



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OREGON ORGANIC COALITION BESTOWS AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE ON NINE OREGON INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES

Organic Farmer and Activist, Elise Higley from Oshala Farm, Gives Keynote at Luncheon Celebrating Oregon's Organic Food Trade

PORTLAND, Ore. - September 14, 2016

The recipients of the 2016 Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC) Awards for Excellence were announced yesterday at a celebratory luncheon at the Ecotrust Building in Portland, Oregon. More than 70 representatives from Oregon's farming, retail, academic, political and food production communities gathered together to honor these organic innovators.

Keynote, Elise Higley, of Oshala Farm, spoke to the growing, positive impact organic agriculture has had on Oregon's farming community and overall economy. Elise stressed the need for collective alignment within the organic trade for further engagement at the legislative level, in an effort to highlight and protect the work of the organic trade, in Oregon and beyond. This collaboration was exemplified by the success of a 2014 ballot measure campaign to protect organic farms from GMO contamination in Jackson County, Oregon. Elise, along with the support of neighboring farms, lawyers and the surrounding community, came together to draft and implement the ballot measure and subsequent ban. Collaboration and collective activism propelled this small county toward a groundbreaking win for organic farmers and consumers in the area. In closing, Oregon Organic Coalition Chair, Stacy Kraker, highlighted the imperative value of finding common ground within the organic trade and called for increased collective engagement with both state and federal legislatures in order to more effectively influence organic policy.

OOC Awards for Excellence were given to the following individuals and organizations that demonstrated innovation in organic practices, service to the industry, expansion of organic business opportunities and overall achievement in the state's organic industry:

Advocate: Lane Selman, Culinary Breeding Network, Portland, OR

Lane has been an agricultural researcher since 2005, actively engaging in collaborative projects between researchers and organic growers to improve organic systems through nutrient and pest management and on-farm variety trails. In 2012, she created the Culinary Breeding Network, dedicated to developing and identifying varieties and traits of superior culinary quality for vegetable crops. She has served as a vital resource for our region's farmers, chefs and researchers by increasing awareness of and access to unique, robust and delicious produce varieties through hosting an annual Variety Showcase and by serving on the boards of the Portland Chefs Collaborative Steering Committee and the Slow Food Oregon Ark of Taste Committee.

Policy Analyst: Lynn Coody, Organic Ag Systems Consultant, Eugene, OR

Lynn Coody has an impressive educational background in natural sciences and began working in the organic trade in the 1970s. She helped pass the first organic legislation in Oregon in 1989, and she brought the voice of organic farmers to the table during the formation of the Organic Foods Production Act. Since then, she has worked diligently on national organic policy to protect organic integrity and advocate for the needs of organic farmers in policy development. She continues to partner with organic trade organizations to offer comments and guidance to the National Organic Program's material list-advocating for alternatives and needs of all certified organic farmers and looking for naturally-derived solutions that will work for organic systems. As a consultant, she offers education and resources to ensure that processes, materials and standards are effective and in compliance. Her work and knowledge are beyond measure and have had a tremendously positive impact on all parts of the organic trade, both in Oregon and nationally.

Processor: Humm Kombucha, Bend, OR

Humm Kombucha has been a family-brewing operation for over 20 years; the tradition has been passed down to multiple generations. Today, Jamie and Michelle seek to make the tastiest kombucha in bulk to minimize their environmental impact and make it affordable. They believe in community-incorporating health, love and joy into their product by using all organic ingredients and sourcing regionally as much as possible.

Farm (Crops): Persephone Farm, Lebanon, OR

Elanor O'Brien and Jeff Falen are first-generation farmers, who are deeply committed to using sustainable practices on their 14 acre farm in Lebanon, Oregon. The farm has been certified organic since 1985 and is now also certified Salmon-Safe. They supply quality organic produce to markets, restaurants and wholesale customers, and they are involved in the Northwest Farmer to Farmer Exchange, offering guidance and inspiration to the next generation of farmers. Cultivating kindness and raising environmental consciousness for organic production is entwined in the farm's ethos-from providing bicycles, education and a respectful workplace for farmworkers, to harnessing solar power for 80 percent of the farm's electrical needs, to utilizing animals in a humane environment for fertility inputs, to participating in variety research and testing with local educational institutions-Persephone Farm has been a leader in sustainable, organic agriculture.

Farm (Livestock): Balin Farm Trust, Klamath Falls, Oregon

The Balin family established its roots in Klamath Falls, Oregon, in the early 1900s on 100 acres that produced hay, grain and potatoes. Today, they are one of the largest producers of USDA certified organic grass-fed beef on 3,757 acres of land. Their cattle has been

raised entirely on certified organic pasture since 2004. The organic hay harvest provides a healthy food source for cattle, while providing a buffer to outside contamination.

Retailer: Green Zebra Grocery, Portland, Oregon

Green Zebra Grocery is the brainchild of Lisa Sedler, who has had a long career as an influential leader in the natural foods community. The first store opened in 2013 and is an innovative, small-footprint, corner-store concept with a mission to bring healthy, natural and organic foods to urban neighborhoods. They source from organic and regional farmers and producers-over 85% of their selection is organic, and their produce department features a highly selective, diverse, organic and local product line. Sustainability is built into the long-term goals of the chain-employees are paid above minimum wage, contributions and food donations are given to local nonprofits, and special discounts are offered to seniors, students, EBT members, and customers who walk or bike rather than drive to their stores.

Farmworker: Saruh Beth Wynes, Minto Island Growers, Salem, OR

Saruh Beth Wynes has been a dedicated farmworker for Minto Island Growers since 2013. With a positive and efficient work ethic, she has proven proficient and knowledgeable about farming operations-from cultivation, seeds, field irrigation, packing and storing, as well as operating farm equipment. She is supportive in training new employees, manages beehives for pollination, and she is constantly thinking about how the farm can be innovative with compost management and other efficiencies.

Environment & Health: Organic Material Review Institute, Eugene, OR

Founded in 1997, the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) is a nonprofit organization providing organic certifiers, growers, manufacturers, and suppliers an independent review of products for use in certified organic production, handling, and processing. They offer resources to support the National Organic Standard Board and the National Organic Program for the development of approved substances on the National List, as well as offering educational resources and presentations for organic certifiers and inspectors, and universities and extension services. After 20 years, they now work with more than 1,000 suppliers in 30 countries.

Organic Scientist: Garry Owen Stephenson, OSU, Corvallis, OR

Garry Owen Stephenson's career as an organic scientist, author, professor and researcher began in 1980 when he graduated from Oregon State University, after which he operated a small, U-Pick berry and apple farm. Since then, he has earned a PhD and continues writing and teaching at OSU while also leading their extension and agricultural education service programs, such as the Extension Organic Program, the Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems and the Small Farms program. These programs have led to new innovations that support the continued growth of the organic sector regionally and in Oregon. His research has focused on organic systems, especially those in Oregon, which has served to help educate emerging farmers and guide organic policy.

Organically Grown in Oregon Week is presented by the [Oregon Organic Coalition](#), with generous support from [Organically Grown Company](#), [Oregon Tilth](#), [Ecotrust](#), and [Coconut Bliss](#). To see a full list of member organizations and OGOW sponsors, please visit www.oregonorganiccoalition.org.

Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC)

The OOC is a trade support organization, working to advance the development and growth of the organic industry and community in Oregon. The OOC consists of a wide array of key players in Oregon's organic industry who volunteer their time and energy- from farmers to wholesalers and processors, as well as organic certifiers, scientists, consumers and retailers. The OOC acts as an organizing body, providing direction and endorsement of activities in promotion of Oregon's organic trade, such as the re-enlivening of OGOW every September and advocating for continued federal support for organic research at Oregon State University. www.oregonorganiccoalition.org

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