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Ardo takes challenges head on

2008 is bound to be a year full of challenges on every front. And we are ready: a tightly-knit team of Ardo employees full of enthusiasm, from diverse backgrounds, will take the challenges head on.

The greatest challenge for the new year will come from the raw ingredients. As you have undoubtedly already heard in the media, the **offer of basic materials is becoming scarcer** by the day – for various reasons: European subsidy regulations have discouraged farmers from planting crops like peas in favour of cereal crops; climate change or at least extremes; and the increase in arable land passing over to biofuel production. Given the shortages of fields, farmers are getting a high price for growing corn, maize or sugar beet for biofuels – to the detriment of acreage intended for industrial vegetables.

The Ardo agronomic services are taking this challenge very seriously and are sparing no effort to **counter all excessive price rises**. Our good relations with farmers and cooperatives are a great asset in this respect. Nevertheless, we cannot thwart price rises altogether. More than ever before, growers have a wide range of crop possibilities, which will inevitably mean higher prices for vegetables in 2008. Supply and demand are coming into play more than ever before, as demand is high but the supply is limited.

Developing new products and concepts is an annually recurring challenge. Our product development and marketing teams work hard together to bring you new ideas. We have a number of fantastic products in store for 2008.

Finally, we keep Ardo at the cutting edge of production through our continuous investment programme. Some companies will undergo a thorough transformation so that we can integrate the latest technologies even better in the production process – and thus guarantee products of even superior quality and unrivalled services for you. This in itself is a challenge of tall order for Ardo engineers! This newsletter provides a glimpse of their initial achievements.

Our biggest challenge is to keep you, our customers, continually delighted with our products and services. **A challenge that we are delighted to take on each and every day.** And we will do so in 2008 too.

We wish you a happy and successful new year.

Happy New Year!



Sweetcorn: a top product at Ardo



Sweetcorn is well known for its sweet flavour and high sugar content. And children love it. Ardo produces sweetcorn in its factories in Albacete in Spain and Saint-Sever in France. We paid the French factory a visit.

Sweetcorn is sown from the beginning of April until the beginning of July. This sweet variety likes warmth and humidity. The Landes region, south of Bordeaux, is ideal for growing sweetcorn.

The sandy soil is irrigated continuously. Furthermore, the temperature is 28° to 30°C on average during the growing cycle.

Regular **laboratory analyses** on seeds and plants during the growing phase ensure that the product is **GMO-free** and fully meets harvest specifications.



Processing in the plant

Once the plants are fully grown, harvesters, travelling at a speed of 4km per hour, carefully remove the ears of each plant. A truck then transports the ears, as quickly as possible, to the factory, guaranteeing swift freezing to lock in the flavour and nutrients. Special machines remove the leaves from the ears, which are then sorted manually and electronically by length. Whole (13 cm) or half cobs are selected manually. The remaining ears are sent for the production of kernel corn. A machine automatically cuts the kernels free from the husk.

The rest of the production continues in the same way as with other products such as peas, i.e. washing, optical sorting, blanching and freezing. Regular checks guarantee constant production quality throughout the process.

Ardo's sweetcorn range

Our group delivers sweetcorn to the market in various forms:

- Sweet and supersweet corn
- Whole corncobs
- Half corncobs
- Baby corncobs
- Bio Organic sweet corn



Interesting facts

- ✓ Maize was grown in Central America 3000 years ago. It was introduced into Europe by Christopher Columbus.
- ✓ Sweetcorn is not only delicious, but contains healthy ingredients. The variety contains polyunsaturated fatty acids (46%) and saturated fatty acids (15%). Furthermore its kernels contain vitamin B, magnesium and many important fibres.
- ✓ Sweetcorn kernels lend themselves to all sorts of vegetable combinations, omelettes, soups, salads, fish dishes etc. Corn cobs are mainly prepared in the oven with a pat of butter, or on the barbecue in summer.



Ardo news

Mushrooms

New



Risotto Spinaci

Fairs



Moscow, Budapest, Cologne, Salzburg, Ghent and Amsterdam: over the last few months Ardo has attended a large number of trade fairs. And everywhere we met with great interest in our

products. Not least for our newcomers: our risottos, Roast Supreme, Insalate Mediterranea and Cream Broccoli. We would like to thank everyone who visited our stand at one of these events.

In the months to come we will be at several trade fairs in many countries (you'll find a summary on the cover of this edition).

We hope to have the opportunity to welcome you. See you soon!

Press conference at Ardo Ardoie (B)



Currently, a European information campaign on processed vegetables is under way in France, the Netherlands and Belgium. This is an initiative involving the European fruit and vegetable processing organisation (OEITFL) and a number of companies and organisations working in the sector. As part of this initiative, a **press conference** was organised at our head office in **Ardoie**. Large numbers of representatives of the written press, radio and TV were present.

They first visited a cauliflower field. They were given an explanation of the harvest, and all the steps involved in achieving a quality harvest. Then there were speeches from Hilde De Geeter, project manager at the Nutrition Information Center, and from John Van Camp and Xavier Gellynck, both professors at Ghent University.

The speakers explained that in general, **people eat too few vegetables**. The main reason is that **preparing vegetables takes too much time and effort**. So **processed vegetables provide an ideal solution**. They are ready cleaned, cut and blanched, or even cooked or prepared. In addition, - in contrast with what many people think, - they retain their nutritional value after industrial processing at least as well as fresh vegetables. After the speeches and the company visit, all those present also enjoyed some delicious vegetable snacks.

Mushrooms: nutritional value guaranteed

Recently, healthy living has received a lot of publicity. More and more people are striving for a healthy lifestyle. If you want to live healthily, you have to eat healthily too. And mushrooms play their part. For example, did you know that mushrooms:

- contain **lots of vitamins**, particularly B group vitamins which contribute to the health of the nerve and muscle system and the skin
- are **rich in trace elements**, such as selenium, which help to prevent heart and vascular diseases and some cancers
- are **very low in calories**, proteins and fats, and so help to keep you in shape
- are a **good source of minerals** such as potassium, copper and iron, which are needed by the metabolism
- add **great flavour** to dishes such as casseroles and soups

Ardo offers a wide range of mushrooms.

They are available throughout the year.



New lines now available in larger packs

Risotto Spinaci, Risotto Funghi and Roast Supreme are three of Ardo's newest A Table vegetable dishes. They have been taste- and kitchen tested by experts in the foodservice area. By popular demand, we will be offering these in larger packs. They will be available in both 450g packs and 1.5kg packs in March.

Let's introduce the three trendy newcomers to the A Table range:

- **Risotto Spinaci** is a classic among risottos, made with leaf spinach and lightly seasoned.
- **The Risotto Funghi** offers refined flavours with its Parisian and oyster mushrooms and a careful blend of seasoning.
- **Roast Supreme**, an addictive mix of partly grilled vegetables with a seasoned butter sauce based on balsamic vinegar and soy sauce, makes an ideal accompaniment to meat dishes.

What they said at the tasting tests:

"A real find, outstanding flavour!"

"The risottos do not only taste delicious, they look really appetising too."

"The preparation of these new dishes is adapted to different cooking methods."



Investment on the agenda



Ardo makes huge efforts to meet your demands. That's very clear in our many international investments, including investments in Violaines and Alpiarça.

Ardo Violaines (F): new packing hall and coldstore



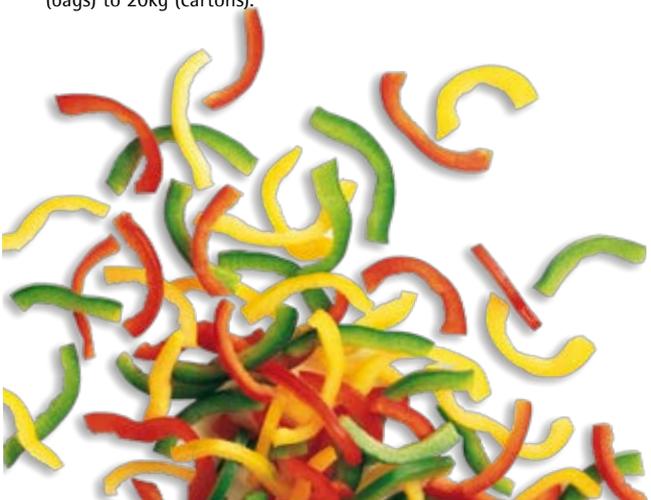
We have started on the construction of a new packing line and additional coldstore space in our processing plant in **Violaines**.

Soon the quick frozen vegetables will be able to pass from the end of the freezing tunnel straight onto the **packing line** and into the **coldstore** in one continuous movement.

This guarantees you the optimal product, frozen and stored in the best conditions.

Ardo Alpiarça (P): one mixing and two packing lines.

In Portugal, the production, packing and distribution of quick frozen vegetables is now concentrated at the **Alpiarça** production site. So this plant has invested in an **additional three-storey building**. This will hold a mixing line to blend up to five ingredients, and **two packing lines** handling volumes from 200g (bags) to 20kg (cartons).



Market and crop reports



Climatic conditions reverted to the seasonal norm after an exceptionally bad summer. Most of the damage suffered as a result was to summer vegetables such as peas, broad beans, peppers, beans and sweetcorn.

Green beans: the green bean crops vary throughout the various European growing areas. Brittany has seen the harvest down by 20% and the extra fine beans suffered a lot of damage. In northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands, crops were also adversely affected. **Overall, a shortage of 15% has been reported throughout Europe.**

Sweetcorn: shows **lower yields of 15%** in most areas. The extremely dry, hot weather conditions in Hungary on the one hand, the excessive rain and cold temperatures in France and Spain on the other hand, have taken their toll on the crop.

Peppers: cold weather in Portugal and Spain have **dramatically reduced pepper yields**. Turkey also suffered with peppers but this was due to the incredibly hot, dry conditions. Ardo is hoping that the winter pepper crop from Spain will deliver a reasonable yield. If this is so, our Albecete production unit should be able to recuperate part of the summer shortfall.

Spinach: thanks to the spread of Ardo's growing and processing plants across Europe, **the yields of the spinach crop are relatively good.**

Cauliflower: due to problems during the planting season (wet weather in July and August) a **late harvest and a drop of 20%** occurred. The results of the winter crops in Brittany are also less promising.

Brussels Sprouts: relatively warm temperatures in October and November have resulted in more **large sized Brussels sprouts**.

Root vegetables: the yields are pretty normal and the sizes are above average.

Broccoli: the season has started in Southern Europe (Spain & Portugal). The harvesting will continue slowly until March 2008. The yield results will be clear only after the first quarter of 2008.

Peas: the shortages already mentioned in the previous newsletter have been confirmed. Despite drastically increased sales prices, consumption has remained constant.

Organic vegetables: are still very difficult to harvest. The crops of organic beans have decreased by 50%!

A revamped Ardo website



The Ardo website is being given a new fresh look. You'll be able to find information that applies to your specific business: retail, foodservice or industry. This makes it a lot easier for you to find the products that suite your specific demands.

The new, very accessible layout is easier to navigate. The presentation of Ardo has been updated. We have also added a FAQ page to the site.

Time for a game?

The new Ardo site has a little something extra: the 'vegetable game'. The game teaches and tests youngsters about vegetables - great fun and educational at the same time. Try it out yourself!

Plus points

Ardo's new website is more than worth a visit:

- ✓ fresh look
- ✓ divided by sector (retail / foodservice / industry)
- ✓ easy to access and convenient
- ✓ a broad range of information

Looking for information

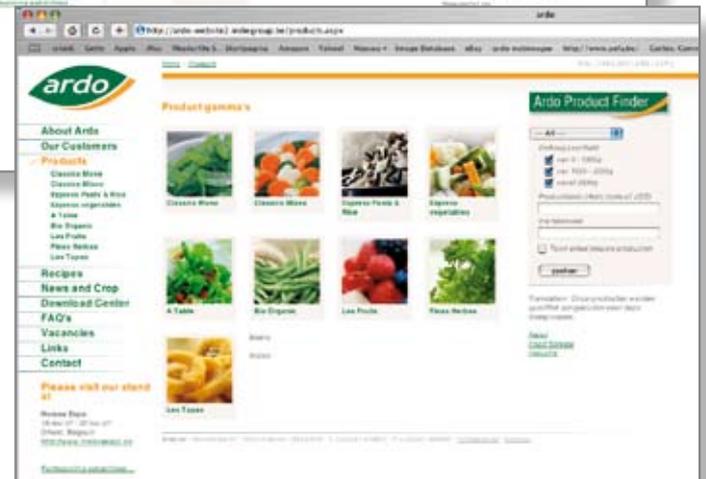
What hasn't changed is the **handy search engine**, which you can still use to find information about all the Ardo products in our ranges: packing, nutritional value, ingredients etc. all illustrated with product photos.

The site also features recipes, general info, harvest updates and the latest news. And, of course, you can still download this newsletter or send it digitally to recipients of your choice.

Want to find out more about our revamped website? Visit us at www.ardo.com



Vegetable game



Culinary Ardo



This newsletter has introduced a number of Ardo products. Our culinary advisors have come up with two tasty recipes. The recipe using the new Roast Supreme was a big hit at the Anuga trade fair. Delicious!

Roast Supreme with roast beef and bruschetta

Ingredients to serve 4:

- 600g Ardo Roast Supreme
- 200g Ardo chopped tomatoes
- 80g Ardo chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon Ardo chopped garlic
- 1 teaspoon Ardo basil
- 250g ciabatta
- 12 slices roasted beef
- 8 pitted olives (green and black)
- 1 dessert spoon olive oil, salt and pepper



Cut the ciabatta into slices and grill.
Mix the chopped tomatoes in a dish with the garlic, basil, olive oil and onion.
Cut the olives into slices and add the mixture. Season with salt and pepper and arrange on the ciabatta slices.
Meanwhile, heat the Ardo Roast Supreme following the instructions on the pack and divide over four plates.
Complete each plate with three slices of roast beef and ciabatta.

Hearty mushroom soup

Ingredients to serve 4:

- 500g Ardo mushroom slices
- 50g Ardo chopped onion
- 750ml instant vegetable stock
- 125ml fresh cream
- 100g grated cheese
- 50g butter
- 20g flour
- salt, pepper, nutmeg



To garnish:

- 4 dessert spoons Ardo chopped tomatoes
- 2 dessert spoons Ardo parsley
- 1 hard boiled egg (chopped)

Cook the onion in butter, and sprinkle the flour over. Add the mushroom slices and vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Stir in the Gouda and the cream, season with salt, pepper and nutmeg, and simmer for a further 4 minutes.

Tip: Serve the chopped egg, chopped tomatoes and parsley separately from the soup. That way everyone can help themselves to what they want.

Delicious!





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