



## **Size Doesn't Matter When It Comes To Ethics**

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Big businesses can be ethical too, according to Andrew Burgess, Produce World's Director of Agriculture. Speaking at the recent Organic Producers' Conference organised by the Organic Research Centre, Andrew said: "It's not the size of the company that decides ethical outcomes; it's the values and behaviour of its leadership."

In his presentation he outlined the background to Produce World, which is one of the UK's largest growers and suppliers of fresh produce. Organic produce makes up a significant proportion of the business. Produce World provides more than a third of all organic root vegetables to the UK retail market, and has in excess of 500 acres dedicated to growing organic vegetables, which includes potatoes, carrots, swedes, and parsnips. It is one of a small number of fresh produce companies that are members of the Organic Trade Board.

Andrew described how the company's own values, right across the business, are actually closely aligned with the principles of organic as laid out by the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) in terms of health, ecology, fairness and care. As well as being a pioneer in large-scale organic farming, the company has a cutting-edge CSR programme that includes care for the environment, community outreach and workplace culture.

Produce World is a grower itself, and also works closely with its grower-suppliers through a series of grower groups that enable the company to share best practice.

Andrew said: "By many people's standards we are a big company with a turnover of more than £200 million and some 1200 employees. We are dealing with some of the UK's largest retailers and supplying the needs of around 35 million consumers. That doesn't stop us from thinking and acting in an ethical way with long-term aims. In fact, I would argue that such long-term thinking is in the best interest of Produce World as well as global agriculture as a whole."

**Ends**

### **Notes for Editors**

Produce World is one of the largest expert growers and suppliers of high quality fresh vegetables in Europe. It is a privately owned business, founded by the Burgess family in 1898, and the family ethos and values remain in place. The Produce World business is customer and category focused and it is an industry leader in sustainable and responsible agronomy, growing and lean supply chain management. Its sourcing is a combination of produce from its own farms, joint-ventures, and collaborative working with dedicated grower groups, supplying a variety of root vegetables, potatoes, brassicas, alliums, and organic produce to leading retailers, food service and manufacturing customers.

Produce World Group companies include Produce World Solanum Ltd, Produce World IFP Ltd, Produce World RBO Ltd, Produce World Rustler Ltd, Produce World Marshalls Ltd, Agromark SA, and Growing Trust with Las Lomas (joint venture).

The company received the Waitrose Technical Excellence Award in June 2011, as well as the re:fresh Innovation of the Year and Packer of the Year awards in May 2011. Its Growing Trust CSR programme, established in 2007, prioritises Responsible Sourcing, along with Environmental Stewardship, Community Impact and Workplace Culture.

**Media Enquiries:**

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