

Sustainable Food Trade Action Council Annual Report | 2021

The Sustainable Food Trade Action Council consists of 52 sustainably minded businesses committed to strengthening the organic sector's voice in work relating to sustainability and climate and boost the sector's efforts to create an environmentally friendly, sustainable food system. The non-profit Sustainable Food Trade Association (SFTA), which ceased operations on the last day of 2020, was formed in 2008 with a mission to support the organic food trade in creating and implementing innovative, sustainable practices across the organic supply chain, from farm to retail. In January 2021, SFTA consolidated with the Organic Trade Association to form the Sustainable Food Trade Action Council. Of the 52 Council Member companies, 38 are former SFTA members and an additional 14 OTA members have joined the cohort in 2021.

Highlights from 2021:

- Effective Transition from SFTA to Sustainable Food Trade Action Council – An Advisory Committee has met monthly to advance strategic planning and priorities for this new OTA Council. Council Members have contributed to special projects and are committed to finding new opportunities for the Council to engage in creating sustainable food systems. Council Membership grew by 25% in 2021 with 14 new council members joining the cohort this year.
- Continued Engagement in COMPASS Modules and Sustainability Reporting – SFTA developed a set of effective tools for organic businesses to build, measure and refine their sustainability programs, and those tools are now available to all Organic Trade Association members through SFTA Council membership. The COMPASS program provides members with systems-based sustainability analyses using a variety of proprietary tools and on-one-on consulting with Lisa Braun, the Council's Sustainability Technical Services Manager. In 2021, 20 Council Members continued engagement in the COMPASS program and 5 were first time participants. Members also measure sustainability performance and track progress each year, with 25 members completing the SFTA Council Sustainability Snapshot, a set of key sustainability metrics and benchmarks for the organic sector.
- UN Food Systems Summit Dialogue – The SFTA Council organized an Independent Dialogue in May 2021 on "Organic as a solution to meet increasing demands from consumers and global markets, to address environmental pressures, and to achieve UN sustainable development goals." The event was hosted by 7 Council Members and brought together an additional 57 diverse stakeholders to look at the ways organic can help address hunger, poverty, climate change, and inequality. Six small breakout discussions took place to ensure a deep dive into separate issues. Formal feedback was then provided to the UN and included in their synthesis for discussion at the United Nation's first-ever Food Systems Summit held in September 2021.

Looking Ahead to 2022:

The Council Advisory Committee has identified 6 key workplan priorities for Council projects and initiatives. The Council will establish Working Groups to advance items as needed.

- Mission and SFTA Council Core Competencies: Define the Council's Declaration of Sustainability and commitments for action areas.
- Tools: Develop a next-generation sustainability toolset that provides sustainability education, measurement, benchmarking, and recognition for the organic sector and also demonstrates the organic industry's collective positive impact and thought leadership in sustainability. Additionally, integrate the Council Sustainability Snapshot into the OTA Organic Industry Survey for expanded reach and data collection.
- Advocacy: Identify synergies between SFTA Council and Climate Change Task Force for political advocacy, and identify opportunities for other advocacy partnership opportunities with additional OTA member communities.
- Networking and Thought Leadership: Facilitate working group collaboration among council members, knowledge sharing, mentorship, speaking and leadership opportunities.
- Communication and Education: Develop a sustainability webinar series and communicate council membership benefits to current and prospect companies.
- Strategic Partnerships: Explore strategic industry partnerships in support of the Council mission.

COUNCIL MEMBERS





Fig Hill Farm Consulting



Paul Schiefer (Amy's Kitchen) serves as Chair of the Sustainable Food Trade Action Council alongside John Foster (Wolf & Associates) as Vice Chair. The work is supported by Adrienne Messe, OTA's Associate Director of Events and Solutions. If you are interested in joining the Sustainable Food Trade Action Council, please contact Adrienne(amesse@ota.com).



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