

## Fruit & Vegetables: the Energy Issue



### What's going on?

- Growers and fresh produce supply chain operators around Europe are struggling with soaring energy prices **up to ten times higher** than last year.
- The energy crunch is causing serious **threats to food safety and food security**, as well as to European environmental sustainability and health.
- Without mitigation measures to alleviate the situation the **energy bills will become unsustainable** and many operators risk serious economic hardships, and even bankruptcy.
- The sector is facing **unlevel playing fields** depending on their country, energy contract and type of product.



### Why is this a problem?

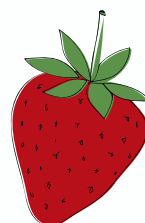
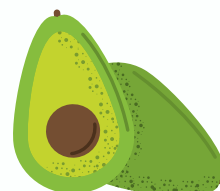
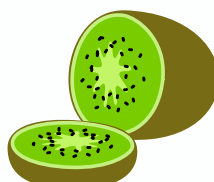
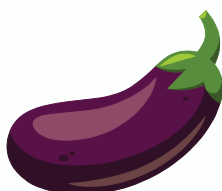
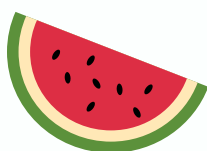
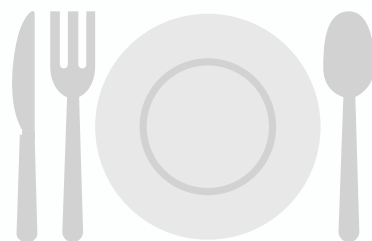
- Fruit and vegetables are perishable products, which need specific conditions to stay fresh and tasty. **Energy is required to ensure safety and quality** from production down to retail.
- Without proper temperature control, there is an **increased risk for microbiological contamination**, putting your health at risk!
- Products might not be harvested or grown given high production and storage costs. The food loss would **limit supermarket assortment and increase prices**.
- High energy bills also affect consumers **purchasing power of healthy fresh produce, leading to a reduced consumption**.

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### The essential role of fresh fruit and vegetables

- Fruit and vegetables are an essential sector. But its **competitiveness might be at stake** due to tight financial margins of fresh produce business.
- Fruit and vegetables are sustainable choices - with numerous **nutritional benefits and low environmental impact**, and need to be sustained.
- **All Member States produce** an array of fruits and vegetables, and so the effects are felt all across the EU.



### What must be done?

- **Create a level playing field** in the EU to avoid distortion of competition among operators. Setting energy price caps on an EU level is desirable.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables needs to be **exempted from potential energy consumption cuts** to ensure quality and safety.
- **The sector needs to move towards self-reliance in energy production.** Support for innovative technologies and electricity production for self-usage with the possibility to inject surplus back to the grid is key.
- These are **exceptional circumstances**, and so exceptional measures need to be taken to overcome this energy crisis.



**Eating fruit and vegetables must be promoted to ensure a healthy diet for European citizens and a transition to a greener Europe.**

