

**COURT APPROVED NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND HEARING DATE FOR
FINAL COURT APPROVAL**

Catalino Martinez Vera v. Valley Fresh Foods, Inc., et al.,
Stanislaus County Superior Court Case Nos. CV-22-002336 and CV-22-003924

***The Superior Court for the State of California authorized this Notice. Read it carefully!
It's not junk mail, spam, an advertisement, or solicitation by a lawyer. You are not being sued.***

You may be eligible to receive money from an employee class action lawsuit (“Action”) against Valley Fresh Foods, Inc. (“Valley Fresh”) for alleged wage and hour violations. The Action was filed by a former Valley Fresh employee Catalino Martinez Vera (“Plaintiff”) and seeks payment of (1) back wages and other relief for a class of non-exempt employees (“Class Members”) who worked for Valley Fresh during the Class Period (November 30, 2017 to April 28, 2023); and (2) penalties under the California Private Attorney General Act (“PAGA”) for all non-exempt employees who worked for Valley Fresh during the PAGA Period (May 27, 2021 to April 28, 2023) (“Aggrieved Employees”).

The proposed Settlement has two main parts: (1) a class portion of the Settlement requiring Valley Fresh to fund Individual Class Payments, and (2) a PAGA portion of the Settlement requiring Valley Fresh to fund Individual PAGA Payments and pay penalties to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”).

Based on Valley Fresh’s records, and the Parties’ current assumptions, **your Individual Class Payment is estimated to be «SettAmt» (less withholding) and your Individual PAGA Payment is estimated to be «PAGA Amt»**. The actual amount you may receive likely will be different and will depend on a number of factors. (If no amount is stated for your Individual PAGA Payment, then according to Valley Fresh’s records you are not eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment under the Settlement because you didn’t work during the PAGA Period.)

The above estimates are based on Valley Fresh’s records showing that **you worked «WorkWeeks» workweeks** during the Class Period and **you worked «PAGAPeriods» workweeks** during the PAGA Period. If you believe that you worked more workweeks during either period, you can submit a challenge by the deadline date. See Section 4 of this Notice.

The Court has already preliminarily approved the proposed Settlement and approved this Notice. The Court has not yet decided whether to grant final approval of the Settlement. Your legal rights are affected whether you act or not act. Read this Notice carefully. You will be deemed to have carefully read and understood it. At the Final Approval Hearing, the Court will decide whether to finally approve the Settlement and how much of the Settlement will be paid to Plaintiff and Plaintiff’s attorneys (“Class Counsel”). The Court will also decide whether to enter a judgment that requires Valley Fresh to make payments under the Settlement and requires Class Members and Aggrieved Employees to give up their rights to assert certain claims against Valley Fresh.

If you worked for Valley Fresh during the Class Period and/or the PAGA Period, you have two basic options under the Settlement:

- (1) **Do Nothing**. You don’t have to do anything to participate in the proposed Settlement and be eligible for an Individual Class Payment and/or an Individual PAGA Payment. As a Participating Class Member, though, you will give up your right to assert Class Period wage claims and PAGA Period penalty claims against Valley Fresh.

(2) **Opt-Out of the Settlement.** You can exclude yourself from the Settlement (opt-out) by submitting the written Request for Exclusion or otherwise notifying the Administrator in writing. If you opt-out of the Settlement, you will not receive an Individual Class Payment. You will, however, preserve your right to personally pursue Class Period wage claims against Valley Fresh to the extent permitted by law, and, if you are an Aggrieved Employee, remain eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment. You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the proposed Settlement.

Valley Fresh will not retaliate against you for any actions you take with respect to the proposed Settlement.

SUMMARY OF YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND OPTIONS IN THIS SETTLEMENT

<p>You Don't Have to Do Anything to Participate in the Settlement</p>	<p>If you do nothing, you will be a Participating Class Member, eligible for an Individual Class Payment and an Individual PAGA Payment (if any). In exchange, you will give up your right to assert the wage claims against Valley Fresh that are covered by this Settlement (Released Claims).</p>
<p>You Can Opt-out of the Settlement but not the PAGA Settlement</p> <p>The Opt-out Deadline is October 4, 2024</p>	<p>If you don't want to fully participate in the proposed Settlement, you can opt-out of the Settlement by sending the Administrator a written Request for Exclusion. Once excluded, you will be a Non-Participating Class Member and no longer eligible for an Individual Class Payment. Non-Participating Class Members cannot object to any portion of the proposed Settlement. See Section 6 of this Notice.</p> <p>You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the proposed Settlement. Valley Fresh must pay Individual PAGA Payments to all Aggrieved Employees and the Aggrieved Employees must give up their rights to pursue Released Claims (defined below).</p>
<p>Participating Class Members Can Object to the Settlement but not the PAGA Settlement</p> <p>Written Objections Must be Submitted by October 4, 2024</p>	<p>All Class Members who do not opt-out ("Participating Class Members") can object to any aspect of the proposed Settlement. The Court's decision whether to finally approve the Settlement will include a determination of how much will be paid to Class Counsel and Plaintiff who pursued the Action on behalf of the Class. You are not personally responsible for any payments to Class Counsel or Plaintiff, but every dollar paid to Class Counsel and Plaintiff reduces the overall amount paid to Participating Class Members. You can object to the amounts requested by Class Counsel or Plaintiff if you think they are unreasonable. See Section 7 of this Notice.</p>
<p>You Can Participate in the November 8, 2024 Final Approval Hearing</p>	<p>The Court's Final Approval Hearing is scheduled to take place on November 8, 2024. You don't have to attend but you do have the right to appear (or hire an attorney to appear on your behalf at your own cost), in person, by telephone or by using the Court's virtual appearance platform. Participating Class Members can verbally object to the Settlement at the Final Approval Hearing. See Section 8 of this Notice.</p>
<p>You Can Challenge the Calculation of Your Workweeks/Pay Periods</p> <p>Written Challenges Must be Submitted by October 4, 2024</p>	<p>The amount of your Individual Class Payment and PAGA Payment (if any) depend on how many workweeks you worked at least one day during the Class Period and how many Pay Periods you worked at least one day during the PAGA Period, respectively. The number Class Period Workweeks and number of PAGA Period Pay Periods you worked according to Valley Fresh's records is stated on the first page of this Notice. If you disagree with either of these numbers, you must challenge it by October 4, 2024. See Section 4 of this Notice.</p>

1. WHAT IS THE ACTION ABOUT?

Plaintiff is a former Valley Fresh employee. The Action accuses Valley Fresh of violating California labor laws by failing to pay minimum and straight time wages, overtime wages, failing to provide meal and rest periods, failing to pay wages upon termination, and failing to provide accurate itemized wage statements. Based on the same claims, Plaintiff has also asserted a claim for civil penalties under the California Private Attorneys General Act (Labor Code §§ 2698, et seq.) (“PAGA”). Plaintiff is represented by attorneys in the Action: Justin F. Marquez, Esq., Benjamin H. Haber, Esq., and Maxim Gorbunov, Esq., of Wilshire Law Firm (“Class Counsel.”)

Valley Fresh strongly denies violating any laws or failing to pay any wages and contends it complied with all applicable laws.

2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT THE ACTION HAS SETTLED?

So far, the Court has made no determination whether Valley Fresh or Plaintiff is correct on the merits. In the meantime, Plaintiff and Valley Fresh hired an experienced, neutral mediator in an effort to resolve the Action by negotiating an to end the case by agreement (settle the case) rather than continuing the expensive and time-consuming process of litigation. The negotiations were successful. By signing a lengthy written settlement agreement (“Agreement”) and agreeing to jointly ask the Court to enter a judgment ending the Action and enforcing the Agreement, Plaintiff and Valley Fresh have negotiated a proposed Settlement that is subject to the Court’s Final Approval. Both sides agree the proposed Settlement is a compromise of disputed claims. By agreeing to settle, Valley Fresh does not admit any violations or concede the merit of any claims.

Plaintiff and Class Counsel strongly believe the Settlement is a good deal for you because they believe that: (1) Valley Fresh has agreed to pay a fair, reasonable and adequate amount considering the strength of the claims and the risks and uncertainties of continued litigation; and (2) Settlement is in the best interests of the Class Members and Aggrieved Employees. The Court preliminarily approved the proposed Settlement as fair, reasonable and adequate, authorized this Notice, and scheduled a hearing to determine whether to finally approve the Settlement.

3. WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT TERMS OF THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT?

Valley Fresh Will Pay \$450,000 as the Gross Settlement Amount (Gross Settlement). Valley Fresh has agreed to deposit the Gross Settlement into an account controlled by the Administrator of the Settlement. The Administrator will use the Gross Settlement to pay the Individual Class Payments, Individual PAGA Payments, Class Representative Service Payment, Class Counsel’s attorney’s fees and expenses, the Administrator’s expenses, and penalties to be paid to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”). Assuming the Court grants Final Approval, Valley Fresh will fund the Gross Settlement not more than 14 days after the Judgment entered by the Court becomes final. The Judgment will be final on the date the Court enters Judgment, or a later date if Participating Class Members object to the proposed Settlement or the Judgment is appealed.

Court Approved Deductions from Gross Settlement. At the Final Approval Hearing, Plaintiff and/or Class Counsel will ask the Court to approve the following deductions from the Gross Settlement, the amounts of which will be decided by the Court at the Final Approval Hearing:

- Up to \$150,000.00 (one-third of the Gross Settlement to Class Counsel for attorneys' fees and up to \$20,000 for their litigation expenses. To date, Class Counsel have worked and incurred expenses on the Action without payment.
- Up to \$7,500 for the Class Representative's Service Payment for filing the Action, working with Class Counsel and representing the Class. The Class Representative's Service Payment will be the only monies Plaintiff will receive other than Plaintiff's Individual Class Payment and any Individual PAGA Payment.
- Up to \$15,000 to the Administrator for services administering the Settlement.
- Up to \$10,000 for PAGA Penalties, allocated 75% to the LWDA PAGA Payment and 25% in Individual PAGA Payments to the Aggrieved Employees based on their PAGA Period Pay Periods.

Participating Class Members have the right to object to any of these deductions. The Court will consider all objections.

Net Settlement Distributed to Class Members. After making the above deductions in amounts approved by the Court, the Administrator will distribute the rest of the Gross Settlement (the "Net Settlement") by making Individual Class Payments to Participating Class Members based on their Class Period Workweeks.

Taxes Owed on Payments to Class Members. Plaintiff and Valley Fresh are asking the Court to approve an allocation of 20% of each Individual Class Payment to taxable wages ("Wage Portion") and 80% to interest and penalties ("Non-Wage Portion."). The Wage Portion is subject to withholdings and will be reported on IRS W-2 Forms. The Individual PAGA Payments are counted as penalties rather than wages for tax purposes. The Administrator will report the Individual PAGA Payments and the Non-Wage Portions of the Individual Class Payments on IRS 1099 Forms.

Although Plaintiff and Valley Fresh have agreed to these allocations, neither side is giving you any advice on whether your Payments are taxable or how much you might owe in taxes. You are responsible for paying all taxes (including penalties and interest on back taxes) on any Payments received from the proposed Settlement. You should consult a tax advisor if you have any questions about the tax consequences of the proposed Settlement.

Need to Promptly Cash Payment Checks. The front of every check issued for Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments will show the date when the check expires (the void date). If you don't cash it by the void date, your check will be automatically cancelled, and the monies will irrevocably lost to you because they will be paid to Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary Post 5059, located at 1405 E. Linewood Avenue, Turlock, CA 95380, a non-profit organization or foundation ("Cy Pres").

Requests for Exclusion from the Settlement (Opt-Outs). You will be treated as a Participating Class Member, participating fully in the Settlement, unless you notify the Administrator in writing, not later than **October 4, 2024**, that you wish to opt-out. The easiest way to notify the Administrator is to send a written and signed Request for Exclusion by the October 4, 2024 Response Deadline. The Request for Exclusion should be a letter from you or your representative setting forth your name, present address, telephone number, and a simple statement electing to be excluded from the Settlement. Excluded Class Members (i.e., Non-Participating Class Members) will not receive Individual Class Payments, but will preserve their rights to personally pursue wage and hour claims against Valley Fresh.

You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the Settlement. Class Members who exclude themselves from the Settlement (Non-Participating Class Members) remain eligible for Individual PAGA Payments and are required to

give up their right to assert PAGA claims against Valley Fresh based on the PAGA Period facts alleged in the Action.

The Proposed Settlement Will be Void if the Court Denies Final Approval. It is possible the Court will decline to grant Final Approval of the Settlement or decline enter a Judgment. It is also possible the Court will enter a Judgment that is reversed on appeal. Plaintiffs and Valley Fresh have agreed that, in either case, the Settlement will be void: Valley Fresh will not pay any money and Class Members will not release any claims against Valley Fresh.

Administrator. The Court has appointed a neutral company, CPT Group, Inc (the “Administrator”) to send this Notice, calculate and make payments, and process Class Members’ Requests for Exclusion. The Administrator will also decide Class Member Challenges over Workweeks, mail and re-mail settlement checks and tax forms, and perform other tasks necessary to administer the Settlement. The Administrator’s contact information is contained in Section 9 of this Notice.

Participating Class Members’ Release. After the Judgment is final and Valley Fresh has fully funded the Gross Settlement, Participating Class Members will be legally barred from asserting any of the claims released under the Settlement. This means that unless you opted out by validly excluding yourself from the Settlement, you cannot sue, continue to sue, or be part of any other lawsuit against Valley Fresh or related entities for wages based on the Class Period facts and PAGA penalties based on PAGA Period facts, as alleged in the Action and resolved by this Settlement.

Release by Participating Class Members:

Plaintiff, individually and in his representative capacity on behalf of the all class members who do not opt-out will release the Released Parties from all Released Claims. The term “Released Claims” is defined to include any and all claims, demands, rights, liabilities, causes of action, injuries, grievances, obligations, losses, damages, penalties, interest, fines, debts, liens, liabilities, attorneys’ fees, consultant’s fees, expert’s fees, accountant’s fees, costs and any other form of relief or remedy in law or equity, of every nature and description whatsoever, known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, anticipated or unanticipated, suspected or unsuspected, asserted or that could have been asserted against the Released Parties based on the factual allegations asserted in the Operative Complaint, any future amendments to the Operative Complaints, whether arising under State or other applicable law, including, but not limited to, wage and hour claims for any and all violations of California’s Labor Code, any applicable IWC Wage Orders and Unfair Competition Law expressly including all claims that arose during the Class Period, including, but not limited to, claims for: (a) failure to pay for all hours worked (including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages), (b) failure to authorize, permit and/or provide meal periods and/or pay meal period premiums, (c) failure to authorize, permit and/or provide rest periods and/or pay rest period premiums, (d) failure to timely pay final wages at termination, (e) failure to furnish accurate itemized wage statements, (f) failure to pay all earned wages twice per month, (g) failure to maintain accurate records of hours worked and meal periods, (h) unreimbursed business expenses, (i) unlawful deduction from wages, (j) unfair or otherwise unlawful business practices based on the foregoing in violation of California’s Unfair Competition Law (Bus. & Prof. Code, §§ 17200–17210), and (k) and all damages, liquidated damages, interest, penalties, fees, attorneys’ fees, expert witness fees, consultant’s fees, costs, and other amounts recoverable under said causes of action under California and/or Federal law, to the extent permissible, including, but not limited to, the California Labor Code and the applicable Wage Orders.

Aggrieved Employees’ PAGA Release.

After the Court’s judgment is final, and Valley Fresh has paid the Gross Settlement, all Aggrieved Employees will be barred from asserting PAGA claims against Valley Fresh, whether or not they exclude themselves from the

Settlement. This means that all Aggrieved Employees, including those who are Participating Class Members and those who opt-out of the Settlement, cannot sue, continue to sue, or participate in any other PAGA claim against Valley Fresh or its related entities based on the PAGA Period facts alleged in the Action and resolved by this Settlement.

Release by Aggrieved Employees:

All Non-Participating Class Members who are Aggrieved Employees are deemed to release, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, the Released Parties from all claims for PAGA penalties that were alleged, or reasonably could have been alleged, based on the facts stated in the Operative Complaint and the PAGA Notice.

Released Parties means Valley Fresh and each of its past and present subsidiaries, dbas, parents, divisions, related entities, joint venturers, as well as each of their respective owners, co-employers, joint employers, agents, officers, directors, stockholders, shareholders, investors, members, principles, subsidiaries, affiliates, partners, predecessors, successors, assigns, insurers, reinsurers, employees, agents, heirs, spouses, associates, representatives, administrators, fiduciaries, trustees, company-sponsored employee benefit plans of any nature, and all staffing agencies that assigned employees to work for Defendant (including Availability Professional Staffing, Cal Pro Farm Labor, Esparza Enterprises, Inc., Oak Tree Ag Mgmt, Inc., M.A. Garcia Agrilabor, Inc., and Partners Temp Services), individually and in their representative capacities.

4. HOW WILL THE ADMINISTRATOR CALCULATE MY PAYMENT?

Individual Class Payments. The Administrator will calculate Individual Class Payments by (a) dividing the Net Settlement Amount by the total number of Workweeks worked by all Participating Class Members, and (b) multiplying the result by the number of Workweeks worked by each individual Participating Class Member.

Individual PAGA Payments. The Administrator will calculate Individual PAGA Payments by (a) dividing \$2,500 by the total number of PAGA Pay Periods worked by all Aggrieved Employees and (b) multiplying the result by the number of PAGA Pay Periods worked by each individual Aggrieved Employee.

Workweek/Pay Period Challenges. The number of Workweeks you worked during the Class Period and the number of PAGA Pay Periods you worked during the PAGA Period, as recorded in Valley Fresh's records, are stated in the first page of this Notice. You have until October 4, 2024 to challenge the number of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods credited to you. You can submit your challenge by signing and sending a letter to the Administrator via mail, email or fax. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

You need to support your challenge by sending copies of pay stubs or other records. The Administrator will accept Valley Fresh's calculation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods based on Valley Fresh's records as accurate unless you send copies of records containing contrary information. You should send copies rather than originals because the documents will not be returned to you. The Administrator will resolve Workweek and/or Pay Period challenges based on your submission and on input from Class Counsel (who will advocate on behalf of Participating Class Members) and Valley Fresh's Counsel. The Administrator's decision is final. You can't appeal or otherwise challenge its final decision.

5. HOW WILL I GET PAID?

Participating Class Members. The Administrator will send, by U.S. mail, a single check to every Participating Class Member (i.e., every Class Member who doesn't opt-out) including those who also qualify as Aggrieved Employees. The single check will combine the Individual Class Payment and the Individual PAGA Payment.

Non-Participating Class Members. The Administrator will send, by U.S. mail, a single Individual PAGA Payment check to every Aggrieved Employee who opts out of the Settlement (i.e., every Non-Participating Class Member).

Your check will be sent to the same address as this Notice. If you change your address, be sure to notify the Administrator as soon as possible. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

6. HOW DO I OPT-OUT OF THE SETTLEMENT?

Submit a written and signed letter with your name, present address, telephone number, and a simple statement that you do not want to participate in the Settlement. The Administrator will exclude you based on any writing communicating your request be excluded. Be sure to personally sign your request, identify the Action as *Martinez Vera v. Valley Fresh Foods, Inc.*, Case Nos. CV-22-002336 and CV-22-003924, and include your identifying information (full name, address, telephone number, approximate dates of employment, and social security number for verification purposes). You must make the request yourself. If someone else makes the request for you, it will not be valid. **The Administrator must be sent your request to be excluded by October 4, 2024, or it will be invalid.** Section 9 of the Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

7. HOW DO I OBJECT TO THE SETTLEMENT?

Only Participating Class Members have the right to object to the Settlement. Before deciding whether to object, you may wish to see what Plaintiff and Valley Fresh are asking the Court to approve. At least 16 court days before the Final Approval Hearing, Class Counsel and/or Plaintiff will file in Court a Motion for Final Approval that includes, among other things, the reasons why the proposed Settlement is fair, and stating (i) the amount Class Counsel is requesting for attorneys' fees and litigation expenses; (ii) the amount Plaintiff is requesting as the Class Representative's Service Payment; and (iii) the amount the Settlement Administrator is requesting for costs related to performing its duties under the Settlement. Upon reasonable request, Class Counsel (whose contact information is in Section 9 of this Notice) will send you copies of these documents at no cost to you. You can also view them on the Court's website at <https://stanportal.stanct.org/search>.

A Participating Class Member who disagrees with any aspect of the Agreement or the Motion for Final Approval may wish to object, for example, that the proposed Settlement is unfair, or that the amounts requested by Class Counsel or Plaintiff are too high or too low. **The deadline for sending written objections to the Administrator is October 4, 2024.** Be sure to tell the Administrator what you object to, why you object, and any facts that support your objection. Make sure you identify the Action *Martinez Vera v. Valley Fresh Foods, Inc.*, Case Nos. CV-22-002336 and CV-22-003924 and include your name, current address, telephone number, and approximate dates of employment for Valley Fresh and sign the objection. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

Alternatively, a Participating Class Member can object (or personally retain a lawyer to object at your own cost) by attending the Final Approval Hearing. You (or your attorney) should be ready to tell the Court what you object to, why you object, and any facts that support your objection. See Section 8 of this Notice (immediately below) for specifics regarding the Final Approval Hearing.

8. CAN I ATTEND THE FINAL APPROVAL HEARING?

You can, but don't have to, attend the Final Approval Hearing on November 8, 2024 at 8:30 AM in Department 24 of the Stanislaus Superior Court, located at 801 10th Street, 4th floor Modesto, CA 95354. At the Hearing, the judge will decide whether to grant Final Approval of the Settlement and how much of the Gross Settlement will be paid to Class Counsel, Plaintiff, and the Administrator. The Court will invite comment from objectors, Class Counsel and Defense Counsel before making a decision. You can attend (or hire a lawyer to attend) either personally or virtually. Check the Court's website for the most current information.

It's possible the Court will reschedule the Final Approval Hearing. You should check the Court's website beforehand or contact Class Counsel to verify the date and time of the Final Approval Hearing.

9. HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The Agreement sets forth everything Valley Fresh and Plaintiff have promised to do under the proposed Settlement. To obtain more information, you can telephone or send an email to Class Counsel or the Administrator using the contact information listed below, or consult the Superior Court website by going to <https://stanportal.stanct.org/search> and entering the Case Number for the Action, Case No. CV-22-002336 and CV-22-003924.

DO NOT TELEPHONE THE SUPERIOR COURT TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE SETTLEMENT.

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Toll Free: 888-735-4734

valleyfreshsettlement@cptgroup.com

www.cptgroupcaseinfo.com/ValleyFreshSettlement

10. WHAT IF I LOSE MY SETTLEMENT CHECK?

If you lose or misplace your settlement check before cashing it, the Administrator will replace it as long as you request a replacement before the void date on the face of the original check. If your check is already void you will have no way to recover the money.

11. WHAT IF I CHANGE MY ADDRESS?

To receive your check, you should immediately notify the Administrator if you move or otherwise change your mailing address.