



FPC PRESS RELEASE

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INCREASED PRODUCTION OF FRESH PRODUCE KEY DRIVER FOR GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Increased consumption of fresh produce and its sustainable production are vital to meet the challenges of global food security, says the Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC). The fresh produce industry is well placed to help the UK Government deliver the recommendations set out in the Foresight report 'Global Food and Farming Futures' led by Professor John Beddington.

"We welcome the report's balanced approach towards the need for imports and the recognition of our responsibility to support developing countries within a global market. The fresh produce industry is ready to play a leading role in developing a sustainable food supply which can meet the pressing global challenges of producing more with less," said Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of FPC.

FPC was involved in the Government's fruit and vegetable task force which identified last year a strategy to increase consumption and UK production of fresh produce. This report recognises that both UK production and imports are critical to deliver UK and global food security, and that both can be sustainable. It rejects food self-sufficiency as a viable option for nations and also recognises the need for fair and fully functioning global markets.

"We need to see swifter action from Defra and others to drive forward sound policies to deliver a globally sourced sustainable food supply," said Nigel Jenney. "The UK Government needs to deliver its commitment to reduce unnecessary burdens on the industry. We want to see progress in removing the cumulative impact of unnecessary regulation on the

economy, and more effective influence with EU policy makers to ensure proportionate governance,” commented Nigel Jenney.

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. UK growers have a significant opportunity to increase the sustainable production of indigenous crops which are suited to our climate. FPC believes that Defra should identify those indigenous crops with greater production potential than is achieved currently and ensure that the sector has the necessary tools to maximise this potential.

The UK horticulture industry is meeting the challenge of reducing inputs through the use of integrated pest management. In addition, government investment to R&D and knowledge transfer is essential to ensure that the fresh produce industry is equipped with the necessary resources and skills to meet the challenges of delivering food security. Currently the UK lags behind many other countries, such as China and India.

“The fresh produce sector has a relatively low carbon footprint in comparison with other food sectors and it’s important that we keep this in perspective while recognising the complexities of the whole food supply chain,” added Nigel Jenney. “The fresh produce industry is putting in place measures to achieve food production in a low-carbon world, calculating greenhouse gas emissions, reducing excess packaging and increasing re-use and recycling, as well as reducing food waste and recovering energy.”

The industry is tackling waste reduction across the food chain, one of the recommendations of the report. FPC was involved in a research project commissioned by WRAP which has developing detailed ‘resource maps’, quantifying food waste and packaging waste, through the fresh produce retail and wholesale supply chain. The project was led by Cranfield University, working with food and grocery supply chain expert IGD and FPC, representing the fresh produce industry.

The reports calls for demand for more resource intensive types of food to be contained. Government departments can make a far greater impact to change people’s diets by having a cohesive policy for public sector food procurement which encourages greater consumption

of fresh fruit and vegetables, regardless of their origin, and in line with Defra's own definition of 'locally in season' which includes imported produce.

Defra's definition of 'locally in season' is: 'Food that is outdoor grown or produced during the natural growing/production period for the country or region where it is produced. It need not necessarily be consumed locally to where it is grown. This applies to seasonal food produced both in the UK and overseas'.

The Government needs to help consumers make sound ethical choices on sustainable healthy food and to encourage greater consumption of fresh produce. The industry's Eat In Colour campaign has made great strides to increase consumers' enjoyment of fresh produce as part of a healthy diet. Whilst the Department of Health has achieved significant consumer awareness of 5-a-day this has not translated into widespread adoption of a healthy diet and greater consumption of fresh produce.

"Beddington's report comments on the highjacking of 5-a-day to promote inappropriate foodstuffs and calls for targeted programmes in schools. FPC wants to see 5-a-day return to its core values and the expansion of the successful Schools Fruit and Veg Scheme," said Nigel Jenney.

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Notes for editors:

1. The Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC) is the UK's fresh produce trade a