

## **ISGA 2012 Breakout Session 1**

**August 22, 2012**

Discussion of **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)** to the Sprout Industry as a whole and specifically to the International Sprout Growers Association (ISGA) as identified in the convention brainstorming session:

### **STRENGTHS**

- Year-round fresh food
- Local production and distribution
- Powerful symbol
- Multitude of different nutrients
- Community Employment
- Speed velocity of production
- Health benefits
- Variety
- Easily metabolized
- Attractive
- Yummy
- Potential for low environmental impact

### **BUILD ON STRENGTHS**

- Communication of benefits
- Collaboration among growers
- Promote nutrition research
- Discourage unrealistic shelf-life claims

### **WEAKNESSES**

- No guaranteed kill step (?)
- Language barriers and time zones
- Lack of marketing & professional promotion
- Public perception
- Fragmented industry
- Inconsistent quality
- Inconsistent regulations
- Governments don't work together
- In competition with addictive foods

### **STRENGTHEN THE WEAKNESSES**

- A global promotional message (i.e. YouTube, Facebook)
- Improved publicity and promotion (increase Marketing to compete with addictive food)

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Global classification of pathogens (stay away from a global count standard)
- More countries could participate in the ISGA – for example Koreans are one of the highest consumers of sprouts per capita. The ISGA would benefit from having the Koreans in the membership.
- More sharing of information and learning from each other.

## **MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES**

- Government to provide correct information. Request the government to align information with other nations (i.e. E coli count confused with pathogens).
- Distribute the proceedings of ISGA conference to other countries.
- ISGA may need to separate cooked vs. uncooked consumptions.

## **THREATS**

- Media
- Outbreak
- Regulators
- Careless Growers
- Human Error
- Contaminated Seed
- Distribution Chain
- Packaging and Handling
- Industry Size

## **REDUCE THREATS**

- Educate – media, regulators, distribution chain, and growers.
- Communicate – internal and external.
- Interactive opportunities for meetings with regulators and growers.
- Work with other organizations to gain strength.

## ISGA 2012 Breakout Session 2

August 23, 2012

Discussion of the benefits and areas for improvement in the International Sprout Growers Association (ISGA) as identified in the membership brainstorming session:

### What does the ISGA do really well?

- Outreach is a strength/Network/long-term relationships
- Organization of an annual convention that is truly *international*
  - Provides a platform for connecting/networking/education
- Longevity of members
- Despite economic fluctuations / tenacity in business
- Value of the food to the 'world'
- Work well in the USA with regulatory agencies – to create rules, regulations, and implementation

### What benefits does the ISGA currently provide?

- As a spokesperson to government agencies
- Networking resource
- Newsletter
- Contact information / Directory of members and suppliers
- Support and expertise for industry
- Annual convention
- Education – Food safety, nutrition, research issues important to industry nationally and globally
- Exposure to new products and equipment
- Opportunity to work together to strengthen industry
- Copy of sanitary guidelines
- UPC codes/nutritional information
- Friendship

### How can the ISGA strengthen the existing benefits?

- More members, more input, more energy, more funds.
- More education tools for public and members
- Marketing
- Share experiences in crisis management
- More liaison with government
- More interaction/activity at convention
- More membership participation
- Busy schedules = challenges
- Need to instill a sense that ISGA is integral to the future of the industry and our businesses
- ISGA or government safety seal of approval

- Provide a recommended list of product liability carrier familiar with sprouted foods
- Provide a PR kit to new members to help promote their business locally
- Guidelines to prepare for a food safety inspection
- Online member forum or facebook page

**In what areas could the ISGA improve?**

- Marketing/PR
- Get Oprah, Jamie Oliver, Michelle Obama, Rachel Ray on the sprout bandwagon
- Use the science
- Use existing resources such as United Fresh Cut, PMA
- Sponsor with products
- Market research – consumer studies
- Develop kids' information package for schools, etc.
- Explain the risk
- Validated treatment: standard validation protocol
- Diplomatic Assertiveness
- Support sprout related training programs