

## **Submission from Country Choice Greengrocers**

**4<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

I am a greengrocer of 25 years standing, I accept businesses change, and mine has several times, but, I am now trying to compete on a playing field biased towards the supermarkets, and have been for several years. If, in the summer, there is prolonged hot weather we will see the take-up of salad increased, unfortunately our price paid to the wholesaler will increase so much so that we can then buy cheaper from the supermarkets than from our wholesalers. This price increase, which is always quite dramatic in these situations, is because the supermarkets have first call on any increase of order, leaving what is left, (and sometimes there is nothing left), to retailers in the rest of the trade. I have seen this happen time and time again, particularly with bananas, Jersey Royals and strawberries as well as other soft fruit. Supermarkets will have a promotion of a certain product and market it aggressively, such is their power that suppliers will have to fulfil their orders, even at a loss, therefore creating a shortage for everyone else, as a result, we pay more for our produce making the market less competitive. Many greengrocers (in particular) and other businesses have gone to the wall as a result of these unfair practices. If nothing or insufficient is done now then there will never be another inquiry, because there will be no competition left. Please do not produce a whitewash as the previous inquiry did. The future of fair retailing in this country is in your hands.

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