



2023 FRESH PRODUCE AND FLORAL PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Setting the Course for IFPA Advocacy in Our Nation's Capital

For 2023, the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) is building on the [success of 2022](#) by evaluating last year's advocacy actions and integrating feedback from the recent [member survey of policy priorities](#). IFPA's government relations team is setting the course for U.S. advocacy by developing this agenda with guidance from the Government Relations Council, outside partners, political leaders on capitol hill, and other interested stakeholders. The IFPA Board of Directors considered these recommendations in January 2023 and agree with the goals and action items included in this agenda.

Challenges and opportunities from all sectors of the fresh produce and floral industry are captured in the 2023 agenda. Important topics like supply chain and market competitiveness touch on such a wide array of issues that they are integrated throughout the agenda's priorities and actions. It is also inclusive of other IFPA policy and regulatory activities and reflects collaboration between government relations and other IFPA teams.

Taking on our Workforce Challenges

Access to an affordable and predictable workforce remains a priority for the entire fresh produce sector. While the 117th Congress focused on agriculture labor, we know workforce needs extend far beyond the field and up the supply chain to packers, wholesalers, retailers, and the businesses that connect us like transportation and suppliers.

Last year, Congress made considerable progress towards addressing farm worker issues, but came up short during the final consideration of legislative activity in December. The makeup of 118th Congress is quite different than last year, but there are signs of opportunity in this space. Republican champions in the House have signaled they are not giving up and Senate leaders who pushed the Affordable and Secure Food Act are aiming for reintroduction this year. Regardless of the political headwinds, IFPA and our allies will hold the ground gained in the 117th and better position ourselves to pass reforms when the winds shift in our favor.

In other parts of the marketplace, labor challenges include the need for additional truck drivers, railroad workers and service employees to avert another crisis – like union strikes – that threatened the supply chain in 2022. Additional congressional and regulatory action on these issues could occur in 2023, and IFPA will take action to ensure that any changes reflect our industry interests.

2023 Actions

- Continue to push Congress to consider agriculture immigration reform legislation. This legislation should include the following elements supported by IFPA members:
 - Open the H-2A program to year-round industries in the fresh produce industry including CEA, Greenhouse, mushroom, and other protective agriculture.
 - Allow for fresh produce on-farm processing to utilize the H-2A visa program.
 - Address the inequities of the current calculation of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate and prevailing wage practices.
- Identify and advocate for regulatory changes that would provide greater flexibility under the current Department of Labor H-2A program.
- Work with allies to reform and remove the cap on the H-2B visa program which is increasingly utilized by the fresh produce industry.
- Engage with Congress, the Administration, and other interested stakeholders to develop programs that help enhance and address adequate labor supply to meet the needs of the industry throughout the supply chain, including the following:
 - Capacity building for Transportation sector.
 - Securing resources for curriculum development that encourages new entries into the fresh produce and floral industry supply chain.
 - Mentorships and collaborations that highlight the fresh produce and floral industry.

Continuing to Grow Consumption

2022 marked the historic White House Conference on Nutrition, Hunger and Health – the first of its kind in more than 50 years. Capitalizing on the conference’s national strategy and IFPA’s own recommendations to the conference, we will execute our vision to ensure federal programs and policies align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and actively address underconsumption of fruits and vegetables. For the 118th Congress, our nutrition efforts focus on the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, regulatory action, and establishing broad, bipartisan support for IFPA’s nutrition recommendations.

2023 Actions

- Implement IFPA recommendations to the White House Conference on Nutrition while adapting to new Congressional leadership.
- Prioritize time-sensitive regulatory and legislative priorities, including Produce Prescriptions, and allowing more fruits and vegetables in SNAP.
- Improve fresh produce procurement opportunities for schools and emergency feeding programs.
- Expand the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
- Improve consumer labeling transparency through the Food and Drug Administration.
- Secure and develop data that will solidify our policy and regulatory priorities and impact decision makers about the need to increase access to fresh produce in federal nutrition programs.

Working to Expand Market Access

International trade in fruits, vegetables and florals ensures that a wide variety of fresh products are available to consumers year-round thus reducing the risk of supply chain interruptions. Trade in fresh produce is a critical source of income for many producers and an engine of economic activity worldwide. However, trade opportunities and markets can be restricted by undue sanitary, phytosanitary, or other non-tariff barriers imposed by governments across the globe. In most cases, non-tariff barriers lack a scientific or risk basis and pose a serious threat to exports of fruits and vegetables.

In the United States, the economic well-being of the produce industry depends heavily on exports which account for over one-third of domestic production, provide jobs for millions of Americans, and contribute to the nation's overall trade balance. We must continue to improve international trade policies that further open markets and support fair-trade practices so that IFPA members continue to robustly compete in the international marketplace.

2023 Actions

- Support expansion and enhancement of current market access trade programs including the Market Access Program and the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops.
- Drive policy and regulatory recommendations that expand responsiveness to trade issues at USDA, USTR, and other federal government agencies involved in trade related matters focused on our industry products.
- Identify and support reducing and eliminating technical trade barriers that prevent access to important markets including ensuring that trade restrictions and market access terms are science and risk based as well as enforced consistently and fairly.
- Pursue regulatory enhancements to ensure undisrupted and priority access for fresh fruit and vegetables to all transportation networks, including rail, road, and air transportation.
- Ensure that trade negotiations such as IndoPacific Economic Framework, United Kingdom, European Union, and Taiwan provide new market opportunities and are fair and supportive of fresh produce and floral products.
- Push for continued enforcement and implementation of USMCA according to the terms of the agreement.
- Engage with the Federal Maritime Commission to ensure robust implementation of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act to enhance export of industry products.
- Support improvements to federal infrastructure and transportation policies including resources at U.S. points of entry to ensure timely inspection of perishable goods which provide better logistics and access for the fresh produce and floral industry.

Focusing on Organics, Agriculture Production, and Input Costs

2022 was a busy inaugural year for IFPA's Organic Committee advocating for sensible policies and elevating our visibility with the USDA National Organic Program (NOP), National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), and Congress. In the coming year, from this strong position we will find every opportunity to advance industry priorities and broaden IFPA's influence and leadership.

From fertilizers to crop protection products, building materials, pallets and cardboard, the fresh produce sector is experiencing major shortages and soaring costs of inputs. Inconsistent deliveries and input shortages are affecting the production of fresh fruits, vegetables, and florals, and jeopardizing the next growing cycles. Rising input costs are even pushing some growers closer towards bankruptcy, threatening the continuity of the supply of affordable fresh produce to consumers. Indeed, while the problem of rising costs and limited availability of inputs has recently eased, it is far from over, and those impacts could be felt for years to come.

IFPA will take an active role on issues critical to production processes, such as crop production, fertilizers and inputs, plant breeding, and operational technology. We will ensure member perspectives are heard by leveraging alliances and being the leading voice for the fresh produce and floral industry.

2023 Actions

- Be the leading voice representing the organic produce sector before the NOSB and NOP by consistently providing meaningful feedback and engagement.
- Strategically collaborate with industry partners to guide organic standards for hydroponic, indoor, and contained environment production.
- Amplify efforts to broadly advocate for members engaged in indoor and contained environment agriculture.
- Increase IFPA engagement with like-minded stakeholders to ensure that regulation of crop protection tools and fertilizers is based on sound, risk-based science.
- Address ways to abate input cost such as supporting current USDA efforts to expand domestic production capacity of fertilizer.
- Support science-based regulation of modern plant breeding as a crucial tool to combat pests and disease, improve health and nutrition, and enhance sustainability through reduced need for water and other inputs.

Championing 2023 Farm Bill Reauthorization Efforts for the Fresh Produce Industry

Preparation for reauthorizing the next Farm Bill begins in earnest this year. The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance will again lead the produce industry efforts. Through the Alliance, IFPA will prioritize programs and policies that ensure that our industry is competitive in the global marketplace.

2023 Actions

- Secure new programs, policies, and resources that foster innovation, increase consumption of fresh produce, and provide tools and technologies that modernize the industry.
- Push for transformative programs to drive industry opportunities through research, automation, market access, nutrition, conservation, supply-chain, organic, promotion, climate, and risk management tools.
- Continue to be a key leader in the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance to ensure adoption of IFPA priorities in the 2023 Farm Bill.

Unified Policy and Regulatory Activities

Driving Food Safety Modernization

As the fresh produce industry works tirelessly to provide safe fresh fruits and vegetables, we remain committed to engaging with the regulatory and public health community to implement sound, science-based food safety policies. Changes in food safety regulations as well as our scientific understanding of outbreaks necessitate an even closer working relationship with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The Agency has put forth a plan for structural, cultural, and leadership changes, some of which may require Congressional oversight or action. To capitalize on this opportunity, IFPA will intensify our advocacy to support rebuilding FDA into a more effective, efficient, transparent, and collaborative organization.

Addressing Sustainability and Climate in the Fresh Produce and Floral Sector

IFPA leads the farm and food sector in advancing fresh produce and floral initiatives on sustainability, climate, and regenerative agriculture. Together with our members and allies, IFPA is investing resources including funding from the USDA climate-related grants to find real solutions and innovations for our industry. IFPA will continue active engagement in the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA) ensuring that our sector has a strong voice on climate and sustainability issues, and – when necessary – staking out our own positions that are most impactful for fresh produce and floral.

Commitment to Invest in Environment and Natural Resources Priorities

Stewardship of natural resources and protection of the environment are essential to the success of every food and farm business as well as the health of our communities. Policies and programs regulating water and air quality, species protection, and resource access and availability directly affect viability and success of the fresh produce and floral sector. IFPA will engage with all federal agencies and Congress that regulate resources and the environment to ensure that fresh produce and floral perspectives are heard, decisions are sound, and agency actions reflect the needs of our industry.