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UK caterers are driving production of French Guinea Fowl

In a bid to add interest and variety to their menus, **Britain's chefs are fuelling the demand for French guinea fowl**, with production now outpacing the growth of all other poultry in France.

Despite the fact that guinea fowl is not indigenous to the UK, the British are now the third largest consumers of guinea fowl in Europe (after the two main producing nations, France and Italy). **France is the leading producer of guinea fowl worldwide; producing 45m birds (equivalent to 600,000 birds each week)** compared to Italy (14m) and followed by Belgium and Spain producing 1m birds each.

"The UK is now our most important export market and this is being driven by demand from the foodservice and catering operators who use it as an alternative to other poultry. Consumers love its subtle taste and strong health benefits, but aren't confident cooking it at home, so it's great for adding value to and enhancing the dining out experience," says Jean Champagne from CIP.



Exports of French guinea fowl to the UK have been growing steadily since 2000, when the UK represented less than 20% of French exports (565 tons). Since then, the demand has continued unabated, showing double figure growth, to reach **35% of exports (818 tons) in 2005 and 46.7% of exports in the first trimester of 2006.**

Lean and golden, the birds have a **tender flesh and superb flavour**, placing them mid-way between other poultry and game – yet with fewer calories than chicken and a higher protein content to red meat, they offer a lighter and healthier alternative.

The production and quality is controlled by Le Comité Interprofessionnel de la Pintade (CIP) to ensure that the birds' natural free range instincts are met and only natural feeds are used. **With demand for organic meat in the UK at an all-time high, caterers can welcome the news that a third of the birds produced in France are raised outdoors (as organic free range and Label Rouge).**

Unlike other poultry products, guinea fowl carries a premium positioning, yet unlike game or other exotic meats it has the potential to appeal to a more mainstream audience because its subtle flavour is even suited to children and it is readily available all year-round. 92.8% of the French guinea fowl imported into the UK is fresh and the majority is sold as whole birds. For convenience, caterers can choose from a range of portions, with the suprême (half breast fillet with skin and top wing joint) and leg (with top of the thigh) proving most popular.



“Such is the popularity of French guinea fowl in the UK, that it has now filtered down from gourmet restaurants and hotels to the mainstream and offers gastro pubs, high street restaurant chains and corporate hospitality chefs a fabulous star menu ingredient with great versatility,” says Jean Champagne from CIP.

www.guinea-fowl.com

For further information and photography please contact:

Fine Food Team at Sopexa

0207 312 3636

contact@sopexa.com

Or

CIP – Comité Interprofessionnel de la Pintade

00 33 223 48 2630

pintade.cip@wanadoo.fr

