

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



By Nina Pullman

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Collaboration across sectors 'would boost' fresh produce intake



The School Fruit Scheme is one example of collaboration across sectors

Agriculture should work with health and education sectors to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables, conference hears

The fresh produce industry needs to work more closely with public health, education and other sectors in order to boost consumption of fruit and vegetables.

That is the message from several speakers at the 7th EGEA conference, which is taking place this week (3-5 June) in Milan, which is looking at the role of fruit and vegetables in a healthy diet, environment and economy.

In one of the opening keynote lectures, Bryony Sinclair of the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF), stressed that it is crucial for sectors to work together on healthy eating policies and campaigns, in order to have an effective and long-standing impact on fresh produce consumption.

"More sales of fruit and vegetables brings economic benefits to producers, and their livelihoods, and improves public

health, which has economic benefits by lowering healthcare costs," said Sinclair. "We need to identify how policy coherence can be achieved through mutual aspects across sectors."

Sinclair listed several global examples of healthy eating policies from different sectors, and suggested that similar concepts could be combined within one country as part of one unified initiative to increase consumption.

One country's education policy included a board game where schoolchildren calculated the energy output of different food products, and which led to greater knowledge about nutrition. In another country's public health policy, one-to-one tailored nutrition counseling resulted in an increased consumption of fruit and vegetables.

She highlighted the Australian campaign 'Go for 2 and 5', a comprehensive

community, media and schools campaign that she said has been "very successful" in raising awareness and consumption of fresh produce.

Other examples included the Green Cart Scheme in New York, which provided financial incentives to traders to offer discounted fruit and vegetable in lower-income neighbourhoods, as part of a social policy to increase consumption.

"Coherence across sectors is needed to complete all these activities and is much more likely to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. Health, agriculture, education and foodservice sectors need to collaborate," she said. "Ultimately everyone will benefit from increased fruit and vegetable intake."

Robert Pederson, food policy advisor at the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), said: "At the moment there is a complete disconnect between agriculture, health and food policies.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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"The School Fruit Scheme is a great example of different sectors working together. What you get

is people saying this is an agriculture policy, this is a health policy, but maybe it is just an example of food policy."

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