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– Press Release –

**2018 vegetable crops severely impacted by weather conditions**

As the main vegetable campaigns come to an end, the European canned and frozen vegetable sector is drawing attention to the weather conditions in Europe over the past three years, which have exposed producers and processors to the effects of climate change. The year 2018 has been the worst year in forty years for the vegetable processing sector. The weather conditions were particularly difficult and varied according to the production region.

The very wet winter and spring, destructive storms and the long heat wave with long drought have affected many production areas in Europe, from North to South and from East to West, although for some regions in the South of Europe the impact has been less severe.

In general, several crops are affected with heterogeneous consequences depending on the product and the production region:

- Peas: The pea campaign has been disastrous in Western, Northern and Central Europe, with yield losses of up to 25% depending on the production region. The low yields were the result of wet conditions at sowing, followed by warm temperatures with drought at harvest.
- Sweetcorn: The long period of warm weather and drought, reduced the growing period and negatively affected the quality of the corn, which ripened earlier than expected, and the average yield per hectare was well below the expected levels. In addition to quality problems, the industry can now confirm that the harvested volumes are 20-25% less than the forecasted volume.
- Green beans: Production regions have experienced yield losses ranging from 15 to 50%.

The situation is also severe when it comes to other autumn vegetables. Yield reductions are confirmed for carrots, broccoli, beetroot, celery, celeriac, onions and courgette, spinach, leek, and Brussels sprouts. For onions the losses in Europe are dramatic, ranging from 25% to 50% in function of the countries.

The high temperatures and rainfall in October led to a simultaneous maturing of autumn harvested crops, like spinach and cauliflower. For spinach, the scheduled sowing programs were compressed into a much shorter period, which has resulted in a loss of product quality and a lower yield per hectare (estimated around 15%). For cauliflower, the situation has been similar, where the harvest has been concentrated over 3 weeks instead of the planned 5 to 6 weeks, resulting in a reduction in yield per hectare (estimated around 20%) and lower quality than expected. Also, the harvest of red cabbage, white cabbage and kale has been disastrous this year. In some regions, white cabbage losses are up to 40%, with losses in red cabbage up to 50%, and with a harvested yield reduced by half, kale is particularly affected.

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