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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**START AGAIN TO ENJOY FRESH!**

**With a complicated year behind the fresh produce sector which still requires actions to remedy the negative impact it has had, Freshfel Europe will continue in 2012 to take the lead in stimulating consumption and assisting the industry in gaining consumer confidence and market share. Following up on actions carried out in 2011, the association is planning several initiatives starting today with a continued press campaign to highlight that it is time again to enjoy fresh!**

The last year will remain on record as one of the most challenging years ever for the fresh fruit and vegetables sector. It has seen an accumulation of factors making a severe impact on the fresh fruit and vegetables industry. The economic and financial uncertainties, the e-coli crisis, the production overlap in the market and the lack of consumer confidence have unfortunately been at the top of everybody's agenda throughout the year. Ramon Rey, President of Freshfel Europe, stated: *"In this context of troubled water, Freshfel Europe has played a crucial role in defending the interests of the sector and serving the industry to the best of its interest. Freshfel Europe acted as a unique platform to join forces and foster renewed confidence, doing the utmost to find adequate responses to the 2011 challenges."*

With a new year lying ahead, Freshfel will also in 2012 take the lead in assisting the industry in gaining consumer confidence and market share and will continue its efforts to build the most favorable environment to stimulate the consumption of fresh produce in Europe. Several activities are already planned in this respect and will be implemented and carried out throughout the year, starting today with a press campaign. Sebastian Kruse, Freshfel's Head of Communication and Industry Policy, commented: *"After the very positive outcome of our media campaign last year, we will continue our enhanced press activities in the first half of 2012. Freshfel will demonstrate and underline that fresh fruit and vegetables not only have a wealth of great assets when it comes to issues such as nutrition and health or climate change, but are most importantly offering a great variety of different tastes and textures at an affordable price and are a pleasure to eat!"*

*"It is important that an organization like Freshfel raises the profile of the sector and of its produce to policymakers, the market and consumers. To achieve this ambitious goal, Freshfel is aiming to consolidate in 2012 its 'Enjoy Fresh' concept into an effective pan-european platform of cooperation for all public and private stakeholders",* stated Ramon Rey. Freshfel will therefore seek the support of all to reinforce its actions for the benefit of the sector and of European citizens. In this regard the association also expects strong support from public authorities to boost consumption in the long term.



EUROPEAN FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION A.I.S.B.L



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The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which will be celebrated this year, the debate on the CAP post 2013, including the financial package for 2014-2020, or the new legislation on promotion of agricultural products towards the end of 2012 are some occasions for refocusing the EU agricultural policy towards market actions that could influence consumers towards healthier eating habits. The current environment of price pressure and stagnating or declining consumption is hardly sustainable for the fresh produce business, leading the sector to seek answers and initiatives to remedy this alarming situation. Luc Clerx, chairman of the Freshfel Promotion, Communication and Image Committee, concluded: *"The year 2012 will bring multiple opportunities to influence a change and rectify public policies, hopefully leading to a positive market environment for the fresh produce industry. Freshfel will work closely together with public authorities to ensure that the needs and specific characteristics of the sector are taken into account in any policy developments. Joint efforts in a strong public-private partnership are needed to ensure European citizens are again enjoying fresh!"*

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**Note to the Editors:** Freshfel Europe is the European Fresh Produce Association, representing the interests of the fresh fruit and vegetables supply chain in Europe and beyond. Freshfel Europe currently has over 200 members, including both companies and associations. For more information, contact the association at [info@freshfel.org](mailto:info@freshfel.org) or visit the association website [www.freshfel.org](http://www.freshfel.org).



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