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**For Immediate Release**

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### **FPAA Members Name Matt Mandel as Member of the Year**

**Nogales, AZ** (November 7, 2022) — During the annual meeting of the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas (FPAA) on November 1st, the association’s president, Lance Jungmeyer, presented the FPAA Member of the Year Award to Matt Mandel from SunFed. The Member of the Year is nominated by FPAA members and is defined as someone who goes above and beyond in working for the betterment of the industry and its membership.

Matt Mandel is Vice President of Finance and Legal of SunFed. Matt attended the University of Arizona, and after a few years, he came into the family business, earned his Masters at Eller and built his own family roots. He has a warm and welcoming personality, and a great sense of humor, with one member commenting how he is never without “a bit of dry wit.”

In acceptance of the award, Matt stated, “I’d like to dedicate this great honor to my peers at SunFed whose tireless work and flexibility have allowed me to dedicate time to working on behalf of the industry I love. I am humbled to walk in the shadows of giants and hope I can continue to contribute to making the FPAA stronger for future generations to come.”

Mr. Mandel has worked in the produce industry for 11 years and has served on the Arizona Governors Rural Business Development Advisory Council. He currently sits on the International Fresh Produce Association’s Grower/Shipper Council and the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Cruz County Board of Directors. His continuous support and participation have managed to further the industry relationships with both state and national political representatives, as well as with FDA, USDA, Homeland Security and Commerce. Mr. Mandel has been key to advance the interest of the produce industry.

Matt is a Past Chairman of the FPAA. Reflecting on when Matt was chairman, another FPAA peer really appreciated how he thanked his father Danny for his tutoring, mentoring and support. The person who made this nomination said: “This tells me how humble and grateful he is with the people who have helped him.” Matt’s efforts have been so consistently strong for so many years. A fellow board member noted his constant engagement, commenting how he prioritizes the FPAA in his schedule.

Recently Matt has been on the FPAA committee guiding the efforts of the Trade Fellowship/Trade Practicum with the Rogers College of Law at U of A. “While we face constant threats, this strategic initiative informs and guides our legal and trade strategies,

President of FPAA, Lance Jungmeyer stated. “Matt sees trends, and he positions himself to contribute because he wants the best for his business, just like you want the best for your business. He figures, we’re all in this together, let’s roll up our sleeves.”

One FPAA staff member stated, “He is someone who always gives of his time and expertise for the industry. He jumps in to lead teams in meetings in DC, he joins committees, he gets involved.” Another staff member, who has been on many trips with this year’s honoree, said, “He is well regarded. He is a natural leader looking for the best interest of the industry. He has participated in numerous meetings in Mexico City. He was the 1st FPAA representative at AHIFORES.”

President of FPAA, Lance Jungmeyer, also commented, “Thinking about it, I would need more fingers to count the number of trips I have been with him to DC. He is a great communicator who knows FPAA issues through and through, and you can see it in meeting after meeting on the Hill, at FDA, CBP, USDA ... you name it.”

Some of Matt’s other distinctions include the *Rising Star Award* awarded by the Produce News and the *40 under 40 Award* from Produce Business. Matt seems to be everywhere, but where he likes to be best is with his beloved family. He is happily married with two feisty children and an even feistier blue heeler.

Each year’s honoree is presented with a custom metal sculpture made by Tucson artist Matt Harper. Prior honorees of the FPAA Member of the Year Award include:

2020-21 – “The Essential Worker”  
2019-20 – Jose Antonio Martinez of Divine Flavor  
2018-19 – Jimmy Mungia of Del Campo Supreme  
2017-18 – Bobby Bennen Jr. & Gerado Ritz  
2016-17 – Chris Ciruli of Ciruli Brothers  
2015-16 -Sabrina Hallman of Sierra Seed Company  
2014-15 - Scott Vandervoet of Vandervoet & Associates

Photo Captions: President of FPAA, Lance Jungmeyer (left); Matt Mandel of SunFed (right) accepting the Member of the Year Award

About the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas:

The FPAA is a nonprofit trade association headquartered in Nogales, Arizona, that represents over 120 U.S. member companies involved in growing, packing, sales and transportation of fresh fruits and vegetables grown in Mexico. The FPAA leverages the efforts of private companies and partner-associations to increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetable from Mexico.