

Guido Franco Clamer

## Interview with Harry Kloppenburg president of Fides

**O**n the occasion of the visit made to Fides during the Flower Trials in June, we met Mr. Harry Kloppenburg, to whom we put some questions on the actual and future situation of Fides, particularly in relation to our market, given that there is in course an expansion of their presence in Italy.



**Why do you regard the Italian market important?**

In the first place, it is a market that represents 60 million consumers, furthermore we have the availability of two companies that are highly esteemed and reliable, Franz Veit and Podere Luen, that allow the coverage of the entire national territory.



***Once upon a time Fides was known exclusively as a grower of Chrysanthemums with a production of around one billion cuttings, and now? We are still the largest producer of Chrysanthemum cuttings in the world.***

***Nonetheless, with respect to previous years, it seems that the space reserved for Chrysanthemums in this Trial, is reduced in favour of other plants. Is this true?***

The production of Chrysanthemums as a cut flower is constantly increasing, but the assortment of pot plants and annuals is in great expansion and calls for greater visibility.

***Can we now talk about the present and future of Fides?***

Fides is part of the Agribio Group Holding B.V, (Agribio) in which belong: Fides, Barbaret &



Blanc, Southern Glasshouse Produce in England, Agribio Japan, Agribio China, and for potato seed: Germicopa in France e Japan Potato in Japan.

Fides forms part of the new Dutch group Agribio in which I am also president, with the duty of promoting and developing exclusively the floricultural activities of the group.

***Can you specify the activities of Fides?***

Fides has two major lines of production: cut-flowers and pot plants and/o annuals and the two sectors have an equal economic importance in terms of turnover. Our strategy, whether toward the growers or final consumers, is to focus on "brands", meaning product groups and not single varieties: for example Calandiva, Grands Idols, Margarita, containing respectively the double-flowered Kalanchoe, Geraniums (Pelargonium), Pot Chrysanthemums.

***Why was this strategy chosen?***

In order to trasmit a strong and distinct image, investing our best skills on groups of products rather than single varieties for which our collaborators can better intercede.

***We understand that Agribio forms part of the portfoglio of the large financial group "H2":***



***does this not create problems?***

Absolutely not, because every large industrial group has in any case the need for a bank that does not interfere with its direction. Agribio employs more than two thousand employees, it has breeding and production in a great many countries and together with sales it is present in 57 countries. For us it is an opportunity and not a disadvantage to belong to a large financial group. Since I am president both of Fides and Agribio, and also shareholder in "H2", a financial holding

in the medium-long term, this is a further guarantee for continuity.

***Returning to the management of your Company's presence in Italy, today you have two distributors, do you think to continue in this way?***

Certainly, because we are satisfied at having found the companies Franz Veit and Podere Luen, two distributors that are serious, dependable and well positioned in the market, that share our philosophy



of focusing on product "brands" and they are capable of transmitting our ideas and expertise to the Italian market.

It is only right to specify that the collaboration with the companies Franz Veit and Podere Luen is limited to annual pot plants, excluding cut-flower Chrysanthemums and pot Kalanchoe for which we have other partners and distributors, for example Straathof Plants.

I am personally very happy to dedicate my involvement and my passion to this undertaking for the forthcoming years, also in Italy.

*We thank the president of Fides for allowing the interview that confirmed for us the wish to remain for a long time in the Italian market with the two actual companies, and we wish them the best of success.*

