



# FPC PRESS RELEASE

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## **UK LOBBYING SAVES BANANA IMPORTERS IMMEDIATE COSTS AND UNNECESSARY CONTROLS**

Successful lobbying by the Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC) has secured the immediate lifting of unnecessary controls for bananas from the Dominican Republic, saving importers further costs and delays.

After the European Commission's recent review of the Annex I listing of products under EC Regulation 669/2009 and agreement to de-list bananas from the Dominican Republic from 1 October 2010, FPC called on the Food Standards Agency and the Commission to lift these controls with immediate effect.

"Banana importers would have been charged £30-40k for checks over the next few months even though their products were perfectly safe for consumers," said Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium. "We are delighted that the authorities have taken heed of our arguments. These ridiculous controls on bananas from the Dominican Republic have cost five UK importers around £50,000 since January 2010. It would be great to see the FSA or the Commission reimburse these importers for the impact of their previously ill-thought out regulation and its application."

FPC continues to lobby for the urgent application of the Assured Trader Scheme which would permit Port Health Authorities to reduce checks on reputable traders already meeting high standards. Currently there is no recognition of the fact that highly reputable companies have made considerable investment in securing accreditation from Globalgap and others, with independently verified records of pesticide monitoring.

FPC has raised concerns with the Food Standards Agency and the European Commission regarding the inclusion from October 2010 of other products to the Annex I listing, namely: Egyptian oranges, peaches, pomegranates, strawberries and green beans; curry leaves from India; and coriander leaves, basil and mint from Thailand.

The UK is a major importer of these Egyptian products, for example, accounting for 40% of EU imports of oranges from Egypt in 2008, and the regulation will impact on many importing companies.

“We are extremely concerned about the impact of these additional checks on the capacity of both ports and Port Health Authorities to cope with the required number of checks. It is likely that some will not have sufficient resource or storage facilities to cope with such high volumes coming from Egypt,” added Nigel Jenney.

“This poorly thought out Regulation fails to meet standards for effective, risk-based and proportionate regulation,” said Nigel Jenney. “Increased checks, delays in clearance, additional storage costs, damage and loss of products and their disposal are devastating many importers and suppliers of highly perishable products. The situation is likely to worsen in October unless the authorities urgently introduce the Assured Trader status and reduce checks on reputable traders.”

“We accept the need for appropriate risk based regulation, but as this regulation stands it is a sledge hammer to crack a nut. The UK Government states that it is committed to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy on trade but we have yet to see this come to fruition.”

## **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. **Egyptian produce**  
The proposal to introduce checks on oranges, peaches, pomegranates, strawberries, and green beans from Egypt will impact significantly on a larger number of UK companies, with high volumes of these products being imported to the UK.

| <b>Product</b> | <b>UK % of EU imports (Eurostat 2008)</b> | <b>Volumes (tonnes)</b> |
|----------------|---|-------------------------|
| Oranges        | 40.5                                      | 44,612.3                |
| Peaches        | 35.8                                      | 535.5                   |
| Strawberries   | 21.7                                      | 2,052.0                 |
| Pomegranates   | 13.8                                      | 580.2                   |
| Green beans    | 20.4                                      | 4,343.2                 |