

69TH ANNUAL IFTA CONFERENCE AND TOURS
"INTEGRATING ORCHARD TRADITIONS, TECHNOLOGIES, AND AI"
FEBRUARY 8-12, 2026 FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

3:00 PM **IFTA Welcome Reception and Super Bowl Watch Party**

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9

8:00 AM **Welcome**

Tree Fruit Economics

8:05 2025 Regional Round-Up, IFTA Board

8:30 North American Apple Production and Market Trends, Chris Gerlach, US Apples, VA

8:50 Sweet Cherry Production and Market Trends, Erick Stonebarger, Stemilt-Chinchiolo, Linden, CA

9:05 Peach and Plum Production and Market Trends, Drew Ketelson, HMC Farms, Kingsburg, CA

9:25 Direct Market Production Economics Picture, Reuwai Hanewald, Terhune Orchards, NJ

9:45 Panel Q&A - Speakers and Audience

10:00 **Break**

Tree Fruit Production I

10:30 National Labor Update-H2A, Rates and Forecasts, Daniel Ross, Seso Labor Management

10:55 Why is New Zealand Obsessed with Planar Orchards? Earnscy Weaver, New Zealand

11:25 Fireblight Update (UV-C in apples update, World Fireblight Conference), Dr. Kerik Cox, Cornell

11:45 Panel Q&A - Speakers and Audience

12:05 – 1:05 Lunch



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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9 (Cont.)

Orchard Technologies

1:15 Current Realities of Orchard Technologies and AI Development, Walt Duflock, Senior VP Of Innovation, Western Growers

1:45 WTFRC Orchard Technologies Update, Dr. Ines Hanrahan, WTFRC

2:05 **Robert Carlson Lecture: Economics of the World's First All-Electric Orchard**, Mike Casey, Forest Lodge Orchard, New Zealand (Remote)

2:35 The Potential for Agrivoltaics in Orchards, Dr. Stefano Musacchi, WSU Wenatchee

2:55 Panel Q&A - Speakers and Audience

3:15 **Break**

3:45 AI Advances in Apple, Cherry and Stone Fruit Sorting Lines

4:05 State of the Art Orchard Vision/Mapping Systems and Applications, Dr. Brian Lawrence, Cornell

4:05 Grower Panel: Experiences with New Technologies and Their ROI
Brent Burky, Drew Ketelson, Earnscy Weaver, Mike Casey, Erick Stonebarger, Paul Cathcart, Justin Finkler

5:25 Panel Q&A - Speakers and Audience

5:45 Wrap Up

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

7:30 AM to 5:00 PM World Ag Expo

Join fellow IFTA attendees for a full-day visit to the World Ag Expo. Buses will board in the hotel parking lot at 7:30 a.m. and depart promptly at 7:45 a.m. Attendees will tour the World Ag Expo at their own pace from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., allowing ample time to explore exhibits and connect with industry leaders. Return transportation will begin loading at 4:30 p.m. from Gate 12 at the World Ag Expo. Buses will depart back to the hotel as they fill.

The World Ag Expo® hosts over 1,200 exhibitors displaying cutting-edge technology and equipment on 2.6 million square feet of exhibit space. An estimated average of 100,000 individuals from over 70 countries attend World Ag Expo® each year.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Mitigating Climate Challenges

8:00 **Welcome**

8:05 SGMA, California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Initiative,
Drs. Tomo Kumashira / Ryo Takanashi, Stanford University

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8:25	Wallace Heuser Presidential Lecture: <u>Root Growth and Function in Orchards: Impact of Droughts, Irrigation, Rainfall</u> , Dr. Astrid Volder, UC Davis
9:10	<u>Plant-Based Irrigation to Reduce Water Use While Maintaining Yield & Quality</u> , Dr. Kosana Suvocarev, UC Davis Biometeorology
9:25	<u>WSU Smart Orchard Irrigation Tools and Experiences</u> , Alejandra Odegard, Swan Systems
9:45	Panel Q&A - Speakers and Audience
10:00	Break
10:30	Grower Panel: <u>Experiences with Precision Agriculture</u> , Keith Veselka, Patrick Dorsing, Zack Ellis
11:15	<u>An Integrated Approach to Improve Sweet Cherry Dormancy and Bloom</u> , Dr. Giulia Marino, UC Davis
11:30	<u>PGR Trials to Enhance Apple and Cherry Dormancy and Bloom</u> , John Avansino, Prima Frutta Packing, Linden, CA
11:40	Panel Q&A - Speakers and Audience
11:55	IFTA Business Meeting and Awards
12:15-1:15	Lunch

Tree Fruit Production II

1:30	<u>Apple Rootstocks to Mitigate Production Challenges</u> , Dr. Gennaro Fazio, USDA-Geneva
1:50	<u>Noteworthy Developments in Pear Production</u> , Dr. Stefano Musacchi, WSU
2:10	<u>Strategies for Mitigation of Bitter Pit</u> , Dr. Chayce Griffith, MSU
2:30	<u>PGR Trials to Promote Apple Fruit Color</u> , Drs. Jozsef Racsko / Polianna Francescatto, Valent BioSciences
2:45	<u>Trials and Impacts of Pneumatic Apple Tree Defoliation</u> , Dr. Lee Kalcsits, WSU
3:00	Panel Q&A - Speakers and Audience
3:20	Break
3:50	<u>Advances in Apple Crop Load Management (PACMAN)</u> , Dr. Brian Lawrence, Cornell
4:10	<u>Advances in Cherry/Stone Fruit Crop Load Management</u> , Drs. Jozsef Racsko / Polianna Francescatto, Valent BioSciences
4:25	<u>Whole Orchard Recycling Strategies</u> , Mae Culumber, UC Cooperative Extension
4:45	<u>Integrating Disease Prediction Models to Improve Bitter Rot Management</u> , Matheus Borba, Virginia Tech
4:55	<u>Management of Bacterial Blast/Canker</u> , Alejandro Hernandez, UC-Davis
5:10	Panel Q&A - Speakers and Audience
5:30	Conference Wrap-Up - Upcoming IFTA Study Tours and Conference

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12 - OPTIONAL POST ORCHARD TOUR

7:15 AM **Board Buses**

7:30 AM **Depart DoubleTree Hotel**

8:00 **Sweet Cherries, PGRs**, Sangha Farms

9:30 **Trellised Double Row-Plums**, King Orchards

10:50 **Low-Chill July-Ripening Apples**, Family Tree Farms

12:10 Lunch - Tulare Extension Complex

1:40 **Trellised Low-Chill Sweet Cherries**, The Grapery

3:35 **Trellised Peaches, Orchard Technologies**, HMC (stop 1)

4:40 **Trellised Plums, Orchard Technologies, Nets**, HMC (stop 2)

6:00 **Arrive at DoubleTree Hotel**

