



FPC PRESS RELEASE

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FPC WARNS OF IMPACT ON INDUSTRY AND PORT HEALTH AUTHORITIES OF ADDITIONAL CHECKS FOR 'HIGH RISK' PRODUCTS FROM 7 OCTOBER

Increased checks required for large volumes of certain Egyptian products designated as 'high risk' will have a significant impact on the resources of both airports, ports and Port Health Authorities from 7 October, warns the Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC). Delays in clearance, additional storage costs, damage and loss of products and their disposal will affect many importers of highly perishable products.

"It is likely that some Port Health Authorities will not have sufficient resource or storage facilities to cope with such high volumes coming from Egypt," said Nigel Jenney. "We have called on the Food Standards Agency to take a more pragmatic approach to its implementation of the Regulation, the FSA is listening but progress is painfully slow. We need the urgent introduction of the Assured Trader status and reduced checks on reputable traders."

Successful lobbying by FPC has secured confirmation that the European Commission does not intend to include pomegranate seeds and mixed fruits from Egypt under Annex I of EC Regulation 669/2009.

FPC raised concerns with the Food Standards Agency and the European Commission regarding the inclusion from October 2010 of products to the Annex I listing, namely: Egyptian oranges, peaches, pomegranates, strawberries and green beans; curry leaves from India; and coriander leaves, basil and mint from Thailand.

The UK is a major importer of Egyptian products, for example, accounting for 40% of EU imports of oranges from Egypt in 2008, and the regulation will impact on many importing companies.

FPC wants the urgent application of the Assured Trader Scheme which would permit Port Health Authorities to reduce checks on reputable traders already meeting high standards. Currently there is no recognition of the fact that some companies have made considerable investment in securing accreditation from Globalgap and other product certification schemes, with independently verified records of pesticide monitoring.

“We accept the need for appropriate risk based regulation, but this is a sledge hammer to crack a nut. The UK Government has made public its commitment to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy on trade but we want to see real action now,” added Nigel Jenney.

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. Egyptian produce

The proposal to introduce checks on oranges, peaches, pomegranates, strawberries, and green beans from Egypt will impact significantly on a larger number of UK companies, with high volumes of these products being imported to the UK.

Product	UK % of EU imports (Eurostat 2008)	Volumes (tonnes)
Oranges	40.5	44,612.3
Peaches	35.8	535.5
Strawberries	21.7	2,052.0
Pomegranates	13.8	580.2
Green beans	20.4	4,343.2