

WAFAC ELECTS SIX NEW DIRECTORS TO 2026-2027 LEADERSHIP

"I am thrilled to welcome six outstanding new directors to the WAFAC Board. Their passion, expertise, and fresh energy will strengthen our mission of transforming lives through learning, and I look forward to the impact we will make together."
- Pat Posey, Chief Operating Officer, WAFAC



KELLI ELSON - Vice President Retail Operations, Albertsons/ Safeway - NorCal

Kelli has built an impressive 31-year career with Safeway, beginning as a Deli Clerk in San Jose and rising steadily through leadership roles across the organization. She quickly advanced from First Assistant Store Director to Store Director, successfully leading multiple locations throughout Northern California. In 2006, Kelli was promoted to Director of Retail Support and later to District Manager, overseeing four districts across the division. Today, Kelli serves as Vice President of Retail Operations for the Northern California Division. Kelli is a proud graduate of the Albertson's University Program (2017), the USC Food Industry Executive Program (2018) and the USC Food Industry Management Program (2022).



AARON JONES - Vice President, Store Operations, Bristol Farms

Aaron is the Vice President, Store Operations for Bristol Farms and is celebrating his 29th year with the company. He began his career as a courtesy clerk at the South Pasadena store and steadily advanced through store operations before joining the Grocery Buying Team in 2010. Throughout his career, Aaron has led major center store initiatives, remodels, and new store openings. A lifelong learner, he completed the USC Food Industry Management Program in 2015 and earned his bachelor's degree from Arizona State University in 2025, with support from Bristol Farms Scholarship Programs.



FRANK KERR - EVP, Chief Store Operations Officer, Grocery Outlet

Frank serves as Executive Vice President and Chief Store Operations Officer at Grocery Outlet, where he leads enterprise-wide operational excellence and enhances the customer experience across the company's independent operator model. He oversees operational strategy, store modernization, infrastructure improvements, and performance initiatives that drive growth and profitability. Before joining Grocery Outlet, Frank held several senior leadership roles at Lidl US, including Senior Vice President of Operations and Chief Customer Officer. His career with Lidl spanned both the U.S. and Europe, where he gained international leadership experience across five countries.



ERIC PEARLMAN - Vice President, West Region Sales, C&S Wholesale Grocers

Eric is a proven executive leader with more than 20 years of experience driving growth and operational excellence in sales and operations. As VP and General Manager of the West Region for C&S Wholesale Grocers, he led independent retail operations across the Pacific Northwest, California, and Hawaii. Known for his strategic leadership and customer-focused approach, Eric successfully built high-performing teams while maintaining exceptional customer retention. He is especially recognized for implementing data-driven strategies and process improvements that strengthened efficiency, profitability, and long-term customer relationships.



JOE RAGUSA - Vice President Marketing & Merchandising, Lazy Acres / New Leaf Community Markets

Joe is a seasoned retail leader with 35 years of grocery industry experience and currently serves as Vice President of Marketing & Merchandising for the Natural Markets Division of Good Food Holdings. His career includes leadership roles with industry giants like Costco and Tesco USA, where he built deep expertise in driving growth while staying closely connected to consumer needs. Beyond his professional achievements, Joe is passionate about health, wellness, education, and giving back to the community. Joe is a proud graduate the USC Food Industry Management Program (2003).



AMY WOLF - Vice President Operations, New Seasons Market

Amy is Vice President of Operations at New Seasons Market, where she helps shape operational strategy and drive execution across all retail locations. Her 19-year journey with the company began as a Grocery Clerk and progressed through leadership roles in store management, multi-unit operations, and executive leadership. Known for her analytical approach and expertise in retail operations, Amy has a strong track record in financial management, merchandising, staff development, and process optimization. She is passionate about the grocery industry, believes in the unifying power of food, and completed the Food Industry Management Program at USC Marshall School of Business in 2025.