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Throughout the past five years, the Center for Produce Safety has cultivated domestic and international research collaborations. The first of such efforts were partnerships through the U.S. - Israel Binational Agriculture Research and Development Fund and the California Leafy Greens Research Program. This year's Request for Proposals (RFP) has a diverse list of research partners. Through a series of articles, the various types of partnerships in the current RFP will be explored.

Center for Produce Safety Partners with California Commodity Groups

Davis, CA, March 7, 2013 – The Center for Produce Safety (CPS) has partnered with four California commodity groups representing cantaloupe, leafy greens and pistachios in the current call for research proposals. California Cantaloupe Advisory Board, California Leafy Greens Research Program, California Melon Research Board, and the California Pistachio Research Program have previously co-funded research with CPS. Collectively, these programs represent 450,900 acres of farmland and \$2.9 billion in farm value (California Agricultural Statistics, Crop Year 2011). Through the collaborative process with CPS, they have identified seven areas of interest that range from production to processing and co-management.

The California Leafy Greens Research Program was the first commodity organization to partner with CPS. This initial effort led to the development of the current CPS Partners in Research program. California's leafy greens industry has a long history of supporting agricultural research. Initially, research efforts were overseen by the Iceberg Lettuce Advisory Board, founded in 1973. That program expanded its scope to include leaf lettuces and changed its name to the California Lettuce Research Board (CLRB) in 1998. Ten years later, in March 2008, leafy greens handlers throughout the State of California voted to replace the CLRB with a new program, the California Leafy Greens Research Program, in order to expand research efforts to include spinach and spring mix while still maintaining research programs for iceberg and leaf lettuces. "By pooling our resources with CPS, we are seeing projects funded that we could never have financed on our own. There is the added advantage that CPS has visibility throughout the country, so the research results can be utilized by leafy greens producers well beyond California," commented Mary Zischke, Program CEO of the California Leafy Greens Research Program.

California Pistachio Research Board manager, Bob Klein stated, "The California Pistachio Research Board has appreciated the opportunity to partner with the Center for Produce Safety and, through CPS, with other commodities. With CPS, we have been able to scientifically assess the risk of foodborne pathogens in pistachios and, with the data generated, have been able to provide guidance to the industry. CPS programs and their expert reviewers have helped the pistachio industry assess hazards and develop science-based preventative controls. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with CPS to meet the needs of small and very small pistachio handlers as they work to not only reduce the risk of foodborne pathogens but also meet the regulatory requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act."

For over a decade, produce safety research has been supported by the California cantaloupe and melon industries. In 2004 the California Cantaloupe Advisory Board funded their first guidance document through the University of California, Davis, *Minimizing the Risk of Foodborne Illness Associated with Cantaloupe Production and Handling in California*. That document is currently being updated. Most recently, California cantaloupe handlers approved their first mandatory food safety program. The program includes a food safety certification program that requires inspection to a set of production and handling metrics.

For further information about cantaloupe, leafy greens and pistachio research priorities, the CPS Request for Research guidance document, and a complete list of CPS research priorities, please visit the Center for Produce Safety website, <http://cps.ucdavis.edu>.

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