



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Aug. 16, 2018

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

CPMA: Sue Lewis, slewis@cpma.ca, 613-226-4187 ext 225

GS1 US: Kaitlin Friedmann, kfriedmann@gs1us.org, 609-620-8074

PMA: Cassidy Taylor, ctaylor@pma.com, 302- 781-5852

United Fresh: Mary Coppola, mcoppola@unitedfresh.org, 202-303-3425

**PTI Leadership Council Encourages Further Industry Collaboration as
Focus on Traceability and Blockchain Grows**

The Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) Leadership Council convened recently to reinvigorate industry discussions as current events have put a new spotlight on traceability, including recent foodborne illness outbreak investigations, release in Canada of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations and projects exploring the benefits of blockchain for the food supply chain.

The PTI Leadership Council's discussions included the importance of ongoing industry collaboration on traceability, and being able to track produce's "last mile", said PTI Leadership Council Co-Chair Doug Grant of The Oppenheimer Group. "The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) remaine outbreak investigation, combined with an increasing number of fresh produce recalls, highlight the need to be able to trace our products through to the retail level. And having more buyers step up and implement PTI at distribution center and store level will also send a strong vote of confidence to our supply chain about the need for and value of traceability."

FDA Deputy Commissioner Stephen Ostroff has stated publicly on several occasions that PTI labels would have improved that agency's traceback investigation. "I'd like to think that [PTI labels] would've made the tracebacks that we were engaged in not only considerably easier but also considerably faster," Ostroff told [Valley Public Radio](#).

Other topics discussed by the council included a Walmart-led effort with IBM and other industry members working to harness blockchain digital ledger technology to provide a farm-to-store view of the food supply chain. A pilot test traced fresh-cut mangoes back to their source in seconds rather than days. The Walmart blockchain project also leverages global GS1 Standards – the same foundation PTI labeling requirements are based on for case-level traceability.

Industry progress to implement the voluntary PTI has slowed as the supply chain awaits implementing regulations for both the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act and, prior to their recent release, Canada's Safe Food for Canadians Regulations. Recognizing that FDA's limited authority means industry must take the lead in meeting the demands of the marketplace, PMA and United Fresh have both urged FDA to leverage PTI as it builds traceability regulations.

PTI's four founding organizations continue to collaborate on PTI traceability best practices, and on blockchain in general. United Fresh Produce Association's (United Fresh) Jennifer McEntire, Ph.D., is chairing the Leafy Greens Task Force traceability work group; Produce Marketing Association's Ed Treacy

and Canadian Produce Marketing Association's Jeff Hall and Jane Proctor are also on the work group. McEntire, Treacy and GS1 US's Angela Fernandez sit on the Global Food Traceability Center's advisory board.

In addition to providing enhanced traceability capability, companies implementing PTI also report a range of other business benefits, including money-saving efficiencies in inventory management, recordkeeping and other business operations. "PTI can be a smart investment," said Grant.

The Leadership Council, representing 33 industry stakeholders, gathered on June 27 during United Fresh's annual convention in Chicago, Illinois.

In addition, council members welcomed Julie McGill, FoodLogiQ director of implementation, as the PTI Technology Working Group's new co-chair, and thanked outgoing co-chair Andy Kennedy for his service. Kennedy was named interim director of the Global Food Traceability Center in March. He co-founded and is an advisor and board member of FoodLogiQ, a traceability solution provider.

"While we very much appreciate Andy's contributions to this group, having him at the Global Food Traceability Center is best for industry traceability's big picture," said Grant.

About PTI

The Produce Traceability Initiative, sponsored by Canadian Produce Marketing Association, GS1 US, Produce Marketing Association and United Fresh Produce Association, is designed to help the fresh produce industry to maximize the effectiveness of current traceback procedures, while developing a standardized industry approach to enhance the speed and efficiency of traceability systems for the future. The PTI's bold vision outlines a course of action to achieve supply chain-wide adoption of electronic traceability of every case of produce. For more information, visit www.producetraceability.org.

About Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA)

Based in Ottawa, Ontario, CPMA is a not-for-profit organization that represents a diverse membership made up of every segment of the produce industry supply chain who are responsible for 90% of the fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada. CPMA is fortunate to represent a sector that is both a significant economic driver for communities and that also improves the health and productivity of Canadians.

About GS1 US

GS1 US®, a member of GS1® global, is a not-for-profit information standards organization that facilitates industry collaboration to help improve supply chain visibility and efficiency through the use of GS1 Standards, the most widely-used supply chain standards system in the world. Nearly 300,000 businesses in 25 industries rely on GS1 US for trading partner collaboration that optimizes their supply chains, drives cost performance and revenue growth while also enabling regulatory compliance. They achieve these benefits through solutions based on GS1 global unique numbering and identification systems, barcodes, Electronic Product Code-based RFID, data synchronization, and electronic information exchange. GS1 US also manages the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code® (UNSPSC®). www.gs1us.org

About Produce Marketing Association (PMA)

Produce Marketing Association is the leading trade association representing companies from every segment of the global produce and floral supply chain. PMA helps members grow by providing connections that expand business opportunities and increase sales and consumption. For more information, visit www.pma.com.

About United Fresh Produce Association (United Fresh)

Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association brings together companies across every segment of the fresh produce supply chain, including growers, shippers, fresh cut processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations.

We empower industry leaders to shape sound government policy. We deliver the resources and expertise companies need to succeed in managing complex business and technical issues. We provide the training and development individuals need to advance their careers in produce. Through these endeavors, we unite our industry with a common purpose – to build long-term value for our members and grow produce consumption. For more information, visit www.unitedfresh.org.

###