



IFPS FOCUSES ON INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30th, 2007 – Seven months into incorporation, the IFPS is focused on solutions for the international produce industry in areas which affect product identification, movement and safety.

On April 16th & 17th the IFPS met in the UK to examine key areas including industry standardized PLUs, the rapidly evolving GS1 DataBar (RSS-14), global guidelines for traceability and harmonization of GAPs. In addition to IFPS members, guests included Greg Rowe, GS1 Interim GS1 DataBar (RSS) Program Manager and Tim Watkins, Marketing Manager, Sinclair UK. Both gentlemen were on hand to provide information during discussions of the DataBar. “This is a critical time in the evolution and implementation of GS1 DataBar,” said Rowe. “Discussions with the IFPS, as a body representing many stakeholders in DataBar, are a tremendous help in GS1 outreach to industry.” After significant focus on DataBar and its role in produce identification, the IFPS Board agreed on a path forward which enables solutions which are standardized but have flexibility to meet all country-specific needs.

In addition to DataBar discussions, the IFPS examined means to expand the existing range of numbers open for PLU assignment. Since the IFPS PLUs have wide-spread international implementation, and are the agreed-to human readable number on a DataBar sticker, the IFPS built on recommendations from the North American based PEIB (Produce Electronic Identification Board) on the means for expansion. As with other issues, IFPS members will now begin consultation on expansion within the seven countries represented within the IFPS membership.

Traceability is another success story for the IFPS. Even before incorporation, those involved in the IFPS had begun consideration of the *CPMA/PMA Fresh Produce Traceability Guide to Implementation* as the basis for a global guideline for industry. With this meeting, the path forward was determined with the endorsement of the Guide. The IFPS will now approach the standards body, GS1, to expand efforts.

GAP harmonization, an issue at the forefront of IFPS efforts, was also on the agenda. “On behalf of our members, the FPC devotes a tremendous amount of effort to solutions which permit the smooth flow of products across borders and throughout supply chains,” noted Douglas Pattie, Fresh Produce Consortium and one of the founding IFPS members. “GAP is an area where harmonization amongst accepted requirements is crucial to maintain that flow, so we strongly support the efforts within the IFPS to bring the international industry closer to acceptable solutions for all.” During the meeting, members identified steps in this process including the starting point which is consideration of a report on this subject in development within Canadian industry.

“The first steps for an organization such as the IFPS are important ones and must demonstrate relevancy to members,” noted Jane Proctor, CPMA and IFPS Chair. “With the conclusion of our meeting we have begun steps to fulfil our mission on many important issues and with the support of our members, and expansion in the future, the entire industry will benefit from our efforts.”

Contacts: Please see the enclosed sheet for the contact in your area.

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