

The Real Deal



INFRA's 2017-2018 Board of Directors (L to R) Terry Brett, Aaron Gottschalk, Michael Kanter, Donna Layburn, Adam Stark, Corinne Shindelar, Paku Misra, John Pittari, Kimberly Hallinan, Aaron Gottlieb, Mylese Tucker. Not pictured: Cheryl Hughes

More, Faster, and Stronger

by Corinne Shindelar, CEO

Just when we think we can't move any faster or absorb more changes in the landscape of organic food retailing, we are handed yet another marketplace disruption. While I was enjoying a long vacation off the grid in Madagascar, Amazon announced that it had bid to purchase Whole Foods Market. Now *that's* a game changer! And one that is going to be a really fun, long discussion on what this means to you, me, and the supply chain we love.

I returned to the office on July 3, after being out for the month of June. The annual conference was a few weeks away and I knew that I had to be prepared to address the members and supply chain partners on the implications of Amazon's announcement. So, the evening of the community celebration with over 225 attendees at dinner, representing 93 members, our primary distributors, and our advocacy partners, I talked about this along with what we as INFRA had to celebrate.

I had the great fortune to thank our sponsors for supporting our very enjoyable evening, the INFRA team of 30, who continually work on behalf of our members with commitment to success, and the 11 individuals who serve with dedication on our Board of Directors. Without this leadership and commitment from our community, we would not be where we are today. We are fortunate to have industry supporters who see our success as an integral part of their own. We have done and continue to do what many said was not possible.

We bring together 243 independent retailers (who take great pride in being independent), representing 366 store locations across the country, through collaboration to forge a sustainable future.

I'm not sure that our four major conference sponsors would have ever envisioned that we would be able to aggregate our volume under 17 different programs that continue to support our original purpose of sharing best practices in operations, marketing our uniqueness together, and aggregating our purchasing power.

Community Celebration Sponsors



S U M M E R 2 0 1 7

I had the opportunity to remind members present at the community celebration of how very important it was for everyone to show up at the tabletop and build the relationships with our industry partners. Without these partnerships we can't deliver three quarters of what INFRA delivers to its members.

This aggregated voice of INFRA we created has never counted more than it does today in light of the changes the Amazon merger will bring. It counts more and more every day, and we need every INFRA member to show up, support the INFRA programs, and leverage the INFRA voice. We have to be careful to not fall into the trap of thinking that "my operation won't be missed if I don't participate because there are so many INFRA members". Every voice and purchase counts; we need every member to step up if we are going to be able to support unique and first to market opportunities. Liken it to what it could look like if the 99% of the eligible American voter showed up to vote. An INFRA member's purchases and participation in INFRA programs can be likened to that level of importance for our long-term survival.

There is a reason Amazon wants Whole Foods. They know the customer inside and out when it comes to data, what they don't have is the customer experience that we deliver every day in our stores. While we have no idea how this merger will impact our businesses, there is no doubt that it will. The supply chain has not experienced a systemic shift of this nature since Walmart launched its supersize store formats and low-price model in July 1962.

Sharing best practices to improve managing our businesses is no longer enough. Now is the time to start visioning and committing to executing the future business model. This is a grand opportunity for INFRA members to really lead the food movement. It's hard to get out from behind the noise and focus on where to go next, to think about what is the best direction to take "my" independent business while at the same time collaborating with INFRA.

I am excited to work with the Board of Directors, the INFRA staff, and the membership on this big voice that is INFRA (that really comes from each and every individual) can create a whole new future of brick and mortar retailing, grounded in what we value in the journey of a holistic food movement.

Conference Sponsors



INFRA Events at EXPO East!

Going to EXPO East? Connect with your Association and your peers! Please RSVP at <http://www.naturalfoodretailers.net/2017-expo-east-rsvp> by Aug 29 to ensure we have appropriate space and food for everyone.

Thurs, Sept 14, 6:15pm to 9:00pm

Catherine Marie Boat Cruise and Dinner - sponsored by KeHE and INFRA

Departs from the Inner Harbor, a short walk from the Convention Center. Boat boards at 6:15 and leaves promptly at 6:30pm. Full Dinner on a three-story yacht cruising the historic Baltimore harbor at sunset. If we receive an overwhelming response, we will limit attendance to three people per store for the boat cruise.

Fri, Sept 15, 8:30am to 9:45am

Member Morning Breakfast Room 343. Open to all INFRA retailers!

Walk the Floor

If we planned floor walks with INFRA staff and other INFRA retailers, would you be interested in participating in a Grocery or Wellness walk? Let us know, and if there is enough interest we will contact you directly.

Don't forget to bring your badge holders!



The Real Deal

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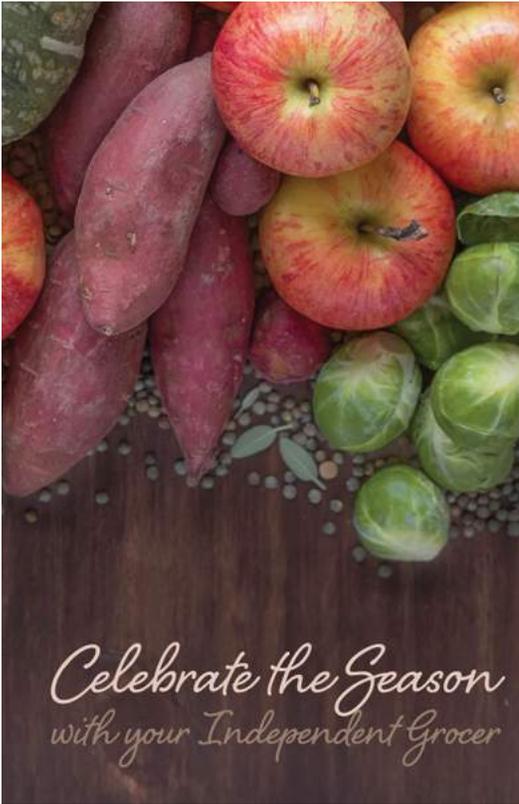
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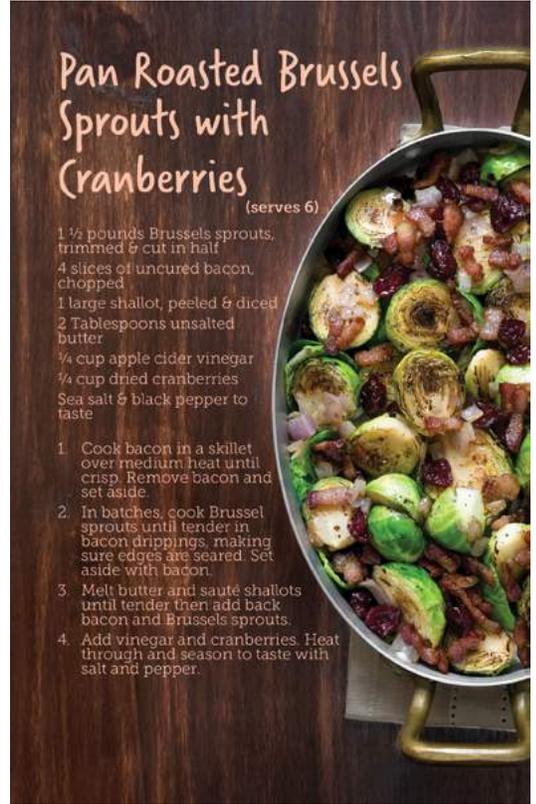
Celebrate the Season Locally

We have a lot to be *thankful* for here at INFRA! Too soon?

...It is never too soon to start thinking about your holiday planning; before your calendar goes into overdrive, start your preparation now!

To inspire and engage your customers, INFRA is putting together a Holiday Toolkit for you to use in combination with your store marketing and foodservice. We will be sending you the toolkit the first week of September, to use and tailor to fit your stores needs during the month of November.

Here are some sneak peeks of the brochure! Contact Meggie at msmith@infretailers.com for more information.



Pan Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Cranberries (serves 6)

- 1 1/2 pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed & cut in half
- 4 slices of uncured bacon, chopped
- 1 large shallot, peeled & diced
- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- Sea salt & black pepper to taste

1. Cook bacon in a skillet over medium heat until crisp. Remove bacon and set aside.
2. In batches, cook Brussel sprouts until tender in bacon drippings; making sure edges are seared. Set aside with bacon.
3. Melt butter and sauté shallots until tender; then add back bacon and Brussels sprouts.
4. Add vinegar and cranberries. Heat through and season to taste with salt and pepper.



ART is a Toolbox

Do you believe in the value of good training? Do you want well-informed, confident team members representing your store? Do your customers look to you and your team for industry insight and discerning product selection? If you responded yes to any of these questions, you should definitely consider ART.

ART is a toolbox. We all have a hammer, screwdriver, pliers, and more tucked away somewhere. We have all these tools at hand in case we need them, and sooner or later, we do. Do you need your team to better embrace customer service? Brush up on visual merchandising best practices? Gain insight into a brand's quality assurances or new product line? Would one of your team get a promotion if only they had a better handle on margins and pricing? Get the toolbox and fix it.

ART is an amazing resource offering two dozen (and soon to be more) courses in the Central Library and includes the option to create your own store-specific content. There are intro courses on organic certification; practical courses on customer service, food safety, and visual merchandising; courses discussing biodynamic agriculture as well as the approach of GMOs 2.0; vendor-sponsored courses profiling brands you may carry. It is a wealth of information, but don't let the scale of ART deter you from taking advantage of this opportunity. Use what you need, when you need it. Not every job calls for a reciprocating saw (if only they all did!), but it's still good to know you have one.

Take a tour of the program, find out how ART can fit into your team development plan, and just like your other toolbox, once you have it, you'll find yourself using it all the time.

Contact Greg at gnorthrop@infretailers.com or call (651) 888-4713 for more information.

New Courses in ART

- Course 204:** The Paleo Diet, provided by Epic Provisions
- Course 409:** KeVita Sparkling Probiotic Drinks
- Course 410:** Organic India
- Course 411:** Natural Factors
- Course 412:** MyChelle Dermaceuticals



Welcome New INFRA Staff!

Terri Nelson joined INFRA on July 5, 2017 as the Executive Assistant. In this role, she supports Corinne and the INFRA Board of Directors with everything from travel and logistics, to minutes and task responsibilities, to Board Meetings and other projects as they arise.

Terri comes from a printing company in Minnesota, where she spent 30+ years as it grew from INFRA's size to a global 5,000+ employee organization. She held many roles in leadership, project management, and business consulting and looks forward to applying all of her experience to supporting INFRA's leadership, particularly during this growth phase of the organization.

She works with INFRA's Operations team and the Department Directors on projects, as well as supporting tasks from Corinne. At present, she's assisting the CEO and Board of Directors in their work supporting the growing INFRA membership and staff, but she foresees becoming an access point to the CEO for members and staff alike.

Terri finds the mission of INFRA and its members inspiring, and the organization's growth exciting. "There is a lot the independent natural retailers bring to communities across the US, and I'm very happy to be a part of supporting them."



Terri enjoying the outdoors



Ella and Ruthanne

Ruthanne Atkinson began work as INFRA's Office Coordinator on May 15, 2017. In her work, she facilitates smooth operations at the INFRA office by answering and routing phone calls, ordering office supplies, supporting billing and accounts receivable, improving office systems and organization, and putting together the INFRA staff newsletter.

Ruthanne has worked in natural foods since graduating college in 2011. She worked as a farmhand and administrator in MN before moving to Birmingham, AL to manage a farm-to-table restaurant. She also worked as a farmer's market program manager/administrator before coming back to MN to join INFRA's ranks.

As a member of the Operations team, Ruthanne supports the INFRA staff with the tools and support necessary to do their best work. She creates systems to improve organization and efficiency in the office, and supports technology needs so that the staff can focus on supporting members.

You might encounter Ruthanne when calling INFRA's main office number, or if she's supporting financial operations or special projects like the recent LBMX rollout.

Growing up, Ruthanne's mother needed to eat organic due to health concerns, and they had to travel 3 hours round trip to go grocery shopping. She believes that everyone should have easy access to healthy foods, and is excited to take part in INFRA's work building a robust national network of independent natural food retailers.

NETWORK Update

As INFRA's first purchasing program, NETWORK Services has been supporting INFRA members with operational supplies since 2007. NETWORK is a member-owned organization similar to INFRA. Their membership represents independent distributors of disposable and janitorial supplies across the country. By aggregating our purchasing through NETWORK, INFRA is able to drive costs on a variety of disposable products, including the Buy Fresh Buy Local brown paper bags.

Because this program's focus is on front-end and food service departments, the Fresh team has been working with NETWORK to look for opportunities for improvement since the beginning of 2017. Stay tuned for a program relaunch that will include an increased "INFRA custom catalog" of operational supplies, a newly formatted price list, and a revamped NETWORK website featuring negotiated items.

We aim to increase product offerings to members while creating a user-friendly experience for the program. Stay tuned for more information. We hope the relaunch will lead to increased benefits to members and increased participation in the program!

Celebrate Non-GMO Month

About 80% of packaged food sold in North American grocery stores contains GMOs? You can help your shoppers avoid them by looking for the Butterfly! October is #NonGMOMonth and there are many ways to get involved and celebrate.

- Get your team excited about celebrating Non-GMO month by helping them understand the facts about GMOs and providing them with training and education.
- Make it easy for your shoppers to learn about Non-GMO verified products by setting up a table with educational materials.
- Engage your shoppers with endcap displays and use shelf talkers to call out all your verified products.
- Submit a press release to your local media and publish an article in your store newsletter.



The possibilities are endless! To get started and get access to exclusive marketing and merchandising materials for Non-GMO month, register your store with The Non-GMO Project's Retailer Program. Registration is free! Learn more and register here: <https://www.nongmoproject.org/get-involved/retailers/non-gmo-month/>. Non-GMO Project will do their best to ensure that any retailers that register prior to 8/31 will receive their Non-GMO month collateral in time for Non-GMO Month.

And More New INFRA Staff!

Nick Auzenne took on the mantle of INFRA's Purchasing Promotions Manager on July 10, 2017. He works with the Purchasing team and vendor partners to broker promotions on products for member stores to execute in store. In addition to creating these promotional opportunities, he's working with the INFRA team to help our members stay competitive in the market.



Nick enjoying the outdoors

Nick has 16 years of natural foods experience on a retail level, starting at the Wedge Co-op, where his passion for local, healthy, and sustainable foods was sparked. His experiences there allowed him to transition into a career in the natural foods industry. Recently he worked on the Linden Hills Food Co-op store remodel, an exciting opportunity to put his skills as a Purchasing Manager to the test.

Nick will be working in conjunction with the Retail Services team to better understand store needs and priorities surrounding in-store promotions, the Marketing and Communications team on communicating promotions, and the Purchasing team in continuing to expand promotional opportunities for our member stores. He'll be working with membership in maximizing promotional opportunities, realizing lift from these efforts and continuing to help differentiate INFRA members from the competition.

Nick is excited to work with people who support the mission of a sustainable future. "It is only through our collaborative efforts that we will continue to make positive change in the food industry."



A rescue pig and Troy

Troy Bond was hired as INFRA's Director of Member Relations on July 10, 2017. His primary role is supporting Region Managers as they engage members' participation in INFRA Programs, and to lead Region Managers to educate and inspire members to use best practices. Troy learned from members at the Annual Conference that the more

members lean into INFRA for support, the more successful they become.

The foundation for Troy's work in natural foods comes from working as a Stress Management Specialist with patients in the Dr. Dean Ornish Program to Reverse Heart Disease, an experimental program at Mercy Hospital in Des Moines, IA. He observed patients with serious heart disease make incredible improvements after changing diet and lifestyle.

He began in the industry as an independent natural foods owner/operator, and has had leadership and operations experience including as a Store Team Leader at Whole Foods Market, earning Regional and National All*Star Awards, turning around a challenged cooperative, working as a category manager for natural foods within a conventional grocery chain, and as a consultant.

Troy will partner with departments and INFRA team members to help members who need guidance operating their business or gathering useful information. He communicates directly with all four Region Managers to increase member awareness of consumer and industry trends, and identify opportunities for improvement in our programs. It's his goal this year to find more ways to strengthen the members within each region.

Troy moved with his family from Iowa City for this position. He feels fortunate to be in a position whose main objective is to help members succeed in their life's work.

Your Free INFRA Member Owner Benefits with savings4members

Your INFRA membership includes access to exclusive

SAVINGS4MEMBERS™

member benefits through savings4members™. These programs are completely free and can save your business substantial amounts of time and money. INFRA partnered with savings4members (formerly BizUnite) in 2009 to offer member benefits including: credit card processing, employee benefits, HR and hiring, payroll, wireless services, shipping, fuel discounts, and more. It couldn't be easier. Simply select the vendors you want to work with and you'll be contacted to get set up with great discounts. There are no long forms or red tape, just unbeatable savings.

Here's How to Start Saving:

- View your member benefits at: <http://infra.savings4members.com>
- Select the programs you want to learn more about
- Enter your contact info and click "Request Information"

Support INFRA and reduce your bottom line at the same time. Savings4members™ is here to help you succeed! Contact your INFRA Savings Consultant, Dan Pramis at (603) 628-2333 or at dpramis@savings4members.com.

2017 INFRA Annual Conference

202 Attendees representing 92 Members joined the INFRA team at the Annual Conference this year in downtown Minneapolis. This year's theme, "Inspire. Engage. Execute. Managing Change in a Changing Marketplace" worked with the many ways change affects an independent natural food retailer and the ways we can learn, succeed, and differentiate ourselves.

INFRA collects evaluation forms not only about the overall conference experience but also for each of the breakout sessions. This feedback is invaluable to the INFRA team as we plan the next year's conference, we take your suggestions into account when making decisions about content, location, speakers, etc. This year's conference received a 94% overall rating. You can read some of our feedback below.

What was the most valuable aspect of the conference?

Networking
Inspirational Talks
Zingerman's

Peer Sharing
Practical Tools
Workshops

Biodynamics
Trends
Ideas to Take Home

Tabletop

Awards

2017 Peer Awards

- 2017 Store of the Year Award:*
The Turnip Truck, Nashville, TN
- 2017 Innovation Award:*
Good Earth Natural Foods, Fairfax, CA
- 2017 Service to the Industry Award:*
Aaron Gottschalk, Wildberries, Arcata, CA

2017 Sales Growth Awards

- Large Store:*
Kimberton Whole Foods, Malvern Location, Malvern, PA
- Medium Store:*
Common Crow Natural Health, Gloucester, MA
- Small Store:*
Roots Natural Foods, Leominster, MA



Palm Done Right: Palm 101

Palm oil is an extremely versatile and pervasive ingredient found in everything from food and cosmetics to cleaning products. However, palm oil that is not grown sustainably — known as “conflict palm” — wreaks havoc on the environment, animals and communities. This includes large-scale destruction of forest biodiversity as well as loss of critical habitat for animals including endangered species. Additional impacts such as soil erosion, air pollution, soil and water pollution and climate change are also damaging.

What is palm oil and where does it come from?

Palm is a tropical oil that comes from the fruit of the African oil palm, *Elaeis Guineensis*, one of the two main fruit-bearing tropical palm species (the other being *Cocos Nucifera*, which produces coconuts).

Palm Oil is a plant-based saturated fat, and can be used in a multitude of ways, in cooking, baking, manufactured food and personal care products. It adds stability, emulsification and a smooth mouthfeel/texture to products, and is a solution for brands and products looking for a clean ingredient profile, without trans fats. 40% of the fat content of Palm Oil is monounsaturated fat, the same fat in olive oil. Palm fruit oil and red palm oil, or oil resulting when the fruit is pressed, contain antioxidants and beta-carotenes, and has a mid-range smoke point and nutty taste that make it a terrific cooking oil for baking, sautéing and medium heat frying.

The people behind the international campaign, Palm Done Right™ are committed to a better way to produce palm oil. Done right, palm is the highest yielding vegetable oil on the planet, producing 5-10 times more oil per acre



compared to other commodity oils (like soybean or Canola). Sustainable palm has a role in nurturing animals, people, communities, and the environment. Our goal is to raise awareness, increase education and maximize the practice of growing palm for good.

Interested in becoming a Palm Done Right partner? Contact Susan Fecko at sfecko@blackdogstudiopr.com.

Stay tuned for our upcoming webinar this November, Understanding Palm Oil: The Issues, Solutions and Benefits.

Watch our video to learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vc0uvc9YJ6U>

At-Your-Service Software

We're happy to announce that INFRA entered into a pricing and service agreement with food costing software company At-Your-Service Software, Inc. Their software includes the desktop product, CostGuard, and the cloud-based product, reciProfity.

As retailers continue to emphasize foodservice as a profitable, fast-growth area which can provide compelling offerings to customers, food costing software can assist in working more efficiently and maximizing profit. At-Your-

Service Software helps retailers optimize their prepared foods business. Both products provide recipe pricing, nutritional analysis, and allergen tracking. Additionally, reciProfity includes conversion and yield data from The Book of Yields, which saves retailers time while increasing costing accuracy.

For more information about the negotiated pricing and support discount, software features, and contact information, please visit the At-Your-Service Software, Inc. page in the MOA. For detailed information about the software, contact Matthew Starobin directly.

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At INFRA's Conference, we asked some of our members what their goals were for 2018. Here's what they said!



Victoria Bradley, Robert Bradley, and Adele Smith
Ramona Family Naturals Market, Ramona, CA
"We'd like to win one of INFRA's sales growth awards at next year's conference."



Stephen Mitchell
Good Earth Organic and Natural Foods, Fairfax, CA
"In 2018, I'd like to get caught up with my 2017 task list."

Calendar of Events

August

- Aug 29 1pm Grocery Category Review: Entrees & Mixes (Shelf Stable)
- Aug 31 3pm Grocery Category Review: Entrees & Mixes (Shelf Stable)

September

- Sept 4 Labor Day (INFRA Offices Closed)
- Sept 12 November 2017 Estimates Due
- Sept 14-16 EXPO East, Baltimore, MD
- Sept 19 1pm Grocery Category Review: Cheese
- Sept 21 3pm Grocery Category Review: Cheese
- Sept 24-26 West Fresh/Foodservice Intensive hosted by New Leaf Valley Stores Felton, CA

October

- Oct 3 1pm Wellness Category Review Hair Care
- Oct 5 3pm Wellness Category Review Hair Care
- Oct 11-13 Zingerman's Training Opportunity Ann Arbor, MI
- Oct 17 12pm Marketing Sharing Series Marketing Efforts and How to Work as a Team in a Time of Change
- Oct 24-25 NE Fresh/Foodservice Intensive hosted by Roots Natural Foods Leominster, MA
- Oct 24 1pm Grocery Category Review Cookies and Snacks
- Oct 26 3pm Grocery Category Review Cookies and Snacks
- Oct 26-28 CE/SE Fresh/Foodservice Intensive hosted by Mama Jean's Natural Market Springfield, MO

Congratulations!

- Meggie McCauley is now Meggie Smith!
- INFRA's Marketing Manager was married on July 29, 2017.
- Many Happy Tidings, Chris and Meggie!



INFRA Staff Anniversaries Quarter 3

Lindy Bannister	Region Manager	Five Years
Matt Ryan	Retail Services Manager	Five Years
Greg Northrop	Education Lead	Three Years
Brian Cole	Region Manager	Three Years
Sarah Shindelar	Consumer Marketing Coordinator	Two Years
Barb Lutz	HR Specialist	One Year



INFRA's 2017-2018 Board of Directors knows how to have fun, too.