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GLOBAL COALITION OF FRESH PRODUCE CALLS UPON POLICYMAKERS, INDUSTRY PLAYERS TO WORK TOWARDS TRUE SUSTAINABILITY IN FRESH PRODUCE VALUE CHAINS

Earlier this week, the Global Coalition of Fresh Produce successfully held its second webinar for the global fresh produce industry, titled *True sustainability in global fresh produce value chains*.

Over 150 commercial operators, industry representatives, and national and international officials registered to attend the webinar, logging in from countries as diverse as Canada, Mexico, Norway, Ghana and New Zealand, to name but a few.

The webinar was moderated by the Coalition's chair, Ron Lemaire of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, and featured presentations by experts in the global fresh produce industry, including Philippe Binard of Freshfel Europe (highlighting **the environmental, economic and social benefits of fruits and vegetables**); Daniel Duguay of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (making the case for **holistic, harmonized policymaking**); Ignacio Antequera of GlobalGAP (discussing the **harmonization of private sustainability certification schemes**); Cheryl Sullivan of International Featured Standards and PAC Global, and Jim Downham of PAC Global (outlining the development of harmonized standards for safe and sustainable packaging worldwide); and David McInnes of the Centre for Agri-Food Benchmarking (Canada) (highlighting the Centre's efforts towards the **development of a sustainability index for fresh produce**). In addition, various Coalition members provided an overview of the main sustainability challenges facing the fresh produce industry in their countries and regions.

Following the webinar, the Global Coalition of Fresh Produce released its new annual policy paper, entitled *An Urgent Call for Holistic, Harmonized Rule- and Policymaking towards True Sustainability in Fresh Produce Value Chains*. The paper calls upon policymakers worldwide to integrate environmental, social and economic considerations into policies and regulations that impact the fruits and vegetables industry. Case studies, such as rulemaking on plastic packaging and the proliferation of sustainability certification schemes, underscore the need for nuanced policy interventions that balance sustainability goals with practical realities. To this end, policymakers should adhere to a number of key principles, outlined in the document: they should embrace a holistic, systems-based approach to rule- and policymaking; adopt a long-term, outcomes-oriented strategy; uphold fairness through objective, science-based and impartial rule formulation; foster alignment between public and private sustainability efforts through multi-stakeholder partnerships; and advocate for the international harmonization of sustainability policies, regulations, and standards across regions and nations.

Ron Lemaire, president of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association and chairman of the Coalition said: "by embracing the principles outlined in our new policy paper, governments can craft and implement policies that promote the adoption of responsible practices while addressing the unique needs and challenges of the sector." He added that such an approach will "empower the fresh fruit and vegetable industry to play a pivotal role in advancing global sustainability objectives, ensuring the ongoing availability of safe, nutritious and sustainable fresh fruits and vegetables for consumers worldwide."

The Coalition's new policy paper focusing on sustainability is available at <https://producecoalition.net/publications/>.

A recording of the webinar of 9 April is accessible at <https://producecoalition.net/webinar/>.

Global Coalition of Fresh Produce

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About the Global Coalition of Fresh Produce

The Global Coalition of Fresh Produce brings together fresh produce associations from around the world, based on their joint vision to create resilient global value chains for fruits and vegetables that bring a myriad of economic, environmental and societal benefits. The Coalition's mission is to voice solutions to address disruptions in global supply chains for fresh produce, including – but not limited to – rising costs, and share and promote best practices towards increased sustainability. The Coalition's current members are Afruibana, the Association of Banana Exporters of Ecuador (AEBE), AUSVEG, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), the Committee Linking Entrepreneurship–Agriculture–Development (COLEAD), Freshfel Europe, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC), the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA), the Southern Hemisphere Association of Fresh Fruit Exporters (SHAFFE) and United Fresh New Zealand. To find out more about the Global Coalition of Fresh Produce, visit our website at www.producecoalition.net or contact us at info@producecoalition.net.

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