



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

25 September 2008

**EU PESTICIDE PACKAGE: FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SECTOR CALLS
PARLIAMENT TO CONSIDER EFFECTS ON THE AVAILABILITY OF QUALITY PRODUCE**

Following this week's reintroduction of the EU's pesticide package for second reading in the European Parliament, AREFLH, FRESHFEL and OEITFL, representing the European fresh and processed fruit and vegetable sector calls Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to take into account the far reaching implications on the availability of quality produce.

Whilst the fruit and vegetable sector is at the forefront in taking up integrated production methods and reducing chemical inputs, a sufficient wide range of plant protection solutions remains crucial to ensure the success of these techniques.

The proposals for the future authorisation of plant protection products introduce so-called "cut-off criteria" which foresee to eliminate hazardous substances on the basis of their toxicological properties, thus phasing out many substances that are safely used on European crops today. An increasing number of reports confirm that the additional criteria adopted by the European Parliament in its 1st reading will have serious consequences on produce quality and availability as well as the economic viability of certain crops. As a consequence price increases for certain commodities will become unavoidable at a time when such matters are already a source of major political concern.

The fruit and vegetable sector, already equipped with limited plant protection solutions, will undoubtedly be hardest hit. Crops such as carrots or onions, but also brassicas (broccoli, cauliflower, ...), could practically lose all plant protection solutions presently available to them. Inevitable price increases would have a knock-on effect on fruit and vegetable consumption, at a time when the role of fruit and vegetables has never been as high on the public health policy priority list, e.g. as a tool to counter obesity and other diet-related diseases.

The fruit and vegetable sector:

- fully acknowledges the need for updating EU pesticide legislation & to provide for a continued high level of consumer and environmental protection;
- criticizes that far-reaching political decisions are taken while the Commission's impact assessment of 2006 failed to look at the impact of the proposals on European agricultural crops and the wider socio-economic implications;
- supports the Member States' compromise (Council common position) which provides for a very high level of health and environmental protection, and which already constitutes a serious challenge for our sector.

Enclosed: background note

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