



# CELEBRATING FOOD HEROES

ANNUAL REPORT  
2020

A YEAR OF  
RESILIENCY



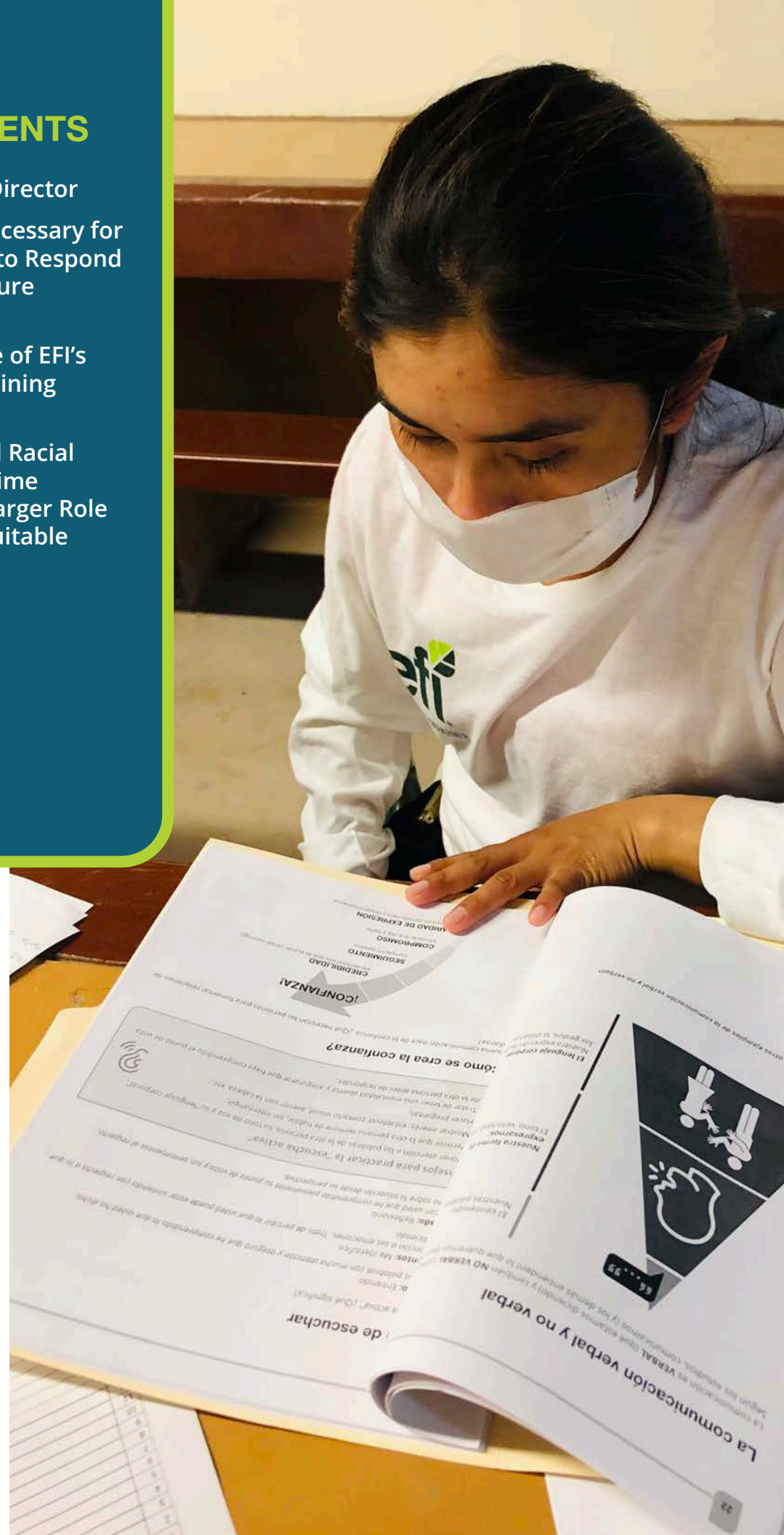
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 From the Executive Director
- 5 EFI Provides Skills Necessary for Farming Operations to Respond to Pandemic and Future Challenges
- 7 COVID Shapes Future of EFI's Leadership Team Training Program
- 9 COVID Pandemic and Racial Justice Movement Prime Consumers to Play Larger Role in Demanding an Equitable Food System
- 11 Reach & Impact
- 12 News & Notes
- 14 Financial Report
- 16 Donors
- 16 Leadership



ANNUAL REPORT  
2020

A YEAR OF  
RESILIENCY



# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

None of us will soon forget 2020, even if we try! Amid the tragedy and disruption of a devastating pandemic, the United States was also torn by a painful wave of racial reckoning and the most divisive presidential election of the last 150 years. Though much work remains on the path to the more just and equitable society all people deserve, at least we can see hopeful signs that the end of our public health emergency is in sight.

The COVID-19 crisis was just beginning as I wrote my introduction to EFI's 2019 Annual Report. At that point we could not have imagined over 600,000 deaths in the United States or over 4 million around the world. The pandemic stretched health care systems and global supply chains to their limits, but it also highlighted the courage and resilience of the essential workers who, despite personal risk, kept our hospitals open and brought fresh food to our tables.

EFI salutes the women and men who continue to brave the pandemic every day to sustain the nation's food supply. The harvesters and packers, the growers who employ them, the supermarket workers and delivery drivers: everyone in the supply chain who ensures that the rest of us can eat. It is EFI's profound hope that the widespread appreciation earned by these essential workers over the past year will endure into the future so that they are accorded the dignity and respect they have always deserved for their hard work.

Like many other nonprofits and small businesses, EFI was hit hard by the onset of the pandemic last March. Travel restrictions wiped out what would have been our biggest year yet of training and certification, which put a large dent in our earned revenue. Nonetheless, inspired by the example of the essential workers whose skill, voice and agency we seek to elevate, EFI showed resilience and commitment in rising to the challenge.

Our workforce development facilitators adapted EFI's in-person curriculum to deliver virtual trainings for farmworkers and managers. Our certification team developed a remote auditing protocol to maintain



Photo by Shiloh Strong

**EFI salutes the women and men who continue to brave the pandemic every day to sustain the nation's food supply. The harvesters and packers, the growers who employ them, the supermarket workers and delivery drivers: everyone in the supply chain who ensures that the rest of us can eat.**



**FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | CONTINUED**

verification of EFI Standards on farms seeking certification. Our business development team continued to line up clients, resulting in an incredibly busy start to 2021. Our marketing team gathered best practices on physical distancing measures from EFI worker-manager teams, designed culturally appropriate education materials on COVID-19 prevention for workers and shared them with the entire produce industry. And through it all, our operations staff kept vital systems running, managed financial constraints, and provided colleagues with regular updates on pandemic measures.

EFI has learned from this experience. Some of the adaptations we made during the pandemic will become permanent as we relaunch our core training and certification products by the end of 2021. Lessons learned from virtual skill-building may help us scale in the future. We are rethinking our revenue model and exploring new ways to engage retailers and consumers in expanding EFI's influence. And we see new opportunities to position EFI as an innovation hub to meet the produce industry's labor needs over the next decade by helping to build a more skilled and professional workforce.

Though 2020 will forever be remembered as a year of challenge and loss, EFI has emerged stronger and more committed than ever to our mission of transforming agriculture and the lives of farmworkers through multistakeholder collaboration, worker voice and agency, and commitment to continuous improvement. We could not have made it through 2020 without the support of our donors, our retail and grower partners and the more than 59,000 workers now employed on farms in the EFI certification process. And as we emerge from the pandemic, EFI looks forward to working with you and our many stakeholders toward a better future for all the essential workers in our food system!

Warm regards,



Peter O'Driscoll, Executive Director



**EFI Provides Skills Necessary for Farming Operations to Respond to Pandemic and Future Challenges**

In early 2021, EFI surveyed fresh produce companies to discover learnings, skills, resources and processes they found valuable during the pandemic. The goal was to understand and share lessons that would help the industry respond to an increasingly volatile marketplace, given labor shortages, weather challenges, international competition, and evolving retail requirements and consumer demands. The pandemic lessons identified through this survey included themes of collaboration, communication and human development – many of the core principles of the EFI Program.

Early in the pandemic certified growers reported the benefits of having invested in the EFI Program, which strengthened their communication networks, problem-solving skills and worker-management collaboration so that they were able to quickly respond to changing safety and health requirements, often before official guidance was available.

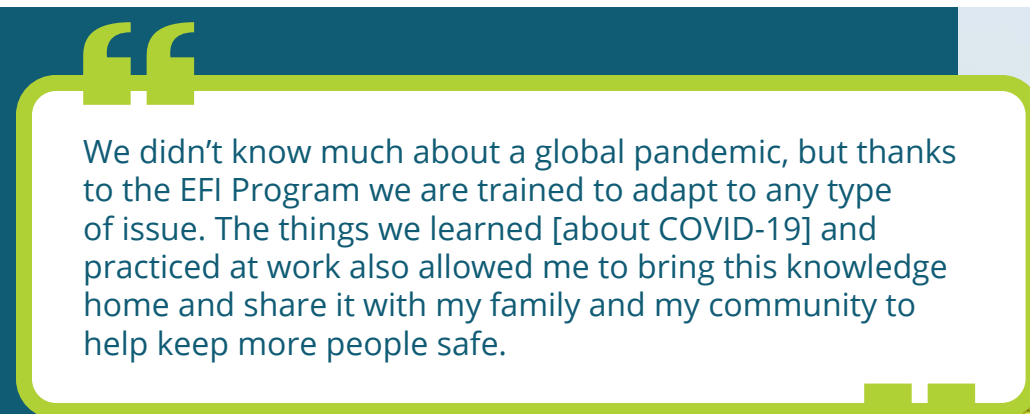
“As the pandemic began, it really showed us how much our communication networks had evolved with EFI, and the team played a critical part in protecting our workers and continuing to serve our customers,” noted Vic Smith, CEO of JV Smith Companies.

A year later, the survey of 50 fresh produce companies, primarily outside of EFI's network, revealed that those same skills and attributes were necessary to successfully navigate the pandemic, a fact that warrants increased focus on workforce development for the fresh produce industry.



Being called an essential worker makes me feel important and necessary. Thanks to my work, people can have food on their tables. It makes me feel vital in their lives. I do this work for my family and it's because of them that I wake up early and get home late so I can support my kids. I'm incredibly proud of being part of EFI and that's what I tell my children.

**Eduardo Aviña**, Gatekeeper, Misionero Vegetables



We didn't know much about a global pandemic, but thanks to the EFI Program we are trained to adapt to any type of issue. The things we learned [about COVID-19] and practiced at work also allowed me to bring this knowledge home and share it with my family and my community to help keep more people safe.

**Juan Perez**, Harvester and EFI Leadership Team Member, Andrew & Williamson Fresh Produce/GoodFarms

**STAFFING | CONTINUED**

Long before the first cases of COVID-19, EFI was helping farms develop a skilled workforce and a formal place for worker-manager collaboration through our Leadership Team model. But during those early days of the pandemic, when each farm was trying to create and communicate health and safety protocols quickly before official guidance was available, EFI realized that we were well-positioned to help both our certified growers and the food industry as a whole. EFI-certified farming operations were uniquely positioned to quickly respond and create solutions that integrated worker perspective. As Leadership Teams solved their own workplace safety challenges, EFI staff actively supported them with real-time feedback loops and materials that we shared across the industry. Our web-based clearinghouse of best thinking included ideas for communicating, transporting workers, storing and cleaning face visors, installing plexiglass, and managing guest workers and housing, providing a useful starting point for many operations as they navigated redesigning their work processes.

Eventually the clearinghouse grew into a formal industry resource with EFI-created worker education materials; government, health and industry resources; indigenous language materials; links to videos and posters; and in 2021, vaccine-related information and printable materials.

As we continue to evolve through the pandemic, the lessons learned can help farming operations and the broader food and agriculture industries navigate the countless challenges ahead. Investing in workers and developing skills like communication, conflict resolution and problem-solving, while fostering a culture of collaboration, respect, trust and continuous improvement, will help organizations adapt, innovate and overcome. One EFI Leadership Team Member, Juan Perez with Andrew & Williamson Fresh Produce/GoodFarms, said it best, "This may be a global pandemic, but thanks to the EFI Program we are trained to adapt to any type of issue."



**COVID Shapes Future of EFI's Leadership Team Training Program**

EFI's workforce development team started 2020 with the completion of two in-person Leadership Team training sessions, which include 40 hours of interpersonal, interactive training to introduce the EFI program and to build skills in communication, conflict resolution and problem solving, while instilling elements to develop a trusting, respectful workplace. The culmination of the training is a cross-functional, cross-level EFI Leadership Team which works to bring a farming operation into compliance with the EFI Standards and to identify and address ongoing issues regarding worker health and safety, food safety and business performance. EFI facilitators had been leading these types of trainings to form Leadership Teams on farms since 2014. It was a proven model that successfully formed worker-manager collaborative teams that can apply their problem-solving skills to almost any issue that arises for a farming operation.

As the reality and long-term impacts of COVID-19 became clear, the EFI workforce development team had to figure out how to continue offering the proven, impactful trainings in a new reality built on Zoom meetings, masks and social distancing. Co-creating authentic interactions that build team trust and communication skills typically involves having everyone in the same room sharing in the same experience. To adjust to the fact that EFI facilitators could not attend in person, each farm identified an employee to serve as training coordinator, the "eyes, ears, hands and feet" of EFI in the training room, who



I feel very happy to have been able to continue to work during this pandemic. To be called an essential worker in agriculture makes me feel like I was able to do my part by providing food. Today in everyone's mind is to take care of each other, because when we do that, we take care of the families that are waiting for us at home.

**Esmeralda Nieto**, Quality Control, Misionero Gonzales



I actually feel safer at work. It feels good to come to work. And you have a safe feeling when you go home because you know you've done all you can do.



**Miguel Campos**, Health & Safety Manager, Houweling's Group



**LEADERSHIP TEAM TRAINING | CONTINUED**

was responsible for managing materials and supplies, guiding on- and offline activities, and uploading photos of the team’s work.

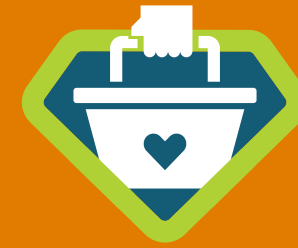
Training coordinators helped with logistics, but the inability to assess group dynamics, comfort level and knowledge acquisition, and to adapt the program in real time, created ongoing challenges for EFI facilitators. Straining to hear masked participants who stood too far from a computer microphone, facing constant connectivity issues, a lack of computers to break the participants into “bubbles” while maintaining proper distancing, and adapting to fluctuations in COVID-19 cases or exposures were also major obstacles, leading to many postponements, absent Leadership Team members or participation difficulties.

While these challenges were immense, the collective efforts of staff from growing operations, EFI facilitators and, most importantly, the team members themselves, ensured that the trainings occurred, skills were developed, and the worker-manager collaborative Leadership Teams began to function on seven new farming operations in the United States and Mexico.

As the EFI workforce development team looks ahead and seeks to make the Leadership Team training program stronger, key learnings and applications from the remote training experiences will be incorporated:

- 1 A comprehensive initial orientation for upper-level management will create a deeper understanding and more support for the Leadership Team.
- 2 Onsite in-person training can be combined with short online experiences in a virtual classroom, to deepen team members’ understanding of the EFI Standards, communication and problem-solving skills.
- 3 Learning sessions designed for field supervisors and crew leaders, coupled with integrated sessions with the Leadership Team, will strengthen context for collaboration and engagement across the farming operation.

Although 2020 was a year filled with challenges, it provided the opportunity to learn and apply lessons and experiences, nurturing a more effective training program that is flexible and easier to implement at growing operations.



**COVID  
Pandemic and  
Racial Justice  
Movement Prime  
Consumers to  
Play Larger Role  
in Demanding an  
Equitable Food  
System**



Most Americans experienced empty grocery store shelves for the first time in their lives during the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic. Amid panic buying and stocking up, consumers became more aware of the supply chain, and embraced a common definition of “essential workers.” Many people were able to work and shop online from the safety of their homes, but essential workers put their lives at risk navigating workplace risks even before official health guidance was available.

Farmworker Awareness Week, celebrated during the last week of March, occurred just weeks into the pandemic lockdown. Posts on EFI’s social media channels sparked hundreds of comments of appreciation and praise of the farmworkers who continued to work through the crisis. Newfound public interest in the supply chain and essential workers resulted in widespread reporting about the role of farmworkers and how farming operations were responding by initiating social distancing and other safety protocols. In May, *Costco Connection* featured EFI in a cover story about its social responsibility efforts in the fresh produce industry, detailing how farmworkers are engaged in the EFI Program.

The alignment of two issues – the recognition of essential workers and the new era of racial awareness in the wake of George Floyd’s murder – has strengthened consumer trends that were at play prior to the pandemic. According to Hartman Group,



**EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEM | CONTINUED**

a consumer research organization that focuses on food, not only did consumers develop a greater appreciation of food supply chains during the pandemic but there is also more appreciation for worker rights and employee safety, as well as a desire for companies to help provide food security, community support and social and racial justice.

As consumers move beyond thanks and appreciation for essential workers and demand that companies provide safer, healthier and more respectful workplaces, the *Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured®* label on EFI-certified produce is a powerful demarcation of company action.

EFI's long-term strategy is to engage consumers more widely as the availability of EFI-certified fruits and vegetables expands. In 2020, EFI formed a Marketing Communications Advisory Council to lay the groundwork for this growing effort, and it has begun to define target audiences and messaging in preparation for greater consumer engagement in 2022.

The growing consumer demand for corporate social responsibility with the greater availability of *Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured* fresh produce creates a perfect environment for EFI's expanding consumer outreach.



I'm always worried for workers' safety, and now [with COVID-19] more than ever. The good thing about the EFI Program is that farmworkers know they have many rights and can express concerns. I'm grateful for my health, especially during this time. I'm still able to provide important information to the workforce, but my main role is to tell them how important their job and well-being is.



**José Luna (Don Chema),**  
Field Supervisor, Andrew & Williamson  
Fresh Produce/GoodFarms



46

CERTIFICATIONS  
COMPLETED



17

CERTIFICATIONS  
IN PROGRESS



58,140

WORKERS ON FARMS  
WITH EFI-TRAINED  
LEADERSHIP TEAMS



3,907

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS  
TRAINED

2,315

LEADERSHIP TEAM  
MEMBERS TRAINED

efi

REACH  
and  
IMPACT

As of  
December 31, 2020



\$2.3M

PAID IN WORKER  
BONUSES IN 2020



\$10.9M

PAID IN WORKER  
BONUSES SINCE 2014

5

COUNTRIES WITH ACTIVE  
CERTIFIED GROWERS:  
CANADA, GUATEMALA,  
MEXICO, PERU AND  
UNITED STATES



# 2020 NEWS & NOTES

Despite the pandemic, EFI staff, partners and certified organizations worked throughout the year to ensure the EFI Program continued to improve the lives of farmworkers and was recognized for its impact.



## INTERNAL TRAINER COURSE MOVES ONLINE DURING PANDEMIC

Certified farming operations can develop an internal staff trainer to support their ongoing development through EFI's Internal Trainer Certification Course. The workforce development team successfully designed and delivered two virtual trainer courses in 2020 with a total of 28 participants. A virtual classroom for asynchronous learning was coupled with online sessions and specific activities carried out with Leadership Teams.



## WASHINGTON APPLE GROWERS BECOME EFI-CERTIFIED

Stemilt Growers and Rainier Fruit Company became the first EFI-certified apple and cherry growers, with products bearing the *Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured* label now available in participating Costco Wholesale and Whole Foods Market locations.

## EFI PARTNERS WITH AMHPAC TO PROMOTE THE ETHICAL CHARTER ON RESPONSIBLE LABOR PRACTICES

As part of its commitment to industry education and support, as well as fostering a culture of continuous improvement on agricultural operations, EFI joined the Mexican Association of Protected Horticulture (AMHPAC) for a series of Spanish-language webinars for its members in November. More than 100 attendees learned how to improve business performance while meeting social compliance requirements in four live webinar sessions.



## KEEPING PEOPLE AT THE CENTER OF FOOD MARKETING

EFI Marketing Communications Director LeAnne Ruzzamenti urged attendees at United Fresh Produce Association's BrandStorm conference in February to market their product authentically by keeping people at the center of their efforts to meet consumer demands for transparency from the food system.



## MISIONERO AND JV SMITH COMPANIES BECOME FIRST EFI-CERTIFIED LEAFY GREENS OPERATIONS

Misionero Vegetables certified two packhouse operations, one in Arizona and one in California, while its growing partner in Mexicali, Mexico, JV Smith Companies, certified its 10,000-acre farming operation under the EFI Standards. The two companies hope to bring the first *Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured* labeled leafy greens to market in 2021.

Our staff say "thank you" to agricultural workers for their professional labor during the COVID-19 crisis

## EFI STAFF SENT THANKS TO FARMWORKERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

In addition to providing resources and support during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, EFI staff sent their thanks and appreciation through a video that was shared with Leadership Team members and farmworkers at certified locations. Watch it at [youtu.be/MNUVL6RdeLI](https://youtu.be/MNUVL6RdeLI).



We implemented many protocols due to the pandemic. For example, we had to change work shifts in the greenhouses. Previously we had two shifts, now we have three or four to avoid crowds of workers who have the same work schedule. That way, groups are smaller during lunch breaks, and there is more space for social distancing. Another example is to avoid having multiple people touching handles and doors, we installed automated doors. Employees scan their badges to go into the greenhouse, and the door automatically opens for them.



**Erika Castro,**  
Human Resources, Windset Farms®



### MASTRONARDI PRODUCE RECEIVES 5TH EFI CERTIFICATION

Mastronardi Produce (sold under the SUNSET® brand) received EFI certification for four greenhouses in 2020, bringing its total to five EFI-certified operations in Mexico and Canada. Its tomato varieties and bell peppers can be found in participating Costco Wholesale and Whole Foods Market locations with the *Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured* label.



### NEW STAFF POSITIONS SUPPORT GROWTH

Two full-time staff positions were added to extend EFI's administrative and program support to growers: operations associate and certification manager. Kenton Harmer was promoted to Managing Director as part of the organization's capacity-building plans.

### EFI MARKS 5TH ANNIVERSARY

2020 marked EFI's fifth anniversary as an independent nonprofit. The milestone was celebrated with a feature in *And Now U Know*, a leading trade publication for the fresh produce industry, and a new historical timeline on the website ([equitablefood.org/history](http://equitablefood.org/history)).



### COSTCO CONNECTION HIGHLIGHTS FAIR FARMS

The cover story of the May issue of *Costco Connection* featured the EFI Program and how it works to engage farmworkers to improve working conditions, environmental impacts and food safety.



### EFI SHOWCASED ON NATIONAL TELEVISION

Celebrity chef Andrew Zimmern featured his visit to an EFI-certified Andrew & Williamson Fresh Produce/ GoodFarms strawberry farm on the premiere episode of the limited docuseries, *What's Eating America*. In addition to highlighting immigration issues and the H-2A program, the episode explained the meaning behind EFI's *Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured* label.



### HOMEGROWN ORGANIC FARMS BECOMES FIRST EFI-CERTIFIED STONE FRUIT OPERATION

Abundant Harvest Organics, which grows stone fruit marketed under the Homegrown Organic Farms label, became the first EFI-certified stone fruit operation in the shortest amount of time following Leadership Team training. Owner Vernon Peterson credits EFI as "the only certification that brings value to our farm. It genuinely does help us do our job better and get a better product to the consumer because everybody up and down the chain is working together."

### EFI-CERTIFIED FARMING OPERATIONS NOW IN 5 COUNTRIES

EFI certified its first operation in Peru, expanding the program into its fifth country in the Americas. With more than 11,000 workers and 4,000 acres, Agrovision will bring EFI-certified avocados, grapes, asparagus and blueberries to U.S. and European markets. Due to the pandemic, Leadership Team training occurred online via Zoom.



The company has implemented all safety and hygiene measures required to prevent contracting the virus. There are always improvements thanks to EFI, and I have learned so much from the trainings, and not only that, I put those learnings into practice. Management listens to us. They constantly provide information and keep us posted on any issues.



**Marco Cervantes**, Operations Assistant, Windset Farms®





# 2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

## Statement of Financial Position

Year Ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 500,907	\$ 759,441
Grants and accounts receivable, net	116,206	632,661
Prepaid expenses	10,543	10,311
Deposits	7,471	10,141
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 635,127</b>	<b>\$ 1,412,554</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	357,889	198,058
Deferred revenue	--	25,000
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>357,889</b>	<b>223,058</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Without donor restriction	(299,454)	(177,562)
With donor restriction	576,692	1,367,058
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 277,238</b>	<b>\$ 1,189,496</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 635,127</b>	<b>\$ 1,412,554</b>

## Statement of Activities

Year Ended December 31, 2020

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	2020 Total	2019 Total
<b>Revenue</b>				
Contributions and grants	\$ 500	\$ 896,100	\$ 896,600	\$ 1,909,810
In-kind contributions	23,131	-	23,131	56,876
Program income	709,471	-	709,471	728,621
Other Income	19,808	-	19,808	15,645
Net assets released from restrictions	1,686,466	(1,686,466)	-	-
<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<b>2,439,376</b>	<b>(790,366)</b>	<b>1,649,010</b>	<b>2,710,951</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Program Service	1,740,599	-	1,740,599	1,826,935
Management and General	726,735	-	726,735	789,848
Fundraising	93,934	-	93,934	113,619
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,561,268</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,561,268</b>	<b>2,730,402</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(121,892)</b>	<b>(790,366)</b>	<b>(912,258)</b>	<b>(19,451)</b>
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Year Restated</b>	<b>(177,562)</b>	<b>1,367,058</b>	<b>1,189,496</b>	<b>1,208,947</b>
<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>\$ (299,454)</b>	<b>\$ 576,692</b>	<b>\$ 277,238</b>	<b>\$ 1,189,496</b>

# 2020 DONORS

- Costco Wholesale
- Humanity United
- The James Irvine Foundation
- Northwest Area Foundation
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- Walmart Foundation
- Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati



## 2020 Leadership BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Ernie Farley**, Chair  
Partner, Andrew & Williamson Fresh Produce

**Preston Witt**, Vice Chair  
Director, Supplier Code of Conduct Compliance, Costco Wholesale Corporation

**Bruce Goldstein**, Secretary  
President, Farmworker Justice

**Carol Schrader**, Treasurer  
Independent Consultant

**Lori Castillo**  
Vice President, Marketing, NatureSweet Tomatoes

**Michael Conroy**  
Independent Consultant

**Maisie Ganzler**  
Chief Strategy and Brand Officer, Bon Appétit Management Company

**Eva Greenthal**  
Policy Associate, Center for Science in the Public Interest

**Thomas Gremillion**  
Director of Food Policy, Consumer Federation of America

**Martin Guerena**  
Sustainable Agriculture Specialist, National Center for Appropriate Technology

**Reyna Lopez**  
Executive Director, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)

**Erika Navarrete**  
Vice President, United Farm Workers

**Margaret Reeves**  
Senior Scientist, Pesticide Action Network North America

**Minor Sinclair**  
Director, U.S. Regional Office, Oxfam America

**Victor Smith**  
Chief Executive Officer, JV Smith Companies

**Baldemar Velasquez**  
President and Founder, Farm Labor Organizing Committee



## STAFF

**Lilian Autler**  
Senior Facilitator, Workforce Development

**Kevin Boyle**  
Director, Business & New Product Development

**Shaleena Capers**  
Operations Associate

**Rebecca Castrejón**  
Digital & Communications Associate

**Rebecca Chavez**  
Business Development Manager

**Karla Cook**  
Certification Manager

**Alexandra DeGrandchamp**  
Data & Impact Manager

**Kenton Harmer**  
Managing Director

**Star Huff**  
Operations Manager

**Alice Linsmeier**  
Senior Facilitator, Workforce Development

**Candace Mickens**  
Director, Finance & Operations

**Diona Monroe**  
Certification Associate

**Peter O'Driscoll**  
Executive Director

**Ana (Lulu) Rivera Collazo**  
Workforce Development Specialist

**LeAnne Ruzzamenti**  
Director, Marketing Communications

**Gretta Siebentritt**  
Director, Workforce Development





200 Massachusetts Avenue, NW,  
Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001

202.730.6672

[www.equitablefood.org](http://www.equitablefood.org)

