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PMA and United are again in merger talks

By TIM LINDEN

ATLANTA — The boards of directors of the Produce Marketing Association and the United Fresh Produce Association voted within the last 10 days to continue discussions that could lead to a merger of the two associations.

Responding to an inquiry from *The Produce News*, the co-chairmen of the two associations' joint task force confirmed that two meetings have been held to discuss how the organizations can work together, and those meetings will continue.

Michael O'Brien, who has been chairman of the board of PMA for the past year and is vice president of produce and floral at Schnuck Markets Inc. in St. Louis, discussed the situation with *The Produce News* Monday, Oct. 17, after developing a joint statement with his task force co-chairman, Steffanie Smith, who is the immediate past chairman of the board of United Fresh and who is also the chief executive officer of River

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Industry needs to enhance flavor, says PMA president

By TIM LINDEN

ATLANTA — Developing a better flavor profile for fruits and vegetables has to be "job one" for the industry, according to Bryan Silbermann, president and chief executive officer of the Produce Marketing Association.

Giving his annual state-of-the-industry address Oct. 15 during the four-day convention, here, Mr. Silbermann touched on a wide range of topics, including the rebranding of his organization as well as the digital revolution and the industry's current food-safety crisis.

The 2011 Fresh Summit easily lived up to its reputation of being the largest produce industry trade show in the United States, as more than 18,000 convention-goers from 67 countries descended upon Atlanta Oct. 14-17. The exhibit hall featured more than



Dave Austin, Tim Hallows and John Patrick of Mission Produce chatted Oct. 15 with Rick Edwards, director of procurement for The Kroger Co., at the Produce Marketing Association's trade show Oct. 14-17 in Atlanta. The 2011 PMA Fresh Summit drew more than 18,000 attendees from 67 countries. Additional photos appear throughout the issue.

(Photo by Gordon M. Hochberg)

900 exhibitors in a cavernous space that seemingly stretched beyond the horizon.

As he surveyed the produce landscape in preparing this speech, Mr. Silbermann saw two big issues. He said that there is an "obvious shortcoming" in the flavor of some fruits and vegeta-

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INSIDE

New brand packs a punch

Fresh produce has always packed a punch, but never more so than now. State Street Produce, based in San Antonio, TX, announced during the Produce Marketing Association's Fresh Summit convention that it had partnered with world champion boxer, best-selling recording artist and Filipino Congressman Manny Pacquiao to launch a new label, "Pacquiao Produce," which began shipping to retail and foodservice in mid-October.



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PFK tops \$3.5m

The PFK Get Healthy, Give Hope spring 2011 campaign raised more than \$408,000 for children's hospitals across the country through the participation of some 40 grower-shippers and 16 retail partners, bringing the total cumulative donations to the program to \$3.55 million.

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Mission acquires half of Chilean avocado shipper

Mission Produce Inc. and Chile-based Cabilfrut inked a deal that transferred 50 percent ownership of the South American firm to the California organization. The agreement includes 50 percent ownership of Cabilfrut's packing and office facilities in Chile and several hundred acres of production. Mission has similar deals in Mexico and Peru, so the "Mission" brand now will be available from all three of the major avocado-producing countries.



Steve Barnard, president of Mission Produce, signing papers to finalize a deal to acquire half of Chile-based Cabilfrut.

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Salinas firms going co-op at 2012 Fresh Summit

At least eight grower-shippers headquartered in California's Salinas Valley will combine their booths at the Produce Marketing Association convention in 2012 and create a location-specific space. Lorri Koster, vice president of marketing and co-chairman of the board of Mann Packing Co. Inc. in Salinas, CA, who is spearheading the effort, said that business today is conducted much differently than it was in the past, and having a huge booth to negotiate a deal with an existing customer is no longer a necessity.

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'Cranberry Mix & MINGle' in NYC



Ocean Spray Cranberries Inc. celebrated the taste, health and heritage of the cranberry, as well as how to prepare and pair this popular fall fruit, with the debut of a pop-up restaurant inside a cranberry bog at New York City's Rockefeller Center Tuesday afternoon, Oct. 18. The grower-owned cooperative invited celebrity chef Ming Tsai to host this one-time-only public culinary experience, which it dubbed the 'Cranberry Mix & MINGle.' Thirty lucky guests enjoyed cranberry-infused drinks and appetizers amidst a 1,500-square-foot bog filled with 2,000 pounds of floating cranberries. Shown with Chef Ming (left) are two Ocean Spray growers, Adrienne Mollor of Kravitz Cranberries in Massachusetts and Bill Cutts of Cutts Bros. LLC in New Jersey.

(Photo by Gordon M. Hochberg)

'Unsanitary conditions' blamed for Listeria outbreak in cantaloupes

By TIM LINDEN

Unsanitary conditions at Jensen Farms in Holly, CO, have been cited as the probable cause of the *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreak that has sickened more than 125 people and resulted in at least 25 deaths.

As a result of the outbreak, which was traced back to Jensen Farms in early September and which led to a recall of the firm's cantaloupes, a multi-agency environmental review of the farm's growing, packing and cooling facilities was conducted Sept. 22-23.

In separate conference calls with both the media and the produce industry on Wednesday, Oct. 19, representatives from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention said that the review identified several unsanitary factors that "most likely contributed to the introduction, spread and growth of *Listeria monocytogenes* in the cantaloupes."

Those factors include a faulty facility

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Industry out in force at 2011 PMA Fresh Summit in Atlanta



Mark Masten, vice president of global sales and marketing for Paramount Farms, was excited about the recent launch of a consumer television advertising campaign for the company's pistachios. The 'Get Crackin'' campaign makes use of numerous pop-culture icons such as Angry Birds, Kermit the Frog and the Winklevoss twins in 15-second TV spots. Multiple layers of the three-year-old campaign, which include coordination with the Nov. 23 release of a new Muppet movie and Angry Birds in-game prizes, have proven to resonate with consumers, and the company has seen noteworthy sales growth.

(Photo by Daniel Jalil)

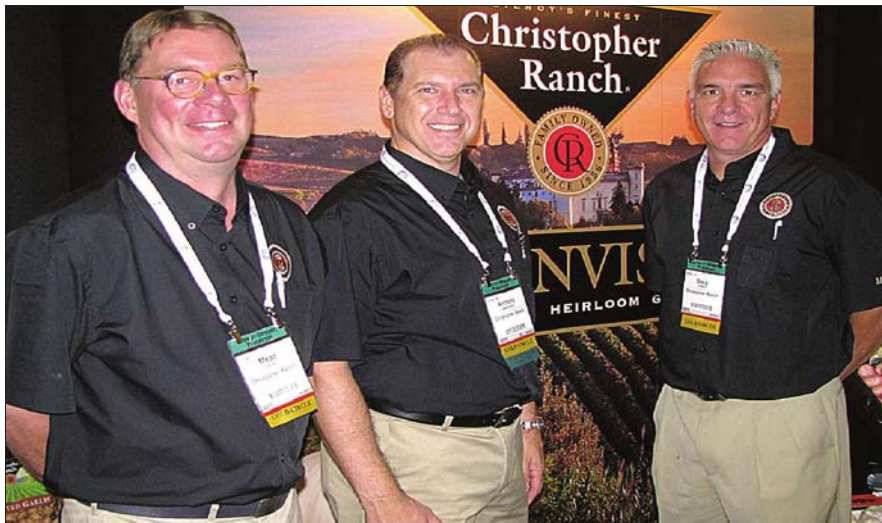


Dulcinea Farms LLC served Fresh Summit attendees items prepared with its products, including its Tuscan cantaloupe, while Kevin Leap and Bill Spidell, both in sales with the company, greeted many visitors to the booth from the retail segment.

(Photo by Daniel Jalil)



Mark Hanks and John Lazopoulos of DNE World Fruit Sales were promoting the firm's Spanish clementine program, with the first arrivals expected the first week of November. The quality is looking excellent due to the dry weather in the region where they are grown in Spain, according to Mr. Hanks, who added that U.S. retailers are very excited for the start of the deal after completing a very successful Chilean program. (Photo by John Grah)



Mead Payne, Anthony DeAngelis and Doug Urbach of Christopher Ranch, which was promoting the 'Monviso' brand of the company's heirloom garlic seed at the show.

(Photo by Gordon M. Hochberg)



Melissa Pehlke and Bill Martinelli of Natalie's Orchard Island Juice in Fort Pierce, FL, in the company's booth at Fresh Summit. (Photo by Chip Carter)