The Co-op has backed the NFU's Fit for the Future initiative with a range of incentives to get consumers eating more fruit and veg.

The supermarket is now issuing 'smart coupons' at the till, providing money off fruit and vegetables as an incentive to increase purchasing. The coupons, which have been available throughout July, offer 50p off fresh produce, and the retailer is considering adding usage tips linked to seasonally available products in future.

The Co-op has credited its 'Fresh, Quality, Always' strategy for a 15 per cent uplift in fresh produce sales over the past year, with prepared produce also rising 19 per cent.

Adele Balmforth, Co-op's category trading manager for produce, said: "We were very interested in the findings within the NFU's Fit for the Future report as they fall very much in line with our own objectives to offer healthier products to our customers. "For example, we have an active strategy on prepared veg to ensure pack sizes are more convenient and that cooking times are as quick as possible and clearly marked on all packaging. Another key focus for us is healthy lunchtime options and our salad range is up 25 per cent."

Balmforth also revealed that the Co-op is trialling chilled units beside checkouts to encourage impulse purchase, point-of-sale info to identify healthy products, and 5 A Day highlighters on packs.

NFU horticulture and potatoes adviser Lee Abbey said: "We are delighted that the Co-op has taken such a proactive approach to encourage increased sales of fruit and veg, alongside their willingness to engage with us on Fit for the Future. This has been mirrored in other discussions we've had across the industry and we strongly believe there has never been a better time to carry forward the options for action in our report."