



### **Kick-off**

The official kick-off for the foundation for monitoring fresh produce, also called 'Food Compass', has been in May 2003. It has been a direct response to the simultaneous introduction of the revised 'Hygiene Code for Uncut Fresh Vegetables, Fruit and Mushrooms' by the Productboard for Horticulture. This code has been based on the HACCP-principles in the Dutch Food Law.

### **Background**

In the Dutch Food Law (which refers to the European Food Law) it is stated that each company that prepares, processes, treats, packs, transports, distributes or trades foodstuffs, is responsible for an inventory of possible food safety hazards that may occur at its production process. Companies may choose whether they work according to an approved own HACCP-plan or apply the Hygiene Code. Companies that apply the Hygiene Code will have to do pesticide residue monitoring. They can either do this themselves or take part in the sectoral residue monitoring through Food Compass. But also other fresh produce companies in the Netherlands can make use of the services of Food Compass. Food Compass takes care of the residue monitoring and aims to inform its participants about analysis results and developments regarding food safety. In 2013 Food Compass also started a research programme on microbiological risks.

### **Organisation**

Food Compass is an independent foundation. The Board consists of representatives of Vroegop-Windig, Frugi Venta, Dutch Produce Association (DPA), Nefyto and the Voedingscentrum. Sector organisations Frugi Venta and DPA are collaborating within the Fresh Produce Centre, which is also where the Food Compass office is located. Food Compass receives advice from an expert panel that consists of representatives of several fresh produce trading companies and the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA).

#### **Summary**

- ✓ Board, expert panel and office
- ✓ Independent sampler, accredited laboratories
- ✓ Risk-based monitoring of pesticide residues
- ✓ Research on microbiological risks
- ✓ Approx. 300 participants (only for companies in The Netherlands)
- ✓ Analysis reports & platform for learning

#### **Benefits**

- ✓ Neutral, expert organization in case of incidents/crises (corporate data available!)
- ✓ Organizes sampling and analysis
- ✓ Makes sectoral risk analysis and sampling plan
- ✓ Provides answers to questions on analyses and legislation
- ✓ Information on (new) risk and developments: newsletters and annual meeting
- ✓ Overview of analysis results in the Food Compass web portal
- ✓ Automatic participation in the Early Warning & Response System (database & rapid alerts)



**Activities**

Food Compass takes, at least once a year, samples at each of its +/- 300 participants (mainly trading companies, importers, exporters, growers associations, auctions). Product sampling is based on a (sectoral) risk analysis. The samples, annually almost 2000, are taken by an independent sampler (Agro Quality Support) and analysed for the presence of pesticide residues in accredited laboratories. Both sample data and analysis results are entered in the Food Compass web portal. Participants automatically receive an e-mail once new results have been entered and released. In case of an exceedance of the MRL, whether or not with exceedance of the food safety threshold (based on the ARfD), Food Compass informs the participant about the actions that are to be taken. By means of a monthly newsletter Food Compass informs its participants about the collective (anonymous) analysis results, exceedances and the developments regarding the European Regulations on pesticide residues. Food Compass participants pay an annual fee. The amount depends on the turnover of the participant. Food Compass aims to make the number of samples taken at a company proportional to the annual fee that it pays.

For the Dutch fresh produce industry it is very important to have collective and representative data available. Firstly, in order to have an overview of bottlenecks and to be able to set priorities. On the other hand, to be well-informed in case of incidents and (therefore) be able to act quickly and correctly.

In 2013, Food Compass has started research on microbiological risks on fresh, unprocessed fruits, vegetables and mushrooms. This research programme is focused on sectoral knowledge improvement and coordination. An important part of this comprises sampling and microbiological analysis of products in the trade channel.

