

SPEAKER BIOS

Maureen McNamara Best is the Executive Director with Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP), a 501c3 non-profit based in Roanoke, VA. LEAP nurtures our food community to create an equitable food and farming system which prioritizes health and abundance by supporting community initiatives, markets, farms, and farmers. LEAP works closely with community members, farmers, and organizational and government partners. Maureen has over fifteen years of experience working with food, agriculture, and community. Her experience includes teaching high school agriculture, working with migrant farmworkers, food safety inspections, and studying the economic viability of the local food system. Maureen has an MA in Anthropology from CO State University and undergraduate degrees in Agriculture Education, Spanish, and Anthropology from NC State University. Maureen is currently pursuing a master's in public health at Johns Hopkins University as a Bloomberg Fellow.

Jonathan Bethony is the head baker and co-owner of SEYLOU Bakery and Mill, a "farm to loaf" bakery in downtown DC specializing in 100% wholegrain bread and pastries made from fresh, locally sourced flour, milled in-house. His baking background hails from the West Coast, having originally trained at the San Francisco Baking Institute as well as the WSU Bread Lab. His commitment to the practices of regenerative agriculture forms the foundation of SEYLOU's model and manifests through imaginative offerings, often made from underutilized crops. His approach to business development seeks to address the issues of food security and access by supporting robust, regional food systems built upon the core principles of nutritional integrity, respect for the land and intentional collaboration throughout the entire value chain.

Jeanne Blankenship is the Vice President, Policy Initiatives and Advocacy at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is an experienced executive and visionary head of government affairs with a demonstrated history of working in the non-profit organization management industry. Skilled in healthcare, agriculture and nutrition, health policy, PAC strategy and grassroots advocacy. Strategically minded and outcome oriented professional with a MS focused in Nutrition Sciences from Oklahoma State University.

Sara Bleich, PhD is the Director of Nutrition Security and Health Equity in the Food and Nutrition Service at the USDA, after serving as the Senior Advisor for COVID-19 in the Office of the Secretary at USDA. She is a policy expert and researcher specializing in diet-related diseases, food insecurity and racial inequality with more than 180 peer-reviewed publications. She is also a Professor of Public Health Policy at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, the Kennedy School of Government, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Dr. Bleich was also a White House Fellow during the Obama administration, where she worked at USDA as a Senior Policy Adviser for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services and with the First Lady Michelle Obama's Lets Move! Initiative. She holds degrees from Columbia (BA, Psychology) and Harvard (PhD, Health Policy).

John Boyd, Jr. is Founder and President of the National Black Farmers Association. A fourth-generation farmer from Baskerville, Virginia, he grows crops, rears cattle and tends a vegetable garden for his family's culinary needs. Boyd founded the NBFA in 1995 after encountering the USDA's discriminatory practices first-hand and meeting many more black farmers who shared this experience. Boyd soon led NBFA members in a march on the White House. After numerous public rallies and an intensive NBFA member lobbying effort, Congress approved and President Obama signed into law in December 2010 legislation that set aside \$1.15 billion to resolve the outstanding Black farmers cases. He is a past nominee for the NAACP's highest honor, The Springarn Award, and currently ranks as one of Ebony Magazine's most influential African-Americans.

Robert M. Califf, M.D., is Commissioner of Food and Drugs at the FDA and was sworn in in 2022. Previously, Dr. Califf served as Commissioner of Food and Drugs. As the top official of the FDA, Dr. Califf is committed to strengthening programs and policies that enable the agency to carry out its mission to protect and promote the public health. Dr. Califf previously served as the FDA's Deputy Commissioner for Medical Products and Tobacco.

Prior to the FDA, Dr. Califf was head of medical strategy and Senior Advisor at Alphabet Inc. He joined Alphabet after serving as a professor of medicine and vice chancellor for clinical and translational research at Duke University. Dr. Califf has led many landmark clinical trials and is one of the most frequently cited authors in biomedical science, with more than 1,300 publications in peer-reviewed literature. Dr. Califf is a graduate of Duke University School of Medicine. He completed a residency in internal medicine at the University of California, San Francisco and a fellowship in cardiology at Duke.

Harold Chase is a government relations professional with a history of working to protect public health working with Congress and federal agencies. Prior to joining NSF, Chase worked for U.S. Senator Carl Levin of Michigan. His policy areas included appropriations, agriculture, housing and veterans' affairs, and governmental affairs issues. Chase also worked on the Farm Bill and the Food Safety Modernization Act. Chase graduated with honors from the University of Detroit with a B.A. in political science and earned an MPH from the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University.

Joseph Clayton is CEO of the International Food Information Council (IFIC). He joined IFIC in 2016. Joseph previously served as Interim President of the American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI). Prior to AFFI, he served as Executive Vice President at Golin International and CEO of Widmeyer Communications. He began his career in the U.S. Senate, where he worked on the legislative staff of former Illinois Senator Alan Dixon (D-IL). A graduate of the University of Illinois, Clayton serves on the Advisory Board of Illinois in Washington.

Janet Collins was formerly Executive Vice President for Science and regulatory affairs at CropLife America. Dr. Collins, brings over 30 years of experience in food and biotechnology regulation to Motif FoodWorks. Prior to CropLife America, Dr. Collins was Director of Corporate Regulatory affairs at DuPont, and the Director of Global Advocacy and International Organizations at Monsanto. As the former President of the Institute of Food Technologists, Dr. Collins is a recognized leader in agricultural advocacy and regulatory affairs with a deep understanding of the U.S. meat and dairy industries.

Ron Estrada is the CEO of Farmworker Justice (FJ), a national advocacy organization for farmworkers. Founded in 1981, FJ collaborates with organizations throughout the country to empower farm, ranch, dairy, and agriculture workers to improve wages, working conditions, occupational safety, health, immigration status, and access to justice. Prior to FJ, Estrada worked for Univision Communications. Prior to Univision, Estrada was vice president for the UnidosUS. In addition, he was a producer for the American Latino Media Arts (ALMA) Awards. Previously, Mr. Estrada worked for the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Estrada also served as the vice president & general manager of ECG.

Stephanie Goodwin joined the Public and Government Affairs team at Danone North America in 2019. She has been with Danone for 7 years, first on the science team for the division of medical foods, and then on the regulatory affairs team. Prior to joining Danone, Stephanie worked within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on the 2015 Dietary Guidelines.

Sally Greenberg has been the Executive Director of the National Consumers League since 2007. NCL's focus is on five key priority areas: fraud, child labor, LifeSmarts, health care, and food safety and nutrition. Sally has testified numerous times before Congress on consumer protection issues, including product safety, fraud, excessive fees on car rentals, consumer rip-offs and in support of protections for farmworker children. Sally came to NCL from Consumers Union, U.S. DOJ, and prior to that she spent a decade at the Anti-Defamation League. Sally started as a legislative correspondent for Sen. Gaylord Nelson (D-WI) and went on to spend four years as legislative assistant for Congressman Toby Moffett (D-CT).

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Thomas Gremillion is the Director of Food Policy at the Consumer Federation of America. He oversees the research, analysis, advocacy and media outreach for the group's food policy activities, and monitors food safety activities at USDA, FDA and in Congress, where he advocates for strong food safety protections for consumers. He coordinates the Safe Food Coalition, a group of consumer, trade union, and foodborne illness victim organizations dedicated to reducing foodborne illness by improving government food inspection programs. Prior to joining CFA, Gremillion practiced environmental law at Georgetown University Law Center. He also served as an associate attorney at the Southern Environmental Law Center. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Gremillion is a member of the D.C. and NC bars. He graduated magna cum laude from the University of South Carolina with a B.S. in mathematics, and served as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar in Quito, Ecuador, where he received an M.A. in International Relations from La Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar.

Kevin Dennis Hall, Ph.D. is a Senior Investigator in the Integrative Physiology Section, Laboratory of Biological Modeling at NIH. His laboratory investigates how metabolism and the brain adapt in response to a variety of interventions to diet and physical activity. They perform experiments in both humans and rodents to better understand the complex mechanisms regulating macronutrient metabolism, body composition, and energy expenditure. A unique aspect of the laboratory involves the development of mathematical models to quantitatively describe, explain, integrate, and predict the experimental results.

Dr. Robert S. Harvey (he/him) is an educator and community-leader pursuing a vision of justice, equity, and love. He is the President of FoodCorps, a national organization committed to ensuring that all our nation's children have access to nourishing food in schools, at the intersection of community-building, racial, and economic justice. He also holds a visiting professorship in the practice of public leadership. Prior to FoodCorps, he served as Superintendent of East Harlem Scholars Academies in New York City. Before that, Dr. Harvey has served as chief operating officer, head of school, dean of students, and classroom teacher. He is also the author of *Abolitionist Leadership in Schools: Undoing Systemic Injustice through Communally Consciousness Education*, exploring school leadership and racial equity through the moral arc of an abolitionist lineage; and *Teaching as Protest: Emancipating Classrooms through Racial Consciousness*, which frames philosophical and practical pedagogy that centers freeing teaching and learning spaces for students and teachers. He is Pahara Institute Fellow; and serves as chair of the The Current Project Board of Directors and is a member of the National Black Theatre Board of Directors.

Lisa Elaine Held is the senior staff reporter at Civil Eats, a daily news source for critical thought about the American food system. Since 2015, she has reported on agriculture and the food system with an eye toward climate and other environmental impacts, equality, and health, and her stories have appeared in publications including *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *Mother Jones*, *Eater*, and *Saveur*. She also hosted and produced more than 100 episodes of the podcast "The Farm Report" on Heritage Radio Network from 2018 – 2021. In the past, she covered health and wellness. She is based in Baltimore and has a master's degree from Columbia University's School of Journalism.

Michael F. Jacobson, who holds a PhD in microbiology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, co-founded and then led a Washington-based health-advocacy organization, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, for four decades. CSPI led efforts to win passage of laws and regulations to ban artificial trans fat and other food additives, obtain Nutrition Facts labels on packaged foods and calorie counts on chain-restaurant menus, improve school foods and food safety, define the term "organic," and reduce sodium levels. CSPI also educated millions of consumers through its Nutrition Action Healthletter, books such as Jacobson's *Six Arguments for a Greener Diet*, *Restaurant Confidential*, and countless media appearances.

Jacobson has received the Food and Drug Administration's Commissioner's Special Citation and Harvey W. Wiley Medal, Food Marketing Institute's Consumer Service Award, American Diabetes Association's Medal for Health Promotion and Awareness, CDC-Foundation's Hero award, and American Public Health Association's Award for Advocacy in Public Health. Jacobson has loved museums since his childhood in Chicago, so after he left CSPI, he has continued his educational efforts related to food by founding the National Food Museum.

Susan T. Mayne is the Director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In this position, Dr. Mayne leads the Center's development and implementation of programs and policies related to the safety and labeling of foods, food and color additives, and cosmetics. Dr. Mayne received a B.A. in chemistry from the University of Colorado. She earned a Ph.D. in nutritional sciences, with minors in biochemistry and toxicology, from Cornell University. Prior to joining the FDA she spent nearly three decades at Yale University, where she held an endowed chair as the C.-E.A. Winslow Professor of Epidemiology. Her distinguished career there included two leadership positions: Chair of the Department of Chronic Disease Epidemiology and Associate Director of the Yale Cancer Center. She is author or coauthor of nearly 250 scientific publications and her work has been cited more than 17,000 times.

Radha Muthiah, President and CEO of the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB), oversees the organization's work to help people across greater Washington thrive by creating more equitable access to food and opportunity through community partnerships. Under her leadership, the CAFB serves as the backbone of the area's hunger relief infrastructure, sourcing and supplying the food for over 45 million meals annually. Prior to her role at the food bank, Muthiah served as CEO of the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, a public-private partnership hosted by the United Nations Foundation. She also worked at CARE International, ICF International, the American Red Cross, Mercer Management Consulting, and the Council on Foreign Relations. Muthiah holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in economics from Tufts University and a Master of Business Administration degree from Stanford University.

David L. Ortega is a food economist and Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics at Michigan State University. Dr. Ortega's research focuses on understanding consumer, producer, and agribusiness decision-making to better inform food policies and marketing strategies. He has published over 60 articles in peer-reviewed journals, has been called to provide expert testimony before the U.S. Congress, and has vast experience working in various developing and emerging countries, including China, India, Rwanda, and Kenya. In addition, Dr. Ortega has provided timely analysis of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine conflict on agri-food systems and food prices and is frequently interviewed by prominent media outlets including *The New York Times*, *National Public Radio*, *CNN*, *NBC News*, *Bloomberg*, *Forbes*, *Politico*, and *Newsweek*. Dr. Ortega earned his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University.

Robert Paarlberg is Emeritus Professor of Political Science at Wellesley College and is an Associate at Harvard's Weatherhead Center. He received his PhD in International Relations from Harvard University. He is the author of six university press books and has been a member of the Board of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the National Research Council, and the Board of Directors of Winrock International. He recently chaired the independent steering committee for a CGIAR research program, Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH), and is a member of the Food and Nutrition Security Task Force at the Bipartisan Policy Center. On a half dozen occasions he has testified to Congress. His latest book, which received a 2022 Nautilus gold seal award, is titled *Resetting the Table: Straight Talk About the Food We Grow and Eat*.

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Molly Pfaffenroth leads federal food safety and nutrition policy for Amazon. Previously, Molly worked for several national trade associations including most recently as senior director of government relations for the National Grocers Association. She also served in USDA's Office of Communications and led the operations for a dairy product and agritourism business in rural New Jersey. While a proud Wisconsinite, Molly is a graduate of Cornell University (B.S. Animal Science) and The George Washington University (M.A. Media and Public Affairs), and resides in Washington, D.C.

Dasha Shor is a global expert on dairy, animal proteins and their alternatives at Mintel, the world's leading market intelligence agency. A Registered Dietitian, Dasha leans on her nutrition and food science expertise and experience working with commodity, foodservice and CPG companies to develop actionable insights for the food and beverage industry. Dasha received her BS in nutrition science from the University of Illinois at Chicago, MS in health communications from Boston University and MBA at Chicago Booth.

Lindsay Smith is the Regional Food Systems Planner at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). COG's members include 300 elected officials from 24 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and Congress. Every month, more than 1,500 officials and experts connect through COG to develop solutions to the region's major challenges and plan for the future. Lindsay provides staff support to COG's newest committee, the FARM Policy Committee, chaired by District of Columbia Councilmember Mary Cheh. FARM is comprised of elected leaders and subject matter experts in food and agriculture from DC, MD, and VA. Lindsay has worked on regional food systems issues in several roles for more than a decade. She holds graduate degrees from the University of Michigan.

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow made history in 2000 when she became the first woman from Michigan elected to the United States Senate. As Chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, a senior member of the Senate Finance Committee, and Budget Committee, and a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, she has a powerful and unique role to play in shaping our nation's health care, manufacturing, infrastructure, environment, and agriculture policies. Senator Stabenow knows that we don't have an economy unless we make things and grow things. She is a national leader on food and agriculture policy and a forceful advocate for Michigan agriculture – the state's second biggest source of jobs. Serving on Agriculture Committees in the state legislature, U.S. House, and U.S. Senate, she has shaped forward-thinking food and farm policy, expanding the diversity of what we grow and how we grow it. As Chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Stabenow authored the 2014 Farm Bill, which strengthened Michigan agriculture and made historic investments in land and water conservation, clean energy, local food systems, specialty crops, cutting-edge research and biobased manufacturing. She built on that success in coauthoring the 2018 Farm Bill, which passed on a strong bipartisan vote of 87-13 – the most Senate votes ever. Thanks to her leadership, the Farm Bill provides historic levels of support for all types of farmers in Michigan – big and small, urban and rural. It also improves the dairy safety net, strengthens support for fruit and vegetable growers, protects land and water, expands local food economies, and invests in Michigan's small towns and rural communities. Senator Stabenow has also led successful efforts to protect and expand access to healthy foods for children, families, and seniors.

Dr. Allison Sylvetsky is an Associate Professor in the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences and is Director of the Bachelor of Science in Nutrition Science undergraduate degree program at the George Washington University. She is also affiliated faculty at the Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness and is a Special Volunteer at the National Institute for Child Health and Development (NICHD) in the Intramural Research Program of NIH. Prior to Dr. Sylvetsky was a post-doctoral fellow in the Diabetes, Endocrinology, and Obesity Branch of NIDDK in the Intramural Research Program of NIH.

She received a doctorate in Nutrition and Health Science from Emory University. Dr. Sylvetsky's research focuses broadly on obesity and diabetes in youth. Her primary research interests are in studying the consumption and health effects of sugar-sweetened beverages and low-calorie (artificial) sweeteners, with a key focus on their consumption during childhood.

Mollie Van Lieu currently serves as Vice President of Nutrition and Health for the International Fresh Produce Association – the largest and most diverse trade association representing the full global fresh produce supply chain. Her work primarily involves increasing Americans' access and consumption of fruits and vegetables through federal policies and programs. Mollie previously worked on nutrition, health, and education policy issues at the Pew Charitable Trusts and on Capitol Hill.

Brian Vines examines inequities in the marketplace, in an effort to ensure fairness for consumers at Consumer Reports. Brian has covered the growing trend of community fridges, refrigerators placed in public areas, stocked by the community and providing free food to those in need. His work helped shine a light on the increasing food insecurity brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic and the underlying inequities that created a need for this type of community intervention. Brian also looked at dietetics and how the cultural and language divide between healthcare professionals and the Black and Hispanic communities they served often made it difficult for these communities to receive the support they needed.

Roberta Wagner is vice president of regulatory and technical affairs at the Consumer Brands Association. Wagner spent 33 years in public service, most recently as the assistant administrator of the Office of Policy and Program Development at USDA's FSIS, the agency's lead policy position. Prior to this she served as the deputy administrator of the Office of Field Operations at USDA's FSIS. Wagner began her regulatory career at the FDA in the Office of Regulatory Affairs' Baltimore District Office in 1987. Wagner was also Assistant Commissioner for Operations in the ORA for two years. Previously, Wagner served as a director of the Office of Compliance in FDA's CFSAN. Wagner later served as the CFSAN Deputy Director for Regulatory Affairs and Associate Director for Food Safety Modernization Act Operations. Wagner holds a bachelor of science in biological science with a minor in environmental science from Hiram College and a master of science in biochemistry from Bowling Green State University.

Susan Weinstock is the CEO of the Consumer Federation of America. Previously, she was vice president of financial resilience programming at AARP. Prior to AARP, Susan worked at the U.S. Department of the Treasury. As the director of the office of consumer policy, she focused on emerging trends and the growing use of technology and data in the provision of consumer financial products and services. Previously, she directed The Pew Charitable Trusts' Consumer Banking Project. Prior to Pew, Susan was the financial reform campaign director at the Consumer Federation of America. She has more than 20 years of advocacy, communications, research, grassroots and legislative experience working to protect consumers.

Margo Wootan, DSc, is the President of MXG Strategies. Dr. Wootan led the successful effort to require trans fat labeling on packaged foods; coordinated efforts of the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity to support passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act; led the effort to pass national legislation to require calorie labeling in fast-food; and worked on expanding nutrition and physical activity promotion and funding at the CDC and passage of over a dozen state and local healthy restaurant kids' meal policies. She has testified before Congress and state legislatures and been invited to speak by federal and state agencies including at the USDA, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, the National Nutrition Summit, and the Surgeon General's Listening Session for the National Action Plan on Overweight and Obesity. She received her B.S. in nutrition science from Cornell University and her doctorate in nutrition from Harvard University's School of Public Health.