ardo sites have been consulted**, to ensure that all business needs have been identified.

**Site involvement, combined with training, will give our employees the opportunity to assist in further professionalising our company, whilst developing their own skills, and enabling us all to be prepared for the future.**



*'Goals can only be achieved with people. To be successful in our future projects, it is essential that the necessary resources, expertise and skills are provided.'*

RIK JACOB  
CEO



## SAFETY IN THE FIELD

Field managers play an active role in raising safety awareness and accident prevention for all the activities they manage in the field (mostly the sowing & harvesting of crops).

**They are expected to provide advice, to lead by example, and to intervene when they observe unsafe working practices.** Special attention is given to the safety features incorporated into the sowing and harvesting machines. Adequate guarding and emergency stop/power cut-off are prerequisites on machines used by our agricultural contractors. Growers, contractors and visitors are reminded to respect the rules on safety to avoid incidents with sowing and harvesting machines. In future, Ardo's leading agricultural contractors will be included in the Health & Safety audit.



## INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH OUR GROWERS

During the growing season, important messages are transmitted to the growers by WhatsApp (a smartphone application using the internet to send text messages, images, videos, etc.).

Our agricultural managers can see who reads the messages and can follow up with daily communication for each field by means of pictures, phone calls and advice direct to the growers.



## GROWERS' DAY IN ARDO BADAJOZ & ALPIARÇA

Every April, Ardo **Badajoz** (ES), invites its local growers to the factory, where they are given the opportunity to meet with agricultural, production, quality and health & safety managers, to discuss various topics:

- Crop protocols and the framework of the MIMOSA programme
- The sustainability action plan focusing on People, Planet and Product
- Training on how to avoid foreign matter in the crops and how to improve their final product
- Actions that growers should take to ensure that they work in a safe and healthy way

Ardo **Alpiarça** (PT) organised their 'Monliz Growers' Day'. This initiative helps build a relationship of trust between the growers and Ardo Alpiarça, thereby ensuring that the quality and quantity of fresh vegetables can be brought in line with our growing demand for raw material.



More than 550 visitors from Portugal and Spain attended the event. The one-day programme included: guided tours of the factory, the presentation of awards to growers in various categories, lots of fun activities and stands where people could taste the products produced in the factory.



# VREDESEILANDEN (NGO): WORKING TOGETHER ON SUSTAINABILITY, TRUST AND FAIR BUSINESS

Working towards sustainable business practices is a subject where Ardo and Vredeseilanden are clearly ‘as one’. That’s why our COO Bernard Haspeslagh willingly took up the challenge to cycle around Nicaragua in November, to find out about several projects run by the Belgian NGO. And now and again he worked up quite a sweat.

**Helping to improve living standards for farming families in the North and the South, through a fair income from sustainable agriculture with respect for the environment.** That is Vredeseilanden’s mission in a nutshell. To get business people more involved in their projects, the Belgian NGO (Non Governmental Organisation) organised a mountain bike tour of Nicaragua in November. Thirty-one Flemish business people took part.

‘The mission was a great success in all aspects’, says Bernard Haspeslagh. ‘It was also really fascinating to learn about these projects and to meet the people behind them on the spot. The places we visited included a cacao plantation and a banana project.’

‘For me it was also about exploring a country of unique natural splendour: volcanoes, national parks, rice fields and a breath-taking coastline. But it wasn’t a pleasure trip. In temperatures of up to 40°C, our group of ‘Flandriens’ coped with changes in altitude of 1,000 m a day on dusty tracks. Fortunately we were cheered on our way by the local population. In the end, it was also a worthwhile experience for Ardo, teaching us that we should offer sufficient support and assistance for our joint projects in third world countries’, concludes Bernard.

some figures:



*‘For too long NGOs thought that development issues were only their business, their domain. But, if we really want to progress, we have to work together with other stakeholders and this is certainly true in the food sector. Building trust between growers, private businesses, the financial sector and the government is very important. It is a pre-requisite to achieve more. This is more than a step, it is a whole process. Therefore we are very happy to have started a collaboration with Ardo, a big player in the food industry. Starting with awareness, we can move towards more sustainable food systems by more connectivity between the partners of the food sector. Ardo is a good partner for us and for the growers, because together with Ardo we can work on sustainability, on trust, and on fair business.’*

MRS. ROOS PEIRSEGAELE  
PROGRAMME ADVISOR VREDESEILANDEN



# THE SOCIAL PROGRAMME AT OUR ALPIARÇA SITE

At our Alpiarça site in Portugal a project team composed of employees from various departments launched the **Social Programme, focussing on people**. The project team met with the Social Associations from the three main areas where our employees live, to investigate their main needs. The findings from these meetings guided our actions in **four areas**:

- Monthly donations of company products to charitable institutions.

Alpiarça regularly donates food products to various social solidarity institutions.



- Creation of an employee volunteer group.

- Support from HR, working with local agencies, for the professional integration of disadvantaged qualified professionals.

- Internal communication to employees through various channels, the creation of local volunteer pools, and time off for the volunteering employees to participate in specific volunteer training and activities.

All Ardo Alpiarça employees participate in an annual collection of clothes and toys for distribution to charitable associations. In 2015, the employees bought 250 noses, which helped to fund the visits of professional clowns to children's hospital wards. Also in 2015, the site received a group-of-children-in-need coming from a temporary shelter.

*'All initiatives have proven to be a great success and each year we have more participants enabling us to support more associations. We are aware that many other activities can be supported by the company and by the employees, to help society, the families in the vicinity of the factory, and indirectly some of our own employees. Therefore we participate in several events at national level and we have established contacts throughout Portugal. Our project team meets quarterly to review the actions taken and to set out new ideas for future social projects. To be continued ...'*

SARA ALBERTO  
HR MANAGER ARDO ALPIARÇA



Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Almeirim

# PLANET



*We are working hard to develop truly sustainable ways of growing our crops, by taking a holistic approach that considers the crop's needs, the activities of our growers and the demands of our customers.*





# MIMOSA

Minimum Impact, Maximum Output  
Sustainable Agriculture - Ardo

Ardo is proactive in exploring and introducing more sustainable agricultural production methods. We have translated our ambitions into our **MIMOSA programme**, which stands for **Minimum Impact, Maximum Output, Sustainable Agriculture**. The objective of the programme is to minimise the impact of our growing activities on the environment, whilst achieving optimal yields of excellent quality vegetables, herbs and fruit, and also to provide attractive and economically viable returns for our growers, whilst continuing to exceed our customers' expectations in terms of product quality and food safety.

An integrated production system and a close relationship with our growers has always been key to Ardo's strategy. For years, Ardo has been active in supporting the creation of Producer Organisations, and investing in mechanisation, technology and R&D. Since the introduction of the ambitious MIMOSA programme however, our focus has shifted more and more towards sustainable production methods. Following many brainstorming sessions with our agronomists and numerous field trials, often in collaboration with research centres, our agronomists now think in terms of 'MIMOSA'. Step-by-step we are updating all of our field protocols to incorporate our latest MIMOSA techniques.

**Today, 63% of the total volume of all the crops we grow have no residues(\*) of plant protection products**, and we believe there are still many opportunities for further improvement. Investing in Research & Development and increasing our knowledge will enable us to further refine our crop protocols, which in turn will allow us to produce more with less water, less plant protection products, less seeds, etc.

(\*) no residues detected above 0.01mg/kg





## MIMOSA APPLIED TO HERBS

### Every crop in the optimal place at the optimal time

For every crop, we plan the best place and time to grow, taking into account the climate, water availability and geographical location. **All our herbs are grown outdoors in field-scale production.** We plan each crop to coincide with the most appropriate weather window for the crop, and in case the weather does not deliver what we expect, we spread our risk by growing in several different regions.

Our factory in La Garde-Adhémar in Provence, specialises in Mediterranean herbs: thyme, rosemary, dill, coriander and basil; whilst our Le Moustoir site in Brittany, focusses on chives, parsley and mint, and our site in Eye in Suffolk, grows a combination of all of these.

### Variety selection

Most annual, and some of the perennial herbs, can be harvested over several cuts during the season. It is important to maintain healthy crops at all times, and disease resistant varieties help to achieve this.

### Investing in knowledge and innovative technology

Our growing techniques are continually evolving. In our basil crop, we recently increased the distance between the rows in which our crops are sown. Our new row spacing encourages the circulation of air between the plants. This limits the development of diseases, gives the plants enough room for optimal development and facilitates mechanical tillage. We have invested in state-of-the-art mechanical inter-row cultivators, guided by GPS and cameras, to achieve a level of precision weeding that was unimaginable until recently. This precision weeding provides a way to reduce the use of herbicides and also hand labour.

The **use of natural bio-stimulants** has proven to be a very efficient way to control diseases like mildew. These natural substances enhance the healthy growth of the plant and make it more resistant to diseases.

## GROWERS AND HERB FACTORIES JOINING FORCES

*The success of the MIMOSA herb programme lies in our close collaboration with our herb growers. We recognise the importance of working in a transparent way, so we can set common goals and really join forces to implement a range of novel techniques to improve crop quality.*

ETIENNE LACROIX  
SITE DIRECTOR ARDO LA GARDE-ADHÉMAR (FR)



# MIMOSA

Minimum Impact, Maximum Output  
Sustainable Agriculture - Ardo



## FACTS & FIGURES

- ✔ 15% yield increase in the first year of applying MIMOSA management to parsley.
- ✔ New basil growers are achieving great results both in terms of quality and yield in their first year of growing this crop, thanks to Mimosa and its collaborative approach.
- ✔ Higher production per hectare and better quality of final product.
- ✔ By bringing the harvest date forward and cutting the crop whilst it is still short, the quality has been improved, the crop remains healthier and in many fields it ensures an extra cut is also possible, which is good news for Ardo and for our growers.



# LET'S MEET IN THE FIELD

After the internal launch of our MIMOSA-programme, we realised that we needed to convince our most important partners, our growers, about the benefits of MIMOSA, and that gaining their support would be crucial to achieving our ambitions. We decided that the best place to talk to our growers was in the field. Therefore Ardo, together with our Belgian growers' associations Unigrow and Ingro, organised a four-day event in September 2015, in a field opposite our factory in Ardoorie (BE).

The field summit, attended by a diverse group of key stakeholders (growers, representatives of Belgian governmental ministries, seed suppliers, press, employees, trading partners, etc.) was designed to **illustrate our achievements in sustainable crop production to date, and to set out our ambitions for the future.**

Letting our agronomists speak for themselves, was the best way to explain what sustainable agriculture means to them in practice, in their everyday work. Informative and practical guided tours through several marquees, trial fields and actual fields, helped to inspire our visitors to make the switch to sustainable and/or organic farming in the future.

### Preventive measures

*How can we give the crop a good start when preparing the fields and sowing, reducing the chance of disease and other problems at a later stage?*



### Organic

*An interesting look at the innovative organic growing techniques required to meet the increasing market demand for organic freshly-frozen vegetables.*



**850**  
visitors attended our 'Let's meet in the field' event



### Corrective measures

*An overview of the various sustainable interventions that can be adopted to keep the crop healthy and achieve a high-quality harvest.*

### Producer Organisations

*How does Ardo, and its Producer Organisations across Europe, implement environmentally-aware, socially-responsible and economically-viable methods that treat nature, the environment and people with the greatest respect?*

RESPONSIBLE AND LOCAL SOURCING

*'By moving an event like this out of the conference room and holding it in the field, you break down barriers and give people the opportunity to talk openly.'*

NIGEL THORGRIMSSON  
GROUP TECHNICAL &  
QUALITY DIRECTOR ARDO

*'The plan was to change preconceptions about sustainable agriculture and emphasise that how we will be producing in twenty years' time will look very different from how we do it today. We have to pay attention to developments, and gradually adapt our habits and customs accordingly.'*

EMMANUEL JADIN  
GROUP ENGINEERING MANAGER  
AGRONOMY ARDO

*'It's really interesting to see what happens in the factory, and what is created with our products.'*

IGNACE VERCRUYSE  
GROWER

*'We learn how to use less seed, and practice more efficient crop protection. It's important to understand and respect nature'*

LUC VANCANNEYT  
GROWER

**Biodiversity**

*Opportunities leading to better cooperation between agriculture and nature conservation.*



**Field visits**  
*MIMOSA best practices in the field.*



**When crops become food**

*An alternative view of the production process and food-safety, combined with academic studies, focusing on the preservation of nutrients in freshly-frozen vegetables, herbs and fruit.*

*'Nowadays, sustainable agronomy is vitally important for consumers. Trends are changing and they're looking much more for natural products. They want to get back to real food, local products and fundamental values. What Ardo is doing is totally in line with this.'*

TRADING PARTNER



Minimum Impact, Maximum Output  
Sustainable Agriculture - Ardo

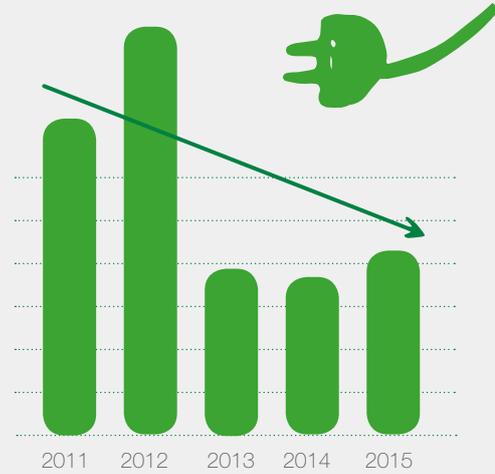


# EVOLUTION OF ENERGY AND WATER USE

We meticulously monitor our energy and water consumption on a month-by-month basis and draw comparisons on Group level.

Whilst we observe differences according to the activities and production volumes of the different sites, we seek to optimise consumption on all sites, by investing in more efficient machines and technologies and raising awareness amongst our workforce.

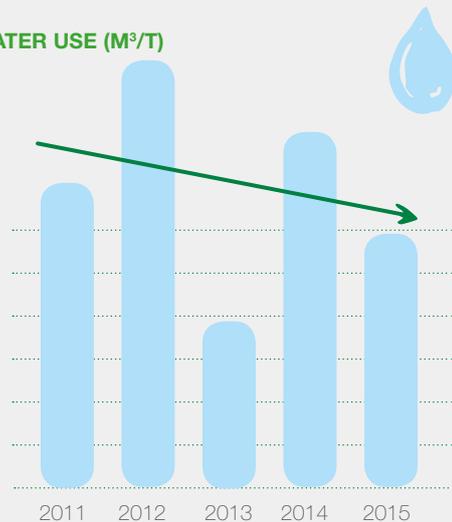
**ELECTRICITY USE (KWH/T)**



**GAS USE (KWH/T)**



**WATER USE (M³/T)**



Green gas, electricity and steam generated at the Biomethanisation plant in Ardoie (BE).





## INTELLIGENT USE AND RE-USE OF WATER

### Water is a precious resource.

The Belgian sites in Ardoonie and Koolskamp maximise the re-use of water. We collect the rain water that falls on our factory roofs and store it in reservoirs. **After treatment, this water is used for cleaning our factories and is also used in our condensers.** The tap water required for our blanchers is collected after the blanching and is used for pre-washing fresh vegetables. It is then cleaned in an on-site water treatment plant and 50% is used again for cleaning the factory.

In Geer, the **purified waste water from the Ardo site is pumped into a 40 hectare wetland reservoir.**

This reservoir is connected to an irrigation network supplying local growers, who can use a proportion of the water to irrigate their vegetable crops. The majority of the water remains in the wetlands, providing habitat for over 200 species of birds. Ardo is the owner of the wetland area and has changed the land use designation, from agricultural land to nature reserve. The wetland project is collectively managed with the producer organisation Apligeer and the nature organization Natagora.



## SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL

Palm oil is still the most important type of oil used in the food industry worldwide. However, it is not without its critics, and the environmental, social and economic challenges and risks associated with its supply chain are well reported.

Interested parties, in particular retailers, are increasingly asking suppliers to use RSPO- (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) certified palm oil.

Wherever possible, Ardo has replaced palm oil with vegetable based oils such as sunflower or rapeseed oil.

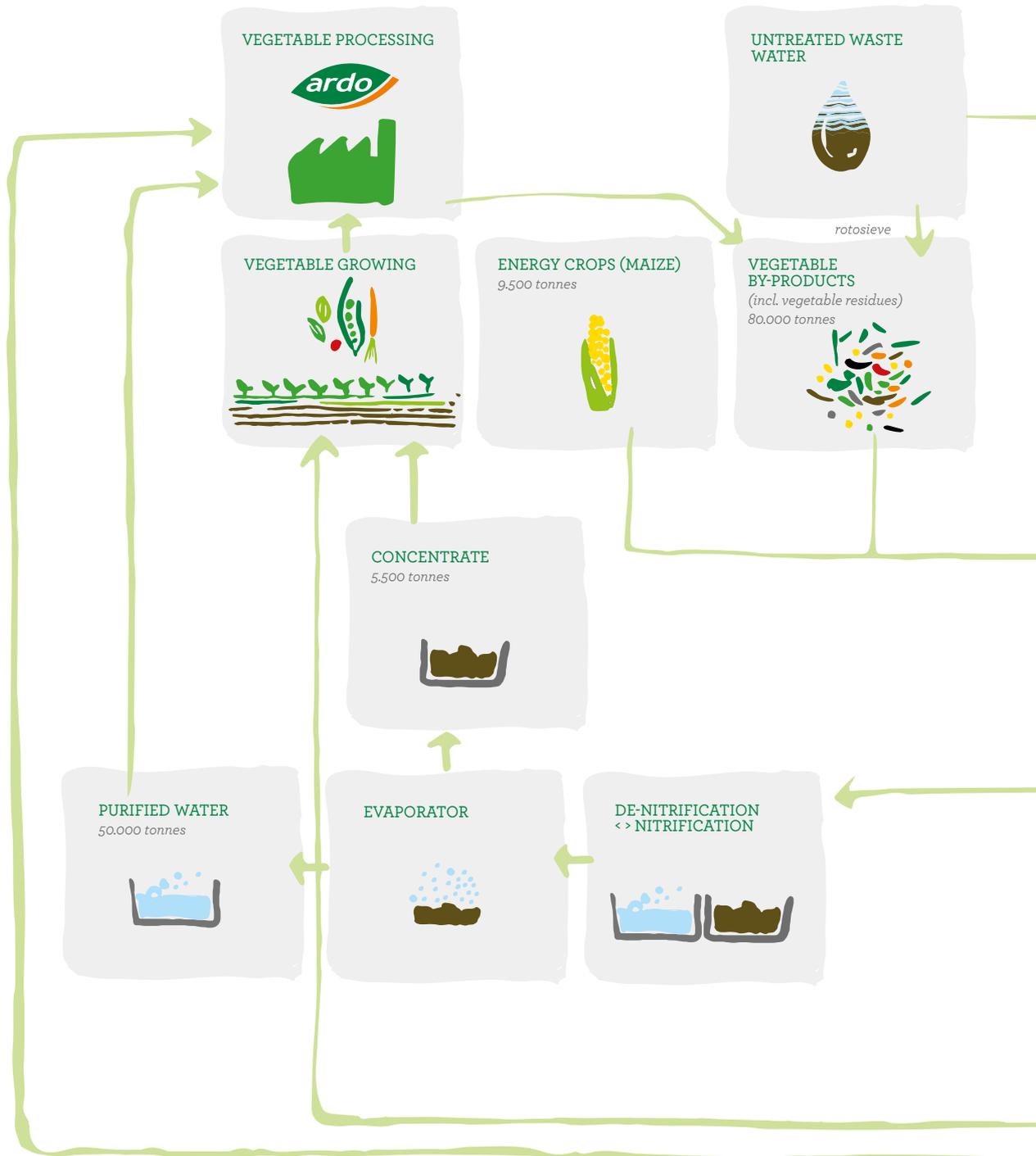
On specific customer request for palm oil, or when technical production requirements dictate the use of palm oil, we use RSPO-palm oil.



# USING VEGETABLE WASTE TO GENERATE GREEN ENERGY

Two of Ardo's Belgian production sites have invested in Biomethanisation plants that can turn vegetable waste (peelings from carrots and onions, stems from green beans, etc.) into biogas. This biogas is used to power generators that transform the gas into green energy, which can be used in two ways:

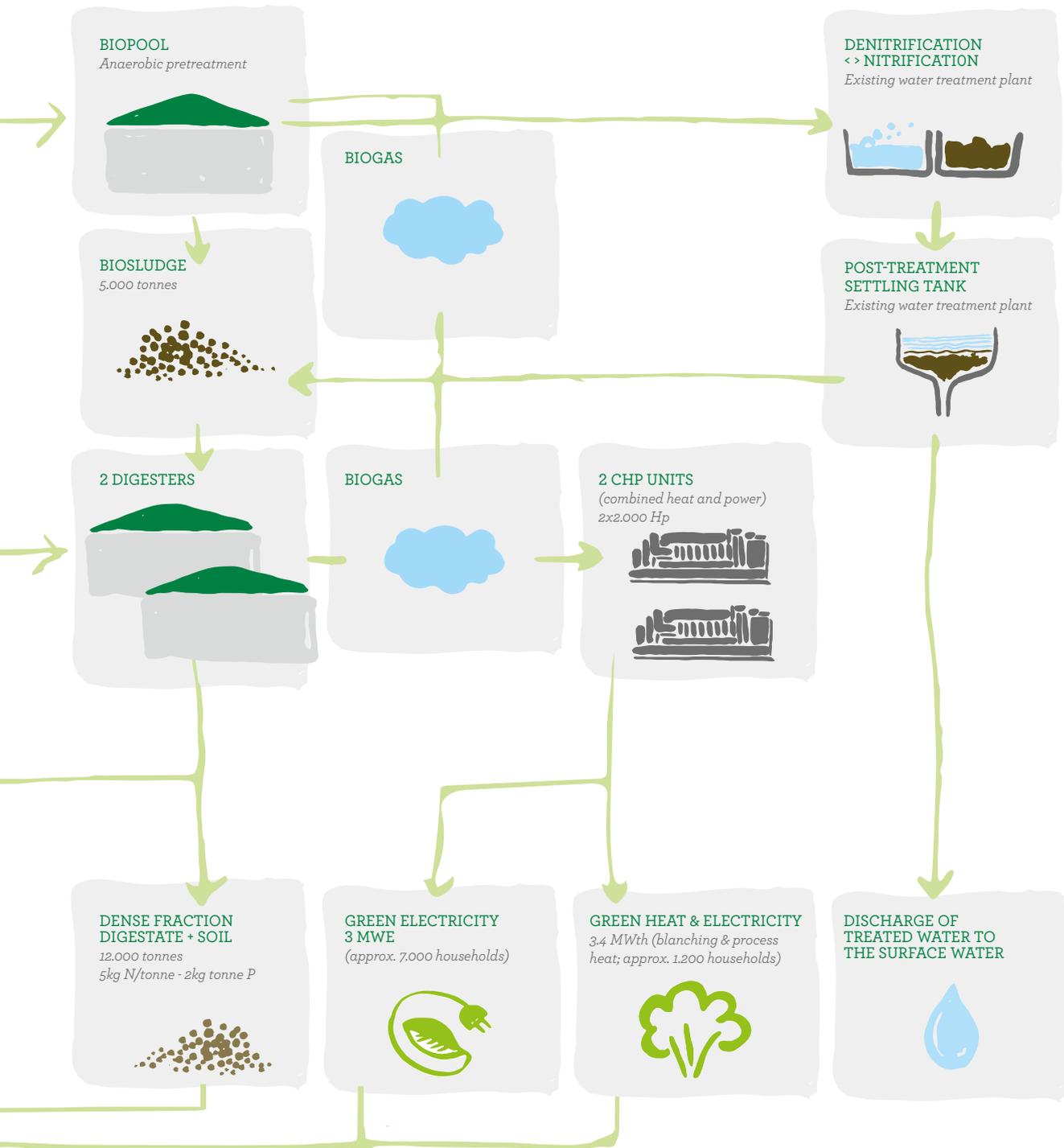
- Green electricity is used to freeze and store the frozen vegetables
- Green steam is used for steam peeling and to blanch the vegetables before freezing



CLOSING THE LOOP

The biomethanisation by-products (digestate & effluent) are converted into organic fertilisers that are used by the growers supplying Ardo Violaines (France). Every 20 tonnes of digestate spread on a hectare of farm land will deliver 132 units of Nitrogen, 140 units of Phosphate and 90 units of Potassium.

In 2015, we decided to double the capacity of the bio-methanisation installation in Ardooise, increasing the biogas production to enable the use of a second generator. With this investment, the green energy generated by the biomethanisation plant will account for 50% of the total gas and electricity consumed by the Ardooise production site.



# NATURE RESERVE PROJECT IN ZUNDERT (NL)

The concept of constructing a new, automated coldstore in Zundert began in 2004. However, it took 10 years to secure all the planning permits, with construction starting in 2014.

One element that assisted in the planning process, was Ardo's proposal to develop a nature zone behind the coldstore. Shortly after, the main construction work was completed, Ardo started establishing a 4.7 hectare nature zone, next to the coldstore. The nature zone enhances the ecological value of the Beekdal area, whilst also providing a buffer for retaining excessive rainwater run-off from the factory. Ardo, the town of Zundert, the Province of Noord-Brabant, Brabants Landschap and Natuurmonumenten worked together to create a **wonderful area that is now enjoyed by wildlife and residents of the town of Zundert.**

From the start of this ecological project, it was our intention to create an area that could attract and support bees. With the guidance of the Nederlandse Bijenhoudersvereniging (the Dutch Beekeepers Association), we constructed a bee hotel and planted vegetation designed to provide sufficient nectar to feed the bees.

The nature zone will be used for educational purposes, and schools will have the opportunity to organise activities that enable students to discover the bees, identify the different plants and fungi and familiarise with them. Through the Zundert green zone, we hope to encourage children to get out into the fresh air and to develop an interest in nature.





## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Ardo is in a continual search for transport & logistic partners with the same philosophy on sustainability as Ardo. Therefore, we initiate and support several sustainable projects with transport contractors worldwide. These are only a few examples:



- Decrease the average speed of the trucks to 80km/h instead of 96km/h, which results in a **reduction of 10% in diesel consumption**. This implies that Ardo's logistic planning should take this speed reduction into consideration when scheduling the different routes.
- Ardo favours transport companies **using trucks with CNG** (Compressed Natural Gas) as an alternative fuel to fossil fuels. These trucks provide a smart and affordable transport means for distribution within city centres. Natural gas offers many advantages over conventional petroleum products, with an important reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions.
- Ardo increases its short sea transport volume. Over **50% of all in- and outbound transport to Portugal are carried out by boats**. This environmental choice reduces CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions and reduces the number of trucks on the road.
- **Ardo favours transport companies using thermoelectric (TE) cooling systems on the trucks**. Unlike a mechanical refrigeration system, TE-modules generate virtually no noise and reduce the CO<sub>2</sub>-emission levels.
- In the development of Ardo's ERP-system, we take into account the efficient routing of the trucks for in and outbound logistics, resulting in a reduction of the number of trucks on the road.



## CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY AWARD FOR ARDO ARDOOIE

Ardo Ardooie Recently received the West-Flanders Charter Corporate Sustainability award for efforts and activities that contribute to Corporate Social Responsibility. This was the 13th consecutive year that the site in Ardooie received this prestigious award. The site was evaluated and rewarded for actions in 10 categories in the past year: good governance, civic engagement, communication and dialogue, people-friendly business practices, risk management, sustainable investments, product & service development, supply chain management, climate change & energy, quality of the environment and sustainable logistics & mobility. Meanwhile, the plans for the 14th cycle have been made and the results of the first actions are underway.



# PRODUCT



*Ardo develops products that are authentic, tasty, natural, attractive, convenient, nutritional and healthy, and that take into account the market needs of our Retail, FoodService and Food Industry partners. Our product development is supported by an ongoing offer of service, advice and quality assurance, to facilitate sustainable partnerships.*



# ORGANIC IS A WAY OF LIFE

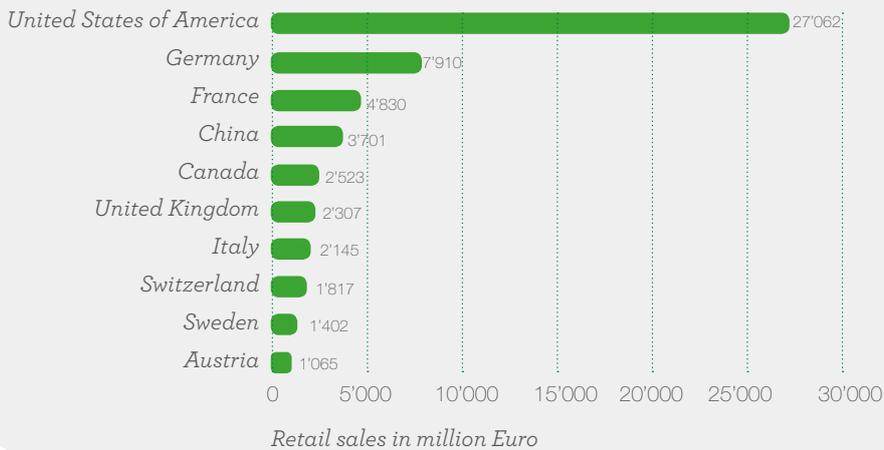
It would be short-sighted to continue to label the organic market as a niche market. After all, the European organic sector generates an annual turnover of more than €26 billion.

The economic crisis did not impact the organic sector, in spite of the higher price paid by consumers for organic products. This goes to show that there is a loyal market for organic products.



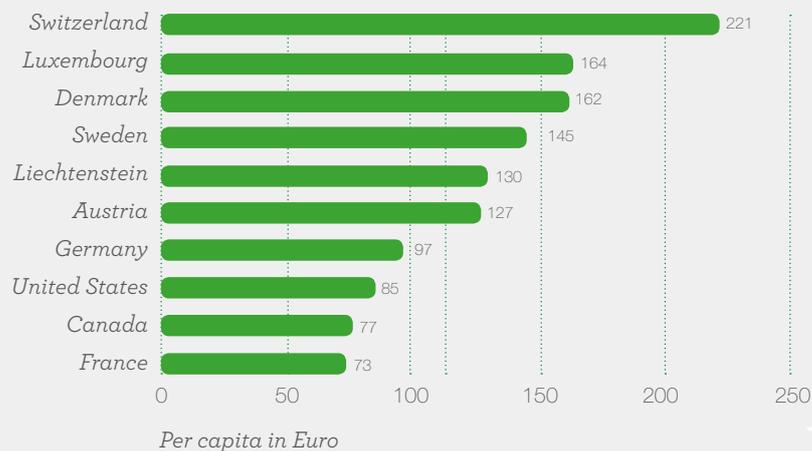
## THE TEN COUNTRIES WITH THE LARGEST MARKETS FOR ORGANIC FOOD 2014

Source: FIBL-AMI 2016



## THE TEN COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION 2014

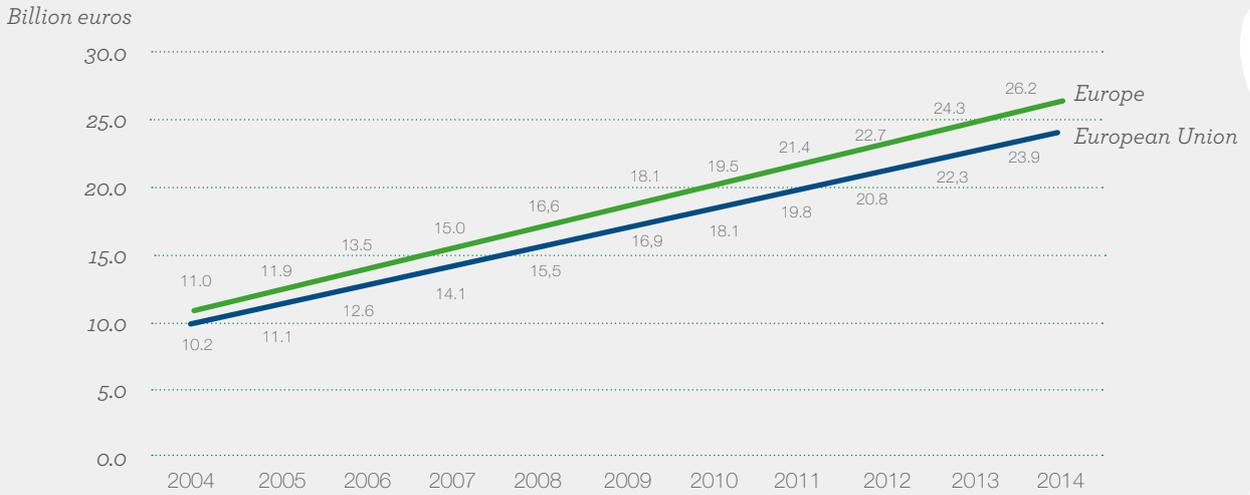
Source: FIBL-AMI 2016



**GROWTH OF ORGANIC RETAIL SALES 2004-2014**

Europe and European Union; Market development 2004-2014

Source: FIBL-AMI 2006-2016 Organic Data Network 2013-2015



*The human aspect of organic production is highly rewarding.*

Organic produce now forms a significant proportion of the Ardo Group's processed volumes. We want to build on this part of our business in the future, and we will work in open and professional partnerships with our producer organisations, running our own crop trials, monitoring technical evolution in the sector, transferring knowledge and applying state-of-the-art technology, to ensure that we advance as planned.

**We are encouraged in this ambition as more farmers are now attracted to growing organic crops, thanks to positive developments in technical expertise and field management skills.**



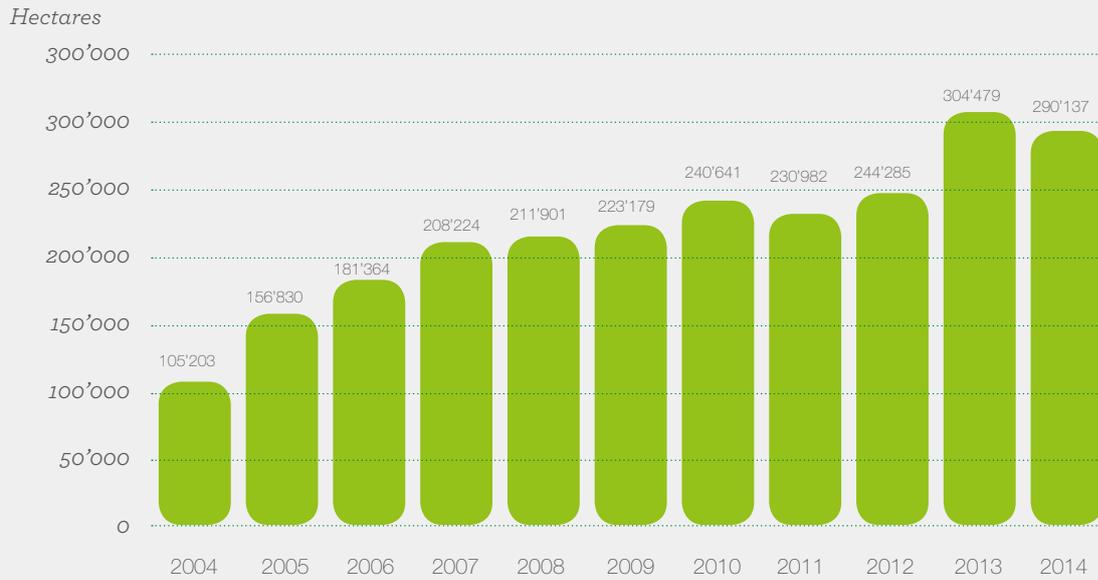
**A WORD FROM THE MARKET ...**

*'Thanks to a close and loyal partnership with our suppliers, Biogast (AT) can guarantee the supply of 100% organic products all year round. Whilst organic products are generally more expensive to buy than conventional products, we find that nowadays our customers are far more aware of the way they use organic products. They calculate the portions they require more accurately than they did in the past and that means that they avoid waste. We help our customers to find the optimal and most efficient ways to use our products, so that at the end of the day, they pay more or less the same for their organic products as they do for conventional products.'*

**BIOGAST - WHOLESALER OF 12,000 ORGANIC PRODUCTS (FOOD & NON-FOOD) WITH 1,250 CUSTOMERS**

**HORST MOSER - DI SIMON ZIEGLER**

DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL AREA OF ORGANIC VEGETABLES



A WORD FROM AN ORGANIC GROWER ...

*“I came to the realisation that the use of chemicals was just too harmful for nature and future generations. After an in-depth financial and agricultural analysis, we decided to focus exclusively on organic production. These investigations were necessary to enable us to understand the significant impact this transition would have.”* Günter Breuer (AT) confirms that organic farming requires a different approach to conventional farming. *‘When you’re growing organic crops, there’s quite a bit of manual work involved. In order to prepare the fields in time you need to plan a bit further ahead. In our case, this meant the provision for approximately 8.000 additional hours of manual work, or the hiring of 10 to 12 seasonal workers. We also diversified our crops to spread the higher risk of a poor harvest.’* Significant investment was required to make the transition to organic



*farming. ‘We had to completely change our machinery. Fortunately however, a close cooperation with a neighbouring farmer meant that we were able to share the cost of the investment in and purchase of ultra-modern machines.’* Günter Breuer has a very positive view of the future. *‘My son Lukas is now working on the farm and together we look for innovative ways of farming organically. Every year our yields get bigger with the same number of seasonal workers. So we’re really happy to be able to supply Ardo’s Austrian plant – effectively ‘our neighbour’ – with delicious, high-quality organic spinach, peas, red cabbage, baby carrots and green beans.’*

PROF. GÜNTER BREUER FROM THE INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY ECONOMICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND LIFE SCIENCES IN VIENNA. OWNER OF AN ORGANIC FAMILY-OWNED FARM (165 HA)



# SUPPLYING OUR CUSTOMERS WITH CONSISTENTLY HIGH QUALITY PRODUCTS EVERY TIME

**Product quality is one of the cornerstones of our business.** We employ 53 agronomists and 148 technicians who work 24/7 to ensure that our products arrive according to specification and the highest standard of quality.

Our agricultural departments care for the crops until they are delivered to our processing sites where our Quality Assurance teams take over and monitor raw materials, production processes, product selection and packing.

**Our objective is to supply our customers with products that meet the highest safety and quality standards.**

Our production sites are certified to internationally recognised standards (BRC / IFS) that in turn provide a platform for the more demanding Ardo Group standards.

Our Quality Managers play an active role at all stages of production and we encourage them to become experts in each of the crops that they are involved in. To acquire this knowledge, they accompany our agronomists on field visits and undertake training in the production processes in our factories.

Our Quality Managers use their 'Complete Product Knowledge' each day. Their efforts help to build customers' confidence and add value to our customers' reputation by delivering the quality required that we are renowned for.





# INTERNATIONAL FOOD WASTE COALITION (IFWC)

The FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) reports that 900 million people in the world are hungry today, and that under current production and consumption trends, global food production will need to increase by 60 per-cent by 2050. Food lost after harvest and food wasted along the distribution and consumption chain, has a dual negative environmental impact: undue pressure on natural resources and ecosystems, and pollution through discarded food. Within the global context of increasingly scarce natural resources, more than one-third of the food produced today is not eaten, which is about 1.3 billion tonnes per year.

## Ardo has a crucial role to play in fighting Food Waste

### Avoiding field losses

Each crop grown for Ardo is allocated a dedicated place in our annual production calendar. By planting, growing and harvesting according to a programme based on known daily factory production capacities, we are able to reduce the fluctuations in supply and demand that are experienced in the fresh produce sector.

### Avoiding distribution chain losses

By freezing our products, we naturally preserve and lock in the goodness. Ardo vegetables, fruit and herbs stored in the freezer, can be eaten next week, next month or even next year.

## Avoiding losses in the kitchen and at the table

Independent studies\* have shown that by choosing to buy frozen food, families and commercial kitchens can dramatically reduce the amount of food wasted in the home or restaurant. Ardo products come ready peeled and cut, meaning no trimming losses; and preparing and serving the desired quantities is simple. Individual servings are taken care of with a choice of portioning options, designed to meet the needs of a range of different recipes and different meal presentations. The quantity required is removed from the pack and the remainder is returned to the freezer, with no waste.

\* 'Frozen vegetables, the answer to food wastage', Prof. Wayne Martindale, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

## Ardo has teamed up with like-minded organisations to fight Food Waste in the Catering/FoodService sector ...

Ardo's actions to reduce Food Waste historically focussed on the company's own activities and those of our upstream growers/suppliers. That was, until Ardo was invited to join six other organisations, mostly food businesses, plus the World Wildlife Fund, to create the **International Food Waste Coalition (IFWC)**. The seven organisations joined forces and expertise, to fight against food waste in the FoodService sector across Europe. The IFWC's ultimate goal is to inspire other companies and organisations to adopt comprehensive food waste reduction programmes and to re-educate consumers about the value of food. The coalition's first initiative is to pilot school projects in a number of European countries, identifying where food waste is occurring, finding efficient solutions, and raising awareness amongst students and teachers.

*'At Ardo, we are inspired to cooperate with the other players in the food business value-chain who are also committed to the International Food Waste Coalition. Working together across the FoodService value-chain will provide a unique opportunity to identify areas where food waste reduction improvements can be made, and collectively we can deliver a message that will help to reconnect consumers with the 'true value' of food.'*

JAN HASPELAGH,  
MANAGING DIRECTOR



Founding members IFWC:



<http://internationalfoodwastecoalition.org>

# SHARING KNOWLEDGE WITH OUR STAKEHOLDERS

We believe that it is crucially important to share knowledge with our stakeholders. That is the reason why we regularly organise knowledge exchange programmes with relevant audiences according to the scope of the subject.

## Herb roadshows

Following the merger of Ardo and Dujardin, our Herbs and Seasonings range has become an important pillar of the Ardo product portfolio. In 2016, we organised a series of **Herbs & Seasonings roadshows across Europe to explain the basics about herbs and to introduce our range to different Ardo teams** (sales force, culinary advisers, NPD, customer service, ...).

The roadshows provided us with the opportunity to hear different views on the herbs market, its challenges and opportunities, and allowed us to improve our 'market intelligence' in Europe and beyond.

## Fruit info session

With fruit being a key part of the Ardo range, the Ardo UK-Team organised '**A Fruitful Day**' event for the Ardo sales teams with useful information on the market and the sourcing of frozen fruits, followed by a fruit tasting session.

*'It was interesting to inform colleagues more about the different existing types of fruit and to hear about the success stories from the last few years in the UK, Denmark and The Netherlands. There are still a lot of challenges in the fruit market, but we're sure that this fruit information session will help us to develop the category further in the future.'*

JONATHAN MARTIN  
GROUP PURCHASING DIRECTOR



# PRODUCT INFORMATION

## Nutritional information on packaging

Ardo aims to keep consumers as fully and clearly informed as possible. We state the Reference Intake (RI) on the majority of our packaging, to show how the products contribute to daily intake. As all our products are healthy and convenient, they can help consumers to maintain a healthy and balanced diet. The information on Ardo's packaging and on Ardo's website is continually updated in line with changing EU regulations on the declaration of nutritional information and allergens. Consumers or chefs can consult the Ardo website to help them decide which freshly-frozen vegetable, herb or fruit is best suited for a specific diet.

## Research and development for healthy products

When creating value-added items, Ardo's product developers always take into account the latest developments in sustainable ingredients and processes to ensure 'clean label' products.

Ardo participates in a wide variety of research projects, aimed at finding new methods to maximise preservation of the vitamin content, texture and colour of vegetables during processing and freezing. **Regular internal and external taste panels provide Ardo with benchmarks for various organoleptic aspects.**



# FRESHLY-FROZEN VEGETABLES, HERBS AND FRUIT: BURSTING WITH VITAMINS

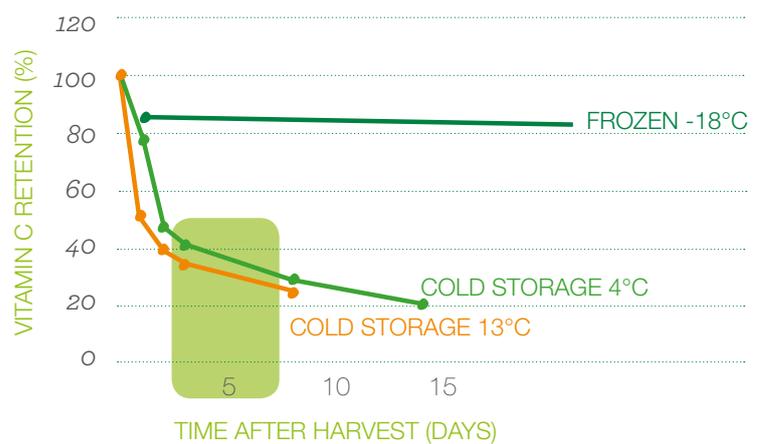
Freshly-frozen vegetables, herbs and fruit have a major advantage: they retain most of their nutritional value because they are frozen very quickly after harvesting. That makes their colour, texture and taste richer than those of most fresh produce purchased in store, with frozen products also containing more vitamins.

The nutritional value of all fruit and vegetables declines from the moment of harvest. As such, the vitamin content of fresh produce imported from other continents may have reduced significantly by the time it is purchased. This is especially true of seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables, such as beans imported fresh from Kenya, for example. The long transport time over water, land and air, before the product reaches the end user, as well as the storage time before consumption, cause much of the nutritional value to be lost.

In contrast, freshly-frozen fruit and vegetables are frozen directly after harvest in the factories close to the fields in the country of origin. Freezing ensures maximum preservation of the nutritional content, and enables consumers to purchase top-quality seasonal products at any time of the year.

## QUICK LOSS OF VITAMIN C IN FRESH BEANS

Source: Ghent University, 2007



 Freshly bought vegetables after 3 to 7 days

## *Sustainability - crucial to our strategy and our way of life*

Long before the term 'Sustainability' became fashionable, Ardo was growing and producing frozen vegetables in a sustainable way. Today we approach sustainability as one big inter-country team: a team that sees the whole picture, and where everyone is invited to contribute and to work together to develop our future objectives and goals.

We have astonished ourselves by the progress we have made through collective sustainable thinking, and we are convinced that our green ambitions and our green actions are good for People, Planet & Product, and make sound economic sense, ensuring a sustainable future for our company.



# Sustainable from the field to your plate

In the various business cases presented in this report, you can discover where Ardo makes the difference in contributing to a more sustainable society using our knowledge base and expertise. Beneath you can find a link between Ardo's improvement activities and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These SDG's define global sustainable development priorities and aspirations for 2030, and seek to mobilise global efforts around a common set of goals and targets.



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<b>Social: Labor Practices and Decent Work</b>			
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<b>Training &amp; education</b> G4 LA9	Average hours of training per year per employee by gender, and by employee category	Partially	p16, 17
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<b>Consumer health and safety</b> G4 FP5	Percentage of production volume manufactured in sites certified by an independent third party according to internationally recognised food safety management system standards	100% benchmarked GFSI	p40
<b>Product and service labelling</b> G4 PR3	Type of product and service information required by the organisation's procedures for product and service information and labeling, and percentage of significant product and service categories subject to such information requirements	Fully	p43

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The paper that this report is printed on is Lessebo Design Smooth 2-sided pressed. This paper is uncoated and constructed from FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified pulps produced in Sweden. FSC certification provides assurance that wood-based products are sourced from responsibly managed, sustainable forests.

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