



**BEUC – European Consumers' Organisation**

- ✓ 43 member organisations in 31 European countries (26 EU Member States)
- ✓ Established in 1962 by 6 consumer organisations
- ✓ Office in Bruxelles: 35 Staff
- ✓ Spanish members:
  - CECU
  - OCU

**BEUC's headlines for 2009-2011  
Our 8 priorities**

- 1 Consumer contracts
- 2 Financial services
- 3 Digital rights
- 4 Group action
- 5 Food
- 6 Energy and sustainability
- 7 Health
- 8 Safety

**BEUC's food policy objectives**

- ✓ BEUC aims to:
  - Informed and healthy choices by consumers,
  - Prevent misleading information
  - Protect children
  - Ensure food is safe

## Informed choices

- Availability of healthy products: Make healthy products more available and more readily accessible to all consumers
- Nutritional information and labelling:
  - ✓ Compulsory & complete back-of-pack nutritional information on the 'Big 8' nutrients (protein, energy, fat, saturated fats, carbohydrates, sugar, salt and fibre) as well as trans fats
  - ✓ Simplified front-of-pack labelling easy to understand and compare (colour coding system)

## HEALTHY NUTRIENT PROFILES

- Nutrient profiles & nutrition claims:
  - ✓ Nutrient profiles = essential because they determine which food products can or cannot bear claims
  - ✓ Strict nutrient profiles should be developed in an independent and transparent manner by the Commission and reflect the objective of the health claims Regulation

## Protection and safety

- Protect children as a matter of priority
  - Focus on advertising (ban on TV advertising of food and drinks which are high in fat, sugar or salt from 6 am to 9 pm)
  - Promotion of the 'Code on the marketing of food products and non-alcoholic drinks to children'
- Focus on food safety as high as possible
  - 'Safe from farm to fork' approach rather than 'chemical treatment' at the end of the production chain

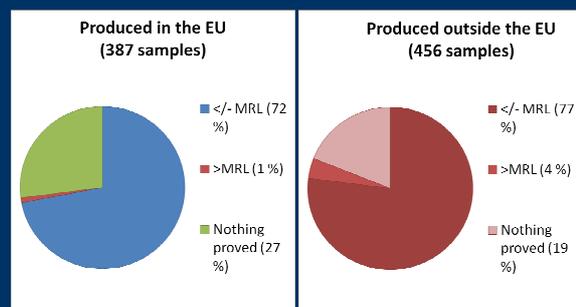
## The benefits of citrus fruits

- ✓ Citrus fruits contain a lot of nutritional components that consumers benefit from:
  - Vitamin C is a beneficial antioxidants found in our food that may provide protection against heart disease and cancer.
  - Vitamin C enhances cellular immunity by promoting the killing ability of white blood cells.
  - Citrus fruits contain different kinds of substances (e.g. limonoids in citrus, carotenoids in oranges) that lower the risk of developing cancer tumors.

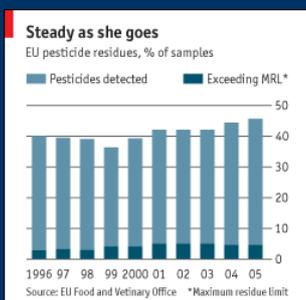
However....  
challenges for the citrus industry

- ☐ Pesticide use in citrus production
- ☐ Health benefits not always as clear as expected (juices)
- ☐ Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

Residues of pesticide found by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration



On the EU level pesticide residues levels are steady, but not decreasing



Less pesticides please...

- ✓ BEUC is concerned with the extensive list of chemical pesticides used in conventional citrus farming as they may cause
  - Cancer, endocrine disruption,
  - Allergic reactions, Hyperactive children
- ✓ Effect on the environment – soil, water resources, biodiversity

### Citrus fruit juice = healthy?

- ✓ Citrus fruit juices are often being promoted as healthy and nutritional. But this image is sometimes untrue.
- ✓ Research from the Brazilian consumer organization IDEC has shown that while fruit juices have a positive and healthy image and are grabbing more and more consumer favor, a recent test of 12 fruit juice brands doesn't follow that image

### Juices are becoming less and less natural

- ✓ 'the manufacturing process including conservatoin tends to eliminate nutrients. Fibres, for instance, are hardly found in fruit juices'.
- ✓ Besides, processed drinks tend to contain high levels of sugar, especially nectars. 'Some of them have as much as 20 grams of sugar per 200 ml, this is the equivalent of two tablespoons'.

- ✓ Many additives such as colouring, flavouring and preservatives are present in fruit juices
- ✓ Colouring additives tartrazine and amaranth and preservative sodium benzoate have been linked to allergic reactions, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders in children. Sodium benzoate was found in four beverages.
- ✓ Juices and functional Food – helping or misleading the consumers?

### CSR in the citrus fruit production

- A competitive advantage in the future?
- ✓ Labour/union/ regulatory issues
- ✓ Environmental issues –Climate change??

### Some conclusions...

- ✓ Food information to be complete and easy to understand
- ✓ Claims to be allowed only on food products with a healthy nutrient profile
- ✓ Legislative measures are taken to restrict advertising and promotion of foods high in fat, sugar or salt to children in all media (television, SMS, etc.)
- ✓ High food safety standards are applied and future legislation takes into account new technologies

### Some more conclusions...

- ✓ BEUC supports campaigns that stimulates consumers to eat 600 grams of fruit per day. Citrus fruits are naturally part of this
- ✓ BEUC encourage people to purchase organic citrus fruits to avoid pesticide residues.
- ✓ BEUC encourage producers of conventional citrus fruits should be more conscious and critical towards the use of pesticides. Such a behaviour will strengthen the consumers' trust in the producers and reduce risk to health and environment.

### The way forward

- ✓ Citrus fruit industry to focus on maintaining the natural nutritional qualities of fruit juices – Reduce preservatives, the amount of sugar, flavouring and the colouring. BEUC prefer natural juices without additives
- ✓ Careful with functional food
- ✓ Corporate Social responsibility is a still more important issue – use this positively in the citrus fruit industry.

## Thank you

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