


# Dole Food Company

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## Dole Food Company, Inc.

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| <b>Type</b>   | public (NYSE: DOLE <sup>[1]</sup> )                   |
| <b>Industry</b>   | Produce   |
| <b>Founded</b>  | 1851 <sup>[2]</sup> as Castle & Cooke                 |
| <b>Founder(s)</b>   | James Dole  |
| <b>Headquarters</b>   | Westlake Village, California, USA                     |
| <b>Key people</b>   | David H. Murdock<br>Chairman <sup>[3]</sup>           |
| <b>Products</b>   | Fruit<br>Vegetables<br>Other food products            |
| <b>Revenue</b>  | US \$6,783 million (2009) <sup>[4]</sup>              |
| <b>Net income</b>   | 84.1 million (2009) <sup>[4]</sup>                    |
| <b>Employees</b>  | 40,900 (2009) <sup>[5]</sup>                          |
| <b>Website</b>  | <a href="http://www.dole.com">http://www.dole.com</a> |

**Dole Food Company, Inc.** (NYSE: DOLE <sup>[1]</sup>) is an American-based agricultural multinational corporation headquartered in Westlake Village, California. The company is the largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the world, operating with 75,800 full-time and seasonal employees who are responsible for over 300 products in 90 countries. <sup>[6]</sup> <sup>[7]</sup> Dole markets such food items as bananas, pineapples (fresh and packaged), grapes, strawberries, salads, and other fresh and frozen fruits and juices.

Dole's Chairman founded the Dole Nutrition Institute, a nutritional research and education foundation.

## Operations

### Management and staff

As of September 2010, Dole's board of directors had seven members: David H. Murdock, Chairman of the Board; Elaine L. Chao, former U.S. Secretary of Labor; Andrew J. Conrad; David A. DeLorenzo, President and Chief Executive Officer; Sherry Lansing; Justin M. Murdock, Vice President of New Products and Corporate Development; and Dennis M. Weinberg. <sup>[8]</sup>

### Products

Including the original pineapple, Dole distributes fresh fruits in the forms of whole fruits, whole vegetables, berries, and fresh-cut vegetables. Packaged products include fruit bowls, fruit bowls in gel, fruit in plastic jars, fruit parfaits, fruit crisps, dates, raisins, and canned fruits. Frozen products include berries, tropical fruits, and fruit bars. Juices are sold chilled, frozen, or canned. Salad products include greens, salad kits, and shreds. <sup>[9]</sup>

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In 1998 Dole bought several growers in Colombia and became the largest distributor of fresh-cut flowers in the US. However, by 2008 the flower business was losing money, and it was bought in January 2009 by a group of private investors. It then called Sunburst Farms, the name of one of the operations it had purchased that was founded in 1968.<sup>[10]</sup>

Since 2008, there has been an ongoing investigation concerning where the fruits are actually being produced. Research has shown that the majority of the fruit actually come from Sunburst Farm's factories which are based in Japan and China. As of 2011, investigators continue to explore the factories in search of determining the actual manufacturer of Dole's fruit.

## History



Dole Plantation on Oahu, Hawaii.

The company traces its origin to the 1851 establishment of Castle & Cooke by missionaries Samuel Northrup Castle and Amos Starr Cooke. Castle & Cooke rapidly became one of the largest companies in Hawaii, investing in shipping, railroad construction, sugar production, and seafood packing. That is why Dole today uses the name Duo for their juices. The other half of Dole's corporate heritage, the Hawaiian Pineapple Company, was founded in 1901 by James Dole, who opened his first pineapple plantation in the central plateau of the Hawaiian island of Oahu. Sanford Dole, the cousin of James, had been president

of the Republic of Hawaii from 1894 after the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii (her last monarch, Queen Lili'uokalani), and first governor of the Territory of Hawaii until 1903.<sup>[11]</sup> The annexation of Hawaii to the United States made selling agricultural products to the mainland much more profitable, since they would never be subject to import tariffs.

In 1932 Castle & Cooke purchased a 21% interest in the Hawaiian Pineapple Company. In the 1960s Castle & Cooke acquired the remainder of the Hawaiian Pineapple Company and the Standard Fruit Company and renamed the company "The Dole Food Company, Inc" in 1991. Castle & Cook also owned Bumble Bee Foods from 1961 to 1985.

It was then the U.S.'s second largest producer and importer of bananas. Dole and Chiquita remain the top two U.S. banana companies.

In 2009 the company had about \$6.8 billion in annual revenue.<sup>[4]</sup> It is a publicly traded company on the NYSE (DOLE).

Castle & Cooke Inc, a real estate company, was spun off in 1995; it is currently a separate company but is also owned by Murdock.

Dole operates plantations throughout Central and South America, and in the Asia-Pacific region, with plantations in the Philippines and a packing plant in Thailand. PepsiCo distributes Dole's Single Serving Juices.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Corporate headquarters

In 1994, Dole announced that it would finalize its plans to build its world headquarters on a 30-acre ( m<sup>2</sup>) site owned by the company, located north of the Ventura Freeway in Westlake Village, California. The decision had been delayed by groundwater contamination tests and reviewing of possible site plan revisions. Having submitted its plans for final approval by the Westlake Village City Council on February 9, 1994,<sup>[13]</sup> Dole completed construction and opened its new world headquarters building in May, 1999.

## Legacy

The Guinness Book of World Records (2001) lists the pineapple maze at the Dole Plantation in Oahu, Hawaii as the world's largest maze.<sup>[14]</sup>

The Dole Nutrition Institute (DNI) was founded by David H. Murdock in 2003 to “Feed the World with Knowledge” through research and education regarding the health benefits of a plant-based diet.

## Mascot

**Bobby Banana** is a mascot of Dole Food Company and the leader of the SuperKids (children who regularly eat five to nine fruits and vegetables every day).<sup>[15]</sup> He is an anthropomorphic banana, who appears in Dole comics and games for children, along with friends Courtney Cauliflower, Mia Mango, Pinellopy Pineapple, and Gavin Grape, all of whom are also anthropomorphic fruits and vegetables.<sup>[16]</sup>



Dole Plantation Pineapple Maze

## Criticism

### Food safety

In 2005, 23 people in Minnesota were sickened with E. coli O157:H7. The source of the bacteria was found to be Dole brand bagged lettuce.<sup>[17]</sup> Then in 2006, another E. coli outbreak that caused over 200 people to become ill and killed 3 more was linked to bagged spinach sold by Dole. The spinach was processed by Natural Selection Foods in California.<sup>[18]</sup>

### Labor relations

The banana industry has traditionally been dominated by a few large corporations, which employ low-wage workers in developing countries.<sup>[19]</sup> <sup>[20]</sup> Dole was named as a defendant in a wrongful death lawsuit filed on behalf of 73 heirs of victims of paramilitary violence in Colombia.<sup>[21]</sup>

In 2007, Nicaraguan plantation workers, represented by Los Angeles-based personal injury lawyer Juan Dominguez, sued Dole and Dow Chemical Company, claiming the use of illegal pesticides like Nemagon (now banned) had made them sterile. (The pesticide was not banned in Nicaragua until after Dole ceased its operations within the country.) The suit and two others were subsequently thrown out by California courts after it was concluded that “[c]ontrary to their sworn testimony, most of the plaintiffs never worked on Dole-affiliated banana farms and none were involved in the DBCP application process,” while similar lawsuits were filed in U.S. and Nicaraguan courts.<sup>[22]</sup>

A lawyer for the Nicaraguans, Steve Condie, however, stated that some of the witnesses who gave testimony that the claims were fraudulent, had been paid by Dole. The witnesses' identities were kept secret so that the plaintiffs' lawyers could not interview them.<sup>[23]</sup>

In June 2009, it was reported that Dominguez was under investigation by the California State Bar for potential ethics violations which he may have committed during the litigation process on behalf of the Nicaraguan workers.<sup>[24]</sup> The judge in the case also reported Dominguez to federal prosecutors for investigation of multiple crimes, including perjury, obstruction of justice, defrauding a court and conspiring to extort a United States company.<sup>[25]</sup>

Swedish director Fredrik Gertten made a documentary film about Dominguez and the alleged banana workers. The movie *Bananas!* premiered in the 2009 Los Angeles Film Festival. Because Dole had serious concerns on what the film might reveal to the public, it urged festival officials to “immediately cease and desist” their sponsorship of the film.<sup>[26]</sup> <sup>[27]</sup> <sup>[28]</sup> <sup>[29]</sup> The festival officials allowed the film to be screened, but it was not allowed to compete for placement in the competition. In addition, festival officials distributed information before the film's screening that

indicated Dole believed the film to be factually inaccurate.

Although the film was screened with a disclaimer from the festival, Gertten was subsequently sued for defamation by Dole.<sup>[30]</sup> The lawsuit was dropped on October 15 2009, and in November 2010 a court in Los Angeles sentenced in favour of the movie crew making it possible to release the movie in the USA, and ordering Dole to pay SEK 1.4 million (roughly USD 200,000) to the filmmakers.<sup>[31] [32]</sup>

The last Nicaraguan DBCP awards against Dole were overturned in July 2010.<sup>[33]</sup>

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## External links

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