



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release, June 15, 2017

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United Fresh Introduces Class 23 of the Produce Industry Leadership Program

Rising Stars of the Produce Industry Begin Their Leadership Journeys

CHICAGO, IL (June 15, 2017) – The United Fresh Produce Association is pleased to announce the members of the 2017-2018 United Fresh Produce Industry Leadership Program Leadership Class 23. Sponsored by a generous grant from DuPont Crop Protection, this program was launched in 1995 and has graduated more than 200 program participants.

The Produce Industry Leadership Program welcomes the following professionals to its 23rd Class:

- **Alisha Albinder**, Hudson River Fruit Distributors, Milton, NY
- **Joel Buurma**, Buurma Farms Inc., Willard, OH
- **Kristen Catalani Small**, Del Monte Fresh Produce, Dallas, TX
- **Tyler Clear**, Deardorff Family Farms, Oxnard, CA
- **Alex DiNovo**, DNO Produce, Columbus, OH
- **Kent Ford**, Taylor Farms Tennessee, Smyrna, TN
- **Jordan Grainger**, Castellini Company, Wilder, KY
- **Troy Le Cheminant**, Westlake Produce Company, Irwindale, CA
- **Kelly Miller**, Griffin Ranches, Inc., Somerton, AZ
- **Mackenzie Mills**, River Point Farms, Hermiston, OR
- **Claudia Pizarro-Villalobos**, D'Arrigo Brothers Company of California, Salinas, CA
- **Michael Schadler**, Florida Tomato Exchange, Maitland, FL
- **Lesley Sykes**, SCS Global Services, Emeryville, CA
- **Michael Wellnitz**, Costco Wholesale, Issaquah, WA
- **Hunter Winton**, Robinson Fresh, Phoenix, AZ

Beginning this July, the members of Leadership Class 23 will participate in a number of educational events and outings centered on the four core focus areas of the program: leadership development, business relationships, government and public affairs, and media and public communications.

During the year-long fellowship, participants will take part in a series of customized trips which include face-to-face meetings with leading industry players, hands-on training with top industry experts and educators, interactive experiences with influential leaders in Washington, and more. This year's schedule will feature trips to California, Washington, D.C., Wilmington, DE, Costa Rica, and Chicago, where the class will graduate at the 2018 United Fresh Convention.

"We are thrilled to welcome the newest class of the Produce Industry Leadership Program," said Amanda Griffin, Senior Director of Meetings and Member Programs for United Fresh, "We congratulate Class 23 for their commitment to becoming future fresh produce leaders."

"DuPont Crop Protection has been the sole sponsor of the Produce Industry Leadership Program since its inception 23 years ago," said Victoria Backer, United Fresh Executive Vice President. "Their tremendous support creates a unique opportunity for future fresh produce leaders to grow professionally and personally, ensuring a bright future for our industry."

Candidates selected for the program submitted an application including essays on what they consider the most important challenges affecting the produce industry, and had two personal interviews with members of the Leadership Advisory Committee comprised of United Fresh Board members and program alumni. The committee is responsible for assessing each candidate based on their experience and expertise, as well as developing a class that is balanced and representative of the industry.

For questions or additional information on the Produce Industry Leadership Program, visit www.unitedfresh.org or contact said Amanda Griffin, Senior Director of Education and Member Programs for United Fresh at agriffin@unitedfresh.org or 202-303-3412.

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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. For more information, visit www.unitedfresh.org