

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, Earnsby 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:** Root Growth and Function in Orchards: Impact of Droughts, Irrigation, Rainfall, Dr. Astrid Volder, UC Davis
- 9:10** Plant-Based Irrigation to Reduce Water Use While Maintaining Yield & Quality, Dr. Kosana Suvocarev, UC Davis Biometeorology
- 9:25** WSU Smart Orchard Irrigation Tools and Experiences, Alejandra Odegard, Swan Systems
- 9:45** Panel Q&A - Speakers and Audience
- 10:00** **Break**
- 10:30** Grower Panel: Experiences with Precision Agriculture, Keith Veselka, Patrick Dorsing, Zack Ellis
- 11:15** An Integrated Approach to Improve Sweet Cherry Dormancy and Bloom, Dr. Giulia Marino, UC Davis
- 11:30** PGR Trials to Enhance Apple and Cherry Dormancy and Bloom, 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** Apple Rootstocks to Mitigate Production Challenges, Dr. Gennaro Fazio, USDA-Geneva
- 1:50** Noteworthy Developments in Pear Production, Dr. Stefano Musacchi, WSU
- 2:10** Strategies for Mitigation of Bitter Pit, Dr. Chayce Griffith, MSU
- 2:30** PGR Trials to Promote Apple Fruit Color, Drs. Jozsef Racsko / Polianna Francescatto, Valent BioSciences
- 2:45** Trials and Impacts of Pneumatic Apple Tree Defoliation, Dr. Lee Kalcsits, WSU
- 3:00** Panel Q&A - Speakers and Audience
- 3:20** **Break**
- 3:50** Advances in Apple Crop Load Management (PACMAN), Dr. Brian Lawrence, Cornell
- 4:10** Advances in Cherry/Stone Fruit Crop Load Management, Drs. Jozsef Racsko / Polianna Francescatto, Valent BioSciences
- 4:25** Whole Orchard Recycling Strategies, Mae Culumber, UC Cooperative Extension
- 4:45** Integrating Disease Prediction Models to Improve Bitter Rot Management, Matheus Borba, Virginia Tech
- 4:55** Management of Bacterial Blast/Canker, 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**

