NSF International Honors United Fresh’s Dr. Jennifer McEntire at 2020 Food Safety Summit

Dr. McEntire receives Food Safety Leadership Award for Produce Safety Immersion Program

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 20, 2020) – NSF International, a global public health and safety organization, announced United Fresh Produce Association’s Dr. Jennifer McEntire, Senior Vice President of Food Safety and Technology, as this year’s Food Safety Leadership Award recipient.

After noticing gaps in the education of aspiring food safety professionals, Dr. Jennifer McEntire answered the call to develop the next generation of produce safety leaders with the creation of United Fresh’s Produce Safety Immersion Program in 2019. Launched with the support of United Fresh, this year-long program offers 15 individuals the opportunity to build the technical competencies, critical thinking skills and leadership attributes required to ensure the safety of produce in the United States.

“United Fresh has always been the industry resource for all things produce safety and the Produce Safety Immersion Program is yet another great tool for the industry,” said Dr. McEntire. “Nothing has given me more personal and professional satisfaction than watching Class One of the program grow their skills by learning from experts, and each other.”

United Fresh is accepting applications through October 31 from prospective fellows and mentors for Class Two of the Produce Safety Immersion Program, again sponsored by Renaissance Food Group at the gold level, and Ecolab as a silver sponsor.

“The importance of produce safety, coupled with emerging science and technology and changes in the regulatory and legal environment, have created a real need for ongoing professional development,” said Cheryl Enlow, Vice President of Quality Assurance & Food Safety, Renaissance Food Group, and Chair of the United Fresh Food Safety & Technology Council. “Given the various paths my peers and I have taken to become produce safety professionals, I’m confident the Produce Safety Immersion program will help ensure a well-trained workforce is following in our footsteps.”

Dr. McEntire began her Washington, DC-based career in 2001 at the National Food Processors Association and as a visiting scientist at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). After earning her Ph.D. from Rutgers University studying Listeria monocytogenes, she joined the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT), where she received the FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition Director’s Special Citation Award for her food defense work with the Food and Ag Sector as well as food defense related training exercises.

At IFT, Dr. McEntire also led a multi-media career guidance initiative through a partnership with Discovery Education, promoting the field of food science in all 18,000 U.S. high schools, which was recognized with a Gold Award by the Society for National Association Publications. Her support of
education extends to her personal life, where she also has established a scholarship for food science students at the University of Delaware, her undergraduate alma mater.

Dr. McEntire subsequently worked with The Acheson Group in Washington, DC, led by former FDA Associate Commissioner for Foods Dr. David Acheson. She later joined the Grocery Manufacturer’s Association, where she led the microbiology, chemistry, packaging and forensics labs and the process authority teams, before joining United Fresh in 2016.

Beyond her expertise in microbial food safety, Dr. McEntire is recognized as an international expert in food traceability, having led the traceability pilots under contract with FDA as part of the Food Safety Modernization Act as she transitioned from IFT to The Acheson Group. She recently co-edited and co-authored the authoritative textbook on food traceability. At United Fresh, she leads the association’s food safety activities, including interpretation of produce safety regulations, recall and crisis support, technical guidance, and produce safety education.

NSF International’s Food Safety Leadership Award recognizes individuals and organizations for real and lasting improvements in food safety. Nominations are evaluated by the Food Safety Summit Educational Advisory Board, which is a volunteer group of industry leaders representing manufacturing, foodservice, regulatory, academia, retail and distribution. Award winners are then selected by NSF International.

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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)