

Fresh Digest

A Publication of the Fresh Produce & Floral Council

December 2019/January 2020

FPFC APPRENTICES
TOUR
VENTURA COUNTY

HOLIDAY AUCTION
AND LUNCHEON
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EDITOR'S VIEW

By Tim Linden



AG CAN LEAD THE WAY

I heard some very good news at the recent Organic Grower Summit. Agriculture can and is leading the way in finding solutions for some of the world's thorniest problem. High on that list are climate change and the reduction in the use of plastic. Several speakers spoke of both innovative technology and old-fashioned techniques as solutions to these problems.

Plant-based polymers to create water bottles, clamshells, crop covers and a whole host of other products that are currently petroleum based is not a pipe dream but a reality. Hemp is being touted as a miracle crop with its fibrous output able to be manufactured into a strong, flexible and biodegradable polymer. It's going to take time for the supply chain to catch up with this developed technology but the solution is there. There are other plant-based options as well, including corrugated packaging that imitates plastic in its functionality but not in its damage to the environment. Imagine the day when you can shred these products and throw them in your garden and watch your plants flourish.

Even more promising is the direct role agriculture can play in slowing and reversing climate change. The world is in agreement that the amount of carbon diox-

ide (CO₂) in the environment is directly impacting the climate. Extreme heat and cold temperatures are causing devastating weather events year in and year out. For the length of the history of the universe, the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere fluctuated up and down in a relatively narrow band with 250 parts per million (ppm) being the high water mark. In the past 250 years that number has been setting new records every year. Measurements show that this year it jumped 3.5 ppm to more than 411 ppm. The Paris Agreement, signed by 185 countries, was and is designed to stop the amount of CO₂ from increasing. If achieved – and that's a big if -- that's a great first step, but not enough. Something has to be done to pull some of the CO₂ out of the environment and get that ppm number back down into the 200s. Trees and plants do just that. Photosynthesis naturally sucks CO₂ from the air and sequesters carbon in the ground while releasing the oxygen.

Very long range, scientists believe the oceans and massive amounts of seaweed can be a big part of the solution, but that piece hasn't been figured out yet.

Researchers have found that returning to old-fashioned farming techniques -- including the use of

cover crops, no-till farming and less chemical inputs – increases the rate at which CO₂ can be sucked from the environment and carbon can naturally be pumped into the soil. More carbon in the soil means better water retention, more nutritious crops, less flooding and greater yields.

Some forward-thinking people are hoping to use carbon taxes to entice farmers to adopt these practices. They figure a \$15 to \$20 per acre subsidy will do the trick. While that probably wouldn't convince too many specialty crop growers to change their farming practices, it is an incentive to the field crop growers and rangeland farmers in the United States where \$40 per acre is the average profit. Thirteen million acres of farmland have already signed up for the program once it has been implemented.

It's a great feeling to imagine that we can "grow" ourselves out of the problem on the backs of farmers. If there is ever a group up to the task, it is those who toil in the dirt. And by the way, while we are all waiting for these types of program to take root, you can be a small part of the solution in your own backyard by planting a tree. Each tree removes about 10-50 pounds of CO₂ annually from the atmosphere. 🌱

A person wearing a red and white plaid shirt and blue jeans is holding a bunch of potatoes in their hands. They are standing in a field of green potato plants under a blue sky with light clouds. The text "SERVING THE PRODUCE INDUSTRY SINCE 1967" is overlaid in large, bold, white capital letters.

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The logo for Progressive Produce features a stylized illustration of a basket filled with various fruits and vegetables, including apples, grapes, and leafy greens. Radiating lines emanate from behind the basket, creating a sunburst effect.

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EXECUTIVE NOTES

By Brian Cook



SO MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR

For those of you who are wondering, “Who is this guy opening up for this issue of the *Fresh Digest*?”, let me address. My name is Brian Cook and I am the president of Pete’s, a hydroponic lettuce grower with greenhouses in Carpinteria and Oxnard, CA. I owe my career to the Fresh Produce & Floral Council and to those whom I met along the way. As incoming Chairman of the Board, I am excited for the opportunity to give back to an association I love so much. Let me tell you a little about my story, which is not unique, but echoed across many in our produce space.

As most are aware, the FPFC is primarily known for the networking around luncheons, celebrating the excitement of the New Year at the annual Dinner Dance (Produce Prom), and the eagerness to close a deal or, even better, start a new friendship at The FPFC Expo. It was the combination of these events that really boosted my career as I met some Angels early in my career through the FPFC.

My very first call was to Dick Spezzano of Spezzano Consulting. I was around 21 years of age and just

switched jobs from selling plastic extrusions and injection moldings to sales for a printing company. I eagerly looked through produce rags for inspiration, like our very own *Fresh Digest*, and continued to see his name pop up and his quotes in articles. I thought this guy must know a thing or two, so I looked him up and gave him a call. He agreed to meet with this young, new-to-the-business kid over lunch at Macaroni Grill in Arcadia. It was there that Dick insisted I get involved with the industry like volunteering at the FPFC.

With learnings from Dick in hand, I moved forward and began to meet some of the biggest-hearted individuals I have ever met who also became true friends. Rick Cruz, Kent Kuwata, and the Raley’s boys (Greg Corrigan and Mike Schutt) were some of the first and most influential Angels in my life. Perimeter Sales & Marketing knew the importance of the FPFC and pushed me to get involved as well. There are so many others that I am in deep gratitude to and most are because of the FPFC.

So I sit here today coming off the Thanksgiving holiday with so

much gratitude for the FPFC. Not just for me but for all those with whom it has touched so lovingly. I am super excited about the foundation it is giving to the apprentices of today and past years.

Like all smart businesses, there is a time of assessment. I am extremely excited as we look for a new executive director that will work with the FPFC Board and our members for a successful future. Change is so crucial to stay relevant and we are progressing to a bright future. There is a lot of work to be done and with 2020 upon us we are excited about the opportunity of change and keeping the FPFC events as must-attend experiences.

As chairman, I will be working with the board and committees to assure the right resources are in place, but as members we also have our roles to take advantage of these great events and opportunities. I am excited for this year and to contribute to our future. I encourage you to take advantage of all the FPFC has to offer by volunteering, sponsoring, and attending all the amazing events we offer. God Bless! 🙏



THE FPFC WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

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Keith Slattery
Stonehill Produce

Charles Muranaka
Muranaka Farm, Inc.

Jessica Luna
Pablo's Produce

Teri Gibson
Peri & Sons Farms

Chris Caroll
Cece's Veggie Co.

Trent Maple
Sunsweet Grower, Inc.

FPFC MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Fresh Produce & Floral Council is to connect members to the information, education and professional network they need to increase knowledge, grow their businesses and collectively advance the industry.

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2020 FPFC Dinner Dance

Venue Change Offers

U r

By Tim Linden

The Pacific Palms Resort in the City of Industry, CA, will serve as the venue for the 2020 Fresh Produce & Floral Council Dinner Dance. Its location, perched on a hill overlooking a wide swatch of Southern California, gave rise to this year's theme "Urban Lights"!

Jeffrey McLellan, of Jeffrey McLellan Credit Consulting and chairman of the FPFC Dinner Dance Committee, said the resort offers a spectacular view. He has served on the committee for 11 years and his experience at the event informed his vision for this year's edition. "The Dinner Dance kicks off the year for us and I believe it needs to be a big, splashy event every year that's fun to attend."

As is the case every year, evaluations from the previous year help the committee build the program for the following year. McLellan said the membership was ready for a change of venue, which typically occurs every several years. He said the Pacific Palm Resort fills so many boxes that attendees were looking for. It is largely a business hotel that is booked solid during the week but is less crowded on the weekend. "We are almost going to have the whole thing to ourselves," he said.

The facility has two golf course and other resort amenities that make it a perfect location for attendees that want to extend their stay

and make a weekend of it. As he mentioned, the view is spectacular including that of the nearby San Gabriel Mountains as well as the urban environment from which the theme was derived. "Hopefully it will be a clear night and the mountains will be covered with snow," he said.

The basic timeline of the 2020 Dinner Dance is unchanged from the last several years with the VIP Reception for sponsors, board members and invited dignitaries at 5:00 pm, followed by the General Reception at 6:00 pm. The General Reception will be held in the hotel lobby, which will be transformed into a beautiful setting, according to McLellan. He added that the "Urban Lights" theme will be evident throughout the night.

This year, the dinner portion of the evening will include live background music, while the dancing part will see the ballroom transformed to nightclub motif with a deejay electronically spinning some records. A light show will also be part of the fun.

McLellan said the entertainment option chosen for this year is a shout-out to the changing demographics of the produce industry, especially as it relates to the FPFC membership and attendance at FPFC events. "We have a lot of up and comers in their 20s and 30s," he said, noting that in the past couple of years

nce

ban lights

the 25-40 year olds were spending a good portion of their Dinner-Dance time in the lobby while the band was playing oldies but goodies. The deejay is expected to have a more diverse playlist that might bring this group back into the party.

Of course, McLellan said there is nothing wrong with hanging outside the doors as that is a great time to catch up with friends and colleagues. This year, the foyer space will be decorated like an outdoor café. A casualty of the new look is the Cigar Bar, which has been

retired. In its place will be the café, a “graffiti wall” and a photo booth.

McLellan said like every year, the FPFC has secured a block of rooms for those who want to spend a night or two. The location is at the crossroads of many of the major arteries in Southern California so it should be fairly close to a lot of members and also is within about a 30 minute drive of many of the Southern California airports, including Long Beach, Los Angeles, Burbank, Ontario and the John Wayne Airport in Orange County. 🌱



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FPFC APPRENTICE PROGRAM APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR 7TH CLASS

BY TIM LINDEN

The Fresh Produce & Floral Council is gearing up for its seventh Apprentice Class in 2020 with applications due by mid-February.

Kristin Reid, executive vice president of the MIXTEC Group and the chairperson for the FPFC Apprentice Task Force, said the basic outline of the program will remain similar to the previous years. As such, applications will be evaluated in February and March with the program kicking off in April and culminating with graduation in January. The program has many different facets including working with team members on projects, attending seminars and luncheons, touring agricultural operations, and participating in industry events such as the City of Hope Walk and the FPFC Dinner Dance. It is that January event that marks completion of the eight to nine month program.

“Every year we take feedback from the current class and tweak the program,” she said. “We have been so excited that apprentice feedback has been more and more positive every year. Some of the changes that have received the highest marks are the addition of a public speaking session and adding some different tour locations to the agenda. We will make some changes for the 2020 class as well but will stay true to the core of what we have been doing.”

Reid has been happy with participation from the FPFC member companies, but the committee encourages senior management of these companies to expand the program throughout more classifications within their businesses. “Many companies think of their sales and marketing talent when looking at applicants for the program, however, we have had people from operations, accounting and food safety all participate,” she said. “The program will elevate talent in any function of your company and we would love to see more diversity in applicants from different functions.”

She said qualification for the program are straight forward and simple. “The program is for anyone who can benefit from a broad education into the produce supply chain and development of intermediate leadership skills,” Reid said. “Mostly we are looking for applicants who are driven and open to learning.”

The entire program takes place in California and only member companies of the FPFC are open to apply.

The Apprentice Task Force, which is made up of a mix of volunteers from the industry with different experiences, tenure and sectors and now includes several former apprentices, will evaluate the candidates. Reid said the evaluators take in several different when building the class. “We are looking to craft a diverse class that will represent different industry sectors, functions, and experiences. Universally we want a class that has demonstrated leadership potential in their companies.

She added that the best applicants are those that will be committed to the industry in the long-term and have a history of seeking out opportunities for growth either formally or informally. “Basically, people who will actively seek to get the most out of the program and who will also add to the experiences of their classmates,” she said.

Reid said the response from the FPFC members has been tremendous. “Each year we have more people interested in participating in the program either as a speaker or a mentor. We try to involve as many people as we can so that the apprentices are introduced to a wide variety of individuals in the industry that they could call in to help in their day-to-day activities. We would always welcome even more involvement and if anyone is interested in supporting, please contact me at kristenr@mixtec.net!”

Reid said the establishment of the FPFC Apprentice Program has been a great experience for virtually everyone involved. “The Task Force speaks often and openly about how rewarding this experience is for us,” she said. “Many of us are involved in other boards and committees in the industry and hands down this is the best experience of our careers. It is so rewarding to see this program grow and to see the participants thrive in their careers after participating. So many of the apprentices have been promoted in higher roles, now serve on boards and committees themselves and report significant confidence boosts after the program. The FPFC Board even now has two former Apprentices on it!”

She added: “It is definitely one of those experiences where those of us involved in creating and guiding the program are getting more out of it than we put in!” 🌻

APPRENTICES TOUR VENTURA COUNTY

BY TIM LINDEN



Briana Giampaoli, Amanda Nojadera, Destiny Dulaney, Thomas Rossi, Jeffrey Fish, Jessica Garica, Tomas Gonzalez, Director of Global Food Safety & Compliance at Limoneira; Kevin Trisko, Lizbeth Reyes, Jose Morales, Denise Gonzalez, Esmeralda Mejia, Committee Member, Emily Fragoso of MIXTEC Group; Julie Boland, John Chamberlain Vice-President of Marketing at Limoneira and FPFC Staff, Emma McBride-Taylor.

The Fresh Produce & Floral Council 2019 Apprentice Class received an up close and personal view of specialty crop production techniques as they toured three different grower-shipper operations in Ventura County on November 4.

FPFC Communications Specialist Emma McBride-Taylor and FPFC Apprentice Committee member Emily Fragoso of MIXTEC Group led the apprentices through a full day of field and facility tours, which included stops at Limoneira Company in Santa Paula, Pete's in Carpinteria and Deardorff Family Farms in Oxnard.

Fragoso relayed the day of activities to the *Fresh Digest*. She noted that all three stops were chockful of information. "At Limoneira, Vice President John Chamberlain welcomed us and gave us some great information about the very long history of this company (founded in 1893) and how it has adopted new technology to blend the old and the new," she said.

Tomas Gonzales, director of global food safety & compliance for Limoneira, conducted the tour of the

citrus giant's facility and explained its comprehensive food safety program.

The group next visited Pete's where President Brian Cook conducted the tour and hosted a fabulous lunch. Fragoso said it was "very interesting to hear Brian's story and how he worked his way up from the bottom to reach the position he holds today of running a company."

She also said the use of hydroponics to grow Pete's signature product of butter lettuce with the roots intact was another fascinating and educational story for all the participants.

The final stop at Deardorff featured Director of Harvesting Alec Martinez and Tyler Clear, who sells the firm's extensive organic line of items. At this stop, the apprentices got out into a cabbage field and were told about the intricacies involved in producing row crops. Fragoso recalls Martinez telling the group that while Deardorff Family Farms is exploring new technologies they don't always work because of the specific needs of fresh produce. 🌱



The second tour stop was at Pete's - here Apprentices Jeffrey Fish, Jose Morales, Lizbeth Reyes, Destiny Dulaney, Denise Gonzalez, Amanda Nojadera, Briana Giampaoli, Julie Boland, Committee Member, Emily Fragoso of MIXTEC Group; Esmeralda Mejia, Jessica Garcia, Kevin Trisko, and Thomas Rossi pose with Kyle Griffith, Sales Manager; Brian Cook, President; and Baltazar Garcia, Director of Sales.



Tomas Gonzalez of Limoniera discusses the positive characteristics of a lemon.

Apprentices Julie Boland, Destiny Dulaney, Jessica Garcia, Esmeralda Mejia, Lizbeth Reyes, Denise Gonzalez, Jose Morales, Amanda Nojadera, Briana Giampaoli, Thomas Rossi, Kevin Trisko, Jeffrey Fish, Apprentice Committee Member Emily Fragoso of MIXTEC Group; with Alec Martinez Director of Harvesting and Tyler Clear of Deardorff Family Farms.



Alec Martinez Director of Harvesting at Deardorff Family Farms answering questions about the process of planting produce.



Brian Cook of Pete's discusses his firm's role in the industry as well as his own personal journey.



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Harald Herrmann of Second Harvest Food Bank and Chef Bruno Serato from Caterina's Club pose together.

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Debbie Remblence, Katie Meyer and Jules Buehler of North Shore Living Herbs + Greens.



Lacy Garcia and Carlos Preciado of Melissa's World Variety Produce with Maryann Gunther of Perimeter Sales and Merchandising and Frank Zapata of Bristol Farms.



Tracy Ramirez and Brian Balladares of Ralphs Grocery Company helping Marvin Quebec of Quebec Distributing Co. auction off a golfing outing.



Michael Schutt of Raley's Supermarkets poses with Heather White of NatureSweet.



Don Gann of Stater Bros. Markets helping out with the Charity Live Auction.

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 - Stater Bros. Markets
 - Steve Junquerio & Associates
 - United Vegetable Growers Cooperative
 - Vallarta Supermarkets
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Marvin Quebec of Quebec Distributing Co. was the auctioneer for the Charity Live Auction.

Kent Kuwata of Smart & Final getting the bids going for Caterina's Club and Second Harvest!



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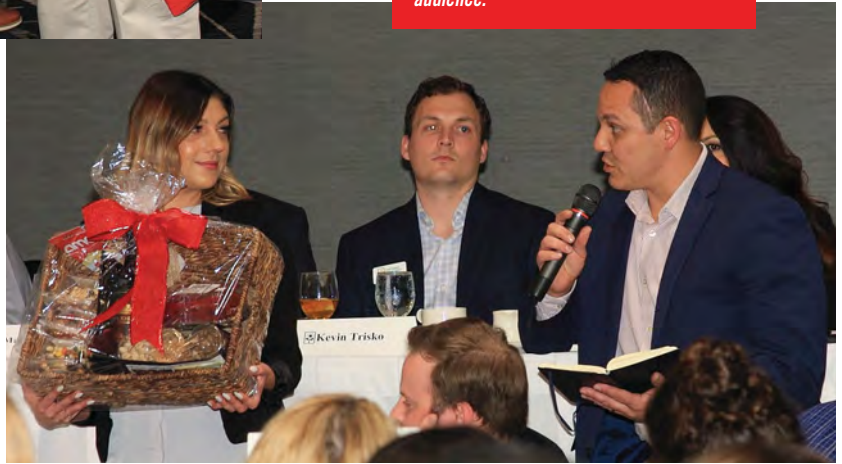
Michael Schutt of Raley's Supermarkets getting the auction started for his Extravaganza!





Brad Martin of Perimeter Sales & Merchandising, Pablo Barreto of XTCA - Fresh Jicama products, Dick Spezzano of Spezzano Consulting Service, Inc., and Harland Heath of Heath & LeJeune, Inc.

Apprentices Jessica Garcia of Veg-Fresh Farms and Jeffrey Fish of Western Mixers auction off their Apprentice Basket to the audience.



Erick Coronado of Avocados from Mexico posing with Steve Rodriguez of Melissa's World Variety Produce.



Marylou Ureta of Hampton Farms, Heather White from NatureSweet, Anjali Bonfante and Dave Schoonmaker of Bolthouse Farms enjoying the post-event networking social hour.

ORGANIC SALES GROWTH EXPECTED TO CLIMB

Steven Muro, president of Fusion Marketing, noted that the “organic market is going to soar” during the recent Organic Sales Data Dive and Analysis breakout session held during the Organic Grower Summit in Monterey, CA. Muro was the moderator of the session, which included Laura Batcha, CEO and executive director of the Organic Trade Association (OTA), and Mike Galaburda, client director for Nielsen.

He said sales of organics continue to drive both produce department sales and growth. He relayed that in the past year, organics accounted for 6 percent of total produce department sales in California while generating 11 percent of dollar sales and 18 percent of year over year growth. “Organic produce continues to be a significant contributor to California produce sales,” explained Muro. “Organic produce sales exceeded \$826 million in California last year with more than a 79 percent price premium over conventional produce.”

Batcha reported the results of an OTA consumer attitudes survey about organics that was conducted earlier this year. It was the first time in seven years that OTA had done this deep dive research. More than 3,000 shoppers were interviewed in a variety of ways to delve beyond the surface into their thoughts and reasons for purchasing organic items. OTA’s research tried to find the trigger points that could lead to increased purchasing of products in that category.

Of those surveyed, OTA found that 62 percent of shoppers did buy an organic item at some time during the year; 12 percent of those shoppers were identified as heavy users while the purchasing habits of 50 percent put them in the category of light users. “The key for the future is to flip those numbers,” she said.

Batcha said the number one message that resonates with consumers when they are considering buying organic produce is that the production method is better for both people and the environment. “It’s good for you and good for the planet,” she said is the message that both light users and heavy users found to be the most compelling.

Consumers also responded positively to messages emphasizing how strict the certified organic standard is and that it is not easy for a grower to transition to organic production. “Shoppers want to know the standard is difficult to achieve and that it’s hard for you to do,” she told the audience, who were largely organic growers.

She added that the fact that organic farming avoids the use of chemicals is another strong message. This idea was not embraced by an audience member who identified himself as a grower who has been producing organic crops for more than 30 years. He said the average person doesn’t know what organics means and believes that they are produced without chemicals at all. He questions whether calling attention to the chemicals that producers don’t

use would be a good strategy. The industry, of course, knows that there are inputs that are approved for organic use. However, Batcha pushed back noting that there are more than 700 agricultural chemicals that can’t be used in organic production. She said consumers reacted positively to this message.

One thing that consumers did not respond well to is the blurring of the distinction between conventional and organic. They seem to like growers 100 percent committed to organics rather than those grower-shippers who produce for both categories.

Galaburda of Nielsen, which uses in-store scan data to measure sales, said the four year trend shows continual growth for organic produce, but the rate of growth is slowing. The data also shows that while more and more produce items are being offered as organic, retail sales are dominated by the top items. In fact, the top five organic produce items in terms of sales volume represent 50 percent of sales in the category.

The scan data also shows that young adults with kids and both Asians and Hispanics over-index with regard to their organic produce purchases. All three of these trends support future growth as all three of those shopper subsets are increasing in number. 🌱

Team Produce Walks for Hope



Wow.....Thanks to Everyone!

That was the message sent to all Team Produce participants by Marty Craner, president of Orange, CA-based B&C Fresh Sales, who coordinates the produce industry's effort each year. Her email message was delivered to the Team Produce members the day after the very successful event at the Walk for Hope on Sunday, November 3.

"Together, we raised more than \$77,000 in sponsorships and distributed over \$85,000 in fresh products to about 6000 attendees," she wrote. "Thanks for showcasing the power of fresh and your wonderful products!!"

Craner went on to note that "we are only successful because of the kindness and compassion of this great industry and to all you leaders and your desire to give back! Thanks again to everyone that supported, donated, gave your time and energy to this fun family event!" 🍎

While it is undisputed that the specialty crop industry in the United States sells great produce and floral products, there needs to be a better effort in getting the consumer to buy the products we grow.

That was the overarching theme of Lauren Scott, the chief marketing officer of the Produce Marketing Association, when she was the keynote speaker at the Oct. 2 membership luncheon meeting of the Fresh Produce & Floral Council in Cerritos, CA.

Scott discussed recent PMA research exploring the mindset of consumers and trends that the industry can use to its advantage to increase the sales of its products. She noted that we live in a changing world and that aspect of 21st Century life is not going away. She indicated that marketers have to continually re-invent themselves to remain relevant.

Speaking specifically of the retail space, she said consumers have to be given a reason to come to a store. They have lots of choices – including online shopping – and brick and mortar retailers have to make that shopping situation special, creating an experience the consumer wants to have. She revealed there are some very favorable consumer trends from the produce industry’s perspective. For example, consumers are looking for transparency, and believe in what she called “ethical living”. Both of these trends work well for increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. As does the continuation of the “experience economy” in which consumers want to share what they do with others. Taking photos of what they eat has become a cornerstone of the experience trend.

She said “mindful eating” is another trend that plays into the attributes of the fresh produce industry. Scott described this as “sans” eating. In other words, doing without certain things such as gluten, salt, fat and other elements that are not typically associated with fresh produce consumption. The key for the produce industry, she said, is not to get caught up in a particular “sans” diet but to make sure whatever food philosophy is followed “we need produce to be half the plate.”

She said the food movement is built around the concept that consumers want to live a full and vibrant life and believe food is a big part of it. “Eating fresh

fruits and vegetables is at the center of living a full and vibrant life,” she argued.

She relayed research PMA has conducted to define the drivers of eating in the United States. She revealed that drivers are different in all parts of the world. She called it “food taxonomy” which explores why people eat what they do and the attributes they associate with food such as healthy, dependable, revitalizing and experiential. She said the more positive attributes one can associate with a particular food item, the more success that item will have. Scott used avocados as an example of an item that checks many of those boxes and as such it has become very trendy.

She also noted that in different places in the world there are varying food drivers. For example, in Australia brunch is a huge eating occasion. Consequently, foods that can be consumed at that eating occasion have a better chance for success. “In the United States, it’s all about taste,” Scott said.

The PMA executive also touched on research noting that while virtually everyone appreciates flowers, very few people in the United States buy flowers on a regular basis. The average floral consumer only purchases the product four times a year.

Research shows that consumers have some negative associations with flowers such as they are too feminine, too expensive, old fashioned and are going to die. But she noted that younger consumers have discretionary dollars and the floral industry needs to tap in to their emotions to increase floral sales. She said flowers make people feel good and they can be part of the effort to help consumers live a full and vibrant life.

She left the audience with a visual that utilized CONSUMER as an acronym and asked the fruit and vegetable industry attendees to:

- C:** Center your business around the consumer
- O:** Open your mind to the future...as crazy as it seems
- N:** Never shy away from trying new things
- S:** Safe, quality products will never go out of style
- U:** Understand consumers fulfill needs differently over time
- M:** Monitor trends through research
- E:** Educate yourself about the consumer...continuously
- R:** Remember - people matter

BY TIM LINDEN

Membership Luncheon

Cerritos, CA
October 2, 2019

Thank You Sponsors!



FPFC Chairman Andrew Bivens of Westlake Produce Company opened the meeting

FPFC Meets in Southern California

On October 2, the Fresh Produce & Floral Council held a membership luncheon meeting in Cerritos, CA, which was attended by more than 200 people.



Sheryl Salazar of Albertsons served as the emcee



Brian Cook of Pete's with Daniel Bell of Grocery Outlet

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Lauren Scott of Produce Marketing Association was the keynote speaker



Dan McGrath and Kevin Leap of Robinson Fresh



Rachelle Schulken of Renaissance Food Group and Kevin Trisko of Taylor Farms



Kristine Gatlin of Litehouse Foods, Daniel Bell and Matt Reaves of Grocery Outlet, and Marvin Quebec of Quebec Distributing Co.



Blake Lee of Bristol Farms with Dan Acevedo of GreenFruit Avocados



Kevin Partida of Vision Produce Company with Hayes Hanlon and Al Valero of Freska International



Dave Howald of Pear Bureau Northwest with Emily Fragoso of MIXTEC Group



Janine Meyer of Marzetti Company with Chris Carroll of Cece's Veggie Co.



Matt Reaves of Grocery Outlet with Catherine Gipe-Stewart of Domex Superfresh Growers

Membership Luncheon

Pleasanton, CA
September 25, 2019

Thank You Sponsors!



*Master of Ceremonies Michael Schutt
of Raley's Supermarkets*

FPFC meets in Northern California

Hall of Fame basketball player Rick Barry was the featured speaker at the Fresh Produce & Floral Council membership luncheon meeting in Pleasanton, CA, on September 25.



Erick Coronado of Avocados from Mexico, Menuka Shrestha and Steve Hattendorf of the Chilean Fresh Fruit Association, along with Ryan Fukuda of Avocados from Mexico and his daughter Nakia, who is a student at University of California at Santa Cruz.



Brian Cook of Pete's with LeighAnne Thomsen and Megan Stallings of Calavo Growers

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Tiffany Stornetta of FreshSource, David Dudley of the California Table Grape Commission, Robert Thompson of FreshSource and Kristyn Lawson of Krissy Farms



Kellee Harris and TW Wilson of Giumarra Companies



NBA great Rick Barry, who was the featured speaker, poses with Marvin Quebec of Quebec Distributing Co. before the luncheon.



David Dudley of the California Table Grape Commission, Justin Schumann of Holiday Markets and Shawn Dagen of HS&R Fresh

Murry Burkhardt and Greg Welch of Fresh Express



Janine Meyer of Marzetti with Heather White of NatureSweet

Ed Odron of Maddan & Co. with Ed Corvelo of The Save Mart Companies



Greg Corrigan of United Vegetable Growers Co-operative with Lisa Davis of Bonduelle Fresh Americas

Scot Olson of FreshSource with Larry Tucker of Raley's Supermarkets and Rachelle Schulken of Renaissance Food Group



Sean Barganski and Howard Nager of Progressive Produce



Zach Torrez of Fresh Point, Aurelia Muckinhaupt of REBBL and Rick Sisney of Impact Group

Millennials Are Valuable Shoppers

Hass avocados are one of the most versatile items in fresh produce, finding their way into cuisines that span the globe. As shoppers discover more ways to incorporate Hass avocados into their home cooking, their in-store purchasing habits continue to transform. The Hass Avocado Board (HAB) recently published a new study that dives into the grocery basket of millennial and non-millennial avocado-purchasing households to uncover the value and content of the basket for each group. The new study – Millennial Avocado Market Basket reveals that Millennial shoppers are especially valuable to retailers when they purchase avocados.


“The Millennial shopper proves to be a significant contributor to the avocado category,” explained Emiliano Escobedo, executive director of the Hass Avocado Board. “And this study suggests there are many opportunities to drive sales with this key consumer group.”

The study found that when shoppers included avocados in their market basket, the value of the basket increased, delivering an in-basket premium of +\$28 on average. The in-basket premium was even greater for millennial shoppers at +\$31, which was nearly +\$5 higher than non-millennial shoppers.

This in-basket premium helped drive a higher total market basket value for millennial households; the value of their market basket with avocados was +\$10 higher than when non-millennials purchased avocados, and this gap increased vs. the prior year. The value of the millennial basket with avocados increased +0.3 percent, while the value of the non-millennial basket with avocados declined -2.0 percent.

Additionally, the study delved inside the avocado market basket to discover what else avocado shoppers are buying with avocados. The study found that fresh produce was commonly found in the avocado market basket: of the top 20 most often found items in the basket, 11 were fresh produce categories, and this trend was especially prevalent among millennials.

The study is based on household purchase data from the IRI Consumer Network™. HAB offers these insights and detailed retail information as the only avocado organization that equips the entire

industry for success, with clear and actionable data and metrics that all can use to drive their avocado business. To learn more about the impact of Millennial households and their avocado purchase behaviors, visit hassavocado.com/research-insights. 



The Hass Avocado Board's recently published Millennial Avocado Market Basket study indicates that Millennial households are especially valuable to avocado merchandisers and retailers.



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