ISAFRUIT builds links between industry and health
Contributed by: Lynley Browne Communications Limited

ISAFRUIT builds links between industry and health

Researchers highlight supply chain’s role in ensuring a healthy diet for European consumers.

Berlin, Germany, 29th January 2007 – Europe’s premier fruit research project will exhibit this year at the world’s largest produce industry gathering – the annual Fruit Logistica trade fair in Berlin.

Dr Ole Callesen, Project Director for the €21.1m ISAFRUIT project, which aims to promote European health and wellbeing through improved quality, appeal and consumption of fruit, said today that Fruit Logistica would provide the ideal opportunity for ISAFRUIT to better introduce itself to members of the European fruit industry.

“ISAFRUIT is a science project, but its goals reach far wider than the research environment and therefore we need to ensure the knowledge ISAFRUIT generates can be applied in the real world for the benefit of consumers.

“The various members of Europe’s sophisticated fresh produce industry are therefore a crucial part of ISAFRUIT’s success. Fruit growers, marketers, logistics companies and retailers play a key role in the health of Europe, supplying foods that are wholesome and nutritious.

“Now we hope that science can enhance their endeavours, helping to ensure all Europeans have access to a healthy diet that includes plenty of fruit.”

ISAFRUIT is addressing this challenge by focusing on “bottlenecks” in the fruit supply chain – areas where issues such as quality, safety, convenience, price and availability impact on consumer willingness, or ability to purchase and consume fruit.

ISAFRUIT is built around 8 key ‘Pillars’. Two of these manage project coordination and dissemination of information whilst 6 focus purely on research (see attached notes) - each of these addresses a number of research, technical and development activities. In all cases research is driven by knowledge of consumer needs and desires, as well as concern for the environment.

Taking the “fork to farm” approach, ISAFRUIT utilises consumer based research conducted by Pillar 1 as a platform for all other research. Project activity ranges from the development of new and improved fruit cultivars using genetics, improved pre and postharvest chain management, to better understanding the role fruit plays in the health of consumers.

Such a wide field of study is necessary when dealing with linkages as complex as those between fruit production, consumption and human health, said Dr Callesen.

“In order to best approach such a demanding research project it was essential to define specific areas for study which could be aggressively pursued by specialist organisations in different countries, yet still contribute to a wider body of knowledge that could be successfully utilised by other ISAFRUIT members and the wider European produce industry for the ultimate benefit of European consumers.”

“It was also important that research areas be complementary, so that the sum total of knowledge gained would increase when results from all areas were combined.”
“Each of the research areas chosen therefore represents a separate, but crucial area in our understanding of the way in which fruit is grown, transported, offered for sale and consumed, and its benefits for the environment and consumer. Importantly, each area also represents a range of products and activities where members feel new discoveries are obtainable. This balance underlines ISAFRUIT’s goal of leveraging existing understanding to create valuable new knowledge.”

ENDS

Representatives from the ISAFRUIT project will be available to meet with visitors and fellow Fruit Logistica exhibitors at the ISAFRUIT project stand, Halle 2.2 stand C-05. Visitors to the stand will also be able to collect a CD road map of the project.

ISAFRUIT – Healthy fruit for a healthy Europe

ISAFRUIT is an integrated research project seeking a healthier diet for Europe by improving the quality, appeal and consumption of fruit. Launched in 2005, ISAFRUIT draws on expertise from sixty of Europe’s premier fruit and food research organisations, centres for technological development and small-medium enterprises, together with two specialist research providers in the United States and New Zealand. With substantial financial support from the European Commission, ISAFRUIT partners are jointly investing €21.1m in a four and a half year research programme to address and remove barriers to fruit consumption. ISAFRUIT’s research, technological and development activities span the entire fruit supply chain “from fork to farm”. They are augmenting and enhancing the quality, safety, sustainability and availability of high quality fruit and fruit products, raising consumer awareness of fruit and health interactions and contributing to opportunities that ensure fruit is economically accessible to all Europeans.

http://www.isafruit.eu

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