



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Mary Coppola
mcoppola@unitedfresh.org
202-303-3425

**Midwinter Leadership Forum to Explore Shifts in
Produce Procurement**
Cornell University's Rod Hawkes to Offers Insights and Implications

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 17, 2015) – On Wednesday, January 13, attendees at United Fresh's Midwinter Leadership Forum will gain insight from Rod Hawkes of Cornell University on Cornell's recently published research "**Produce Industry Procurement: Changing Preferences and Practices.**"

This robust research explores how changes – both inside and outside of the produce industry – are dramatically affecting the produce procurement process, from technology shifts to climate change, from consumer demands for year-round produce to global sourcing. Rod will share Cornell's findings and offer commentary on how retail and wholesale procurement practices have changed over the past 20 years and the implications on today's supply chain.

The "Produce Industry Procurement: Changing Preferences and Practices" research was released in September 2015. The report explores the complexities of produce procurement and the motivating factors for supply chain cooperation and transparency. The United Fresh Retail-Foodservice Board provided support and input on the research.

Rod Hawkes, has been a faculty member at Cornell University's Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management in its Food Industry Management Program for more than 35 years. In addition to teaching undergraduate courses, Rod helps conduct and teach in a variety of executive education programs, including United Fresh's Produce Executive Development Program. He has extensive international program experience, bringing hundreds of food industry executives to Cornell from over 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

Rod will headline the United Fresh Midwinter Leadership Forum breakfast General Session on January 13 at the La Quinta Resort & Club in Palm Springs, CA. The Forum is an annual gathering of more than three hundred United Fresh volunteer leaders who come together for board and council meetings, to take part in supporting the United Fresh Start Foundation through its annual Golf Tournament, and finally, to celebrate industry influencers at the Produce Legends Dinner. On the evening of January 12, this year's dinner will honor Rick and Tonya Antle – each in their own right – with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Registration for all events is available online at <http://www.unitedfresh.org/events-programs/winter-leadership-conference/>. For questions about the event, contact Sophie Drayton at sdrayton@unitedfresh.org or 202-303-3413. For questions about the United Fresh Start Foundation Golf Tournament, contact Andrew Marshall at amarshall@unitedfresh.org or 202-303-3407.

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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.