



EFI Receives Two-Year Grant From California Workforce Development Board Partners With Measure to Improve to Pilot Waste Reduction and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Program That Explores Role of Workforce Development

MEDIA RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, August 10, 2021 – Equitable Food Initiative, the workforce development and certification organization that partners with growers, farmworkers, retailers and consumer groups, announced a two-year grant from the California Workforce Development Board awarded in conjunction with Measure to Improve, LLC. Measure to Improve is a leading sustainability consultant in the fresh produce industry and will work with EFI to evaluate improved worker outcomes and reduced greenhouse gas emissions from implementing new waste reduction efforts.

The grant is part of California Workforce Development Board's High Road Training Partnership, a multi-industry state project meant to develop industry-driven partnerships that deliver equity, sustainability and job quality through regional skills strategies designed to support economically and environmentally resilient communities. The High Road Training Partnership is funded through California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy and improving public health and the environment – particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Three EFI-certified farming operations, Andrew & Williamson Fresh Produce/GoodFarms, Misionero and Windset Farms, are piloting the Produce & Reduce program. The participants are eager to build on the workforce development investments made through the EFI program and expand their worker engagement to include a sustainable focus.

"Farming operations that have worker-manager collaborative teams and have been trained in communication and problem-solving skills as part of their EFI certification are in a unique position for this project," remarked Lilian Autler, senior facilitator at EFI and project manager for the grant. "They can now apply these skills to sustainability by collaborating to find new ways to reduce materials waste, food loss and ultimately greenhouse gas emissions."

The Produce & Reduce program offers timely solutions to address a growing problem. Just as climate change mitigation is high on the current administration's agenda, it is also a priority for farmers. Farmers across the country are asking for support as they work to address climate issues and reduce waste. Agriculture is responsible for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions in California. As California regulations tighten, and as retailers and consumers demand that companies do more to mitigate their

environmental impact, waste reduction programs have emerged as an opportunity to help companies reduce emissions, while engaging all employees.

“Industry-driven collaborations have offered unique insights into sustainability solutions, and we are excited to work within the agriculture space, which plays an important role in California’s economy. It is very exciting to blend workforce development with the state of California’s goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as we work to meet our goals for sustainable and resilient communities,” said Rafael Aguilera, field specialist from the California Workforce Development Board.

For its part, EFI has already developed a successful skill-building and certification program through which farmworkers and agricultural employers collaborate to meet rigorous labor, food safety and pest management standards that address sustainability and social responsibility concerns. EFI’s approach continues to gain traction, but growers are also asking for support to satisfy consumer, retail and regulatory demand for more transparency and solutions to environmental issues.

EFI partnered with MTI because of its sustainability expertise and customer successes in the fresh produce industry. MTI recommended a waste reduction program as a starting point for this grant project because it would engage employees at all levels and help growers reduce costs while addressing key California legislative objectives to reduce waste to landfills, minimize food loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“Agricultural producers should be exploring steps to adapt their businesses to the reality of climate,” said Nikki Cossio, founder and CEO of Measure to Improve. “We’ve partnered with EFI to develop a waste reduction initiative as the first step in formalizing a program that tracks and reports sustainability data while connecting employees to the impact their day-to-day work has on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.”

To learn more about EFI, visit equitablefood.org, and to learn more about MTI, visit measuretoimprovelc.com.

About EFI

Equitable Food Initiative is a nonprofit certification and skill-building organization that seeks to increase transparency in the food supply chain and improve the lives of farmworkers through a team-based approach to training and continuous improvement practices. EFI brings together growers, farmworkers, retailers and consumers to solve the most pressing issues facing the fresh produce industry. Its unparalleled approach sets standards for labor practices, food safety and pest management while engaging workers at all levels on the farm to produce Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured® fruits and vegetables. View a list of EFI-certified farms at equitablefood.org/farms.

About MTI

Founded in 2014, Measure to Improve’s mission is to help produce companies measure, improve and credibly promote their sustainability efforts. Its clients include produce growers, packers, shippers and industry associations across the United States, and its staff has a proven track record of helping companies identify and implement strategies to increase efficiency. By supporting clients in setting ambitious but attainable sustainability goals, MTI encourages progress that can be validated and marketed. MTI’s projects address a variety of sustainability challenges, including water, energy, greenhouse gas emissions and waste.

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Media

EFI logo and label:



Breakout during meeting of Misionero's Produce & Reduce Team:



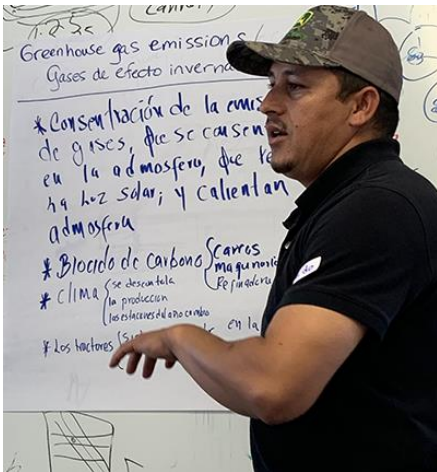
Measure to Improve logo:



Breakout during meeting of Andrew & Williamson Fresh Produce's Produce & Reduce Team:



Presentation during Andrew & Williamson Fresh Produce's meeting of its Produce & Reduce Team:



Produce & Reduce Team meeting at Misionero:

