



FPC PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until issue of Which? Hungry for Change? Report - 11 March 2009

HUNGRY FOR CHANGE

Fruit and vegetables are the ultimate convenience food and even in the current recession fresh fruit and vegetables remain fantastic value for money.

People are achieving 5-a-day on a limited budget which indicates that fresh fruit and vegetables can be part of an affordable diet. However, consumers in the UK are not eating enough fruit and vegetables to maintain a healthy diet, and without a dramatic change in eating habits it could take another 25 years for consumers to meet the recommended 5-a-day. On average consumers are eating 2.5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day.³

“With rising obesity levels and poor diet among children both industry and government need to encourage the UK consumer to eat 5-a-day. An ambitious programme is needed to tackle public health issues. The Schools Fruit and Vegetable Scheme is encouraging young children to form good eating habits. Since the introduction of the scheme in 2005 there has been a greater increase in consumption among 6-10 year olds, the target age group of the scheme. We want the UK Government to seize opportunities such as the EU funding proposal to fund further school initiatives in order to expand the highly successful Schools Fruit and Vegetable scheme,” commented Nigel Jenney, chief executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium.

The UK consumer enjoys a wide variety of fruit and vegetables all year round and the fresh produce industry works hard to encourage higher consumption of fruit and vegetables through initiatives like Eat In Colour, www.eatincolour.com which gives advice on easy ways of enjoying healthy eating.

The Which? '*Hungry for Change?*' report highlights well recognised issues, and whilst progress is being made there is an urgent need to increase efforts to avoid losing another generation to poor diet and obesity.

"This is no longer about raising awareness, it is now about delivering change which consumers can relate to and take on board. The industry's Eat In Colour campaign is well placed to play its part," added Nigel Jenney.

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 necessarily tools to provide a sustainable and affordable supply of fresh produce," added Nigel Jenney.

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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. TNS 5-a-day research commissioned by the Fresh Produce Consortium.

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