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IFPA and partners receive \$15m from USDA for Advancing Climate-Smart Pilot Projects

Washington D.C. and Newark, DE – International Fresh Produce Association has announced that the pilot program project they submitted with a group of partners has been selected by the USDA to receive funding. The pilot project, titled “A Vibrant Future”, will incentivize growers of specialty crops to adopt climate-smart production in order to establish a consumer-driven, climate-smart market for fruits and vegetables grown using climate-smart practices. The approximate funding ceiling for the project is \$15 million.

“IFPA applauds the USDA investment into all climate-smart projects and is especially motivated by USDA’s strong commitment to projects impacting specialty crops,” said IFPA Chief Science Officer Max Teplitski, PhD. “We are thrilled to see the ‘Vibrant Future’ project funded, as an investment into specialty crops is especially timely. This funding will allow us to ‘test-drive’ technologies that are climate-smart and also ensure financial sustainability of grower operations, develop marketing strategies to educate consumers on how fresh fruit, vegetable and floral industry contributes to alleviating the climate crisis and – importantly – gather data that will enable our industry to participate in the Green Economy.”

The IFPA-submitted pilot program was supported by several major partners, among them the University of Florida, CropTrak, Frehner-Jens Consulting, Clark McDowall Brand Architecture Company, Alcorn State University, Measure to Improve, LLC, Mississippi Small Farm and Agribusiness Center at Alcorn State, Alamo Farms, Bayer, Bland Farms, Bolthouse Farms, Calavo, Campbell Soup Company, Del-Monte, Driscoll’s, Limoneira, Monterey Pacific, Noble Produce Holdings, and Sun Pacific. IFPA will issue a broad industry-wide call for other interested partners to join the project.

IFPA is also an active partner of the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA), which represents more than 80 organizations from farmers to ranchers, agribusinesses, forest owners, state departments of agriculture and non-governmental organizations that support voluntary, incentive-based climate solutions.

“IFPA has been actively engaged as one of the members of the Steering Committee of FACA as we both recognize the need for bringing specialty crops to the table and ensure that our industry is part of conversations on climate-smart and carbon-smart innovations,” said Teplitski. “IFPA has long advocated that the federal investment into our industry’s R&D is long overdue, and we grateful to see an investment of this scale. We are excited to see that 15 projects aiming to develop climate/carbon-smart production practices for fruits, vegetables, and nuts are a significant category of investment in the USDA grants. IFPA is excited to work

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together with other grantees on serving the industry as we collectively navigate challenges associated with the changing climate”

IFPA will continue to provide updates to the industry on the progress of the pilot project, including ways the industry can participate in pursuing climate-smart practices. Attendees can hear more about the pilot program next at [The Washington Conference, September 26-28](#) where Teplitski will discuss climate-smart agriculture with a panel of experts.

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The International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) is the largest and most diverse international association serving the entire fresh produce and floral supply chain and the only to seamlessly integrate world-facing advocacy and industry-facing support. We exist to bring the industry together to create a vibrant future for all. We grow our member’s prosperity by conducting advocacy; connecting people and ideas; and offering guidance that allows us all to take action with purpose and confidence. While IFPA is built on the legacy of United Fresh and Produce Marketing Association, it is not just a combination. It is transformational. Recognizing the industry required an even more powerful and unified voice, the leaders of the former United Fresh and Produce Marketing Association chose not to merge, but rather to create an entirely new organization to supersede their organizations, effective January 1, 2022.