



freshproduceconsortium
NEWSLETTER

6 February 2009

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Get involved with Re:refresh

The Re:refresh Conference and Awards will take place on Thursday 28 May at the London Marriott - a fabulous opportunity to win one of the prestigious Re:refresh Awards presented at our Oscar style awards gala evening. There's lots of competition for these popular awards so think about your entry and the categories - remember, you can enter more than one.

The programme for the conference is being finalised and is guaranteed to be full of topical debates, as informative and entertaining as 2008! With the credit crunch in mind we are offering a 'BOG OFF' for 2009! Details will be published soon.

Why not sponsor an award - costs remain the same as 2008, giving great value for money considering the publicity your company can expect to receive. For sponsorship opportunities and conference details visit:

www.refreshawards.com

'Trade not charity' - FPC celebrates strong links with Kenya at Annual Dinner

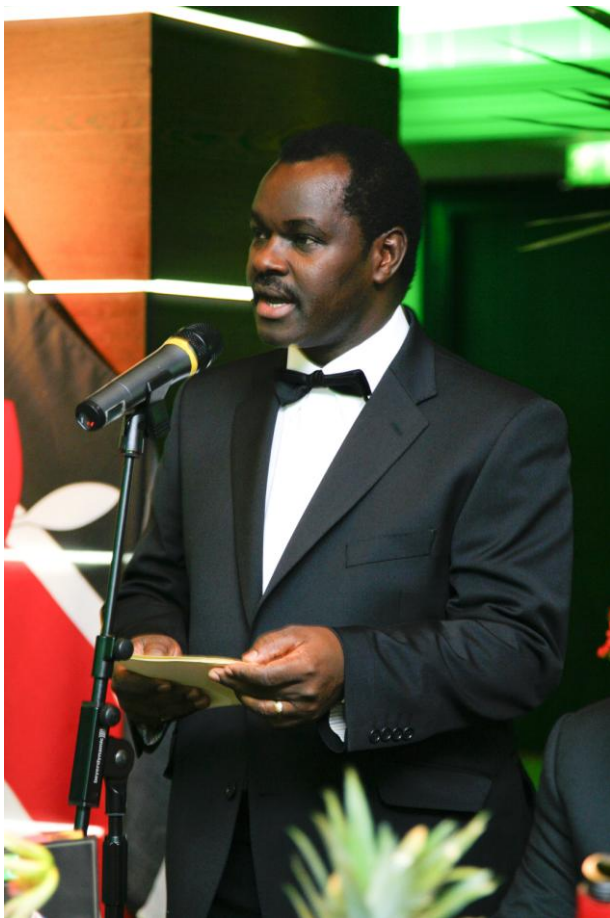
The UK fresh produce industry celebrated its strong trading relationship with Kenya and its people at the 63rd Fresh Produce Consortium Annual Dinner on Saturday 31 January held at the Intercontinental, London Park Lane, with main sponsor Anglia Business Solutions Ltd. In his address FPC President Jim Rogers said: "Kenya is a valued member of the Fresh Produce Consortium, and we have worked hard over the past year, with our Kenyan partners, to address some of the issues surrounding food miles and climate change, to maintain an honest and a real perspective. The UK has enjoyed good trading relationships with exporting nations such as Kenya, for a great many years, to mutual benefit."





“The suggestion from certain quarters that in the UK we can effectively grow sufficient produce, in both quantity and variety, to feed our nation a healthy balanced diet is surely naive, misguided and completely impractical. And this will be further undermined by the EU proposal to ban the use of certain key pesticides which would have a potentially catastrophic effect on UK sustainability and food security,” added Jim Rogers.

The guests of honour were Dr Cyrus Njiru ESB, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Trade and the High Commissioner, His Excellency Joseph Muchemi. Dr Cyrus Njiru spoke of the Kenyan government’s support for the horticultural sector which is second to tourism as the largest foreign exchange earner for the country’s economy, raising Kshs 67 billion (£445 million) in 2007.



He stressed the importance of partnership and friendships between the two nations, and in particular for trade not charity to support future development.

“Kenya recently faced a daunting task in warding off the threat of the Soil Association to ban air freighted products in which the FPC was very vocal and supportive,” commented Dr Njiru. “Kenya and developing countries in general should not suffer because of a flawed measure of environmental footprint. Kenya takes environmental issues seriously and I would like to assure you that the carbon footprint will always be small even with airfreight. Kenya has abundant availability of clean energy such as geothermal, hydropower, solar and wind which are already in use and further expansion is ongoing.”

“Out of all the fresh produce exported from Kenya, 60 per cent ends up in the UK. This implies that the UK is a very important market that needs to be nurtured. I would like to encourage you to source more from Kenya as we will continue to strive to grow good quality products that would meet your standards. In so doing you will have helped my country to fight poverty and meet its development objectives under the UN Millennium Development Goals,” added Dr Njiru.

Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium welcomed Kenya’s example, commenting: “Lord Stern recently highlighted at the World Economic Forum the massive variations between the carbon footprint of Africa (1-2 tonnes of carbon per head) with that of the UK (11-14 tonnes per head) and the US (22 tonnes per head), calling for nations to move to low carbon technologies. With rising obesity levels across Europe we need to encourage consumers to eat 5-a-day. To achieve this consumers must have access to a wide variety of fresh produce regardless of origin. We must put ill-founded concerns about the impact of transportation of fresh produce from developing countries in their proper perspective, and balance them against the need to address a major public



health issue across Europe and assist the development of local economies in Africa.”



Get fresher – UK consumers not getting enough

UK consumers need to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables to ensure a healthy diet according to the latest annual statistics of EU consumption. In 2007 UK consumers ate slightly more fruit but fewer vegetables than in the previous year, but still fall short of eating the recommended 5-a-day for a healthy diet.

The Freshfel Consumption Monitor 2008 provides data on trends in the production, trade, supply and estimated per capita consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables across the 27 EU member states, as well as

information covering Norway, Switzerland and the USA.

UK production of fruit and vegetables decreased in 2007: for fruit by 4 per cent, with a total of 336.600 T; and for vegetables by 20 per cent, with a total of 2.37 million T. However, UK fruit production was 14 per cent above the average for the previous five years. In contrast, UK vegetable production was 13 per cent below the average of the past five years.

Imports have increased, by one per cent for fruit and by 3 per cent for vegetables. Overall fruit exports decreased by 17 per cent, however, fruit exports to countries outside the EU increased significantly in 2007, in particular apples and pears. Vegetable exports increased by 6 per cent in the same period.

According to a UK survey commissioned by FPC last year the average UK consumer eats just 2.5 servings of fruit and vegetable a day. Without a dramatic change in eating habits it could take another 25 years for consumers to meet the recommended 5-a-day.

“With rising obesity levels in the UK and across Europe, particularly among young children, we cannot be complacent about the efforts needed by both industry and government to encourage people to enjoy a healthy diet,” commented Nigel Jenney.

Many UK fresh produce businesses are involved in the successful UK School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme and the industry’s Eat In Colour campaign (www.eatincolour.com) provides tips and advice on enjoying a wide range of fresh produce. Consumers regard fruit and vegetables as an essential part of their diet and fresh produce continues to provide excellent quality and value for money for hard-pressed consumers in this economic climate.

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.

“It’s disappointing to see further confirmation that we’re not even meeting the minimum recommendation for a healthy diet in the UK. This is why we are calling on the Government to take advantage of additional EU funding available to extend the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme,” said Nigel Jenney.

Compared with other European countries, the UK ranked 18th for estimated consumption of fruit and vegetables in grams per person per day. The UK ranked 4th in terms of increased consumption of fruit, and 9th for consumption of vegetables in 2007.

“The annual Freshfel consumption monitor has fast become the vital document against which the performance of Europe in getting fresh fruit and vegetables into the diet of its population can be judged. The recent initiative of a new European School Fruit Scheme by the European Commission is a step forward as we know we must first reach out to our young children and train them to eat healthily,” commented Laurence Swan, Chairman of the Freshfel Working Group on Promotion, Communication and Image.

SPECIAL OFFER FOR FPC MEMBERS

We have negotiated a discount which allows FPC members to purchase the full Freshfel monitor at a discounted rate of 200 Euros (full price: 400 Euros). The Freshfel Monitor includes: total gross supply of fruit and vegetables in the EU-27 including trends in production, exports and imports of fruit and vegetables; a comparative review of consumption trends across the EU-27; a review of the total gross supply, trends in production, exports and imports of fruit and vegetables in the countries of the EU-27; and consumption trends in Norway, Switzerland and the USA.

If you are interested please contact sian@freshproduce.org.uk and we will forward your details to Freshfel so that you can receive the discount.

Plant Health apologies for system failure

FPC alerted members with the following statement from Defra Plant Health/RPAI:

“The current situation from an operational point of view is that the PEACH system is now returning to a near normal standard of operation.

Following the recent issues yesterday (2 February) and today (3 February), the poor functionality of the PEACH system has, we realise, caused problems for both Importers of fresh produce and agents responsible for clearance of fresh produce through Customs procedures. For this, we apologise.

IBM, our strategic partners, has worked with us to seek to overcome the issues concerned and will continue to closely monitor the situation over the next few days. This situation was classed as a Major Incident (MI) by IBM and had the highest priority for resolution. In addition we will work closely with IBM to track



down the root cause of this issue and put in place necessary measures to prevent a reoccurrence. Defra and RPA realise the issues that this failure has caused to Customers and would like to reassure Industry that we treat them with the highest degree of importance and seriousness.

However from a business angle, RPAi Inspectors and Plant Health Inspectors on the ground at Heathrow and other major ports have worked extra hours and flexible working patterns to ensure that a minimum number of goods were delayed, despite the poor state of the PEACH system. Both RPAi and Plant Health inspectors were instructed to move to backup systems, firstly the use of automatic controls and then secondly manual paper based controls when it became clear that the PEACH system was failing to provide an adequate service to Industry. Inspectors used their professional knowledge of Industry and their experience of the common practises within the trade to assist companies and ensure a smooth clearance of goods into free circulation.

Following on from that and in response to concerns expressed by Industry, all inspectors have continued to work closely with Industry around the sea and airports of England and Wales to ensure that there was a minimum of delay to trade."

It is important that we understand the impact of this system failure. If you suffered difficulties as a result of this situation please email angie@freshproduce.org.uk with the details.

Automatic Licence Verification System

There are important changes to be introduced by Defra, RPA and HMRC in May 2009 which should reduce clearance times and paperwork of consignments. The International Trade Single Window, a cross government

collaboration between Business Link, HMRC and Defra, is in the late stages of testing the new Automatic Licence Verification System (ALV).

Advance notifications submitted to Defra/RPA on the PEACH system will be received and matched to an import declaration submitted to HMRC on its CHIEF system. If there is an exact match, then a Defra and/or RPA release decision will be passed electronically to HMRC.

When live, the system will speed up the customs clearance of plants, flowers, fruit and vegetables imported into England and Wales from third countries and it will also remove the need for importers or agents to fax PHSI Quarantine Release Certificates or HMI Conformity Certificates to the National Clearance Hub at Salford.

The full launch of ALV is due to be preceded by a pilot starting in April 2009 and the ITSW team is seeking agents or importers who are willing to participate in the pilot.

We are looking to ensure that recent IT issues are addressed before further automation of the system. There are significant opportunities for a more efficient management of imports which will result in further savings to the industry, estimated to be at least £1 million. This will result from a reduced administrative burden to the industry and avoidance of additional costs at the port.

FPC has been actively pursuing these improvements. It's essential that the industry gets involved in the pilot. If you are interested in taking part in the pilot, or if you would like further details, contact infor@freshproduce.org.uk



Inquiry into future of aviation

The House of Commons' Transport Committee is conducting an inquiry into the future of aviation, looking at economic, environmental and infrastructure issues. Areas of interest include the value of aviation to the UK economy and the development of the infrastructure for the needs of UK businesses.

FPC will be coordinating a response, and we welcome input from members. Please forward any feedback to sian@freshproduce.org.uk by 16 February.

SITPRO Port review

A review of procedures at UK sea ports, airports, the Channel Tunnel and inland clearance depots for the international and intra-EU movement of goods has been announced by SITPRO (Simplifying International Trade).

FPC will be responding and we welcome input from members. In order to coordinate our response please send input by 7 March to sian@freshproduce.org.uk For more information visit: <http://www.sitpro.org.uk/questionnaires/ports09.html>

PRC 2008 surveys – grapes and peppers

The Pesticide Residues Committee has published the findings of its November and December surveys of grapes and peppers.

Grapes: Twelve samples were taken, none containing residues above the MRL. The samples did contain residues at or below the MRL – 5 from Brazil, 2 from Spain, 2 from USA, 1 from Greece, 1 from Italy, 1 from Peru. Ten samples contained more than one

residue, with one sample containing 11 residues.

Peppers: Seven samples were taken, none containing residues above the MRL. One sample contained residues at or below the MRL, and one sample contained three residues – both from Spain.

None of the residues found both surveys gave intakes above the Acute Reference Dose or Acceptable Daily Intake.

For more information visit:

Grapes:

<http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/prc.asp?id=2610>

Peppers:

<http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/prc.asp?id=2620>

International Exhibition and Conference – Cairo

Members are invited to participate in the Food and Health II International Exhibition and Conference which takes place between 21-23 April at Cairo International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Cairo, Egypt.

For more information about sponsorship and participation email info@grandevent.org or visit www.grandevent-eg.com

EU Rapid Alert – Update

Border Notification:

Date: 30/012009; notified by Spain; ref: 2009.AFI Bad hygienic state of fresh bananas from Cote d'Ivoire.