



The Foodservice Conference

INTERNATIONAL
FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION

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Energy builds for IFPA Foodservice Conference as expo sells out

June 21, 2023

The produce and foodservice industries will unite to share ideas, products and services to advance consumption of fresh produce at The Foodservice Conference. The event, from the [International Fresh Produce Association](#), will take place July 27-28 in Monterey, CA. It features thought leadership, opportunities to connect and an expo that is among the most important five-and-a-half hours in produce foodservice.

The expo sold out mid-June, ensuring that attendees will have access to innovative products and services to enhance their produce and plant-forward offerings. The 192 exhibitors will see buyers from all formats — distributors, operators, K-12 school foodservice pros, chefs, menu developers and retail foodservice buyers. As of mid-June, buyer registration had topped 600, and the event boasts a one-to-one buyer-seller ratio.

“For me, the opportunity to bring members together to connect and do business is one of the bedrock reasons IFPA exists,” said IFPA CEO Cathy Burns. “The energy we feel for this conference is tangible — even six weeks out. I credit our conference volunteers for producing an event that so clearly meets the needs and aspirations of our members and this industry.”

Though the expo has sold out, there are additional opportunities for companies to gain visibility at the conference, including an expo wait list, sponsorships and Buyer Sourcing Meetings, according to Joe Watson, IFPA vice president of retail, wholesale, foodservice membership.

The one-to-one buyer-supplier ratio is a key draw for this event. “Having a buyer for every supplier at a conference is rare in our industry,” he said. “Nowhere else do you come close to that. Essentially, there’s a buyer around every corner. Even suppliers who are not yet exhibitors will find buyer connections they can’t get anywhere else. So I would encourage anyone who supplies produce or supporting services to register and attend this unique event.

“What stands out for me is the breadth of foodservice operations represented at the conference,” Watson said. “You expect distributors, operators, and menu planners — and they are coming. But we also have a strong cadre of K-12 school foodservice pros who are keeping our kids healthy and building lifelong preferences for fresh produce. These large-volume purchasers are coming to see the latest products, visit fields and production facilities, and connect with suppliers so they can offer kids the kinds of produce items they see in restaurants or other out-of-home eating places. Plus, we have retail foodservice buyers coming as they continually up their game for shoppers seeking at-home meal solutions.”

Watson called the conference a one-stop shop for attendees to be inspired by new ideas and innovations. “Conference participants connect with peers and key influencers across the entire foodservice supply chain, all in one place, at one time,” he said. “They discover trends and gather and share insights to help move their businesses forward.”

In addition to the expo, the conference features an education program with chefs and industry thought leaders who will discuss trends, expectations, sustainability and diversity. Participants will also enjoy many networking opportunities during meals and receptions, including the highly popular

Women's Fresh Perspectives Reception (additional ticket required).

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