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## Local entrepreneurs ask the Oxfordshire public to help them pitch to Richard Branson.

The founders of an Oxfordshire food start-up are calling on local residents to help them win a share of £1,000,000 in prizes and the opportunity to pitch their business to Richard Branson as part of the Virgin Media Business VOOM 2016 competition.

VOOM 2016 relies on public votes to shortlist the UK and Ireland's most exciting new businesses, and the team behind **Wonky Fruit** ([www.wonkyfruit.co.uk](http://www.wonkyfruit.co.uk)) believe they have the idea to impress the public.

Oxford-based John Cavers and his sister Ashley, from Combe, near Witney, came up with the idea for **Wonky Fruit** after becoming frustrated with the level of food waste in the UK, which sees about 40% of perfectly edible fresh fruit and veg never even reach the shop shelf. Along with professional caterer and Combe neighbour, Laura Snook, they have created a range of chutneys, relishes and jams that use unwanted fruit and veg that might otherwise fall out of the food chain.

"We wanted to create an exciting new brand that has sustainability at its heart," explains Ashley. "Customers are becoming more aware of the problem of food waste and we believe there is a real demand for products that address this issue – and also taste great!"

**Wonky Fruit** is currently involved in a trial with a major supermarket to collect surplus fruit and veg from a number of its stores around Oxfordshire and plans to launch its first range of products in selected independent retailers this summer. The team would also like to hear from more local farmers and suppliers who may be looking for new markets for their surplus or imperfect fruit and vegetables.

"Winning VOOM2016 would give us access to the expertise and financial support to help us really spread the word about **Wonky Fruit**", says Ashley. "It would be a major boost to our business and help us get a step closer to making our business dreams a reality."

If you'd like to support **Wonky Fruit**, visit [www.vmbvooom.com/pitches/wonky-fruit](http://www.vmbvooom.com/pitches/wonky-fruit) and cast your vote. As well as showing your support for local business, your votes could result in Virgin Media Business crowning Oxfordshire as Britain's most entrepreneurial region... so get voting now! (Voting closes 23<sup>rd</sup> May).

**ENDS**

### Notes to editors:

About Wonky Fruit:

For more information, please contact Ashley Cavers at **07596 488518**; [ashley@wonkyfruit.co.uk](mailto:ashley@wonkyfruit.co.uk); [@wonky fruit](https://twitter.com/wonkyfruit); [www.wonkyfruit.co.uk](http://www.wonkyfruit.co.uk)

About VOOM:

"Virgin Media Business VOOM 2016 is all about seeking out, supporting and celebrating the UK's and Ireland's most exciting businesses. It's the biggest and most valuable pitch competition out there - we're hoping everyone will find a way to get involved!" says Sir Richard Branson.