



**NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release, July 17, 2019**

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## **United Fresh Initiates New Round of Revisions to the Produce GAPs Harmonized Standard**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 17, 2019) – United Fresh remains committed to strengthening produce safety GAP standards, announcing plans to refresh the current version of the Harmonized Standard, ten years from its original inception.

In its original charter, published in November 2009, the vision for the Harmonized Standard was to “Develop a harmonized food safety standard and checklist ... for GAP audits necessary to protect consumers from potential hazards that may contaminate produce at that stage of the supply chain, and to build efficiencies into the supplier audit process. The overall goal is one audit by any credible third party that can be acceptable to all buyers.”

As secretariat to the Harmonized Standard, United Fresh holds fast to this vision. Throughout the update process, United Fresh will coordinate the efforts of a diverse group of buyers, producers, and other industry partners to identify additions and revisions to the current standard that reflect a deeper understanding of the hazards and risks associated with produce growing and handling environments. Additionally, general modifications will be considered to make the standard more user-friendly and minimize the opportunity for misinterpretation. Ultimately, United Fresh aims to further strengthen industry awareness and buyer acceptability of the Harmonized by closely involving stakeholders in each step of the process.

The current version of the Harmonized Standard was released in 2016 after focused revisions were made to align the standard with the FDA’s Produce Safety Rule. The upcoming revision will examine each of the requirements of the standard in its entirety. This process will begin with an in-person meeting of the Technical Working Group in Washington, D.C., September 18-19, immediately following the United Fresh Washington Conference.

“While the Harmonized has received strong support from a wide variety of produce industry stakeholders over the past ten years, we recognize that there are still some buyers who don’t currently accept the Harmonized for various reasons, or who simply prefer to perform their own company-specific customer audits,” says Dr. Emily Griep, United Fresh’s Manager of Food Safety. “Though it is a lofty goal to achieve total harmonization of produce safety audits within the industry, we are committed to working with growers and buyers alike to maintain a strong, relevant produce safety standard that emphasizes the need for growers and handlers to acutely understand their respective food safety risks, regardless of size or commodity. I look forward to continuing to work with the Technical Working Group

and other industry experts who are passionate about produce safety, and who recognize that GAP standards such as the Harmonized are key components to protecting public health.”

The Technical Working Group is currently soliciting produce safety professionals to participate in the update process. For more information, 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.