**Press Release**

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**For Immediate use: Consumer**

**Carrots are the tops: British Carrot Growers Association launches National Carrot Awareness Day**

Celebrating - and safeguarding the future - of the UK-grown carrot is behind the decision to hold a National Carrot Day on 3 October 2024.

Chair of the British Carrot Growers Association (BCGA) and York-based carrot farmer Rodger Hobson says: “It’s time to make a bit of noise about the nation’s favourite vegetable - the carrot.”

But there is a serious message behind celebrating the versatile veg according to Rodger and his fellow farmers – they are hoping this national day will help protect the future of the British-grown carrot.

“We are making a rallying call to the nation,” explains Rodger. “If every household nibbles their way through just a few more carrots each year it would be a huge help to farmers and help keep home-grown carrots on the shelves.”

Raw or cooked, sweet or savoury, carrots are one of the most popular root vegetables consumed in the UK, with over 700,000 tonnes grown every year, equivalent to 70 times the weight of the Eiffel tower. However, Rodger explains that profits have been squeezed to such a tight margin, that many farmers have decided to stop growing them.

“This multipurpose vegetable is iconic,” says Rodger. “Carrots are such good value for money and extremely versatile with high nutritional value. I challenge the British public to find anything better value than 6p - the price of a carrot - to consume one of their five a day.”

An International Carrot Day already exists and is celebrated annually in the USA on 4 April. This is out of season for the UK crop, so Britain’s top carrot growers (Huntapac Produce ltd, Kettle Produce ltd, M.H Poskitts ltd, Burgess Farms, and Strawson ltd) decided to cultivate their own special day on 3 October, which is peak harvest time and when the BCGA holds its annual demonstration day.

“We want to communicate both the challenges and joys of growing carrots, which has a high disease susceptibility, high input costs and a conflictingly low price on the supermarket shelf, which means making a viable return a struggling reality for UK carrot growers. Boosting consumption by even small volumes, across many homes, will support the farmers and keep domestically grown carrots firmly planted in the UK.”

Four Fun Facts:

* Each year 22 billion seeds are planted in Britain, producing around 100 carrots per year for every member of the population.
* If you laid all the carrots grown every year in the UK end to end, they would stretch 1.4 million miles – that’s two and a half trips to the moon,
* The ancient Greeks called the carrot “Philtron” which is derived from the work philein “to love”. They used it as a love medicine to make men more ardent and women more yielding.
* According to the Asian tradition of classifying foods as yin, yang or neutral, carrots are regarded as yang food, known for their tendency to warm the body, tighten muscles and speed up movement.

On the UK’s National Carrot Day, people will be encouraged to buy, get creative, cook with, and eat carrots.

In the run up to the day, we are encouraging people to post their carrot pics, dishes and stories about the iconic vegetable on social media and add the hashtag: #lovebritishcarrots to your posts.

Follow us on Instagram @lovebritishcarrots

For more information visit the British Carrot Growers Association website: <http://britishcarrots.co.uk/>

**-Ends-**

**Notes to Editors:**

The British Carrot Growers Association has approximately 40 members, made up of carrot producers in the UK. Funded voluntarily by its associates, the union has the primary aim of increasing UK consumption of carrots and aims to manage the sustainability of the industry and help responsible growers to operate.

The BCGA is a community of British carrot farmers that meet to discuss all things carrots – the diseases, varieties, and new growing/harvesting technologies.

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