



# FPC PRESS RELEASE

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## **Get fresher – UK consumers not getting enough**

UK consumers need to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables to ensure a healthy diet according to the latest annual statistics of EU consumption, says the Fresh Produce Consortium. In 2007 UK consumers ate slightly more fruit but fewer vegetables than in the previous year, but still fall short of eating the recommended 5-a-day for a healthy diet.

The Freshfel Consumption Monitor 2008 provides data on trends in the production, trade, supply and estimated per capita consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables across the 27 EU member states, as well as information covering Norway, Switzerland and the USA.

UK production of fruit and vegetables decreased in 2007: for fruit by 4 per cent, with a total of 336.600 T; and for vegetables by 20 per cent, with a total of 2.37 million T. However, UK fruit production was 14 per cent above the average for the previous five years. In contrast, UK vegetable production was 13 per cent below the average of the past five years.

Imports have increased, by one per cent for fruit and by 3 per cent for vegetables. Overall fruit exports decreased by 17 per cent, however, fruit exports to countries outside the EU increased significantly in 2007, in particular apples and pears. Vegetable exports increased by 6 per cent in the same period.

According to a UK survey<sup>4</sup> commissioned by the Fresh Produce Consortium last year the average UK consumer eats just 2.5 servings of fruit and vegetable a day. Without a dramatic

change in eating habits it could take another 25 years for consumers to meet the recommended 5-a-day.

“With rising obesity levels in the UK and across Europe, particularly among young children, we cannot be complacent about the efforts needed by both industry and government to encourage people to enjoy a healthy diet,” commented Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium.

Many UK fresh produce businesses are involved in the successful UK School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme and the industry’s Eat In Colour campaign ([www.eatincolour.com](http://www.eatincolour.com)) provides tips and advice on enjoying a wide range of fresh produce. Consumers regard fruit and vegetables as an essential part of their diet and fresh produce continues to provide excellent quality and value for money for hard-pressed consumers in this economic climate.

Recent moves by the European Parliament to withdraw the use of key products used to protect against pests, weeds and diseases will undermine the ability of UK and European horticulture to supply good quality affordable produce in a safe sustainable manner. It may become uneconomic to grow some crops and lower yields will mean consumers may have to pay higher prices for their fruit and vegetables.

“The fresh produce industry recognises the challenges it faces to encourage consumers to eat more fruit and vegetables, as well as feeding an increasing world population, competing pressures on agricultural land and the impact of climate change. With increasing levels of obesity across Europe we should be encouraging more people to eat fresh fruit and vegetables and ensuring that growers have the necessary tools to provide a sustainable and affordable supply of fresh produce,” added Nigel Jenney.

“It’s disappointing to see further confirmation that we’re not even meeting the minimum recommendation for a healthy diet in the UK. This is why we are calling on the Government to take advantage of additional EU funding available to extend the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme,” said Nigel Jenney.

Compared with other European countries, the UK ranked 18<sup>th</sup> for estimated consumption of fruit and vegetables in grams per person per day. The UK ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in terms of increased consumption of fruit, and 9<sup>th</sup> for consumption of vegetables in 2007.

“The annual Freshfel consumption monitor has fast become the vital document against which the performance of Europe in getting fresh fruit and vegetables into the diet of its population can be judged. The recent initiative of a new European School Fruit Scheme by the European Commission is a step forward as we know we must first reach out to our young children and train them to eat healthily,” commented Laurence Swan, Chairman of the Freshfel Working Group on Promotion, Communication and Image.

**Ends**

### **SPECIAL OFFER FOR FPC MEMBERS**

We have negotiated a discount which allows FPC members to purchase the full Freshfel monitor at a discounted rate of 200 Euros (full price: 400 Euros). The Freshfel Monitor includes: total gross supply of fruit and vegetables in the EU-27 including trends in production, exports and imports of fruit and vegetables; a comparative review of consumption trends across the EU-27; a review of the total gross supply, trends in production, exports and imports of fruit and vegetables in the countries of the EU-27; and consumption trends in Norway, Switzerland and the USA.

If you are interested please contact FPC and we will forward your details to Freshfel so that you can receive the discount.

### **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. The UK data of the Freshfel Consumption Monitor 2008 is available from the Fresh Produce Consortium, which is a member of Freshfel Europe, the European Fresh Produce Association. Copies of the full Freshfel Consumption Monitor 2008 are available from Freshfel, price 400 Euros to non-members; email: [info@freshfel.org](mailto:info@freshfel.org).
4. TNS 5-a-day research commissioned by the Fresh Produce Consortium.

**Ends**