

It's time for a closer look at food safety: Canadian Produce Marketing Association launches the Canadian Food Safety Fund to support food safety research and projects

01/22/2018 (Ottawa, ON) - As the voice of the produce industry in Canada, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) has identified food safety as a top priority to ensure the ongoing viability and growth of the fresh produce sector in Canada. Understanding that a food safety incident in one commodity group or segment could have devastating repercussions throughout the industry, CPMA is proud to launch the Canadian Food Safety Fund (CFSF).

"We actively recognized the need for ongoing Canadian-focused research and education in the areas of pathogens, regulatory changes and best practices so members can stay at the forefront of food safety in Canada," states Ron Lemaire, CPMA President. "We saw a unique opportunity to help support research projects that would typically be cost-prohibitive to many of the smaller companies that make up our membership. The Fund will therefore facilitate and disseminate the important work, current and future, occurring in the produce industry."

The CFSF's main goals are to support vital, Canadian-focused, food safety research; to develop educational programs and key information for CPMA members on existing and emerging food safety challenges; and to increase government outreach, including in the U.S. and Mexico, to address food safety issues for CPMA members.

Through the CFSF, CPMA members can be confident that their organization is committed to continuous improvement within the Canadian food safety system. Members will be able to suggest or initiate commodity specific projects to address opportunities or challenges faced by their businesses; contribute to the overall body of scientific knowledge which, in turn, will result in the development of new, more efficient, more economical practices within the industry; and seek out the advice of CPMA's new food safety expert, Jeff Hall.

"CPMA is already working with academia, governments, and other associations to move these goals forward," adds Hall. "A part of our mandate is to provide members with information, through education, research or other projects, on food safety and related issues. We're committed to partnering with a broad base to ensure that we create a body of research that will contribute to the long term sustainability of the industry."

As a part of this renewed food safety focus, CPMA will be hosting a series of information sessions on the upcoming Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) and the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) which is now in force. These sessions are available free to CPMA members and media and will take place in January and February 2018 in select Canadian and US locations. For more information on the CFSF and the ongoing initiatives to strengthen Canadian knowledge in food safety, please visit www.cpma.ca/foodsafety.

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About the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA):

Based in Ottawa, Ontario, CPMA is a not-for-profit organization that represents a diverse membership made of 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.