

**Produce GAPs Harmonization Initiative**  
**Technical Working Group meeting**  
February 17-18, 2010  
Meeting Summary

Chairman Suresh DeCosta convened the meeting and asked for self-introductions. There were several new participants to the Technical Working Group (TWG), and the group was reminded that there is an open invitation to all stakeholders to participate on the TWG. David Gombas briefed the group with the Vision and Scope of Work as defined by the Initiative Steering Committee, and results from the November and December TWG meetings. Gombas reminded the group that United Fresh now has a webpage dedicated to this Initiative:

[http://www.unitedfresh.org/newsviews/gap\\_harmonization](http://www.unitedfresh.org/newsviews/gap_harmonization). In order to maintain transparency for the Initiative, this webpage will be updated after each meeting, and is freely accessible by the public. DeCosta encouraged the TWG to visit the webpage and provide suggestions for improvement.

As of this meeting, twelve standard owners had provided their audit standards in the “Standards Matrix” format developed by TWG: Mushroom GAPs, AIB, GlobalGAP, CanadaGAP, Silliker, CA LGMA, SENASICA, AFDO Model Code for Produce Safety, Tomato Food Safety Audit Protocol, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, SQF 1000 and USDA GAPs. While other standards will still be accepted for consideration, the group has initiated the harmonization process with these.

Since the December meeting, ten volunteers had worked on compiling the twelve standards into a “compilation matrix”, by audit category. This was done so that the working groups would spend less time on compiling and formatting the standards and more time on analyzing them for harmonization opportunities. The attendees assembled into two breakout groups and each worked on three of the compiled audit categories: Group 1 (Group leaders Sharan Lanini and Bill Pool) worked on Food Safety Plan, Animal Control, and Agricultural Water. Group 2 (Group leaders Bob Mills and Amy McLester) worked on Field Production Management Responsibility, Documentation and Verification, Seed-Graft-Transplant, and Production Equipment.

Both groups reported that having the standards compiled by audit category greatly facilitated the analysis process. Group 2 was able to bring all four of their categories, and Group 1 two of their categories, to harmonized standards. Group 1 made considerable progress on Agricultural Water, but noted that it is probably one of the most contentious categories and will require more discussion.

There are 60 audit categories identified in the Standards Matrix and twelve had been compiled (including the six that were worked on this meeting). Susan Pheasant and Raina Nelson volunteered to continue compiling the standards by audit categories for future meetings.

Additional TWG members volunteered to host meetings in May, June and July. The list of future TWG meetings, and the hosting organizations, is now as follows; please mark your calendars:

- March 10-11, Taco Bell, Irvine, CA
- April 7-8, Darden, Orlando, FL

- May 12-13, US Foodservice, Rosemont, IL
- June 17-18, Sysco, Houston, TX
- July 13-14, California Strawberry Commission, San Jose, CA

Erin Grether will email TWG members location and hotel information about one month in advance of meetings and will solicit members' intent to attend. Members are asked to respond to Grether's requests promptly so that meeting organizers can plan for sufficient "seats at the table". Members needing information about the March 10-11 meeting should contact Grether now (egrether@unitedfresh.org).

The TWG was reminded that on April 19, 1:00-5:00 pm, immediately prior to the United Fresh annual convention at The Venetian in Las Vegas NV, there will be a joint meeting with the Steering Committee, so that the TWG can provide an update and discuss any issues. The TWG will discuss the report to the Steering Committee at the March and/or April meeting.

The group briefly reviewed the TWG Charter, and amended it by identifying some of the "stakeholders". The group also discussed ways to encourage more participation by stakeholders, particularly growers who will be most affected by the harmonized standards. One suggestion was to ask grower associations to encourage their members who are located near future TWG meetings to attend. Even if growers are only able to attend one meeting, it would be valuable to get their insights and perspectives, and they would have a better understanding of the harmonization objectives and process. It was also suggested that articles about the Initiative in trade publications (e.g., The Packer, Produce News) could help attract participants to future meetings.

DeCosta thanked Juan Anciso and Texas AgriLife Extension for hosting the meeting and thanked J.D. Produce and Val Verde Produce for sponsoring the group's lunches.

Attendees:

Juan Anciso, Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
 Megan Arnold, C.H. Robinson  
 Michael Bentel, Naturipe Farms  
 Beth Bland, Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association  
 Reggie Brown, Florida Tomato Exchange  
 Debbie Carter, Northwest Horticulture  
 Chris Christian, California Strawberry Commission  
 Justin Colson, CE Farms  
 Suresh DeCosta, McDonald's Corporation  
 Nigel Garbutt, GlobalGAP  
 David Gombas, United Fresh Produce Association  
 Erin Grether, United Fresh Produce Association  
 Jean Hamil, A. Duda & Sons  
 Johnna Hepner, PMA  
 Max Jehle, SunView Vineyards  
 Kent Killebrew, Ahold USA, Inc.  
 Amy Kinder, A. Duda & Sons  
 Sharan Lanini, Chiquita/Fresh Express

Drew McDonald, Taylor Farms/Taylor Fresh Foods  
 Amy McLester, US Foodservice  
 Bob Mills, Misionero Vegetables  
 Saul Morales, Sysco Corporation  
 Raina Nelson, Rosemont Farms  
 Butch Nottingham, VDACS  
 Ken Petersen, USDA  
 Susan Pheasant, Washington State Horticultural Association  
 Bill Pool, Wegmans  
 Eric Ritchie, McCain Foods USA, Inc.  
 Martha Roberts, University of Florida, IFAS  
 Sonia Salas, Western Growers  
 Randy Sodoma, Grant County Foods LLC  
 Mike Villaneva, California Leafy Green Products Handler Marketing Agreement  
 Steve Warshawer, Wallace Center/National Good Food Network