



NEWS RELEASE

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New Primer Examines Distribution Options from Fresh Produce at Convenience Stores

CHICAGO, IL (June 22, 2016) – As consumer demand and sales for fresh produce at convenience stores continues to grow, the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) and the United Fresh Produce Association have published a new resource looking at distribution options available to store owners.

[“Convenience Store Distribution Options for Fresh Produce”](#) provides an overview of the various options available to retailers seeking to increase their fresh produce offerings.

Consumers are increasingly looking to convenience stores for fresh produce for snacks and meals, whether bananas, cut fruit or prepared salads. Nearly half of all consumers (48%) say that convenience stores are a place where they can get fresh produce, according to a 2015 national consumer survey conducted by NACS.

At the same time, convenience retailers also are stocking more fresh produce. More than three in four NACS members (77%) say that they now sell fresh produce. As a result of these trends, sales of fresh fruits and vegetables in convenience stores grew 14.4% in 2015, more than five times the overall 2.7% growth rate of produce sales in the United States, according to Nielsen data.

Depending on their resources and business model, the 154,000 convenience stores in the United States have very different distribution approaches to get products to their stores — and these approaches affect how they obtain fresh product. Further complicating the issue, many chains have grown through a combination of acquisitions and the building of new stores, making it tougher to implement a one-size-fits-all approach across all stores within a company.

“This latest resource is designed to provide an overview of the options available to retailers so that they can examine what approach may work best for their business — or even at individual locations. It also is an excellent resource for others interested in the channel so that they can best understand the challenges and opportunities related to obtaining fresh produce,” said Jeff Lenard, NACS Vice President of Strategic Industry Initiatives.

“During the past two years, members of the NACS-United Fresh Convenience Task Force have researched current challenges in supply chain management, in-store handling and

merchandising, and other barriers to produce success for convenience retailers,” related Jeff Oberman, United Fresh’s Vice President of Trade Relations. “This document provides convenience retailers and their supply chain partners with insight to develop and maintain an effective distribution network for success.”

The new publication is the third deliverable from the partnership that NACS and United Fresh formed in June 2014 to identify best practices to grow produce sales in convenience stores. The groups published two documents in 2015: “[Building the Business Case for Produce Sales at Convenience Stores](#)” and “[Are You Fit for Fresh?](#)” a 10-point checklist that looks at critical areas to assess whether a specific store should grow its fresh produce offer. NACS and United Fresh also were among the groups that worked with The Food Trust to develop its 2015 resource, “[Healthy Food and Small Stores: Strategies to Close the Distribution Gap in Underserved Communities.](#)” United Fresh President & CEO Tom Stenzel is featured on the latest [NACS Convenience Matters podcast](#). NACS also has other resources online as part of its [reFresh initiative](#), which provides tools for retailers to improve their businesses and the communities they serve.

The groups will continue to jointly develop follow-up resources and educational sessions at both the 2016 NACS Show and United Fresh 2016 to help retailers and their supplier and distributor partners execute quality produce programs, from acquiring product to effectively merchandising and marketing it.

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About United Fresh Produce Association

Founded in 1904, the **United Fresh Produce Association** 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. We empower industry leaders to shape sound government policy. We deliver the resources and expertise companies need to succeed in managing complex business and technical issues. We provide the training and development individuals need to advance their careers in produce. Through these endeavors, we unite our industry with a common purpose – to build long-term value for our members and grow produce consumption.

About the National Association of Convenience Stores

Founded in 1961 as the National Association of Convenience Stores, NACS (www.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 \$696 billion in total sales in 2013, of which \$491 billion were motor fuels sales. NACS has 2,100 retail and 1,600 supplier member companies, which do business in nearly 50 countries.