

**PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

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**A Great Bunch: British Farmers Rally for Home-Grown Carrots this National Carrot Day**

On Thursday, 3 October, British carrot growers will unite for the inaugural UK National Carrot Day, urging the nation to support home-grown carrots and safeguard their future in the face of mounting climate challenges and shifting market conditions.

Leading the charge is Rodger Hobson, Chair of the British Carrot Growers Association (BCGA) and an eighth-generation farmer from York. Alongside five of the UK's top carrot growers - Huntapac Produce, Kettle Produce, M.H Poskitts, Burgess Farms, and Strawson Ltd - Hobson hopes to raise awareness of the skill, resilience, and sustainability efforts behind every British-grown carrot. The campaign encourages consumers to get creative in the kitchen and make carrots a staple in their meals, while emphasising the importance of supporting local farmers.

In 2023, extreme weather conditions - record heat followed by excessive rain - led to the worst year Hobson has ever experienced for carrot production. "We’ve traditionally been 97% self-sufficient in carrots," he explains, "but last year’s weather brought in a flood of imports from countries as far away as China and Israel."

Carrots, while a staple in the British diet, are increasingly vulnerable to climate change. Hobson explains, "Carrots suffer when temperatures rise, and prolonged wet soil conditions leave them susceptible to diseases. They’re a fresh crop, harvested and sent straight to stores, meaning any disruptions in the growing season can have immediate effects on availability."

Hobson, along with his fellow carrot grower and sponsor of National Carrot Day, Guy Poskitt, emphasises the importance of consumers looking for the Red Tractor logo as an indicator of British-grown produce. "Buying British carrots not only supports local farmers, but also reduces the carbon footprint compared to importing from abroad," adds Hobson. With environmental sustainability top of mind, Hobson rotates his fields, planting carrots only once every ten years to maintain soil health.

Poskitt, who grows 50,000 tons (packed weight) of carrots annually, echoes the concern over undervaluing fresh produce. "Last Christmas, we saw supermarkets slash the price of veg to as little as 15p per packet. While the discount was subsidised by retailers, it can increase food waste, as customers may buy more than they can consume.

Poskitt highlights, “How many people would buy extra bags because they were so cheap and end up throwing some of them away? There isn’t a single farmer in the world who likes to see their produce go to waste and not eaten.”

Beyond the pricing debate, both growers point to changes in supermarket layouts that have marginalised fresh produce. "Fruit and veg used to be the first thing shoppers saw when they walked in," says Poskitt. "Now, non-food items like clothing often dominate the entryway. This makes it harder for fresh produce to grab attention.

“Without those displays, we have to work harder. If I get talking to somebody who isn’t involved in farming, they are always genuinely interested in how we grow carrots. They find it fascinating how we are trying all kinds of ways to work with climate change rather than just throw the towel in. Farmers need to make the most of this interest and get better at explaining our craft.

“With our limited budget we’re not expecting miracles with Carrot Day, but any increased awareness and appreciation for what we do will make a difference."

3 October will also see the annual BCGA demonstration day, which brings together carrot growers, industry professionals and retailers to network, knowledge-share and celebrate the best in carrot cultivation via variety trials, trade stands and competitions. This year, the event will be hosted by Bil Bradshaw, B H Bradshaw & Son, and Strawson Ltd at Cockett Barn Farm in Nottinghamshire.

For more information about National Carrot Day and the BCGA Carrot Demonstration Day, visit the British Carrot Growers Association website: <http://britishcarrots.co.uk>

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**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.

British Carrot Growers Association

BGA House

Nottingham Road

Louth

LN11 0WB

**Email:** holly.jones@britishgrowers.org

**Tel:** 01507 353770