



Interview  
January 2015

## “Consumers demand perfect quality”

*“We have to keep consistency of supply and quality for the future,” says Douglas Hutton-Squire, agronomist and sustainable horticulture manager for Chingford Fruit (UK), a specialist in supplying large varieties of fruit to UK supermarkets. Together with Bayer CropScience and in several Food Chain Partnership projects he wants to improve the sustainable agricultural practices of farmers and suppliers worldwide.*

### **Mr. Hutton-Squire, how important are partnerships in your business?**

**Douglas Hutton-Squire:** “Partnership means working together to solve problems. In fact, engaging together with Bayer CropScience in Food Chain Partnership helps us tremendously to tackle current and future problems and make sure that we have an advantage over our competitors in the marketplace.”

### **You’ve mentioned the Food Chain Partnership business model. What main benefits and results has Chingford Fruit achieved as a partner in the Food Chain Partnership in the last years?**

**Douglas Hutton-Squire:** “The Food Chain Partnership is a great platform for sustainable crop protection strategies and solutions. The feedback from our growers who have engaged in the Food Chain Partnership program was really good. They have been able to reduce residues and improve their sustainability practices with the help of the Food Chain Partnership sustainability radar. The project has helped them to focus on pest and disease management and has given them more confidence about the risks that can occur in that area. As far as I know there is no other approach that is similar to this program. It is definitely adding value to ground level on the supply base. Our growers can really benefit from the inputs.”

### **What are your main import countries?**

**Douglas Hutton-Squire:** “Our fruit comes from all over the world but the main countries we source from are South Africa, UK, Spain, France and Portugal. Some smaller quantities come from Morocco and Italy for example.”

### **Could you please give us a successful example of a Food Chain Partnership project that Chingford Fruit is involved in?**

**Douglas Hutton-Squire:** “We work together with a stone fruit company in Spain that has been able to reduce the amount of residues they have on the fruit they supply to us. They have managed to reduce the number of detects from four residues down to two. That makes a huge difference in terms of being able to promote the sustainable characteristics and consistent quality of their fruits to our customers.”





**You've mentioned the topic of sustainability. What is Chingford Fruit's approach in terms of sustainability and what role does Bayer's Food Chain Partnership program play here?**

**Douglas Hutton-Squire:** "Three years ago we decided to set up a sustainability team so we could understand our supply base a lot better. They set up grower development groups and were looking at the sustainability risks for the entire business of our suppliers. One of the weak points identified was that they were lacking knowledge in terms of pesticides applications and efficient pest and disease control. We saw that Bayer with its Food Chain Partnership initiative would be an ideal partner to support them with knowledge and a set of tools to address these specific points that came up around the world."

**What about customers' requirements ?**

**Douglas Hutton-Squire:** "The customers we supply like Sainsbury's, pride themselves on quality and that is how they market themselves. They have very high quality specifications that we have to meet. We are expected to deliver fruits that fully meet the expectations of our customers. To secure the quality that our customers request we work with our suppliers around the world to make sure they understand the specifications."

**What impact do certification schemes have on your business?**

**Douglas Hutton-Squire:** "Certification schemes do have quite a big impact on our business. Our growers have various certification schemes they have to comply with, for instance Global GAP, SEDEX or BRC. They really suffer from audit fatigue, that's why a lot of our sustainability work is focussed on a "bottom-up" grower development group process to reduce the number of audits the suppliers have to deal with on a daily basis."

**Let's end this interview by taking a short look into the future: Does Chingford Fruit plan to extend its Food Chain Partnership projects?**

**Douglas Hutton-Squire:** "At this stage we are not planning to extend the number of our partnerships. We have some quite interesting and successful ones running and we really want to focus on those to make sure we deliver maximum value. We will definitely continue working with Bayer's Food Chain Partnership. It is really good to have a relationship we can rely on. The program enhances the credibility of our sustainability credentials in terms of plant protection products."

**About Chingford Fruit Ltd:**

Chingford Fruit, founded in 1966 and located in Crayford, Kent (UK), is a specialist in supplying a large variety of fruits from all over the world to well-known supermarket chains like Sainsbury's and Waitrose. The main crops that are sourced are apples, pears, and citrus of all different types, kiwi fruit and a broad variety of stone fruit. Chingford Fruit is now one of the leading fresh fruit import and supply companies in the UK. Today the company employs more than 300 people and has a turnover of about 125 million GBP a year. Chingford Fruit has been a partner in Bayer CropScience's Food Chain Partnership since 2010.

