

## Agribusiness Person of the Year – 2008

### NICHOLAS TOMPKINS

Nick grew up on the family cattle ranch in Casmalia, California. His father, Dave Tompkins, learned quickly how to get the most work out of his only son and made sure Nick had plenty of work to do. Nick grew up locally on the ranch and was involved with the Santa Barbara County fair as a youth. Upon graduating from Fresno State in 1977, Nick partnered with his long-term friend, Tim Murphy, and together they became the major owners of Apio, Inc., a small vegetable transplanting company. While operating Apio, Inc., Nick also became a diversified vegetable farmer and eventually continued his father's cattle operations in Casmalia.

Under Nick's vision, Apio, Inc. grew into a large vegetable shipping, sales and cooling company and is known for their innovative approach to produce marketing.

Today, Apio is a manufacturer and marketer of pre-cut, value-added, vegetables to the club, retail and food service sectors as well as an exporter of fruits and vegetables throughout the world. In December of 1999, Apio Inc. was acquired by Landec Corporation. Mr. Tompkins is currently Chairman of the Board of Apio, Inc., as well as serving on the Landec Board of Directors.

Apio is one of the largest, non-government employers on the Central Coast and is proud they can offer a safe, innovative, and stable work environment for local laborers.

Mr. Tompkins currently sits as a board member and past chairman of the Ag Business Advisory Council for California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. He has been a member of the board of the United Fresh Produce Association, formerly the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, for 7 years serving as Chairman of the Board for the 2005-2006 year. Mr. Tompkins is currently serving as Chairman of the United FreshPac Advisory Board.

Nick and his wife, Kathy, have 4 children - Patricia, Elizabeth, David and Paul. For many years, Nick and Kathy have assisted their children and 4-H club members prepare for good experiences at the Santa Barbara County Fair.