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Braga Fresh CEO Rod Braga named OGS 2023 Grower of the Year

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The [Organic Grower Summit](#) presented by Western Growers and OPN will honor longtime organic grower Rod Braga as the recipient of the sixth annual Grower of the Year Award. Braga, president and CEO of Braga Fresh, was selected based on his ongoing commitment and dedication to excellence in organic production, organic industry leadership, and innovation.

The Grower of the Year Award, sponsored by AGCO, will be presented to Braga as part of the keynote presentation at the Organic Grower Summit Nov. 29-30 in Monterey, CA. The Grower of the Year presentation is part of an extensive educational program designed to inform and engage organic producers and their service providers and supply chain partners.

“We are honored to present the annual Grower of the Year award to Rod Braga — truly a grower’s grower,” said Matt Seeley, CEO of Organic Produce Network. “His decades-long work exemplifies what hardworking, passionate organic farming means to the success of his family farm and to California agriculture. Rod has worked tirelessly to encourage natural methods for pest control, water conservation, and always found ways to share information about those practices with other organic farmers. His dedication to the environment and community is what makes the organic sector special and makes him so deserving of the title of Grower of the Year.”

Braga grew up in his family’s multigenerational farming business, starting his first job on the home ranch when he was 8. After graduating from Saint Mary’s College of California with a degree in business administration, he joined the company now known as Braga Fresh full time in 1990. Over the years, he’s helped it expand into today’s operation, which features multiple large-scale growing, processing, and shipping locations in California.

A leader in organic produce production, Braga is a board member of the Western Growers Association and former board member of the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California; he was a founding board member of Pacific Valley Bank in Monterey County; and former board member of Natividad Hospital in Salinas.

The Grower of the Year Award will be presented to Braga by Cale Sledge, regional sales director for AGCO. Previous winners of the award have been Jeff Huckaby, CEO of Grimmway Farms (2022); Vic Smith, CEO of JV Smith Co. (2021); the Lundberg Family (2019); Thaddeus Barsotti of Capay Organic (2018); and Vernon Peterson of Peterson Family Farms (2017).

The sixth annual OGS is designed to provide information vital to organic growers and producers, including an overview of the opportunities and challenges in the production of organic fresh food.

In addition to the annual Grower of the Year award, the other keynote presentation at OGS 2023 will be Grower Roundtable: The State of Organic Growing. Panelists for the keynote roundtable include leadership from three prominent organic companies, who will be announced later this month.

Other educational sessions slated for OGS 2023 include:

- SOE Deadline Looms—Are You Ready?
- Understanding Evolving Production Challenges for Organic Growers
- Regenerative—What Does it Mean for Organic?
- Unlocking the Value of AI on the Digital Farming Journey
- Meet the Ag Sharks
- Roadmap to a Sustainable Pest Management Future for Organics
- How Organic Growers Are Using Ag Tech: Obstacles & Opportunities

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