

Edinburgh catering firm goes bananas for Fairtrade



Hundreds of free bananas will be handed out in Edinburgh by a Scottish catering giant to show its support for Fairtrade farmers around the globe. Venues across the capital such as the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, Dundas Castle and Edinburgh Corn Exchange to name but a few will be giving away over 500 pieces of the sustainable fruit during Fairtrade Fortnight, which runs from February 25. Sodexo Prestige, which also provides catering and hospitality services at venues such as Perth and Hamilton Race Courses, Aberdeen Football Club and National Museums of Scotland, is behind the freebies.

Austin Tilsley, Scotland regional director at Sodexo Prestige, said: "We partner with some of the finest venues in Scotland and were determined to do our bit for Fairtrade Fortnight. Now every delegate attending a meeting or conference at one of those venues over the fortnight will get a Fairtrade banana on us. It's a bit of fun, a tasty snack and a perfect way to get people to think about where their food comes from and to focus on the excellent work of the Fairtrade Foundation. Everything we do at Sodexo Prestige is about using locally-sourced, sustainable and in-season produce as widely as possible. Obviously we can't buy locally-grown bananas, but we can make sure those we do buy help the poorest farmers around the world. We already use a range of Fairtrade products across our venues, including sugar, coffee and tea."

Fairtrade Fortnight runs to March 10 and aims to promote the

issue of world poverty, encouraging people across the UK to think about where their food comes from and help support smallholders in the developing world. A total of 10,000 bananas will be handed out by Sodexo Prestige, which partners with 17 top class Scottish venues and more than 50 across the UK. It also provides catering for The Open Championship, one of the world's biggest golfing events. Parent company Sodexo employs more than 1000 people across Scotland, providing catering and a wide range of other services at scores of sites, including council buildings, government offices, courts, schools, colleges, as well as many businesses. The company, which operates globally, has outlined its long term sustainability goals in its Better Tomorrow plan, a worldwide sustainability strategy taking it up to 2020.

James Bennet, Head of Brand and Out of Home at the Fairtrade Foundation said: "In 2013 Fairtrade is challenging businesses to go further for Fairtrade producers. We are pleased to work with Sodexo Prestige on a number of initiatives that drive sales of Fairtrade goods across their sites and raise awareness to their consumers. Over the past few years in line with its Better Tomorrow Plan, Sodexo Prestige has actively engaged with Fairtrade. We look forward to continuing this in the future and across 2013 driving more significant producer impact. "

Operating under the BS8901 Management System for sustainable events, Sodexo Prestige implement a number of practices designed to ensure it acts in a sustainable manner. Initiatives include ensuring all baked goods are made on site or sourced from within 30 miles; using fresh, seasonal and locally sourced ingredients where possible; and consolidating deliveries to minimise food miles.

