



@Geri Halliwell 9 bananas will kill u 2 May

@EatThisNotThat NUTRITION 101: Onions and garlic are in the allium family of vegetables, which have been shown to decrease the risk of cancer! 3 May

@GrowGuides To get the best results you must talk to your vegetables. - Prince Charles <http://www.growguides.net/> 5 May

@BostonGlobe Farm-share programs, and angst about too many vegetables, on the rise <http://b.globe.com/ZCzWbX> 7 May

Soundbite

The Vegetarian Society's Liz O'Neill on why consumers should be considering meat-free



“
Going vegetarian is fun, tasty and seriously rewarding, and there's never been a better time to enjoy a meat-free lifestyle
”

Beekeepers rejoice at ban but say EU must enforce it

The two-year ban on three neonicotinoids, imidacloprid, thiamethoxam and clothianidin, has delighted beekeepers but the European Beekeeping Coordination say the fight is not over as it must ensure the EU actually enforces the ban.

EBC spokesman Francesco Panella said: “The prohibition of systemic insecticides is a first step in the right direction to save bees and life in our fields. The decision is a great encouragement for good agricultural practices and for the preservation of Europe's soil fertility. We must now ensure that the EU Commission will act upon it to produce a coherent policy linking agriculture to nature and to life.”

The EBC added that it will take time to observe a real recovery due to the high amount of neonicotinoids that have been used to date.

In the press

The dark side of children's food apps revealed



While there are examples of good educational food apps for children, *The Guardian's* Sue Quinn advises parents to take a closer look at what their little ones are downloading. Following recent reports that The Family and Parenting Institute has accused junk food manufacturers of using mobile games to target children by “stealth”, citing Chewits and Lovehearts as examples of brands using advergames to push sweet goodies, Quinn suggests parents be aware that the contents of so-called “advergames” are not pushing junk.

VIEWPOINT

Rob Shelley

CEO of Maritime Cargo Services



Stormy seas forecast for fresh produce shippers in potential supply chain bottleneck

The latest whisper in the shipping and fresh produce logistics sector is all about a possible new supply chain bottleneck. It looks very much like the major container shipping lines are putting fresh investment in reefer boxes (refrigerated units) on hold until the recent and significant programme of rate increases has been more widely accepted throughout global markets. With this in mind, there is the growing possibility that shippers could find capacity increasingly scarce.

According to analyst reports, more conventional reefer vessels were scrapped last year than in any other year in history. Reefer vessels are ships with refrigerated holds as opposed to ones carrying standalone reefer containers.

Although they represent less than 10 per cent of the total reefer capacity, more than 70 such ships were ‘recycled’ in 2012, meaning the global fleet has now shrunk to its smallest level in living memory – with no new vessels under construction.

The same analysts have indicated that the demand for perishable transport is forecast to grow by 4.5 per cent this year. Combine this with the lack of investment in both conventional reefer vessels and the – larger and strategically more important – reefer container carriers and you are looking at the likelihood of a possible ‘perfect storm’ with the subsequent capacity bottlenecks.

Meanwhile, international shippers of fresh produce are caught in something of a cleft stick at the moment. Seasonal demands and fluctuations cause issues; for instance, right now is something of a peak period for apples. Importers of apples will be well aware that duty payable between April and August is zero-rated, but then shoots back up again, therefore creating its own mini boom import period.

These fluctuations create pressure points when demand outstrips supply and customers are finding they have little choice but to stump up and pay the increased rates demanded by the shipping lines.

There seems no early or easy end in sight, with everyone sticking to their guns in the rate war. A representative of the largest shipping company on the planet – which enjoys a reputed 25 per cent market share – reiterated recently that “our reefer rate restructuring initiative aims to provide us with the returns so we can reinvest in the future.”

It has even stated on the record it's happy to sacrifice short-term market share in order to redress this seeming imbalance. You would assume that this might mean more competitive pricing. Unfortunately, most of the other box lines have fallen in behind the market leader and are looking for similar rate rises. Combine this with intransigence with the aforementioned peak season and lack of current investment and we may well be set for that ‘perfect storm.’ — FPI