



FPC PRESS RELEASE

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT JEOPARDISES FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SUPPLY

The ability of European horticulture to supply good quality affordable produce in a safe sustainable manner will be jeopardised by the European Parliament's decision to remove key products which are vital for controlling pests, weeds and diseases, says the Fresh Produce Consortium. This decision has been made with no full assessment of the wider impact on food supply.

"Growers already have a limited range of products to protect horticultural crops, and in some instances there will be no viable alternatives for treating common pests which reduce yields and damage fresh produce. It may become uneconomic to grow some crops such as sprouts and carrots, and lower yields will mean hard-pressed consumers will have to pay higher prices for their fruit and vegetables, including apples, pears, raspberries, leeks, peas and beans," said Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium.

FPC campaigned against the proposals, and received significant support from MEPs, Ministers, including from Hilary Benn and Prime Minister Gordon Brown, as well as worldwide trade organisations.

"We are grateful to our members and many UK MEPs for making great efforts to reinforce our views. We are bitterly disappointed that other MEPs failed to understand the practical realities of their proposals, and in particular that a full impact assessment will be not carried out before the Regulation is implemented," added Nigel Jenney. "The horticulture industry already leads in the adoption of integrated pest management systems and we will continue

to press the UK Government and others to ensure that the industry has the necessary tools to provide a sustainable supply of fresh produce.”

“With rising obesity levels across Europe it is essential that we encourage more people to eat fresh fruit and vegetables and that we can continue to provide a sustainable supply of fresh produce against the challenges of feeding an increasing world population, competing pressures on agricultural land and the impact of climate change.”

FPC is meeting with Hilary Benn this week to discuss the outcome of the European Parliament’s vote and the next stage of the Regulation’s development through the Council of Ministers before final ratification. FPC will continue to call for a common sense approach and will request safeguards to minimise the impact on UK horticulture before the implementation of the Regulation in 2010.

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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.