

# Announcement



CENTER FOR PRODUCE SAFETY

## Produce Research Symposium

June 23, 2010 • University of California, Davis

Davis, Calif., June 30, 2010 - The Center for Produce Safety's (CPS) first-ever research symposium brought the private fresh produce supply chain together with researchers and government officials June 23 to learn about and discuss the real-world business applicability of the center's produce-specific food safety research.

CPS's first Produce Research Symposium attracted 300 attendees from the private produce and food safety communities, including growers, packers, processors and commodity groups, retailers and restaurant operators, as well as representatives from government and academia. They convened at the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of University of California, Davis, on June 23 to hear the results of 11 produce-specific food safety research projects and discuss their immediate production and business applications.

"The projects presented, as well as on-going research being sponsored by CPS, represent a focus on near-term research with real-world applications that can quickly generate results to help answer the industry's most pressing questions," said CPS Executive Director Bonnie Fernandez-Fenaroli. "This symposium was the culmination of two years of intense work by CPS and volunteer leaders and scientists who are passionate about enhancing the safety of fresh produce."

Research findings were presented on topics related to assessing the actual survivability of E. coli in the field, previewing the next generation of pathogen tests, and assessing the risks of pathogen transfer posed by livestock and harvest practices. Researchers hailed from a broad range of agricultural research universities and government agencies, including UC Davis, Louisiana State University, Oklahoma State University, Clemson, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service. After a brief presentation by each researcher, the real-world implications of each project were discussed by panelists from across the supply chain and the public sector, including the Food and Drug Administration, Taylor Farms, Darden Restaurants and Wegmans Food Markets.

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"The information that I can take home to my business has great value, and it was equally impressive to see the broad array of people that CPS has been able to bring together in service to our industry," said Tim York, president of foodservice distributor Markon Cooperative, and chair of the CPS Advisory Board. "CPS is already returning great value to the industry it serves."

In opening York noted, "Our industry has come together as never before - not just to react to events, but to debate, initiate and lead changes that will improve the safety of our products and, by extension, improve public health." In his closing remarks, he acknowledged the generous contribution of the public and private partners that have provided critical funding support. "CPS is a shining example of the public and private sector working together toward a common goal: increasing the safety of fresh produce."

"The symposium reflected the efforts of so many dedicated stakeholders, and it is great to see the broad and sincere interest in our mutual challenge to raise consumer confidence in our healthy fresh fruits and vegetables," said Alec Leach, president of Taylor Farms, a founding partner of CPS and one of the symposium's sponsors.

Presenting researcher Dr. Xiuping Jiang of Clemson University also noted the unique nature of the symposium from a researcher's perspective, reporting, "This meeting is by far the most interactive meeting I have participated in. The format of the meeting created an environment to promote dialogue among the presenter, panel members, and meeting participants. I was able to meet so many people from the produce industry, government, and universities to discuss produce safety, and get information on the real-world practices and research needs in the area of composting."

Since Fernandez-Fenaroli was appointed executive director in March 2008, CPS has invested \$3.8 million in 24 produce-specific food safety research projects. The members of the center's technical committee -chaired by PMA Chief Science & Technology Officer Dr. Bob Whitaker and composed of representative from academia, industry, and government - will soon announce the results of the center's 2010 call for proposals.

"The center's Advisory Board and Technical Committee have come together to fill priority food safety information gaps and get information into the hands of the people who need it most," said Whitaker. "It has been tremendously exciting to join in this effort, and to be part of the interaction between industry and the research community that CPS is fostering."



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The June 23 symposium was sponsored by: platinum sponsor Produce Marketing Association (PMA); gold sponsors iGPS and Taylor Farms; and silver sponsors Castellini Group of Companies, Chiquita Brands International/Fresh Express, C.H. Robinson Worldwide Inc., Ecolab, Florida Agricultural Experiment Station at the University of Florida-IFAS, Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, The Giumarra Companies, Microsoft Dynamics and UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

### **About Center for Produce Safety**

The Center for Produce Safety is focused exclusively on providing the produce industry and government with open access to the actionable information needed to continually enhance the safety of produce. Established by public and private partnership at the University of California, Davis, CPS funds original research; has created a searchable database of global produce safety research; and is developing industry training and outreach programs. Initial funding for CPS was provided by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the University of California, Produce Marketing Association and Taylor Farms. For more information, visit <http://cps.ucdavis.edu>

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