



FPC News Release

19 July 2011

Commission's 'What's on the menu this summer?' campaign misses the mark for UK consumers

The UK fresh produce industry has rejected the Commission's attempt to restore UK consumer confidence as a wasted opportunity for UK businesses and way off the mark for UK consumers. The Commission has produced a one-off advertisement 'What's on the menu this summer?' which ran today in the 'Metro' magazine.

"The Commission is definitely off the menu as far as UK businesses are concerned, having damaged the fresh produce industry through unfounded and premature links between fresh produce and the recent E.coli outbreaks," said Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium. "This poorly planned one-off advertisement is another example of the Commission's ineptitude. It makes no reference to UK businesses and will do nothing to help them or restore consumers' confidence in fresh produce."

FPC has contacted the European Commission to point out the more effective ways in which it can support UK businesses by:

- removing fresh peas and beans from the current EU ban on Egyptian imports;
- providing direct compensation to all UK businesses adversely affected, not just growers of a limited selection of products;
- working more closely with the fresh produce industry to develop immediately a more targeted and effective promotional campaign.

Despite the fact that the industry's Eat In Colour website address was tacked onto the advertisement FPC received no consultation or prior notification of this UK advertisement.

The advertisement fails to respond to difficulties experienced by the UK sprouted seed sector and confusion for consumers caused by European and UK advice to cook sprouted seeds prior to consumption. In addition, it takes no account of the on-going impact on UK distributors generated by the European Commission's ban on certain Egyptian imports, including fresh beans and peas, that is not seeds (under the CN code 0708) which have no link with the E.coli outbreaks.

"A single advertisement run for one day in a commuter magazine is not going to have a significant impact on the UK population as a whole," added Nigel Jenney. "Defra has failed to ensure that its voice has been heard in support of the industry. The Commission needs to do far better than this to put right its mistakes. We have called on the Commission to take responsibility for its bungling management of the recent E.coli outbreaks."



Notes for editors:

- 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.
- Extensive membership covers the complete spectrum of industry businesses including growers, importers, wholesalers, retailers, distributors, processors, packers, food service companies and other allied organisations.
- Eat In Colour website: www.eatincolour.com

Ends