



19TH ANNUAL

# THE WESTERN FOOD SAFETY CONFERENCE

presented by HARTNELL COLLEGE

**CREATING A SAFE AND TRANSPARENT FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN**



**HARTNELL COLLEGE**

AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS  
AND TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE

**MAY 1-2, 2024 • SHERWOOD HALL, SALINAS, CA**





## **HARTNELL COLLEGE**

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### **AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE**

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The 2024 Western Food Safety Conference, presented by Hartnell College, is committed to the inclusion of people with disabilities participating in the virtual event. Online activities are designed to be accessible, meeting the standards provided in the Rehabilitation Act (Section 508). If a person with a disability is requesting reasonable accommodations due to a disability to participate in the event, requests need to be sent to Hartnell College CTE, [Agtech@Hartnell.edu](mailto:Agtech@Hartnell.edu), (831) 755-6702. Requests for disability accommodations received three business days in advance of the event will be given priority, although an attempt to fulfill all requests will occur.

# WELCOME



Dear Esteemed Industry leaders,

On behalf of Hartnell College and the Hartnell College Foundation, it is with great pleasure that we extend a warm welcome to each of you to the 19th Annual 2024 Western Food Safety Conference. This year's theme revolves around the paramount importance of "Creating a Safe and Transparent Food Supply Chain."

Over the next two days, we are excited to offer you an enriching experience filled with insightful discussions, keynote addresses, and networking opportunities. Our distinguished keynote speakers, (Frank Yannis, Renowned food safety leader and executive food systems futurist, and Soren Bjorn, President of Driscoll's and incoming CEO of the leading global brand for fresh berries), promise to deliver thought-provoking insights that will set the stage for engaging conversations.

Throughout the conference, you will have the opportunity to delve into a myriad of topics, ranging from navigating the challenges of taking processing level sanitation expectations and applying them in the field, understanding and assessing the health of your wells and water systems, to the future of AI and advancing food safety and quality management.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Food Safety Advisory Committee, chaired by Johnna Hepner and Jess Hogg, for their unwavering dedication in organizing this conference. Their expertise and commitment have been a monumental driver in shaping the conference program.

Moreover, I extend sincere gratitude to our sponsors whose generous support has made this event possible. Your contributions enable us to provide valuable resources and scholarships to students pursuing careers in food safety.

I also want to acknowledge our industry partners, the Hartnell's President's Ag Steering Committee, Hartnell College Foundation staff, and The Buzz Public Relations, for their invaluable assistance in organizing this event.

As you engage in discussions, connect with peers, and explore opportunities for collaboration, remember that food safety is indeed everyone's business. Together, we can strive towards excellence in ensuring the safety and integrity of our food supply chain.

Once again, welcome to the 19th Annual 2024 Western Food Safety Conference. I encourage you to make the most of this opportunity, and I look forward to the valuable insights and connections that will emerge from our time together.

Warm regards,

Michael Gutierrez  
Superintendent/President

Jackie Cruz  
Vice President of Institutional Advancement

# WESTERN FOOD SAFETY CONFERENCE

## SCHEDULE | MAY 1-2, 2024

### DAY1 MAY1 STARTS AT 8:00 A.M.

TIME	TOPIC/SPEAKER
8:00 - 9:00	<b>Check-In, Continental Breakfast and Sponsors' Tables Open</b> Emcee: Johnna Hepner, iFoodDS
9:00 - 9:10	<b>WELCOME, OVERVIEW FOR THE DAY</b> Michael Gutierrez, Superintendent/President, Hartnell College
9:10 - 10:00	 <p><b>KEYNOTE PRESENTATION WITH FRANK YIANNAS</b> FY Smarter Solutions, Renowned Food Safety Leader, Author, Professor, Consumer Advocate <b>Creating a Safe &amp; Transparent Food Supply Chain</b> People-led, Science-based, &amp; Technology-enabled</p>
10:00 - 10:50	<b>Harvest Forward, A Holistic Approach to Executing Harvester Sanitation</b> Joe Stout, Commercial Food Sanitation
10:50 - 11:05	<b>BREAK AND SNACK</b>
11:05 - 11:55	<b>PANEL DISCUSSION:</b> <b>The Clock Is Ticking for FSMA Traceability Rule 204 Compliance, Will the Industry Be Ready?</b> <i>Moderator:</i> Johnny McGuire, Nunes Company <i>Panelists:</i> • Frank Yiannas, FY Smarter Solutions • Andy Kennedy, New Era Partners • Kerry Bridges, Chipotle

### DAY1 MAY1 CONTINUED

TIME	TOPIC/SPEAKER
11:55 - 1:00	<b>LUNCH, NETWORKING &amp; SPONSORS' TABLES</b>
1:00 - 1:50	<b>The Future of AI and Advancing Food Safety and Quality Management</b> Claire Zoellner, iFoodDS
1:50 - 2:30	<b>BREAK &amp; SPONSORS' TABLES</b>
2:30 - 3:20	<b>Continuous Improvement to Reduce Heavy Metals in Produce</b> Jennifer McEntire, Food Safety Strategy LLC
3:20 - 4:10	<b>Understanding Your Well Water and Assessing the Health of your Wells and Water Systems</b> Cecilia Mendoza, Taylor Farms
4:10 - 4:30	<b>CLOSING COMMENTS FOR DAY ONE</b>

NOTE: Schedule is subject to change



# WESTERN FOOD SAFETY CONFERENCE SCHEDULE | MAY 1-2, 2024

## DAY 2 MAY 2 STARTS AT 8:00 A.M.

TIME	TOPIC/SPEAKER
8:00 - 9:00	<b>Check-In, Continental Breakfast and Sponsors' Tables Open</b> Emcee: Johnna Hepner
9:00	<b>WELCOME, OVERVIEW FOR THE DAY</b> Michael Gutierrez, Superintendent/President, Hartnell College
9:10 - 10:00	 <p><b>KEYNOTE PRESENTATION</b> <i>WITH SOREN BJORN</i> CEO of Driscoll's</p>
10:00 - 10:50	<b>PANEL DISCUSSION:</b> <b>Defensible "Clean for Intended Purpose": Evolving BMPs for Field Harvest Equipment Sanitation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trevor Suslow, Trevor Suslow Consulting LLC</li> <li>• Channah Rock, University of Arizona,</li> <li>• Justin Kerr, Factor IV Solutions LLC</li> </ul>
10:50 - 11:05	<b>BREAK AND SNACK</b>
11:05 - 11:55	<b>One Health Approach to Identify Produce Food Safety Best Practices</b> Michele Jay-Russell, UC Davis Lianna Kelly, CFSAN Office of Food Safety, FDA Richard Warsaw, Braga Fresh

## DAY 2 MAY 2 CONTINUED

TIME	TOPIC/SPEAKER
11:55 - 1:00	<b>LUNCH, NETWORKING &amp; SPONSORS' TABLES</b>
1:00 - 1:50	<b>PANEL DISCUSSION:</b> <b>The Conundrum of Produce Safety Research</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Bob Whitaker, Whitaker Consulting LLC <b>Panelists:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jim Brennan, Smart Wash</li> <li>• Channah Rock, University of Arizona</li> <li>• Michele Jay-Russell, UC Davis</li> </ul>
1:50 - 2:10	<b>BREAK &amp; SPONSORS' TABLES</b>
2:10 - 3:00	<b>Navigating Contamination Paradoxes: The Role of EMPS in Risk and Root Cause Synergy</b> Dr. Eduardo Gutierrez-Rodriguez
3:00 - 3:50	<b>What Testing Didn't Tell You: Uncovering the Secrets in Your Testing Program</b> Joelle Mosso, Western Growers Association
3:50 - 4:10	<b>CLOSING COMMENTS</b>

NOTE: Schedule is subject to change





## Western Food Safety Conference Committee Members

**Francis Adenuga**  
True Leaf Farms

**Cathy Carlson**  
Carlson Food Safety Consulting

**John Eade**  
Driscoll's

**Lisa Fuentes**  
SV Labs

**Johnna Hepner**  
iFoodDS

**Jess Hogg**  
Constellation Brands

**Justin Kerr**  
Factor IV Solutions, LLC.

**Karen Lowell**  
USDA

**Johnny Massa**  
Comgro Soil Amendments, Inc.

**Robert Mills**  
The Harbinger Group, LLC/Misionero

**Jacob Odello**  
The Nunes Company

**Sonia Salas**  
Western Growers Association

**Kari Valdes**  
Taylor Farms

**Chato Valdes**  
Sábor Farms

**Melissa Ortner**  
Latitude 36 Foods

**Brian Banks**  
KipTraq

**HARTNELL COLLEGE  
ABTI AND FOUNDATION/  
ADVANCEMENT:**

**Rosie Armstrong**  
Hartnell College Foundation

**Shannon Bliss**  
Hartnell College

**Jackie Cruz**  
Hartnell College Foundation

**Nonita Fortman**  
Hartnell College Foundation

**Belen Gonzales**  
Hartnell College

**Emily Rustad**  
Hartnell College

**Lourdes Sanchez**  
Hartnell College

# **BARRY EISENBERG** FOOD SAFETY SCHOLARSHIPS



## **THE BARRY EISENBERG** **FOOD SAFETY SCHOLARSHIPS**

are named on behalf of Dr. Barry Eisenberg, a career leader in food safety. Dr. Barry Eisenberg received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in post-harvest physiology. Barry's leadership journey included Vice President, Food Safety Services at United Fresh Produce Association where he developed educational programs and training for member companies in their food safety planning, operations, and compliance with best practices and regulatory standards. He has held many executive leadership positions within the food industry applying his product research development, quality assurance, and food safety skills. Dr. Eisenberg was instrumental at the launch of the Food Safety Program at Hartnell College as well as one of the initial instructors. Barry's passion for the produce industry is evident in his many years held as a committee member for the Western Food Safety Conference.

## **SCHOLARSHIP OFFERING:**

One scholarship offered at \$2,500 and an additional five scholarships at \$500 will be awarded each year.

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

- Actively enrolled at Hartnell College, have completed a minimum of 9 units, and are working to achieve either a food safety program degree or certificate of achievement.
- Provide a written statement of interest, up to 500 words, and a minimum of one letter of recommendation (e.g., from an instructor, employer, community leader, etc.).
- Candidates for the \$2,500 Scholarship must have taken a minimum of two courses in food safety and intend to take another two courses for the upcoming year.
- Candidates will be interviewed by the Western Food Safety Selection Committee as part of the selection process.
- Candidates for the \$500 scholarships must have taken at least one food safety course and intend to take at least one more course in the upcoming semester.





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**AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS  
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**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**

The Agricultural Business and Technology Institute at Hartnell College provides collaborative, innovative and practical career educational experiences to prepare skilled professionals for the dynamic, global agricultural industry.

































# SPEAKERS

## 2024 Western Food Safety Conference

### presented by Hartnell College



#### **JIM BRENNAN**

**President, SmartWash Solutions, LLC**

Jim Brennan, President of SmartWash Solutions, LLC, brings over 40 years of expertise to the food, beverage, and produce industries. Specializing in R&D, engineering, and operations, Brennan excels in developing and commercializing technologies that foster new businesses, particularly within the fruit and vegetable sector. His leadership in international joint ventures and bioengineering projects focuses on alternative disease and pest control solutions. Brennan's notable contributions include integrating microprocessor technology in agriculture, significantly enhancing food safety and reducing costs associated with disease and pest management. At SmartWash Solutions, he has been pivotal in innovating processing methods to prevent microbial cross-contamination in food and agricultural wash systems, advancing GAPs across a wide range of produce.



#### **KERRY BRIDGES**

**Vice President of Food Safety, Chipotle Mexican Grill**

As Vice President of Food Safety at Chipotle Mexican Grill, Kerry Bridges oversees the company's stringent food safety protocols, from supply chain management to in-restaurant practices. Joining Chipotle in 2019, she leads a dedicated team upholding Chipotle's zero-tolerance approach to food safety, embedding these standards into the company's culture. Her extensive background includes overseeing food safety for Wal-Mart, managing a vast network of food suppliers, and addressing emerging food safety issues. Bridges' prior roles at TESCO and Jack in the Box, coupled with her leadership positions within the International Association for Food Protection and the Global Food Safety Initiative, underscore her profound impact on food safety standards in the industry.



#### **SOREN BJORN**

**Chief Executive Officer, Driscoll's**

Soren Bjorn, CEO of Driscoll's, directs the global operations of one of the leading fresh produce companies specializing in berries. Driscoll's, family-owned for over a century, partners with over 900 independent growers worldwide. Bjorn's leadership focuses on maintaining the company's culture and driving global expansion. His tenure at Driscoll's since 2006 includes roles in international business and leading the company's global research and breeding programs. Prior to Driscoll's, Bjorn contributed significantly to Del Monte Foods and UniMark Foods, Inc. A native of Denmark, he holds an MBA from Texas Christian University and a BBA from Baylor University, embodying extensive executive experience in the food industry.



#### **MICHAEL GUTIERREZ**

**Superintendent/President, Hartnell College**

Michael Gutierrez, Superintendent/President of Hartnell College, has a rich background in vocational education, workforce development, and higher education leadership. Previously at Sacramento City College and various roles in Texas's education system, Gutierrez has focused on economic development and academic affairs. His experience spans government program coordination, grants management, and faculty positions, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to educational leadership. Gutierrez, holding degrees from Princeton University and the University of Texas at Austin, is finalizing a doctorate in educational leadership, highlighting his commitment to advancing educational excellence.



#### **DR. EDUARDO GUTIERREZ-RODRIGUEZ**

Dr. Eduardo Gutierrez-Rodriguez, with over 20 years in food safety systems research, focuses on the microbial ecology of pathogens in produce and minimally processed foods. His work, extending to Latin America and the U.S., includes FSMA training, risk assessment, and development of remediation practices for the fresh produce industry. Gutierrez-Rodriguez's collaborations with the food and chemical industries have contributed to the registration of antimicrobial products and strategies to reduce pathogen transfer. His research emphasizes the interconnection of human health with agricultural ecosystems, addressing global challenges in food safety and sustainability.



### **JOHNNA HEPNER**

#### **Director Industry Relations, iFoodDS**

Johnna Hepner, Director of Industry Relations at iFoodDS, has over 30 years in the food safety and supply chain sectors. Previously with the Produce Marketing Association and Markon Cooperative Inc., Hepner has developed deep industry relationships, focusing on food safety education and technology adoption in the produce industry. A graduate of the California Agricultural Leadership Program and holding a B.Sc. in Food Science from California State University, Hepner's career exemplifies a commitment to elevating food safety standards and embracing digital transformation in the agricultural sector.



### **MICHELE JAY-RUSSELL**

#### **Research Microbiologist and Manager, Western Center for Food Safety, UC Davis**

Dr. Michele Jay-Russell, Research Microbiologist and Manager at the Western Center for Food Safety, brings extensive public health and microbiology expertise to her role. Her background includes over 15 years as an epidemiologist including the role of California State Public Health Veterinarian. Her work focuses on food safety research and epidemiology, contributing significantly to the understanding and management of foodborne pathogens. Dr. Jay-Russell's credentials from the University of California-Davis and her board certification underline her significant contributions to food safety and public health research.



### **LIANNA KELLY**

#### **Produce Safety Expert, CFSAN Office of Food Safety, FDA**

Lianna Kelly, Produce Safety Expert at the FDA's CFSAN Office of Food Safety, has dedicated a decade to enhancing food and agriculture safety. With a foundation in Environmental Toxicology from UC Davis, Kelly's career spans from winery operations to leading food safety initiatives for a North American produce cooperative. Her commitment to improving food safety practices across the produce industry is evident in her role with the FDA's Produce Safety Network, where she focuses on education and outreach for the FSMA Produce Safety Rule.



### **ANDREW W. KENNEDY**

#### **Co-founder, New Era Partners**

Andrew W. Kennedy, a renowned leader in food traceability technology, co-leads New Era Partners, part of iFoodDS, focusing on aiding companies with FDA Food Traceability Rule compliance. With a rich background at the FDA, Kennedy played a pivotal role in developing food traceability systems and the Final Rule for Food Traceability. His work includes leading the creation of 21 Forward for pandemic response efforts. Before the FDA, Kennedy's contributions at IFT's Global Food Traceability Center and FoodLogiQ were significant, highlighting his expertise in establishing traceability standards. Co-editor of "Food Traceability from Binders to Blockchain," Kennedy's career spans from Accenture to pioneering startups, reflecting his diverse experience in food safety and traceability innovations.



### **JUSTIN KERR**

#### **Owner, Factor IV Solutions LLC**

Justin Kerr, founder of Factor IV Solutions LLC, brings over 25 years of experience in sanitation and food processing support. With a B.S. in Dairy Product Technology from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Kerr has dedicated his career to enhancing food safety and sanitation programs through comprehensive training, procedure verification, and operational monitoring. Factor IV Solutions, established in 2013, emphasizes stability and efficiency in food safety practices across North America, showcasing Kerr's commitment to advancing industry standards in food sanitation and safety.



### **DR. JENNIFER CLEVELAND MCENTIRE**

#### **Founder, Food Safety Strategy LLC**

Dr. Jennifer Cleveland McEntire, a leading food safety expert, recently founded Food Safety Strategy, LLC, after serving as the Chief Food Safety and Regulatory Officer at the International Fresh Produce Association. Her career includes influential roles at the Grocery Manufacturers Association and The Acheson Group, where she led FSMA 204 traceability pilots. McEntire's work, recognized by numerous awards and publications, focuses on impactful, public health-oriented food safety initiatives. Holding a Ph.D. from Rutgers University and a B.Sc. magna cum laude from the University of Delaware, her contributions span research, policy, and industry leadership in food safety.





### **JOHNNY MCGUIRE**

**Director of Information Technology, The Nunes Company, Inc.**

Johnny McGuire, Director of Information Technology for The Nunes Company, Inc., and COO of ProduceSupply.org, has nearly two decades of experience in produce traceability and technology. McGuire has been instrumental in developing field-based labeling systems and advancing item traceability, contributing significantly to technology adoption in the produce supply chain. His work facilitates collaboration among North America's leading produce suppliers, aiming to enhance efficiency and safety standards across the industry.



### **CECILIA MENDOZA**

**Director of Food Safety, Taylor Farming's Agricultural Operations**

Cecilia Mendoza, Director of Food Safety for Taylor Farming's Agricultural Operations, boasts over 20 years of expertise in Food Safety and Quality Assurance. A Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Food Science graduate, Mendoza has led food safety departments and water treatment programs, demonstrating a commitment to advancing safety practices in agriculture. Her industry involvement includes participation in the Western Growers Food Safety Subcommittee and the Hartnell Food Safety Committee, underscoring her leadership in promoting food safety standards.



### **JOELLE MOSSO**

**Entrepreneurial Scientist**

Joelle Mosso, an entrepreneurial scientist and VP of Science Programs at Western Growers Assoc., specializes in pathogenic food microbiology and risk assessment. Her work includes developing improved food safety and sustainability approaches for growers, laboratory management, and food safety for international supply chains. Mosso's expertise in Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment and leadership roles in the food industry underscore her dedication to advancing practical solutions for food safety challenges.



### **DR. CHANNAH ROCK**

**Professor, Dept. of Environmental Science, University of Arizona**

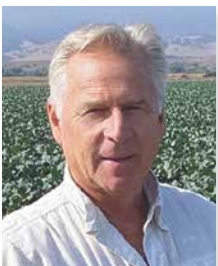
Dr. Channah Rock, a Professor at the University of Arizona with expertise in water quality and public health protection, leads significant research projects evaluating water quality impacts on food safety. Her collaborations with FDA, local communities, and industry stakeholders focus on enhancing safety measures and understanding the efficacy of agricultural water treatment. Rock's leadership in water reuse initiatives and contributions to food safety research reflect her commitment to safeguarding public health through science-based solutions.



### **JOE STOUT**

**Founder / Senior Advisor - Commercial Food Sanitation LLC**

Joe Stout, founder and senior advisor of Commercial Food Sanitation LLC, is celebrated for his contributions to sanitation and hygienic design in the food industry. With a distinguished career at Kraft Foods and leadership roles in industry working groups, Stout's expertise spans global plant cleaning controls, allergen/pathogen control programs, and hygienic design. His work has significantly influenced food safety practices, leading to recognitions such as the IAFP Sanitarian of the Year and Food Safety Award.



### **TREVOR SUSLOW, PH.D**

**Founder, Trevor Suslow Consulting LLC**

Dr. Trevor Suslow, founder of Trevor Suslow Consulting, LLC, and Emeritus faculty at UC Davis, is a leading authority on preharvest to postharvest quality and safety of fresh specialty crops. His extensive contributions to food safety research, industry extension service, and international collaborations have established him as a key figure in advancing quality and safety standards in the fresh produce sector. Suslow's awards and leadership roles highlight his impact on food safety education and practice.



***RICHARD WARSAW***

**Vice President – Food Safety & Quality Assurance for Braga Fresh**

Richard Warsaw, VP of Food Safety & Quality Assurance at Braga Fresh, leverages his microbiology and industry experience to support technical and regulatory aspects of food safety. His background includes an MBA from the University of Arizona and a B.S. in Biology, along with laboratory and produce processing experience. Warsaw's leadership in food safety reflects a deep commitment to maintaining the highest standards of safety and quality in the produce industry.



***ROBERT J. WHITAKER, PH.D.***

**President, Whitaker Consulting, LLC**

Dr. Bob Whitaker, President of Whitaker Consulting, LLC, offers vast experience in produce safety and technology. His tenure at the Produce Marketing Association as Chief Science & Technology Officer and founding roles in key industry groups highlight his dedication to advancing food safety. Whitaker's work in agricultural biotechnology, produce safety, and technology development has earned him numerous accolades, underscoring his influential role in shaping food safety standards and practices in the produce industry.



***FRANK YIANNAS***

**FY Smarter Solutions**

Frank Yiannas, a distinguished food safety executive and advocate, has significantly impacted food safety standards through innovative leadership roles at the FDA, Walmart, and the Walt Disney Company. Recognized for modernizing food safety management systems, Yiannas' contributions have enhanced food safety practices industry-wide, earning him recognition as a leader in the field. His career embodies a steadfast dedication to protecting consumers and advancing food safety technologies.



***CLAIRE ZOELLNER, PH.D***

**Director of Data Science, iFoodDS**

Dr. Claire Zoellner, Director of Data Science at iFoodDS, leads the development of data-driven solutions for food safety and quality management. With a Ph.D. from Cornell University, Zoellner's expertise in epidemiology, systems engineering, and predictive analytics fuels innovations in risk management for the food industry. Her research and collaborations aim to enhance decision-making processes, demonstrating her commitment to leveraging technology for improving food safety and quality standards.



# SPONSORS

## 2024 Western Food Safety Conference presented by Hartnell College



**AEMTEK** is a leading laboratory in the food and beverage industry, recognized for its excellence in data quality, customer service, and cutting-edge technology. This ISO 17025-accredited third-party laboratory specializes in analytical services, research, testing, training, and consulting, aiming to support food safety and overcome industry challenges. With four state-of-the-art lab facilities, AEMTEK commits to delivering accurate, fast, and reliable results, covering services from shelf-life studies to comprehensive product testing and environmental monitoring.



**AgroThrive**, founded by Dragan Macura, transforms organic wastes into safe, nutritious fertilizers, emphasizing food safety, organic integrity, and environmental stewardship. Its Progressive Digestion Process (PDP) technology converts industrial food waste into liquid organic fertilizer in just 21 days, using microbial digestion to eliminate pathogens and reduce chemical reliance in soil. AgroThrive's organic fertilizers, utilized in both organic and conventional farming, significantly contribute to environmental sustainability, supported by its solar-powered facility in Salinas Valley, CA.



**AGQ Labs** offers over 20 years of experience in comprehensive services including advanced analytical testing, agronomic consulting, and environmental project management. Distinguished by its use of cutting-edge technology, AGQ Labs provides rapid, accurate, and cost-effective solutions across the agricultural, food, environmental, mining, and industrial sectors. Its international network of accredited laboratories, alongside R&D and consulting services, focuses on identifying the most reliable, sustainable, and valuable solutions for customer needs.



Since 1923, **D'Arrigo California** has been synonymous with innovation in farming, shipping, and packaging of fresh produce. With Andy Boy as its flagship brand, the company offers a range of services including cross-dock, consolidation, and custom growing. Upholding a legacy of sustainability and quality, D'Arrigo is committed to nourishing consumers worldwide with its fresh produce, driven by a dedicated team and sustainable farming practices.



**Bengard Ranch** prides itself on producing high-quality vegetables and providing unparalleled service. With a history dating back to the 1850s in Salinas Valley, it has evolved into one of the largest grower-shippers in the U.S. Bengard Ranch's commitment to consistency, reliability, and building long-term customer relationships is underscored by its integrated family values and traditions, ensuring customer confidence and industry leadership.



**Braga Farms** has been a hallmark of quality in farming since 1928, offering a mix of organic and conventional vegetables. With a focus on innovation, sustainability, and meeting the highest food safety standards, Braga Farms brings its expertise and integrity to the retail market through its Braga Farms and Josie's Organics brands, ensuring a legacy of high-quality produce.



**The California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (LGMA)** is a collaborative effort to enhance food safety in the leafy greens industry. Through government audits and a commitment to continuous improvement, LGMA sets rigorous, science-based standards, ensuring a culture of food safety among its members who represent a significant portion of U.S. leafy greens production.



**Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers** stands as a rapidly expanding restaurant brand, known for its ONE LOVE® chicken finger meals. With a presence across the U.S. and internationally, Raising Cane's aims to be among the top 10 U.S. restaurant brands, celebrated for its craveable chicken and Cane's Sauce.



SPONSORS, continued...



**Cathy Carlson** is a seasoned consultant in food safety, blending program management skills with regulatory experience and sustainable farming practices. Her work spans quality assurance, policy regulation, and hands-on agricultural research, assisting in compliance with various audit agencies and promoting food safety within the agricultural community.



**CCOF** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing organic agriculture for a healthier world. Through certification, education, advocacy, and promotion, CCOF works towards a future where organic is the norm, supporting the organic agriculture community in producing safe, sustainable, and high-quality food.



**Church Brothers Farms** is a family-owned company producing a wide variety of fresh vegetables year-round. With its own farming/harvest program and processing plant, True Leaf Farms, it ensures adherence to the highest food safety and quality standards. The company is a pioneer in the industry, dedicated to delivering produce with passion, leveraging a legacy of service and innovation.



**Commercial Food Sanitation (CFS)** integrates strategic consulting and training to tackle food safety, hygienic design, and sanitation challenges in food processing. Emphasizing a proactive approach, CFS collaborates closely with clients to instill preventive food safety programs, aiming for consistent production of safe food. CFS's comprehensive services include training in sanitation, hygienic design, pathogen control, and more, fostering a global passion for food safety.



**Denham Services** excels in providing washing, drying, and sanitizing solutions for bulk bins used in food transport. With over 25 years of experience, the company also offers repair and recycling services for bins. Committed to food safety, Denham Services partners with major food retailers and brands, ensuring high standards of hygiene and efficiency in food packaging and transport solutions.



**Driscoll's** is committed to growing the finest berries through natural breeding methods and meticulous care by farmers. The company's dedication to quality and freshness is evident from farm to table, with each berry hand-picked and packed to ensure superior quality. Driscoll's stands as a leader in berry innovation, enriching diets with nutritious, delicious fruits.



**Eurofins** supports the produce industry with comprehensive testing services, from pre-harvest to retail. Recognizing the unique challenges of the produce sector, Eurofins offers rapid testing, risk assessments, and shelf-life studies, backed by a network of ISO 17025 accredited labs. The company is committed to partnering with clients to ensure product quality and safety, leveraging advanced technologies and expertise for industry-leading support.



**Factor IV Solutions** specializes in sanitation support services across the food safety spectrum, emphasizing the four critical factors: Time, Temperature, Action, and Chemistry. Beyond leading in sanitation, Factor IV provides comprehensive support for food safety programs, addressing challenges in-field and processing environments. The company's dedication to innovation and efficiency supports North American agriculture with practical, data-driven solutions.



**Foxy**, a brand under Nunes Company, Inc., has been innovating in agricultural practices since the 1930s. With over 20,000 crop acres in the U.S., Foxy stands for freshness and quality in produce distribution globally. Originating film-wrapped lettuce for freshness, Foxy continues to lead in providing healthy, fresh vegetables, emphasizing sustainable farming and consumer health.



**GreenGate Fresh** prioritizes food safety and product quality through comprehensive controls at all production levels. By maintaining rigorous standards in harvesting, processing, and packaging, GreenGate ensures the delivery of safe, high-quality products. The company's commitment to continuous evaluation and improvement of quality standards and food safety programs underscores its dedication to customer satisfaction.



SPONSORS, continued...



**Green Leaf Ag**, with over 30 years in water treatment, focuses on providing solutions that are right for the grower and compliant with regulations. Trusted by municipalities and growers alike, the company ensures cost-effective water treatment services, emphasizing the use of labeled products for agriculture. Green Leaf Ag's commitment to precision and affordability supports sustainable agriculture and water management practices.



**The Grower-Shipper Association (GSA)** advances agriculture in Central California by offering solutions-based programs to its members. Addressing critical issues like COVID-19 protection for farm workers, water supply, food safety, and pest management, GSA plays a pivotal role in supporting the agricultural community through advocacy, education, and services, fostering a sustainable and productive farming environment.



**Highland Ag** offers innovative digital solutions for agriculture, making complex processes simple through its software platform. Specializing in food safety, compliance, and data management, Highland Hub provides on-demand insights to connect and streamline the business of agriculture. With a customer-centric approach, Highland Hub addresses the unique challenges of food safety and regulatory compliance, offering time-saving, integrated solutions for the agricultural sector.



**Hygiena** delivers rapid microbial detection, monitoring, and identification solutions across industries, including food and beverage. Utilizing advanced technologies, Hygiena's testing solutions cover ATP monitoring, foodborne pathogens, and more, supported by software for early issue identification. The company is committed to improving industry standards for health and safety, offering products that enhance microbial detection and management.



**iFoodDS** stands at the forefront of digital solutions for food supply chain traceability, quality, and safety. Through its comprehensive platform, including FSMA 204-compliant trace exchange features, iFoodDS enhances regulatory compliance and operational efficiency for the fresh food industry. The company's commitment to innovation and collaboration supports a safer, more transparent food supply chain.



**The International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA)** leads the global produce and floral industries in advocacy, connection, and guidance. With a mission to drive change, IFPA works on national and global stages to create beneficial changes for its members, fostering a community where industry challenges are addressed proactively, and opportunities for growth and innovation are embraced.



**KipTraQ** offers a versatile data collection and reporting platform, enabling users to custom-design mobile forms for efficient data capture. This web-based tool facilitates the analysis of data through graphs, auto-email reports, and dashboards, streamlining operations for businesses. KipTraQ enhances decision-making and operational efficiency, making it an essential tool for businesses seeking to optimize data management and reporting processes.



**Markon** has been leading the way in providing high-quality produce to the foodservice industry in the U.S. and Canada for 35 years. Renowned for its commitment to food safety, innovation, and sustainability, Markon collaborates with distribution partners and suppliers to offer cost-saving, efficient, and fresh solutions, setting industry standards and redefining what it means to be fresh from the field to the plate.



**Meras Water Solutions** is dedicated to supporting comprehensive food safety operations in agriculture. Specializing in water treatment for farming and industrial applications, Meras helps implement food safety controls and maintenance programs tailored to packing houses, equipment, and facilities. Their expertise in micro-irrigation maintenance and specialty chemistries ensures optimal agricultural productivity and safety.



**Misionero** excels in producing a diverse range of organic and conventional specialty salads, lettuces, value-added vegetables, and premium kits. With a focus on combining fresh vegetables with modern, appealing taste profiles, Misionero is committed to delivering satisfying, healthy food options. The company actively engages with its community through various social media platforms, showcasing its innovative approaches to fresh produce.



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**Nature Safe Fertilizers** champions sustainable agriculture by producing fertilizers from natural ingredients that enrich the soil and enhance crop yield and quality. With a strong commitment to environmental stewardship, Nature Safe offers a comprehensive product line that supports organic and conventional farming, demonstrating that responsible agricultural practices can yield significant benefits for both the land and farmers.



**Nutrien Ag Solutions**, the retail division of Nutrien Ltd., serves as a global leader in agricultural inputs and services. Offering comprehensive solutions including crop consulting, custom application, and precision ag services, Nutrien Ag Solutions is committed to feeding the future by helping growers achieve maximum yields with a broad selection of products and innovative, sustainable agricultural practices.



**Ocean Mist Farms**, the premier grower of fresh artichokes in the U.S., is committed to delivering a full line of premium fresh vegetables year-round. With a holistic approach to food safety, Ocean Mist Farms ensures the highest quality and safety of its products, from planting through distribution, emphasizing continuous improvement and leadership in food safety research and quality assurance.



**Pathotrak** introduces groundbreaking technology for rapid, ultra-sensitive pathogen detection in food safety protocols, offering reliable solutions for detecting pathogens like E. coli and Salmonella in large sample sizes quickly and efficiently. This innovative approach provides the agricultural industry with a powerful tool for enhancing food safety and consumer confidence.



**Primus Auditing Ops** carries over two decades of expertise in farm-level produce audits, expanding its focus to include semi-processed and fully processed produce foods. With a commitment to objective, thorough, and accurate audits, Primus Auditing Ops plays a crucial role in advancing food safety practices across the produce supply chain, ensuring integrity and compliance at every stage.



**Priority Sampling** revolutionizes food safety sampling in the produce industry with a focus on transparency and innovation. Addressing the need for efficient and reliable food safety protocols, Priority Sampling offers a high-quality service that enhances the safety of leafy greens and other produce, employing cutting-edge solutions to traditional sampling challenges.



**PRO\*ACT** is North America's leading fresh food procurement and distribution organization, servicing foodservice, retail, and emerging channels. Through strategic sourcing and consolidation services, PRO\*ACT offers significant cost benefits and streamlined supply chain solutions, supporting over 130 independent foodservice distributors and servicing thousands of units weekly across North America.



**Provision**

**Provision Analytics** Provision's cloud software is revolutionizing the agricultural industry by digitizing food safety and quality assurance. This system helps growers replace paper reports with automated notifications, compliance rules, and report generation, simplifying audit preparations and enhancing process control.



**PURE Bioscience** focuses on developing antimicrobial products based on patented, stabilized ionic silver technology, including Silver Dihydrogen Citrate (SDC). These products offer broad-spectrum, non-toxic solutions for pathogen and hygienic control across various industries, underscoring PURE's commitment to improving health and environmental safety.



**QSI** emphasizes the importance of managing sanitation programs effectively, attributing success to the support and structure provided to local management teams. By addressing human resources, safety, and food safety aspects, QSI enhances sanitation practices, ensuring safe and efficient operations in food processing environments.



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**RADICLE SEED** Since 1985, Radicle Seed (formerly T&C Supplies) has been a leading supplier of vegetable seeds and agricultural products on the West Coast. In partnership with Headstart Nursery, Radicle Seed offers seeds and plants to growers, ensuring access to the latest varieties and growing techniques.



**Sábor Farms**, founded by a partnership rooted in community and shared values, specializes in niche crop farming. Emphasizing the importance of treating coworkers like family and partners with integrity, Sábor Farms is dedicated to bringing unique, healthy vegetables to the market, demonstrating a commitment to innovation and community involvement in agriculture.



**Sanitation Process Control**, led by Gonzalo De La Cruz, aims to transform the sanitation service industry with innovative, digital solutions. Focusing on process consulting, digital transformation, and staff augmentation, the company strives to improve operational efficiency and profitability for businesses, advocating for advanced, future-ready sanitation practices.



**Tanimura & Antle**, an employee-owned family farming business, is dedicated to producing premium quality produce through sustainable and innovative practices. With a legacy spanning four generations, Tanimura & Antle shares ownership with all employees, emphasizing the value of its workforce in achieving excellence in the agricultural sector.



**Taylor Farms**, founded with the vision of being North America's preferred provider of salads and healthy fresh foods, continues to grow with a focus on sustainability and community. As a family-owned company, Taylor Farms prioritizes long-term success, stewardship of resources, and delivering fresh, wholesome products, contributing positively to consumers' health and the environment.



**Thermo King of Salinas, Inc.** Founded in 1963, Thermo King of Salinas, Inc. specializes in reliable refrigeration and heating units for transport vehicles. Known for continuous innovation and high standards, Thermo King guarantees exceptional customer service and trustworthy temperature control solutions globally.



**True® Organic Products** leads in organic fertilizer production, combining agronomic expertise with a commitment to product safety and environmental responsibility. With a focus on soil health and sustainable agriculture, TRUE® offers a range of organic fertilizers designed to enhance crop health and yield, supporting growers in building a sustainable future.



**Visionary Vegetables, LLC**, committed to innovation and food safety, specializes in growing and packing a variety of leafy green commodities. With a focus on clean, sustainable produce, Visionary Vegetables is dedicated to meeting customer needs, enhancing food safety standards, and strengthening customer relationships through integrity and excellence.



**Western Growers Association** represents family farmers producing fresh fruits, vegetables, and nuts, advocating for healthy food choices and sustainable farming practices. With a commitment to providing variety and healthy choices, Western Growers plays a pivotal role in supporting the agricultural community, ensuring year-round access to nutritious food, and fostering environmental stewardship.



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