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## **Dole gives \$750K to Center for Produce Safety**

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Dole Food Co. Vice President Food Safety and Quality Natalie Dyenson is frank about the two-sided coin that motivated her company to contribute \$750,000 to Center for Produce Safety's new capital fundraising campaign: much is at stake, and much can also be gained.



Natalie Dyenson

“The produce industry has been challenged by a series of food-safety issues the past few years,” she said. “Food safety isn’t something that affects only this grower or that grower – it affects every grower, it affects every company, and most importantly it affects every consumer. Produce is a healthy option with many health benefits and as an industry we need to ensure that we are producing the safest possible food and investing and following the science is the way for us to do that.”

Dyenson also stressed much can be gained from CPS’s produce-centric work – not just by Dole, but by the industry in general.

“Selfishly, Dole is a really big, well-known brand, and we want to protect it. We have implemented a lot of [CPS] research in our own program,” she said. “But we also want to protect this industry that is a big part of our identity. The work product that comes out of CPS’s research program is really important for the industry. We want to see that continue, for everyone in our industry.”

Dole’s contribution is the company’s second to a Center for Produce Safety capital campaign; it donated \$500,000 to CPS’s 2015 campaign. Dyenson also serves on CPS’s board of directors.

CPS launched its latest campaign publicly in January. To date, the center has raised nearly \$6 million toward a \$15 million goal to fund its work for the next five years. CPS finances produce-specific food safety research, then transfers those research learnings to industry, government and other stakeholders. Most of the research projects it funds are completed within one year.

Each year, Dole sends a delegation to CPS’s Research Symposium to gather learnings to inform the company’s food safety program. Those delegates transfer that knowledge to the rest of Dole’s food safety team, where learnings are implemented throughout Dole’s food-safety program, and to the company’s management chain. Dole also monitors for technology emerging from CPS research, and evaluates whether that tech can be implemented or adapted to Dole’s operations.

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Dyenson noted that CPS currently has research under way that is designed to answer some of the produce industry's top food-safety questions, from evaluating the effectiveness of various agricultural water treatments and Listeria controls, to assessing the emerging threat of Cyclospora.

"We're excited about the prospects of some of the projects coming up, and what they will mean for the industry," she said.

Dyenson also noted how CPS has already helped to change the conversation about fresh produce food safety. "CPS has filled a very important need for the industry," she said. "It created a forum for industry, regulatory and academia to come together to identify and conduct very targeted and focused research that fills a need for industry, and then provides vehicles for getting that information out.

"I don't think that food safety in the produce space would have advanced as much as it has had CPS not been around," Dyenson said.

Dole's food-safety lead called on other produce industry companies, large and small, to contribute to Center for Produce Safety to enhance fresh produce food safety.

"Better food safety is better business," Dyenson said. "We all need to participate in finding solutions."

As of April 30, [these companies](#) have generously contributed to CPS's new fundraising campaign.

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