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OPS to present The Future of Grocery Retailing

On the heels of a global pandemic, much has changed over the past two years in the world of grocery retailing, and with it the various dynamics of what may lie ahead for the fresh produce industry. To discuss the future of grocery retail and its impact on fresh produce, a pair of leaders from one of the nation's most progressive grocery chains and the former co-CEO of the organization have been confirmed as panelists for a keynote presentation at [Organic Produce Summit](#) 2022, this July in Monterey, CA.

This engaging conversation, *The Future of Grocery Retailing*, will be moderated by Walter Robb, principal of Stonewall Robb Advisors, senior executive partner at S2G Ventures, and former co-CEO of Whole Foods. Joining the conversation will be Karen Christensen, senior vice president of merchandising for perishables for Whole Foods, and Madhavi Reese, vice president of marketing for Whole Foods. Featuring candid commentary, this insightful and informative conversation between a trio of respected industry leaders will discuss how Whole Foods is addressing supply chain issues, the role of technology and e-commerce, consumer shopping behavior, new formats, and innovations in grocery retailing.

The three Whole Foods leaders have been recognized by the industry for their life-long devotion to healthy food and promoting it to consumers across the country. As an investor, mentor and advisor to the next generation of U.S. food companies, Robb has a long and varied entrepreneurial history, ranging from natural food retailer to farmer to consultant. He joined Whole Foods Market in 1991 and in 2010 was named co-CEO, at which time he joined the Whole Foods Market board of directors. Christensen is a true food visionary who previously served as regional vice president of the Whole Foods Northern California region. Reese spent 18 years working on the agency side before joining Whole Foods as vice president of brand strategy in 2017.

“The world of grocery retail has evolved significantly over the past two-plus years, as consumer demand for a seamless shopping experience continues to create opportunities for retailers to grow their business. To have leadership from Whole Foods — consistently recognized as one of the nation's most reputable and progressive retailers — share their thoughts on the future of our industry is something OPS attendees will not want to miss,” said Susan Canales, president of Organic Produce Summit.

OPS 2022 is a two-day event specifically designed to bring together organic fresh produce growers, shippers, and processors with retail and buying organizations from across North America. The sixth annual event will be held July 13-14 at the Monterey Conference Center.

The Future of Grocery Retailing is the third keynote announcement for OPS 2022. In the first keynote, John Ruane, senior vice president and chief omnichannel merchandising officer for The Giant Co., will discuss *The Growth of Omnichannel Merchandising That's Driving Retail Sales* and how consumers will spend more and become more loyal to a brand with an effective omnichannel merchandising and marketing program. In the second keynote, *Empowering the World to Stop Ocean Plastic*, David Katz, founder of Plastic Bank, will share how the world's most progressive companies are stewarding the collection of ocean-bound plastic waste and empowering communities to thrive.

In addition to the keynote presentations, a series of engaging and relevant ed sessions round out the

OPS 2022 educational program. Included in the OPS program are a pair of educational sessions devoted to CEA, an exploration of regenerative agriculture, branded vs. private label organic offerings, sustainability across the supply chain, organic sales data (from the first half of 2022), and the impact of inflation on consumer purchasing behavior.

OPS 2022 also includes a selection of field tours for qualified retailers and buyers, a gala opening night reception, and a sold-out trade show floor featuring over 150 producers and processors of organic fresh produce from across North America and the globe.

More information will be made available in the coming weeks as the event's program becomes finalized. Registration to attend OPS 2022 is available at www.organicproducesummit.com.

Photo: Walter Robb, Karen Christensen and Madhavi Reese.

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