

**Press release**  
**from Germany's Non-alcoholic Drinks Industry Federation**  
**(Vereinigung Alkoholfreie Getränke-Industrie e.V., AFG-Vereinigung)**  
**from 10 November 2020, for the (virtual) BrauBeviale**

**Non-alcoholic beverages: Coronavirus is testing the sector**

Diversity of products and packaging  
ensures plenty of choice and high quality supply

**Coronavirus: Companies within the non-alcoholic beverage sector are taking up the challenge**

The coronavirus pandemic is posing fundamental challenges for the non-alcoholic beverage sector. The specific (economic) impact on companies is widely varied. However, the main source of concern for the sector, which consists predominantly of small and mid-sized producers, is the continued difficult situation for restaurants, hotels, and the event industry. Retail sales can only offset a portion of the revenue lost as a result of the extremely unfavourable developments in and even the complete loss of some of these sales channels.

It's also important to note that, as an integral part of the food industry and critical infrastructure, the companies in the sector were able to ensure the security of supply this past spring, despite the very challenging circumstances.

That experience demonstrated the importance of functioning supply chains – both within the European Union and worldwide. Thus, many companies have since adjusted their processes and frameworks – and the industry will continue to do everything in its power to ensure the supply of quality products.

**Non-alcoholic beverages: Effective deposit systems are a model worldwide**

When it comes to beverage packaging, the associations advocate a fact-based discussion that reflects the actual situation in Germany. Here, the established deposit systems for refillable and single-use containers form a highly effective infrastructure within the industry. These systems are essential to the reuse of returnables and provide exemplary material cycles that make high-quality recycling possible.

The fact is, almost all beverage containers that carry a deposit in Germany are returned. Therefore, these containers are not a relevant factor for the pollution of the environment or the seas. A white paper issued in collaboration with other major business and industry groups entitled "Ensuring diversity of packaging and effective deposit systems for non-alcoholic beverages in Germany" ("Vielfalt von Verpackungen und funktionierende Pfandsysteme bei alkoholfreien Getränken in Deutschland sicherstellen"), which is available from the groups' respective websites, affirms this stance.

## **Diversity and innovation: Nutritional policy based on facts, not preconceptions**

Non-alcoholic beverages represent a diverse range of products that includes mineral and curative waters, fruit juices and nectars, and soft drinks. Consumers can choose from a rich and varied selection that includes a variety of flavours as well as low- and no-calorie products. The category is especially innovative. Referencing this diversity, which includes sugar-free and low-calorie alternatives, Germany's Non-alcoholic Drinks Industry Federation endorses a moderate nutritional policy in Europe and Germany that is based on facts, not ideology.

## **Germany remains world fruit juice champion – and sees growth amid difficult times**

Germany has posted the highest per-capita consumption of fruit juices and nectars worldwide since 1985. In 2019, that figure was 30.5 litres. Germany is the largest market for fruit juices within the EU and the second-largest worldwide after the United States. Around one-third of the fruit juice sold within the EU is purchased in Germany. Roughly half (350) of the EU's 750 fruit juice producers are located in Germany.

Sales of fruit-containing beverages in the first 9 months of this year rose 10.6%. Fruit juices benefited the most from this trend, recording 13.8% growth after the first three quarters. That is primarily due to increased sales of citrus juices containing Vitamin C, multivitamin juices, and higher-quality direct juices. It is clear that consumer appreciation of fruit juice as a healthful product has increased. Consumption of nectars also increased 5.6%. As a whole, the fruit-containing beverages sector experienced strong growth for the first time in 17 years.

## **Consumers continue to appreciate mineral water and curative water**

At 10.9 billion litres, sales of natural mineral water and curative water in 2019 were down compared to 2018's record-setting sales (11.5 billion litres), which had been driven largely by an unusually hot summer. That is a decrease of 5.0 percent. However, with per-capita consumption at 139.7 litres, natural mineral water and curative water are still among the most popular non-alcoholic beverages. Consumers still appreciate the benefits of high-quality natural mineral water, which they know they can trust to be consistently safe and stringently monitored.

The market share of classic sparkling mineral water was 35.8 percent in 2019. Medium sparkling mineral water held 43.4 percent. Meanwhile, still mineral water accounted for 18.5 percent of the market. At 0.7 percent, the market share of curative water in 2019 was unchanged from the previous year. Sales of flavoured mineral water made up the remaining market share of 1.6 percent.

Total sales in the sector, which includes mineral water, curative water, and soft drinks made using mineral spring water, came to 14.2 billion litres in 2019.

## **Reduced-calorie soft drinks in higher demand**

Among soft drinks, the trend toward reduced- or zero-calorie beverages continued in 2019. After the exceptionally hot summer of 2018, per capita consumption of soft drinks in 2019 came to 121.4 litres (2018: 123.6 litres), which down by 2.2 litres or 1.7 percent.

However, "light" versions of colas, cola-based drinks, and sodas were up considerably year-on-year, reflecting consumers' desire for products with lower or even no calories. At the same time, it also demonstrates the sector's efforts to significantly reduce the calorie content of their products.

According to data from Germany's Federal Statistical Office, production of soft drinks in 2019 totalled 10.6 billion litres, which was down 2.9 percent from the previous year.

**Background:**

In 1989, the Association of the German Fruit Juice Industry (Verband der deutschen Fruchtsaft-Industrie e.V. – VdF), the German Mineral Water Trade Association (Verband Deutscher Mineralbrunnen e.V. – VDM), and the Association of the German Non-Alcoholic Beverage Industry (Wirtschaftsvereinigung Alkoholfreie Getränke e.V. – wafg) established the Non-alcoholic Drinks Industry Federation (Vereinigung Alkoholfreie Getränke-Industrie e.V. (AFG-Vereinigung) as a common platform for coordinating on issues that affect producers across the non-alcoholic beverage sector. Key aspects of the collaboration are industry news and information, market statistics, environmental and packaging matters, food law, and consumer policy.

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