

## **Safeguarding fresh fruits, vegetables and nuts in the context of EU-US ongoing trade dispute**

The International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA), the global fresh produce and floral sector, and our European based member companies wish to express concern regarding the inclusion of fresh produce and nuts in the European Union's proposed list of products that could be subject to countermeasures against the recent U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. We believe it is essential that the European Commission and the U.S. administration negotiate urgently on a workable solution for global supply chains. We were grateful to hear the temporary delay in the first and proposed second tranche of tariffs going into effect. In view of the ongoing focus in the European Union around expanded access to nutrition education and expanding healthy diets, on behalf of the fresh produce sector worldwide, from farm to retail, we call on the European Commission to exclude fruits, vegetables and nuts from any countermeasures. Considering the sector's critical role in ensuring global food security and the availability of nutritious, sustainable, and affordable food in Europe, the sector should be safeguarded from unrelated trade disputes both in the European Union as well as in the United States.

The transatlantic trade in fresh fruits and vegetables is extensive and beneficial for both sides of the Atlantic. In 2023 alone, the European Union imported approximately €109 million worth of fresh produce from the United States, including key products such as potatoes, tomatoes, and grapes. Likewise, exports from the EU to the U.S. amounted to around €197 million, encompassing a diverse range of produce such as strawberries, kiwifruit, citrus and cucumbers. In addition, the bi-directional trade in tree nuts between the US and EU was worth over €2.5 billion in 2023. This robust exchange underscores the market interdependence driven by respective market size, year-round demand in both the EU and US, and the importance of maintaining an open and free trade environment for essential goods like fresh fruits, vegetables, and nuts.

This trade flow is not only a pillar of agricultural commerce, but also a lifeline for ensuring a stable, diverse, and affordable fruits, vegetables and nuts supply for European consumers. Fresh produce is fundamental to the health and well-being of European consumers, and the free and uninterrupted movement of fresh produce is vital to maintaining food security within the EU and beyond. Any disruption - including additional tariffs - would inevitably lead to higher prices, reduced availability, and an overall decline in the quality and variety of fresh produce accessible to consumers. This would directly affect European consumers' access to nutritious food, while undermining efforts to promote healthier diets in the EU and exacerbating existing health inequalities.

Open trade is particularly crucial for fresh produce due to its perishable nature. Unlike other goods, fruits, vegetables and nuts have a limited window of freshness, and any delays caused by market barriers risk compromising their quality, safety, and nutritional value. Many fresh products have a remarkably short shelf life - for example under ideal conditions, blueberries remain fresh for only up to two weeks after harvest, tomatoes for around 1 week, and leafy greens such as spinach can wilt within 5 days. That is why efficient, unhindered movement across borders ensures that produce reaches consumers at peak freshness, minimising food waste and supporting the availability of high-quality, healthy options for all Europeans.



Moreover, the fresh produce sector supports thousands of jobs across the entire supply chain, from farmers to distributors and retailers. The imposition of tariffs would impose undue hardship on these businesses, threatening jobs and livelihoods on both sides of the Atlantic. The economic repercussions would be felt not only by exporters but also by local markets and consumers who rely on affordable, high-quality produce.

In light of these considerations, we believe that fresh produce must be recognised as a sector of strategic importance, deserving of exemption from retaliatory measures. As a priority, we urge the European Commission and the U.S. administration to engage in cooperative dialogue to address trade disputes in a way that shields the EU and US bi-directional trade of fresh produce and nuts from unnecessary harm. A collaborative, solution-oriented approach is essential to preserving the integrity of the transatlantic fresh produce trade and ensuring that citizens on both sides of the Atlantic continue to have access to affordable and nutritious food.

On behalf of the fresh produce and floral supply chain worldwide, we remain committed to supporting the European Commission in navigating these complex trade challenges with additional information, and stand ready to collaborate to find constructive, forward-looking solutions that benefit both European consumers and businesses alike.

**For further information, please contact:**

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**About IFPA**

The International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) unites the fresh produce and floral industry to build a vibrant, healthy and sustainable future for across the globe. As the largest and most diverse association for the fresh produce and floral supply chain worldwide, we are the only organisation that effectively combines world-facing advocacy with industry-focused support. Guided by the belief that our sector can play a key role in addressing some of the world's most pressing challenges, we are here to ensure everyone, from farm to fork, can reap the benefits of fresh produce.

As the world's largest and most diverse fresh produce and floral industry association, IFPA has strong roots all over the globe – and Europe is no different. With a solid presence across the continent, we're committed to securing a vibrant, sustainable and healthy future for Europe and beyond.