



Embargoed for 00.01 on Monday 8th October

80% OF RETAILERS RALLY TOGETHER TO DRIVE UP VEG CONSUMPTION IN THE UK

VEG SUMMIT – 8th OCTOBER 2018 – CITY HALL, LONDON

- **Seven major retailers, who together make up more than 80% (82.9%) of the grocery market share¹ in the UK, have rallied together to drive up declining vegetable consumption in the UK**
- **New Euromonitor data shows the UK ranks 21 out of 28 in the EU for fresh vegetable consumption²**
- **80% of adults and children and 95% of teenagers don't eat enough veg³**
- **Food Foundation research shows that two thirds of ready meals contain less than one portion of vegetables⁴**
- **20,000 deaths a year could be prevented by tackling low consumption of vegetables and pulses**
- **The seven supermarket pledgers will develop and promote more veg products and prioritise in-store positioning of vegetables in a bid to support the public health benefits of high veg consumption**
- **2018 Pledgers to be announced at The Vegetable Summit at City Hall on 8th October**

More than 80% of the UK grocery market has come together to boost vegetable consumption in the UK. Major retailers Aldi, Asda, and Waitrose join Co-op, Lidl, Sainsbury's and Tesco (who joined the initiative in 2017) in making commitments to help their customers eat more vegetables as part of the [Peas Please](#) initiative. These commitments are welcome in view of newly released Euromonitor data which show that the UK ranks 8th worst in Europe for per capita fresh veg consumption².

Peas Please is coordinated by partner organisations in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and aims to bring together business and brands from across the food system to secure [commitments](#) to improve the availability, affordability and quality of the veg offered in supermarkets, shops, schools, pubs, fast food outlets and beyond. Peas Please has delivered 4.8 million additional portions of veg in its first year.

The 2018 Vegetable Summit will feature keynote speeches from Tony Juniper, Executive Director for Advocacy and Campaigns for World Wildlife Fund and one of the UK's foremost environmentalists and Professor Alan Dangour, Professor of Food and Nutrition for Global Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Tony Juniper, Executive Director for Advocacy and Campaigns for WWF, said: "Our planet's web of life is being torn apart, and the main reason is our food. From being the main cause for deforestation to the pollution of rivers with chemicals and soil, how we feed ourselves is the biggest factor behind the loss of wildlife. Livestock products have an especially high impact. An area roughly the size of Africa is now used up in producing meat and dairy products. Farm animals are also a major source of climate changing pollution, and as incomes rise so demand for meat and dairy products is going up too. The good news is that reducing demand for animal products is one of the most powerful ways we have for both feeding the world and saving it."

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Sir John Hegarty will also be present with an update on the Veg Power fund that was announced at last year's summit with an aim to look at how advertising can play a role in increasing veg consumption.

Following its launch in 2017, Peas Please has secured commitments from 41 pledgers (including Greggs, Birds Eye, Brains Ltd, PwC, the Scottish Government, Castell Howell, Birmingham City Council, Sodexo and Nestle) and helped sell nearly five million (4.8 million) additional portions of veg.

RETAIL

Pledges from the UK supermarkets involve delivering more vegetable products, increasing veg marketing and prioritising in-store positioning of vegetables in order to increase consumption. For every one of your five-a-day eaten, your risk of all-cause mortality decreases by 5%⁵. Currently 80% of adults and teenagers and 95% of children eat fewer than 3.5 portions a day³, but eating more veg could prevent diet-related chronic illnesses like heart disease, cancer and diabetes, and significantly reduce the financial burden on the NHS.

As part of its pledge to drive up veg consumption, Waitrose has committed to recommending other vegetables each time a customer puts a vegetable in their online basket. Aldi will run 12 dedicated TV campaigns to highlight promotions on fruit and vegetables, and will position vegetable offerings in higher footfall areas of its stores.

Moira Howie, Nutrition Manager Waitrose, said: "We believe there are few things more important than the food we eat. That's why we're committed to encouraging shoppers to incorporate a rainbow of veg into their and their family's diets - through inspiring products, recipes and events."

Julie Ashfield, Managing Director of Buying at Aldi UK, said: "Our new store layout dedicates more space for fresh produce. As the UK's best value supermarket our customers know they can purchase quality fresh produce at unbeatable prices at Aldi.

"Working with Peas Please gives us the opportunity to help our customers increase their consumption of fresh vegetables. We will also continue our work on developing recipe ideas to share with and inspire customers."

READY MEALS

In 2017 we spent £4.7 billion on ready meals in the UK⁶, and yet only a third of ready meals include a portion or more of veg⁴. Included in Castell Howell and Birds Eye's pledges are commitments to launching new veggie ready meal products and increasing veg portions in existing ranges.

Pete Johnson, General Marketing Manager at Birds Eye, said: "The best way to achieve a healthy, nutritious diet is to eat a wide variety of different foods that provide the range of nutrients that the body demands. Vegetables are often the only natural source of these nutrients, and buying frozen vegetables is a great way to aid vitamin retention and reduce food waste. Recently, we launched our *Veggie Bowl* range of ready meals to make consuming vegetables more appealing; each serving contains two portions of an individual's recommended five-a-day. Because they are frozen, they contain no artificial preservatives, colours or flavours."

Edward Morgan, Group CSR & Training Manager at Castell Howell, said: "Castell Howell Foods value the opportunity to be involved with the Peas Please initiative. As an intermediary in the foodservice supply chain we are in a position of responsibility to work with both customers and suppliers to find and deliver solutions that provide nutritional gains to the final consumer. We are encouraged by the positive approach of our supplier, Authentic Curry and World Foods and key customers such as SA Brain & Co and Cardiff Education Catering to help achieve phase one of our targets."

The [Vegetable Summit 2018](#) (free press passes available with the code MoreVeg) held at City Hall on 8th October, will celebrate progress made by Peas Please, announce major new pledges, welcome Northern Ireland as a new partner, and will launch the Peas Please 2018 Progress Report.

Anna Taylor, Executive Director of the Food Foundation, said: “Peas Please shows that it is possible to make it easier for everyone to eat more veg but it needs concerted leadership from progressive businesses. We’ve made great progress in the last eight months but the pressure is now on to change pledges into portions to ensure genuine impact on the nation’s health.”

Notes to Editors

1. <https://www.kantarworldpanel.com/global/grocery-market-share/great-britain>
2. Euromonitor International is a global market research company, providing strategic intelligence on industries, companies, economies and consumers around the world. Euromonitor data is based on data on the availability of fresh produce gathered from production, trade and, industrial processing and waste statistics. 18 markets are researched with a full individual country research programme (including the UK), while for the remaining 36 countries, market sizes are built centrally using secondary source information. Modelled countries are not researched, they are estimates based on most similar/representative markets. <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Euromonitor-fresh-produce-data.pdf>
3. <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/FF-Veg-Doc-V5.pdf>
4. <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/research-method-ready-meals-online.pdf>
5. Wang Xia, Ouyang Yingying, Liu Jun, Zhu Minmin, Zhao Gang, Bao Wei et al. Fruit and vegetable consumption and mortality from all causes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer: systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies BMJ 2014; 349 :g4490
6. Eating Better briefing - Are ready meals ready for the future? <https://www.eating-better.org/uploads/Documents/2018/Ready%20Meals%20Briefing%20final.pdf>

Anna Taylor is available for further comment.

Please contact:

Jo Ralling – 07770500858 / jo.ralling@foodfoundation.org.uk

Pandora Haydon – 07789712608 / pandora.haydon@foodfoundation.org.uk

Media pack available here (including Peas Please progress report): [Media Pack](#)

Social Media

@Food_Foundation

@nourishscotland

@fairfoodcardiff

@wwf_UK

@food_NI

@VegPowerUK

#PeasPlease
#VegPower

About Peas Please

A trail-blazing initiative focused specifically on veg, Peas Please aims to bring together farmers, retailers, fast food and restaurant chains, caterers, processors and government departments with a common goal of making it easier for everyone to eat veg. Committed to collaborative working, Peas Please is led by project partners the [Food Foundation](#), [WWF UK](#), [Nourish Scotland](#), [Food NI](#) and [Food Cardiff](#) who have secured engagement and support from over 150 organisations in cities, business and Governments across the UK to bring about change to the whole food system to improve people's health and wellbeing. For more information about the Peas Please, please visit www.foodfoundation.org.uk/peasplease

