Proud despite hard times!

Only 6 weeks ago - which feels like an eternity - it became clear what was in store for us regarding measures in case of Coronavirus. The first notifications came from our Italian colleagues about quarantines, possible lockdown, hundreds of infected, and the first people who died from this virus. Then it escalated quickly. We also had to prepare ourselves, which risks and impact this pandemic would have for our companies in the other European countries, where we operate. We involved our customers to know their vision for the coming months. Also new forecasts have been made and we did some research into reducing work time. Various scenarios passed. Precautions have been taken; cars from the operational staff have all been supplied with soap and water, extra cleaning has been scheduled, all the office personnel were asked to work from home. We try to follow one clear policy as hard as we can. Of course, with specific exceptions in each Country.

The fact is that this situation is showing how strong our organisation is: there is more cooperation than ever on all fronts, we have daily team meetings, where we keep each other informed about developments by video conference. HR, QHSE, Sales and Operations have never worked that close and intensively before. Everyone has a lot of creativity and is motivated to answer to all our customers issues. The most important thing is we remain self-motivated.

This situation reminds me of a Dutch quote: “alone you go faster, together you come further." This sentence certainly applies to us. We really do this together!

We have divisions that are struggling, so we are blessed that we also work in branches that continue to run their business. Logistic never stands still, pests cannot be held back by coronavirus and the demand for our services has never been higher in the food industry. New services, such as disinfection, have been developed and time has been dedicated to knowledge transfer. Multidisciplinary training of our colleagues has always been a high priority on our agenda, but due to constant growth and tight labour markets, this has been difficult to achieve. Nowadays, colleagues between the different divisions are exchanged more than ever before.

It’s often said in the news: there is a world before coronavirus and a world after it, and it will never be like before. I must tell you honestly that I hope so, because this extraordinary situation brought significant changes. I am proud, extremely proud of our colleagues, our partners (customers and suppliers). We all stand together, with patience and understanding. This is inspiring and give us the drive to go for it every day.

Take care, enjoy the little things and try to stay healthy!

Joren Nieuwenhuizen

CEO