

NHC NEWS

A Monthly Bulletin of the Northwest Horticultural Council

GAPs

The United Fresh Produce Association is in the midst of exploring a new national effort aimed at harmonizing the current jumble of good agricultural practices (GAPs) related to fresh produce food safety. Brian Kocher, president of Chiquita North America, has been named chairman of this project which, if launched, will bring the industry together to work on the common goal of reducing unnecessary audit costs while maintaining a strong system for food safety.

An initial conference call of a core group of produce industry leaders was held in mid-August to describe the proposed initiative and gauge support for proceeding with the Northwest Horticultural Council's chairman, Dar Symms, and president, Chris Schlect, participating.

While a final decision was not made in August, it is highly likely that sufficient interest exists in the produce supply chain to fire up this effort. Such support and interest certainly exists at the NHC.

In terms of structure, a small steering committee would lead the GAP harmonization effort with advice from a larger technical working group of industry experts. Dr. Dave Gombas, United's senior vice president for scientific and technical affairs, would be the principal advisor to both the steering committee and technical working group.

More on this proposal will certainly come forth at United's Washington Public Policy Conference to be held September 9-11 in the nation's capital. Both Mr. Schlect and Debbie Carter, the NHC's technical issues manager, plan to attend this annual event.

Separate, although not apart, is current activity in the United States Congress on the issue of produce food safety. With a major bill on this subject passed by the House of Representatives in August, the attention of reform advocates now shifts to the Senate. It is certain that language on GAPs will be considered by legislators as they craft a final bill. This, in turn, may have a direct impact on the many private GAP standards and small armies of private auditors.



An Apple a Day ...

The tree fruit industry is blessed with a multitude of positive popular sayings and cultural references; one example being the universally known phrase "An apple a day keeps the doctor away."

According to *The Phrase Finder*, the origin of this saying may be Wales, where a Pembrokeshire proverb recommended "Eat an apple on going to bed, And you'll keep the doctor from earning his bread." (A cite is given by *The Phrase Finder* to an 1866 publication that first reported this bit of folklore wisdom.)

Such common sayings are often given new spins and twists. For example, Sir Alan Lascelles, counselor to King George VI of England, reported in his diary entry for April 8, 1946, "Dalton is a very unlikeable man when he was Minister of Economic Warfare, he was so unpopular with all his subordinates that they formed an 'Apple Club', each member being obliged to buy an apple in rotation and place it on the doorstep, 'to keep the Doctor away'."

And then there was P.G. Wodehouse who once wrote, "An apple a day, if aimed straight, keeps the doctor away."

Travel

Christian Schlect

September 8-11 – United Fresh Produce Association’s Washington Public Policy Conference and meeting of United’s Government Relations Council, Washington, D.C.

September 24 – Continuing Legal Education seminar on “Intellectual Property for the Non-IP Attorney and annual banquet of the Washington State China Relations Council, Seattle, Washington.

Mark Powers

September 2-5 – Speaker at Asiafruit Congress, Hong Kong, China.

Mike Willett

September 14-18 – Minor Crop Farmer Alliance Technical Committee meeting, Washington, D.C.

Deborah Carter

September 8-11 – United Fresh Produce Association’s Washington Public Policy Conference and meeting of the Food Safety and Technology Council, Washington, D.C.

The pears ripened, and crows flocked to the orchard. From dawn to dusk they attacked in droves, like American bombers over Vietnam in the movies, and I had to charge back and forth among the trees to scare them off. As soon as I drove them from one spot, they gathered in another, and as I chased them, damaged pears kept dropping to the ground. I made a slingshot but kept missing the crows and knocking pears down instead.

Kang Zhengguo

Confessions:

An Innocent Life in Communist China

The Northwest Horticultural Council represents the deciduous tree fruit industry of Idaho, Oregon and Washington on national and international policy matters of interest to growers and shippers. Its full and associate members are:

- *Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers*
- *Idaho Apple Commission*
- *Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission*
- *Pacific Northwest Canned Pear Service*
- *Washington Apple Commission*
- *Washington State Fruit Commission*
- *Washington Tree Fruit Research Comm.*
- *Wenatchee Valley Traffic Assn.*
- *Yakima Valley Growers-Shippers Assn.*

The NHC also advises the Fresh Pear Committee (Portland) on certain issues related to food safety, crisis control and international trade.



- **Christian Schlect**, President
- **Mark Powers**, Vice President
- **Michael J. Willett, Ph.D.**, Vice President for Scientific Affairs
- **Deborah Carter**, Technical Issues Manager

Street address:

105 So. 18th Street

Suite 105

Yakima, Washington 98901 USA

Telephone: (509) 453-3193

Facsimile: (509) 457-7615

E-mail: general@nwhort.org

Web site: www.nwhort.org