



FPC NEWS RELEASE

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FPC welcomes vindication with EU clean bill of health for Egyptian fresh produce

FPC welcomes the European Commission's decision to lift the ban on imports of certain fresh produce from Egypt, including fresh peas and beans. The products were caught under an EU ban imposed after the recent E.coli outbreaks in Germany and France. The timing of the removal of the ban on certain products has not been announced yet.

"It was vital that the European Commission identified the source of these serious E.coli outbreaks very quickly. However, this was no excuse for a knee-jerk reaction based on unfounded assumptions which jeopardised the viability of fresh produce businesses trading in Egypt and the UK," said Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of the FPC. "FPC is delighted that our extensive lobbying has been vindicated and common sense has been applied. Fresh produce should never have been included in this ridiculous ban and we want to see it lifted without delay. This removal of fresh produce from the ban reinforces the competence of Egyptian producers, although the same cannot be said about the Commission's handling of the matter."

The UK fresh produce industry suffered significant losses and a drop in consumption of salad products due to unfounded and premature claims linking fresh produce to the E.coli outbreaks. FPC estimated that lost sales revenues for cucumbers, tomatoes and lettuce alone were around £54 million. Sales of bean sprouts fell by 30 per cent.



Food poisoning outbreaks linked with the contamination of fresh produce remain extremely rare in the UK. Good agricultural practices, hygiene preparations and packaging minimise the potential for contamination. The fresh produce industry has stringent standards in place to ensure that consumers can enjoy safe, healthy, good quality fresh produce.

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.

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