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Trade mission to China

Whether you are a fan of Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte or not, his work ethic is exemplary. Rutte flies from one appointment or meeting to another seemingly tirelessly. That 'flying' may be taken literally because the one trade mission is not yet over or the following is upon us. During his last visit to China the 'premier' was accompanied by Sjoerd van der Laan.



A part of the trade delegation with on the front row, in the middle, Prime Minister Rutte with Agriculture Minister Mrs Carola Schouten on his right side (black dress)

Trade delegations are not new to Zwanenberg. At the end of the last century, Aldo van der Laan also went on trade missions to examine market opportunities in the former Soviet bloc and the Middle East. Now it's the Chinese market's turn and also that is only accessible through official government channels.

So in April, along with the Prime Minister and over two hundred candidate exporters from all kinds of industries, Sjoerd set sail for cities like Xi'an and Guangzhou. The visit was framed with lectures, company visits and introductory sessions with local entrepreneurs. The main objective was establishing contacts with official government agencies.

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(Continued from page 1)

The trade delegation with Sjoerd van der Laan on the back row, second from right

How do you actually qualify for such a delegation, we wondered?... Sjoerd: "That's actually pretty easy: you just register your company. For the main objective, establishing contacts, it is important that you show interest by visiting the country and therefore show your willingness to invest time and money. It's all about your 'file' which you should get on the agenda of the relevant authorities. That requires a lot of lobbying, both at Chinese authorities such as the national procurement office – AQSIO – as through the Association for Dutch Meat industry, the VNV."

"That is a matter of long breath. It has, for example, taken seventeen years for fresh veal to be approved for the Chinese market. For our products that will presumably go a lot faster because fresh pork as such is already allowed. In addition, we hope to be able to benefit from the fact that one of our competitors, Tulip, is also active in China.

Its parent company, Danish Crown, even has concrete plans for two factories. We are not that far yet."

Second European mission

The fact that many Chinese are careful after a number of food scandals is also of importance. Especially the Chinese middle class whose purchasing power has grown tremendously in recent years, is willing to pay more for premium products from Europe. Local entrepreneurs know that as well, and they are only too happy to establish joint ventures with European companies.

Mid-May Sjoerd visited China again, though this time it was in the group of the European Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan. Together with more than seventy European businessmen Sjoerd visited Shanghai. Other than in the Dutch group, Zwanenberg had to be nominated at European level.

Sjoerd: "This business trip came about through the Third Countries Access Department of the VNV. This mission was even more interesting than the one in April, all the more so because this trip with Mr Hogan purely focused on food and beverages. "

"However, I will never forget the first journey. It was impressive to see how busy Mr Rutte is and how he copes with it. Despite the hectic pace he takes a moment for everyone so I could shake his hand at dinner and have a brief chat. Coincidentally, in the plane I sat next to our Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality minister, Mrs Carola Schouten. That chat was very enjoyable as well and more extensive than with the Prime Minister. I thought it was a privilege to briefly hang out with 'the Government' and see how energetic and committed they are. That may also be emphasised for once!"

Former CEO Ronald Lotgerink:

"I'm going to do my trick one more time"



Ronald Lotgerink

Our Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ronald Lotgerink will leave Zwanenberg on 1 September 2018. He will hold the same position at Vion meat group, which in terms of sales is ten times bigger than Zwanenberg. Aldo van der Laan takes over Ronald's duties. The editors of The Swan interviewed Ronald.

How have you experienced those 28 years at Zwanenberg?

"They were very enjoyable! I have learned a lot. I arrived at Zwanenberg when I was only 28. At the time, I worked as a consultant at KPMG and the then Th. S. van der Laan BV were looking for a CFO. KPMG consultant Evert-Jan Huizingh advised me to go and have a chat. Luckily I was hired!"

What did you appreciate most?

"The freedom I got. Essentially I was allowed to tackle anything, as long as I did it right. Coincidentally I recently found the first strategic plan I wrote in 1993. It was nice to reread it."

Which parts of that plan are still standing?

(He browses through:) "I read here: cost leadership, co-extrusion, no nonsense ... that's all still valid. A difficult market ... unfortunately that is also still the case! And: 'we want to be a worldwide distributor of preserves.' Well, we are!"

When your departure was announced, your interview with Management Scope was often cited in which you said you were like a counselor within the Van der Laan family.

"Although it was a bit out of context, that was in essence correct. When Aldo took over from his father Aat, he wanted to lead the company his way. Aat often agreed with him, but sometimes he did not. In those cases it may be better to communicate indirectly, so that the relationships are not disturbed. Conversely, Aldo also asked me to discuss certain issues with his father. That worked well. Actually, I was a kind of shock absorber!"

How should that continue after your departure?

"At the moment, the situation is similar: naturally Aldo's children Sjoerd, Jo-Anne and Tjeerd want to move on and that makes perfect sense. It is important that there is someone who makes sure the relationships remain good and does that what is best for the company. Zwanenberg may have to look for a new shock absorber!"

What were the highlights of your 28 years at Zwanenberg?

"The best memories are the large strategic events. Around the turn of the millennium we sold our slaughtery group Sturko well, and Offerman in 2017. The acquisition of the ZWAN brand in 1996 and the Unox factory in 2017 were also major steps forward. Thanks to some fifty acquisitions we have been able to grow the company substantially. "

And what were the lows?

"The low point was without a doubt the death of friend and colleague Jan Hameka. That was horrible for all involved, in the first place his wife and children. It has taken me a year before I could cope with that tragic event."

What do you think are the most important requirements for a good CEO?

"Vision and emphatic ability. Someone who can look ahead and who is able to establish a connection with the staff, so that they stand behind your vision."

Why have you chosen to go to Vion?

"For several years I was on their Supervisory Board. At one point my reappointment was due which I discussed with the shareholder. He asked me if I wanted to be CEO. That evening, the Supervisory Board asked me the same question. I discussed it with my wife Ellen. It is a big step, but also a nice challenge. I know Vion quite well, I'm 57 years old and will do my trick one more time."

Surely after 28 years you have an anecdote up your sleeve?

"I even have two, both have to do with travelling. From time to time Aldo and I went to Australia. As a result of two very long flights in a short time, you are of course totally out of rhythm. A long delay made that so much worse, that we really had no idea what time it was. It turned out we were having dinner including a glass of wine at 6.00 a.m.!"

"Another experience was at least as embarrassing. Because I can not go to sleep in airplanes, I always take a sleeping pill. The first time I had not dosed it properly. I landed at 11 a.m. coming in from the US and had a lunch with a major customer at 1 p.m.. He called me after a few days and said, "I don't know what was wrong with you, but I have never heard you tell so much nonsense!"



Ronald, thank you for your hard work over the past 28 years. Would you like to say anything else?

"For sure! I would like to thank all colleagues very much for the great cooperation and wish Zwanenberg the best for the future. We will hear from each other."

Zwanenberg Food Group – production facilities in the Netherlands

Almelo

- canned meat, snacks, liver sausages, patés, halal products

Lichtenvoorde

- dry sausages, snacks, vegetable burgers

Oss

- smoked sausages, frankfurters, cocktail sausages, hamburgers, minced meat and soup balls, patés, soups, sauces

Raalte

- smoked sausages, cocktail sausages, hamburgers, meat and soup balls

Vlagentwede

- dry sausages

For an extensive overview including our activities in the UK and USA, please refer to pages 6 and 7 in this magazine.

Colofon

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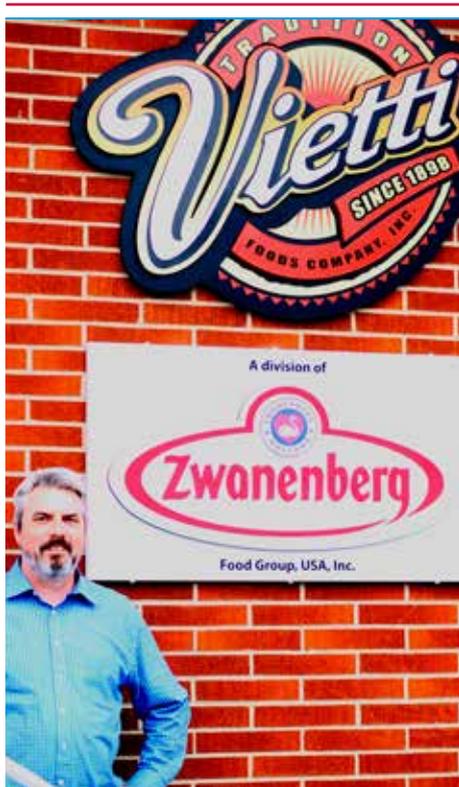
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Articles may be edited by the Editorial Board.

Please send your contributions to casa@zwanenberg.nl no later than October 5, 2018.

Factory Vietti Foods undergoes metamorphosis

At our American company Vietti Foods (part of) the machinery is being renewed. The company has been producing chili, stews and soup in Nashville for more than 120 (!) years. Over the years, investments have been made of course, but part of the equipment was now in need of replacement. According to Chief Operating Officer Patrick Jansen the current metamorphosis is the largest investment in the company since it was acquired by Zwanenberg Food Group.



Patrick Jansen

“Early 2017 it was decided to revamp and professionalize the factory as much as possible. That leads to improved product quality and more efficiency. New cooking boilers

will be placed in the kitchen where the chili meals and stews are prepared.”

“Each boiler has a capacity of 2,300 kilos and is horizontally mixed and not, as before, vertically. This will enable the ingredients to get better dispersion. Before all ingredients are mixed all beans are blanched first. They are led through large drums with water in two phases in which they absorb water for better processing. By using hot water the process is accelerated significantly. Finally, the kitchen will be fully conditioned. This all takes place on the top floor. “

Robot

“On a lower floor the ready meals are put in cans which are then closed by the Seamer. Then, after retort process, they move on to the packing Department that will also be substantially modernized with a new labeling machine, a new conveyor and a robot that puts the boxes on pallets. Before this was done manually. The capacity is slightly higher than that of the cooking kettles that can handle about 10,000 kilos per hour”, Patrick adds.

“While installing all new equipment, which comes largely from Spain and Germany, the production just continued. In doing so, we

have the advantage that we work with canned foods and not with fresh products.”

“Although the physical work was done largely by American colleagues, we have benefited from the know-how of colleagues like Willem Versantvoort and Peter Nijhof who regularly flew in from the Netherlands.”

“The whole modernisation was a bit delayed at the start because a local contractor suddenly did not deliver. Nashville is booming and he probably found a more lucrative project elsewhere. The aim is now to be ready in August. All in all, we have not reached our maximum capacity yet in Nashville, unlike our Cincinnati plant, where the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, which caused mayhem in Puerto Rico in September, causes a continued high demand.”

Years ago, Zwanenberg started its USA production operations in that factory. At the start, everything was crafted together by using mostly second-hand machines. We had to first see if our plans would prove viable. In 2016 we also got additional boiler capacity for generating steam and investments were made in labeling and palletizing. In addition, we have been able to expand the factory a bit on the spot.”

“The modernization means the largest investment since Vietti was acquired by Zwanenberg”



The old Technical Department space is converted into a staff entrance with toilet groups and locker rooms



The robot



The new labeling machine



Automated Guided Vehicles in Oss

In the Oss Central Warehouse of the former Unilever factory the transport tracks for production output and the Expedition Department are about two hundred metres apart. On each team there was one forklift driver who took care of the transport between them.

In 2017 talks with Toyota started about automating these activities. This led to a system with Automated Guided Vehicles (AGV). As soon as a pallet with products is available, it is scanned. The Order Manager Programme gives an automatic command to transport the pallet to the expedition in a specific strip.

The next AGV executes the command. The vehicles navigate by using a laser and reflectors. Thus they know exactly where they are and how they should drive. Since February 2018 the AGVs are a valued part of the plant and are available round-the-clock.

In the first weeks there were still some problems with traffic rules and some minor software errors. These were all neatly solved by Toyota and the system is still getting better.

News from the Finance Department

From now on, you will be informed a bit more often about the financial ins and outs of Zwanenberg Food Group. Our Chief Financial Officer Greta Gerritsen catches up.

The first three months of 2018 were extremely busy for the Finance Department. Formally, Offerman was transferred to Belgian food group Ter Beke per 1 December 2017. Offerman was 'carved out' from the Zwanenberg organisation and all systems.

Through a joint effort the Financial Department managed to deliver the 2017 figures for both Offerman and Zwanenberg on time. This truly was a top performance, especially as the deadlines, apart from the carve-out issue, were even tighter than usual.

Farewell

Mid-March we said goodbye to our colleagues Petra, Danian, Audrey, Eddy, Eric, Harald, Laurens and Ap who all moved to Offerman. That is not a permanent farewell as we will be using the same system until the end of 2018.

At the start of 2018 the Unox factory in Oss, the Netherlands, was acquired from Unilever. This was also a carve-out as 'Oss' was carved out of the Unilever organisation. The plant is currently being integrated with our systems. The first invoices to Unilever were drawn up at the end of February.

2017 Results

During the most recent Zwanenberg weekend Greta explained the results for 2017. "Although we suffered from high raw material prices in 2017, we are perfectly healthy. Thanks to the book profit on the sale of our fresh activities our net result in 2017 was significantly higher than in previous years. As a result of the unexpectedly high meat prices however we experienced margin pressure. Margins will recover in the current financial year 2018."

"Of course, raw material prices are also important in 2018. But what can we do ourselves to improve results? We have to keep the costs down, look where efficiency improvements can be realized and keep investing in promising market segments."



Greta Gerritsen

On this last point: substantial amounts have been (and will be) invested in our plants. In Nashville (USA) the factory will be modernised. In Oss, our latest acquisition, products will be added to the range. The new paté line is the first example.

At the end of 2017 and the start of 2018 two large strategic projects were completed: the sale of the business unit 'Fresh' which will now continue as Ter Beke subsidiary Offerman and the acquisition of the Unilever factory in Oss. On balance, the turnover will remain about the same, around 400 million euros.

First quarter 2018

Meanwhile the figures of the first quarter are ready. Compared with the first quarter of last year results have improved. The volumes are in line with the forecast, in Almelo (NL) and Corby (UK) productivity has improved, as well as margins in the United States.

*Greta Gerritsen
Chief Financial Officer*

CORE DATA PRODUCTION FACILITIES ZWANEN

	PRODUCTS	BRANDS	EMPLOYEES 190
ALMELO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halal snacks (sausages, burgers, carreras) Fresh meatball snacks Fresh chicken skewers satay snacks Fresh burger snacks Luncheon meat Chopped Ham & Pork Ham preserves Liver sausage Spreadables hot fill Spreadables cold fill Liver pate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kips Lupack ZWAN Princes Linera Private labels Fancylabels 	

	PRODUCTS	BRANDS	EMPLOYEES 313
OSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frankfurters Cocktail sausages Smoked sausages Soups Sauces Meat in sauce Hamburgers Liver pate Ragout Soup balls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unox Zwan Bertolli Knorr 	

	PRODUCTS	BRANDS	EMPLOYEES 50
LICHTENVOORDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dry sausages Fuet/Mini-Fuets Snack plates Chorizo Salami Snacks, meat balls Biological smoked sausage and frankfurters Fresh satay snacks Vegetable burger Vegan burger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Huls Hoy Hulshof Private labels 	

	PRODUCTS	BRANDS	EMPLOYEES 100
RAALTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frankfurters Cocktail sausages Smoked sausages Burgers Meat ball meals Soup balls in broth Meat balls in sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lupack Kips ZWAN Westlers Private labels 	

VLAGTWEDE	PRODUCTS	BRANDS	EMPLOYEES 80
	Regional dry sausage specialties Sticks Halfies	Huls Visser Private labels	

USA

CINCINNATI	PRODUCTS	BRANDS	EMPLOYEES 90
	Ham Chopped ham and pork Luncheon meat Chunky chicken	ZWAN Dutch Colony Bristol Prem	

NASHVILLE	PRODUCTS	BRANDS	EMPLOYEES 60
	Chili Beans Stews Soups	Vietti Southgate	

UK

CORBY	PRODUCTS	BRANDS	EMPLOYEES 280
	Satay Meat balls Breakfast sausages	Puredrive Taste Original Westlers Private labels	

MINSTERLEY	PRODUCTS	BRANDS	EMPLOYEES 100
	Ox tongues Pork tongues	Rea Valley Private labels	

AMOTHERBY	PRODUCTS	BRANDS	EMPLOYEES 100
	Ready meals Protein meals Low carb meals Survival meals Puddings Pate	The Big Kitchen Asda Westlers Pot Stuff Tyne Chesswood	

ZWAN: big differences on the

Recently, Export Manager Merel Zwanikken (who unfortunately has left Zwanenberg Food Group meanwhile, ed.) made a relatively long business trip to the Caribbean. It began in French Guyana (east of Surinam) and if you're in the area than you might as well take the opportunity to visit the Windward Islands such as Martinique, Guadeloupe and Barbados. It resulted in a report on hoarding behaviour, chauvinism and 'rattling' planes.



Guadeloupe

taken up the role of spokesperson because she speaks French, also on Martinique and Guadeloupe which also have a French history."

French Guyana has 250,000 inhabitants 50,000 of which live in Cayenne. "In Cayenne half of our ZWAN products find their way to Carrefour, Super U and Géant Casino supermarkets through importer HSM. The other half goes to the same supermarket chains located in Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni. It is striking that in Cayenne especially the hot dogs from Raalte do well while in Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni in particular luncheon meat from Almelo is sold. This is not entirely illogical as relatively much is consumed on sea."

Rebellion

"The market is small but stable. Last year we benefited from large-scale strikes and barricades causing many people to hoard. The population rebels against the ailing economy, heavy criminality and the lack of health care. We're going to stimulate sales by targeted marketing."

With still wet clothes as a result of tropical rainstorms, Merel ended up on Martinique. Zwanenberg has picked a new importer last year, De Negri. "Like Guadeloupe, Martinique is a typical hotdog island. To persuade the population to consume luncheon meat as well, we will have to 'educate' them. Next year, a considerable growth in hotdogs sales

"In French Guyana ZWAN benefited from large-scale strikes"

In Cayenne, French Guyana's capital, Merel met Sonia who works for French agent Food

Sunrise. She flew to Cayenne from France a few days earlier. Merel: "Sonia has mainly



Antilles

is expected, partly as a result of old Soneal trade disappearing from the market.”

As of January 2018, De Negri has also taken over from trading company Dormoy on Guadeloupe which -eyeing for better margins- will fully focus on beverages as its core business.

Business sense

“Although De Negri must still prove itself in part, they have a lot of business sense and success with other brands. We expect that they also achieve more shelf space in retail. They have the advantage that they are represented on both islands which will result in the turnover rate of the products going up.”

“ZWAN suffers a bit from local providers and producers from ‘mother country’ France. Likewise there is an impressive selection of French cheeses and wines. The prices are also pretty French, partly because the islands are prosperous. People can rely on French social security.”

‘Little England’

After Guadeloupe Merel ended her journey with a visit to Barbados, also known as ‘Little England’. “Here we work without an agent and deliver directly to importer Massy Distribution. They have own supermarkets and the target for 2018 is to sell ZWAN also to other supermarkets.”

“Apart from the fact that we have increased (almost doubled) sales considerably, there is little to report. All in all we only sell several containers per year in these countries. So there is much to gain and in this respect we are pleased that Loraine Pijffers has enhanced our team since December last year as a back-office assistant.”



Richard Walker new Sales and Marketing Director Zwanenberg UK

Martin Burdekin has left Zwanenberg UK. He has taken up a new challenge outside of the food industry that is more conveniently located close to his home in Shropshire.



Martin Burdekin



Richard Walker

As a Sales Director Martin kept up the family tradition for 24 years as his father Richard was Managing Director of Zwanenberg UK for decades.

Fortunately, Martin still found time to prepare and assist his successor Richard Walker who has taken up the job of Director of Sales and Marketing. Richard has considerable food industry experience including both chilled foods and ready meals. Having held Sales and Marketing Director level roles with Samworth, Dawn Meats and Grampian, Richard will bring a strong market insight led approach to the role.

Richard has been working in the sales team at Corby since July 2017. Martin and Richard worked together on a detailed handover of the commercial agenda at Malton.

Furthermore Nigel Laing joined Zwanenberg UK in September 2017 as Operations Manager at the Corby plant.

Jonathan Ramsden, New Product Development Manager at Malton Foods, completed 25 years’ service which was acknowledged by Jonathan Ashmore, Managing Director Zwanenberg Food UK.



Auke-Jan Heeringa:

“Great things will happen in the future”

After a long preparation, Zwanenberg's cooperation with Unilever became reality on 1 February 2018. With it the Unox factory in Oss became the property of Zwanenberg Food Group. Auke-Jan Heeringa (52) has been plant manager in Oss since 2015.



Auke-Jan

In the extra edition of the Swan (February 2018) Auke-Jan already informed us that he was looking forward to the collaboration: “Zwanenberg is a professional and well-managed company. Zwanenberg is ambitious and that fits in well with what Oss needs for future growth. Products will be added to our portfolio. That is a positive development, because growth and ambition are the best guarantee for a successful future.”

Are there any differences between a ‘corporate’ like Unilever and a family business such as Zwanenberg Food Group?

“Sure, but the one is not necessarily better or worse than the other. At Unilever everything happens in a very structured way. In such a large group, that has tremendous benefits in terms of control, costs, methods, standardisation and marketing. On the other hand, that precision can also be a bit limiting when it comes to innovation, speed and flexibility. At Zwanenberg you can act quickly, because a smaller group of people makes the decisions.”

“But I also like to look at the similarities: both have professional people, well-managed companies, excellent systems, beautiful products. If we combine the great qualities of both companies, wonderful things will happen in the future!”

International career

Auke-Jan Heeringa studied chemistry at the University of Leiden. After his studies he spent his military service time in the German city of Seedorf. After being discharged in December 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. This historic event led the fall of the communism.

In 1990 Auke-Jan joined the Unilever Research Laboratory in Vlaardingen, the Netherlands. As a process engineer he had to improve the efficiency of the thirteen refineries Unilever possessed at the time.

After that he worked in Rotterdam as a technical brand manager for industrial products. He specialised in cooking oil and was co-responsible for an important innovation. At the time, pubs and caterers were still using solid fat. If it had to be refilled, the frying pan was often in use (at 180 degrees Celsius or 356 degrees Fahrenheit). Unilever developed a dripping system which allowed the pub owners to add the fat in a safe way.

The Heeringa family moved to Jakarta where Auke-Jan was responsible for Foods in South-East Asia. “That was a very wide range of products; cooking oil, but also ice cream, tea, coconut, coconut milk and spices. Just then an economic crisis broke out in Asia. Because some Asian currencies were worth much less, sales in US dollars were under pressure. However, we organised the supply chain in such a way that things improved and no one even had to be fired.”

The Heeringa caravan went to the United States, where Unilever had acquired the Slim-fast diet company. For the first time Auke-Jan got in touch with a family business that responded to market opportunities in an alert and flexible way.

The next stop was the Netherlands, where Auke-Jan held a procurement job. “At the time, a lot was still purchased per country. By centralising the procurement of a large number of raw materials and consumables huge cost and efficiency advantages were achieved.”

England was another... well, cup of tea. In the factory near Manchester Auke-Jan found out that the average Brit consumes twenty times as much tea as his continental European counterpart. “The most successful sales unit was a box of 240 sachets. I thought it was for wholesale purposes. But I spoke to families who said: “We consume a box like that in a single week!”

As of 2010 the family spent several years in Switzerland, where the Unilever Supply Chain Company for tea in Europe was established. From time to time Auke-Jan visited Unilever's European tea factories; in England, Poland, Brussels and Marseille.

In 2015 the family wanted to move back to the Netherlands, because two of Auke-Jan's daughters preferred to study there. Auke-Jan was offered the job of plant manager in Oss. In that capacity he was involved in the negotiations with Zwanenberg Food Group from start to finish.



ZWAN at Carrefour in the United Arab Emirates

'Zwanenberg 2.0' at Gulfood in Dubai

Earlier this year Zwanenberg participated in the international food fair Gulfood in the World Trade Center in Dubai for the second time in succession. For Klaasjan Joosten, Sales Group Manager International, it was his first visit to the fair and the striking desert town. He manned the booth initially together with Joey Vegter (ZWAN) and later also with Directo Ambient, Sjoerd van der Laan.

This year no less than 97,000 visitors from 185 countries visited Gulfood in five days. With a total of 5,000 exhibitors the food fair claims to be the largest annual food fair in the world.

Klaasjan looks back with satisfaction. "We arrived on a Friday at eleven o'clock in the evening at our hotel. A day later we built the booth and decorated it with the many samples that were delivered through the local distributor."

"As of Sunday it was already very busy pretty quickly on the booth which always has our ZWAN brand as a recognizable landmark. For the first time we also showed products from the recently acquired Unilever factory: pasta sauces, sauces and soups."

"Generally our booth visitors were very positive about these new products. In addition to new potential customers, a number of existing customers and distributors were also interested. We are planning to expand this synergy advantage in the time to come."

Private labels

"Many visitors from the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia visited our prominent ZWAN booth, although in our International Department we sell more private labels. Still it's a good choice to use and take advantage

of the appeal of ZWAN. It also happens that our colleagues from International promote ZWAN if possible."

"There was also a remarkable interest for our other brand, Niers. This brand is not available in every country. However some people ate it for instance in their childhood in Lebanon and would now also like to consume in in for instance Iraq or Kuwait. Not only have we gained many new contacts, we have also used the trade fair to to meet with our existing customers once again in the flesh."

Full notebook

"Some of them had their own booth, such as Kawasho from Japan, Century Pacific from the Philippines and Magro Brothers from Malta."

Klaasjan enjoyed the trade fair visit in Dubai. "We were not only visited by existing customers, but I also have a notebook full of potential customers. A great challenge to follow up on these prospects."

"Since several Asian countries including Japan, the Philippines, Korea and Vietnam are also in my portfolio, it was a nice way to get to know a number of Asian customers. Since the lion's share of that part of the world is delivered from Cincinnati, I will also be in



Klaasjan Joosten,
Sales Group Manager International

touch with that factory more often than is currently the case. "

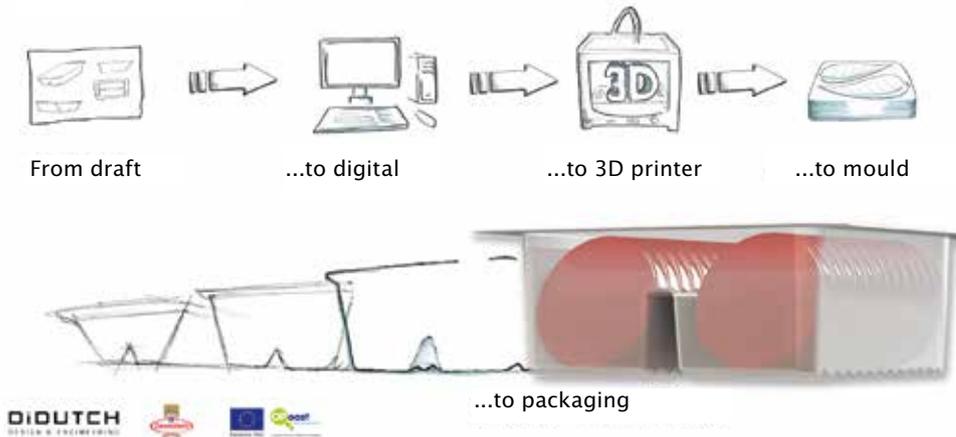
"During such a trade fair you also experience some of the city and the atmosphere in Dubai. It is built in the desert and boasts a lot of luxury and glamour. The city was constructed in a few years with stunning eye-catchers such as the tallest building in the world, the Burj Khalifa. It's great to see how many cultures live together peacefully and in an open and respectful way."

"Our products are very well received"

Breakthrough in 3D printing for packaging purposes

Once in a while a technology emerges that has nothing but benefits. The 3D printing of moulds for thermoform packaging seems to be such a technology. It is cheaper, faster and much more flexible in terms of packaging. Since it also offers a higher efficiency in used packaging material the European Union stimulates the technology with a subsidy. Zwanenberg is quick to be involved.

What is it?



Thermoform is also known as vacuum forming. In this process a plastic plate is heated until it is visco-elastic and 'formable'. Consequently the plate is sucked tightly in or around a mould. After cooling and finishing the packaging is ready.

In reality these moulds tend to be a bottleneck. "Our supplier of thermoform machines, Multivac, also supplies the corresponding moulds. They do that a lot for customers in all kinds of industries. The unfortunate result is that we often have to wait for months for a new aluminum mould", explains Product Developer Thea Smit. "Due to these long delivery times we are unable to anticipate market developments and all kinds of events sufficiently. A year or two ago together with the company DiDutch we defined a project under the name Freeform with the objective of being able to cope with our packagings more flexibly."

EU subsidy



"We submitted this project to the European Union for funding. We are now in an advanced stage, testing the prototypes in practice.

DiDutch is able to print these moulds for us in just a few hours. That way we can solve our packaging problems faster and supply beautiful prototypes to our customers."

"Moreover, with 3D printing we are much freer in determining the precise form of the packaging. Anything is possible including relief application, printing your company logotype or brand in the packaging, put the products in the tray criss cross or with a domino effect. Even creating a packaging in the form of a heart for Valentine's Day or a football is possible. The technology is still not quite fully developed and that is where we step in. We now have three projects run-

ning in our Almelo, Raalte and Lichtenvoorde sites, all in the Netherlands."

Experiment

"The project was started for delicatessen but also after the divestment of our Business Unit Fresh plenty of applications remain. These projects are slices of salami for a big private label customer, bratwurst and skewers. The presentation of the slices greatly improved and shelf space was saved. For the bratwurst we managed to eliminate redundant plastic by putting the sausage tighter in its 'jacket'. In addition, we experiment with multiple packaging."

"The display presentation of the skewers also greatly improved. So far the skewers sank to the bottom making the packaging look badly filled. In the months to come everything will be perfected including the fit of the printed mould, the ideal processing temperature with a view on the life of the moulds, and the best starting material for the packaging – issues like that."

Competitive advantage

"With this project we gain valuable experience in working with 3D printed moulds. If we increase our knowledge we can recoup the investment faster and at relatively low cost. In view of the EU subsidy provision this is the time to test multiple shapes and sizes. The moulds are now paid for and in the future we can use the lessons that we learn. So if you have a good idea, please let us know. All in all I am convinced that we are ahead of the competition, especially with the 2.0 version coming!"



New range of pulled meat products: El Mundo United

‘PLMA’s World of Private Label’ , which was held in Amsterdam at the end of May, is a trade show that is specifically aimed at producers of private labels, let’s say the ‘own brands’ of supermarket chains (or any other trading partners). Still, Zwanenberg chose to introduce a new concept under its own brand at this private label trade fair.

The new retail concept is called El Mundo United. It includes a range of ready-to-use pulled meat-products in preserves. There are six flavours in small easy-open cans of 200 grammes, based on ‘street food’ and world cuisine: Mexican salsa pulled chicken, Indonesian tjah-babi pulled pork, Indian madras pulled chicken, American BBQ pulled pork, Dutch curry pulled chicken and Japanese teriyaki pulled pork.

“This is a real innovation in the field of canned foods,” says Zwanenberg’s product manager Malou Oude Luttikhuis. “It is primarily a concept for millennials, but of course also suitable for anyone who is looking for convenience meals.”

Malou reports that a second retail concept will be added later this year. That range will not only consist of meat products, but will be a comprehensive tapas concept with a variety of products.

Why have we chosen to introduce a branded product on a PL-fair?

Malou: “The PLMA is visited by many people who search specifically for innovations. For us that was the main reason to put this concept in the spotlight. Within the preserves category the market is screaming for such refreshingly new products. We regard El Mundo United as a comprehensive concept. Our objective is to launch a range of products in line with the current market trends and thus meet the wishes and needs of the consumer. It is also possible for retailers to sell these articles under their own private label.”

Will the products first be introduced in Netherlands and then across the border?

Malou: “We focus both on the Dutch and the European market. Both markets have already shown considerable interest. The aroused interest and ideas on ‘filling the shelves’ are extremely diverse. For example, Scandinavian countries see it as complementary to TEXMEX. In Portugal they see opportunities



to rejuvenate the traditional preserves shelves with this concept. In addition, there is also interest from countries such as the United Kingdom. And in other parts of the world including Japan, South Korea and the United

States this concept has not gone unnoticed either.”

To be continued...

Zwanenberg: from meat processing company to genuine ‘Food Group’

Zwanenberg Food Group is a company with 1,600 employees who jointly achieve sales of 400 million euros. Zwanenberg Food Group is among the leading European producers and exporters of meat products.

However, Zwanenberg wants to be more than a meat processor and is therefore taking steps in the direction of, for example, soups and sauces. Buying the factory in Oss should be seen in that perspective.

Oss is the largest

Zwanenberg has ten production locations in the Netherlands (five), the United Kingdom (three) and the United States (two). The fac-

tory in Oss is the largest. The head office of Zwanenberg Food Group is in Almelo, the Netherlands.

Export to more than 100 countries

Zwanenberg exports (canned) meat (primarily under the brand name ZWAN) to over 100 countries worldwide. The brand name ZWAN (for a large number of export markets) was acquired from Unilever in 1996.



From left to right Joris Rijnsburger (Junior Account Manager Western Retail), Dilek Alkir (Product Manager/QC), Süleyman Kardas (Marketing Executive), Kanber Çetin (Operational Executive), René Hochstenbach (CEO), Jan Willem van Niekerk (Sales/Marketing), Murat Altun (Commercial Manager Ethnic Retail)

Cooperation crucial for further growth ANUR

For many years ANUR, a subsidiary of Zwanenberg Food Group that focuses on halal meats and snacks for the European market, has shown a healthy growth. Managing Director René Hochstenbach expects to be able to achieve double-digit sales growth in the years to come as well.

The growth is reflected in the number of employees. There are currently 25 people on the payroll. René is happy with the varied composition: “As far as I’m concerned, this is the perfect symbiosis: people learn from each other’s cultures, habits and customs. That promotes mutual respect and understanding. Together we’re strong!”

Growing market

ANUR benefits from the current favourable markets. René explains: “The number of Muslims that live and work in Europe is growing and will increase in the coming decades. This implies a growing market for halal products. In addition, the younger generations are higher educated and visit Western supermarkets more often. That development plays into our hands as we are excellently represented with our products in the big supermarket chains. These offer an increasingly more varied range of halal products. In the meantime we are not losing our focus on the ethnic market which will not stand still either.”

All this leads to ANUR foreseeing a new growth spurt in the direction of 20 million euro sales, says René. “Exports to neighbouring countries will increase. We are working on an attractive food service concept. Possibly we will be adding other products to our range. We have for instance added a fresh products concept with HPP. With this High Pressure Processing technology products retain their freshness

longer. Distribution in the Western as well as the ethnic retail will also be expanded.”

Working steadily on market positioning is effective for ANUR. “Our market position is getting stronger, as we work on our products, concepts and marketing in a very serious way. Serious market players invite us ever more frequently.”

Authenticity and modern entrepreneurship

According to René authenticity, modern entrepreneurship and cooperation are critical to future success. “We should realise that with our halal products we are – so to speak – a guest in the world of Muslims. We should therefore have a high standard of authenticity. Our Muslim colleagues, who they are and what they exhale, are crucial. They know the Islamic culture, habits and developments from within.”

“Furthermore the market is changing quickly. The organisation that we need should seamlessly match with our high requirements. We have to be an even more modern company with modern structures. This applies both to the ethnic market (concentration of purchasing power and growing professionalism) as for the Western retail and food service. We will make more steps in these areas in the near future. Together as a team we’re strong!”