SUSTAINABILITY IS IMPORTANT TO US!
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OUR THINKING IS DRIVEN BY SUSTAINABILITY
Don Limón strives to improve the world of fruit and vegetable production globally in a sustainable way. It impacts all social, economic and environmental factors in most optimal way.

Don Limón is a family owned company in the 3rd generation, and as such, we always look long term and are most directly aware of our direct impact to the next generations.

We consider ourselves a Learning Company. With continuously improvement in mind, we set high standards for ourselves, to fully understanding every step and detail in the supply chain and enhancing the value of our supply network. Our global and integral view of the supply chain gives us an opportunity to influence and change it for the betterment of all stakeholders.

My grandfather founded this business by sourcing produce, shipped them from A to B and sold them. Nowadays, we design and organize the value chain network right from the origin in the southern hemisphere to the demand-driven markets in the northern hemisphere. We are globally connecting our customers from North America, Europe, Middle East and Far East with the producers in Latin America, Asia (China, India, etc.), Africa, and Southern Europe.

The greatest strength of our strategy is the international process- and quality-management-system which we integrated in the supply-side.

This strategy is based on a multicultural approach, which is ingrained in the Don Limón´s DNA.

Our daily work is to develop together with our producers, adopt to their cultural values, in order to bring out the best features for our products and their farms. The ingredients of our success are specific knowledge about agricultural production, global logistics, global marketing, and managing international CSR activities around water and energy solutions, driven by an international team which represents our producer countries and cultures. This combination is key for our organization’s great achievements.

An open, authentic and cooperative communication is the hallmark of our business with suppliers, customers and partners to realize and move a sustainable worldwide network in a complex and fast-moving business. Please feel free to connect with us if you would like to share your ideas and thoughts.

Andreas Schindler
By 2050, the world population will grow to 9 billion people (UNO 2017). In the developing and emerging countries, the population will grow at a higher rate, therefore the number of smallholder farms will increase disproportionately in agriculture. In their countries, the smallholder farmers make the greatest contribution to the local economy by organizing the field and packhouse processes in accordance with international food standards. The connection to international export markets opens up access to higher incomes to increase the living standards for a large proportion of the agricultural population who provide us with fresh fruit and vegetables every day.

Don Limón’s MISSION STATEMENT

Small-scale family farms in the center

Don Limón provides process and quality management for farmers to improve their lives. With the holistic view of the supply chain, taking into account best practices in the field and packing house processes, as well as energy and water management, we make a sustainable contribution to the food industry.

Throughout our supply chain network, we develop market access, strengthen long-term supplier relationships and support smallholder farmers in improving their income situation.

Make rural areas attractive and sustainable with partner countries

At the center of the business model of Don Limón are smallholder farms. They form the basis for sustainable economic growth in agriculture in many countries. Women in agriculture play a prominent role in contributing to the family income. Don Limón supports the education of women in agricultural occupations to change the one-sided dependence on men.

Promote more professional and sustainable agriculture

The key to food security lies in the rural areas of the emerging and developing countries. With our involvement in the widely diversified small-scale production sites, we are developing more and better jobs in the partner countries, combined with dependable agricultural production.

Adapt agriculture to the effects of climate change

Don Limón combines the cultures of smallholders with the established standards of industrialized countries in training and quality management programs. This creates a sustainable added value in the work processes in the field and in the packing houses.

Strengthen innovations in the agri-food sector

In agriculture, the natural resources of water, soil and biodiversity must be preserved. With the integration of environmental management, especially energy and water management, Don Limón promotes a conscious approach to nature, starting with the smallholder structures to the customer.

We consider the entire food chain – from the field, to the processing then to the consumer. Through research projects in close collaboration with universities, we create new production processes and reduce the amount of food that is lost through improper harvesting, poor storage or inefficient transportation.
The world pursues the Sustainable Development Goals. Don Limón takes part in this transformation.

Don Limón is involved in agriculture production in emerging and developing countries along with governments, funding agencies, associations, universities and chambers of agriculture for a comprehensive development and invigorating entrepreneurship. In the rural regions, this creates economically sustainable living conditions for smallholder farmers and an ecologically sustainable use of the land, water and energy.

"Just the increase of productivity within small family farms reduce level of poverty. Involving women workers reduce gender disparities, decreasing poverty rates and improving their wellbeing."

Professor Sukhpal Singh
Centre for Management in Agriculture Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India
We measure the increasing prosperity of smallholder farmers with the share of export volume compared to the production volume per hectare.

Don Limón’s international training and quality management program is driven by the exchange of best practices and a high degree of integration between the different cultures of the different countries that are united in the production chain.

The training and quality management program is holistically set up and connects all stakeholders in the supply chain. In the country of origin, from the seed to the final packaged goods ready-for-export, from the field worker to the packing house employee to the logistics staff. In the sales market to the business customer and indirectly to the final consumer.
DeveloPPP.de PROJECT FOR SMALL-SCALE FARMERS OF GRAPES IN INDIA
**2 ½ years of develoPPP.de in India**

India ranks 2nd in the world production of fruits and vegetables, just behind China. The volume of India grapes production takes 8th position in the world, but the export share is only around 2 percent as of 2015. So, there is a high potential to work with Indian farmers on international export requirements. Through our training and access to necessary technical and financial information, we fulfill the main concerns of our Indian partners.

In cooperation with German Federal Ministry of Economic and Development (BMZ) for a develoPPP.de, we set up the program in India. Individual meetings every week and group training on a quarterly basis with farmers have been conducted to work on solutions in fields. Our cross-country knowledge transfer and network communication give high impact on quality control and process improvements in the field and in the packinghouse.

**Higher earnings for farmers**

Small and marginal farmers with an average land holding of fewer than two hectares constitute 83.29 percent of population of Indian farmers. But in the vicious cycle of production, agriculture has not been profitable for the farmers. The average monthly expenditure among farming household has been estimated at 503 Indian rupees, or 7 euros. For most of the farmers it is hard to invest even the 7 euros, which is a clear sign of poverty.

By integrating smallholder farmers in our value chain, it can generate higher income and better living for the farmers. Our commitment towards the smallholder farmers made us one of the leading exporters in the Sangli region. Over the last three years, we developed a strong relationship with the farmers. Every year new farmers are joining with new energy and enthusiasm.

"I always wished the global recognition for India’s unique fruit taste. Due to the time when my father was working in agriculture, it was far away from that. Now I am part of that communication bridge between India and the world in a brand creation for the Indian grapes and developing the field-processes together with farmers for better export conditions”.

Dhananjay Joshi, Farmer, Member of develoPPP.de
We started the business relationship with the grape farmers in the **2015-16 season** with an export volume of **1 container**. Over the years, the number of containers increased drastically and according to the plan will **increase up to 75 containers for the next season 2018**.

**Increased exports have created higher employment opportunities for people in production area, both in the field and packaging house. More than 250 employees are part of the packaging house processes. Women empowerment is the prime target in these processes. 70 percent of the employees are female getting a secure job and regular income.** It increased the total household income and the living conditions for non-farming population, too.
Over the years, the total production of the farmers involved in the project increased drastically. Though the total production with increase in production area can be pointed out, but the total productivity is also increased at the same time.

Don Limón measures results in better income through higher quality production.

On average, the total export share of grapes in the total production in Sangli (India) under developeP-PP.de project increased from 68.17 percent in the 2015-16 season to 81.61 percent in 2016-17 season i.e., an increase of 13.44 percent. This is the improvement in the two years of the project implementation. Before the project, the share lies somewhere in the range of 42-45 percent. The increase in the share is a result of the technical and training program to the farmers.

Sustainable income =

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\frac{\text{export volume per ha}}{\text{total production volume per ha}}
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In 2007, we visited Mexico for the first time, in search of fresh limes. In that year, we made in total 6 containers to Europe. In collaboration with the Calderon-family we soon felt that we can do much more than trading limes for our customer in Hamburg. We felt the need of trusted partnership to develop a long-term business relationship. At that time, we had poor product quality, limited experience with the volatility of the global markets. Together, we developed our approach to learn and understand all the details of the agricultural production, the complex packing process and the worldwide marketing of fresh limes. We participated together the trade shows in USA, Europe and Asia. We organized academic support in partnership with the Zamorano University in Honduras. Every year we organize an internship program to develop a sophisticated supply chain management process.
In 2009 we opened our Americas office in Guatemala to develop the market in the USA, which is by far most important for the consumption of fresh limes than Europe.

Japan and Korea are the next step.

Bringing the highest value to the consumer and offering a fair price to the farmer is the main goal.

Today we have a strong process management, we developed detailed knowledge and strong communication between the units of production, packing, shipping and sales.

In the last 10 years we created in partnership a structure of permanent learning and optimization, trust and a common long-term vision. We see our project as a success story in combining agriculture production of smallholder farmers and a modern marketing and project management. In the market we are known for high quality limes, responsible treatment of nature and people and a strong vision for the future in sustainable agriculture. The Mexican project is our model for all the following projects aiming on social, environmental and economic impact.

Sustainability is our common language.

In 2017, the new packinghouse in Martinez de la Torre in Mexico was opened. The capacity and the plans are to double the volume in the coming 6 years. Investing in organic production of Limes, sustainable energy and water management are our plans.

We are very optimistic for the future when we look-back to all the forward steps that we made so far!
Ten years ago, back in 2007 we met the first physalis farmers from Colombia. Since then, together we improved a lot starting from field management all the way to packinghouse processes, and established reliable supply for our retailers. The positive effect on income situation of the farmers in the fields strengthened our relationship with them, and now it is level of employment of 300 workers.

To get to this point it wasn’t always easy, we overcame many challenges with continuity from one season to the next. Farmers changed crops, because they had doubts to earn enough money with the volume they would produce. Usually a plant produces 26 kg of physalis. Since it’s just a one-season plant, the soil loses its nutritious elements and the volume of exportable physalis decreased. Because of this issue, we couldn’t provide a secure supply for the retailer value chain.
However, we were determined to find solutions for the soil. **We applied best practices approaches and expanded our training for farmers. The outcome is that farmers do not switch anymore to other products and increased the production of each plant than ever before.** The permanent physalis cultivation results with **continuous quality improvement.** With this, farmers better their living conditions for the long-term and it also brings best quality for the final consumers.

In 2017 we steadily reached the income factor measured by export volume as a fractional amount from the whole production per ha at 75%. For 2018 we are going to expand the production volume per ha by more than 30% through innovation in managing the soil. That has a significant impact on the income situation for the smallholder farmers.

Next steps will be to transfer the knowledge to other products and work on water management and health improvement programs. European health institutes are very interested in this fruit, and research shows positive effects of the physalis on several diseases in the industrialized countries.

“**We create basic supply for the producers so that they can live independently and self-determined. This is possible through a fair offsetting of the added value of the importer in the markets and the exporter who cooperates with the producers. The largest share belongs to the producer, who makes the essential contribution so that all others can earn their basic service.**”

Kemal Urak, Don Limón Hamburg
Sweet Potatoes have a huge potential to realize a significant social and economic impact against poverty in Central America and beyond in Africa and Asia. Production of sweet potatoes creates sustainable impacts in countries with high unemployment rate.

In 2014 Don Limón started its first production project of Sweet Potato in Honduras focusing on having a clean conventional production. Basing the production process in the appliance of good agricultural practices and efficient techniques to use the natural resources, Don Limón closely collaborates with Zamorano University.

The relationship between Don Limón and Zamorano University rely on the engagement of graduates and on the research and knowledge transference that guides us to have a cleaner and greener production. These challenges include conservation of natural resources, rural transformation, and development of internationally competitive agriculture and agro-industry.

The Biological Control Laboratory develop, produce and commercialize natural enemies of agricultural pests in a learning-by-doing program. The strategy of the use of biological control began to venture into the commercial production of microorganisms for the control of pests, due to an unfulfilled demand in Honduras and neighboring countries. The biological controllers that it has produced are the antagonistic fungus. These great contributions are 100% used in Don Limón’s Sweet Potato Production in Honduras and after replicated in the production processes in Guatemala and Nicaragua.
Nicaragua has become one of the strongest partners of Don Limón in the last years for sweet potato production.

By the end of 2014, Don Limón’s representative in Nicaragua, installed a solar panel park with a capacity of 2.52 MW and generates electricity to cover at least 27% of the energy needs of the production site, where the agricultural production department and the Carton box production department are integrated.

Moreover, the packaging produced in Nicaragua for the ready sweet potato for the European export market is made from 100% recycled paper to keep up with the green spirit of the whole operation. 100% of all the water used in the Sweet potato production is treated in oxidation ponds (6 in total), to be able to use it again for the different processes.
In the past years, the sweet potato crop in Guatemala has been chosen by the Guatemalan government to tackle undernourishment. As around the half of the Guatemalan population cannot afford the cost of the basic food basket, sweet potato feeding program became very important in the country and Don Limón got involved with this as well.

Don Limón focused its Sweet Potato production in Guatemala in San Jeronimo, Baja Verapaz where 100% of the employed field workers are indigenous from the Mayan community poqomchi’. As most indigenous women live in marginal areas, where property rights are ill-defined, it is very important to provide secure access to land, water and to address indigenous women’s basic human rights to food, health, education, culture and dignity. These women have an opportunity to contribute to their local economies even though they live in extremely poor rural communities.

“We are working with a group of 50 local women that are participating in entrepreneurship activities such as exporting, training and sharing best practices for sweet potatoes production and packing. They have flexible work arrangements which help them to play a greater role in working with other companies or cooperatives elevating them to harmonize the equality status.”

Ilена Garcia, Don Limón Hamburg
EMPLOYEE FIRST

The foundation of our sustainable business is based in Hamburg.

Our experience is that imports from Latin America, India and Africa are best developed with native speakers based in Germany. The social and cultural understanding of the markets and producers forms the basis for the business model of Don Limón. Today, Don Limón is a platform where employees of producers share the market know-how.

**Employee first – networking, empowered, involved**

The complexity of the fruit industry and the cultural differences in Hamburg’s Don Limón team made it necessary to give up direct leadership and allow employees maximum freedom in choosing products, suppliers and workflows. The management focuses on networking, empowering and involved employees.

In Hamburg, process and quality management is combined with B2B trading and offers broad development opportunities.

**Marcos Shedden, Costa Rica**

“Employee first spirit in our company means for me that everyone has the opportunity to find his own way, by himself in the company. It means that you get the confidence to do your own way with the guidance of our boss.”
Anastasia Hohmann, Russia

“At Don Limón I am inspired by the way the different cultures work together. It makes it easier for us to continue expanding on the international market and to establish the right connection to the customers and suppliers around the world. Although we are all so different, we are a great and successful international team. I consider that our ‘business card’, as they say in Russia.

I am able to learn a lot from my colleagues and to get an insight into the way people work and conduct themselves in other cultures. That makes a person open for the whole world.”

Edrich Burger, South Africa

“I am inspired by the way our company flows between many different nationalities and cultures to reach a common goal: To become experts in fruit trading in all areas of the world. Becoming experts in fruit trading in all areas of the world inspires me.

The company culture helps me understand the cultural differences of diverse markets as well as the production side of the global fruit industry. I can use this knowledge in my own culture to establish strong links with the rest of the world’s fruit industry.”

Rafayatul Kabir, Bangladesh

“Don Limón is a place of energy for a professional. This company follows the path to develop fresher from the very root level. I found myself all through in the learning process. The multicultural working environment provides me the ascent of geographical differences. However, it gave me a new window to see the world in a different way. The daily work lets me the opportunity to be more globalized. It is helping me to develop my managerial capacity and passing me through a lot of experiences to reach the goals. The freedom in work helps to think differently. The work is always oriented by the supporting team members, working in such team is always enjoyable.”
The Pan-American Agricultural University focuses on supporting young, talented people of diverse backgrounds who are concerned with the challenges of Latin America. Zamorano follows the Learning By Doing approach in a multicultural environment, enabling students to live in agriculture. Don Limón has been in close partnership with Zamorano since 2009 with research & production collaboration, as well as establishing an internship program for Zamorano’s senior students. Thanks to the success of this program, Zamorano’s graduates joined the Don Limón’s staff, and further developed the Latin American market.

The OAV offers its members a knowledge exchange and productive dialog across different industries, as well as a wide variety of practical and comprehensive services.

In the LAV (Latin American Association), Don Limón is firmly committed and participates in the network to develop rural areas in Latin America with the right network partners. The Latin American Association is an information and networking platform for German companies with business interests in Latin America. Across sectoral knowledge transfer and exchange improves and expands business activities in South America and the Caribbean. Furthermore, the association fosters political, social and economic relationships between both regions.

Together with Prof. Dr. Sarah Jastram from HSBA (Hamburg School of Business Administration), Don Limón develops the topic of sustainability. The collaboration will create a framework for measuring and evaluating sustainability activities and providing strategic recommendations for the further development of Don Limón’s Corporate Social Responsibility. HSBA is applied Business School in Hamburg, which support companies in qualifying their employees and recruiting promising talents who are willing to study their internationally-oriented dual Bachelor’s and part-time Master’s degree programmes.

ZNU, Institute for Sustainable Leadership, is an applied research center which focuses on Sustainability all around the business world. It is directed to companies and organizations that want to set up a strategy management which orientates itself around sustainable business concepts. Main topics are: Pilot-Projects within food industry for sustainable standards, as well as establishing a dialog with target groups around the food industry. By becoming a member of the Network for The Food Industry, Don Limón is developing its sustainability standard within this network.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." – African Proverb

Don Limón sees the responsibility as an international producer and trader in establishing and developing a value creation network with all partners involved, from the field to the consumer. Only together we can meet the challenges of sustainable economic, ecological and social development.

WITH A GREAT TEAM YOU CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING!
The Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) supports Don Limón in its sustainability projects with, among other things, the develoPPP.de program. BMZ set goals to strive for equal distribution of global resources and better living conditions for all humans around the globe. With the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, global goals have been determined which are only achievable through a solid community; economic improvement resonating with social justice in the borders of ecological possibilities on earth.

With the global development organization sequa gGmbH, Don Limón initiates quality and process management projects. Sequa gGmbH is a has been carrying out programs and projects of international cooperation since 1991 in close cooperation with the German economy.

The Federal Association of Wholesale, Foreign Trade, Services e. V. (BGA) is a German umbrella organization of associations of these branches of industry based in Berlin. With the BGA, we connect with partners for prosperity and employment in our value chain and to further develop our focus on trade in the international market. BGA was founded on March 29, 1949 by representatives of 40 associations as a general association of German wholesale and foreign trade. Today it has almost 70-member associations.

The Sustainability Initiative Fruits and Vegetables (SIFAV) with IDH aims to make imports of fruits and vegetables from Africa, Asia and South America 100% sustainable in 2020. Launched in 2012 with 13 Dutch companies, today SIFAV has become a pan-European initiative with over 40 partners, including retailers, brands, traders and civil society organizations from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. Don Limón is a member since 2016.

IDH The Sustainable Trade Initiative is leading the SIFAV2020. They build ambitious public private coalitions of companies, civil society organizations and governments and high-impact programs to benefit people, planet and profit.

United Nations with Feeding the World 2050 initiative, an international organization with currently 193 Member States, takes action on issues confronting humanity in the 21st century, such as peace, security, climate change, sustainable development, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, governance, food production and more. To unite these issues the UN started its Feeding the World 2050 initiative, which set up 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are leading development efforts all around the world.
WE STRIVE TO REDUCE CO₂ CONSUMPTION IN THE WHOLE SUPPLY CHAIN.
SUSTAINABLE PLATFORM!

TAKE PART IN OUR SUSTAINABLE PLATFORM!