

# Consumers to Farm: Changing Patterns in the Fruit and Vegetable Industry

2009 VFIC Conference, August 21, 2009

Omni Hotel-Downtown Austin



## Welcome to the 2009 Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center Conference

Texas is a leading producer of plant food products that contribute to the state's economy. Historically, producers throughout the state and the nation have played a major role in the variety and supply of products from farm to table. Now, recent shifts in the produce industry related to fruit and vegetable consumption has people asking what do consumers want? Fruits packed with more nutrients? Better tasting vegetables? More variety? Texas AgriLife scientists are seeking answers to these questions.

Held in conjunction with the Texas Produce Convention, the one-day conference hosted by the Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center (VFIC), a part of Texas A&M University, was developed for scientists, educators, and consumers. Attendees will gain valuable information on current research through collaborative efforts of the interdisciplinary scientists within VFIC and a better understanding of changing consumer needs and how this affects produce for health from a regional, state and national perspective. Targeted sessions include real-world presentations and applications, a round table with producers, grocers, and restaurateurs discussing the health impacts of fruits and vegetables, current challenges and opportunities, and a research update on fruit and vegetable breeding and the environmental impacts of healthy compounds in produce that may prevent human disease.

The conference offers 7 CPEU hours for registered dietitians and dietetic technicians. The public is invited to view poster presentations and visit with the research scientists.



## Keynote Speaker

### *Dr. Randall E. Westgren*

Randall E. Westgren Al and Mary Agnes McQuinn Chair in Entrepreneurial Leadership  
Professor of Agricultural Economics University of Missouri-Columbia

*Consumer Behavior in Health and Healthy Choices:  
What Strategies for Produce?*

Randall E. Westgren is Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Missouri. He joined the University as the Al and Mary Agnes McQuinn Chair in Entrepreneurial Leadership. Prior to his appointment at Missouri, he was Professor of Business Administration and Professor of Agribusiness Management at the University of Illinois, where he was Director of the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER). Before joining UIUC in 1995, he was Department Chair in Agricultural Economics at McGill University (Montréal, Canada; 1989-1995) and Assistant Professor of Agribusiness in the Levey School of Business, Santa Clara University (California, 1984-1989). Westgren has taught courses in strategic management and food marketing at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as to food industry executives. He lectures regularly in France, Spain, and Canada. His research and outreach focus on firm and inter-firm strategies in the agri-food sector and on structural change in the sector.

Westgren received his Bachelor of Science from Cornell University, MBA from Denver University, and PhD in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University. In 2007, he was named Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the Republic of France.

- 8–10:15 a.m. Poster Presentation. Public is invited to view posters and visit with the scientists.
- 10:30 a.m. Representatives from public schools and the Austin fire department will discuss changes in consumer preferences.
- 11:00 a.m. Keynote address by Dr. Randall E. Westgren, professor of agricultural economics at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Westgren also holds the Al and Mary Agnes McQuinn Chair in Entrepreneurial Leadership.
- 2-3:30 p.m. Round table of producers, grocers and restaurateurs to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the produce industry from the regional, state and national perspectives.
- 4–5:30 p.m. Research update on fruit and vegetable breeding, environmental impacts of healthy compounds in produce, extracting healthy compounds from produce and how these compounds may help prevent human disease.

Detailed information for speakers/sessions can be found on the Center website: <http://vfic.tamu.edu>

## Agenda

Registration - *Lone Star Room - 2nd Floor* 7:30 a.m.

Poster Session - *Bouquet Room - 1st Floor* 8:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Session I - *Lone Star Room* 10:30 a.m.

*Chair, Daniel Leskovar, Assistant Director VFIC*

### **Consumer Paradigm Change**

*Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant Expands Students' Horizons*

Donna Pittenger, Sundown Elementary, Katy ISD

*Consumer Impact of the VIC Kids Program*

Polly Wilson and Holly Strother, Bryan ISD

*Light your health on fire!*

Rip Esselstyn, Austin Fire Department, Station 2

Keynote Address 11:00 a.m.

*Chair, Tim Davis, Department Head, Horticultural Sciences*

*Consumer Behavior in Health and Healthy Choices:*

*What Strategies for Produce?*

Randall E. Westgren Al and Mary Agnes McQuinn Chair

in Entrepreneurial Leadership

Professor of Agricultural Economics

University of Missouri-Columbia

Lunch - *Austin Room* 11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

*Welcome & Introductions, Bhimu Patil, Director, VFIC*

### **Remarks and Stakeholder Recognition**

The Honorable John Cornyn, *United States Senate*

The Honorable Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, *Texas Senate, District 20*

Dr. Vincent Fonseca, *Texas Department of State Health Services*

Dr. Mark A. Hussey, *Vice Chancellor and Dean for Agriculture and Life Sciences, Texas A&M University*

Dr. Jeffrey Seemann, *Vice President for Research, Texas A&M University*

Session II - Lone Star Room

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

**Round Table Discussion**

*The Health Impact of Fruits and Veggies: Perspectives on Challenges and Opportunities*

*Moderator:*

John Sauve, Swardlick Marketing Group

John Suave currently leads the Food & Nutrition Practice at Swardlick Marketing Group--the Maine-based firm that first discovered and launched the antioxidant-ORAC health-based story for the wild blueberry industry and also created the '5-A-Day The Color Way' strategic communication program for the produce industry. With over 40 years in the food industry, Suave has a wealth of marketing and operations experience. Prior to joining Swardlick Marketing Group, John served as Executive Director of the Wild Blueberry Association of North America. He has served as a principal with The Hale Group, a Boston-based management and consulting firm, and held executive positions in operations and marketing for a major restaurant chain and ice cream retailer in the northeast.

*Panelists:*

**Jim Gratzek**, General Mills

**David Gombas**, United Fresh

**Chris Romano**, Whole Foods

**Hugh Topper**, HEB Grocery

**Gary Huddleston**, Kroger

**Richie Jackson**, Texas Restaurant Association

**John Kreger**, Houston Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association

Break

3:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Session III

4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

*Chair, Kendal Hirschi, Assistant Director VFIC*

**Research Updates:**

Genetics/Breeding/Environmental Effects on Bioactive Compounds - *Kevin Crosby*

Bioassay Derived Assays and Isolation and Purification of Bioactives - *K.N.C. Murthy & G.K. Jayaprakasha*

Mechanism of Action Studies Related Disease Prevention - *Cynthia Thomson*





### Contacts:

*Bhimu Patil*

Director, Vegetable & Fruit Improvement Center, Texas AgriLife Research  
Professor, Department of Horticultural Sciences, Texas A&M University  
Email: [b-patil@tamu.edu](mailto:b-patil@tamu.edu)  
979.458.8090 (p)

*Connie Sebesta*

Administrative Coordinator  
Vegetable & Fruit Improvement Center, Texas AgriLife Research  
Email: [csebesta@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:csebesta@ag.tamu.edu)  
979.862.4592 (p)  
979.862.4522 (fax)

*Vegetable & Fruit Improvement Center*

1500 Research Parkway, Suite A120  
College Station, TX 77845  
<http://vfic.tamu.edu>

