United Fresh Produce Association Builds the Next Generation of Produce Safety Professionals

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OCTOBER 9, 2020) – United Fresh Produce Association is now accepting applications for Class Two of the Produce Safety Immersion Program. To further support the career development of produce safety professionals, they also are launching two new programs: a food safety student membership and a food safety job board.

“Despite a global pandemic, class one of the Produce Safety Immersion Program successfully built their professional network, advanced their technical knowledge, and grew their leadership skills,” said Dr. Jennifer McEntire, Senior Vice President, Food Safety & Technology at United Fresh. “I’m looking forward to welcoming new fellows into the program as Class Two applications are now being accepted.”

In addition to participant applications, United Fresh also is now accepting applications from prospective mentors for Class Two of the program, sponsored by Renaissance Food Group at the gold level, and Ecolab as a silver sponsor. The program offers a balance of face-to-face meetings/trainings, tailored webinars, regular networking and professional development sessions with industry leaders, as well as an ongoing mentorship program. Three to four highly skilled produce safety professionals will serve as mentors to the program fellows and will support the professional growth and development of the cohort.

“Being selected to participate in the United Fresh Produce Safety Immersion Program has been an honor. We have had the opportunity to learn from key individuals from different sectors in the food safety discipline, whom have allowed us to ask specific questions to further build our knowledge within the industry,” said Kristina Schoen, Food Safety Specialist at Highland Ag Solutions and Class One fellow. “We have also had a chance to learn from each other. This program has allowed us to build not only business relationships, but friendships as well. We know that we can reach out to other class members, our mentors and the panel who led discussions about any questions we may have. This opportunity has given me additional confidence to play a more active role within the industry.”

Early-to-mid career professionals with less than five years’ experience in produce safety are encouraged to apply for Class Two. Participant and mentor applications will be evaluated by members of the United Fresh Food Safety Council Steering Committee based on their backgrounds, roles in the industry, career aspirations, and recommendations.

“Ongoing professional development is especially crucial in produce safety, as ensuring consumers can safely consume such healthy products requires knowledge of a wide variety of processes and regulations,” said Donna Lynn Browne, Director of Food Safety & Social Responsibility, Naturipe Farms. “United Fresh has always been on the forefront of all things food safety in produce and this program is yet another great tool for the industry.”
With a focus towards building the next generation of produce safety professionals, United Fresh has launched a complimentary membership program for undergraduate and graduate students with a career interest in produce safety or quality. These students will have access to all United Fresh membership benefits, including dozens of food safety webinars, discounted trainings and events, and regular networking opportunities with industry professionals. United Fresh also has created a job board exclusively for produce safety and quality positions that will be available to members this fall.

To apply for Class Two of the Produce Safety Immersion Program as a fellow or mentor, visit [www.unitedfresh.org](http://www.unitedfresh.org). For more information about these programs, contact Katie McGowan, United Fresh’s Food Safety Coordinator, at 202-303-3402 or kmcgowan@unitedfresh.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. For more information, visit [www.unitedfresh.org](http://www.unitedfresh.org).