

NCG Food Co-ops Celebrate Climate Action

The Second Annual National Co+op Grocers Climate Collaborative Awards

BY ALLIE MENTZER

Now in their second year, the National Co+op Grocers Climate Collaborative awards stand as a benchmark for the natural products industry's progress on climate change. The 2019 award winners (including PCC Community Markets!) were announced as part of Climate Day at Expo West in March to a packed house that extended at times to standing-room only, as companies gathered to learn from and be inspired by one another.

As many businesses, including food co-ops, seek to find ways to reduce carbon footprints and increase positive impact, it's more important than ever to highlight and celebrate stories of achievement and success. Reframing the challenge of climate change through the lens of progress rather than fear has immense power to galvanize action not only within our industry, but among food co-op customers as well. Sharing these powerful stories on a national stage is helping to normalize and publicize the reality that climate action is not only urgently needed, but also already underway by a number of progressive co-ops and companies.

We are pleased to report that our 2019 winners were selected from a pool of 40 nominees by a panel of judges that included Sheila Ongie, Sustainability Manager at NCG, Carlotta Mast of New Hope, Lara Dickinson of OSC2, Paul Hawken of Project Drawdown, and Catherine Greener of Greener Solutions. As in 2018, National Co+op Grocers recused itself from the judging of food co-ops and other retailers that were nominated for awards.

Judge Sheila Ongie shared a sentiment that was common across the judging panel. "We're thrilled to recognize these companies for their leadership and the outstanding work they're doing to address climate change. These examples inspire us all to do even more, and we hope that by highlighting their success, we'll create ripples of impact that turn into waves of positive climate action throughout the industry. Working together, we can help reverse global warming."

The award winners graciously reported that the awards were validating and meaningful for their companies and staff. "Receiving this award is a huge honor for us at REBBL," said Sheryl O'Loughlin, CEO of REBBL.

"It is a recognition of the importance of the link between humanity and the environment, which is at the core of our philosophy and what we believe to

be the way to regenerate our world." REBBL's line of plant-based elixirs and protein drinks are a favorite of food co-op shoppers across the country.

Miguel Gil, interim CEO for ORGANIC INDIA summed up the significance of their award. "We are all stewards of this earth, and as part of the natural and organic products community, we are uniquely capable of, and therefore called to, enact large scale change to leave our planet better than we found it. ORGANIC INDIA is proud to be honored with this award because it confirms our leadership role in creating a business model dedicated to global wellness for people, communities and our environment."

In addition to being proud to see a food co-op among those honored in this year's awards, C.E. Pugh, CEO of National Co+op Grocers, expressed his respect for companies that are authentically delivering on their brand promise. "We're delighted to recognize these award winners for their considerable efforts to address the global challenge of climate change, inspiring others within our industry and beyond to do the same," he said.

"We're especially proud that six NCG food co-ops were among the nominees for awards this year. Our sector has made terrific progress in the past five years in measuring, improving and reporting about our impact and sustainability, an important discipline that helps us to be better grocers and stewards of the earth."

We invite you to learn more about these winners' stories by visiting www.strongertogether.coop and searching for "climate awards." •



Brenna Davis, Vice President of Social and Environmental Sustainability at PCC Community Markets (center) accepted the co-op's Outstanding Company Award, along with PCC staff attending Expo West.

NCG CLIMATE COLLABORATIVE AWARDS 2019

2019 Outstanding Company Award Recipients

This award recognizes brands, retailers, or other companies that have demonstrated best practice, rapid progress on climate action and/or a new approach to climate change management. Only Climate Collaborative-committed companies are eligible for this award.

- **Dr. Bronner's**, for bringing regenerative organic agriculture to the forefront of the natural products industry and pursuing fair trade agroforestry projects within their supply chain.
- **Glen's Garden Market** (Washington, D.C.), for prioritizing food produced, transported and sold with minimal emissions, waste and environmental impact in their retail grocery.
- Nature's Path, for creating a certified zero waste production plant and dramatically reducing their packaging and distribution emissions.
- **ORGANIC INDIA**, for significantly reducing emissions within their supply chain, including converting over 20,000 acres of farmland to regenerative organic methods.

- **PCC Community Markets** (Seattle, WA), for achieving carbon-neutral operations in their 11-store chain and ongoing work to increase adoption of carbon farming methods locally through PCC Farmland Trust.

2019 Outstanding Value Chain Engagement Award Recipients

This award recognizes brands, retailers, or other companies that are demonstrating best practice and a willingness to go "above and beyond" with climate action in a particular area across the value chain, from sourcing and supplier engagement down to consumers. Only Climate Collaborative-committed companies are eligible for this award.

- **Sambazon**, for successfully engaging thousands of people in education that resulted in the protection of 126,270 acres of Amazon rainforest through their innovative #PurpleForThePlanet social media campaign.
- **REBBL**, for developing and implementing "REBBL Supplier Ethos," driving transparency and reducing supply chain emissions, paired with product launches geared at reversing deforestation.

2019 Outstanding Influencer Award Recipient

This award recognizes a key company, organization, or individual that has taken substantial action to help the industry to act on climate change. Nominees do not need to be affiliated with a Climate Collaborative-committed company.

- **Nancy Hirshberg**, for her 25 years of climate leadership, including developing the first non-utility carbon offset program, the nation's first methane emissions reductions program for dairy farms and helping launch the Climate Collaborative.

For background on the awards, see "National Co+op Grocers Sponsors Climate Collaborative Awards", January-February 2018 issue of *Cooperative Grocer* (CG194).



David Bronner, Cosmic Engagement Officer (CEO) for Dr. Bronner's (center), accepted their Outstanding Company Award from Allison Hermes, NCG Promotions Programs Senior Manager (left) and Lara Dickinson, Executive Director of OSC2 and co-founder of Climate Collaborative (right).



This year's Outstanding Influencer award went to Nancy Hirshberg (center), for 25 years (and counting) of environmental leadership within the industry. She is pictured here with Allison Hermes, NCG Promotions Programs Senior Manager (left) and Erin Callahan, Executive Director of the Climate Collaborative (right).

