United Fresh and NACS Help Retailers Assess Fresh Produce Offerings with New Resource

WASHINGTON, DC (August 3, 2015) – With fresh produce offerings on the rise in convenience stores across the country, United Fresh and the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) have published a new retail assessment tool. “Are You Fit for Fresh?” is a simple 10-point checklist that helps retailers examine considerations for implementing fresh produce programs.

According to NACS, more than 77% of retailers sell fresh fruits and vegetables; approximately 57 percent sell packaged salads; and nearly 50 percent sell cut fruit and vegetables. Within the past six months, 50 percent of convenience retailers indicate they have expanded their fresh fruit sales; 30 percent have increased cut fruit and vegetable offerings; and 21 percent provide more salads. Additionally, sales of fresh fruits and vegetables in convenience stores grew 10 percent in the United States during 2014, according to Nielsen.

“A strong produce program can attract new customers, increase sales, plus deliver strong margins,” said NACS Chairman of the Board and NACS-United Fresh Convenience Task Force co-chairman Steve Loehr, vice president of operations with La Crosse, WI-based Kwik Trip. “This resource helps retailers considering a fresh produce program to ask the right questions customer demand and demographics as well as resources required to effectively execute a quality program.”

“We want to provide solutions from the entire fresh produce supply chain to help convenience store retailers capitalize on this ‘fresh’ opportunity,” said NACS-United Fresh Convenience Task Force co-chairman Ron Carkoski. “Retailers who share an interest to develop a fresh program can be ensured that our effort will address best practices and educational programs to achieve success,” said Carkoski, who also is United Fresh’s past chairman of the board and president and CEO of Ephrata, PA-based Four Seasons Family of Companies

The new publication is the second deliverable from the partnership that NACS and United Fresh formed in June 2014 to identify best practices to grow produce sales in convenience stores. Earlier this year the groups published the 26-page “Building the Business Case for Produce Sales at Convenience Stores.” More than two-dozen retailers, distributors and produce companies helped develop and review the document. Follow-up resources as well as educational sessions at the United Fresh 2015 Convention in June and at the upcoming NACS Show, October 11-14, 2015, in Las Vegas are in development to help retailers execute quality produce programs.
About the National Association of Convenience Stores
Founded in 1961 as the National Association of Convenience Stores, NACS (nacsonline.com) is the international association for convenience and fuel retailing. The U.S. convenience store industry, with more than 152,000 stores across the country, posted $698 billion in total sales in 2014, of which $483 billion were motor fuels sales. NACS has 2,100 retail and 1,600 supplier member companies, which do business in nearly 50 countries.

About the United Fresh Produce Association
Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association (unitedfresh.org) brings together companies across every segment of the fresh produce supply chain, including growers, shippers, fresh cut processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations. Through a variety of programs, it unites the produce industry with a common purpose — to build long-term value for its members and grow produce consumption.