

The Boards of Directors of the Produce Marketing Association (PMA) and United Fresh Produce Association (United Fresh) have reached an Agreement in Principle to create a 'new global trade association'.

They say the new association will combine their resources and expertise to enhance member services, increase advocacy before government and the public, help members grow their businesses, and drive consumption of fresh produce and demand for floral products as a vital cornerstone of public health.

The two associations will continue to operate as independent organizations through 2021, with the new association to be launched Jan. 1, 2022.

“This Agreement reflects the ongoing commitment of both associations to deliver the highest level of value to members,” said Board Chairs Michael Muzyk of United Fresh and Dwight Ferguson of PMA.

“Looking ahead, we believe we can accomplish that goal better together building on the synergies and experience of our expert staffs, complementary education programs and member services, and a stronger voice in advocating for our industries,” said Muzyk and Ferguson.

Over the past several months, PMA CEO Cathy Burns and United Fresh CEO Tom Stenzel have worked with a group of Board leaders from each association to develop the strategic commitments for the new association that serves as the core of the Agreement in Principle.

- Commitment to serve all sectors of the global fresh produce and floral supply chains, growing their global membership and participation.
- Commitment to government advocacy and leadership to build and maintain a positive business climate in the United States and the North American market so critical to their members’ success.
- Commitment to global engagement with international bodies and allied organizations to promote free and fair trade, international harmonization of standards, and worldwide growth in consumption.
- Commitment to providing expertise and business solutions in food safety, new technology, supply chain management, sustainability, leadership and talent development, business operations, marketing and more.
- Commitment to bringing all sectors of their diverse supply chain together to better understand their interconnections and support efficiency and profitability throughout the chain.

- Commitment to enhance business-to-business sales and marketing connections across the produce and floral supply chains.
- Commitment to demand creation to inspire consumers to embrace produce and floral products as essential parts of their lives, while increasing profitable sales of members' products.

The new association will be led jointly by Burns and Stenzel as Co-CEOs throughout 2022. After that time, Burns will become the sole CEO.

“Through my 28 years of service to our industry, I have long recognized the potential synergies of our groups building something powerful together,” Stenzel said.

“It is gratifying to me several years before my retirement to find a strong and committed partner in Cathy who also believes in this shared vision. I’m looking forward to launching this new organization together, setting the stage to enhance member value while driving greater produce consumption in the years ahead.”

“By joining forces, we will continue to support our members with the services, insights, and connections they seek to grow their businesses while ensuring our role and voice as an industry has an even greater impact,” Burns said.

“Tom has been a great partner, and I truly appreciate his deep history, knowledge, and care for our industry. We, along with our talented teams, look forward to leveraging our strengths to serve our diverse and complex supply chain. I am so proud and honored to serve the produce and floral community at such a pivotal time in our history.”

Over the coming months, Burns and Stenzel will work with their staff teams and Board leaders to build out the new organization. Concurrently, the two associations will begin sharing their expertise and promoting participation in each other’s events and programs. It is anticipated that the volunteer leadership, governance and membership structure, and 2022 business plan for the new association will be in place and shared with the membership in Fall 2021.