



Background of NOSB Members: April 2023

Class of 2023

Nathaniel (Nate) Lewis

Nathaniel (Nate) Lewis currently works as the South Sound Conservation Manager for the Washington Farmland Trust in Washington State. He also owns and operates Oyster Bay Farm in Olympia, WA, one of exceedingly few family-scale farms that are members of the Organic Trade Association (OTA). Oyster Bay Farm is certified by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), also a member of the OTA.

Mr. Lewis was previously employed as the Organic Certification Coordinator at the Washington State Department of Agriculture, coming on board when Miles McEvoy, former Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program, was WSDA's Organic Program Manager. He later served as the Farm Policy Director at the Organic Trade Association. His Organic Inspector Training was completed through the International Organic Inspectors Association, an OTA member.

Mr. Lewis received (a likely unprecedented) 61 letters of support, including endorsements from the Organic Trade Association, four members of the current OTA Board (and one current board candidate), and many other OTA members (Oregon Tilth, California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), Accredited Certifiers Association, Driscoll's, General Mills, Stonyfield, Organic Valley, WSDA, and the Organic Produce Network, to name a few).

Our review of the letters revealed a number of interesting patterns, including numerous submissions from OTA members affiliated with vertically-integrated agribusinesses producing organic eggs.

Over half the letters supporting his appointment came from individuals or entities with OTA affiliations. One such letter is from prominent industry consultant and OTA member/financial donor, Wolf and Associates. When speaking at the Fall 2018 National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting, Mr. Lewis identified himself as "an associate consultant with Wolf, DiMatteo and Associates" and stated that his comments were being made on their behalf. This professional relationship was not noted in his application. Wolf and Associates is listed as a financial sponsor of OTA's upcoming Organic Week in Washington, DC.

Mr. Lewis also received a letter of support from Miles McEvoy who "retired" from the USDA after an ethics complaint alleged improper personal benefit from relationships with the certifiers the NOP was charged with overseeing. Details of the USDA investigation have never been released through Freedom of Information Act requests, with the agency stating the matter was still "open."

Mr. Lewis will hold one of the Environmental Protection and Resource Conservation seats on the NOSB.

Dr. Franklin Quarcoo

Dr. Franklin Quarcoo is an Entomologist/Integrated Pest Management Specialist who is currently an Assistant Research-Extension Professor of Entomology in the Department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at Tuskegee University in Alabama. He also serves as their Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (SARE) state coordinator.

In 2022, Organic Trade Association member Clif Bar partnered with the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research to fund a \$2 million endowment intended to support Dr. Quarcoo and a colleague in developing a network of organic research among Southeast academic institutions with a focus on historically Black colleges and universities in an effort to promote the adoption of organic farming practices and increase equity in organic farming.

The Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research frequently partners with the OTA's nonprofit arm, The Organic Center, to fund organic research and training. Dr. Quarcoo also participated in "Endowed Chair Office Hours" at the Clif Bar booth at Natural Foods Expo West, an industry tradeshow.

It should be noted that Clif Bar's prior point person on organic policy, Tom Chapman, chaired the NOSB when he worked closely with NOP director Miles McEvoy to rewrite the Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) for the board, stripping the panel's ability to set their own agenda and work plan. Mr. Chapman is now the CEO of the Organic Trade Association.

Dr. Quarcoo received a single letter of support from the National Organic Coalition (NOC). He will hold one of the Environmental Protection and Resource Conservation seats on the NOSB.

Class of 2022

Allison Johnson is a senior attorney and sustainable food policy advocate with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in Oakland, CA. She previously worked as an organic certification and policy specialist at California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), a prominent member and major contributor (over and above their annual dues) of the Organic Trade Association (OTA). She holds a J.D. with an Environmental Law certificate, a master's degree in Gastronomic Sciences and Quality Products, and a bachelor's degree in Nutritional Sciences. Ms. Johnson received letters of endorsement from the OTA and CCOF. She serves as a Public/Consumer Interest representative on the NOSB, appointed in 2022.

Dr. Dilip Nandwani is a professor and researcher of organic agriculture at Tennessee State University in Franklin, TN, with a focus on organic agriculture, certification, and crop science. He holds a Ph.D. in Botany. Dr. Nandwani serves on the boards of Tennessee Organic Growers Association (TOGA), Southern Cover Crops Council (SCCC) and is Chair of the Organic Tropical and Subtropical Fruits workgroup of International Society of Horticultural Science (ISHS). He has published extensively, is editor of several books on Organic Agriculture, Sustainable Agriculture, and Urban Agriculture, and serves on the editorial board of the Organic Agriculture Journal. Dr. Nandwani holds the Scientist seat on the NOSB, appointed in 2022.

Javier Zamora owns and operates JSM Organics, a 110-acre family-owned vegetable/fruit farm in California. JSM Organics is a member of the OTA and certified by prominent OTA member California

Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF). Mr. Zamora has served in CCOF leadership and CCOF provided a letter of endorsement for his nomination. Mr. Zamora was awarded the OTA Rising Star Award in 2018 and has been a speaker at events held by the OTA and The Organic Center (the research arm of the OTA). He was elected to the OTA Board of Directors in 2021 but subsequently resigned. Mr. Zamora has also served on the boards of the USDA's Small Farmer & Rancher Advisory Committee, the Agriculture and Land-based Training Association (ALBA), and the Ecological Farming Association (Eco Farm). He holds associate degrees in Organic Production and Landscape Design, as well as certificates in Greenhouse Production, Landscape Management, Nursery Management, and from the ALBA Farmer Education Program. Mr. Zamora has been a speaker at the Real Organic Project Symposium and his farm is ROP certified. He holds an Organic Producer seat on the NOSB, appointed in 2022.

Resigned appointment in December 2022:

Elizabeth “Liz” Graznak is the owner of Happy Hollow Farm, an 82-acre diversified organic vegetable farm focused on retail sales and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) near Jamestown Missouri. She was voted the 2021 Farmer of the Year by the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) and has served on the boards of the Missouri Organic Association and Sustainable Farms and Communities. She holds a master's degree in Plant Breeding and a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Environmental Studies. Ms. Graznak has 16 years of certified organic farming experience. She was appointed to the NOSB in 2022 and served as an Environmental Protection and Resource Conservation representative until December 2022.

Class of 2021

Amy Bruch is a farmer and President of Cyclone Farms in East Central Nebraska. According to their website, they grow “organic, transition, or conventional crops.” Cyclone Farms is certified by OTA member Where Food Comes From Organic (WFCFO). Ms. Bruch is also the co-founder of AgriSecure, an organic advisory service provider that describes itself as an “industry partner” to the Organic Trade Association (OTA) and regularly promotes their programs. Both Cyclone Farms and AgriSecure are members of OTA and AgriSecure is on OTA's Grain, Pulse, and Oilseed Council. Ms. Bruch participated in OTA's Farmer Advisory Council virtual “fly in” to Washington, DC in February 2021. She was named OTA's 2022 Farmer of the Year.

OTA provided a letter of support for Ms. Bruch's appointment to NOSB and included her in “A special shout out to our members who have been appointed by @SecretarySonny to serve on #NOSB” on their official Twitter account. She holds one of the NOSB Organic Producer (farmer) seats.

Logan Petrey is the Southeast Ranch Manager for Grimmway Farms. Grimmway is an OTA member managing 50,000 acres of production and certified by fellow OTA member CCOF. Their president was the recipient of OTA's Farmer of the Year award in 2020. Ms. Petrey was a presenter at an OTA webinar in March 2020. She received a letter of support from OTA for her appointment to NOSB and was also recognized as a member and congratulated on their Twitter account. Additional letters of support came from OTA members Grimmway and Quality Certification Services. She has previously worked with Robinson Fresh and is on the board of Florida Organic Growers (whose Executive Director was on the OTA board for many years and was one of its most prominent spokespeople).

Ms. Petrey holds one of the NOSB Organic Producer seats.

Carolyn Dimitri is on the faculty of the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies at New York University. Her research has often been cited by OTA and she has been a speaker at their conferences. She also cites their work in her research. She is on the Scientific Board of The Organic Center, the educational and research organization operating under the administrative auspices of OTA, as well as serving on the Organic and Regenerative Agriculture Advisory Council at General Mills and the Executive Board of the Organic Farming Research Foundation (both OTA members).

OTA provided a letter of support for her appointment. Dr. Dimitri holds one of the Consumer/Public Interest seats on NOSB.

Brian Caldwell owns and operates Hemlock Grove Farm, a certified organic farm producing tree fruits and nuts in West Danby, New York. He was a founding member of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY) and is retired from Cornell University.

Mr. Caldwell holds one of the Consumer/Public Interest seats on NOSB.

Kyla Smith is a Certification Director at Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO), an OTA member. She was PCO's representative on OTA's Global Organic Supply Chain Integrity Task Force in 2017 and has been an OTA webinar presenter. Ms. Smith has served on the board of the Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA) and received letters of support from numerous OTA members and their representatives (PCO, ACA, California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), Danone, Ecocert, Florida Organic Growers, Heritage Poultry, International Organic Inspectors Association, and MOM's Organic Market). She was also recognized as a member and congratulated on her appointment to the board on OTA's Twitter account.

Ms. Smith holds the USDA Accredited Certifying Agent seat on NOSB.

Class of 2020

Nathan Powell-Palm operates a 1,000-acre certified organic farm outside of Belgrade, Montana. Mr. Powell-Palm has a long resume of extensive involvement with the OTA and some of its affiliates.

Mr. Powell-Palm started growing his operation at a young age, and he serves on the board of the Montana Organic Association (MOA), one of just two organic farmer groups that we know of that endorsed an OTA proposal for an industry checkoff (tax) on agricultural producers. Another MOA board member, Doug Crabtree, currently sits on OTA's Board of Directors.

Mr. Powell-Palm has spoken at OTA conferences, participated in their Capitol Hill lobby days, and, in 2019, received the organization's coveted "Rising Star" award. He is also trained as an organic inspector. He sits in an NOSB seat reserved by Congress for an Organic Producer and was elected board chair in 2022.

Kimberly Huseman works for Pilgrim's Pride, a \$12 billion business enterprise and the second-largest conventional poultry producer in the United States. Pilgrim has a growing interest in organic production as well. Ms. Huseman's responsibilities include procurement of feed grain for their livestock. She sits on the NOSB in a slot reserved for a Handler/Processor.

Pilgrim's Pride, an OTA member, is part of an industry that has been under scrutiny for depending on a copious amount of imported feed rather than supporting and purchasing from domestic organic farmers.

Therefore, Ms. Huseman's positions on this issue are being closely watched. The NOSB has also failed to resolve a number of scale-related poultry issues.

Another poultry-related issue, a years-long controversy the NOSB has stalled on resolving, that will now be considered by Ms. Huseman, is the continued use of the synthetic amino acid methionine. Many public interest groups have accused major poultry producers and OTA of paying lip service to phasing-out the feed ingredient utilized, in part, to "supercharge" their production and facilitating confinement, factory farm conditions that are considered illegal in organics.

Gerald D'Amore works for a major conventional/organic industry produce handler, Munger Farms, which is a member of OTA. He has previously been employed by a number of other major, primarily conventional, agribusinesses. Many of these companies are also OTA members, including Dole, Chiquita, and Driscoll's Strawberry Associates. Driscoll's is certified by the nation's largest USDA-accredited certifier, California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF). CCOF certified early adopters of hydroponic technology, including Archi's Acres in southern California. In light of the laws governing organics and previous NOSB decisions, most public interest groups believe soilless production is illegal. CCOF is among OTA's largest financial supporters.

Mr. D'Amore is listed as a former vice president of Driscoll's, the world's largest berry marketer. Because of his experience in the company that helped pioneer certified organic hydroponic production, his voice on certified organic hydroponics is being watched carefully. Mr. D'Amore is currently listed in his LinkedIn profile as an independent consultant, although this was not disclosed by USDA. He sits in one of the Handler/Processor seats on the board.

Mindee Jeffery is currently working as the Organic Activism and Education Coordinator for OTA member Good Earth Natural Foods. She also manages a joint compost program for Good Earth and Tara Firma Farms. She has been active in the Independent Natural Food Retailers Association (INFRA), also an OTA member.

Ms. Jeffery previously served as chair of the California Organic Products Advisory Committee (COPAC) and nominated Karen Archipley as her replacement. Archipley, a small-scale hydroponic-greenhouse grower from San Diego County, served as a spokesperson for an "Astroturf" group formed and financed by Driscoll's, Wholesome Harvest, and other major hydroponic agribusinesses.

Ms. Jeffery sits in an NOSB seat reserved for a Retailer.

Wood Turner currently serves as Senior Vice President of Sustainability at an investment firm, Agricultural Capital. Prior to that he worked for Stonyfield Farms, a major OTA member and

contributor (with a staff member currently sitting on the OTA board), now owned by the French dairy giant, Lactalis. According to press accounts and industry insiders, OTA, with Stonyfield's leadership, brokered a provision in federal law, commonly known as The Dark Act, that established a weak labeling law concerning disclosure of genetically engineered ingredients, stripping states (like Vermont)—with preemption language—of the right to adopt more stringent state food labeling disclosure laws. Groups have pointed out that the “compromise” legislation has led to deceptive GMO [genetically modified organisms] labeling of food that sends consumers to company websites, which are misleading and fraudulent in extolling the benefits and safety of GMOs. The legislation also provides for the use of a warm and fuzzy logo.

With a background in urban and environmental planning, Mr. Turner serves on the Board in an Environmental Protection and Resource Conservation seat.

Class of 2018 (finished his five-year term in January 2023)

James R. “Rick” Greenwood is an Adjunct Professor in the Fielding School of Public Health at UCLA and a participating faculty member in the Institute of Environment and Sustainability. He owns Greenwood Grove, an organic avocado grove in Fallbrook, CA, and is a member of the Organic Trade Association. His avocado farm is certified by California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), also an OTA member.

Dr. Greenwood held one of the Environmental Protection and Resource Conservation seats on the board.