

INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

**Taking Action Towards Harmonized Sustainability
Practices for the Global Produce Supply Chain**

Friday April 26, 2024 - Vancouver, B.C., Canada

SUMMIT REPORT

including

A Draft Fresh Produce Sustainability Charter

CPMA ACDFL



Global Coalition of Fresh Produce



September | 2024

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Acknowledgement

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Summit Agenda - April 26, 2024

Reception Breakfast	07:15 - 08:00
Welcome, Agenda Overview & Meeting Goals	08:00 - 08:05
<p>Opening Remarks Minister Lawrence MacAulay (by video), Minister of Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom Rosser, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture & Agrifood Canada 	08:05 - 08:15
<p>Keynote Speaker A Globally Sustainable Fresh Produce Supply Chain: Challenges, Barriers & Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Anderson, Chairman, CEO & Managing Partner, OPPY The Oppenheimer Group • Garland Perkins, Director, Innovation & Sustainability, OPPY The Oppenheimer Group 	08:15 - 09:00
<p>Panel The State of Sustainability - Efforts impacting Global Produce Supply Chains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Yogendra Chaudry, VP, Professional Services & Environmental, Social and Governance, SSCI/Eco Canada • Erika Luna, Policy Analyst, International Institute for Sustainable Developments • Cheryl Sullivan, International Featured Standards (IFS) & PAC Next Consultant • Richard Schouten, Director, Fresh Produce Centre -GroentenFruit Huis <p><i>Moderator: Daniel Duguay, Sustainability Specialist, CPMA</i></p>	09:00 - 10:00
Sponsor Moment - International Featured Standards	
Networking Break	10:00 - 10:20
<p>Fireside Chat Decoding Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Reporting & Investing Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graeme Blair, Director, Sustainable Finance, Royal Bank of Canada • Jonathan Belair, Managing Partner, Power Sustainable Lios 	10:20 - 11:00
<p>Aligning Global Produce Supply Chain Sustainability Practices with UNSDGs - Lessons to Date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacob Lawes, Projects Manager, United Fresh New Zealand, New Zealand • Dr. Hans Maurer, Director Strategy & Research, United Fresh New Zealand, New Zealand 	11:00 - 11:50

Sponsor Moment – Sinclair	
Lunch Break	11:50 – 12:30
Sponsor Moment – IFCO	
<p>Plenary Session Sustainability in Action – Produce Sector Leaders Taking a Systems-Centric Approach to Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the sustainability of the broccoli supply chain Tom Pierce, National Director of Produce Sourcing & Supplier Development, Sobeys, & Matt Aronson, Chief Revenue Officer, Verdant Technologies • Potato supply chain sustainability John Mesko, CEO, Potato Sustainability Alliance • Global Produce Supply Chain Sustainability Gerd Uitdewilligen, Director International Sales, COPELAND <p><i>Moderator: Devon Kennedy, National Marketing Manager, Highline Mushrooms</i></p>	12:30 – 13:20
Overview of the Breakout Sessions – Format, Goals & Outcomes	13:20 – 13:30
<p>Breakout Sessions Taking Action towards Harmonized Sustainability Practices for the Global Produce Supply Chain</p> <p>Theme 1 – Environment Applicable UNSDGs (8): Clean Water, Affordable Energy, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life below Water, Life on Land</p> <p>Theme 2 – Social Applicable UNSDGs (11): No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure, Reduced Inequalities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</p> <p>Theme 3 – Governance Applicable UNSDGs (8): Gender Equality, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; Partnerships for the Goals</p>	13:30 – 15:30
Networking Break	15:30 – 15:50
Breakout Session Reports	15:50 – 16:30
Taking Action – Next Steps and Action Items	16:30 – 16:50
Closing Remarks & Summit Close	16:50 – 17:00



Executive Summary

The global fresh produce industry faces critical sustainability challenges that span social, economic, and environmental dimensions, impacting every stage of the supply chain. To address these challenges, the fresh produce sector should adopt key principles such as harmonizing standards to align with internationally recognised frameworks, fostering collaboration, increasing transparency, and promoting continuous improvement. Key priority areas should include sustainable packaging, food waste reduction, water conservation, carbon footprint reduction, supply chain transparency, and stakeholder engagement.

The industry must overcome barriers like inconsistent standards, regulatory uncertainties, insufficient infrastructure, resource constraints, and complex supply chains. Addressing these barriers requires coordinated efforts, investment in sustainability solutions, supportive policies, and active and expanded stakeholder engagement.

Insights from Government, industry leaders, and sustainability experts, underscore the need for a holistic, integrated approach, emphasizing the importance of harmonized practices, targeted investments, governance, and environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting to drive sustainable progress. Actions recommended include establishing common sustainability standards, enhancing consumer education on packaging impacts, streamlining sustainability reporting, and fostering enhanced collaboration. The adoption and integration of UN Sustainable Development Goals within fresh produce industry practices,

comprehensive data collection for informed decision-making, and transparent communication of sustainability efforts are also vital.

To advance ESG outcomes in the fresh produce sector, key considerations are summarized for each ESG dimension, notably the principles to guide the industry towards harmonization, ongoing activities to consider, leading risks to achieve harmonization, and priority actions towards harmonization.

The fresh produce industry must unite under shared objectives and principles to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience. Consequently, a draft Fresh Produce Sustainability Charter is proposed that proposes key principles and actions in response to the sector's leading sustainability-related challenges.

Fresh Produce Sustainability Charter

Sustainability is not only integral – but increasingly critical – to the success, prosperity and survival of the fresh produce industry globally. The growing complexity and interdependency of social, economic and environmental outcomes makes sustainability the most important challenge facing the fresh produce industry. This is compounded by the fact that sustainability has significant impacts across the fresh produce supply chain – from production and packing to distribution, retail and consumer consumption. Consequently, all partners along the fresh produce supply chain play an essential role prioritizing, maintaining and improving the sustainability of the fresh produce supply chain. Furthermore, the fresh produce industry’s sustainability challenge is global in scope – with the fresh produce industry around the world facing sustainability challenges, be they social, economic or environmental.

As the complexity of sustainability continues to evolve, it is important to question if or how current practices such as audit/compliance are the most impactful strategy for sustainability assurance, and what principles & priorities should guide the industry going forward. An effective and efficient way forward is needed – one that is simple – principles-led, and outcomes based. Furthermore, key barriers should be identified and addressed by way of strategic commitments and actions

PRINCIPLES

In response to this challenge, International Sustainability Summit participants identified key principles that enable fresh produce supply chain sustainability.

Adopt an Integrated Approach to Sustainability

- Recognize the interconnectedness of the three aspects of sustainability: environmental, social, and governance (ESG).
- Adopt a systems-based view that addresses sustainability holistically rather than in silos.

Foster a Culture of Continuous Improvement

- Set, and work towards ambitious yet realistic sustainability goals and targets that drive continuous progress.
- Regularly measure and report on sustainability performance to identify areas for improvement.

Prioritize Global Harmonization and Common Standards

- Develop harmonized, industry-wide standards and best practices for sustainability metrics, reporting, and certifications.

- Align industry sustainability standards and efforts to globally recognized frameworks like the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Elevate Industry Leadership and Advocacy

- Industry, and industry associations must take a proactive role in shaping sustainability narratives and policies within our industry.
- Advocate for supportive government policies, research funding, and infrastructure investments.

By following these principles, the fresh produce industry can drive meaningful sustainability progress in a coordinated, credible, and impactful manner across the entirety of the global fresh produce supply chain.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Summit participants also identified key outcomes which should be pursued towards improving sustainability in the fresh produce supply chain, including:

Convert to Fully Sustainable Packaging

- Develop industry-wide standards and best practices packaging enabling sustainable fresh supply chains.
- Invest in research and innovation towards packaging suitable for optimum end-of-life management strategies.
- Improve recycling infrastructure and consumer education for better packaging recovery.

Increase Material Use Efficiency

- Promote the examination of waste hotspots throughout the supply chain and implement targeted solutions.



- Collaborate with waste management partners for diversion from landfills.
- Support the development of technologies and practices that mitigate food loss & waste.

Enhance Water Use Efficiency

- Assess water risks across growing regions and particularly prioritize efforts in high-stress areas
- Adopt precision irrigation, regenerative agriculture and other water-efficient practices throughout the industry
- Invest in technologies that optimize water usage at all stages of the supply chain

Embrace Energy Use Efficiency

- Measure scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions to identify biggest contributors at all stages of the supply chain
- Implement energy efficiency, renewable energy, and transportation optimization
- Develop standardized carbon calculation methodologies specific to produce, but aligned to global frameworks

Champion Supply Chain Transparency

- Increase visibility into labor practices, human rights and social responsibility
- Consider certifications like Fair Trade or Equitable Food Initiative for supply chain due diligence
- Adopt international standards like IRIS or the Global Social Compliance Programme, amongst others
- Leverage technology for traceability and accountability throughout the chain

Reinforce Stakeholder Collaboration

- Engage all stakeholders – supplier, growers, retailers, NGOs, regulators, consumers, and standards bodies
- Participate in industry working groups and sustainability initiatives
- Align our efforts to global frameworks like UN Sustainable Development Goals

BARRIERS & RISKS

By prioritizing these areas through a coordinated industry-wide effort, the fresh produce sector can drive meaningful sustainability improvements

across environmental, social and economic dimensions, responding directly to the leading barriers and risks to achieving sustainability in the fresh produce supply chain, including:

Lack of Harmonized Standards and Metrics

- Proliferation of different sustainability certifications, reporting requirements from customers and/or governments
- Lack of standardized methodologies to measure and report sustainability performance

Regulatory Uncertainty and Misalignment

- Rapidly evolving and sometimes conflicting regulations around plastics, emissions, labor practices etc.
- Regulations shaped by incomplete understanding of produce industry realities against global standards or frameworks

Insufficient Infrastructure

- Inadequate recycling/composting facilities for sustainable packaging and food waste
- Water scarcity and climate change impacts in certain growing regions

Cost and Resource Constraints

- Sustainable packaging and technologies are often more expensive initially
- Limited financial and human resources dedicated to sustainability initiatives

Supply Chain Complexity

- Global nature of produce supply chains with multiple handoffs and stakeholders
- Challenges in data collection, traceability and driving sustainability across the chain

Consumer Awareness and Participation

- Lack of consumer understanding about sustainability impacts of packaging choices
- Difficulty incentivizing recycling/composting behavior changes

Overcoming these barriers will require coordinated industry-wide efforts, investment in sustainability solutions, supportive industry and regulatory policies and infrastructure, as well as education and engagement of all stakeholders in the produce supply chain.





Summit Opening Remarks

- **Tom Rosser**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada emphasized the importance of sustainability in the fresh produce industry, while Minister Lawrence MacAulay (by video) expressed support for the summit and highlighted challenges faced by fruit and vegetable producers in Canada, including climate change. Key messages included the need for sustainable practices in the industry to ensure its long-term success.

A Globally Sustainable Fresh Produce Supply Chain: Challenges, Barriers & Opportunities

- **Garland Perkins**, Director, Innovation & Sustainability, OPPY | The Oppenheimer Group
- **John Anderson, Chairman**, CEO & Managing Partner, OPPY | The Oppenheimer Group

SUMMARY

The fresh produce industry faces sustainability challenges, including reducing global emissions and measuring progress. Sustainability reporting is crucial for companies, and common standards and practices are needed. Climate change impacts are growing and having an increasing impact on fresh produce globally, hence sustainability strategies can help address these challenges. ESG reporting requirements and packaging issues are also important considerations. The intersection of sustainability and the fresh produce industry is growing, and dedicating resources to sustainability efforts can bring benefits. Key themes and related points raised included:

Sustainability challenges and opportunities for a global fresh produce company

- Oppy discussed the company's perspective on sustainability in the fresh produce supply chain, highlighting that the challenge of sustainability in the fresh produce industry, notably where expectations have shifted from marketing to compliance.
- It was noted that there is currently no agreed-upon best practice for measuring sustainability progress, and many companies struggle to keep up with the rapid changes in legislation and regulation, hence the importance of setting common standards for sustainability in the industry.

- Companies should prioritize creating a sustainability strategy that takes customer requirements and regulations into account.
- Collecting supply chain data is a challenge due to vast and complex networks, varying customer and/or government interests .
- Furthermore, there are leading challenges and opportunities in collecting and analyzing data on carbon emissions in the fresh produce industry. This highlights the importance of understanding carbon footprint and focusing efforts on biggest contributors to lower emissions.

Reducing waste in the fresh produce supply chain

- Industry challenges include insufficient waste infrastructure, cost-prohibitive sustainable packaging, and conflicting priorities among customers.
- There are increasing examples of successful sustainability initiatives in reducing packaging waste by finding recyclable alternatives.
- The need for collaboration and sharing of successes and failures in reducing food waste throughout the supply chain is critical.

Water conservation in the fresh produce industry

- Water scarcity is a major challenge for the fresh produce industry, emphasizing the need for innovative solutions to optimize water use.
- Oppy is exploring precision irrigation techniques to reduce water consumption by 10% on one of its farms, with potential implications for global production areas and water-stressed areas.
- Oppy is working with WWF to assess water risk in their supply chain and deploy efforts in the most stressed areas.
- Oppy is using regenerative agriculture principles in their table grape production in Mexico but taking a wait-and-see approach to industry definition and certifications.

Sustainable packaging challenges and opportunities in the fresh produce industry.

- Packaging is a challenge due to consumer expectations and lack of education on end-of-life impacts.
- Industry education on packaging benefits and environmental footprint is crucial for change.
- Sustainability reporting, including impacts of packaging choices is crucial for companies.

Sustainability challenges and opportunities in the produce industry.

- Challenges in implementing sustainability practices in supply chain, include variability in customer requirements and lack of transparency.
- Consequently, there are opportunities for transparency to demonstrate good practices and identify areas for improvement in supply chain.
- Nonetheless, challenges and benefits remain with respect to aligning sustainability efforts with business goals.
- Collaboration between companies and their competitors is crucial for industry-wide sustainability.
- Industry-wide agreement on common standards is necessary for long-term progress.
- The importance of industry associations like CPMA and IFPA in advocating for the produce industry was highlighted.

Action Items to Consider

- Prioritize actions to develop a common set of sustainability standards for the fresh produce industry.
- Examine opportunities to educate consumers about packaging impacts and sustainability claims.
- Continue enhancing sustainability reporting and aligning with financial reporting requirements.
- Outsource expertise and partner with sustainability consultants to expedite progress.
- Collaborate on packaging innovations that consider quality, food safety, and the supply chain.





The State of Sustainability - Efforts Impacting Global Produce Supply Chains

- **Dr Yogendra Chaudry**, VP, Professional Services & Environmental, Social and Governance, Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative/Eco Canada
- **Erika Luna**, Policy Analyst, International Institute for Sustainable Developments
- **Cheryl Sullivan**, International Featured Standards (IFS) & PAC Next Consultant
- **Richard Schouten**, Director, Fresh Produce Centre – GroentenFruit Huis
- *Moderator:* **Daniel Duguay**, Sustainability Specialist, CPMA

SUMMARY

The panel conversation centered around strategies for achieving harmonized sustainability practices in agri-food supply chains. Speakers discussed the importance of setting minimum benchmarks, target setting, and science-based decisions. They also highlighted the need for collaboration, alignment with science-based targets, and sectoral participation in decision-making processes. Additionally, challenges in harmonizing food safety and sustainability in the European fresh produce industry were discussed, including the difficulties of adopting sustainability standards and the importance of standardized language and stakeholder consultation. Key themes and related points raised included:

Sustainability efforts in global produce supply chains, with a focus on harmonization and target setting

- Dr. Chaudhry highlighted the Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative (SSCI) work led by the Consumer Goods Forum to advance sustainability practices in supply chains, notably to create a global benchmark against which all sustainability schemes can be benchmarked, much like the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) and food safety benchmarking.
- Multiple speakers highlighted the challenge of trusting global sustainability standards, with 100s of codes and standards available.
- The panel agreed to the importance of rolling sustainability into packaging standards, with a focus on supply chain transparency and trustworthiness.
- Panelists discussed the complexity of sustainability and harmonization of food safety and sustainability measures.

Simplifying sustainability standards for various industries.

- Many panelists were hopeful SSCI can achieve for sustainability the similar outcomes as GFSI achieved in food safety. However, some expressed concerns about GFSI's focus on large companies, potentially neglecting the needs of smaller family farms.
- Sustainability must be integrated with quality and safety in companies.
- Speakers highlighted the importance standardization, auditing, and stakeholder engagement for sustainability schemes.
- Companies struggle to incorporate sustainability into their business models, with a leading challenge being measuring Scope 3 emissions.
- Panelists emphasized the importance of cooperation among stakeholders in the food industry, including governments, NGOs, retailers, and family farmers.

Sustainability challenges in agriculture and food industry, including carbon emissions and regenerative agriculture.

- The Institute for Sustainable Development reported it is working to address issues in various sectors, including primary production.
- The organization is navigating complexity by involving stakeholders, developing guidance documents, and incorporating specific requirements for small producers or family farms.
- Panelists cited the importance of reducing emissions, not just removing them, in the agri-food sector.

Harmonizing sustainability standards for fresh produce industry.

- Panelists highlighted limitations in current sustainability schemes and standards, emphasizing need for harmonization.
- Panelists prioritized awareness and resource allocation to address industry fragmentation to improve sustainability.
- Farmers are frustrated with environmental requirements that are not sector-specific and sectoral participation is crucial for effective decision-making.
- A systems-based approach (i.e., a method of understanding and addressing complex problems by considering the entire system rather than focusing on individual components) is necessary to address sustainability issues, involving all stakeholders at the same time.
- Prioritize third-party verification and transparency to increase credibility and leadership in sustainability.
- Emphasize cooperation and sustainability in addressing food supply chain challenges.

Action Items to Consider

- Work to clarify sustainability standard requirements for small producers and family farms to ensure applicability.
- Develop guidance on rolling sustainability into existing food safety standards to reduce audit burden on companies.
- Finalize the Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) framework for fruits and vegetables in Europe and explore alignment with standards globally.
- Measure and set targets to reduce key sustainability impacts like transportation emissions by engaging with suppliers.
- Pursue cooperation across the supply chain and sectors to advance sustainability transition together.



Decoding Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Reporting & Investing Trends

- **Graeme Blair**, Director, Sustainable Finance, Royal Bank of Canada
- **Jonathan Belair**, Managing Partner, Power Sustainable Lios

SUMMARY

Panelists discussed the growing importance of sustainable finance and ESG reporting in the food and agricultural industry. They shared their experience in creating a mid-market private equity firm focused on sustainable investments. The speakers discussed investment opportunities in the sector, challenges of simplifying sustainability reporting for mid-market companies, and the importance of prioritizing sustainability initiatives that drive commercial value. Panelists shared insights on the crucial areas of investment required to reach net zero in the food system, including addressing climate volatility, soil health, food waste, and water management. Key themes and related points raised included:

Creating a specialized private equity fund for food and agriculture, focusing on sustainability

- Managing partner Jonathan Belair explained why Power Sustainable Lios was created to address a gap in specialized capital for food and agriculture companies.
- Lios addresses a void in mid-market food and agriculture investing, sustainability, and institutional capital.

Investing in food and agriculture, focusing on sustainability and reporting.

- RBC highlighted that institutional investors seek sustainable food and agriculture investments, despite perceived niche opportunity.
- Investment firms seek companies with strong sustainability practices in food and agriculture value chain.

- Investors prioritize diligence in sustainability, engaging stakeholders early and often to understand their perspectives and priorities.
- The firm evaluates reporting requirements in two categories: must-haves for value proposition and additional layers for financial and operating reporting, with a focus on tying sustainability to value creation.

Using data and reporting to drive investment decisions and create value in businesses

- Sustainability reporting has led to effective capital allocation in companies, resulting in value creation. An example of using data to inform sustainability-related capital decisions at McCain Foods was provided.
- Lios outlined an example of how their team helped a food waste company communicate sustainability attributes to stakeholders, resulting in a successful investment.

Sustainability and food investing, focusing on key areas for improvement.

- Focus on small, commercially relevant sustainability wins to drive value, rather than extensive Key Performance Indicators (KPI) tracking.
- Four key areas for sustainability in the food system were highlighted: water, soil health, climate volatility, and food waste.

Action Items to Consider

- Continue pushing portfolio companies to focus on one or two sustainability metrics directly tied to value creation.

Aligning Produce Supply Chain Sustainability to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs)

- **Jacob Lawes**, Projects Manager, United Fresh New Zealand, New Zealand
- **Dr. Hans Maurer**, Director Strategy & Research, United Fresh New Zealand, New Zealand

SUMMARY

The presentation focused on progress towards sustainable food systems aligned to the global United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), and the outcomes achieved in New Zealand, with speakers highlighting the need for effective governance, industry-led action, and stakeholder engagement, for industry actions to be effective. Speakers also discussed the challenges and opportunities facing the fresh produce industry, including in New Zealand, emphasizing the importance of our industry adopting the UNSDGs Framework, measuring progress towards sustainability goals using standardised metrics, and aligning our industry sustainability practices with the UNSDGs. The interconnectedness of sustainability in business was also emphasized, with speakers highlighting the importance of addressing the three ESG aspects: governance, social, and environmental sustainability. Key themes and related points raised included:



Sustainability practices in NZ, focusing on UNSDGs and government engagement

- New Zealand government has created guidelines for government sustainability practices, using UN SDGs as a framework.
- The Auditor General in New Zealand recommended the government communicate more clearly on the sustainable development goals and improve stakeholder engagement.
- United Fresh and Tahuri Whenua co-convened an industry-led food system summit dialogue titled “The Future of Fruit and Vegetable Kai” in New Zealand, focusing on developing a New Zealand specific framework for a sustainable produce industry.

Sustainability in the fresh produce industry in New Zealand, with a focus on siloed thinking and collaboration

- Work with social enterprises, such as United Fresh did with Tahuri Whenua, to develop sustainability projects/efforts with community perspectives.
- Industry leaders in N.Z. struggle with siloed thinking, and a lack of strategy, in pursuit of sustainability.
- Industry has the ability, and opportunity, to learn from the non-commercial sector, and other industries, to advance our sustainability efforts.

UNSDGs and industry sustainability opportunities

- United Fresh has translated the UN Sustainable Development Goals into language understandable to the fresh produce industry.
- United Fresh identified 3 to 4 initial UNSDG opportunities relevant to every business in the industry for each SDG. These are not the only opportunities.
- Businesses need to identify additional SDG opportunities relevant to them, beyond the ones provided by United Fresh.

- Industry needs to enhance its efforts to accelerate science knowledge integration, develop resilient supply chain infrastructure, and increase employment opportunities for marginalized groups.

Data and targets for sustainability goals in the fresh produce industry

- Opportunities are strategic and involve blue sky thinking, while targets are operational and require measurable data. Both are important in developing your sustainability efforts.
- A data publication, “Fresh Facts”, was published annually by Plant & Food Research, a State-Owned-Enterprise for 20-25 years, providing data on the New Zealand fresh produce industry, and is now being published by United Fresh, which has increased the amount of data available to measure sustainability efforts.
- United Fresh has noted how aspects of an “industry action plan” developed by industry for progressing sustainability efforts, failed to align with UN Sustainable Development Goals framework, as it lacked clear instructions or guidance for industry.

Sustainability and ESG concepts in business

- Speakers discussed integrated approaches to achieving UNSDGs through an ESG lens, emphasizing the importance for businesses of governance and social sustainability in addition to environmental sustainability, highlighting their interconnectedness and the need for a long-term approach that supports all three branches of sustainability.
- Governance sustainability opportunities are best identified from the top of your organisation, social sustainability from the bottom of your organisation, and environmental sustainability by everyone.
- Social sustainability is best driven internally with staff involvement and feedback being crucial for success, while governance requires a mix of top-down and externally driven systems.
- Speakers highlighted the importance of ESG concepts in sustainability, emphasizing their interconnectedness and the need for all three branches to work together effectively to achieve sustainability.
- The speakers emphasized the importance of proactively addressing all sustainability risks, rather than waiting for external regulations, to protect the business’s value and long-term success.

Sustainability practices and UNSDG implementation

- Emphasis was given to the importance of implementing UNSDG aligned sustainability processes in organizations.
- The UNSDGs are not a menu, but a composite framework to be adopted in full.
- Official UNSDG targets and indicators are just globally relevant measurements available for everyone. Produce specific indicators and measurements can be developed and utilised.

Sustainability practices and UNSDGs in the produce industry

- Combining industry expertise with UNSDG knowledge, as well as common sense, enhances sustainability practices.
- Emphasis was given to the importance of collaboration outside the commercial sector, with not-for-profit and social producers, to achieve UNSDGs.
- Developing a UNSDG guide or guidelines towards sustainability is a crucial first step, not the end of the journey. Industry and businesses then need to implement the opportunities identified in any guidelines.
- Further emphasis was given to importance of collaboration in achieving sustainability goals, with government, communities, customers, the supply chain, and all other stakeholders.

Action Items to Consider

- Download the N.Z. sustainability development goal guide from <https://unitedfresh.co.nz/technical-advisory-group/united-nations-sustainable-development-goals>.
- Contact United Fresh New Zealand for more information and discussion on sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals at tag@unitedfresh.co.nz.
- Consider how sustainability practices can be enhanced by injecting UNSDG-knowledge into business practices.
- Utilize every communication tool available to report on sustainability journey progress to clients, suppliers, regulators, and the surrounding community.



Sustainability in Action – Produce Sector Leaders Taking a Systems-Centric Approach to Sustainability

- **Enhancing the Sustainability of the Broccoli Supply Chain**

Tom Pierce, National Director of Produce Sourcing & Supplier Development, Sobeys, & **Matt Aronson**, Chief Revenue Officer, Verdant Technologies

- **Potato Supply Chain Sustainability**

John Mesko, CEO, Potato Sustainability Alliance

- **Global Produce Supply Chain Sustainability**

Gerd Uitdewilligen, Director International Sales, COPELAND

- *Moderator:* **Devon Kennedy**, National Marketing Manager, Highline Mushrooms

SUMMARY

The conversation centered around sustainability in the fresh produce supply chain, with speakers highlighting their respective organizations' initiatives to reduce carbon footprint, improve supply chain efficiency, and promote sustainability. Speakers emphasized the need for collaboration, data-driven decision making, and education to drive towards sustainability, while also balancing ESG outcomes. They

shared experiences working with growers to find efficiencies in their processes and reduce their environmental footprint and emphasized the importance of integrating data with transportation companies to understand trends and address exceptions. The speakers also emphasized the need for a diversity of operations, an example being how PSA helped develop a story based on a community of farmers to enhance the sustainability story of smaller farms. Key themes and related points raised included:

Sustainability efforts in the produce supply chain

- The Potato Sustainability Alliance’s rapid growth in numbers and recognition for helping companies meet sustainability requirements was highlighted. The Potato Sustainability Alliance discussed on-farm data collection for sustainability practices.
- COPELAND discussed technology that monitors produce during transportation and storage.
- Sobeys & Verdant described innovative approach to extend the shelf life of perishable commodities, while also reducing water use and improve produce quality. The benefits of their innovation included increasing shelf life by 4-5 days.

Sustainability efforts in the produce industry, including reducing water usage and improving supply chain efficiency

- Panelists noted that the “most dangerous phrase in our language is this is the way it’s always been done.”
- Balancing sustainability outcomes (social, economic, environmental) in agriculture is increasingly critical to long term success.
- Practical examples of sustainability impact, including water conservation and transportation efficiency, were highlighted.

Sustainability practices in the fresh produce industry

- Challenges include tracking food temperature, citing conflicting figures and the need for easy-to-use technology.
- Farmers are reluctant to share information due to various reasons, including fear of competition and lack of trust in data.
- The industry is largely challenged by the constant pressure to improve sustainability practices in fresh produce industry.
- Need to prioritize activities that recognize and value leadership capability of growers in sustainability efforts.

Sustainability in agriculture, favoring larger operations

- Speakers emphasized the critical importance of involving farmers in sustainability conversations.
- Large operations with capacity for monitoring and reporting have an advantage in sustainability practices, while smaller operations may struggle with added staff or resources.

Collaboration and education for sustainability and harmonization in the food industry

- Collaborative approach to sustainability with collective problem-solving is of growing importance.
- Collaboration and education on how supply chain impacts shelf life and consumer experience is also of growing importance.
- Speakers emphasized collaboration and education to drive harmonization in the industry.
- Speakers reiterated the importance of sustainability and pre-competitive issues like food waste require collective action, with collaboration being key to making a difference.

Action Items to Consider

- Promote collaboration and partnership between organizations to develop and share sustainability solutions.
- Educate more growers and share best practices for sustainability through field days, workshops, and conferences.
- Have ongoing discussions on sustainability topics and concepts to increase familiarity and comfort in raising awareness.



Breakout Session Summary

The breakout sessions were framed by the three central sustainability concepts: Environment, Social and Governance, with breakout sessions held to identify the following for each theme:

- **Principles to guide the industry towards harmonized practices,**
- **Ongoing Activities to consider,**
- **Leading Risks to achieve harmonization, and**
- **Priority Actions towards harmonization.**

The summary of each theme is provided below.

THEME 1 | ENVIRONMENT

FRAMING QUESTIONS: To help shape a Draft Fresh Produce Sustainability Charter, we are seeking your input today on...

ENVIRONMENT-RELATED PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE INDUSTRY TOWARDS HARMONIZED PRACTICES

APPLICABLE UNSDG (ENVIRONMENT)

- Clean Water
- Affordable Energy
- Industry
- Innovation and Infrastructure
- Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Responsible Consumption and Production
- Climate Action
- Life below Water
- Life on Land

- Key principles include the need for pollution prevention, recycling, resource efficiency, and stakeholder collaboration.
- Metrics should be agreed upon at the industry global level to ensure consolidated reporting, enabling businesses to meet needs using a unified set of globally relevant tools and audits acceptable to all stakeholders.
- This approach should be applied at the business level rather than the product level.
- Sustainability should be emphasized as a core principle for all organizations, aiming to meet present needs without jeopardizing those of future generations.
- The polluter pays principle holds industries financially accountable for managing their pollution to prevent harm.
- The precautionary principle suggests taking preventive measures even when scientific certainty about the level of harm is lacking.
- Environmental considerations should be integrated into all economic and social policies and decision-making processes (integration principle), and entities should take responsibility for their environmental impacts (responsibility principle).
- Several specific environmental impacts highlighted include carbon emissions, water usage, soil health, and nutrition.
- Continuous improvement is preferred over one-time audits, encouraging progress through motivation rather than enforcement.
- The need to use natural resources wisely and efficiently is also underscored (conservation principle).
- Transparency is critical, ensuring public access to environmental information, promoting accountability, and informed decision-making (transparency principle).
- Collaboration among varied stakeholders is essential to address complex environmental challenges effectively (cooperation principle).
- Industries are encouraged to reduce and reuse all resources such as water, and energy consumption while maximizing renewable energy use, improving waste management, preserving soil and biodiversity, reducing chemical inputs, and supporting local production and urban farming.



- The aim should be to minimize the environmental impact of produce transportation and maintain the health of essential natural resources.
- Lifecycles should be broadly analyzed to offer solutions that are scalable across different commodities and regions.
- Tracking performance should focus on outcomes, including impacts on carbon, water, soil, social factors, and nutrition.
- Industry-specific environmental principles for the industry must be detailed for different commodities and regions, while still aligning with the UNSDGs.
- Sustainable practices, such as composting, enhancing soil health, reducing waste, and ensuring clean water, should be emphasized.
- Key principles include precautionary measures, financial accountability for polluters, sustainability, integration of environmental considerations in all decisions, internal and external stakeholder participation, transparency, equity, and pollution prevention.
- Adhering to these principles will guide industries towards resource-efficient, low-impact practices, enabling sustainable development by conserving natural resources and minimizing pollution.

Summary

Industries are encouraged to reduce and reuse all resources such as water and energy consumption, while maximizing renewable energy use, improving waste management, preserving soil and biodiversity, reducing chemical inputs, and supporting local production and urban farming.

Conclusion

The fresh produce industry is encouraged to adopt environmental principles such as sustainability, pollution prevention, resource efficiency, environmental impact assessment, compliance with regulations, and stakeholder engagement to guide harmonized practices. These principles aim to ensure that present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own, minimize pollution at its source, optimize resource utilization, assess environmental impacts, comply with laws, and engage stakeholders. By following these principles, industries can contribute to conservation efforts, reduce pollution, and promote a sustainable future for all.

ONGOING ENVIRONMENT-RELATED ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Companies are integrating environmental concerns into operations by reducing carbon emissions, conserving water, and promoting biodiversity.
- **ISO 14001 Certification:** This provides a framework for organizations to establish an environmental management system, improving performance and regulatory compliance.
- **Circular Economy Initiatives:** Businesses are minimizing waste, promoting resource efficiency, and encouraging reuse and recycling of materials.
- **Sustainable Supply Chain Management:** Companies are working with suppliers to reduce environmental impacts, ensure ethical practices, and enhance transparency.
- **Renewable Energy Adoption:** Industry transition to renewable energy sources to cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
- **Carbon Pricing and Trading Schemes:** Implementation of carbon pricing mechanisms to incentivize emission reductions and facilitate a low-carbon economy transition.
- **Biodiversity Conservation Initiatives:** Measures to protect and restore ecosystems.
- **Green Building Standards:** Adoption of standards like LEED to minimize environmental impacts in construction.
- **Waste Management and Recycling Programs:** Companies are implementing programs to reduce waste generation and conserve resources.
- **Environmental Reporting and Disclosure:** Emphasis on transparent reporting of environmental performance metrics to stakeholders.



Summary

The successful implementation of food safety and environmental sustainability in industries requires significant collaboration across various commodity associations, all affected stakeholders, and the agreement on standardized metrics of outcomes and their measurements.

Conclusion

The fresh produce industry is focusing on environmental sustainability through various initiatives such as corporate social responsibility, ISO 14001 certification, circular economy practices, sustainable supply chain management, renewable energy adoption, and biodiversity conservation. These efforts are supported by government incentives and industry alliances to establish metrics, standardize measurements, and promote continuous improvement. Embracing sustainable practices, including waste management, carbon pricing, and eco-labeling schemes, is crucial for aligning with the UNSDGs and ensuring a greener future.

LEADING ENVIRONMENT-RELATED RISKS TO ACHIEVE HARMONIZATION

- **Climate Change:** Increasing frequencies of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and precipitation shifts. These present threats to ecosystems, communities, and economies globally. Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate impacts are essential.
- **Biodiversity Loss:** This threatens ecosystem stability and essential services like pollination and climate regulation. Conservation efforts must be harmonized to protect and restore biodiversity.
- **Pollution:** Our industry has several pollution sources such as industrial activities, agriculture, transportation, and waste disposal, which degrade air, water, and soil quality. Effective pollution control requires harmonized regulations and enforcement.
- **Resource Depletion:** Overuse of natural resources disrupts ecosystems. Harmonized resource management, including sustainable consumption and production, ensures future resource availability.
- **Land Degradation:** Issues like deforestation, soil erosion, and urbanization reduce land productivity, threatening food security and ecosystems. Sustainable land management practices and restoration efforts need harmonization.

- **Water Scarcity:** Increasing water demand coupled with pollution and climate change exacerbate water scarcity. Harmonized water management and efficient usage are vital for equitable access to clean water.
- **Waste Management:** Improper waste handling leads to pollution and health risks. Effective waste reduction, recycling, and disposal measures are necessary to support a circular economy.

Summary

Ultimately, addressing these risks requires global collaboration, policy alignment, and sustainable practices across all sectors, involving governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and individuals to achieve effective and lasting solutions.

Conclusion

Achieving global harmonization in environmental practices is crucial to address key risks such as climate change impacts, biodiversity loss, pollution, resource depletion, and inequitable distribution of environmental burdens. Global cooperation, policy alignment, and sustainable practices are essential for mitigating these risks. Addressing challenges like conflicting certifications, audits, and standards, as well as the high costs and slow pace of harmonization, requires collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders. Implementing harmonized efforts to manage environmental risks is vital for sustainable development and ensuring a resilient future for ecosystems, communities, and economies worldwide.



PRIORITY ENVIRONMENT-RELATED ACTIONS TOWARDS HARMONIZATION

- **International Cooperation:** Strengthen collaboration between all stakeholders, including governments, organizations, and communities in order to tackle global environmental challenges collectively.
- **Policy Alignment:** Industry working with other stakeholders to harmonize environmental policies at local, regional, national, and global levels, to promote sustainability, reduce emissions, protect biodiversity, and improve resource management through aligned regulations, targets, and incentives.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building:** Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and expertise between countries and stakeholders. Enhance understanding of environmental risks and promote effective risk management through capacity building initiatives.
- **Technology Transfer:** Promote the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries to bridge the technology gap and support sustainable development, ensuring cooperation and harmonized efforts in this regard.
- **Integrated Approaches:** Adopt strategies that consider interconnections between different environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution for holistic environmental management.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Work with other stakeholders to ensure inclusive participation of governments, businesses, civil society organizations, local communities, and marginalized groups in decision-making processes, promoting transparency and fostering partnerships for sustainable environmental management.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Establish robust industry systems aligned to global frameworks, for monitoring and reporting on environmental performance, facilitating comparison and evaluation through harmonized methodologies and data collection.
- **Education and Awareness:** Promote environmental education and awareness within organisations and industry to build a culture of sustainability, raise public consciousness, and engage communities in environmental stewardship.

Summary & Conclusion

To achieve harmonization in environmental risk management, stakeholders must prioritize international cooperation, policy alignment to global frameworks, knowledge sharing, technology transfer, integrated approaches, stakeholder engagement, monitoring and reporting, and education and awareness. By focusing on these key actions, stakeholders can work collaboratively to address global environmental challenges, promote sustainable practices, and ensure accountability, ultimately leading to a healthier planet for future generations. This requires a bottom-up approach, alignment with SDGs, consolidation of standards, and a global action by the industry as one voice.



THEME 2 | SOCIAL

FRAMING QUESTIONS: To help shape the Draft Fresh Produce Sustainability Charter, we are seeking your input today on...

SOCIAL-RELATED PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE INDUSTRY TOWARDS HARMONIZED PRACTICES

- Uphold human rights and labor standards within our organisations and supply chains: secure fair wages, safe working conditions, and prohibit child and forced labor.
- Ensure community and staff engagement, particularly with marginalized groups, in decision-making processes impacting their lives.
- Promote equity and inclusion for all by ensuring equal access to opportunities regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, or socioeconomic status.
- Prioritize local procurement and employment to bolster economic development and community strength.
- Foster transparent stakeholder dialogue across all sectors.
- Implement robust health and safety measures for employees and communities.
- Invest in education and training, both formal and “on-the-job” to enhance workforce capabilities.
- Conduct social impact assessments to mitigate adverse effects on communities.
- Practice responsible marketing and consumer protection.
- Commit and work towards goals like decent work and economic growth, peace and justice, reduced inequities, quality education, gender pay equity, and clean water and sanitation.

Summary

Commit to goals like decent work and economic growth, peace and justice, reduced inequities, quality education, gender pay equity, and clean water and sanitation.

APPLICABLE UNSDG (SOCIAL)

- No Poverty
- Zero Hunger
- Good Health and Well-Being
- Quality Education
- Gender Equality
- Clean Water and Sanitation
- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Industry
- Innovation & Infrastructure
- Reduced Inequalities
- Responsible Consumption and Production
- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is crucial for all organisations to work with governments to establish a globally aligned set of common social principles, focusing on human labor and sustainability. Key components include fair wages, safe working conditions, community engagement, equity, and local procurement. Adhering to these principles can lead to positive social impact, economic growth, and a more inclusive society.

ONGOING SOCIAL-RELATED ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programs: Address issues like education, healthcare, and poverty through philanthropy and strategic partnerships.
- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Framework for preventing and remedying human rights abuses linked to business operations.
- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards: Guidelines for reporting social impacts, including labor practices and community engagement.
- Fair Trade Certification: Ensures fair wages, safe working conditions, and environmental sustainability, especially in developing countries.
- Social Accountability International (SAI) Standards (SA8000): Framework for ethical sourcing and fair labor practices based on international standards.
- Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives: Prioritize fostering inclusive workplace cultures and addressing systemic barriers.
- Employee Well-being Programs: Promote physical and mental well-being, work-life balance, and career development.

- **Social Impact Investing:** Investments aimed at generating positive social outcomes alongside financial returns.
- **Community Development Partnerships:** Collaboration with local communities and stakeholders for development initiatives.
- **Ethical Sourcing and Supply Chain Transparency:** Enhance accountability in supply chains through ethical practices and supplier audits.
- **Additional Focus Areas:** Ethical charters for labor, food safety, water quality regulations, ethical recruiting, and training schemes, via both formal education and on-the-job training.

Summary & Conclusion

Overall, importance is given to social-related activities and initiatives, such as CSR programs, UN guiding principles on business and human rights, GRI standards, fair trade certification, SAI standards, diversity and inclusion initiatives, employee well-being programs, social impact investing, community development partnerships, and ethical sourcing practices. It also highlights the need for utilizing, and adhering to, existing social certificates instead of adding more certification requirements.

LEADING SOCIAL-RELATED RISKS TO ACHIEVE HARMONIZATION

- Social sustainability is often perceived as the least important aspect and thus lags significantly behind the environmental and governance aspects of sustainability.
- Various factors like economic conditions, regulation enforcement, decentralization, costs, skill levels, and lack of competition exacerbate this issue.
- Consumers' reluctance to pay higher prices for social responsibility further complicates matters.
- Challenges include limited incoming workforce, the high cost of operational changes, and ongoing employee training.
- Labor rights violations (child labor, unfair wages, unsafe conditions) and human rights abuses (discrimination, harassment, indigenous rights violations) lead to legal and reputational risks.

- Large-scale projects can result in community displacement and conflicts with local community stakeholders.
- Global supply chains face risks like labor abuses, environmental degradation, and corruption.
- Social inequalities, community health hazards, and data privacy concerns also pose significant threats.
- Lack of supply chain transparency hinders addressing social risks, and social inequities remain pervasive
- Migration and refugee crises create additional social tensions and human rights challenges.
- Lastly, companies face non-compliance issues, social pressure, government regulations, competition from countries with lower standards, and audit fatigue.

Summary & Conclusion

Challenges include social sustainability, such as labor rights violations, human rights abuses, community displacement, supply chain risks, social inequities, and data privacy issues. These issues are exacerbated by non-compliance within companies, social pressure, government regulations, and competition from countries with lower standards, leading to audit fatigue and hindering progress towards achieving sustainable workforce conditions such as a living wage.

PRIORITY SOCIAL-RELATED ACTIONS TOWARDS HARMONIZATION

- **Dialogue and Education:** Engage stakeholders, with strong representation for all stakeholders. Build trust through transparency and honest communication.
- **Compliance and Accountability:** Follow all relevant laws, regulations, and standards.
- **Social and Economic Equity:** Adopt the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and social principles of equity.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Human Rights:** Engage diverse stakeholders to understand social issues and business impacts and implement their recommendations.
- **Labor Standards and Community Consultation:** Comply with fair labor standards, ensuring safe working conditions and prohibition of child and forced labor.

- Supply Chain Transparency and Inclusion: Enhance supply chain transparency and traceability.
- Community Development: Invest in social development initiatives such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure.
- Ethical Sourcing and Fair Trade: Source goods ethically, ensuring fair wages and safe conditions.
- Social Impact and Reporting: Conduct social impact assessments and report on social performance transparently.
- Training and Capacity Building: Invest in training programs, both “on-the-job” and formal training, to raise awareness and strengthen capabilities related to social issues.

- Ethics and Audits: Highlight ethical practices, encourage social audits, and follow-up on non-compliance with improvements.

Summary & Conclusion

Ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement, compliance with labor standards, transparency in supply chains, and commitment to diversity and inclusion. Promote ethics, human rights, and fair-trade practices while investing in staff and community development and education. Conduct social impact assessments and provide transparent reporting to demonstrate accountability and foster trust through education, collaboration, and sustainable practices. Implement the recommendations of stakeholders.



THEME 3 | GOVERNANCE

FRAMING QUESTIONS: To help shape the Draft Fresh Produce Sustainability Charter, we are seeking your input today on...

GOVERNANCE-RELATED PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE INDUSTRY TOWARDS HARMONIZED PRACTICES

- **Wage and Accountability:** Implement an ethical wage structure, integrate outcome-based evaluations for leadership and company health, and ensure public accountability.
- **Diversity:** Foster representation from various sectors, implement anti-discrimination systems, and encourage participation from professionals of all ages and experiences.
- **Inclusion:** Promote equity for all, responsible consumption, and climate action with policies that highlight the health benefits of produce and team health.
- **Work Environment:** Ensure a safe workplace at all times and develop health credits as an alternative to carbon credits.
- **Transparency & Accountability:** Maintain transparency in all operations. Hold individuals and organizations accountable for their actions.
- **Integrity & Fairness:** Uphold integrity, honesty, and ethical conduct, and promote fairness in decision-making processes.

APPLICABLE UNSDG (SOCIAL)

- No Poverty
- Zero Hunger
- Good Health and Well-Being
- Quality Education
- Gender Equality
- Clean Water and Sanitation
- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Industry
- Innovation & Infrastructure
- Reduced Inequalities
- Responsible Consumption and Production
- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

- **Rule of Law:** Respect national and international laws and industry standards.
- **Governance & Risk Management:** Establish robust risk management systems and integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into governance frameworks.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage stakeholders, incorporate their feedback into future actions, and promote long-term sustainability.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Encourage and implement a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and regulatory compliance.

Summary & Conclusion

Key principles and actions for sustainable and ethical business practices include an outcome-based ethical wage structure, diversity and inclusion, transparency, accountability, gender equity for all, climate action, and responsible consumption. Emphasis is placed on integrating ESG considerations, stakeholder engagement, regulatory compliance, accurate data reporting, and fostering continuous improvement, aiming for balanced leadership and fair HR practices that align with the UNSDGs.



ONGOING GOVERNANCE-RELATED ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

- Corporate Governance Codes: Provide best practices in board composition, compensation, and risk management, as part of standard operations.
- Sustainability Reporting Standards: Frameworks like GRI, SASB, and TCFD guide ESG performance disclosure.
- Ethical Supply Chain Management: Ensures responsible sourcing and labor rights compliance.
- Anti-Corruption Measures: Frameworks such as UNCAC and ISO 37001 help prevent and address corruption risks.
- Board Diversity and Independence: Promotes diverse perspectives in decision-making.
- Whistleblower Protection: Policies to report misconduct without fear of retaliation.
- Shareholder Engagement: Enables shareholders to voice concerns and hold companies accountable.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Committees: Oversee CSR initiatives and ESG reporting.
- Regulatory Compliance Programs: Ensure adherence to laws and regulations.
- Integrated Reporting: Combines financial and ESG performance reporting for holistic value communication.
- Additional focuses: wage equity, DEI policies, climate action, and advocacy for gender, race, and sexual orientation equity.

Summary & Conclusion

Several key initiatives in governance were highlighted, emphasizing the importance of sustainability, ethical supply chain management, anti-corruption measures, board diversity, whistleblower protection, shareholder engagement, CSR committees, regulatory compliance, and integrated reporting. Companies are encouraged to adopt these practices to ensure transparency, accountability, and responsible governance.

LEADING GOVERNANCE-RELATED RISKS TO ACHIEVE HARMONIZATION

- Reputational damage, employee resentment, competition, and operational distractions are significant risks for businesses.
- Many people misunderstand agricultural processes.
- Corruption and bribery erode trust and require harmonized anti-corruption measures.
- Conflicts of interest disrupt objectivity and impartiality, necessitating robust governance frameworks and disclosure requirements.
- Board effectiveness suffers without proper oversight and independence.
- Harmonized standards for board roles and evaluation are crucial.
- Non-compliance with laws and standards in corporate governance, financial reporting, and data privacy can lead to legal issues and reputational harm.
- Harmonized regulatory frameworks ensure consistent compliance and a fair business environment.
- Data privacy breaches and cybersecurity threats undermine trust and business continuity.
- Internationally harmonized data protection laws and cybersecurity standards are essential.
- Shareholder activism impacts corporate governance and strategic decisions, demanding harmonized shareholder rights and engagement mechanisms.
- Financial fraud undermines investor confidence; standardized governance and internal controls are necessary for transparency and accountability.
- Regulatory arbitrage exploits inconsistencies between jurisdictions.
- Harmonized regulations and enforcement mechanisms level the playing field.
- Inadequate risk management exposes organizations to various risks, necessitating harmonized risk management frameworks.

- Lack of transparency and accountability in governance undermines trust and effective oversight; without harmonized governance principles and disclosure standards to promote responsible stewardship.
- Organizations failing to adhere to their principles, engaging in greenwashing, or rejecting governance practices need corrective measures.
- Multiple, conflicting regulations from governments can create unattainable requirements, disrupting industry practices.

Summary & Conclusion

Effective good governance requires harmonized anti-corruption measures, alongside governance frameworks to manage conflicts of interest, enhance board effectiveness, and ensure regulatory compliance. Additionally, unified data privacy laws, shareholder rights, and corporate governance standards are essential. Addressing issues like regulatory dissonance, inadequate risk management, and lack of accountability is necessary to promote transparency, trust, and good governance across jurisdictions.

PRIORITY GOVERNANCE-RELATED ACTIONS TOWARDS HARMONIZATION

- Internal wage transparency, public reporting on social/environmental impacts, formal documentation processes, and fostering collaboration and long-term education.
- Standardizing international trade regulations for fruits and vegetables and enhancing education about processes, consumer awareness, and worker rights.
- Adopting international standards (e.g., OECD, UN, ISO 37001), harmonizing regulations across jurisdictions, and strengthening enforcement mechanisms.
- Building capacity among stakeholders through training and technical assistance is essential.
- Corporate governance reforms focused on enhancing transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement.
- Encouraging integrated reporting on governance practices, risks, and ESG factors will improve transparency and investor confidence.
- Public-private partnerships addressing governance challenges collaboratively, which is crucial to strengthen risk management and internal control mechanisms.

- Continuous improvement and aligning governance practices with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) are vital.
- Developing standardized governance programs, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion for all, and achieving common standards across the supply chain are essential steps toward effective governance and sustainability.

Summary & Conclusion

To achieve harmonization in governance, key actions include adopting international standards, promoting regulatory harmonization, enhancing enforcement mechanisms, building capacity, implementing corporate governance reforms, fostering stakeholder engagement, promoting integrated reporting, fostering public-private partnerships, strengthening risk management, and encouraging continuous improvement. Additionally, aligning governance efforts with UNSDGs, developing best-practice governance programs, and enabling equity for all are essential for inclusive and transparent practices.



ANNEX 1 | Summit Participants

A total of 130 participants representing the following organization attended the International Sustainability Summit:

Accu-Label Inc.
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
Associated Labels and Packaging
BC Centre for Agritech Innovation (SFU)
Bonipak Produce Co.
California Giant Berry Farms
California Strawberry Commission
CanadaGAP
Canadawide
Catania Worldwide
CKF Inc
Control Union Canada Inc.
Copeland
Costco
Costco Wholesale Canada
Country Grocer
CPMA/ACDFL
Creekside Organics
DAUMAR Corporation
Delphi
Domex Superfresh Growers
Driscoll's
EarthFresh
ECCC
EcoVadis
Emerald Packaging Inc
Equifruit
Farm Pak
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association
FORWARD Insight & Strategy
Fresh Advancements
Fresh Produce Centre Netherlands
Freshfel Europe
Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada
FS Fresh Foods
GS1 Canada
Hazel Technologies
Highline Mushrooms
IFCO Systems
IFS International Featured Standards
IISD
International Fresh Produce Association
International Institute for Sustainable Development
Ippolito International
iTradeNetwork, Inc.
Kings Produce Ltd.
L & M Companies Inc.
Latitude 36 Foods
Mexico Pavilion
MITCHEL LINCOLN PACKAGING
MJO Solutions Ltd.
Monette Farms
Mucci Farms
Nature Fresh Farms
Naturipe Farms LLC
New Brunswick Department of Agriculture
NNZ Inc.
North American Produce Buyers Limited
North Bay Produce, Inc.
Oppy
Pacific Coast Fruit Co.
Packer Publications (PMG)
Pacty
Pattison Food Group/Save on Foods
Peak of the Market Ltd.
PEI Horticultural Association Inc.
Pfenning's Organic Vegetables
Potato Sustainability Alliance
Power Sustainable Lios
Produce House, LLC.
Quebec Produce Marketing Association
Royal Bank of Canada
Sev-Rend
Sinclair Systems International, LLC
Sobeys
SSCI
Stronach & Sons (2020) Inc.
Sun Pacific
Taylor Farms
The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity
The OPMA
TOTEM LTD
United Exports
United Fresh New Zealand
US Embassy
Value Chain Management International Inc.
Verdant Technologies
Volm Companies, Inc.
VPZ Verpackungszentrum GmbH
Western Growers Association
WestRock
Whole Leaf Ltd.
Windset Farms

ANNEX 2 | Summit Slides & Videos

- International Sustainability Summit slides are available at: cpma.ca/docs/default-source/industry/sustainability/master-iss-deck-v1-4-final-w-break-out-summaries.pdf
- Individual speaker videos are available at: [International Sustainability Summit \(cpma.ca\)](https://cpma.ca/industry/sustainability/international-sustainability-summit)

Alternatively, visit the following for both Summit Slides, Videos and related information:
<https://cpma.ca/industry/sustainability/international-sustainability-summit>





INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

CPMA  ACDFL



Global Coalition of Fresh Produce

