



FPC PRESS RELEASE

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What is Gordon f**king talking about?

Gordon Ramsey's suggestion earlier this week that British restaurants should serve only 'in season' UK grown produce and be fined if they did otherwise has, unsurprisingly, met with opposition from the UK's fresh produce industry.

This preposterous proposition is unlikely to attract the support of the nation's chefs and caterers who seemingly could find themselves criminalised for adding non UK produce to their menus, which if taken to the extreme would significantly restrict the range of fruit and vegetables on offer.

Such prohibition would obviously have a huge impact on the bottom line of the country's importers, wholesalers, grocers and food service who have, for years, met demand from diners and cooks for 'in season' high quality produce from around the world, most of it impossible to produce under our often cloudy and enthusiastically precipitous sky.

In the UK we currently enjoy a wide variety of fruit and vegetables, around 60% of which are imported. This provides produce outside of the UK season in addition to varieties which simply cannot be grown in the UK. Bananas, avocados and the like have been enjoyed by the nation for many years and nutritional value of such products is well documented.

The knock on effect of this ill thought out proposal would be catastrophic to the fresh produce industry globally, and consumers alike, and it is simply ironic to believe that the general public would accept such a significant restriction to their freedom of choice.

It would have been significantly more constructive if Mr Ramsay had championed the cause of balance – a balanced diet for all, consisting in enjoyment of a wide variety of fruit and vegetables, produced efficiently and sustainably and transported in the same way.

Perhaps most importantly, Chef Ramsay's outburst sends out an extremely negative message. At a time when government, and the industry, (through our Eat in Colour campaign www.eatincolour.com) are making vast efforts to encourage higher consumption of fruit and vegetables amongst the proportion of the population who still find 5-a-day a daunting prospect, to suggest that a large section of the grocery aisle should be out of bounds to those who lead our food culture can only confuse and dissuade.

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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 (both formal and informal), distributors, processors, packers, food service companies and other allied organisations.