



## **Global Conference on Produce Food Safety Standards April 24-25, 2009 Palazzo Hotel, Las Vegas**

### **Conference Overview**

Multiple food safety auditing programs are the norm for most produce growers, shippers, and processors. But retailers and foodservice companies are also often confused about what's included in different audits, and which programs they should use with their supply chain partners. This conference represents the first effort to benchmark different audit programs and begin a serious top-to-bottom supply chain dialogue on the potential benefits of harmonization.

Attendees will include a wide range of major retail and restaurant chains, fresh-cut processors, and grower shippers, all joining together with government officials, private-sector auditing companies, and standards-setting bodies from around the world. The conference is co-sponsored by Chiquita/Fresh Express and the Dole Food Company, and is hosted by the United Fresh Food Safety and Technology Council, representing quality assurance and technical experts from more than 75 companies throughout the produce supply chain. In addition, the conference has been formally endorsed by the United Retail-Foodservice Board as an important event for grocery and restaurant company participation.

### **Conference Agenda**

#### ***Friday, April 24***

##### **1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.      Opening Session**

The opening session will set the stage with presentations by produce suppliers and buyers on the importance and potential benefits of audit benchmarking and harmonization. Speakers will address the impact of multiple, redundant and conflicting audits on suppliers and suppliers' costs, and increasing retail-foodservice questions about whether multiple audits and standards actually improve food safety.

##### **2:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.      Produce Food Safety Standards Today**

This session focuses on the many produce food safety standards and auditing programs in place today. The session begins with views from government speakers on their roles in setting standards and assuring verification through third-party auditors. Speakers from the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) will then address their mission to benchmark audits to enhance reliability and minimize the burden of multiple audits for all players in the food chain. The session then features an examination of benchmarking projects using side-by-side comparisons of food safety standards from both pre- and post-farm gate audit programs. This will also introduce the work of the United Fresh Food Safety & Technology Council's *Audits Benchmarking Initiative*, which has undertaken research to compare the structure, processes and assurances of the various audit and certification schemes available to the fresh produce industry. The afternoon session will conclude with a moderated Q&A with all the presenters in this session.

##### **5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.      Reception Hosted by Food Safety & Technology Council**

Join colleagues from throughout the global produce supply chain at this reception hosted by the United Fresh Food Safety & Technology Council. Council members will be identified with ribbons in order to give all attendees the opportunity to recognize and speak with these industry leaders about issues and questions on the day's topics.

**Saturday, April 25**

**8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Participant Break-Out Sessions**

With the diversity of audit programs affecting the produce industry, the conference breaks into two tracks to deal individually with pre-farm gate and post-farm gate audits. Attendees are invited to participate in either track of their choosing. During the morning sessions, each track will feature speakers from standard-setting organizations, government auditing bodies, and private-sector auditing companies discussing their specific auditing programs and how they are intended to assure integrity and reliability. Following formal presentations, attendees will participate in a moderated discussion on similarities, differences and potential opportunities for harmonization and benchmarking based on what they have heard in the session.

**Track 1 – Pre-Farm Gate Audits**

Track 1 will examine farm-level audit programs commonly used in the United States for generic Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) audits. Speakers will discuss federal, state and third-party private GAP auditing programs. The session will then examine two GAP certification programs available globally which are approved by GFSI –GlobalGAP and SQF 1000. This discussion will focus on the structure and processes of the certification programs and how they differ from or are similar to other audit programs. Last, this session will examine the role of “Commodity-Specific” GAP audits, which provide a more intense focus on standards and metrics specific to a particular commodity group, such as lettuce and leafy greens, tomatoes, and melons.

**Track 2 – Post-Farm Gate Audits**

Track 2 will focus on post-farm gate audits in produce packing, re-packing and fresh processing operations. The session will begin with a look at several certification schemes approved by GFSI such as the BRC (British Retail Consortium) and SQF 2000. At present, these post-farm gate schemes have greater global industry penetration than the pre-farm gate certifications. The second half of the morning session will focus on traditional audit programs offered by a variety of third-party auditing companies. These audits area generally focused on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans

**12:00 noon-1:00 p.m. Lunch/Informal Discussions at Your Table**

**1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. Working Breakout Sessions**

Participants will then convene in four moderated breakout groups to discuss lessons learned and opportunities to enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of audits in the fresh produce industry. Each breakout group will be asked to develop recommendations on the potential means to benchmark and/or harmonize audits to reduce costs and duplication, without sacrificing food safety assurance.

**2:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Final Plenary Session/Report From Breakout Sessions**

The afternoon session focuses on a future mandate and direction for the produce industry in addressing both pre- and post-farm gate audits. Each breakout session will share its recommendations on ways to move ahead in benchmarking and harmonization efforts, resulting in an overall group discussion – and potential industry consensus – on next steps to tackle this critically important issue.

*For more information on conference registration, visit [www.unitedfresh.org](http://www.unitedfresh.org), or contact Andrew Marshall, [amarshall@unitedfresh.org](mailto:amarshall@unitedfresh.org), 202-303-3407. Registration includes free access to the United FreshTech and Fresh Marketplace expos April 22-24, the Food Safety Pavilion, Traceability Demo Center, and numerous educational workshops on the trade show floor.*