

Fruitful BUSINESS

Port International can call on almost 150 years of experience in the fruit game – Tiete Port laid the cornerstone for the business back in 1875 when he set up the T.Port company, a small fruit seller in Hamburg. Back then, he could not have imagined how big the venture would become; it's now one of the leading fruit and vegetable suppliers in Europe, praised for unrivalled produce, smooth delivery, and sustainable values.

MIKE PORT

Managing Director @ Port International





Keeping it in the family: Karlsson (L) and Mike

Port International is all about family. Tiete's son Theo took over the business in 1894 and branched out into tropical fruit. This proved a huge hit in Europe as many people had never seen, yet alone tasted, most of the exotic delights the company imported. Then, in 1912, T.Port started supplying bananas from Colombia in refrigerated steam vessels owned by a joint venture between Hapag-Lloyd and Port – this in turn led to the purchase of a fleet of vehicles as demand almost outstripped supply. Business was booming for the Port family but then two world wars followed, stalling operations. Things fired up again in the 1950s as the third generation, John Port, revitalised the banana business. Over the following years, it was his son Hajo Port who continued and expanded trade. He set several milestones such as introducing the Golden B brand in Europe, establishing ties with international partners, and developing an import company in the Netherlands.

New contacts were forged with suppliers in countries including Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Cuba, Mexico, Colombia, Mozambique, South Africa, and New Zealand. Operations became truly global.

Just before the turn of the millennium, Mike Port – Tiete's great-great grandson – reorganised the entire business to make sure it

had the necessary import licenses for bananas, while also establishing a performance-related ethos. Port International, together with its operating daughters Port International Bananas GmbH, Port International Fruit GmbH, and Port International Organics GmbH, were born and there was no looking back.

Father to son

"I'm the fifth generation to work for the family-run business, my son Karlsson is the sixth generation – the plan is for him to take over in a couple of years because I'm now 60," Mike says. "I joined the company in 1994 and straight away I started working with the Dutch NGO Solidaridad to evaluate the possibility of introducing bananas as a Fairtrade product, which Port International managed to do in 1997. We initially supplied these bananas to Switzerland and Germany before exporting to the rest of Europe – Port International is a pioneer in this respect. The ideals and standards of the Fairtrade system



We move more than 20 million cartons of fruit and vegetables at competitive prices every year

were a perfect fit for our family-run group – we have cultivated long-term and cooperative trade relations with our suppliers and have always shown social commitment in disadvantaged regions. In 2012, we were awarded the Fairtrade Award and everyone at the company is incredibly proud."

Port International has also led the way when it comes to organic bananas, Mike adds: "In 2000, we started supplying Europe, despite the fact many people told us going organic was impossible because of the tropical climate in South America, but it's all about using the right land. Yes, we suffered some crop losses in the first couple of years, but we learned from our mistakes and today it's working very well. It's so much better for the environment and our health."

Improving communities

Another daughter company was set up in 2010, Port International European Sourcing GmbH, enlarging the product portfolio with fruit and vegetables from the Continent and Mediterranean, forging a successful partnership with managing partners Philippe Peiró

“We implement our own aid projects and have built schools and orphanages”

and André Lüling. Lately they also became managing directors of the daughter Port International Fruit GmbH, which focuses on sourcing products from overseas.

Throughout this impressive growth, Port International's management has never once neglected its commitment to social and environmental issues.

"We regularly implement our own aid projects and support existing programmes all over the world," Mike explains. "Some of our highlights have been the construction

of a kindergarten in Colombia, the support of a home for mentally disabled people in Ecuador together with one of our German banana customers, the support of SOS Children's Villages with the construction of six new orphanages, and the completion of a provisionally built kindergarten in Peru. We also face the task of reducing our impact on the environment and climate on a daily basis. We have optimised our logistics processes by introducing climate-friendly routes and delivering products directly from the field to the customers."

Climate-neutral

In 2017, Port International, became climate-neutral as a company and added climate-neutral strawberries to its portfolio. Only two years later the company offered these strawberries under BE CLIMATE – the first brand for climate-neutral fruits and vegetables. The brand assortment also includes bananas, blueberries, leaf clementines, and green asparagus. Climate-neutral means that all unavoidable CO₂ emissions caused during the →



SUSTAINABLE BANANAS FROM COLOMBIA TO EUROPE

The company was founded by Diogenes Echeverri Arias and Rosalba Zapata Cardona in 1963. We are now celebrating 58 years generating a living wage for more than 500 people and families, and we are one of the most respected banana-producing companies in Colombia.

As the founder of both Uniban – the first international banana marketing business in Colombia – and Augura, the strongest association of banana growers in Latin America, Bananeras de Urabá SAS is a pioneer.

We were the first certified grower in Colombia by Banana Fairtrade, Global Gap, and Rainforest, while making sure social responsibility and sustainable practices to protect the environment are top priorities. Working to increase the social development of our employees, their families, and the communities they live in is also a key part of the business. Bananeras de Urabá SAS is a great example of how to make our world greener and preserve natural resources for future generations.



“As long as God allows us to grow bananas, we will be cultivating dreams for many people”

Rosalba Zapata Cardona

Bananeras de Urabá SAS is a Colombian producer and exporter of high-quality bananas. We export to Europe and take pride in ensuring excellent working conditions for our employees and promoting social projects. By doing this, we create opportunities and transform lives through growing bananas.



cultivation, packing, and logistics process have been calculated, reduced where possible, and compensated in advance with the help of certified climate protection projects. More than 13 million kg of CO₂ have been compensated so far with BE CLIMATE products – for comparison, this is the equivalent of about 14 million wash cycles.

Leading the way

The Belgian supermarket Delhaize was the first to place BE CLIMATE bananas on its shelves in January 2020. “We are happy to continue our ten-year partnership with Delhaize with climate-neutral bananas now,” says Mike. “We started the weekly supply of climate-neutral organic bananas to specialised organic dealers in Germany at the

A BETTER, MORE CONSCIOUS BRAND

• BE CLIMATE is the climate-neutral brand by Port International GmbH and was launched in October 2019. It stands for climate-neutrality, sustainable production, selected producers, and excellent product quality.

“The pandemic challenged not only us, but the whole world. It made us move a big step forward in terms of modernisation and digitalisation. Online business is booming and we see high potential for our branch, too. Due to our virtues such as passion for fruit trading, flexibility, and our guiding principle ‘the client is king’ we keep working hard and are looking positively into the future,” says Mike.

same time. Three more European countries have received deliveries, too. Further distribution channels and countries are being planned.”

“BE CLIMATE offers our clients and the consumers in all of Europe an uncomplicated method of actively supporting climate protection,” adds Karlsson. [🔗](#)



QUALITY, RESPECT, FAMILY

We are a fourth-generation family-owned company dedicated to the production and export of bananas from Ecuador.

Ginafruit was founded in 2004 and started exporting in 2011; today it is one of Ecuador’s top 10 banana exporters, shipping between 140,000-180,000 per week around the globe.

We own 650 hectares of banana plantations and have our own logistics/trucking company, plus our own quality team with 80 personnel.

Ginafruit has 700+ employees and in 2019 our group’s (Ginafruit S.A + subsidiary companies) annual revenue hit \$100+ million, making us one of the top 500 biggest companies in Ecuador, ranked 236th in 2019.

We are proud to say that 60% of our operating team is composed of women.

We are also proud to say that one of our most treasured assets is the knowledge of the banana business passed through our family.

Hugo Castro, GM of Ginafruit

“Port has been a key customer for us. Our mutual growth has been based on trust and sustainable produce, and also in investing in improvements and new ideas each year. We are lucky enough to have a business partner who serves as a leading expert in the banana business, combining their experience with our youth and energy – we’re a great match.”

