



Working together  
to provide **healthy**  
and **safe** salads



The Costa Rican  
Vegetable Project

## How it all started

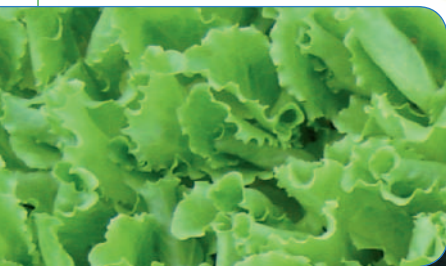
In Costa Rica, the consumption of fruit and vegetables has become a fundamental part of the people's healthy diet. Traditionally, Costa Ricans have purchased fruit and vegetables at small local markets where producers sell their produce directly from the fields. However, the growth in warnings about food poisoning caused by micro-organisms and chemicals has made consumers more discerning, especially with regard to food safety. Supermarkets and food suppliers demand high quality and safety standards, as they are becoming increasingly important factors in the population's eating habits. Younger Costa Ricans now have different eating habits. Families are getting smaller and do not make the big food purchases that used to be so common. They are switching to convenience food that is fresh and ready to eat, and generating a big demand for food that is easy to prepare, available daily and which has a lower health risk. In Costa Rica, Vegetales Fresquita is one of the leading fresh-food producers with a product line in cooked or semi-cooked food and juices.

The produce that Vegetales Fresquita use for their food products mostly comes from growers in the horticultural and fruit-growing area east of the country's capital, San Jose, and especially from Cartago Province. This company has made tremendous efforts to guarantee the safety and quality of all their products.

## What we aimed to achieve

Since Vegetales Fresquita are very concerned to sell high-quality and safe products, they have begun to implement a GAP (Good Agriculture Practices) Programme with their suppliers. One of the objectives of the company's Agriculture Department is to offer producers technical tools focused on sustainable production. In this field, Bayer CropScience has a strong technical background and can offer producers solutions in crop management and research, as well as coaching personnel in GAP issues.

Vegetales Fresquita was very interested in the technical crop protection expertise provided by Bayer CropScience and asked the latter to supply top-quality advice to producers to solve their problems in the fields.





## Who is involved

**Producers:** They have received assistance in crop development from Vegetales Fresquita and Bayer CropScience with the aim of delivering excellent quality and safe products. At the same time, this food chain partnership provided them with technical tools and coaching to achieve this goal. Producers that deliver high standards will be always one step ahead.

**Manufacturer:** Vegetales Fresquita, as the company that processes and markets the fruit and vegetables, can guarantee the quality of the product thanks to the professional assistance provided by Bayer CropScience in offering their suppliers high-standard technical support and research.

## Expected benefits

**This successful cooperation programme between producers and Vegetales Fresquita has differentiated the produce in the market place:**

- Improved solutions to producers' local needs through technical innovations, research and crop protection products
- Generation, in a short time, of field solutions to the problems faced by the producers through the assistance of technical development personnel
- Determination of the producers' assistance and coaching needs to meet their requirements in cooperation with Vegetales Fresquita Agriculture Department

**Consumers:** They can have confidence in the safety of the products they are buying and avoid any risks to their health. They can also trust the production process in the fields and at the plants in view of the fact that both Vegetales Fresquita and Bayer CropScience are very concerned to offer high-quality, healthy food.

**Bayer CropScience:** Agricultural solutions are provided to producers and consumers through high-quality crop protection products, a technical support service, research, coaching and a clear focus on the production of high-quality and safe food. Bayer CropScience wants to forge stronger alliances with pioneering companies, such as Vegetales Fresquita, who have strong links with groups of national producers. The aim is to bring added value to agricultural produce.



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Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition. Food chain partnerships help to supply consumers with high-quality fresh produce, which forms the basis of a healthy diet. But such partnerships can only succeed if they involve every player in the food chain – from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer. Bayer CropScience has the global experience and cutting-edge expertise to create a successful partnership at every level.

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