

# SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2023





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## 1. About Fruit At Work

#### 1.1 Organisation

Fruit At Work (FAW) commits to fair prices that match everyone's work. Honest and healthy are our keywords. Offering fresh, seasonal fruit direct from the producer is beneficial not only to the consumer, but also to the producer, the community, and the environment! Our business is run with the utmost attention to ethical and environmental issues.

#### 1.1.1 Business Model

## What's in a name? Fruit At Work delivers fresh, seasonal fruit from a short supply chain!

Even though we primarily deliver to businesses, we give schools and families the opportunity to order our fruit boxes.

Every fruit box includes fruit straight from the field! Our Belgian fruit is directly purchased from the grower. We only buy fruit abroad in the event the Belgian product it is not available or unsatisfactory.

We strive to minimise the distance between the country and the customer. Fruit grown outside of Belgium is bought straight from the importer (such as Aida or Exsa). As a result, we can guarantee the highest quality and shortest supply chain. Our grapes, nectarines, persimmons, clementines, and other fruits are imported straight from their native countries. The fruit does not travel unnecessary miles, which is good for the environment. We do not use air transport either.

Still on the tree on Tuesday and already in your fruit box on Monday: this is the rule rather than the exception for our European fruit.

Our corporate social responsibility is not limited to securing a short supply chain! More than many of our competitors, we are devoted to fair prices for our produce. As the only fair-trade player in our field, we demonstrate the importance of fair prices in our supply chain.

We also offer organic fruit boxes, ensuring access to pesticide-free and organic fruit for consumers willing to go the extra mile.







#### 1.1.2 Mission and Vision

We all understand the value of good health; however, we frequently fail to fully appreciate it. A balanced diet, including fruit, is fundamental to optimal health. Fruit ought to be in season, fresh, as diverse as possible, and preferably of local origin. This is precisely what Fruit At Work provides to companies, schools, and families!

### IMPROVING THE WELLBEING OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS

Fruit At Work focuses on improving employee health, which in turn improves business health. Moreover, we envision to enhance the environment's wellbeing, given that we place a high value on protecting the environment.

We make every effort to have as little of a negative impact as possible on the environment! We also place a lot of emphasis on the wellbeing of our relationships, including those with our customers, suppliers, and employees at work. This is because we also aim to play a positive role in society.

Therefore, we strive to conduct business in a morally upstanding and honest manner while paying close attention to sustainability.

#### 1.1.3 Where can I find Fruit At Work?

Our office is housed in the newly constructed (as of 2018) Business Centre Frees in Zonhoven and is entirely heated and cooled with heat pumps. Fossil fuels are totally banned on our premises!

It is also almost self-sufficient in terms of energy thanks to an elaborate solar panel system. Moreover, we even use as much rainwater as possible and only need 27% tap water. Even better: we are located next to a great nature area.

The fruit is stored in a warehouse in Sint-Truiden, also equipped with solar panels. In short, minimising our negative impact starts at the workplace!





#### 1.1.4 Certifications

On the Fruit At Work website, we aim to inform and inspire with our CSR dedication. Our belief in a business where sustainability and social standards are incorporated is evidenced by the many certifications we obtained. As a small SME, Fruit At Work aims to excel in corporate social responsibility.

Over the years, we have shown our dedication to CSR and all aspects of ESG by obtaining the following accreditations. The link to our ESG topics can be found further in this report!

#### 1.1.1.4 What does each certification represent?







Bio-certified fruit means that the farming process is based on a balanced and holistic approach to sustainability. This approach causes fewer pollutant emissions, benefits actions to restore biodiversity, and respects the health of the consumer. (Certisys, 2023a)





#### **Fairtrade Certification**

The Fairtrade label on a product certifies that the producer outside of Europe was paid fairly for his products. A system made feasible by fair trade enables more equitable, respectful, and equal international trade. (Fairtrade Belgium, n.d.).



#### **Prix Juste Producteur**



Since 2018, an official label in Belgium shows that the producer was paid fairly for his products. In particular, the "FairProducer Price" certification on products indicates that farmers have adequate bargaining power and may take production costs into account, all the while enhancing their social and environmental performance. The "Prix Juste Producteur" label enables consumers to choose items that support local agriculture. (Prix Juste Producteur, 2022)



#### **SDG Champion**

The PCA 2030 Trajectory was developed to raise organisations' ambitions in terms of sustainability and contribute to the completion of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is split into three phases to clearly indicate in which stage the company is in terms of impact and ambition.



It begins with strategic implementation (Pioneer) followed by transition (Champion) and ends with a human rights sustainable development approach that encompasses human rights (Ambassador). (CIFAL Flanders, 2023).

The Voka Charter for Sustainable Entrepreneurship (VCDO) was originally signed by Fruit At Work in 2017. With this, we started a three-year project to get a SDG Pioneer certificate delivered by the United Nations. Fruit At Work succeeded every year! On August 26, 2020, we received the formal UN SDG Pioneer certification.

However, this was only the beginning for us. We continue to support CSR and push forward with the goal of becoming an "SDG CHAMPION" in the process. As of 2022, Fruit At Work is one of the first twenty-eight businesses in Belgium to hold the title of SDG CHAMPION!

This shows that CSR is ingrained in Fruit At Work's DNA. We can compete with any business in the industry. Our motto is: Either you conduct business sustainably, or you do not. With the phrase "Fair is Delicious", we emphasise this.





#### The SDGs as a guidebook

The SDGs are a guidebook to our enterprise, and we continue to include them in our communication. The SDGs are matched to our CSR initiatives so they can share their goal as a blueprint for peace and prosperity. The most important SDGs for Fruit At Work are:





































SDG 2 - Zero hunger - Promote sustainable agriculture.



SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth - Promote full and productive employment and decent work for all.



🚣 SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production -Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



SDG 13 - Climate action - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



SDG 15 - Life on land - Halt biodiversity loss

#### 1.1.5 Fruit At Work in numbers

years old. Founded in 2008

of our purchased fruit (in volumes) are certified

tons of fruit each year to businesses, schools & families

of our fruit (in volumes) come from European producers

of the non-organic Fairtrade bananas is purchased by Fruit At Work



#### 1.1.6 Supply Chain

As should be clear now, a short supply chain is essential to our guarantee of fresh and honest fruit. We maintain close relationships with our suppliers and are directly in contact with our partners at each step of the supply chain.





#### 1.1.6.1 Cultivators

We are in direct contact with our fruit growers.

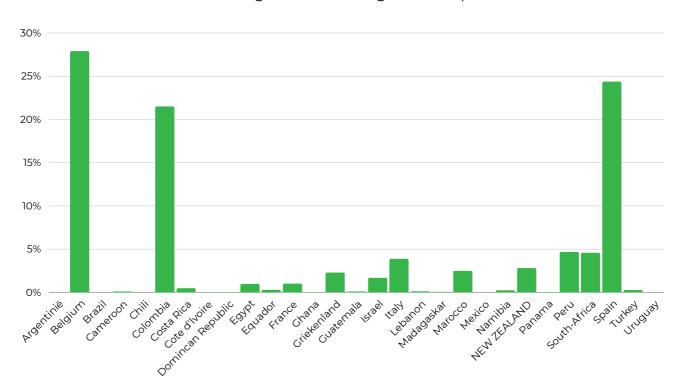
For instance, every brand of Belgian fruit is purchased directly from the farmer. Moreover, we actively promote and support the launch of new Belgian fruit brands. In 2020 and 2021, we collaborated with partners to introduce a Belgian melon and a Belgian apple, competing with fruit originating from non-European countries (Belgische Fruitveiling CV & Truval, 2022; Meers, 2020). Our Belgian apples and pears comply with the standards of Prix Juste Producteur, meaning the growers receive an honest price for their work.

## To minimise potential CSR risks, we analysed our supply chain and fruit origins using a due diligence process.

The details of this analysis can be found in the next section. We concluded that our potential risks can be reduced, since we obtained multiple types of certificates for almost every type of fruit.

For instance, at least 50% of all growers comply with the Global GAP standards. Businesses that adhere to the GAP standards comply with a range of standards. They are able to produce more effectively with less pollution while preserving people wellbeing and the environment. In order to maintain continuity and allow the next generation to continue farming, the method of (fruit) cultivation is based on best practices (Global G.A.P., n.d.-b).

The graph below shows the distribution of the fruit growers internationally. No less than 50% of our total volume originates from Belgium and Spain!





#### 1.1.6.2 Repackaging



Together with Smets Fruit & Sorting byba, we pack the fruit boxes in their facility, which is located in close proximity to the orchards. Literally fewer than 200 meters separate the fruit box from the orchard.

The same applies to the production of our fruit boxes, which takes place less than 10 minutes from the sorting facility. This way, we keep all preparation close by and do not waste any transport.

#### 1.1.6.3 Transport to Clients

When it comes to the distribution of fruit boxes, Fruit At Work prioritises sustainable collaboration. Instead of relying upon giant multinational corporations, we turn to reputable local market players. Those that adhere to our strict standards are allowed to develop their collaboration with us.

We commit to assigning each of them 50 weeks of work annually. This way, we help them create job stability and continuity. We also give them a turnover certificate if they require one to complete an investment with a bank.

Additionally, we encourage our transportation partners to join us in saving lives by making transportation CO2-free and by helping them further professionalise their approach to work toward operational excellence.





#### 1.1.6.4 Supplier and Partner Relations

Thanks to André Aerts, a co-founder of Fruit At Work and one of the founders of HVA-Koeling, we have a connection with the refrigeration sector. As a result, we can rely on many years of business ties (>35 years) and our expert product knowledge.

We try to secure this practice across the entire supply chain from the transport to the producer of our fruit boxes. We view personal and long-term relationships as a standard. For instance, we are on a weekly basis in direct contact with our importers, drivers, and employees of the sorting facility.

#### 1.2 Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships

Over the years, we have established close relationships with our direct stakeholders. To do business with corporate social responsibility, stakeholders play a very important role. Our attempt to have a positive impact on society and environment is supported by our stakeholders. The various stakeholders are listed below:

#### Level 1:

#### **Employees**

In an SME, employees all have a large responsibility in their daily work. For instance, our sales manager communicates our mission and values to new consumers. This is a part of our corporate culture. Another example is the hiring process. When hiring an employee, we like to connect them with all aspects of our business, regardless of their function. The Code of Conduct and all sustainability reports play an important role in this.

#### **Consumers**

The mission of Fruit At Work is improving the wellbeing of people and of the planet. Thus, we want to have a positive impact on the lives of our consumers. Eating fruit provides a feeling of freshness and vitality. Additionally, we can live longer and experience illness less frequently.

#### **Suppliers**

As a small family-owned SME, we maintain personal and long-term relationships with our suppliers. We purchase our fruit personally from the importers and communicate with the drivers delivering fruit boxes.





#### Level 2:

#### **Partnerships**

Our CSR story officially began in 2017, when we signed the <u>VOKA Charter</u> for <u>Sustainable Entrepreneurship</u>. This charter is an essential tool for corporate social responsibility (CSR) and for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (VOKA Charter Duurzaam Ondernemen | VOKA, 2023).

This led to a close collaboration with VOKA and other cooperation opportunities with among others **CIFAL Flanders**, an SDGs learning centre linked with UNITAR that provides coaching, project creation, and training (CIFAL Flanders, 2023). We acted as guest speaker to demonstrate the benefits of voluntary sustainability reporting for SMEs. Presenting our sustainability efforts may positively influence other enterprises and inspire them to also increase their positive impact. Informing and sharing our achievements is a significant demonstration of the fact that every company can achieve positive impact on people and on the planet.

Therefore, we pursue more opportunities to share our story. For instance, we organise more moments to inform and influence others.

**Firstly**, we participate in the <u>"Entrepreneur in the Classroom"</u> project that attempts to build a bridge between education and business (VLAJO, n.d.). We see Fruit At Work as an example to motivate young people to launch a business with respect to CSR. By building an interactive case study with them, we try to teach them in a practical way about fair prices and healthy labour conditions.

**Secondly**, we build further on this commitment by inviting university students of <u>UHasselt</u> to participate in our company for a short period of time. This opportunity allows us to introduce them to CSR in practice. This way, we hope to inspire them with our values and ways of doing business with respect for people and the planet.

**Thirdly**, we participated in a project between the <u>Belgian Fair Trade Federation</u> and <u>Universitaire Namuroise</u>. This project was a series of interviews for their university radio to build support for honest trading. Thanks to our membership of the <u>Belgian Fair Trade Federation</u>, we are able to share our commitment on fair trade and network with other companies that value honest trading (Belgian Fair Trade Federation, 2023). This membership was accepted as a result of our commitment to Fair Trade and the central place it holds in our activities, our consistent and fair supply chain, and our commitment to constantly improve the fair market.

**Lastly**, the importance of sharing and informing about sustainability is also applied outside our business operations. We fully support the mission of the **Sustainable Stories** nonprofit. This organisation undertakes actions to inform and inspire children about the Sustainable Development Goals in an educative and playful way (Sustainable Stories vzw, 2021).





## 2. Double Materiality Analysis

#### **2.1 Impact on Society and Environment**

Fruit At Work strives to be sustainable for all its stakeholders, including its customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, and the community at large. As a family company, taking care of one another and the society in which we live is ingrained in our blood.

In order to assure a bright future for the next generation, we seek to have only beneficial effects on society.

To reach this goal, we have reviewed our supply chain and sought to comprehend the potentially adverse impact we may have. This due diligence process applies the criterion of salient human rights issues to establish the scope and content of reporting, with the emphasis on the individual rather than risks for our organisation. As this is our first opportunity to research our supply chain, we have focused on the first stage: growing fruit and the linked CSR risks. The transport issues are investigated in general, as opposed to an analysis per country.

The most severe potentially negative impacts on human rights, specified for our supply chain, pertain:

- Unfair or dangerous labour conditions for workers
- Inadequate living wage for workers
- Climate risks and ecological threats
- Soil and water contamination



#### 2.1.1 Salient Human RightsIssues Associated with Fruit At Work

#### 2.1.1.1 Labour Conditions

Fruit At Work may be associated with unfair or dangerous labour conditions through the agriculture sector, inside and outside of Europe. When looking into the potential risks related to fruit outside of Europe, seasonal workers often work without written contracts. This leads to long working hours and rough facilities during harsh weather conditions. In Europe, such situations are also reported in Italy and Spain where undocumented work causes high-risk situations in terms of human rights.

Next to this, the transport sector may also be responsible for discrimination and violating of rights. Resting periods are reportedly not applied, or the truck parking spaces could be unsafe.



#### 2.1.1.2 Wage and Remuneration

Similarly, Fruit At Work may be associated with inadequate wages for agricultural workers. Several investigations uncovered that temporary workers usually are paid below the minimum wage, rendering them unable to provide for their family. This risk is more salient outside of Europe.

In our supply chain, transport is more frequently assigned to subcontractors in Europe who use truck drivers from that region or other non-EU nations. These truck operators frequently offer low pay, unpaid overtime, and intense time pressure as part of their working circumstances.

Although the drivers are entitled to the wages of the country in which they typically operate, logistics firms frequently bypass these greater minimum salaries. No social security is therefore paid on these amounts either.





#### 2.1.1.3 Climate and Energy

A considerable number of orchards outside of Europe are located in countries that receive a 5 out of 5 in the Ecological Threat Report, which means that there is an extremely high risk of ecological threat. In addition, the agriculture and transport industries are respectively accountable for large amounts of nitrous oxide (N2O) and CO2 emissions. These industries and their impacts could be linked to our business operations.

#### 2.1.1.4 Soil and Water Contamination

There are several indications that large-scale agriculture causes severe ground water contamination, for instance through heavily use of pesticides and fertiliser. South Africa and Costa Rica are two example locations with polluted drinking water, causing health problems. As we occasionally import from these countries, SDG goal 6 is a risk we should address.





#### 2.1.2 Determination of Salient Human Rights Issues

A human rights issue is salient if:

- The issue is the most severe in terms of scale, scope, and remediable character: the issue has a large impact on human rights for a large number of individuals and can be resolved.
- It is likely to reoccur in the future.
- It puts less emphasis on unrelated efforts to defend or enhance human rights and more emphasis on preventing harm to those rights.
- It puts a greater emphasis on risk to people than to the business.

This criterion is applied by the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework and OECD Due Diligence Guidance For Responsible Business Conduct (OECD, 2018; Shift Project Ltd & Mazars LLP, 2015).

To select issues for our supply chain, we employed the Due Diligence roadmap delivered by MVO Nederland, starting with listing all our fruit brands and their country of origin, evaluating the potential human rights issues, and prioritising this list.

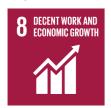
The figure below describes this process. The risk classification per country is based on the list developed by Amfiori (amfori BSCI, 2021).

Supplier	Product	Brand	Country of origin	Prioritisation	Countries' Risk Classification	Total CSR risks	CSR risks for fruit
	Tomatoes		Marocco	E	43,5	32	0
	Nectarine		Spain	С	Low Risk	21	7
	Strawberries		Spain	С	Low Risk	21	7
	Clementine		Spain	С	Low Risk	21	7
	Grapes		Italy	С	Low Risk	22	9
	Oranges		South Africa	F	57	43	13
	Plums		South Africa	F	57	43	13
	Plums		South Africa	F	57	43	13
	Oranges		Spain	С	Low Risk	21	7
	Apples		Italy	С	Low Risk	22	9
	Melons		Spain	С	Low Risk	21	7
	Bananas		Colombia	E	45,8	36	6
	Pineapples		Costa Rica	E	Low Risk	26	12
	Grapefruit		South Africa	E	57	43	13



#### 2.1.3 Management of Human Rights Issues

As a result, we are aware of the salient human rights issues we could be associated to via our supply chain. To limit any negative impact, we listed our current policies that are in place to manage the risks. The detailed information per initiative is found later in this report.



#### Unfair or dangerous labour conditions for workers

- Fairtrade certification
- Supplier certifications as a guarantee



#### Inadequate living wage for workers

- Fairtrade certification
- Prix Juste Producteur



#### Climate risks and ecological threats

- Carbon footprint
- Transport
- Supplier certifications as a guarantee



#### Soil and water contamination

- Fairtrade certification
- Supplier certifications as a guarantee

#### 2.2 Impact of Climate Change

Beyond our impact on society and environment, we acknowledge the impact of sustainability factors on our company.

#### 2.2.1.1 Climate Change

Issues: First, fruit supply may be endangered as a consequence of extreme weather. Forest fires, drought or extreme rainfall will harm fruit farming.

In addition, biodiversity loss will harm fruit farming. For instance, if certain inspects that benefits fruit disappear, fruit production will be harmed.



## 3. Environment

For Fruit At Work, sustainability is not merely a theoretical idea; it is ingrained in our organisation and in how we do our business.

Every day, we make sustainable choices, from transport to packaging. We also formalise these choices by committing to the VOKA Charter for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and to all the certifications we hold every year.

For instance, the SDG Championship was the starting point for our Zero Waste project. The following sections disclose our sustainability efforts in more detail.







#### 3.1 Climate Change

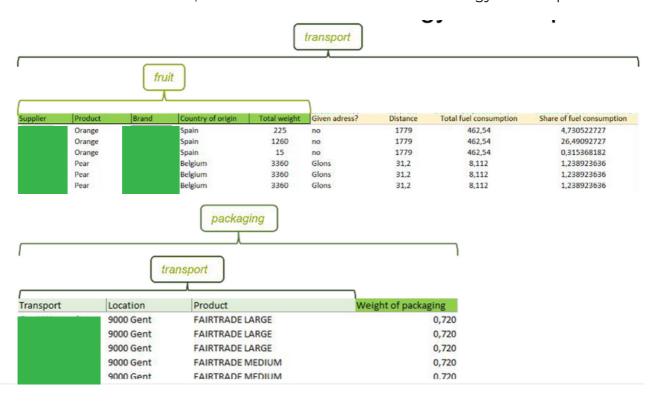
To further improve our sustainability efforts, we needed to map out the impact of our business operations on the environment. This starts with a full analysis of the carbon footprint of Fruit At Work.

To ensure that we report a realistic impression of the carbon emissions, we committed to include every stage of the journey the fruit boxes take, meaning we adopted the cradle-to-grave method. The full calculation is done with emission factors with the support of DVdB Consulting bvba (D. Van den Broecke, personal communication, 28 July 2023).

#### 3.1.1 Carbon Footprint

We started to map our carbon emissions by tracking our full supply chain, starting at the fruit growers. Thanks to a fruitful collaboration with our suppliers, we obtained an overview of the purchased volumes of fruit, together with the land of origin.

This gave us the opportunity to calculate the exact carbon emissions of our fruit as raw material, the transport of our fruit and the packaging. An example of the data can be found below. Furthermore, we collected information on our energy consumption.







#### 3.1.1.1 Fruit

We calculated the total of tons we purchase each year and split these into fruit that receives a separate emission factor and an emission factor for fruit in and outside season. This way, we can provide a number as close as possible to the actual carbon emissions. Moreover, we receive our fruit in paper boxes so the cardboard materials are also added to our calculation. As a result of our Zero Waste project that is disclosed later, we were able to ignore any fruit waste.

#### 3.1.1.2 Transport

For fruit produced outside of Europe, we chose to calculate the distance from the most popular port for fruit and a container ship often used for fruit transport. The distance for fruit cultivated in Europe is calculated partly from the regions and partly from the exact address of the fruit farm. Based on assumptions by our usual transport partner, we assumed the fuel consumption for Europe at 26 liters/100km (Frubelco, personal communication, 10 July 2023).

In addition, we also calculated the transport of our fruit boxes to the client, based on the average fuel consumption of our drivers and the weight for each type of fruit box. Finally, we even included our own transport to work and occasionally to our suppliers for a visit or personal purchase.

#### 3.1.1.3 Packaging

Our fruit boxes are made of FSC-certified cardboard, which also allows reusing for other purposes. We investigated the waste caused by the boxes in 2022 and found out that almost 50% of our clients can reuse their box. Thus, we can already eliminate half of the waste we generate.

#### **3.1.1.4 Energy**

As said, the office in Zonhoven is totally fossil free and uses a green energy contract and solar panels. In carefully designed cold warehouses, our fruit is always stored in compliance with industry best practices. The fruit is only removed from these refrigerators when the fruit packaging is created to ensure we offer the best possible quality and do not waste valuable energy. This building also benefits from solar energy, next to nuclear sources. This information was substantiated by invoices from our suppliers.







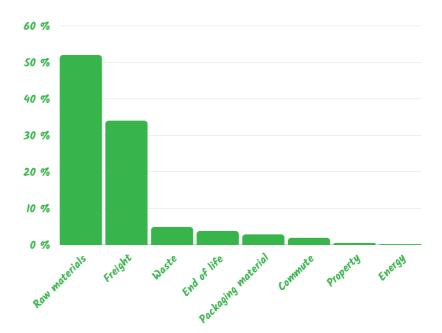
#### **3.1.1.5 Summary**

The result of our calculation is 657 tons of CO2 emissions. To compare, a resident of Flanders has a carbon footprint for consumption of 14,2 tons CO2 equivalents in 2016 (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2021).

As can be seen in this graph, 52% of our total carbon emissions are caused by the emissions released by fruit production.

The second-largest source is transport, with 34% of the total carbon emissions.

The waste of the boxes that we receive from the suppliers and our own boxes amount to 9% of the emissions.



We limit our carbon emissions as most of the pollution is caused by our primary activity. Moreover, we calculated that our green transport policy already saved 17 tons of carbon emissions.

#### 3.1.2 Reducing carbonemissions

Fruit At Work strives to adopt a climate neutral policy in the upcoming years. We want to exclude all negative impact we have as a company as much as possible. At this moment, there are already steps in place to offset our carbon footprint so we can reach the goal of having exclusively positive impact.

For instance, we plan to some land to create a "Fruit At Work Food Forest." This combines the benefits of offsetting our carbon emissions and sustainable food production with space for nature and biodiversity.

This multi annual plan should ultimately lead to climate neutrality. We acknowledge that the simple act of planting a tree is not equal to offsetting our emissions, but we strive to cultivate this forest and grow healthy and mature trees that will reduce carbon emissions when fully grown.

In addition, we will benefit from the insights we obtained from the calculations to reduce our carbon emissions. The more we are able to utilise green transport methods, the more our carbon emissions from freight will decrease.





#### 3.2 Pollution

Both eating fruit and breathing clean air can save your life. In our country, traffic congestion and air pollution are both issues. According to estimates from Statistics Flanders, fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in the air reduces the lifespan in Flanders by than 15 months per inhabitant (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2023).

With Fruit At Work, we actively take on our responsibilities to reduce air pollution, fine particles, greenhouse gas emissions, and traffic congestion in and around urban areas.

Since 2015, we have delivered to customers in the city's centre by bicycle when possible. Rayon9 is used for this in Liège. This bicycle courier business is also a social project, which employs persons with barriers to the labour market. In Ghent and Antwerp, we collaborate with Cargo Velo that fully understands our mission to do business in a socially responsible way.

In addition, we also supported a small local business that started an emission-free courier service. To show our belief in Green Delivery, we guaranteed 50 weeks of work on Mondays for his new business. We now utilise the 100% solar-powered electric vans for over 500 kilometres, causing a significant CO2-reduction compared to our previous delivery trucks.

The graph below shows our dedication to green transport. More specifically, it visualises the evolution from week 26 in June 2022 to week 26 in June 2023. As can be seen, we realised a considerable increase in green transport.







#### 3.3 Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Fruit At Work has held a continuous organic certification for our bio-fruit boxes since 2015. Every test came back with a perfect score.

Thanks to our bio-certification by Certisys, we can offer a Bio-Fair trade fruit box next to our regular Fairtrade fruit boxes. By offering a specific organic option, we attempt to increase awareness on the principles of organic farming and work toward sustainable models. This bio option radiates respect for a natural cycle and exclusion of any pesticides that have harmful effects. Moreover, there are necessary precautions in place to avoid contamination by products not authorised by regulation on organics.

In addition to the bio fruit box, we actively endorse eliminating the usage of pesticides in conventional (non-organic) fruit. We use fruit from Belgium that is grown using the "integrated cultivation" philosophy. Only the damaged plants and fruits that require pesticide management are treated.

When possible, we always favour fruit that is residue-free. This indicates that although the fruit has been treated, there are no leftover chemicals on it. We were able to purchase residue-free citrus fruit multiple times. In this area as well, we set market trends.





#### 3.4 Resource Use and Circular Economy

#### 3.4.1 Zero Waste

Sadly, there is still a significant problem with food waste today. Every year, households in Belgium discard 3.6 million tons of food. Fruit makes up the largest portion of this with 30%. It would be naïve to believe that our consumers are exempt from this issue. We have decided to assist our clients in producing ZERO WASTE in order to halt this. This is the name of our transition initiative, which is a component of the UN SDG Champion program.

#### **3.4.1.1 Clients**

In this project, we decided to start at the source of the suspected waste. By increasing the awareness of our clients about waste and its impact on the environment, we hope to eliminate all fruit traces. As a benefit, we could increase our client involvement and, even more important, boost their health even more by increasing their fruit consumption. Besides, we try to inspire our clients with possibilities to utilise leftover fruit. For instance, we offer various recipes with fruit on our website. Clients can even try a smoothie recipe with the blender we offer with an order of ten fruit boxes!

In addition to awareness projects, we also investigated our own process to ensure we purchase and communicate efficiently. First, we have a highly effective ERP system, as well as information to make fully accurate purchases. Moreover, the only fruit purchased is that which is required for deliveries the following week. As a result, we do not have any inventory problem. Additionally, we only select premium and seasonal fruit, which lowers our waste.

Secondly, we are constantly available for clients to handle adaption sof their fruit box. We receive weekly notes from our clients asking to lower or increase a certain type of fruit. The fruit waste we save balances out the extra work we dedicate for processing the exceptions.

#### 3.4.1.2 Production

Despite our efforts, certain fruits still don't adhere to our high standards; as a result, they are taken out of the fruit boxes during inspections. Fruit with minor flaws or fruit that has been damaged severely shortens its "shelf life" and increases the likelihood that it will not be consumed.

The fruit that is still suitable for immediate consumption is given to the packing staff. Additionally, we give leftover fruit to those in need. For instance, we collaborate with the "Zonder HongerNaar Bed Hasselt" organisation. Every week, we give them fruit so they may help people who are struggling with vitamin intake.

Furthermore, we donate any fruit that is unfit for humans to eat to a number of animal shelters in the area as we are reluctant to throw it away.





#### 3.4.2 Packaging



The mark of responsible forestry

Fruit At Work products come with closed-loop recycling. Our fruit is delivered in an FSC-certified box made entirely of recycled cardboard. Our packaging partner values CSR and is also active in the SDG Ambition Accelerator Programme. After use, the consumer has the option to "upcycle" the fruit box or recycle it on their own.

Reusable package has not yet been introduced in our business operations. According to our research, additional transportation and cleaning required for this packing will have a higher environmental impact than our FSC-certified cardboard. Nevertheless, we anticipate market changes and keep a close eye on new developments.

#### 3.4.3 Waste Management

We remove extra packaging from the fruit after inspection and packaging. For instance, fruit wrapped in plastic or paper, as well as cardboard, wood, or plastic packaging that is employed to transport the fruit securely. This extra packaging material is completely sorted and collected.



Since 2017, we have started using a cardboard press. This replaced weekly collection trips with one or two visits every two months. However, we prefer re-using to recycling. Thus, we donate our boxes regularly to youth organisations or restaurants that are able to use them again.

We have also discovered a paper substitute for bubble wrap. As a result, our boxes are no longer overstuffed with extra plastic.



## 4. Social

#### **4.1 Our Workforce**

The Fruit of Work team is perfectly balanced. Fruit At Work employs:









We also had a gender equality audit done in our company. This is done to confirm that the initial impression was accurate and to search for potential problem areas. As a result, we received a confirmation of our impression when outlining how the HR policy on gender equality is applied generally.



















#### Packaging: 30 people on Saturday 10 people on Tuesday









#### 4.2 Workers in the Value Chain

An honest price for each person's work is a value we have committed to for a long time now. Exploiting market prices or paying below a living wage goes against everything Fruit At Work stands for.

For us, the price is determined by the top quality of our fruit rather than the auction price! In this manner, the producer still receives a farmer-friendly price that covers his expenses, even if there is abundance on the market.

For instance, the market crashed when the Russian market closed its doors in 2014. Even though the auction price was far lower than our agreement, our producer still received the agreed price for his fruit. The "Prix Juste Producteur" and Fairtrade accreditations are examples of how we extended our approach of fair prices.

#### **4.2.1 Prix Juste Producteur**

Fruit at Work makes it clear that the fruit grower gets paid fairly for his produce. In January 2019, Fruit At Work received the "Prix Juste Producteur" certificate.

This is thanks to the honest price we give to Belgian farmers. We are now the only participants in the process in our field. Additionally, we support the "Prix Juste Producteur" in its efforts to increase awareness of the fruit industry in Flanders and Belgium. Every Fruit At Work box bears their logo.



This way, we combine our CSR efforts with informing and influencing other players to increase the positive impact they have as business.







#### 4.2.2 Fairtrade

As of 2018, our fruit boxes comply with the requirements of Fairtrade. Our packaging also bears the Fairtrade label. As mentioned in partnerships, we are also currently a member of the Belgian Fair Trade Federation.



Because our full fruit box complies with the Fairtrade requirements, it can be considered fair for our workers in the value chain. The standards consist of both essential requirements and development indicators. Each organisation must adhere to these fundamental conditions as well as committing to install the development standards. The latter are primarily designed to enhance the organisation and working conditions of producers and to implement effective long-term environmental protection measures.

For instance, there are essential requirements, such as the protection of trade unions or a prohibition of any form of discrimination. A development practice could be committing long term with producers, so they also have the ability to have long-term contracts.

#### 4.2.2.1 Fairtrade and Fruit At Work

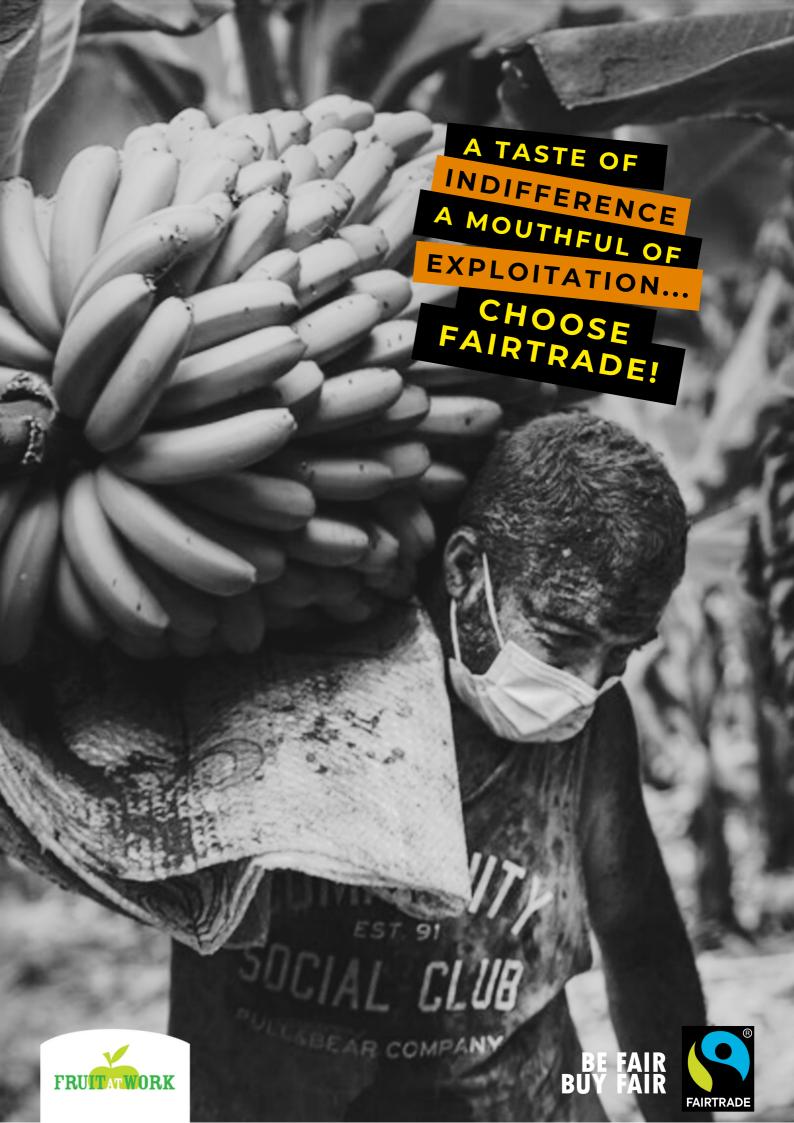
To further deepen our collaboration with Fairtrade Belgium, we started an initiative to import Fairtrade-certified bananas from South America together with Agro fair and Van Damme. Because we believe in the benefits of variation and quality, we purchase yearly a substantial number of bananas outside of Europe. However, we demanded that this amount did not cause any negative impact on society or the environment.

Consequently, we introduced conventional Fairtrade bananas on the Belgian market.

Very successfully too, because Fruit At Work now sells more than 22% of the nonorganic Fairtrade bananas marketed for sale in Belgium.

Even better, these Fairtrade bananas are certified with CANAPEP, a SMETA Audit, BRC Food Safety and GRASP, all controlling labour conditions. Hence, this project succeeded to increase decent work in South America.

In conclusion, this project exemplifies the standards we apply and our ambition to increase the occurrence of such events in the future.



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#### **4.2.3 Supplier Certifications as a Guarantee**

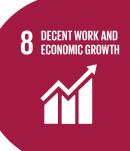
The image below describes the classification process for the origin of our fruit. First, countries are assessed based on their classification by Amfiori and the number of potential CSR risks by MVO Nederland: the risks are displayed in 2 columns: the total number and the number for the specific fruit sector.

Second, we processed the certifications the suppliers hold, and we examined their public information disclosed on their CSR policies. Thanks to a fruitful collaboration with the suppliers, we constructed an overview of the sustainable efforts made by the growers of our fruit, including their certifications.

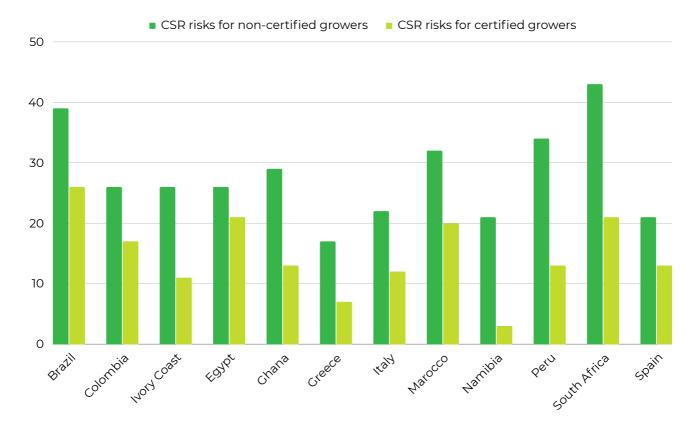
Third, we assessed our compliance with the Baskets of Social Standards by Sustainability Initiative for Fruit And Vegetables (SIFAV). The colour code in the last column determines compliance (green), no compliance yet (red), or insufficient certification for SIFAV (orange).

Product	Country of origin	Prioritisatio n	Countries' Risk Classification	Total CSR risks	CSR risks for fruit	Certification?	in getal	Public info on CSR?	SIFAV Map of Risk Countries	Comply with Basket?	Stoplight
Tomatoes	Marocco	E	43,5	32	0	GLOBAL GAP - GRASP	1	yes	High Risk	Semi	Orange
Nectarine	Spain	С	Low Risk	21	7	GLOBAL GAP - GRASP	1		Medium Risk	Yes	Green
Strawberries	Spain	С	Low Risk	21	7	GLOBAL GAP - GRASP	1	nee	Medium Risk	Yes	Green
Clementine	Spain	С	Low Risk	21	7	GLOBAL GAP - GRASP	1		Medium Risk	Yes	Green
Grapes	Italy	С	Low Risk	22	9	Global GAP and BSCI certified.	1		Medium Risk	Yes	Green
Oranges	South Africa	F	57	43	13	?	0		High Risk	tbc	Orange
Plums	South Africa	F	57	43	13	?	0		High Risk	No	Red
Plums	South Africa	F	57	43	13	?	0		High Risk	No	Red
Oranges	Spain	С	Low Risk	21	7	?	1	yes	Medium Risk	Yes	Green
Apples	Italy	С	Low Risk	22	9	AGRIOS & GLOBALG.A.P.+GR ASPA.P.+GRASP & IFSFood BRCGS & SMETA2P	1	yes	Medium Risk	Yes	Green
Melons	Spain	С	Low Risk	21	7	Bio x2 + residu des pesticides +	1	yes	Medium Risk	Yes	Green
Bananas	Colombia	E	45,8	36	6	Fairtrade, Rainforest alliance	1	yes	High Risk	Yes	Green
Pineapples	Costa Rica	E	Low Risk	26	12	Fairtrade	1		Low Risk	Yes	Green
Grapefruit	South Africa	E	57	43	13	Global Gap, FSSC22000, ISO9001 and Siza amongst others	1	yes	High Risk	Yes	Green





According to the SIFAV, the third-party verification of social standards is a way to monitor, record, and further improve working conditions at a producer's facility. Thus, certifications are a valid way to minimise negative impacts in the supply chain. The visual below reflects the effect on the CSR risks when collaborating with certified suppliers. In the future, we intend to comply with the Baskets of Social Standards created by SIFAV to guarantee decent labour conditions for workers in producing countries.



At this time, about 50% out of the total of all fruit brands can already show certifications that minimise risks for our workers in the value chain. It should be noted that if we count all missing certifications as not certified, the actual percentage may be higher. The share of fruit that originates from high-risk countries represents less than 40% of our total volumes. Moreover, more than 85% of the volumes we buy in high-risk countries is certified and thus the farm is verified based on the labour conditions for workers. The non-certified volumes coming from medium-risk countries are somewhat higher, at 40% of our total volumes.

Hence, we are very motivated to continue with tracking our suppliers and limit any negative risks in total. SIFAV has developed the Baskets of Social Standards to advance harmonisation, facilitate alignment of market requirements with best practices, and boost openness and comparability by establishing baskets of accepted social norms. Fruit At Work strives to adopt their recommendations for supplier certifications.





#### **4.2.4 Supplier Relations**

As mentioned before, we hold personal and long-term relations with our direct suppliers. This allows us to evaluate our external workers as much as possible via personal contact.

For instance, we pay close attention to our direct drivers that we encounter during our operations. We are in contact with some of the drivers that transport our fruit across Europe and contact them unexpectedly when purchasing the fruit. In addition, we try to have an open conversation on their labour conditions in their native language. The drivers that deliver to our clients are even more acquainted with us. We speak with them on the phone on a weekly basis and meet them occasionally. Thus, we can ensure that any problems considering working hours or resting periods can be detected rapidly.

Unfortunately, we are aware that our partners may employ subcontractors. This complicates the management of our CSR risks and increases potential association of negative impact.

For instance, we ended a business relation with a direct partner after discovering they did not align with the values of Fruit At Work. Although this partner delivered exemplary work and delivered to almost 20% of our clients, we decided to replace them. This approach will be continued thanks to our commitment to the Code of Conduct.

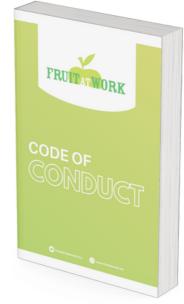
#### 4.2.4.1 Code of Conduct

The Fruit At Work Code of Conduct was created with uniform standards in mind across the entire value chain. We can only accomplish improved working and environmental conditions when it is spread across full the food value chain.

All partners who conduct business with Fruit At Work are subject to our Code of Conduct. This clarifies the minimum standards and starts the conversation to further improve the production conditions on every stage on the supply chain.

You can consult our code of conduct here!





www.fruitatwork.eu/code-of-conduct



#### **4.3 Affected communities**

As an SME, the communities affected by our business are limited. An example could be the population in villages and cities where we deliver fruit boxes. As mentioned above, we try to minimise our carbon emissions by transport and reported an incredibly positive evolution compared to 2022. Nevertheless, there are still negative impacts associated with transport.

Other communities could be the indigenous people that are negatively impacted by increasing mass agriculture on their land. For instance, the Ica-Valley in Peru is known to have limited access to water for the indigenous community since the agriculture, among others for fruit, has significantly expanded in that area.





#### **4.4 Consumers and End Users**

#### 4.4.1 Schools

We have been actively involved in the Oog Voor Lekkers (OVL) Project to provide children with access to nutritious food since the 2020–2021 academic year. Sadly, that is not current evidence. Some children bring empty lunch boxes to school far too frequently. We joined the OVL project because we believe that every child deserves the same opportunities.

We made special efforts to ensure that the project was free and thus we are grateful for subsidies offered by the European Union.

At this time, we give fruit and vegetables for snacks to over 10,000 children.

We also try to extend our efforts to inform and inspire about CSR to the young generation. As mentioned, we support the mission of Sustainable Stories and believe in the benefits of reading stories to educate children about Sustainable Development Goals.

Thanks to our support together with other partners, the stories get delivered together with our fruit boxes to schools.

This combines the benefit of eating healthy with the positive impact we try to have for future generations.

#### 4.4.1 Companies

We try to extend the impact of storytelling and sharing our values to the employees that receive our fruit boxes. Our fruit box is designed to benefit and inform the people that enjoy our fruit.

First, the importance of choosing a healthy snack cannot be underestimated. According to feedback from our clients, there has been an improvement in the health and productivity of workers when they have the opportunity to eat healthy for free!

Second, the accreditations of Fruit At Work are immediately visible when opening the fruit box. As the only Fairtrade player in our industry, we feel it is important to notify our clients that we value honest prices and that nobody gets extorted.



## 5. Governance

#### **5.1 Business Conduct**

een beschrijving van de rol van de bestuurs-, leidinggevende en toezichthoudende organen ten aanzien van duurzaamheid en de expertise van de personen om toegang te hebben tot die organen

#### 5.1.1 Embedding Due Diligence in our Internal Business Process

Every member of this company is familiar with their responsibility towards human rights issues. In our SME, employees are specialised in their areas and actively prevent the CSR risks in daily activities but also in a long-term vision. This occurs partly naturally thanks to our corporate culture and attention to CSR.

For instance, the procurement manager purchases the fruit on site. Thus, he maintains direct relations with the suppliers and retains the possibility to discuss CSR risks personally. Moreover, he checks the certificates on the fruit to ensure the grower does not violate human rights.

The same direct approach is used by the colleague responsible for transport. To ensure we have a realistic assessment of our transport risks, we consult drivers directly across the value chain to know their working hours, rest periods and treatment by employers. As we mostly import from Spain, we contact them in Spanish to ensure we have a direct and personal communication.





#### **5.2 Ambitions**

With this report, we hope to clarify our efforts to do business with respect for society and environment. We believe that our approach is crucial to secure a positive impact as a business. Nonetheless, we wish to eliminate our negative impact in the supply chain entirely. We recognise the risks we still face and are motivated to completely exclude these.

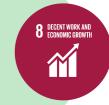
To include our stakeholders in our ambitions, we plan to launch a survey to investigate the significance of our CSR risks and design a Materiality Matrix for Fruit At Work. This helps us to select the most crucial risks and human rights issues, while we still work with the salient human rights criteria.

At this time, we build our goals based on the salient human rights issues.

## Extend our compliance of the Baskets of Social Standards by December 2024.

#### **Human rights issue:**

- Unfair or dangerous labour conditions for workers
- Inadequate living wage for workers



## Build a roadmap to reduce and eventually offset our carbon emissions by December 2024.

#### **Human rights issue:**

• Climate risks and ecological threats



#### Continue our evolution to green transport.

#### **Human rights issue:**

• Climate risks and ecological threats



#### Enhance our pesticide-free purchasing policy.

#### **Human rights issue:**

• Soil and water contamination





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Senator A. Jeurissenlaan 1154 bus 4 | 3520 Zonhoven





