



FPC PRESS RELEASE

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Don't be a seasonal Scrooge this Christmas

Enjoy the best of our seasonal British fresh produce, but don't limit your winter diet for the sake of maintaining well intentioned principles, says the Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC). There is an understandable interest in eating in season, to ensure that we enjoy fresh produce at its best, however a narrow focus on home-grown seasonal produce at all costs is threatening to become the Scrooge of festive fare.

Mealtimes could be rather dreary and monotonous at this time of the year if we followed the rigid advice of 'British and seasonal' only from 'green do gooders'. One promoter suggests that there are only nine UK vegetables and no fruit at all which are seasonally appropriate until the spring. Yet older generations will remember the delight of finding nestling in their Christmas sock an orange or tangerine, which are just as much our traditional festive fare as the Brussel sprout.

There is no reason to feel guilty about enjoying the wonderful array of fresh, and seasonal, produce available to us from other parts of the world. Consumers can enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables as part of a healthy diet and put in context their environmental footprint.

Recent research confirms that foods with higher recommended consumption levels like fresh produce are also those with a lower environmental impact, regardless of their origin or concerns about food miles.

Around 60 per cent of fruit and vegetables are imported to the UK, mainly from within the EU, providing consumers with produce outside the UK season as well as varieties which cannot be grown in the UK due to our climate.

“Whilst FPC welcomes seasonal British fresh fruit and vegetables and wishes to see increased production of indigenous produce, the reality is that the UK would never want to, or be able to become totally self-sufficient, given the pressures on land availability and the vagaries of our climate,” said Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium.

“Limiting food choices to the UK only would reduce the diverse range of produce available to consumers, particularly during certain growing seasons. Consumers would be restricted to a limited diet and be deprived of some of their favourite vegetables and fruit. Some food supplies may on occasion be more vulnerable to extreme weather conditions, such as we’ve experienced recently, and these seasonal Scrooges would deny us the option of alternative sources of supply elsewhere in Europe and worldwide.”

“Our society faces a major health issue with rising obesity levels and on average the UK consumer eats only 2.5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day. We need to encourage the UK consumer to eat 5-day through initiatives such as the industry’s Eat In Colour campaign (www.eatincolour.com) and to enjoy a wide variety of affordable quality fresh produce irrespective of its origin and means of production.”

Ends

Notes for editors:

1. 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.
2. Extensive membership covers the complete spectrum of industry businesses including growers, importers, wholesalers, retailers, distributors, processors, packers, food service companies and other allied organisations.
3. For more information on the Eat In Colour campaign visit www.eatincolour.com

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