



A Letter From United Fresh Produce Association Co-Chairmen Maureen Marshall and Mark Miller

January 23, 2007

Dear United Fresh Members,

None of us can deny that our fresh produce industry faces a different business world today than we did six months ago. We have all been impacted by the recent food safety issues in our industry. Each time any fruit or vegetable is implicated in a foodborne illness outbreak, we all suffer from lost consumer confidence in our industry as a whole. In the long run, this is simply not sustainable and certainly not acceptable.

Over the past months, your Board of Directors and management staff have worked hard to assist our members facing the most pressing food safety issues. Our scientific and technical team has worked tirelessly in developing rigorous and measurable standards for Good Agricultural Practices for the production of lettuce and leafy greens. Meanwhile, our government affairs and regulatory team has been analyzing options to determine the best and most credible means to assure compliance with food safety standards for these and other commodities, as well as overall industry practices. These efforts are both short-term to help assure trade confidence for the produce items we are producing today, as well as long-term to assure consumer confidence in our products for many years ahead.

At the recent Board of Directors' meeting this past weekend, your Board unanimously adopted a set a principles to shape our nation's food safety regulatory process that we believe will provide the greatest assurance of food safety possible, combined with strong consumer confidence to sustain our industry for the future.

Let us explain the four guiding principles adopted by your Board.

1. Produce safety standards first must be consistent and applicable to all produce grown anywhere in the United States, or imported into this country. We strongly applaud those industry members in different states and regions that are tackling food safety standards for produce. Your work has advanced our industry already. But to earn the long term trust of retailers, restaurateurs and most importantly, consumers, we believe that all fresh fruits and vegetables must be held to the same standards, regardless of their origin.
2. Produce safety standards must be mandatory, with sufficient federal oversight in order to be credible to consumers. Strong and clear federal oversight is essential to building and maintaining public confidence in all of our products. The industry's integrity and ability to defend ourselves in the event of an outbreak depends on our ability to assure the consumer that we are complying with government established, government enforced, and government supported food safety practices.
3. These standards cannot depend upon marketing programs or voluntary certification. Again, we applaud those commodity groups and organizations that have risen to the challenge of current times, and are working to implement various voluntary standards in different parts of the industry. This important work demonstrates our industry's commitment to adopting the highest food safety practices, even before

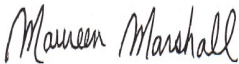
federal requirements. Yet, while these programs are an important means for specific sectors of the industry to enhance performance, long-term public trust requires that such standards must be set by the government in an open and transparent process, with full input from industry, academia, consumers and all stakeholders.

4. Finally, produce safety standards must allow for commodity-specific food safety practices based on the best available science. One size does not fit all in the produce industry, and a mandatory federal regulatory approach must contain needed scientific flexibility to address specific commodities differently based on the need.

Your Board of Directors not only voted unanimously to endorse these principles, but to drive a United States regulatory framework for the fresh produce industry that incorporates these principles as expeditiously as possible. We intend to work with all of our members, our allied produce industry associations, our customer associations in retail and foodservice, the Food and Drug Administration, USDA, members of Congress and all other stakeholders to implement federal food safety policies that are consistent with these principles.

While these steps may not always be comfortable, we are convinced they are necessary to protect the future of our fresh produce industry. We know scientifically that we cannot promise there will never be another outbreak of foodborne disease. But we also know that in the future, we must be able to stand side-by-side with government to reassure the public that together, we have done everything we know to implement and comply with strong mandatory government standards to protect public health.

We ask for your support and encourage you to make your views known as we go forward in this process together. Thank you.



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