



Funding Science  
Finding Solutions  
Fueling Change



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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**3**

About CPS

**4**

Chairman's Letter:  
More Work to be Done

**5**

Executive Director's Letter:  
It Takes an Above Average Village

**6**

2016 Year In Review

**8**

Key Learnings

**12**

2015 Financials

**13**

Donors

**14**

Board of Directors

**15**

Technical Committee  
CPS Staff

**cps** CENTER for PRODUCE SAFETY

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The Center for Produce Safety provides and shares ready-to-use, science-based solutions to prevent or minimize produce safety vulnerabilities.





## ABOUT CPS

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**On paper**, the Center for Produce Safety (CPS) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, nonprofit organization. CPS's funding comes from across the fresh produce supply chain, from farm to grocer to foodservice, and from grants from major specialty crop-producing states.

**In actions**, CPS answers burning produce-specific food safety questions. It does so by funding research that yields science-proven results that are ready to use in the real world.

CPS is a unique partnership that brings together leaders from industry, government, and the scientific and academic communities. This public-private collaboration allows CPS to identify the most pressing research needs, fund the most promising research, and spread workable solutions to industry and others. CPS also works with federal agencies to shape food safety policies, guidelines and regulations.

CPS does this all with a small staff and minimal overhead. The secret sauce of CPS's success is our volunteer leadership.

The 30 members of CPS's engaged, visionary Board of Directors hail from across the fresh produce industry, government and academia. Its 35-member Technical Committee guides CPS's research activities, establishing annual priorities, issuing calls for research proposals and advising funding decisions. A small army of ad-hoc experts helps the Technical Committee to review research proposals.

As a result, in 10 short years CPS has become *the* destination for collaboration and cooperation on produce food safety.

# MORE WORK TO BE DONE

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**TIM YORK**  
CHAIRMAN

Fourteen-year-old Dana Dziadul stole the show when she walked out on stage at the Center for Produce Safety’s Research Symposium five years ago to remind us all why CPS is so important.

“When I was 3 years old I ate a cantaloupe contaminated with *Salmonella*. The doctors did not know what was wrong with me at first, and I just kept on getting sicker and sicker. I almost died.”

Dana is 19 now. Chronic reactive arthritis has set in since her *Salmonella* poisoning. She’s still medicated, and sometimes the pain is so bad she has to wrap her feet and ankles for relief.

Dana and others like her are a vivid reminder of why we’re here. It’s about people and their trust in us to deliver safe, healthy fruits and vegetables to families like Dana’s and ours.

While we’ve made significant progress in providing safer foods, there remain unanswered questions standing between our industry, long-term science-based solutions and public confidence.

None of this work would have been possible without CPS’s diverse assortment of stakeholders working together – industry, researchers, policy makers and regulators, public health, academia. This collaboration is unprecedented, and it is humbling.

CPS’s story to date is certainly compelling, but it’s not yet complete and more work is yet to be done. Join us in writing the next chapters for CPS research. Get involved in our moral imperative to ensure the food we grow and market is safe. Put food safety at the center of everything you do and take no shortcuts.

Where do you start? Contribute to our Campaign for Produce Safety, to help us **fund science**. Participate in our annual Research Symposium with ideas and insights to help **find solutions** that work in the real world. Then **fuel change**, from business to academia to government to public health, for the long-term health of producers and consumers alike.

Thank you.

# THIS TAKES AN ABOVE-AVERAGE VILLAGE

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The architects who designed the Center for Produce Safety recognized that an effort of this importance and magnitude would need leaders who understand when to listen and when to act. They also understood that this organization would need many talented and dedicated volunteers. Almost 10 years in, we have stayed true to their vision on both counts.

We have been able to do so in part because those same architects ensured that CPS has a crystal clear focus. We are all about – and are only about – identifying fresh produce safety research priorities, funding needed research and distributing our research learnings.

Our founders also made sure that the “right” people are seated at CPS’s table. Our volunteer board directors hail from across the spectrum of fresh produce safety stakeholders, from fresh produce suppliers and retailers to academia, public health officials and regulators. They listen to and learn from each other. Then they get to consensus and act decisively, setting direction that best serves produce safety.

CPS’s work takes money and other resources, lots of grey matter in particular. Our volunteer leaders are extraordinary in the grey matter department. Our direction is set by a dedicated Board of Directors whose collective perspective Chairman Tim York captured so well on the facing page. Technical Committee Chair Drew McDonald and past chair Bob Whitaker steadily guide CPS’s technical process and information transfer. Together, the board and Technical Committee ensure that CPS’s work results in sound produce safety science.

These are just some of the dozens of CPS volunteers who are rolling up their shirtsleeves and getting down to the business of enhancing produce safety for the real world. For example, ad hoc research proposal reviewers ensure the research projects we fund are of the highest quality, down to their laboratory methods. Graduate student volunteers staff our symposia so that CPS can focus our funds on our research priorities.

This report is dedicated to all of our volunteers, past and present. CPS’s achievements to date would not have been possible without your contributions.

Thank you.



**BONNIE  
FERNANDEZ-FENAROLI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## 2016 YEAR IN REVIEW

Center for Produce Safety's laser focus on its research mission was very evident in the 2016's key results:

- ✓ CPS's seventh annual Research Symposium set participation records
- ✓ New research awards pushed CPS's lifetime investment over \$20 million
- ✓ The Campaign for Food Safety reached the half-way point of its goal to raise research funds in less than a year

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### SYMPOSIUM FUELS CHANGE

In June 2016, CPS held its seventh annual Research Symposium in Seattle, Washington. This event is the primary way that CPS communicates results of the research it has funded.

CPS's symposium was notable for several reasons:

**Diverse participants:** The symposium brings together researchers, industry, academia, regulators and other produce safety stakeholders. No other organization or gathering achieves this breadth or depth of engagement.

**Lively discourse:** The symposium's format creates an environment where attendees can have a frank discussion about the research and what the findings mean in the real world. This ensures that findings are widely understood across attendees' varying perspectives.

**Broad distribution:** This frank, multidisciplinary discussion helps to ensure that the research findings and their real-world implications are spread widely.

### THE NUMBERS:

**Attendees:** 314

**Countries:** 7, including the United States

**Participants:**

- Industry, from sellers to buyers
- Researchers – academia and government
- Regulators
- Suppliers
- Media

15 research presentations

16 posters/lightening sessions

1 case study



## RESEARCH FINDS SOLUTIONS

In October, CPS announced its 2016 research awards, culminating a year-long process.

**Focused:** CPS sets research priorities each year. Ultimately, only those proposals that best match CPS’s priorities are funded.

**Team reviewed:** A small army of volunteers – including growers, retailers, regulators and academics – work side by side to review researchers’ proposals against the year’s established priorities.

**Science for the real world:** CPS-funded research is completed in relatively short time frames, to deliver science-based solutions that have real-world value.

## THE NUMBERS:

**2016 projects funded:** 10

**2016 value:** \$2 million+

**Projects funded to date:** 124

**Institutions:** 35

**Countries:** 5

**Total funded to date:** \$20.6 million

## CAMPAIGN FUNDS FUTURE SCIENCE

Announced in late 2015, CPS’s Campaign for Produce Safety got into full fundraising swing in 2016. By year’s end, the campaign had already raised more than half of its \$20 million goal to fund future research.

**Single minded:** The campaign’s theme of “Funding Science, Finding Solutions” clearly communicates CPS’s goal to continue to fund produce-specific food safety research for the real world.

**Widely supported:** Here too, CPS is bringing diverse stakeholders together. Donors to the campaign hail from across the fresh produce supply chain, from farm to retail.

**Long-term view:** The five-year campaign allows CPS to take a long-term view to meet produce-specific food safety research needs.

## THE NUMBERS:

(as of Dec. 31, 2016)

**Number of contributors:** 71

**Amount raised:** \$10.8 million

**Countries:** 3

**Donors are:**

- Growers
- Packer-shippers
- Processors
- Wholesalers
- Distributors
- Retailers
- Associations
- Commodity boards
- Foodservice
- Suppliers and solution providers
- Charitable foundations
- Media (in kind)

# KEY LEARNINGS

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## There are no risky animals, just risky environments

**The challenge:** Are wildlife a significant source of pathogens that can be transferred to fresh produce? Absent concrete answers to that question, well-meaning efforts to reduce the perceived risk posed by animal intrusion could result in untenable restrictions on producers.

**CPS at work:** CPS research has found that a range of wildlife have the potential to carry human pathogens like *Salmonella* spp. or Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STECs) such as *E. coli* O157:H7. That said, our research has found that the likelihood that animals *actually* carry those pathogens is low.

For example, CPS-funded research has found that of the domestic cattle that have been tested, 17.3 percent carried *E. coli* O157:H7, 38.4 percent carried non-O157 STECs, and 6.9 percent carried *Salmonella*. Cattle and feral swine have been found more likely to carry *E. coli* O157:H7 than small mammals and birds. Bird tracking revealed that while birds fly regularly from cattle feeding operations over produce fields to their roosting areas, they are rarely captured in those produce fields. CPS-funded research has even found seasonal variations – more birds tested positive for non-O157 STEC and *Salmonella* in the spring, while more cattle tested positive in the fall.



**Key learning:** CPS-funded data demonstrates that there really are no “risky” animals – just risky environmental conditions that might bring animals into contact with human pathogens that then might be transferred to fruits or vegetables. These findings are changing the fundamental discussion about wildlife intrusion in produce fields. They underscore the importance of analyzing hazards posed to produce fields and packing operations.

**Source:** 2015 CPS Research Symposium Key Learnings, “Pathogen transference from animals to produce: have we tested enough animals yet?” Download this Key Learnings document from [centerforproducesafety.org/keylearnings.php](http://centerforproducesafety.org/keylearnings.php).

*Thanks to the CPS Technical Committee’s Drew McDonald and Bob Whitaker for their roles in ensuring the accuracy and quality of these Key Learnings descriptions. They and other committee members routinely deliver above and beyond their volunteer job descriptions.*

# KEY LEARNINGS

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## It's simple to test water, right? The simple answer is no.

**The challenge:** Water is a major risk factor for contaminating fresh produce. Water can carry many causes of disease, including human pathogens such as *Salmonella* or viruses such as hepatitis A. These threats can enter a water supply anywhere from its point source through its distribution and use. Ensuring water does not become a means to contaminate fresh produce and cause human illness presents several challenges. Water safety has become even more important because the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) mandates water quality testing and reaction.

**CPS at work:** By the end of 2016, CPS has funded a range of research projects about water, particularly water used to irrigate growing crops and to pack harvested crops.

FSMA's Produce Rule mandates testing for generic *E. coli* as an indicator of irrigation water quality. The thinking is that if generic *E. coli* is present, other pathogens are also likely to be present. However, CPS-funded research now suggests that may have limited value. Research has found that finding generic *E. coli* didn't mean that *Salmonella* would likely also be found – and vice versa.

Several CPS-funded research projects have underscored the need to sample irrigation water carefully to yield reliable results. Research has revealed that disturbing the bottom of the water source can literally and figuratively muddy test results. Research also indicates that water samples should be drawn in the morning, before the sun's UV rays reduce bacteria loads. CPS-funded researchers have also found that disinfecting a contaminated irrigation water source could be very complex and have unintended consequences.



Source: Dr. Trevor Suslow

**Key learning:** There is much more to ensuring water quality than “simply” deciding which pathogens to look for and what threshold quantities should send up warning signals. It is just as important to know where and how to draw water samples so that test results reliably reflect real-world risk, so that risk can be addressed.

CPS's water quality work has already been major and influential. Findings have informed the development of regulations, including water quality rules to implement the Food Safety Modernization Act.

**Source(s):** 2016 CPS Research Symposium Key Learnings, “Generic *E. coli* has limitations as an indicator for irrigation water quality”, “It is important to sample irrigation water sources correctly”, and “Irrigation water sources can be treated with disinfectants, but...” Download this Key Learnings document from [centerforproducesafety.org/keylearnings.php](http://centerforproducesafety.org/keylearnings.php).

CPS Agricultural Water Research Report, August 7, 2014. Download this report from [centerforproducesafety.org/resources.php](http://centerforproducesafety.org/resources.php).

# KEY LEARNINGS

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## What's next: Putting pathogens' genetics to work for us

**The challenge:** Environmental conditions can impact pathogens' gene expression to enhance their survival. The growth environment can cause pathogens to turn genes on or off that could make them more tolerant of harsh conditions. The upside of that reality is that pathogens' own genetics could be used to help the supply chain to detect pathogens and address them to prevent foodborne illness. While Genome Sequencing and gene expression biology is already revolutionizing food safety, including identifying and tracking foodborne illness outbreaks, it may be even more important and valuable to understand how pathogens regulate and express their genes.

**CPS at work:** CPS research has demonstrated that the environment in which enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* or *Salmonella* exists can cause those pathogens to express genes differently. While conducting studies to validate preventive controls, CPS-funded researchers found that field conditions can actually impact pathogens' survivability. Researchers have also found that when grown on leafy greens, *E. coli* O157:H7 will express genes related to oxidative stress – in turn making the pathogen more resistant to an oxidative disinfectant.

CPS researchers also cautioned against under-reacting to finding what are considered to be clinically insignificant STECs, because factors may trigger those STECs to become more virulent. Other CPS researchers found that gene clusters in some *Salmonella* strains may allow those strains to adapt to tomatoes as a host, resulting in some tomato varieties being more susceptible to infection with *Salmonella*.



**Key learning:** Knowing more about pathogens' genetics and gene expression will drive the next level of understanding of produce safety. That knowledge could help create new diagnostic tests, better inform stakeholders how to interpret test findings, and provide new tools to aid traceback investigations. Such knowledge could also lead to development of targeted, next-generation treatments to clean and sanitize equipment.

**Sources:** Download these Key Learnings documents from [centerforproducesafety.org/keylearnings.php](http://centerforproducesafety.org/keylearnings.php).

2016 CPS Research Symposium Key Learnings, "Understanding genetics and gene expression in production environments will drive the next level of understanding in produce food safety".

2015 CPS Research Symposium Key Learnings, "Is it the genes or their expression that matters?"

# KEY LEARNINGS

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## Cultivating the next generation of researchers

**The challenge:** When it comes to safeguarding fresh produce safety, there are currently more questions than there are answers. The pipeline of research needs is long, creating a need for an equally deep pool of food safety researchers.

**CPS at work:** Dr. Laura Strawn's first contact with CPS came while she was earning a bachelor's degree in food science and technology at the University of California, Davis. Laura worked as a laboratory technician under the supervision of Dr. Linda Harris. She went on to earn a master's degree in food microbiology and safety in 2009, where she co-authored several studies regarding tropical fruit safety with CPS-funded researcher Dr. Michelle Danyluk. Later while Laura was earning her Ph.D. in food microbiology and as a postdoctoral research associate at Cornell University, she co-authored studies with CPS-funded researcher Dr. Martin Wiedmann.

Costa Rican native Dr. Eduardo Gutierrez-Rodriguez earned a certificate, two master's degrees and a Ph.D. from University of California, Davis. Eduardo came to UC Davis with several years of produce industry and food safety auditor experience. During an internship in postharvest biology and technology at UC Davis' Mann Laboratory, Eduardo developed an interest in integrating quality and food safety into a systems approach to crop management. After completing his master's degree in postharvest quality, Eduardo began his doctoral training in CPS-funded researcher Dr. Trevor Suslow's lab, where he studied the impact of crop management inputs on enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* persistence and internalization of baby spinach. As is *de rigueur* in the Suslow lab, Eduardo participated in many Rapid Response investigations of natural contamination events, and provided research



Source: Dr. Eduardo Gutierrez-Rodriguez

support to environmental investigations and root-cause assessments of fresh produce.

Today, Dr. Strawn is an assistant professor and extension specialist at Virginia Tech, and is now herself a CPS-funded researcher. She earned a two-year award in 2016 to study the potential for pathogen transfer from and to contact surfaces across the cantaloupe supply chain from field to retail. Her co-investigators include Danyluk and North Carolina State University's Dr. Ben Chapman.

Dr. Gutierrez-Rodriguez is assistant professor and extension specialist at North Carolina State University. He earned a CPS research award in 2015 to study die-off rates of nonpathogenic and pathogenic strains of *E. coli* in strawberry and cilantro production. His work will inform one of the most highly-contested components of the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act's Produce Rule, regarding agricultural water.

**Key learning:** CPS provides a truly unique environment for food safety stakeholders to come together collaboratively, to answer burning produce safety questions. This collaboration is engaging and respectful for researchers and industry alike. As a result, CPS has already been able to influence the international dialogue about produce safety – starting with the community that studies it.

# 2015 FINANCIALS

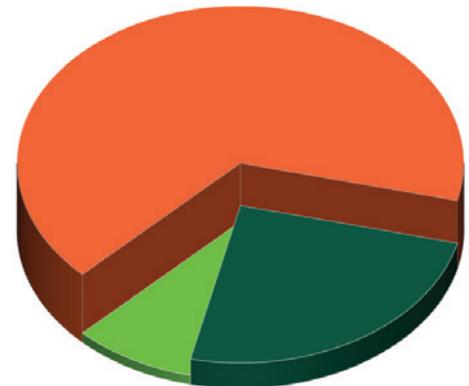
**Funds in:** Center for Produce Safety is funded by diverse public and private sources. Industry funds come from across the fresh produce supply chain, from farm to grocer to foodservice. Public funds come from grants made by major specialty crop-producing states.

CPS's operational expenses have been funded by Produce Marketing Association since CPS's inception.

**Funds out:** The vast majority of CPS's funds are spent to sponsor produce-specific food safety research, and to transmit key learnings to the many and varied stakeholders of produce safety.

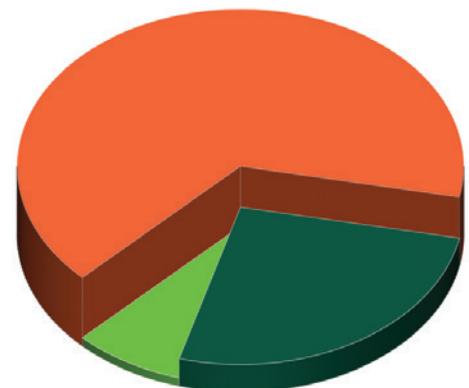
## INCOME <sup>(1)</sup>

<b>67%</b>	<b>Research:</b>	\$1,281,345
<b>25%</b>	<b>Operational:</b>	\$470,380
<b>9%</b>	<b>Symposium:</b>	\$166,356
<b>Total income:</b>		<b>\$1,918,081</b>



## EXPENSES <sup>(2)</sup>

<b>65%</b>	<b>Research:</b>	\$1,281,345
<b>26%</b>	<b>Operational:</b>	\$511,629
<b>8%</b>	<b>Symposium:</b>	\$166,356
<b>Total income:</b>		<b>\$1,959,330</b>



**NET INCOME/LOSS: (\$41,249)<sup>(2)</sup>**

The 2015 Year End Financial Statements, Independent Auditor's Report and accompanying Federal Reports and Schedules in accordance with the requirements of OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations are available on CPS's website, [www.centerforproducesafety.org](http://www.centerforproducesafety.org).

**Footnotes:**

(1) Pledges for conditional contributions are not reported in the consolidated financial statements until the conditions are met. Such amounts totaled \$2,090,000 as of December 31, 2015.

(2) CPS received funds in the amount of \$42,201 budgeted for 2015 General and Administrative Expenses. These funds were recognized as income in the 2014 Year End Financial Statements, resulting in a 2015 Operating Net Loss of \$41,249.

# DONORS

As of Dec. 31, 2016

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## Contribution of \$1,000,000+

Produce Marketing Association \*  
Taylor Farms \*  
Western Growers

## Contribution of \$500,000 – \$999,999

Washington State Tree Fruit Association  
California Fresh Fruit Association  
Dole  
Fresh Express, Incorporated

## Contribution of \$250,000 – \$499,999

Agricola El Toro  
California Melon Research Board \* /  
California Cantaloupe Advisory Board \*  
Georgia Pacific \*  
Sysco  
Tanimura & Antle \*  
The Wonderful Company

## Contribution of \$100,000 – \$249,999

GreenGate Fresh  
JV Smith Companies \*  
Lipman Produce  
Melissa's  
Pacific International Marketing  
Target Corporation  
Wegman Family Charitable Foundation  
Western Precooling Systems  
Bolthouse Farms  
Church Brothers / True Leaf Farms  
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association  
International Paper \*  
*The Produce News* (in-kind)  
Andrew & Williamson Fresh Produce  
California Citrus Quality Council  
Castellini Group of Companies \*  
Driscoll's \*  
Florida Tomato Committee \*  
Freshway Foods  
California Pepper Commission

Markon Cooperative, Inc. \*  
McEntire Produce, Inc.  
Monterey Mushrooms, Inc. \*  
The Oppenheimer Group  
Ocean Mist Farms  
organicgirl  
Ready Pac Foods, Inc.  
Wish Farms

## Contribution up to \$99,999

Sunview Marketing International \*  
*Food Safety News* (in kind)  
4Earth Farms  
Amigo Farms  
Coastline Family Farms, Inc.  
FMI Foundation \*  
H-E-B \*  
L & M Companies  
Martori Farms  
Mission Produce, Inc.  
National Watermelon Association  
New York Apple Association, Inc.  
Santa Rosa Produce  
Tree Top, Inc.  
Loblaw Companies Limited  
California Pear Advisory Board  
California Tomato Farmers  
Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association  
J&D Produce, Inc.  
Texas International Produce Association  
Michigan Apple Committee  
Monsanto Company \*  
Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Program  
Giant Eagle, Inc.  
Pasquinelli Produce Company  
Procacci Brothers Sales Corp.  
Diversified Restaurant Systems, Inc.  
New York Apple Sales, Inc.  
Rice Fruit Company  
L&M Companies

\* These companies have not only given to the CPS Campaign for Produce Safety, but have also supported CPS in past fundraising efforts.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As of Dec. 31, 2016

**TIMOTHY YORK, CHAIR\***

MARKON COOPERATIVE

**JIMMY BASSETTI**

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**MARK BORMAN**

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CONSUMER SERVICES

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DRS INT'L

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CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY

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PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

**CRAIG WILSON**

COSTCO WHOLESALE

\* denotes Executive Committee members



*“CPS succeeds because of its clarity of focus on our mission,  
a clarity that begins at the board and extends seamlessly through  
the staff and Technical Committee to the research itself.”*

— **MARK MIGNOGNA** SYSCO VICE PRESIDENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

# TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

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**DREW MCDONALD, CHAIR**

CHURCH BROTHERS / TRUE LEAF FARMS

**JIM BRENNAN**

SMARTWASH SOLUTIONS

**PASCAL DELAQUIS**

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA

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BASF

**SAMMY DUDA**

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RESEARCH SCIENTIST - CONSULTANT

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TANIMURA & ANTLE

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PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

**DEVON ZAGORY**

DEVON ZAGORY & ASSOCIATES, LLC

**MARY ZISCHKE**

CALIFORNIA LEAFY GREENS RESEARCH PROGRAM

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**SILVIA ORTIZ**

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

**DANIELA YUSCHENKOFF**

CLS GLOBAL DATABASE



*“Western Growers invests time and money in the Center for Produce Safety’s work and research because CPS develops the knowledge and tools our industry needs to implement strong, science-based food safety programs – in the field and facility.”*

— **TOM NASSIF** WESTERN GROWERS PRESIDENT AND CEO



**CPS** CENTER *for* **PRODUCE SAFETY**

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[www.centerforproducesafety.org](http://www.centerforproducesafety.org)

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