



# The Foodservice Conference

INTERNATIONAL  
**FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION**

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**IFPA Foodservice Conference drops the mic in Monterey**

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The [International Fresh Produce Association](#) welcomed produce suppliers, foodservice innovators, chefs, menu planners and others to the first Foodservice Conference as a part of the IFPA banner (41st in Monterey). With a record high of almost 2000 registered attendees, the Foodservice Conference illustrated that demand is strong for foodservice and produce connections.

“Foodservice and produce took over Monterey Bay and it was exciting to see and hear the energy and intention in every conversation I’ve had this week,” said IFPA CEO Cathy Burns. “The foodservice segment, while one of the most disrupted segments since the beginning of the pandemic, has also proven to be incredibly resilient, creative and innovative. This is exactly the energy we need because our industry is committed not just to coming back, but transforming the way we feed the world to create a vibrant future for all. This community is committed to getting more fruits and vegetables on plates and menus in every restaurant, school, hotel, hospital, stadium and every other place food is served around the world.”

The conference kicked off on Thursday, with a number of small group experiences including the K-12 Foodservice Forum. With almost 100 K-12 professionals registered from some of the largest school districts in the country, Foodservice Forum attendees traveled to local farms to learn more about how the produce they serve kids around the U.S. is grown and processed. Additionally, suppliers were able to connect with their customers in Buyer Sourcing Meetings, which let them meet potential new partners in a low-pressure environment followed by a networking lunch.

General Session speaker Robert Irvine, a Food Network star, world class chef and philanthropist, led attendees with a lively discussion about changing the trajectory of how we eat. Thursday General Session speakers Bruce Taylor, CEO of Taylor Farms; Michel Nischan, founder and chairman of Wholesome Wave; and Vincent Huynh, culinary director at Agricole Hospitality; also shared their personal insights on how they’re promoting produce from their place on the supply chain. The general session also featured recognition of the Produce Excellence in Foodservice Award winners who can be found [here](#).

“From new audience segments to the new products on the show floor, the talk of Foodservice Conference was about new channels and opportunities,” said Lauren M. Scott, IFPA chief strategy officer. “When we’re considering the role and responsibility that we have in foodservice, to expose people to new foods and flavors and to make produce irresistible to consumers, that commitment to growing our impact is key. Thank you to all who came and participated by sharing an idea, by meeting someone new, and overall, by sharing in the belief that the produce and foodservice industries can change the world — one menu, one dish, and one consumer at a time.”

Dubbed the best five-and-a-half hours in produce, the Foodservice Conference Expo served as the perfect opportunity for foodservice operators and other buyers to meet with industry representatives with the best products, services and innovations. The buyer audience attended in full force, and with over 900 registered buyers from over 250 companies, the buyer to supplier ratio was of almost one to one. Also on the show floor, IFPA recognized the winners of the expo awards, which included Best of Show Winner Natalie’s Orchid Island Juice Co; Best of Show Runner Up Duda Farm Fresh Foods; and Best Product Promo winner Rijk Zwaan for its new Red Vein Arugula.

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Closing the program was the networking reception and the Wine for a Cause Wine Auction benefiting Brighter Bites. Brighter Bites is celebrating its 10th birthday this year, and all proceeds from the wine auction will be used to fund Brighter Bites programming.

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