

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Manston Airport](#)
Cc: committee@savemanstonairport.org.uk
Subject: RE: 2019-06-07 - Manston advantages for fresh produce - SMAa - for Deadline 8 - plus Finlays" letter
Date: 08 June 2019 18:19:18
Attachments: [2019-06-07 - Manston advantages for fresh produce - SMAa - for Deadline 8 - plus Finlays" letter.pdf](#)

2019-06-07 - Manston advantages for fresh produce - SMAa - for Deadline 8 - plus Finlays' letter

Dear Inspectorate,

In the DCO Hearings week 3rd to 7 June 2019, there were a few mentions, particularly on the 6th and 7th, regarding the air transportation of fresh produce such as flowers, vegetable and fruit. I (Dr. Beau Webber) spoke twice on this matter.

We attach a PDF of our thoughts on this matter.

Appended to the PDF is a letter from Finlays to the Transport Select Committee on this matter, which the examiners requested a copy of.

Thanking you,

Dr. Beau Webber

Chairman, Save Manston Airport association

-- Kentforlife.net - the email service for alumni of the University of Kent

2019-06-07 - Manston advantages for fresh produce –

Save Manston Airport association (SMAa), for Deadline 8.

In the DCO Hearings week 3rd to 7th June 2019, there were a few mentions, particularly on the 6th and 7th, regarding the air transportation of fresh produce such as flowers, vegetable and fruit.

I (Dr. Beau Webber) spoke twice on this matter.

Firstly it was stated that, by weight, fresh produce was at the bottom of the league table for environmental advantages.

This is quite clearly directly due to the low density of correctly packed fresh produce.

If the league table was re-done by monetary value, fresh produce would probably be in the middle of the table, and if it was re-done on the basis of the value to the health of UK citizens, fresh produce would probably be near the top of an environmental league table.

Secondly, Stone Hill Park suggested that HGV transport of fresh produce would be more environmentally friendly than flying it. This does not seem to be a particularly useful contribution to the discussion as most fresh produce comes on international flights, often from places like the highlands of Kenya, where it is grown in vast greenhouses.

Some of this is now flown into Schipol (Amsterdam) and then trucked across the channel, arriving much degraded. Even when it is say flown directly into say Stansted, Manston Airport gave a far better service, even for a fresh produce importer, Finlays, based in Stevenage, Herts.

The House of Commons Transport Select Committee, discussed Manston Airport on 2nd February 2015, and SMAa attended and gave evidence. This is what a fresh produce importer, Finlays, had to say in evidence to the TSC :
“Manston were unique in being able to offer such as quick turnaround of getting airfreight onto lorries, with suitable perishable handling facilities, and flexibility in dealing with freight day or night. The freight that we now have arriving at Stansted (approx 2 hours closer to Finlays sites by lorry than Manston) is regularly arriving 6 hours later than the equivalent Manston vehicles.” [1]

We would suggest that this probably means that the fresh produce is currently losing a day’s sell-by date on the supermarket shelves. Further, in the flying aircraft it is the low external air temperatures that are used to keep the produce cool; while the plane is sitting on the Stansted tarmac in the sun, the fresh produce is degrading rapidly.



7th October 2012 Manston - Findlays' labelled produce boxes being offloaded from a Magma plane.



Ditto, detail.

Kent Intl Airport Cargo Flight Board Schedule

DATE	REG	TYPE	ETA	FROM	ETD	TO	OPR	REMARKS
THURS 08								NIL OPS
FRI 09	N408MC	B747	09:35	NBO	11:35	OST	ATLAS	LD IN PRODUCE / FERRY FINLAYS
SAT 10								NIL OPS
SUN 11	TCACH	B747	08:30	NBO	10:30	BRU	MAGMA	LD IN PRODUCE / FERRY FINLAYS
MON 12	DC	SW4	TBA	TBA	19:00	BRU	BIN AIR	POSN IN / LD OUT GEN CARGO
TUES 13	DC N408MC	SW4 B747	6:00 10:15	BRU NBO	TBA 12:15	TBA OST	BIN AIR ATLAS	LD IN GEN CARGO / LD IN PRODUCE / FERRY FINLAYS
WEDS 14	OHLGD	MD11	12:20	NBO	13:50	OST	NORDIC	LD IN PRODUCE / FERRY FINLAYS
THURS 15	CLOSED AT 1700 LOCAL NO MORE OPS							OVERTAKEN STANSTED AS TIME DID NOT GET ANY FUEL

FINAL BOARD

The last four fresh produce arrivals at Manston Airport (Kent International Airport) for Finlays, including from a Magma Plane.

Dr. Beau Webber

Chairman, Save Manston Airport association (~3,500 members)

[1] Written evidence submitted by Finlays Horticulture Investments Ltd to the Transport Select Committee. 16th January 2015.

16th January 2015

Written evidence submitted by Finlays Horticulture Investments Ltd

As a previous large customer to the services of Manston airport, we felt it important that Finlays wrote to explain their previous business and ongoing support for Manston as an infrastructure hub for UK airfreight importation.

Finlays had been a customer of Manston airport through its various ownerships for a period of approx 17 years up to its closure a few months ago. Finlays brought in a large quantity of freight (approx 400t) on various carriers weekly through the airport, as they had become specialists in handling perishable cargo. Since Manston's closure this Finlays cargo (and other importers cargo) has been transferred to other London airports increasing their traffic, and placing strain on their resources to deal with an additional 1000 tonnes each week. Cargo capacity constraints continue to mount at airports in the south east of England which has adversely affected our business. The main factors we see specific to Manston are as follows:-

Manston were unique in being able to offer such as quick turnaround of getting airfreight onto lorries, with suitable perishable handling facilities, and flexibility in dealing with freight day or night. The freight that we now have arriving at Stansted (approx 2 hours closer to Finlays sites by lorry than Manston) is regularly arriving 6 hours later than the equivalent Manston vehicles.

Manston is one of only 5 UK airports to have a BIP (EU Border Inspection Post) facility. Trade has moved and is still moving to Europe as a consequence of the shutdown.

The overall limits of air freight capacity and restricted handling services in the South East continue to increase, and for the perishable air freight business, other airports are struggling to match the quality and speed of service for which Manston was renowned.

Manston's location to major roads and ports meant that the development of more trade was a distinct possibility and its unique air freight handling service makes it very desirable to the cargo business. In addition Customs, Port Health, FERA and other agencies were all in place to facilitate the airport's operation.

Cont/...

In our dealings with Manston over the last decade or more we have been very satisfied and actively supportive by putting our cargo business there. It was with deep regret that Manston management took the decision to close the airport.

It is noted that other interested airport operators have shown serious interest about taking on Manston as an airport, we strongly hope that a future for Manston can be found.

Yours faithfully



David Brown
Group Supply Chain Director Finlays Horticulture