



On 5 February 2010, the BFV cvba and Profruco cvba merged into a single cooperative society. This merger was given the thumbs up by the extraordinary general meeting. Thanks to this merger, the BFV will reinforce its position as market leader in Belgium.

The Belgian Fruit Auction (Belgische Fruitveiling/BFV) now has 5 divisions:

- 1) BFV division in Sint-Truiden
 - supply and sales point
 - sorting and packaging department
 - ULO cooling department
- 2) BFV division in Glabbeek
 - supply and sales point
 - ULO cooling department
- 3) BFV division in Vrasene (Waasland)
 - supply and sales point
- 4) BFV division in Zoutleeuw
 - ULO cooling department
 - Pre-sorting installation
- 5) BFV division in Hannuit (Wallonia)
 - ULO cooling department
 - Fast Fresh Fruit (fresh cut processing, in cooperation with Matterne)

The sales for all divisions will be managed centrally from Sint-Truiden.

Each supply and sales point offers the same services — packing material department, grower support, inspection, growing techniques, commercial support and logistical possibilities — as well as the same cost price.

The BFV's Board of Directors consists of 26 fruit growers representing all of the BFV's areas of production (Haspengouw, Hageland, Wallonia) and, as a result of the merger, four hard fruit directors from Profruco in the Waasland area have joined the board as well.

Thanks to this merger, the BFV will be able to consolidate and reinforce its position as market leader in Belgium. The BFV will be an even bigger supplier on the clock and will be able to guarantee a transparent price setting process. This is an essential point of trust for our growers and for the trade in general.

Another reason for the merger is to save costs. A higher turnover with the same fixed costs and reduced labour costs should eventually lead to lower commission costs.

The BFV's new cultivars, such as Belgica and Sweet Sensation, will now also be promoted in the Waasland division. The Sweet Sensation is certain to arouse interest in this pear country. Profruco has played a prominent role in the kiwi project, and this will now be generalised to Sint-Truiden.

The success of the entire merger project will depend on the members' willingness to cooperate. After all, the objectives of a group do not always coincide with those of the individual. In times of crisis, however, a strong auction will also offer added value for the individual, such as financial security, a stronger negotiating position towards trade and distribution, as well as the opportunity to deliver to larger customers in a correct and professional manner.

In the next few months, the new organisation will be optimising and upscaling its Vrasene division. Naturally, growers in East and West Flanders and growers in Zeeland who as yet are not members of the BFV and who are interested in a more transparent price setting are all welcome to join this division.

The BFV has developed a strong commercial model. To this end, we invested in our brand policy, which will now be applied consistently throughout the Waasland offer. In addition, we will be looking out intensively for new markets, hence our annual trade fair participations, such as FruitLogistica in Berlin. The Belgian Fruit Auction (Belgische Fruitveiling/BFV) is actively exploring and approaching new markets, including China, Hong Kong, India and various other Asiatic countries.

Our main objective remains the same: achieving the best price on the market for our members – the fruitgrowers.