

13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

# Flavor Quality & American Menus Leadership Retreat



UC DAVIS

New Directions in Agriculture, Food Production,  
and Menu Development  
August 25-27, 2016



*"Outstanding! Excellent experience." "I rarely rank events with such complete excellent scores—this was a superb conference!" "This program far exceeded my expectations." "Speakers were unbelievable!"*

*"Fabulous experience. Thank you!" "You hit a home run with this conference."*

—Comments from corporate chefs, operators and other attendees at previous Flavor, Quality & American Menus Leadership Retreat

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Flavor, Quality & American Menus (FQAM), an annual invitational leadership retreat, aims to stimulate innovative thinking around the future of agriculture as well as flavor-, quality- and diversity-driven menu R&D. It does so by connecting leaders within the volume foodservice and agriculture industries to foster better understanding of current challenges and opportunities faced by each sector. The retreat also emphasizes fundamental shifts in the foodservice industry, and how millennials are largely (but not exclusively) driving those shifts. FQAM helps foodservice operators understand what the shifts are, who and what is driving them, and the impacts those shifts will have on future menus and future generations of eaters.

It used to be that farmers and ranchers produced food, and food processors innovated within a narrow range of expectations. Professional chefs and home cooks made few demands on producers, and food and flavor trends were slow to emerge. Wine was at most a tangential player at the American table.

Today, commodity agriculture in developed nations and much of the United States is under pressure as Latin America, China, and other Asian countries boost production. Chefs, culinary product developers, cookbook authors, and other culinary experts are fueling consumer interest in international flavors, and changing demographics are accelerating this trend. The options for growing, processing, and marketing agricultural products are now vast and global, while clarity about best options is often muddled by a competitive marketplace sending mixed signals. Clearly, for those who value quality and diversity in food, beverages, and the culinary arts, and for those invested in the success of agriculture and value-added processing, now is the time to be working closely together. This is the impetus behind the partnership between The Culinary Institute of America (CIA), a world leader in professional culinary arts education, and University of California, Davis, a world leader in agriculture, food science, viticulture and enology, and brewing science education and research.





Flavor, Quality & American Menus provides a venue for networking, information- and idea-sharing, and advancing agriculture and the industries that depend on it. Working in partnership, the CIA—through its Greystone campus in Napa Valley—and the UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences hope to unite leaders in agriculture, food processing, and the culinary arts around a common mission, one that values scientific and technical excellence on the one hand, and artistic and aesthetic accomplishment on the other. After the first gathering dedicated to this mission, held in 2004, we have continued to build on the success of the inaugural event with retreats held every summer at the CIA at Greystone.

Our 13th Annual Flavor, Quality & American Menus Leadership Retreat will continue the tradition August 25-27, 2016, as we welcome, on an invitation-only basis, 30-35 of our nation's most influential chefs and foodservice industry leaders. The new target audience for FQAM will be those for whom millennial diners are a core focus: emerging chains, colleges/universities, and supermarket foodservice. At the same time, we welcome operators from all high-volume foodservice sectors for whom millennial diners are also of great concern. These foodservice leaders will be joined by leaders in agriculture, food processing, and manufacturing—as well as key media from both trade and consumer publications.

After over a decade of delivering cutting-edge, high-impact programming for the foodservice industry, FQAM in 2015 added a new content layer, leveraging the existing emphasis on the future of agriculture and menus in America to also focus on the diners who represent the future of flavor in America: millennials and Generation Z.

Born between about 1980 and 1995 (approximately ages 20 to 35), the 80 million millennials in this country are the fastest growing consumer group, the fastest growing segment of the wine industry, and the veritable tastemakers of the foodservice industry. Millennials eat out more frequently than other generations do, and are willing to spend more on organics, ethically sourced meats, and farm-to-table experiences. They care about where food comes from and how it is grown. Nine out of 10 will splurge on a nice meal even when strapped for cash, and 40 percent will order something different every time they visit a restaurant.

Quickly coming up behind millennials is Gen Z: consumers under about age 20. As eaters, they share many similar traits but bring even greater concern for sustainably sourced ingredients and even greater willingness to pay a premium for these foods.

In short, these generations of diners expect quality, they aim to eat ethically, and they crave new flavors and experiences. And what they crave is constantly changing.

#### *Research Partnership*

The CIA and Datassential are co-facilitating the FQAM Think Tank. Comprised of a small group of foodservice leaders, and led by Colleen McClellan, Director at Datassential, the group helps to identify the most pressing and valuable topics each year when it comes to addressing shifting demographics, emerging palates, and fundamental changes in both American agriculture and the volume foodservice industry.

#### *New Retreat Format*

The retreat will take place across three days, August 25-27, 2016. Registration will begin at 2:00 PM on Thursday the 25th, leading into four hours of programming, including a tasting experience, and an evening sponsor exchange and networking reception. Friday will be split between farm tours throughout Napa Valley, programming at the CIA, and a walk-around sponsor exchange and networking reception. Saturday the 27th will consist of a morning of programming, a family-style lunch, and an afternoon Market Basket exercise in the Teaching Kitchen. Following a tasting and reception, the retreat will conclude at 5:00 PM.



## OBJECTIVES

1. Host an **annual retreat on menu development** for the foodservice industry that approaches menu R & D from the perspective of flavor, quality, and diversity in agriculture and food processing.
2. Stimulate new thinking about the **future of agriculture** that:
  - Addresses the need to expand research and develop new directions in agriculture and food processing—directions that emphasize quality, diversity, and increased opportunities for specialty, higher-margin agriculture;
  - Takes advantage of a growing consumer willingness to spend money for quality and in the pursuit of culinary adventure;
  - Anticipates changing American demographics and related taste preferences, and the impact that these changes will have on agriculture, food processing, and beverage industries, including wine and beer;
  - Looks for solutions to balance and integrate consumers' growing interest in environmental sustainability with the economic needs and realities of farming communities around the world.
3. **Accelerate health and wellness initiatives within the foodservice industry** by exploring opportunities for ingredient and supply chain innovation that focuses on delivering higher standards of flavor and greater flavor diversity.
4. **Build bridges among leaders in agriculture, food processing, wine, beer, distribution, and chefs and other foodservice leaders** (with an emphasis on multi-unit and volume foodservice operations).
5. **Showcase leaders and innovators** whose successes confirm the viability of a commitment to greater quality, flavor, and diversity.
6. Grow a digital resource library at [www.ciaprochef.com/FQAM](http://www.ciaprochef.com/FQAM) that supports these objectives and captures the best **information, ideas, and culinary trend analysis** from each year's retreat.
7. **Expand collaboration between The Culinary Institute of America and the UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences** to benefit students of both institutions and thereby advance the fields of culinary arts, foodservice management, agriculture, and food and beverage science and technology.





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