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## **Albertsons launches AI shopping assistant**

Albertsons announced a major milestone in its digital transformation journey — the launch of the Albertsons AI shopping assistant, an industry-leading web browser experience designed to make grocery shopping faster, smarter and more personalized. As the industry leans into agentic commerce, the Albertsons AI shopping assistant moves beyond search to execute complex end-to-end grocery tasks helping customers complete shopping, from recipe to cart, in minutes. Building on the success of the company's Ask AI tool introduced earlier this year, the agentic shopping assistant is a customer-friendly

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## **Lipman donates \$2 million for hunger relief**

Lipman Family Farms is deepening its generational commitment to fighting hunger. Its latest \$2 million investment will help to build a new facility for the Harry Chapin Food Bank of southwest Florida in Fort Myers. The center — set to break ground this November and completion by the end of next year — will expand the food bank's ability to sort, pack and distribute fresh, nutritious food to thousands of families facing hunger. For Lipman, the gift isn't just a financial pledge. It's the next step in a decades-long relationship rooted in shared purpose. Based in Immokalee and still family-owned

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## **FPFC's year-end gathering returns**

The Fresh Produce & Floral Council will close out the year with one of its most anticipated traditions: the FPFC Holiday Reception, set for Dec. 11 at the Sheraton Park Hotel at the Anaheim Resort. Running from 4 to 7 p.m., the reception has long been considered a signature year-end gathering for the West Coast produce and floral industries, and this year's event leaned even further into community, celebration and a focus on the industry's future. Matthew Hayes, the council's program and events director, said the event stood out because it "brought together the full breadth of the produce and

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## Sunny Valley International expands its sales team

Sunny Valley International, a leading supplier of domestic and imported fruit on the East Coast, welcomed Kevin Lyons and Paul Pascal to its sales team on Dec. 1. Lyons brings more than 30 years of produce industry experience. Most recently, he was a produce sales manager with UNFI, leading a sales team and managing everything from sales and store merchandising to transportation and procurement. Prior to joining UNFI, he was at Baldor Specialty Foods, where he helped guide the expansion of their retail and fresh-cut business segments. He also brings extensive organic produce sales experience

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## **PRO\*ACT Crop Update: Desert volume builds, citrus sizes shift, berries recovering**

We're not off to the smooth start we were hopeful for post-Thanksgiving. Load times in Yuma remain long as growers work through muddy fields and backed-up harvest schedules. Crews are doing everything they can to catch up, but customers should still expect delays at the cooler and a slower turn on trucks through early next week. The good news: product quality is improving every day, and weights are trending upward as the fields dry out and temperatures stabilize. On the lettuce front, desert Iceberg, Romaine and green leaf are all showing stronger quality than in recent weeks. There are still

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# Giorgio's Grill Packs win the Joe Nucci Award for product innovation

Giorgio's Grill Packs have been named the winner of the 2025 Joe Nucci Award for product innovation. The award was presented during the Thought Leaders Keynote Breakfast at the New York Produce Show. Competition was strong, with the Grill Packs standing out among 10 innovative produce products selected by a panel of judges recognized for their expertise in the produce industry.

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