

## Food Industry in Kent & Medway

- Identified as **1 of 3 food clusters within the UK**, Kent is home to almost **500 food related companies** employing over **18,000 people**. Key players include: **JP Fruit Distributors; Mack Multiples; Fresca Group; Delmonte Fresh Produce; Compagnie Frutiere; Brakes; Premier Foods; Chiquita and Sainsburys, Tesco, Waitrose and Marks & Spencer distribution centres.**
- With a significant presence of importers, wholesalers, processors, manufacturers and specialist transportation services the Kent base feeds into a wider food manufacturing industry throughout the South East and the UK. Due to the location most major grocery chains have a distribution presence in Kent and Medway.
- Key attributes of the sector in Kent & Medway include:
  - Over **200 food wholesale operations**
  - **122 companies involved in manufacturing** of food and drink, including Brakes, Premier Foods and RHM Frozen Foods
  - **9 specialist cold storage facilities** for holding or ripening fresh foods
  - Presence of a number of **specialist road haulage and freight forwarding companies** with temperature controlled facilities designed for the food industry
- With Kent's strategic location as the closest UK County to continental Europe, Kent & Medway is an important gateway for European and non-European food imports. In fact, **39% of all non-EU fresh produce in the UK travels via Kent. Sheerness is the top fresh fruit and vegetable port in the UK** and Kent International Airport is a significant portal for perishable and high value fresh produce from outside Europe.
- **"Produced in Kent"** is the local producer led group which supports the industry and market the produce to consumers, retailers, manufacturers and caterers.
- Expertise within the industry includes the world renowned Department of Agricultural Sciences of Imperial College at Wye, a world class centre of excellence for research and teaching. This was recognised by a rating of 4 in the Government's most recent Research Assessment Exercise, with plant molecular biology and physiology receiving the highest 5 star rating for the last 2 years.

- East Malling Research is one of the leading centres for horticultural research in the UK and the single largest team of horticultural R&D scientists in the world.
- Kent & Medway is also home to the Natural Resources Institute, part of the University of Greenwich and a world leader in natural resources management and research, which includes food management and marketing.
- In addition to those named above, key investors include **Sharp Interpack and Veetee Foods.**
- For further information on the Food sector in Kent and its company base, please visit [www.locateinkent.com](http://www.locateinkent.com) or contact us on 00 44 1732 520700 / [enquiries@locateinkent.com](mailto:enquiries@locateinkent.com).