

Wholesale Markets

GERMANY & UK

Hamburg ready for reinvention

Germany's Hamburg Wholesale Market should by the end of the year be able to unveil the results of a major redevelopment process

STEVEN MAXWELL

✉ steven@fruitnet.com

The image of more than 20,000 bikers on Harley Davidson motorcycles milling around a market hall is not the traditional one where Hamburg Wholesale Market is concerned, but this June that is exactly what will be taking place at the 28ha site. Playing host to a motorcycle enthusiasts' convention may seem unconventional for the sector, but it is just one of the ways that Hamburg market is looking to give greater access to the public; a strategy that it believes could pay dividends for its tenants.

By the end of this year or early 2011, redevelopment of the market hall should be completed – a process that managing director Torsten Berens says will provide a modern environment for traders and one that can broaden its possible uses.

“We are a good way through the renovation of the market hall, which is about 40,000m² in size – we started last year and have finished the work outside the hall and we've now started the interior

renovation,” he explains.

For Mr Berens and the market authority, the redevelopment of the site has several key aims. As well as providing a modern facility for the traditional wholesale market, the authority also wants to provide logistics companies with “the ability to develop their businesses” at the site. However, it is the third aim – that of giving greater access to outside events in the market – that is perhaps the most radical.

Mr Berens believes there is great potential to successfully rent out part of the market hall during weekends for outside events, which traders will have the option of using as potential sales opportunities. Over the coming months, the market authority will examine the possibility of staging farmers' and other food markets at the site, in which traders will also have the opportunity of being participants.

Mr Berens believes such “special events” could become increasingly important for Hamburg market over the next decade, as its harbourside location is gradually redeveloped as a residential area.

He argues that alternative income opportunities could become increasingly



Hamburg Market is being transformed

important for the wholesale market sector, particularly given the affect the economic crisis has had on their principal sales avenues – restaurants and street markets. “I don't believe it's the right decision for traders to continue working as they have been,” says Mr Berens. “Convenience is becoming very important in Germany and I believe traders should be looking for ways of working with that and also looking at how to improve street markets.” ■