

For Immediate Release

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EPC 2024 Leadership Class Examines Logistics Firsthand at Philly Port and Wholesale Market

The sixth Eastern Produce Council (EPC) Leadership Class toured the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market (PWPM) and Holt Logistics on March 19, 2024. “Logistics and distribution are such a crucial part of the produce industry,” said Susan McAleavey Sarlund, EPC Executive Director. “PWPM and Holt Logistics offer significant aspects of the supply chain for consideration in our leadership program.”

The class first toured PWPM, beginning with a presentation from John Vena, President of John Vena Inc. (JVI), on the market’s history and development. “Terminal markets have always played an important role in the distribution of fresh produce,” he said. “But, even with all our technological advancements of this largest, fully refrigerated produce market in the world, we built a vibrant marketplace where customers interact with wholesalers to maintain the hands-on aspect of the produce business.”

The group also heard from Tom Kovacevich, president of TMK Produce. “What makes this market successful, and it’s been true from the beginning, is our cooperative effort,” he said. “The way of the merchants on this market has always been to work together to fulfill orders and move forward. By cooperating, we make all our businesses better.”

The group then walked the concourse of the 700,000 square-foot facility to meet with various merchants. A highlight of the tour was a reconnection with previous EPC Leadership Class participants including Gabrielle Procacci of Procacci Brothers Sales Corp. and Christopher Scotti of John Vena Inc.

After PWPM, the class visited Holt Logistics Corp. at the Gloucester Marine Terminal in Gloucester City, NJ, where Sander Daniels, Business Development Manager, presented a comprehensive summary of the various facilities of the Philadelphia port. Daniels credited the port’s prime location as well as its efficient, fast handling of perishable cargo as contributing to its success and growth. Daniels escorted the participants on a tour of the Del Monte Fresh

Produce facility at the port. During the tour, the class discussed the process for imported products and inspections and was treated to samples of some DelMonte signature items including pineapple and cantaloupe.

The EPC's esteemed program provides a dual-medium learning environment and includes various tours and classroom learning activities throughout the year. "We celebrate another amazing class this year," said McAleavey Sarlund. "We are looking forward to the networking, education and development with each other as we go through this program."

Participants selected for this year's program include: Jackson Brady, Crispy Green; Kate Degan, JOH; James Ferrier, organicgirl; Jessica Huber, America's Grow-a-Row; Devin Hunt, T.M. Kovacevich; Nick Kraus, MamaMia Produce; David Linthicum, Wakefern Food Corp.; Dustin Manento, Four Seasons Produce; Therese Mauch, Zespri; Chantal McCrossin, F&S Fresh Foods; Jason Morris, Oppy; Cassi Nicodemo, Highline Mushrooms; Ryan O'Neill, Four Seasons Produce; Mohini Patel, Wakefern Food Corp.; Michael Porcile, JOH; Jillian Rudolph, John Vena Inc.; and Jessica Ziglar, Oppy Transport.

Also participating in the tour were: Theresa Lowden, President of the EPC and Executive VP, Produce and Floral at JOH; Vic Savanello, VP, Merchandising & Business Development for S. Katzman Produce Distributors and a former EPC President; and, Al Murray, EPC Board Member.