

## **Food discounts by Supermarket giants a serious threat to Irish growers – Kennedy**

The livelihoods of Irish market growers are at risk as long as supermarket giants continue to make special offers on fruit and vegetables below the cost of production, according to Dublin North Fianna Fáil TD, Michael Kennedy.

Statement by Michael Kennedy at 08:45 05/03/2008

Deputy Kennedy said: "Supermarkets always retain their margins and it is only the farmer who suffers. The supermarkets have a hold on growers who depend on the sale of their produce.

"These discounts should apply three ways; they should be cut between the producer, the retailer and the wholesaler so they are each paying their fair share of the discount. Currently, there is a completely unbalanced process where the discounts are effectively coming straight from the growers' pockets," he added.

"In my constituency alone, there are 160 market growers who are hugely concerned about their future. Predatory prices by supermarket giants are endangering their livelihoods.

"It is vital that we support the growers by ensuring it is feasible for them to continue. These fresh fruit and vegetables are of the highest standard, coming straight from the market garden to the supermarkets. Irish consumers are benefiting from this fresh produce and in turn we are boosting the economy with the creation of local jobs.

If we did not have local growers, the consumer would be hit the hardest as the produce would have to be imported and would be more costly and not half as fresh. We also must consider the serious environmental implications of importing produce. The ships coming to and from the country would create a major increase in CO2 emissions.

"It would be incredulous if growers were forced out of the market for financial reasons and I intend to raise this matter in the Dáil and to continue to lobby on their behalf.

"I am in total agreement with the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) that there is a basic unit cost that must be recovered from the marketplace," said Deputy Kennedy.