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IFPA honors DNO Produce

The [International Fresh Produce Association](#) announced DNO Produce as the 2022 Industry Advocate of the Year Award recipient. The award was given at The Washington Conference and was featured in the breakfast general session. It recognizes one IFPA member company each year that serves as an advocate for the entire produce industry.

“We are humbled and honored to receive the Industry Advocate of the Year Award this year. We are committed to advocacy because our work and our produce is changing the trajectory of global human health,” said Alex DiNovo, president and CEO of DNO Produce. “That is something that everyone in our industry should be proud to be a part of. Our livelihood is genuinely a good thing that creates a more vibrant and healthier world.”

DNO Produce has been an active and engaged advocate for many years but has demonstrated outstanding support over the past year in particular. In addition to having its team members engaged with grassroots and industry public policy conferences each year, DNO also had an impressive list of engagements with U.S. representatives and policy makers including:

- In July of 2022, DiNovo served as an advocate through the American Business Immigration Coalition to appeal to lawmakers to address the need for agricultural immigration reform.
- In August of 2022, DNO hosted Senior Legislative Assistant for Agriculture from the office of Senator Brown, providing a tour of its wholesale operations and fresh-cut processing facility. During this time, DNO shared policy recommendations regarding government procurement, nutrition programs and the farm bill.
- In September of 2021, DiNovo and Director of Communications and Public Affairs Marissa Dake were selected to attend a small group meeting with USDA Under Secretary for Food and Nutrition Stacy Dean and USDA Senior Advisor Nutrition Kumar Chandran. In this meeting they focused on the Farmers to Families Food Box Program, Produce Prescriptions and more.
- DiNovo has also provided his personal voice by crafting numerous articles to encourage industry involved in government relations advocacy to increase consumption and improve produce availability in school meal programs among other topics.

“DNO has prioritized proactively reaching out to their members of Congress throughout the year — not simply when something is needed,” said IFPA’s Vice President of Nutrition and Health Mollie Van Lieu. “This is a textbook example of effective engagement and I’m thrilled to see DNO and Alex’s team recognized for their hard work. Alex and DNO have been a trusted and responsive resource throughout many of the less glamorous, but essential, parts of policy work, including weighing in on technicalities of programs and policies. It is work that requires constant attention and DNO has been unwavering in their advocacy work on behalf of the industry.”

DNO Produce has been an especially vocal advocate for child nutrition policies that re providing school children with greater access to fresh produce on a daily basis. Not only have DNO Produce and DiNovo participated in education and support to representatives in Washington, but they have also offered invaluable support and advice for school nutrition leaders.

“Over the last two years, as distributors continued to experience challenges with everything from

labor, gas, freight rates and more, Alex and his team at DNO Produce was always willing to lend their time to support the association's programs and virtual networking opportunities," said Andrew Marshall, who leads IFPA's engagement with the wholesaler-distributor sector and K-12 school foodservice operators. "DNO Produce is an example of a company that's comfortable putting on their 'industry hat' and looking for ways to grow business and collaborations for all companies in the sector. Alex is passionate about increasing children's consumption of fresh fruits and veggies, and he's willing to put his time, energy, and treasure into willing his vision into reality."

"Alex, and particularly Marissa Dake, have helped DNO find ways to lend their voice to issues like immigration, which have typically been the focus of the grower-shipper portion of the industry. By providing the perspective of the wholesaler-distributor sector, they have given a whole new perspective of the impact of this issue, and why Congress needs to address our labor challenges," said John Hollay, director of labor/workforce.

Photo: IFPA's Robert Guenther with Alex DiNovo, Deandra Barnett, Vilces Garcia and Marissa Dake of DNO Produce.

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