



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**United Fresh To Recognize Industry Leaders With  
2017 FreshTEC and FreshMKT Achievement Awards**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 12, 2017) – The United Fresh Produce Association will present its 2017 FreshTEC and FreshMKT Achievement Awards to two leaders who have made their mark on the fresh produce industry.

Receiving the FreshTEC award for outstanding technical achievements is Peter Quiring, Owner & CEO of NatureFresh™ Farms, whose leadership has helped advance the fresh produce industry through innovation in greenhouse technologies.

Receiving the FreshMKT award for outstanding marketing achievements is Roger Pepperl, Marketing Director for Stemilt Growers, for his significant innovations in the marketing and merchandising of fresh produce.

**FreshTEC Achievement Award to Peter Quiring**

Prior to NatureFresh, Peter Quiring started a company called South Essex Fabricating, located in Leamington, Ontario. As the forerunner to NatureFresh, South Essex Fabricating (SEF) was established to drive innovation in Canada's high-tech commercial greenhouse industry, providing growers with structures, heating systems, and logistics. South Essex Fabricating was just the beginning. It brought leading-edge ideas like thermal storage, CO2 capture, biomass heating, water recycling technology, and the latest in greenhouse innovations, such as diffused glass, into the industry eighteen years ago.

Despite fighting the need to be both the grower and the marketer, Peter's enterprise continued to grow and soon developed into NatureFresh Farms. Now, the company boasts 100 percent zero nutrient water discharge into the environment and is just starting to install commercial dehumidification systems in greenhouses after experimenting with it for the past 6 years. NatureFresh also became one of the first successful businesses to grow peppers under lights.

Since its foundation, the vertically integrated corporation has built nearly 2,000 acres of greenhouses for growers in North America and owns 130 acres in Ontario with an additional 45 acres in Delta, OH.

"Peter's contributions to greenhouse technology have advanced the industry significantly," said United Fresh President & CEO Tom Stenzel. "His competitive drive and commitment to invest in technology advancements in controlled growing environments are what set him apart. We're proud to honor Peter with this FreshTEC Achievement Award."

## **FreshMKT Achievement Award to Roger Pepperl**

Roger Pepperl began his produce career working his way up from produce manager to senior buyer/merchandiser during 21 years with Meijer, Inc. He then joined Stemilt's team as marketing director in 2000. Roger's knowledge and experience as a retailer for one of the nation's largest grocery chains has served him well in his role at Stemilt. He understands that success is in the hands of the shopper first and foremost, and has made it a priority to tell the Stemilt story in order to engage with all shoppers, and especially the next generation, millennials.

The advent of new packaging and new proprietary varieties in the tree fruit world has been a huge focus for Roger over the past several years. He was the mastermind behind Stemilt's line of kid-sized fruits, Lil Snappers™. Delivering convenience and quality in a package and targeting that to today's busy parents quickly led to increased category sales for both apples and pears. He also had the foresight to bring Sunkist Growers into the brand with their citrus products, creating a new level of cross-category merchandising.

Recognizing the fact that consumers want to know where their food is grown and the advantage Stemilt has in growing its pears in the Wenatchee and Entiat River Valleys, Roger recently helped Stemilt launch a new label for its pear program, called Rushing Rivers™ pears. This program benefits all the audiences Stemilt serves and is a classic example of Roger's innovative approach to creating marketing programs that work for produce. Piñata!® and SweeTango® apples are additional success stories of Roger's and Stemilt's. He led the introduction of the company's proprietary apple variety, Piñata, back in 2009. Marketing the variety in the middle of the winter with eye-catching, tropical themed cartons/displays and the flavor profile "classic apple flavor with a tropical twist" put this apple in shopping carts and created huge consumer demand. Pinata is now a variety that consumers are seeking out, and it appeared in more than 7,000 supermarkets in the U.S. alone last season.

"Roger's contributions to the marketing and merchandising of fresh fruits and vegetables have advanced the industry significantly," said United Fresh President & CEO Tom Stenzel. "His innovative marketing programs, unique approach to merchandising and foresight to stay one step ahead of the curve are what set Roger apart from his peers. We're proud to honor him with this FreshMKT Achievement Award."

Both Peter and Roger will be recognized on Tuesday afternoon, June 13 at the United FreshTEC and FreshMKT conferences, respectively, in Chicago. Registration is available online at [www.UnitedFreshShow.org](http://www.UnitedFreshShow.org).

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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.