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# Dutch prefer traditional Christmas gift packages

## *Changeover to Euro a popular theme*

Zaandam, The Netherlands, November 13, 2001 – Sales of holiday gift packages at Ahold's Dutch foodservice subsidiary, Deli XL, show a strong preference towards traditional assortments consisting of, among other items, a bottle of high quality wine, salmon and a kitchen-ware item. The value of employee gift packages for the holiday season has also remained unchanged for years, coming in at around fifty to sixty Dutch guilders.

The only discernible change is in the theme that is given to gift packages. "Following the huge popularity of the Millennium two years ago, we now offer Euro packages to mark the changeover to the Euro on January 1, 2002," explains Marius van der Kolk, Manager of Deli XL's Gift Service. "Tradition is the mainstay of our sector. Although our assortment has grown considerably through the years, our gift business is characterized by a consistency in choice and is led by customers' demand."

This is based on the approximately 750,000 gift packages that Deli XL sells annually to more than 2,000 corporate customers. These range from multinationals to family-owned businesses, hospitals and hotels. With more than 25 years of experience, Deli XL is one of the biggest suppliers of gift packages in The Netherlands.

Ahold subsidiary and Dutch supermarket leader Albert Heijn also sells gift packages through its stores, targeting some 65,000 small companies annually with employee counts of between 5 and 200. In addition to eight types of standardized packages, the Albert Heijn retail stores also sell tailor-made gift packages.

Deli XL's range of gift packages is displayed year-round in 17 showrooms across the country, where specialists assist customers in compiling their customized gifts. Both Deli XL and Albert Heijn also offer online facilities for the ordering of gift packages.

Deli XL is Ahold's major European foodservice operation active in The Netherlands and Belgium, with annualized sales of approximately Euro 800 million. On November 5, 2001, Deli XL, together with its sister Dutch subsidiaries Albert Heijn, Gall & Gall, Etos and De Tuinen, launched a joint internet-based delivery service called 'Albert' offering customers access to approximately 9,000 products through one website.

Ahold is a multi-local food retailer and foodservice operator with over 9,000 stores in 27 countries serving 35 million customers each week. Sales total approximately Euro 65 billion.

## **Photographs can be requested at Ahold Communications**

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