

National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) - Applicant Summary for January 2026 Appointments

Internal | Deliberative | Pre-Decisional

NOSB membership is defined by the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA). Fifteen members serve five-year terms on the board across seven seats, as follows:

- four seats for individuals who own, operate, or are employed by an organic farming operation (**two vacant seats**);
- one certifying agent (**one vacant seat**);
- three individuals who represent public interest or consumer interest groups (**two vacant seats**);
- two seats for individuals who own, operate, or are employed by an organic handling operation (**no vacant seats**);
- one individual who owns, operates, or is employed by a retail establishment with significant trade in organic products (**no vacant seats**);
- three experts in environmental protection and resource conservation (**no vacant seats**);
- one expert in the fields of toxicology, ecology, or biochemistry (**no vacant seats**).

There is a [Abbreviations List](#) and their meanings at the end of this document.

ORGANIC FARMER / PRODUCER SEAT (2 VACANT: Replacing Soy/Corn Farmer in Nebraska; Grimmway Farms Farmer in Florida)

Name	Location	References	Summary of Candidate's Qualifications
Steve Pierson	Saint Paul, OR	Y (5): ODFA; Organic Trade Assoc. (OTA); OV; OFA; WODPA.	Professional Experience: 45 years in organic dairy. Owner, Sar-Ben Farms Inc (1980-present) (b) (4) acres organic pasture/forage. (b) (4) organic dairy cows. Affiliations: Producer member, OV. Member, OV's Board of Directors (2012-2023); Board director of Willamette DHIA (1998-2010). Education/Training: BS, Dairy Science, Univ. of FL.
Sandy Syburg	Oconomowoc, WI	Y (8): NOC; OFA; OTA; OV; True Grace Health (supplement company); UW-Madison Dept of Plant Pathology; Zimmer (BioAg fertilizer company founder and Otter Creek Organic Farm owner); MeadowlarkOrganics.	Professional Experience: 30 years in organic agriculture. Owner, White Oak Farm (b) (4) acres organic beans, feed grains, food and seed, veggies, herbs). Co-Founder/President, Purple Cow Organics (consulting; OMRI-listed soil amendments; bulk ag and retail garden products). Affiliations: Producer member, OV; Member, OV Grower Executive Committee; Member, True Grace Health's Science and Agriculture Advisory Board. Education/Training: None provided.
Jerry Matzner	Marshall, MN	Y (5): State: Dahms (MN-15). Bell & Evans (poultry company); MN Farm Bureau; OFA; OV.	Professional Experience: 13 years in organic crops and poultry. Owner, Century Farm Organics LLC (2014-present) (b) (4) acres organic kidney beans, black beans, corn, oats, sunflowers. (b) (4) acres transitioning to organic). Co-Owner, Century Farm Ag Solutions (2024-present) (specialty organic equipment, corn seed sales; custom services). Co-Owner, Century Farm Poultry (2002-present) (producer for (b) (4)). Affiliations: Producer member, OV; MN Farm Bureau; Supplier-partner, (b) (4). Education/Training: BA, Augustana College.

Name	Location	References	Summary of Candidate's Qualifications
Vishal Shinde	San Luis Obispo, CA	Y (1): Bio S.I. Technology (crop/soil microbes company)	Professional Experience: 14 years in agriculture research and farming. Managing partner, Central Coast Organic Berries LLC (2023-present) (b) (4) acres organic hydroponic berries). Research Director, Growers Research Innovation Network (2023-present) (greenhouse and field studies). Director, Business Development, Ag Metrics Group (2017-2023). Affiliations: Entomological Society; NAICC; Biosolution; Phytopathological Society. Education/Training: PhD, Plant Pathology, Univ. of CA. PhD, Agrochemicals and Pest Management, MS, BS, Shivaji Univ.
Gerardo Cruz	Spreckels, CA	Y (1): REVEAM (shelf-life extension technology company).	Professional Experience: Eight (8) years in produce and mushroom farming. Director of Corporate Food Safety and Quality Assurance, Monterey Mushrooms LLC (2021-present) (mushroom producer and processor). Senior Quality Assurance Manager, San Benito Foods (2020-2021). Quality Assurance and Food Safety Manager, Fresh Leaf Farms (2018-2020). Plant supervisor Quality, Food Safety, Organic Integrity department, Earthbound Farms (2013-2015). Affiliations: Member, American Mushrooms Institute, and Mushroom Council (2021-present); Member, International Fresh Produce Assoc. (IFPA). Education/Training: MS, Univ. of TX. BS, Univ. of Guanajuato.
Joshua Hoffmann	Salado, TX	Y (3): Horizon Organic; NM State Univ. Department of Extension Animal Sciences and Natural Resources; TX A&M Univ. (Whitney, Organic Program Specialist, TX A&M AgriLife Organic Research Extension).	Professional Experience: 17 years in organic dairy. Owner/CEO, Lone Star Organic Dairy LLC since 2024 (b) (4) acres pasture, hay forages, corn, wheat. (b) (4) organic dairy cows). Genetics Specialist, Geno USA (2023-present). Director of Organic Operations, Natural Prairie Dairy Farms (NPDF) (2008-2023). Affiliations: WODPA; John Deere International Advisory Board (2021-2023). Education/Training: BS, Animal Science and Dairy Science, TX A&M Univ. Notes: (b) (5) DPP
Scott Sechler	Strausstown, PA	Y (6): Congressional: Meuser (PA-9); Thompson (PA-15). State: Dept. of Ag (PA). PA Farm Bureau; PennAg Industries Assoc.; Rodale Institute.	Professional Experience: 60 years in poultry industry. Owner/Chairman, Farmer's Pride, Inc. (dba Bell & Evans) poultry company (1984-present). Poultry slaughtering/processing facilities and chicken producer. Owner, Sechler Poultry (1976-1984). Affiliations: Member, PA Preferred Organic Advisory Committee. Education/Training: None provided in application. Notes: (b) (5) DPP
Ryan Klassen	Belgrade, MN	Y (1): OFARM.	Professional Experience: 20+ years organic row-crop farming experience. Owner, Heirloom Grains MN LLC (b) (4) acres organic corn, oats, rye, soybeans, and wheat). Affiliations: OFARM; Policy and Licensing Contributor, CPOFA (grain cooperative). Education/Training: None provided in application. Notes: (b) (5) DPP
Robert Peeters	Bell River, Ontario, Canada	Y (7): Congressional: Kaptur (OH-9). CEA Alliance; Economic Development Corp; Fulton Co, OH; IFPA; OH Farm Bureau; OPA; OGVG.	Professional Experience: 4 years in greenhouse industry. Vice President, Farm Operations & Strategy, Nature Fresh Farms Inc (2022-present) (b) (4) acres organic greenhouses in OH). Affiliations: IFPA; CPMA; OGVG; OPA. Education/Training: MBA, Univ. of Fredericton. BS, Lawrence Technological Univ. Notes: (b) (5) DPP

Name	Location	References	Summary of Candidate's Qualifications
Kurt Thell	Freeport, MN	None	Professional Experience: 16 yrs experience. Owner/Operator, Century Oaks Farm/Thell Family Farm (b) (4) acres organic alfalfa, hay, corn, pasture, millet, rye, sorghum, (b) (4) organic cattle). Affiliations: None provided. Education/Training: AS, St. Cloud Comm. College.
Leslie Zuck	Spring Mills, PA	Y (7): Congressional: Thompson (PA-15). State: Dept of Ag (PA). Honest Tea; Lacewing Consulting; Current NOSB member (Smith); QCS (certifier); Wolf & Assoc.	Professional Experience: Owner, Common Ground Farm (b) (4) acre organic mixed vegetables, (b) (4) sq ft seedling greenhouse – exempt due to size). Organic Specialist/Accreditation Auditor Common Ground Consulting. General Manager, Ecocert (2019-2021) (certifier). Affiliations: Mentor, TOPP mentor; OEFFA (certifier); PA Farm Bureau; PVGA; PVMRP; PVCA; Treasurer, OTA; Co-founder and former President, Accredited Certifiers Assoc. (ACA); Co-chair, IFOAM Organics International General Assembly. Education/Training: JD, Dickinson School of Law. BA, PA State Univ.
Heather Folks-Lambert	Quincy, WA	None	Professional Experience: Quality Assurance Group Manager, Amway / Nutrilite / Trout Lake Farm (organic compliance for two farms, milling/warehouse/plant facilities for supplements). Affiliations: Board of Trustees, AHPA. Education/Training: MS, Sustainability, Harvard; BS, Animal Science, Univ. of NE.
Neil Checketts (b) (5) DPP	Pleasant View, UT	Y (2): Congressional: Lee (UT). OPA.	Professional Experience: Vice President of Food Safety, Mastronardi Produce (not organic); (handling/processing, co-packer, private labeler, distributor, marketer/trader of fresh produce). Affiliations: IAFP; Food Marketing Institute. CPMA; IFPA; Food Safety and Regulatory Industry Group at CEA Alliance; SEPC; OPA; GFSI. Education/Training: MBA, Univ. of Phoenix; BS, UT State Univ.

CERTIFYING AGENT SEAT (1 VACANT: Replacing Certifier Representative in Pennsylvania)

Name	Location	References	Summary of Candidate's Qualifications
April Vasquez	Felton, CA	Y (17): Congressional: Panetta (CA-19) and Padilla (CA). State: Dept. of Ag (CA). Abundant Harvest; Certifiers (ACA, CCOF, Control Union, Ecocert, PCO, SCS); Driscoll's; OTA; Quick Organics (software); Taylor Farms; Traditional Medicinals; WG; Wolf & Assoc.	Professional Experience: Chief Certification Officer, CCOF (2019-current) (certifier). Director of Farm Programs, CCOF (2016-2019). President/CEO, Envirocann (former organic certification company) (2016-2019). Quality and Compliance Supervisor, CCOF (2014-2016). Senior Grower Certification Specialist, CCOF (2007-2014). Affiliations: COPAC; IFPA; NOC; OMRI; OFA; OTA. Education/Training: MBA, CA State Univ. BA, Univ. of CA.
Beth Rota	Morgantown, WV	Y (15): Certifiers (ACA, Ecocert, OTCO, QCS); Common Ground Consulting (L. Zuck); CFSA; FLPP; GAPF; Ken Carver (egg company); NC Egg Assoc.; NCPF; OMRI; OTA; SCPF; SOS.	Professional Experience: 18 years in organic certification. Director of Quality & Accreditation, QCS (current) (certifier). Organic Program Director, QCS (previous). Affiliations: ACA Board of Directors (2017-2022). Education/Training: MS, Environmental Studies, Univ. of MT; BA, International and Environmental Politics, Juniata College.
Nicole Dehne	Burlington, VT	Y (6): State: Dept of Ag (VT). Certifiers (MCIA, NOFA-NY); Former NOSB (Richardson); NOC; OFA.	Professional Experience: 22 years certification experience. Certification Director, VOF (current) (certifier). Owned and operated an organic poultry operation (8 years). Affiliations: Former board member and Chair, OMRI; Real Organic Project; ACA; IOIA; NOC. Education/Training: Post-BS cert., Univ. of VT; BS, Univ. of MT.

Name	Location	References	Summary of Candidate's Qualifications
Mabell Rivas	State College, PA	None	Professional Experience: 20 + years certification experience. Technical Manager, QAI (2015-current) (certifier). Technical Reviewer and Inspector, QAI (2013-2015). Program Director, PCO (2010-2013) (certifier). Certification Specialist, OCIA (2009-2010) (certifier). Affiliations: OTA; ACA. Education/Training: MA, BS, Polytechnic Univ-Nicaragua; AS, Kings River Comm. College.

CONSUMER / PUBLIC INTEREST SEAT (2 VACANT: Replacing Professor in New York City; Farmer/Advocate/Educator in Upstate New York)

Name	Location	References	Summary of Candidate's Qualifications
Jed Murray	McAllen, TX	Y (6): Congressional: Cornyn (TX) and De La Cruz (TX-15). IFPA; Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers; TX Vegetable Assoc.; TX Citrus Mutual.	Professional Experience: 20 years agriculture, 13 years farm vegetable production experience. Director of Government Relations, TIPA (2024-current). Managing Partner, 9 Kids Compost LLC (2016-present). Managing Partner, MO Produce LLC (2010-2024). General Manager, Church Brothers Farms (2013-2016). CEO (2013), Val Verde Vegetable Co. Affiliations: TIPA; TX DSHS Food Safety & Defense Task Force; TX Vegetable Assoc.; TX A&M Vegetable & Fruit Program. Education/Training: BS, Agribusiness and Marketing, CA Polytechnic State Univ.
Bradley Heins	Morris, MN	Y (6): Congressional: Klobuchar (MN). MN Milk Producers Assoc.; Olsen (Chair, MN OATF); OTA; OV; Univ. of MN (Hadrich, Associate Dean, College of Food, Ag).	Professional Experience: Authored/coauthored > 100 peer-reviewed publications on livestock. Professor of Organic Dairy Management, Univ. of MN (2022-present) (b) (4) organic forages, hay, pasture, corn, soybeans, wheat. (b) (4) organic dairy cattle). Associate Professor (2016-2022), Assistant Professor (2010-2016) of Organic Dairy Production and Management, Univ. of MN. Research Assistant, Univ. of MN (1999-2010). Affiliations: Producer member, OV (dairy and beef); Member, NFO; Member, MISA; Member, MN OATF; Member, ADSA; Member, AASA; Editor, Journal of Dairy Science; Member, S1096 Dairy Genetics Multistate Research Group; Former President/Secretary, Midwest ADSA Board of Directors; Former member, ADSA Breeding and Genetics Committee. Education/Training: PhD, MS, Animal Science, BS, Animal and Plant Systems, Univ of MN.
Mark Keating	Mt. Holly, NJ	Y (3): Eldredge (independent organic inspector); Kuhlman Farms; Moreno (attorney).	Professional Experience: Founder/Chief, Wheel of Life Consulting. Independent Organic Certification Inspector, NOFA-NJ. Affiliations: Member, IOIA; NOFA-NJ. Education: MS, Conservation Biology, Univ. of WI; BA, Yale Univ.
Alan Lewis	Boulder, CO	Y (2): NOC; OFA.	Professional Experience: Vice President, Director of Organic Integrity, Director of Government and Regulatory Affairs, Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage, Inc (2004-present). Affiliations: NonGMO Project; IFOAM; Real Organic Project; OFA. Education/Training: BA, Brown Univ.; Univ. of Coimbra.
Roland McReynolds	Pittsboro, NC	Y (3): State: Dept. of Ag (NC). NOC; OFA.	Professional Experience: Executive Director, CFSA. Affiliations: OFA Policy Committee, NCSU Crop and Soil Sciences Advisory Board. Education/Training: JD, Univ. of NC; BA, BS, Univ. of MO.
Amber King	Mountlake Terrace, WA	Y (3): Corrado (former VP Bosch); Shields (ARK); Stokan (physician).	Professional Experience: Currently unemployed, previous retail/restaurant experience. (b) (5) DPP Affiliations: Member, PCC Market (certified organic retailer); Member, Skagit Valley Co-op. Education/Training: Art Institute of Seattle, Univ. of AK; AK Growers School.

Name	Location	References	Summary of Candidate's Qualifications
Dr. Tania Martinez	Miami, FL	N	Professional Experience: Quality Director, Heinlein Foods. Supervisor, Demos Foods. Affiliations: AFDO; IAFP; Lead Technical Assessor, FSMA (FDA). Education/Training: JD, St. Thomas Univ.; PhD, Univ. of Valencia; MA, Univ. Pompeu Fabra. Notes: (b) (5) DPP
Eugene Koprowski	Champaign, IL	N	Professional Experience: Legal Consultant and Lawyer-Arbiter in Housing Court for Montgomery County. The City Law Firm, Ltd. Affiliations: None provided. Education/Training: JD, MA, BA, King's College, Univ. of London Law School. Notes: (b) (5) DPP
Latricia Powell	Mount Pleasant, MI	N	Professional Experience: Strategic Business Consultant, LA Powell & Assoc. Affiliations: (b) (5) DPP Education/Training: MBA, BS, Central MI Univ. Notes: (b) (5) DPP
Steven Roach	Iowa City, IA	Y (1): Former NOSB member (Karreman).	Professional Experience: Safe and Healthy Program Director, Food Animal Concerns Trust. Affiliations: Keep Antibiotics Working Coalition; Codex Alimentarius Ad-hoc Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance; Member, WHO Advisory Group. Education/Training: MA, IA State Univ.; BS, Randolph Macon College. Notes: (b) (5) DPP
Zafar Toshev	Monroeville, PA	Y (1): JR International Logistics LLC (logistics solutions company/customs, air, sea, and land freight, supply chain management).	Professional Experience: Founder, Dry End Inc & Express Inc. & iMobile Fitness Inc; Former farmer in Uzbekistan (2006-2015). Affiliations: None provided. Education/Training: BS, Military Engineering Academy, Uzbekistan. Notes: (b) (5) DPP

Abbreviations List

Abbreviation	Full Name
AASA	American Animal Science Association
ACA	Accredited Certifiers Association
ADSA	American Dairy Science Association
AFDO	Association of Food and Drug Officials
AHPA	American Herbal Products Association
ARK	Alliance for Reason and Knowledge
CCOF	California (CA) Certified Organic Farmers / CCOF Certification Services, LLC (certifier)
CDFA	California Department of Food and Agriculture
CEA Alliance	Controlled Environment Agriculture
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFSA	Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
COPAC	California Organic Products Advisory Committee
CPMA	Canadian Produce Marketing Association
CPOFA	Central Plains Organic Farmers Association
DHIA	Dairy Herd Improvement Association
DSHS	Department of State Health Services
FDA	U.S. Food and Drug Administration
FFWR	Food and Farm Worker Relief
FLPA	Florida (FL) Poultry Federation
FMI	Food Marketing Institute
FSMA	Food Safety Modernization Act
GAPF	Georgia (GA) Poultry Federation
GFSI	Global Food Safety Initiative
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
IAFP	International Association for Food Protection
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
IFPA	International Fresh Produce Association
IOIA	International Organic Inspectors Association
LFPP	Local Food Promotion Program
MCIA	Minnesota (MN) Crop Improvement Association (certifier)
MISA	MN Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
MPIRG	Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant
NAICC	National Alliance for Independent Crop Consultants
NCPF	North Carolina (NC) Poultry Federation
NFO	National Farmers Organization
NOC	National Organic Coalition
NOFA-NJ	Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey (NJ)

NOFA-NY	Northeast Organic Farming Association New York (NY) / NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC (certifier)
NOSB	National Organic Standards Board
NPDF	Natural Prairie Dairy Farms
OATF	Organic Advisory Task Force
OCIA	Organic Crop Improvement Association (certifier)
ODFA	Oregon (OR) Dairy Farmers Association
OEFFA	Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (certifier)
OFA	Organic Farmers Association
OFARM	Organic Farmers Agency for Relationship Marketing
OGVG	Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers
OILC	Organic Integrity Learning Center
OMRI	Organic Materials Review Institute
OPA	Organic Produce Association
OREI	Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative
OTA	Organic Trade Association
OTCO	Oregon (OR) Tilth Certified Organic (certifier)
OTI	Organic Transition Initiative
OV	CROPP Cooperative (Organic Valley/Organic Prairie)
PCC	Puget Consumers Cooperative
PCO	Pennsylvania (PA) Certified Organic (certifier)
PGPR	Plant Growth Promoting Rhizobacteria Society
PVCA	Penns Valley Conservation Association
PVGA	Pennsylvania (PA) Vegetable Growers Association
PVMRP	Pennsylvania (PA) Vegetable Marketing & Research Program
QAI	Quality Assurance International Organic Certification (certifier)
QCS	Quality Certification Services (certifier)
SCPF	South Carolina (SC) Poultry Federation
SCS	Scientific Certification Systems Inc. dba SCS Global Services, Inc. (certifier)
SEPC	Southeast Produce Council
SOS	Strengthening Organic Systems
TIPA	Texas (TX) International Produce Association
TOPP	Transition to Organic Partnership Program
VOF	Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC (certifier)
WG	Western Growers
WHO	World Health Organization
WODPA	Western Organic Dairy Producers Association