



# FPC PRESS RELEASE

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## **FRESH PRODUCE INDUSTRY WELCOMES FOOD 2030 STRATEGY**

Increased consumption of fruit and vegetables and sustainable opportunities for increasing domestic production of fresh produce are key elements of the strategy 'Food 2030', says the Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC).

"We believe that all sectors of the fresh produce industry must play a leading role in developing a sustainable food policy for the UK and FPC is involved in the Government's fruit and vegetable task force, identified in the strategy as a key group to help drive forward this important agenda," said Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of FPC. "It is disappointing that wholesalers are not named among the key sectors in the headline strategy given their important role in the supply chain."

"We welcome Defra's commitment to reduce unnecessary burdens on the food industry and to carry out integrated inspections based on risk-based criteria. Defra recognises the cumulative impact of regulation on the economy, the need to influence policy makers in the EU and to have early engagement with the food industry on issues," commented Nigel Jenney. "This strategy must be adopted across Government and by others, including the Food Standards Agency in relation to its implementation of the EU's increased import controls of 'high risk' products. In a matter of weeks the FSA will be responsible for the ridiculous imposition of additional costs, unnecessary delays and duplication of pre-notification of products, as well as wastage of highly perishable produce."

Around 60 per cent of fruit and vegetables are imported to the UK, mainly from within the EU, providing consumers with produce outside the UK season as well as varieties which

cannot be grown in the UK due to our climate. UK growers have a significant opportunity to increase the sustainable production of indigenous crops which are suited to our climate. FPC believes that Defra should identify those indigenous crops with greater production potential than is achieved currently and ensure that the sector has the necessary tools to maximise this potential.

“Government departments can make a far greater impact to combat poor diets and rising obesity levels simply by having a cohesive policy for public sector food procurement which encourages greater consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, regardless of their origin, and in line with Defra’s own definition of ‘locally in season’ which includes imported produce,” added Nigel Jenney.

Defra’s definition of ‘locally in season’ is: ‘Food that is outdoor grown or produced during the natural growing/production period for the country or region where it is produced. It need not necessarily be consumed locally to where it is grown. This applies to seasonal food produced both in the UK and overseas’.

The Government needs to help consumers make sound ethical choices on sustainable healthy food and to encourage greater consumption of fresh produce. The industry’s Eat In Colour campaign has made great strides to increase consumers’ enjoyment of fresh produce as part of a healthy diet. Whilst the Department of Health has achieved significant consumer awareness of 5-a-day this has not translated into widespread adoption of a healthy diet and greater consumption of fresh produce, and FPC wants to see a greater focus on key consumer groups in the 5-a-day action plan.

“FPC has been lobbying for the expansion of the successful Schools Fruit and Veg Scheme and it’s disappointing that the strategy fails to acknowledge the proven potential of this Scheme to increase consumption of fresh produce and establish healthy eating habits among young children,” commented Nigel Jenney.

Affordability of fresh produce is recognised as an important factor for consumers and Defra recognises a ‘clear improvement’ in the relative pricing of fruit and vegetables to help increase consumption. FPC believes that there should be the opportunity for adequate returns for all elements of the supply chain which are working efficiently.

The UK horticulture industry is meeting the challenge of reducing inputs through the use of integrated pest management. In addition, government investment is essential to ensure that the fresh produce industry is equipped with the necessary resources and skills to meet the challenges of delivering food security.

“The fresh produce sector has a relatively low carbon footprint in comparison with other food sectors and it’s important that we keep this in perspective and recognise the complexities of the whole food supply chain,” added Nigel Jenney. “The fresh produce industry is putting in place measures to achieve food production in a low-carbon world, calculating greenhouse gas emissions, reducing excess packaging and increasing re-use and recycling, as well as reducing food waste and recovering energy.”

‘Food 2030’ recognises that there is insufficient data currently to help tackle waste reduction across the food chain. FPC is involved in a research project commissioned by WRAP which is developing detailed ‘resource maps’, quantifying food waste and packaging waste, through the fresh produce retail and wholesale supply chain. The project is led by Cranfield University, working with food and grocery supply chain expert IGD and FPC, representing the fresh produce industry.

“We welcome a balanced approach towards the need for imports and the recognition of our responsibility to support developing countries within a global market. We look forward to working further with Defra to help develop sound policies to deliver a globally sourced sustainable food supply,” said Nigel Jenney.

**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. For more information on the Eat In Colour campaign visit [www.eatincolour.com](http://www.eatincolour.com)

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