



FPC PRESS RELEASE

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Zero carbon – zero choice? FPC responds to *zerocarbonbritain 2030* report

The 'Zero Carbon Britain' project's second report is setting a ridiculous target for 77.5 per cent of all UK food needs to be met domestically by 2030, says the Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC). The UK is already 74 per cent self-sufficient in the production of indigenous produce.

"Whilst FPC welcomes seasonal British fresh fruit and vegetables and wishes to see increased production of indigenous produce the reality is that the UK would never want to, or be able to become totally self-sufficient, given the pressures on land availability and the vagaries of our climate," said Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of FPC.

"By limiting food production to the UK we will reduce the diverse range of produce available to consumers, particularly during certain growing seasons. Consumers will be restricted to a limited diet and be deprived of some of their favourite vegetables and fruit, like bananas. In addition, food supplies may on occasion be more vulnerable to extreme weather conditions experienced in the UK rather than having the option of alternative sources of supply elsewhere in Europe and worldwide."

"We live in a global society and we need trade diversity to ensure the UK's food security. There is a place for both conventional and organic farming methods in a global market to provide consumers with choice, variety and, at the same time, ensure that we have a sustainable food supply," added Nigel Jenney.

To claim that locally produced food has less impact on our environment and that consumers can reduce their carbon footprint by buying local produce is misleading. The *zerocarbonBritain2030* report rightly recognises the change to reduce meat consumption and livestock production as being a key way in which the agricultural sector can reduce its emissions.

Other research in the US has shown that changing the make-up of a family's diet is a more effective means of lowering an average household's food-related climate footprint than 'buying local'. According to this same research reducing meat consumption, which is responsible for 46 per cent of inputs in a conventional diet, would have far greater impact than buying locally grown food. Meat and dairy production is responsible for 8 per cent of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, more than three times that of fruit and vegetables.

It's impractical to expect that by 2030 the UK could access the significant amount of additional land which would be required to go totally organic, which is implied by the report to be the ideal sustainable method of farming. Using conventional farming methods we are currently 60 per cent self-sufficient in the UK, and grow 74 per cent self-sufficient in indigenous produce. Organic farming cannot produce the same yields as conventional farming and meet the needs of the UK population, estimated to reach 79 million by 2057.

"The UK Government and much of the agricultural industry are far from complacent about the challenges of maintaining food security and have sensibly recognised that this is a global issue. We do need to look at ways of tackling climate change, but let's look at the footprint of the whole product supply chain and provide consumers with meaningful advice on which to make informed decisions," said Nigel Jenney.

"Our society faces a major health issue with rising obesity levels and on average the UK consumer eats only 2.5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day. We need to encourage the UK consumer to eat 5-a-day through initiatives such as the industry's Eat In Colour campaign (www.eatincolour.com) and to enjoy a wide variety of affordable quality fresh produce regardless of its origin and means of production."

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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.
3. Eat In Colour www.eatincolour.com
4. Zerocarbonbritain 2030 published by the Centre of Alternative Technology www.zcb2030.org

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