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OPS 2023 to look at the value of sustainability compliance

As more retail organizations request sustainability information from their suppliers, opportunities exist to bring buyers and producers together using survey data to improve their respective operations. The Value of Sustainability Compliance, an educational session at [Organic Produce Summit 2023](#), will explore the benefits of sustainability reporting and how it is impacting buying decisions.

With consumers seeking more sustainability information than ever and retailers collecting data from suppliers to market the sustainability of their products, the amount of information requested via buyer surveys can be overwhelming and at times burdensome. The Value of Sustainability Compliance will explore why retailers are asking for this information, how suppliers can utilize it to improve their operation, and how the two sides can better align their sustainability efforts.

Moderated by Kieran Ficken McNeice, director of sustainability programs at Measure to Improve, panelists for the session include Dana Brennan, vice president of external affairs and corporate responsibility at Grimmway Farms; Laura Himes, senior merchandising director at Walmart; and John McKeon, director of organic integrity and compliance at Taylor Farms.

“When the fresh produce industry started receiving buyer surveys from large retailers, there was hesitation, and the value of reporting was unclear. Today, they have become a cost of doing business,” said Nikki Cossio, founder and CEO of Measure to Improve. “While there is a cost in responding to buyer surveys, that doesn’t mean they have no value. If leveraged properly, buyer surveys are a great tool to start looking at your organization from a sustainability perspective or a foundation for building a larger sustainability program.”

Organic Produce Summit 2023 is a two-day event specifically designed to bring together organic fresh produce growers, shippers, and processors with retailers and buying organizations from across North America. The seventh annual event will be held July 12-13 in Monterey, CA.

The Value of Sustainability Compliance is the fourth of five sessions announced for OPS 2023. Additionally, OPS attendees will hear a pair of keynote presentations, including The Retailer Roundtable. OPS 2023 will also include a selection of field tours for retailers and buyers, a gala opening night reception and a sold-out trade show floor featuring over 170 producers and processors of organic fresh produce from across North America and the globe. Additionally, several new activities are planned for OPS attendees and will be announced in the coming weeks.

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