

Study of food loss

in the fruits and vegetables sector



Performed by **Cabinet Gressard** in partnership with experts from **INRA (2015)**

For the first time in France, the study, commissioned by Interfel, presents an estimate of the loss of fruits and vegetables in the fresh fruit and vegetables sector, from production (pre-harvest stage) to the point of sale.

Findings and issues



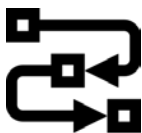
- Fruits and vegetables are often associated in the media with food loss and waste
- There are very few figures on fruits and vegetables
- A first challenge was the collection of reliable and usable data in France

Objectives



- Assessing losses in the whole fruit and vegetables sector
- Identify the causes and destinations of the losses
- Specify measures to reduce losses

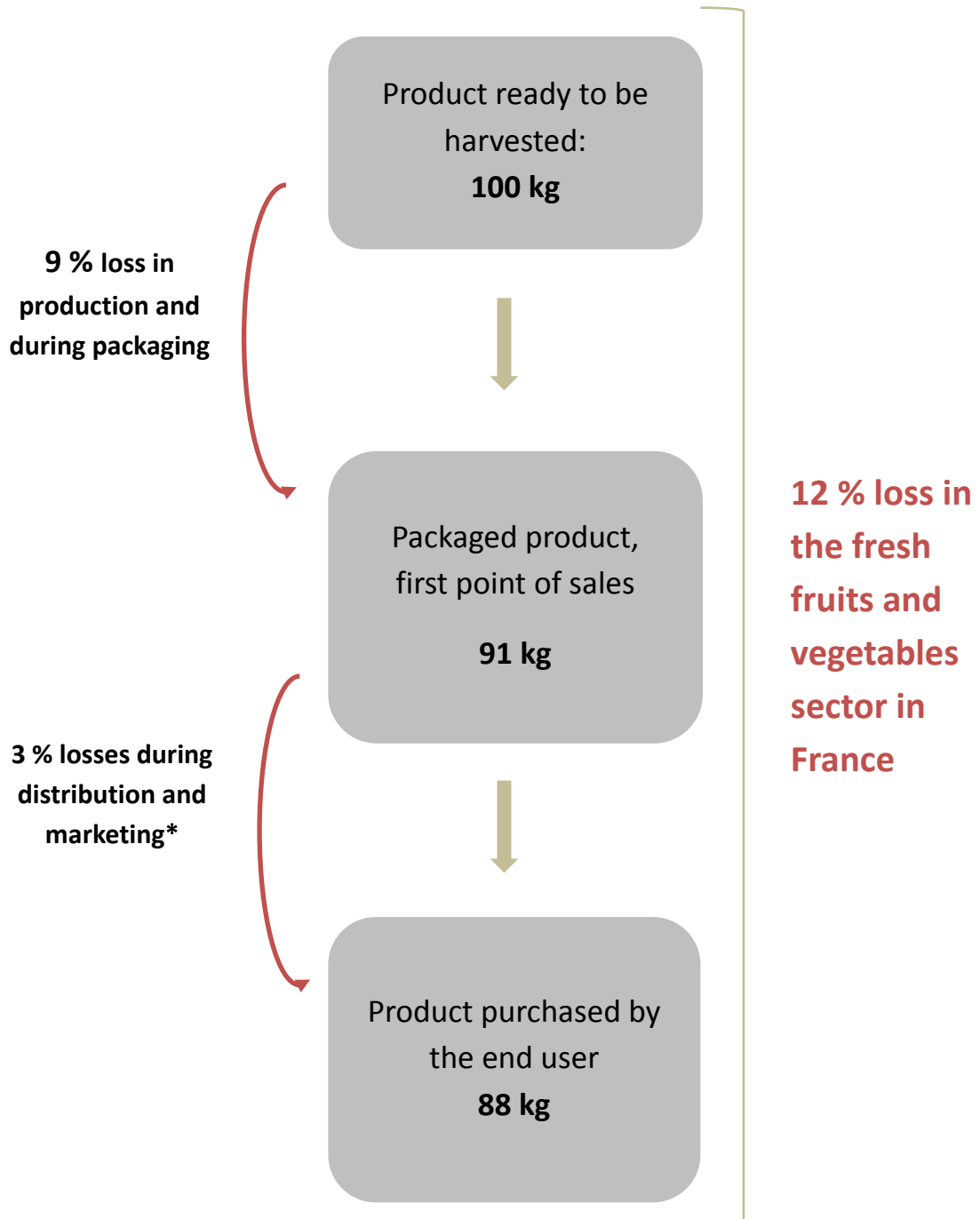
Method



- Literature review followed by interviews with 110 enterprises in the sector, at every stage (production, shipping, wholesale, supermarkets and hypermarkets, and retail), quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data, and putting the results into perspective.
- Definition from the European project **FUSIONS**: loss is considered any product which “is removed from the food supply chain” from the time the product is “ready to be harvested”. Products sent to food donation or as animal feed are not considered losses.
- Scope: fresh fruits and vegetables, mainland France, from production to retail.

This study, commissioned by Interfel, benefited from co-financing from FranceAgrimer and partnerships with UNILET and ANICC.

Estimated losses in the French fruits and vegetables sector



*An equivalent volume is intended for **food donation**. Integrated into the food chain, the amount of food that goes into food donation is not considered loss.

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Main causes of losses

- At each stage of the chain, losses in fruits and vegetables are largely due to the **perishable nature** of fresh fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are fragile products, their life span is short and they require careful handling. Their degradation takes place in the production and all stages of marketing.
- The production losses are also related to **the impacts of weather** and **biological hazards** (pests = insects, bacteria...).
- Finally, the **economic** parameters (production costs, market prices, and periods of overproduction) are also likely to generate losses.

Comparison with other data sources

- Data concerning losses were published and disseminated in recent years, but the scope of these studies never specifically concerned the **fresh fruits and vegetables sector in France**.
- Often the disseminated data was extrapolated from the sectors studied in other countries during different years. That methodology was notably chosen in the **FAO report** (*FAO (2011) Global Food Losses and Food Waste - extent, causes and prevention. Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*) where the extrapolation concerned large geographical areas while merging the fresh and processed fruits and vegetables sectors.

To remember!

- The fruits and vegetables sector strives to **reduce food losses** from production to retail (12% of losses in the fruits and vegetables sector in France).
- For example, companies **donate food** at all stages of the chain.
- It's only as a last resort that fruit and vegetables unfit for consumption are used for other processes such as anaerobic digestion.