



NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release, November 26, 2018

Contact: Mary Coppola

mcoppola@unitedfresh.org

202-303-3425

FDA and CDC To Announce Romaine Lettuce Back in Market

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 26, 2018) – FDA and CDC recently shared with industry and government stakeholders that later today they will be lifting their advisory for consumers not to eat any romaine lettuce based on a new voluntary labeling agreement with industry and allowing for romaine to return to the marketplace. The labeling agreement was negotiated by a number of romaine grower-shipper-processors, who have each pledged to label their romaine products with the region where grown and approximate harvest date. This will allow FDA to communicate to consumers that product coming back into the marketplace could not have been related to the outbreak earlier this fall.

A number of produce associations including United Fresh Produce Association also have agreed to support this initiative and are recommending that all industry members throughout the supply chain follow this same labeling program. The voluntary labeling agreement is one illustration of industry and government working in partnership to ensure consumers have access to romaine that was not implicated in the outbreak.

“The industry is committed to regaining consumer confidence,” says Dr. Jennifer McEntire, United Fresh Produce Association Vice President of Food Safety & Technology. “Romaine that will soon be available in grocery stores and restaurants could not have been related to the outbreak. This labeling will give consumers assurance that they can purchase romaine again.”

In anticipation of many “how to” questions, [United Fresh and PMA have posted Questions & Answers](#). A standardized approach to source labeling is new to the industry and we expect situation-specific questions that were not anticipated. All involved, including FDA, recognize that we will need to gain real-world experience as companies develop the most workable approach in different situations. United Fresh and PMA, along with our regional partners: Western Growers, CA LGMA, AZ LGMA, Grower Shipper Association of Central California, Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, Yuma Fresh Vegetable Association, and Yuma Safe Produce Council; serve to help the industry navigate this new approach.

In addition to the labeling agreement, the industry and FDA have agreed to work together to continue improvement in the tracking and tracing of romaine lettuce through the supply chain. Improved data capture at *all* supply chain points is a prerequisite to leveraging technology that can quickly illuminate supply chain pathways.

“We’re is committed to working with FDA in a new effort with experts from within and outside the industry, together with government, to implement improved procedures that enhance the speed and accuracy of investigations,” said Dr. McEntire. “Moving forward, our efforts to enhance strong traceability systems will be most beneficial for consumers only if coupled with expert epidemiological

methodology, accelerated investigations with sufficient resources, and government-industry expert collaboration that allow us all to pinpoint the source of contaminated product resulting in more targeted recalls.”

###

About United Fresh Produce Association

Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association serves companies at the forefront of the global fresh and fresh-cut produce industry, including growers, shippers, fresh-cut processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations. From its headquarters in Washington, D.C. and Western Regional office in Salinas, Calif., United Fresh and its members work year-round to make a difference for the produce industry by driving policies that increase consumption of fresh produce, shaping critical legislative and regulatory action, providing scientific and technical leadership in food safety, quality assurance, nutrition and health, and developing educational programs and business opportunities to assist member companies in growing successful businesses. For more information, visit www.unitedfresh.org or call 202-303-3400.