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Fruits and vegetables, a priority in the shopping basket



Madrid (ots) -

Health, quality and respect for the environment play a fundamental role for consumers when buying fruit and vegetables.

The campaign under the slogan "Compete for a better life by eating at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day, Join the #LongLifeChallenge of Europe" aims to raise awareness of the importance of eating European fruit and vegetables daily, in the context of good eating practices.

The war in Ukraine and the impact on energy costs have left this year's shopping basket with record prices. In the last year, consumers have noticed a generalized **rise in prices including fruit and vegetables** that has been increasing, even reaching the highest in almost 30 years. In fact, in some cases, the price of food in the supermarket has reached five times the original price.

Despite this, it should be emphasized that both fruit and vegetables are highly valued by consumers because they are essential to cover their nutritional requirements, look after their bodies and maintain healthy lifestyles. **The health and nutrition sectors recommend** increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables, as stated in the campaign "**CuTE Healthy - Cultivating a Healthy Europe with Fruit and Vegetables from Europe**" that is being developed under the slogan "**Compete for a better life by eating at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day, Join the #longlifechallenge of Europe**".

It is worth noting that variables such as health mean that consumers continue to choose fruit and vegetables when it comes to filling their shopping baskets. Thus, 31% of consumers are buying more fruit than before Covid and 29% are buying more vegetables, according to a study carried out by **AECOC Shopperview** after the pandemic among 1,004 fruit and vegetable consumers in Spain. And the fact is that taking care of the body through nutrition is becoming increasingly important nowadays.

Other aspects influence the purchase of these foods in addition to price, such as whether they are in season (65% of consumers), whether they look good (59%) and whether their origin is known (44%). But other values that have to do with quality and environmental protection are also gaining strength. For example, 63% of consumers surveyed value the quality of these foods more highly than before the pandemic and 48% prefer to find more local and locally produced products.

Eating at least 5 portions a day

The EU co-funded promotional program "**CuTE Healthy - Cultivating a Healthy Europe with Fruit and Vegetables from Europe**" aims to raise consumer awareness of the importance of eating European fruit and vegetables every day, in a context of good food practices, and to generate a social and consumption movement of at least five portions a day. The World Health Organization warns that only 14.3% of European consumers eat five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day and warns that low consumption of these foods increases the risk of disease.

One of the main characteristics of the fruits and vegetables of European origin that are part of the campaign is their freshness. Each of the types of fruits and vegetables has its own season, which will help to complete the [#LongLifeChallenge](#) throughout the year and make the most of these healthy foods:

- **Orange** (between October and May).

- **Clementine** (October through January).
- **Tangerine** (between October and April).
- **Broccoli** (all year round).
- **Green asparagus** (from February to June).
- **Polish apple** (available all year round).
- **Blueberry** (from July to September).
- **French strawberry** (from March to October).

In addition, the campaign aims to launch small tips to incorporate these foods into daily routines, in other words, adding "small gestures such as including an orange in your breakfast, keeping an apple in your backpack or bag for your rest time, changing snacks for something as healthy as a mandarin or asking for a strawberry or blueberry smoothie in the cafeteria", explains the vice-president of **EUCOFEL** and president of the Citrus Management Committee, Inma Sanfeliu.

Olympic' foods

The elite sportsmen and women who support the campaign as prescribers are personalities of the stature of **Ona Carbonell** (the woman with the most medals in the history of the world swimming championships); **Lydia Valentín** (Olympic champion at London 2012.); France's **Florent Manaudou** (silver medallist in the 50m freestyle at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games; Germany's **Sebastian Brendel** (bronze in still water at Tokyo 2020) and Polish cyclist **Maja Włoszczowska** (silver medallist at Rio 2016 in cross-country).

You don't have to be a professional athlete to improve your habits: "It is essential to teach young people and society in general about the importance of vegetables, fruit, healthy eating and exercise. We don't need to practice elite sport, which I don't know if it's the healthiest thing to do, but we do need to lead an active life", says swimmer Ona Carbonell.

The initiative is promoted by the '**CuTE Healthy**' consortium, made up of **FruitVegetablesEUROPE** and national fruit and vegetable associations from **Spain, France and Poland** (Citrus Management Committee – CGC – , **French National Association of Strawberry Producers**, **Más Brócoli**, **KZGPOiW** and **Interprofesional del Espárrago Verde de España**). Actions will focus on four target countries: **Belgium, Germany, France and Spain**.

About FruitVegetablesEUROPE

Founded 60 years ago, **FruitVegetablesEUROPE** is the European Fruit and Vegetable Association that defends, represents and promotes European fruit and vegetables. Based in Brussels, **FruitVegetablesEUROPE** acts as a liaison between industry stakeholders and policy makers in the European institutions, giving a voice to the European fruit and vegetable sector. The members of **FruitVegetablesEUROPE** are national and regional federations/associations (mainly producer organisations and associations) and companies from the main fruit and vegetable producing countries of the EU (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain).

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