



freshproduceconsortium
NEWSLETTER

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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

Get involved in pilot - 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

UK horticulture needs full impact assessment of EU legislation

Conservative MEP Robert Sturdy has continued to voice his concerns following the European Parliament's vote last month on the Pesticide Directive 91/414. His office issued the following statement:

'The UK's Pesticides Safety Directorate has shown the true extent the European Parliament's vote on plant protection products in January will have on crop production in Britain.

According to its latest impact assessment, the PSD argues that products that control diseases in potatoes, oilseed rape, lettuces, peas, spinach, celery, onions and carrots could all be lost.

The key issue left to resolve is a clear definition of an 'endocrine disruptor'. Under the parliament's vote, these would be banned from the market, yet no clear definition was given. If, for example, all triazoles are classified as endocrine disruptors, wheat yields would drop by 10-20 percent.

Robert Sturdy has agreed that there do need to be tighter controls on pesticide use. However, he has argued against the draconian approach taken by the MEPs, which will harm food production and threaten Europe's food security.

Robert said: "The true extent of the parliament's vote is now being realised.

Products that we rely on to control vital crops are going to be lost.

"Food security in Europe and across the developing world is becoming a major issue, yet the parliament has voted to make food production more difficult. Falling food yields can only mean rising prices in the weekly food shop.

"The PSD has accepted that their report is far from conclusive because there is still no clear definition of an endocrine disruptor. All along, we have called for a comprehensive European Commission impact assessment, yet one has not been provided. While this report gives a good indication, the full impact of the EU's new pesticides rules must be detailed by the commission."

You can find the revised PSD assessment at: [http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/Web_Assets/PSD/Outcomes_paper_-_summary_impact_assessment_\(Jan_09\).pdf](http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/Web_Assets/PSD/Outcomes_paper_-_summary_impact_assessment_(Jan_09).pdf)

We want you to look this evaluation and to let us know what you believe will be the impact on your business and specific produce. It's essential that the industry does not become complacent at this stage.

FPC will continue to fight the industry's position as the regulation is developed and finally ratified before its implementation in 2010. We will endeavour to ensure that your concerns are raised with UK Government.

For those that trade elsewhere in the EU and the world - have you asked the question of your suppliers and growers 'Can you grow your produce without these key products?'

FPC responds to tabloid scare

Both the Daily Mirror and The Sun published 'scare stories' about fresh produce early this week. According to the Mirror online:



The great British breakfast can seriously damage your health, say food experts. But - sorry folks - so can fresh fruit and vegetables, it was revealed yesterday. The conflicting reports came as the Food Standards Agency launched a campaign to encourage us all to eat more healthily. They pointed out that the traditional fry-up has 33.7g of artery-clogging saturated fat - way over recommended limits.

But just hours later in a separate report, scientists disclosed that outbreaks of food poisoning in Europe have been linked to imported baby corn, lettuce and raspberries. And cases in the US have been traced to spinach, melons and tomatoes.

Prof Norman Noah, a London-based expert on infections, said: "Some outbreaks undoubtedly go unrecognised and the scale of the problem is as yet unknown."

FPC issued the following response to both papers:

Food poisoning outbreaks associated with the consumption of fresh produce are extremely rare in the UK, accounting for just 4 percent of outbreaks between 1992 and 2006. Good agricultural practices, hygiene preparation and packaging minimise the potential for contamination. The fresh produce industry has stringent standards in place to ensure that the UK consumer can enjoy healthy good quality fresh produce.

We should be encouraging people to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables. The risk of ill-health associated with poor diets and rising obesity levels far outweighs the minute risk of contamination of fresh produce.

We have contacted Prof Norman Noah and will track down the report referred to. If you are aware of this report, let us know. To ensure that guidance to companies is up-to-date FPC is producing a revised version of its Food Hygiene Guide, which will be published shortly.

Food and Farming Study

The Government's think tank, Foresight, has launched a new project, 'Food and Farming Futures', which will analyse the global food system including changing demand, production and supply. The aim of the project is to assist policymakers both in the UK and overseas to develop strategies.

Professor John Beddington, the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of the Government Office for Science, said: "There are huge challenges facing food and farming due to a growing world population and limited resources, such as water and land. Intricately linked to this is the issue of climate change and concerns over the environmental impacts of agriculture. The Foresight study is a fresh opportunity to consider how science and technology can help meet these challenges now and in the future."

The findings of the report will be published in late 2010. For more information visit: <http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/ActiveProjects/FoodandFarmingFutures/FoodandfarmingProjectHome.asp>

Sources of capital grant funding - WRAP guide to funding for food waste processing

WRAP has published a funding guide for food waste processing, in response to the growing number of requests for advice and support.

The guide lists potential sources of funding from a range of organisations covering areas such as environmental improvements, business development, and research, as well as detailing other grant aid schemes.

There is also a section highlighting relevant searchable databases and providing links to useful organisations and resources.



To access the guide visit:

http://www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/Funding_guide_FINAL_printed_0e3794c2.6551.pdf

Making Sense of GM Foods

A new consumer guide 'Making sense of GM foods' examines the way GM has been debated in the past, and presents commentary from scientists, who say a new perspective needs to take into account.

Professor Ian Crute, Director, Rothamsted Research, interviewed on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, said: "In the last decade, momentum towards publicly-funded improvement of UK crops based on GM technology has sadly been lost. And unless we make changes, the costly framework for regulatory approval that now exists in the EU means that a valuable technology is likely to become the exclusive province of wealthy multinational corporations.

However, if we overcome prejudice and misinformation, I fully believe that we can arrive at a discussion that appreciates the role of crop science, including GM, in delivering the increases in yield and quality that society is looking for."

In the guide, the heads of the independent, public-sector research centres in the UK call for a discussion about GM that helps the public and policy makers to judge what crop technologies could contribute to global food supply and to the management of natural resource and changes in climate. They and other scientists explain what GM is and the research that uses it.

For a copy of the report visit:

<http://www.senseaboutscience.org.uk/PDF/MakingSenseofGM.pdf>

International Exhibition and Conference – Cairo

Members are invited to participate in the Food and Health II International Exhibition and Conference on 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

Information Notification:

Date: 2/02/2009; notified by the Netherlands; ref: 2009.0106 Salmonella (in 1 of 5 samples /25g) in Asiatic pennywort from Thailand.

Date: 2/02/2008; notified by the Netherlands; ref: 2009.0111 Salmonella in praeuw leaf from Thailand.

Date: 4/02/2009; notified by Finland; ref: 2009.0128 Carbofuran (0.37 mg/kg – ppm), prophenophos (0.10 mg/kg – ppm), ethion (9.5 mg/kg – ppm), traizophos (0.10 mg/kg – ppm), omethoate and dimoethoate (sum 0.49 mg/kg – ppm) in fresh coriander from Thailand.

Date: 4/02/2009; notified by Italy; ref: 2009.AGQ Imazalil (6.88 mg/kg – ppm) in lemons from Argentina.

Border rejections:

Date: 6/02/2009; notified by Spain; ref: 2009.AHL Spoilage of fresh pears from Chile.

Date: 6/02/2009; notified by Spain; ref: 2009.AHP Spoilage of fresh plums from Chile.

Date: 6/02/2009; notified by Spain; ref: 2009.AHS Spoilage of cassavas and bananas from Ecuador.