

WP3 – Case study report Comparison of Belgian and Peruvian fresh asparagus chains Jana Schwarz, Bernd Annaert, Erik Mathijs

Local and global value chain features

Peru

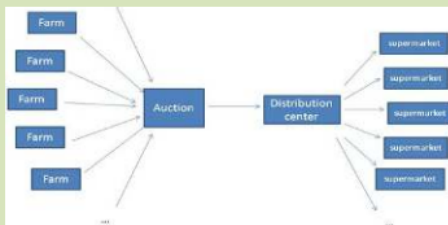
- Fresh green asparagus
- Produced in the regions of La Libertad and Ica
- Extremely global chain regarding distances and inputs
- Peru is the biggest exporter of fresh asparagus worldwide
- Public policies and institutions have played a remarkable role in boosting the growth and competitiveness of the sector
- Main debates: Water resources and labour conditions



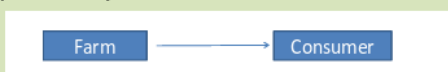
Belgium (Flanders)

- Fresh white asparagus
- Produced in the region of Limburg
- Very local and seasonal product
- Two marketing channels:

a) Supermarket



b) Farm shop



Highlights and remarks

- Asparagus exports are very important for the Peruvian economy whereas Belgian asparagus is a niche product
- Asparagus producers in Peru are very heterogeneous: 80% cultivate asparagus on less than 5ha, only 3% on more than 50ha.
- The sustainability of Peruvian asparagus production is heavily debated, especially regarding water and labour issues.
- **Land productivity** is much higher in Peru than in Belgium: 11.4 tonnes/ha versus 8.7 tonnes/ha
- **Standards and labels** play a prominent role in both the Peruvian and the Flemish supermarket asparagus chain: 37% of Peruvian export companies have at least one certificate, all Flemish producers selling to auction need to have GLOBALG.A.P. and Flandria certification.
- **Working conditions:** All chains rely heavily on migrant field workers who are not organized in unions.
- **Water footprint:** 889 m³/t in Belgium vs 1,137 m³/t in Peru
- **Prices:** Belgian producers receive much higher prices when selling through the farm shop. Depending on the quality class they receive up to 6 EUR/kg vs. 3.75 EUR/kg when selling to the auction.



(Sources, from left to right: www.cofis.be; www.fruite.be; www.fruite.be; www.par-hof-fabof.com)

Main data sources

Peru

- Primary data collected within the division: Survey of 499 farm workers (Schuster & Maertens, 2013/2014) and 87 export companies (Schuster & Maertens, 2013)
- Agricultural census 2012
- Field visits and qualitative interviews with 49 stakeholders of the Peruvian asparagus sector

Belgium

- Primary data collected from three asparagus growers.
- Interview with farmers association
- Visit and interview at the auction

Selected attributes

- Connection
- Contribution to economic development
- Creation and distribution of added value
- Efficiency
- Fair trade
- Food safety
- Governance
- Labour relations
- Pollution
- Profitability/ Competitiveness
- Resource use
- Responsibility
- Traceability

Current state of research

- Field visits to Peru and in Belgium have been realized
- Good quality information on some indicators is still missing, especially on profits along the chain and on water withdrawal
- Contact with supermarket chain has been established to get more detailed information on the retailer stage
- LCA still needs to be performed