



FPC PRESS RELEASE

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'Trade not charity' - FPC celebrates strong links with Kenya at Annual Dinner

The UK fresh produce industry celebrated its strong trading relationship with Kenya and its people at the 63rd Fresh Produce Consortium Annual Dinner on Saturday 31 January held at the Intercontinental, London Park Lane, with main sponsor Anglia Business Solutions Ltd.

In his address FPC President Jim Rogers said: "Kenya is a valued member of the Fresh Produce Consortium, and we have worked hard over the past year, with our Kenyan partners, to address some of the issues surrounding food miles and climate change, to maintain an honest and a real perspective. The UK has enjoyed good trading relationships with exporting nations such as Kenya, for a great many years, to mutual benefit."

"The suggestion from certain quarters that in the UK we can effectively grow sufficient produce, in both quantity and variety, to feed our nation a healthy balanced diet is surely naive, misguided and completely impractical. And this will be further undermined by the EU proposal to ban the use of certain key pesticides which would have a potentially catastrophic effect on UK sustainability and food security," added Jim Rogers.

The guests of honour were Dr Cyrus Njiru ESB, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Trade and the High Commissioner, His Excellency Joseph Muchemi. Dr Cyrus Njiru spoke of the Kenyan government's support for the horticultural sector which is second to tourism as the largest foreign exchange earner for the country's economy, raising Kshs 67 billion (£445 million) in 2007. He stressed the importance of partnership and friendships between the two nations, and in particular for trade not charity to support future development.

“Kenya recently faced a daunting task in warding off the threat of the Soil Association to ban air freighted products in which the FPC was very vocal and supportive,” commented Dr Njiru. “Kenya and developing countries in general should not suffer because of a flawed measure of environmental footprint. Kenya takes environmental issues seriously and I would like to assure you that the carbon footprint will always be small even with airfreight. Kenya has abundant availability of clean energy such as geothermal, hydropower, solar and wind which are already in use and further expansion is ongoing.”

“Out of all the fresh produce exported from Kenya, 60 per cent ends up in the UK. This implies that the UK is a very important market that needs to be nurtured. I would like to encourage you to source more from Kenya as we will continue to strive to grow good quality products that would meet your standards. In so doing you will have helped my country to fight poverty and meet its development objectives under the UN Millennium Development Goals,” added Dr Njiru.

Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium welcomed Kenya’s example, commenting: “Lord Stern recently highlighted at the World Economic Forum the massive variations between the carbon footprint of Africa (1-2 tonnes of carbon per head) with that of the UK (11-14 tonnes per head) and the US (22 tonnes per head), calling for nations to move to low carbon technologies. With rising obesity levels across Europe we need to encourage consumers to eat 5-a-day. To achieve this consumers must have access to a wide variety of fresh produce regardless of origin. We must put ill-founded concerns about the impact of transportation of fresh produce from developing countries in their proper perspective, and balance them against the need to address a major public health issue across Europe and assist the development of local economies in Africa.”

Ends

Notes for editors:

1. The Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC) is the UK’s fresh produce trade association and is based in Peterborough. The FPC has represented the fresh produce sector for many years and is recognised across the UK and EU as the voice of the industry.
2. Extensive membership covers the complete spectrum of industry businesses including growers, importers, wholesalers, retailers, distributors, processors, packers, food service companies and other allied organisations.
3. Photographs are available of the dinner. Contact sian@freshproduce.org.uk tel: 01733 405792. The Kenyan theme was reflected in the menu, which incorporated a wide range of fresh produce from Kenya, as well as in the entertainment by Kenyan acrobats.

4. In Kenya horticulture accounts for up to 20% of agriculture output and contributes 5% of GDP, in which the overall contribution of agriculture is 25%. Small scale farmers are significant players in export and domestic production, with an overall share of 80%. About 2.5 million people are employed in the sector; 85% of the population is engaged in agriculture. Annual growth in the horticultural sector has been consistent since 1992 at between 10-22%. Production for export (fruit, vegetables and flowers) in 1992 was 57,000 tons rising in 2008 to 190,000 tons. In value terms the rise has been phenomenal, rising from £19 million in 1992 to £445 million in 2008.

