United Fresh Releases Updated Food Safety Guidelines for the Fresh Tomato Supply Chain

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 26, 2019) – United Fresh Produce Association is pleased to announce the release of the updated version of the Food Safety Programs & Auditing Protocol for the Fresh Tomato Supply Chain, commonly known as the ‘Tomato Metrics’. These metrics were initially developed in 2009, endeavoring to harmonize food safety audit standards for the fresh tomato supply chain. It was this original effort that led to the development of the aptly named Produce GAPs Harmonized Standard.

The Tomato Working Group recommended a new structure for the Tomato Metrics in which tomato operations will use the Harmonized Standard (or other similar GAP audit) as the base food safety protocol, with the Tomato Metrics added as an industry-specific addendum. With the revision, the Tomato Metrics are limited to areas that are either unique to the tomato industry, or not necessarily unique, but not currently in the Harmonized Standards.

This update of the Tomato Metrics corresponds with the September 2018 publication of the Tomato Guidelines, 3rd ed. Together, these resources provide in-depth information and auditing protocols for the recommended food safety practices intended to minimize the microbiological hazards associated with fresh and fresh-cut tomato products.

“Over the past decade, United Fresh has strived to encourage broad industry participation in the development process of both the Tomato Metrics and the Harmonized Standard, as is demonstrated by the wide adoption of the Tomato Metrics among tomato handling operations,” says Dr. Emily Griep, United Fresh’s Manager of Food Safety. “We hope that the new format of these metrics will encourage continued use of these standards, achieving our ultimate goal of food safety standard harmonization, and reduced audit fatigue among produce growing and handling operations.”

The Tomato Guidelines can be downloaded for free by visiting www.unitedfresh.org. Individuals interested in learning more about the Tomato Metrics or the Harmonized Standard should contact Dr. Emily Griep at 202-303-3401.

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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.