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United Fresh announces Class Two of Produce Safety Immersion Program

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United Fresh Produce Association announced the Class Two Fellows of the Produce Safety Immersion Program, sponsored by Renaissance Food Group at the gold level and Ecolab as a silver sponsor. The 12 fellows will begin their journey virtually during a kickoff meeting later this month.

“We’re thrilled to welcome class two of the Produce Safety Immersion Program as they begin their journey as produce safety professionals,” said Jennifer McEntire, vice president of food safety at United Fresh. “We successfully adapted class one’s program and are excited to take what we learned to effectively build the technical capacity, critical thinking skills, and leadership attributes of this next class through a virtual format.”

The program combines a variety of approaches, including formal webinars, informal networking, technical seminars, group work, individual projects, and problem-solving exercises, combined with mentorship. Four highly-skilled produce safety professionals will serve as mentors to the program fellows and will accompany them at each meeting, including:

Class Two Fellows include:

- Kelsey Adams, Taylor Farms – Texas, Dallas
- Abraham Cardenas, Taylor Farms Fresh Vegetables, Salinas, CA
- Jordan DeVries, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Grand Rapids, MI
- Isabel Gomez-Garcia, Walther P. Rawl & Sons Inc., Pelion, SC
- Hilal Kasapoglu, Taylor Farms Inc., North Kingtown, RI
- Kaylie Lemon, Curation Foods, Santa Maria, CA
- Mike Lepera, Mucci Farms, Kingsville, ON
- Jose Morales, Dole Fresh Vegetables Inc., Salinas, CA
- Alex Morales, Jr., Prima Wawona, Reedley, CA
- LaTaunya Tillman, Driscoll's, Tampa, FL
- Mari Villegas, Heinzen Manufacturing International, Gilroy, CA
- Bristol Wells, Highland Ag Solutions, Mulberry, FL

Early-to-mid career professionals with less than five years' experience in produce safety were evaluated by members of the United Fresh Food Safety Council Steering Committee based on their backgrounds, roles in the industry, career aspirations, and recommendations. These budding produce safety professionals will be coached by the following mentors:

- Suresh DeCosta, director of food safety, North America and Latin America, Lipman Family Farms
- Natalie Dyenson, vice president, food safety and quality, Dole Food Co.
- Sergio Nieto-Montenegro, president, Food Safety Consulting & Training Solutions LLC
- Walter Ram, vice president of food safety, Guimarra Cos.

Several United Fresh members, including Drew McDonald, Taylor Farms; Mayda Sotomayor-Kirk, Seald Sweet International/Greenyard USA; and Michelle Danyluk, University of Florida shared their knowledge and experiences with class one. United Fresh invites interested members to reach out if they would like to support class two in this fashion. For more information about the program, contact Katie McGowan, United Fresh's Food Safety Coordinator, at 202-303-3402 or kmcgowan@unitedfresh.org.

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