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"Think Global but Act Local" (René Dubos)

Did retailers understand anything? Apparently not

Two years of the COVID pandemic, huge logistical problems with the blockage of the Suez Canal, the hacking of the Maersk shipping company and the South African Transnet system, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the instability of the energy market with an impressive increase in fuel prices, social conflicts in many countries of the Southern Hemisphere leading to strikes, riots, and almost causing South Africa to enter the category of failed states. In short: a scenario of instability and insecurity that makes it advisable to go from the global to the local. After the globalization fever of the last two decades, **the smart thing to do now, what the gurus and big consultants are advising, is to shorten supply chains to make them more local.**

But no... in April and May, European supermarkets are still betting on importing lemons from the Southern Hemisphere as soon as possible instead of promoting the supply of European lemons, local and with maximum guarantees. They may not be the most beautiful, but they are from here and that should be more than enough.

It is the world upside down. Can you explain it to me?



May 12 and 15: two important dates

Celebrating certain dates is always a reason to be happy, and this week we do it twice: May 15 is the day of St. Isidore, the patron saint of farmers, and May 12 is the International Plant Health Day declared by FAO.

Let's go with St. Isidore, who lived in the 12th century and was a Spanish peasant known for his piety towards the poor and animals and is the Catholic patron saint of farmers. His real name was Isidro de Merlo y Quintana. He is a saint to whom his devotees traditionally pray for good harvests, good weather, good market conditions and profitable prices for farmers and ranchers. I am afraid that **praying to San Isidro is not the solution to guarantee profitability for all the links in the supply chain, or at least it will not be enough.** The heavenly will need the support of the earthly and the commitment of retailers, consumers and legislators.

And on May 12 we celebrated **International Plant Health Day. Both our health and the health of our planet depend on plants.** Plants make up 80% of the food we eat and provide 98% of the oxygen we breathe, yet they are under threat as up to 40% of food crops are lost each year due to plant pests and diseases.

In a global market it is also vital to remember that it is essential to take extreme measures to control the import of products from third countries to prevent the entry of pests that fortunately are not present in the farms of lemons and grapefruits in Spain (Black Spot, Canker, Scab, Greening, False Moth ...). It is not a commercial defense mechanism, it is our obligation and our responsibility to society, farmers and the environment. Once a new pest is introduced in Europe, it is never eradicated, which means increased costs and loss of productivity. That is why being aware of the importance of plant health is so relevant. To protect the health of lemon and grapefruit trees... is to protect life.

