

(This is a copy of an email sent around ahead of the public launch of the Center for Food Integrity outlining its plans. The email has been reproduced in entirety with only minor formatting changes – Bob Burton, SourceWatch editor).

From: Terry Fleck [[EMAIL ADDRESS DELETED](#)]  
Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2007 [TIME DELETED]  
To: RECIPEINT DELETED  
Subject: Introduction to the Center for Food Integrity

To our Grow America Project friends,

In late February, the board of directors of The Grow America Project and the co-chairs of Best Food Nation decided to merge the two organizations into a new association called the Center for Food Integrity. Our Grow America venture was founded at roughly the same time as Best Food Nation was coming together. Both organizations had similar, but not identical missions. With the successful Grow America inaugural Summit last October, our board was looking to broaden its vision and direction, and felt a merger with Best Food Nation provided a solid platform for the combined mission of both organizations, while eliminating duplication and maximizing resources. The Grow America Project, supported by Monsanto, The State of Indiana, Countrymark Co-op, Indiana Packers Company, Elanco Animal Health, National Pork Board, Maple Leaf Farms, Fair Oaks Dairy and Purdue University unanimously approved the merger.

The merger of the two organizations has received solid support from the members of Best Food Nation as well. To date the following associations have publicly signed on to support the merger: American Farm Bureau, United Soybean Producers, United Egg Producers, American Meat Institute, Produce Marketing Association, National Pork Producers Council, National Pork Board, National Restaurant Association, National Milk Producers Federation, National Chicken Council and National Turkey Federation. The mission of the Center for Food Integrity is: To build consumer trust and confidence in the contemporary U.S. food system by sharing accurate, balanced information, correcting misinformation, modeling best practices and engaging stakeholders to address issues of shared concern.

Our foundational activities are as follows:

- Annual Consumer Trust Survey Benchmark survey of current opinion of U.S. consumers Gauges level of trust they have in our food system Repeated each year to track opinion, identify areas for improvement
- Industry Outreach and Response Amplify accurate information Correct misinformation Used to protect the industry, not specific companies or brands
- Issues Teams Provide strategic leadership for key issues Best practices modeling and communication Public outreach Annual summit programming We will begin with five (5) separate issues teams: Nutrition and Health Food Safety Worker Care Environment Farm Animal Well Being

Each segment of the food chain has its own member-driven association focused on the issues important to that segment. The few cross-segment organizations in existence today are narrowly focused on specific issues or initiatives. We believe the Center for Food Integrity will be the only organization that brings the entire chain together in a sustained fashion to deal with the five critical issues. Our goal is that the issue teams include a broad range of stakeholders from production, processing, restaurant, retail, and the NGO community. We believe there is an opportunity to build trust, and improve the performance of the entire chain on these critical issues by sharing best practices across the chain rather than simply within a given segment. For example, the produce industry may be able to learn from the meat industry on issues of traceability and on-farm food safety. The production community may be able to learn from restaurants on issues of worker care, etc. In addition, this provides a forum for engaging stakeholders, including NGOs, without having the issue be brand specific. We want to create a forum where these issues can be discussed and addressed within and across the chain. We also want to establish standards that help build trust. The standards for each issue must be meaningful enough to be credible. We plan to recognize and celebrate those who achieve standards that build trust in each of the five issue areas. The board is adamant that this organization take action that builds trust.

I will remain as Executive Director of the Center for Food Integrity and be joined by Charlie Arnot of CMA Consulting and his very qualified team of professionals, located in Kansas City. We are scheduled to go public with the merger news shortly, and wanted you to be aware of the change in advance. Many of you have assisted The Grow America Project in significant capacities. The cause and mission of what started as GrowAmerica has just been refined, re-named, re-aligned and will be as strong as ever. My contact information is listed below, and I look forward to visiting with you shortly about the new Center for Food Integrity.

Best regards,-Terry