



Press release 02/03/20

Special Merit Award 2020: Climate Change
Awarded to Fresca & Thompson's Innovation Centre

We are delighted to announce Fresca & Thompson's Innovation Centre as winners of the first award in the collaboration between the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers (WCF) and the Trustees of the Journal of Horticultural Science and Biotechnology (JHSB); the Special Merit Award 2020: Climate Change.

The Special Merit Award Scheme supports horticultural scientific research and industrial development. The aim of the first award is to help address the mitigation of climate change, the major challenge facing human survival on our planet.

These Awards are intended to: **encourage innovation, vision and practical application**. Applicants had to demonstrate that their work is achieving a significant impact and requires further financial support to take this work to the next level. The winners are awarded £30,000 over three years to progress their work.

The WCF's Awards Council and the JHSB Trustees recognised that ***Fresca & Thompson's Innovation Centre's work addressing two fundamental issues; (a) the increasingly challenging weather conditions and (b) taking advantage of increased warmth and longer growing periods, has the likely impact of a reduced carbon footprint as well as developing more sustainable production methods, while addressing challenges such as soil erosion and reduced water.***

The Award will be presented at the WCF's Audit Court dinner, Mercers Hall, City of London on 13th May 2020. In addition, representatives of the winners are invited to meet the Board of Trustees of JHSB for a buffet lunch at their AGM on 7th May 2020 which will be held at the School of Agriculture, Policy & Development of the University of Reading.

Professor Eve Mitleton-Kelly, Chairman Special Merit Awards, WCF said: "This is the first of many future awards that the Awards Council looks forward to granting as part of the WCF's commitment to support research into the vital areas of climate change, education and wellbeing. We are delighted to have such a deserving winner. The objectives of Fresca & Thompson's Innovation Centre show originality and vision. The Centre *"was created to identify and commercialise potential new UK crops as a climate change adaptation and mitigation project"*. That objective fits very well with the Award objectives. We are also very pleased to be working with the Trustees of the JHSB and look forward to our partnership continuing in the future."

Professor Geoffrey R Dixon, Chairman of the Trustees JHSB said: "The Trustees of the Journal of Horticultural Science and Biotechnology (JHSB) are very pleased to be associated with this initiative. The Journal was originally founded with the express purpose of publishing robust horticultural science research for the benefit of producers and the wider public. This award promotes and expands that remit."

Peter Thompson, Managing Director, George Thompson Ltd said: "We are very proud to receive the Special Merit Award from the Fruiterers and JHSB, recognising the work we have undertaken to date with the support of Fresca and Belazu. This allows us to accelerate and expand the scope of our work to deliver the results and change we are aiming for."

Ends

Fact Sheet

About the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers (WCF)

The Worshipful Company of Fruiterers is a progressive City of London Livery Company with a 700-year history of supporting the fruit industry. We are a charitable organisation and our key objectives include supporting education and research and promoting excellence across all areas of the fruit sector. Today over half our membership is actively engaged in the fruit industry, while the other half is drawn from a wide range of professions and occupations within the City and wider community. Our aim is to continue to be an influential fellowship, promoting the interests of the fruit industry, The Lord Mayor and the City of London Corporation; building upon our ancient heritage and traditions for today's world.

Future Awards: WCF is now looking for further funding for future awards to address climate change as well as in support of education, research and developing excellence across the sector, and would welcome donations. To discuss further please contact matthancock@nortonfolgate.com

About the Journal of Horticultural Science and Biotechnology (JHSB)

Founded in 1919, JHSB publishes the results of high quality, peer reviewed research in all aspects of production, environmental and social horticulture and detailed critical reviews of scientific progress. The JHSB's remit is publishing scientific research in the interests of those engaged in research and the practice of horticulture. It is managed solely by a Board of Trustees and regulated by the UK's Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, via the Chairman of Trustees and Secretary/Treasurer. Partnership with Taylor and Francis (the Informa Group) ensures rapid publication of research papers and reviews using the latest electronic techniques. The Senior Editor and a group of Associate Editors assess submissions for potential publication; afterwards the Social Media Manager and staff of Taylor and Francis enhance their dissemination.

About George Thompson Ltd

George Thompson Ltd are 3rd generation vegetable and fruit growers with a focus on serving the high end and oriental foodservice sectors with niche crops. A long relationship with Fresca has seen the development of a centre for innovation, home to a diverse range of trials and application of R&D in a commercial environment with a particular focus on sustainability. www.gthompsons.co.uk

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