

# Eliminating waste with grown-to-measure vegetables

The enjoyment of good food is an all-round sensory experience. Anyone involved in food preparation knows that any dish presented in a restaurant, café or even a fast-food outlet must not only be a treat for the taste buds. It must also be visually appealing to heighten the sense of temptation. This means using ingredients that are fresh and tasty, while looking good too. Legumesure BVBA, based in Belgium, specializes in tomatoes which are effectively grown to measure to meet the individual requirements of the company's broad client base.



"My father and I already sold tomatoes commercially through our company A&D Naenen, and the idea for Legumesure came from a meeting we had with a firm that sells sliced tomatoes to a hamburger chain and other restaurants," explains Owner and Managing Director Danny Naenen. "In this sector it is important that the size and shape of the tomato slices are uniform, which results in a lot of waste material during the slicing process. We discussed with them what type of tomatoes would help them optimize their processes. Tomatoes for hamburgers, for

example, need to be crisp and not fall apart when sliced. Ideally each tomato should provide five perfectly sized slices. That way, yield and costs are constant, and waste is reduced. We then started growing tomatoes which meet those requirements, and five years ago, Legumesure was born."

Legumesure – the name means 'grown to measure' from the French 'légumes-mesure' – supplies a broad range of different clients, each with individual requirements in terms of the size, shape and qualities of the tomatoes they

buy. "We try to convince our clients to give us sufficient information about their internal processes so that we can produce vegetables that help them optimize those processes and reduce waste. Obviously this is sensitive information, which we treat as highly confidential," adds Mr. Naenen. Situated in Boechout, around 95% of the produce Legumesure sells is grown either in A&D Naenen's 5 ha of greenhouses or the 2.5 ha facility owned by his cousin Kurt Naenen. Only in peak times do they depend on other, carefully selected growers. This means that the company

is extremely reliable in terms of the quality and characteristics of its tomatoes, as well as its delivery service. [...]

"Although we are rooted in the business of growing tomatoes, we are a trading company and see ourselves as a service provider with the emphasis on service," underlines the Managing Director. All the company's grown-to-measure tomatoes are supplied via the auction process in accordance with Belgian regulations. Legumesure serves a broad sector of the food industry, including slicers, catering companies and



Legumesure supplies 'grown to measure' tomatoes which enable clients to optimize their processes and reduce waste to a minimum, and also offer end consumers a feast for the eyes



**A&D Naenen grows its tomatoes in 5 ha of greenhouses in Boechout, near Antwerp**



**Legumesure supplies up to 1,250 t of tomatoes each year for food processors**

firms which provide toppings for pizzas and snacks. Its produce is perfect for any situation where a fixed size and measured amount of vegetables are required. “We provide a very interesting niche service, helping our clients to standardize their processes so they have no waste, which enables them to calculate their costs using fixed prices for raw materials,” says Mr. Naenen. “Our produce is not the cheapest, but it is the most efficient, and we make our clients’ work easier and more cost

effective. Our clients do not need special varieties of tomato. They simply demand a constant supply of a single product. 30% of our work is in the greenhouse. 70% is in the added-value service we provide by sorting the produce and delivering the perfect tomatoes, exactly when they are required.” The service that Legumesure provides is indeed unique. “I am not aware of any other players in the market who provide a service such as ours,” points out Mr. Naenen. Building on its success over the

past five years with uniform-sized tomatoes, the company is now looking to expand its activities to include other vegetables, such as eggplants, cucumbers and bell peppers – any vegetables in fact that can be grown in a greenhouse. “I have 30 years of experience in growing vegetables in greenhouses. That is a hugely important asset,” Mr. Naenen continues.

The young company has clearly identified a niche in the market

which offers lots of potential for future growth. However, that is not the all-important measure of success for Mr. Naenen. “We do not want to expand purely for the sake of growing,” he said. “We want to serve the clients that we are able to serve well, those who can optimize their business through what we do. If we can’t provide added value to someone’s business, then our product would probably be more expensive than he can find elsewhere.” Steady, organic growth in the right direction is key for the success of Legumesure. “Ten years ago, this niche market did not exist. We want to continue to provide top-quality, unique service. We believe that reliability is a key factor, both in the product itself and in our ability to supply our produce on time to tight delivery schedules. We pride ourselves on our ability to optimize our clients’ activities and will continue to build our reputation as a service provider,” Mr. Naenen concludes. █

**The company carefully selects varieties of tomatoes that meet the individual requirements of its food preparation sector clients**

 GROWN TO MEASURE  
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