



FPC PRESS RELEASE

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HOME-MADE BABY FOOD IS HEALTHY AND SAFE TO EAT

We should have every confidence that fresh produce is safe to eat and that we and our children can enjoy the benefits of eating a wide variety of fruit and vegetables all year round, grown in the UK and overseas, and irrespective of the method of production. The independent monitoring of fresh fruit and vegetables by the Pesticide Residue Committee confirms that the health benefits of eating fresh fruit and vegetables are far greater than any potential risk from minute levels of pesticide residues that may remain.

The presence of a residue does not mean that food is not safe to eat. Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) are not safety limits but are based on good agricultural practice and are usually well below the levels that would be a concern for people's health. According to the latest reports by the Pesticide Residues Committee the vast majority of samples were found to have no residues at or above the MRL. Infant foods are covered by particularly strict rules on pesticides residues. In the latest report from the Pesticide Residues Committee, none of the samples of prepared infant foods found to have pesticide residues (including one organic sample) were above the MRL.

The horticulture industry has led the adoption of integrated crop management systems which have been responsible for significant reductions of crop protection products in the production of fresh produce. There are stringent standards in place to ensure that the UK consumer can enjoy healthy good quality fresh produce including a rigorous testing and regulatory process for the use of pesticides. It is important for everyone within the fresh produce industry to ensure that they maintain high standards and follow good practice to reassure consumers that every care is taken by both UK and overseas growers.

The market for processed organic baby food products is tough at the moment, with reported falling sales and retailers often reviewing their offer to include own brand and leading brand only. Let's not see some in the processed organic sector resorting to such cynical marketing tactics by implying that conventionally grown fresh produce is not safe to be given to our children or the nation as a whole.

Fresh produce is recognised as an essential part of our diet, yet people in the UK are not eating enough fresh fruit and vegetables to maintain a healthy diet. With rising levels of obesity and poor diet, it's even more critical that consumers are not misled into having doubts about enjoying safe affordable fresh produce.

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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 recognized 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 campaign www.eatincolour.com
4. FPC response to article in 'The Times': 'Is healthy, home-made baby food just pulp fiction? New research shows that pesticides are present in the fruit and veg often fed to babies. But are supermarket purees really the best alternative?' by Anna Shepard.

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