

Grower Summary

FV 396

Leeks: Desk study to review and assess existing research into the nutritional and health benefits

Final 2011

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Use of pesticides

Only officially approved pesticides may be used in the UK. Approvals are normally granted only in relation to individual products and for specified uses. It is an offence to use non-approved products or to use approved products in a manner that does not comply with the statutory conditions of use, except where the crop or situation is the subject of an off-label extension of use.

Before using all pesticides check the approval status and conditions of use.

Read the label before use: use pesticides safely.

Further information

If you would like a copy of the full report, please email the HDC office (hdc@hdc.ahdb.org.uk), quoting your HDC number, alternatively contact the HDC at the address below.

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Headline

Literature shows that there is strong association with *Alliums* and reports of the prevention and even cure of many ailments and diseases, but there is little evidence to indicate any specific parallels with leeks. Detailed research would be needed to support any evidence of the health benefits of leeks.

Background

The health benefits of a diet rich in fresh fruit and vegetables is well known. Some vegetables stand out as being particularly beneficial. Onions are particularly good and it has been reported in the press that onions are good for the digestive and immune system. Leeks are closely related to onions being in the same *Alliums* family but it is not known whether they have the same health benefits.

Previous research has shown that onions and garlic provide a good source of fibre, folic acid, vitamins B6 and C, manganese and iron. Leeks are less dense than onions and garlic so larger quantities of them may need to be consumed in order to produce similar beneficial effects. Leeks are also generally not eaten as regularly as the bulb onion so the quantities that should be eaten to have a positive effect on the immune system, cholesterol levels and fighting cancer, is not known for leeks.

There is no clear understanding as to what research has been undertaken specifically on leeks. This small desk study would therefore help the Leek Growers Association in planning their future marketing strategies by providing an accurate overview of what material is available. This will also allow the Leek Growers Association to incorporate the results into their own research and development strategy.

Summary

It is difficult to make exact, quantitative and universally correct statements on this subject. There remains, therefore, much potential for further research to clarify the subject of the nutritional and health benefits of *Allium*. From reviewing all of the research available on the health benefits of *Alliums*, with special attention to leeks, it is clear to say that *Alliums* have

extensive potential for prevention and even cure of many ailments and diseases, although to say the same about leeks would need to be very much substantiated by detailed research, as there is little evidence that indicate parallels.

Financial Benefits

n/a