



freshproduceconsortium

NEWSLETTER

27 February 2009

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Listen to consumers – and give us clarity over the future of horticulture

Concerns are mounting that the horticulture industry faces months, if not years, of uncertainty about the impact of the European regulation to remove key products which are vital for controlling pests, weeds and diseases.

The ability of European horticulture to supply good quality affordable produce in a safe sustainable manner will be jeopardised without a full impact assessment, including the wider impact on food supply.

The lack of detail from the European Commission and clarity regarding definitions of criteria makes it very difficult for the fresh produce sector to assess fully the implications of this regulation. This has led to speculation, second guessing, and even talk of unofficial ‘blacklists’ to ban certain active substances. This speculation is neither useful nor constructive as these substances have been through rigorous testing and approval. We are grateful for the evaluation by the Pesticides Safety Directorate in the UK, and work is progressing to interpret more fully the implications of the regulation which will be most helpful to the industry. However, the European Commission must resolve this uncertainty by putting in place a full impact assessment and providing information of the impact on individual crops.

“The European Commission appears to base its livelihood on indecision and narrow thinking, but it cannot impose this on the fresh produce industry. We need hard and fast information upon which to make long-term business decisions to ensure that we can continue to provide safe, affordable fresh produce,” commented Nigel Jenney.

Growers already have a limited range of products to protect horticultural crops, and in some instances there will be no viable alternatives for treating common pests which reduce yields and damage fresh produce. It may become uneconomic to grow some crops such as sprouts and carrots, and lower yields will mean hard-pressed consumers will have to pay higher prices for their fruit and vegetables, including apples, pears, raspberries, leeks, peas and beans.

In a recent survey by the Food Standards Agency UK consumers indicated that they are more concerned about rising food prices than about pesticides in food. In fact, concerns about pesticides have decreased over time and are now at their lowest level since tracking began in 2001. The Food Standards Agency’s latest quarterly ‘public tracker’ survey monitors changes in consumer attitudes regarding key food issues (see: <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/trackersurvey1208.pdf>).

The European Parliament should prioritise its efforts to tackle the significant challenges of feeding an increasing world population, competing pressures on agricultural land and the impact of climate change. With rising obesity levels across Europe we must encourage more people to eat fresh fruit and vegetables and ensure that the industry can continue to provide a sustainable supply of fresh



produce. We will continue to press the UK Government and others to ensure that the industry has the necessary tools to provide a sustainable supply of fresh produce,” added Nigel Jenney.

Your opportunity to take part in the industry’s Oscars

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 deadline for entries is Thursday 9 April. Entries are free, and forms are available from: www.refreshawards.com

The overall Produce Trader of the Year will be selected from the winners of the following categories:

- Foodservice Supplier of the Year;
- Retail Florist of the Year;
- Importer of the Year.
- Wholesaler of the Year;
- Packer of the Year;

Other Awards categories are:

- 5 A DAY Supporter of the Year;
- Retailer of the Year;
- Young Person of the Year;
- Innovation of the Year;
- Marketing Campaign of the Year;
- Lifetime Achievement.

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! For conference details visit: www.refreshawards.com



Competition Commission consults industry on supply chain practices

FPC will be responding to the Competition Commission’s consultation regarding The Groceries (Supply Chain Practices) Market Investigation Order 2009. The fresh produce industry welcomes the opportunity for sharing best practice and transparency throughout the supply chain.

The Commission published its final report on the market investigation into the supply of groceries in the UK on 30 April 2008. The report set out the CC’s findings that there are features of the markets



for the supply of groceries which adversely affect competition in the UK. One of these features was the exercise of buyer power by certain grocery retailers with respect to their suppliers of groceries, through the adoption of supply chain practices that transfer excessive risks and unexpected costs to suppliers.

The Commission's Order sets out a package of remedies to address the adverse effect on competition and the consequential detrimental effects on customers. The Order covers procedures for de-listing; variations made to terms of supply; minimum standards with regard to price and payment; information and reporting requirements.

The Order can be found at: http://www.competition-commission.org.uk/inquiries/ref2006/grocery/pdf/notice_of_intention_to_make_order_gscop.pdf

We are asking members to provide their views regarding the Commission's proposals by 20 March so that we can coordinate an industry response.

Get involved – 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



Pesticide Usage Survey

The Pesticides Safety Directorate is reviewing the pesticide usage programme and seeking feedback on proposals to collect data on fruit and vegetable crops on a bi-annual basis rather than every four years. PSD intends to use the data to assess the economic and environmental implications of the withdrawal of pesticides, targeting monitoring programmes for residues in food, and providing information to assist research projects.

Defra has commented that the current programme does not take into account changes in pesticide use due to variations in weather, pest pressures and the availability of pest control solutions. In addition, EU statistics regulation will create new statutory requirements to collect UK data on the use of pesticides.

FPC will be coordinating a response to the consultation on the proposals by 30 May so let us have your feedback regarding the current survey and PSD's consultation. For more information visit: <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/approvals.asp?id=2638> and forward your feedback to sian@freshproduce.org.uk

Tackling the challenge of global food security until 2050

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food for Development has launched an inquiry into food security. The group is calling for evidence by 31 March on whether the UK is meeting its current commitments to address issues of global food security and how well equipped the UK is to play its part in generating long-term predictable and sustainable development for those affecting in the developing world.

FPC will be providing a written submission to the group. If you would like to participate you can find more information at [http://www.ukcds.org.uk/assets/downloads/Global%20Food%20Security%20Call%20For%20Evidence%206%202%2009 .pdf](http://www.ukcds.org.uk/assets/downloads/Global%20Food%20Security%20Call%20For%20Evidence%206%202%2009.pdf)

GLA licence refused over identity concerns

Concerns over the identity of a prospective gangmaster have led to the refusal to provide a licence. The Gangmasters Licensing Agency commented that the identity of the applicant Mr Joginder Mann who intended to run J Mann contractors Ltd in Wolverhampton could not be authenticated, due to the failure to provide sufficient evidence of his entitlement to work in the UK.

Prices from recovered materials

Long term UK markets for recovered materials appear to be stabilising according to an update from WRAP. Prices have continued to rise for paper (up to £5 per tonne). However there are still concerns about volatility in certain markets, including cardboard (currently £50 per tonne). Evidence



from traders suggests that, due to the fragility of the Chinese market, prices for plastics and cardboard could come under pressure. WRAP's Materials Pricing is compiled from data collected independently from industry (visit:www.wrap.org.uk/wrap_corporate/news/wrap_materials.html)

EU Rapid Alert – Update

Information Notification:

Date: 16/02/2009; notified by the UK; ref: 2009.0196 fosthiazate (0.04 mg/kg – ppm) in new baby potatoes from the United Kingdom.

Date: 18/02/2009; notified by Germany; ref: 2009.0206 oxamyl (0.072 mg/kg – ppm) in fresh peppers from Turkey.

Border Rejections:

Date: 17/02/2009; notified by Italy; ref: 2009.AIR triazophos (0.11 mg/kg – ppm) in okra from India.