

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol at the heart of Valentine's flower rush

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol found itself right at the heart of this year's pre-Valentine's Day rush, as growers in Africa hurried to get their roses into the shops in time for February 14th.

The airport's usual 26 weekly freighter flights from Nairobi were not enough to cope with the huge influx of extra flower traffic; 800 tonnes of additional inbound freighter capacity was added – an increase of 30%.

Meanwhile airfreight and perishables truckers added 50% more vehicle movements in order to transfer the inbound blooms to destinations throughout Europe.

Rose sales through Amsterdam's world-famous giant flower auction house, FloraHolland, increased two and half times in the week up to St Valentines Day, reaching an estimated 100 million stems; 70% of these were imported by airfreight, and a total of 85 million stems were then re-exported by truck and air.

Says Schiphol Cargo Business Development Director Bart Pouwels, who is the airport's perishables specialist: "Schiphol remains at the centre of cut flower imports into Europe, and its impressive collective resources really come into their own during major annual events like St. Valentine's Day, when speed of cargo processing is critical to product condition.

"The airport community handled 30 million extra imported rose stems in the past few days. We're glad to have played a part in making so many ladies happy!"