



## **ECFF POSITION STATEMENT**

### **Benefits of chilled foods**

Chilled foods are great value offering consumers the choice of a wide range of tasty and nutritious foods that are quick and easy to prepare. The range includes salads and prepared fruit and vegetables as well as portion-controlled low fat foods and more traditional foods.

They also provide convenience in buying, preparing and cooking food helping to reduce the amount of time and energy consumers would otherwise spend looking for/buying, washing and preparing the different ingredients that make up a meal.

Attractive and innovative packaging also allows consumers to see exactly what they are buying.

Chilled foods also reduce waste by cutting down on the need for consumers to buy unnecessary or large amounts of ingredients (e.g. several different types of lettuce) which may only be used a bit at a time and which may then ultimately be wasted. In addition, most packaged fresh and prepared foods have had the non-edible materials (e.g. peels, vegetable tops, bones etc) removed during preparation. These materials are used for animal feed or other purposes instead of going into domestic waste. Likewise, energy is saved by not having to transport this unwanted material through the distribution and retail chain to the consumer.

Chilled food manufacturers constantly adjust the supply chain in order to minimise waste. The move to 24 hour trading has also improved the flow of materials and ingredients thus helping to reduce waste during production.

### **Chilled Prepared Food**

The food industry processes our food to ensure its safety and to offer convenient and ready-to-eat options. Food processing extends shelf life and helps prevent food waste.



Some methods of food processing decrease the activity of bacteria and maintain and guarantee quality whereas others (such as pasteurisation) remove potentially harmful microorganisms that spoil food. Processing techniques add value to agricultural products by turning them into food (e.g. pasta, bread, cheese, meat products, sauces). Food processing can also enhance the nutritional quality of foods by adding essential nutrients, like vitamins and minerals.

All categories of food, processed or unprocessed, contribute a variety of nutrients to the daily total dietary intake. Therefore, focus should be on the diet as a whole, rather than on single food categories or nutrients. Having a diet based on variety, balance and moderation, regardless of the level of processing of the foods eaten, is good for health. Therefore, consumers can include processed foods in a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle with confidence.