

Phil LaRocca

LaRocca Vineyards

When did this individual get involved with organic farming and in what capacity?

Late 1969, Phil started with a truck farm in Sonoma County. He also ran an apple Orchard in Plumas County as well as an Apple and Walnut Orchard before becoming the first Certified Organic Apple grower in 1975 with his own property. Phil was an early member of CCOF and have been an officer in his North Valley Chapter off and on for 42 years. Phil has served in his Chapter capacity ensuring active participation of all farmers in his immediate area, as well as serving on Board of Directors as Chairman from 1994- 2002. Phil became CCOF Chairman of the Inc. Board again since 2013.

Phil was also active in creating the California Food and Production Act and participated in formulating the National Organic Rule on Organic Wine. Phil was appointed by State of California as First Representative for California Organic Board.

Phil was also one of the first Organic farmer asked to Speak at Western State Coalition representing the adverse affects of Genetic Engineering, long before their was a movement to fight Genetic Engineering.

Phil was the First Certified Organic Apple Grower, and created the First Certified Organic Non Sulfite Wine, back when most people said it was not possible to grow an Organic apple or to create a Non Sulfite Organic Wine, now LaRocca Vineyards have sold over a million bottles and created an industry space for others to follow.

Phil also was active in preserving the CCOF Foundation and currently serves as Vice Chair of CCOF Foundation. Phil's brainchild was to give grants to 4H and FFA to encourage Organic in our youth. This program now is flourishing and we have submissions from 4H and FFA throughout the USA. Phil continues to create ways for Organic to become the Normal. Phil is a true leader in Organic.

How has this individual demonstrated personal commitment, leadership and vision with regard to organic farming; such as working to increase the amount of land under organic management, expand the number of farmers using organic practices, or advance organic agriculture through farm policy advocacy, community education, or innovative land stewardship and technical practices?

Phil was one of the Pioneers of Organic and has been since the early 70's. Phil has participated in the shaping of Organic and defending the label. Phil is also a Professor and has taught in Colleges and created legislation for certifying Organic Wine without Sulfite. Phil continues to keep communication with his legislators. Phil continues to participate in shaping organic no matter what he is facing on his own farm. Phil LaRocca is a trusted voice in Organic!

Phil continues his leadership with CCOF, Inc. as well as CCOF Foundation. Phil knows how to

work with all people and cares about being inclusive, while holding the line of Organic. Any association that Phil takes part in, understand quickly Phil's commitment to Organic.

Has this person been an OTA member and/or made positive contributions to OTA?

YES, Phil has been with OTA since its inception. Phil also currently sits on the Farmers Advisory Council. Phil is active for most Policy Days and carves time away from his vineyard to be a voice for Organic. Phil has actively been a spokesperson for the Organic Checkoff program.

In what capacity do you know the nominee?

I met Phil at an OTA Policy Conference in 2010. I consider Phil a friend and mentor in Organic, as he is with many small farms. I have had the pleasure to serve on the Board of CCOF for past 5 years, with Phil being Chairman of the Board for last 4.

Other comments you wish to add about why this person should receive the OTA Award.

Phil is respected from every corner of Organic. He is known to be committed and unafraid to stand up for true organic. It is an honor to know Phil and you cannot be in the Organic space without knowing him or knowing of him.

Do you plan to submit endorsement letters for this nomination? YES

Submitted by

Karen Archipley, Archi's Acres, Inc.



CCOF

Organic Certification

Education & Outreach

Political Advocacy

Promotion

Organic Trade Association
444 N. Capitol St. NW, Suite 445A
Washington D.C. 20001

April 18, 2017

Dear OTA Board Members,

On behalf of CCOF, I write to express the strongest endorsement for Phil LaRocca's nomination as OTA's Farmer of the Year.

Phil has been a tireless organic farming advocate and practitioner for over 40 years. Phil has deep organic convictions and puts them into practice on his farm, in his winery, and in the community. As an organic wine grape grower and winemaker, Phil understands the challenges faced by small and mid-scale growers and processors. Phil pioneered the art and science of making quality organic wines with no added sulfites. He also uses innovative, environmentally friendly farming practices—his practices are featured in the book *Managing Cover Crops Profitably*. Phil speaks at conferences around the state, teaching farmers about how to transition to organic.

What sets Phil apart from other nominees is his unwavering commitment to organic advocacy and community. As chair of the CCOF Board of Directors, Phil goes above and beyond his core duties by attending CCOF regional chapter meetings all over the state and representing CCOF in public forums such as National Organic Standards Board meetings. The California Secretary of Agriculture recently appointed Phil to the California Organic Products Advisory Committee. He is also being considered for appointment to the California Cannabis Advisory Committee.

Moreover, Phil is a valuable, long time OTA member. He serves on OTA's Farmers Advisory Council where he brings the perspective of a specialty crop grower farming in a state with tough regulations and labor shortages. He regularly advocates on the Hill with OTA at the annual OTA Policy Conference. He is a vocal champion of the Organic Checkoff program and has defended OTA actions on the GMO labeling legislation. It is clear that Phil is not only a farmer with conviction, but also a leader who does what it takes to promote and protect organic from farm to marketplace.

Please give Phil your strongest consideration. We cannot think of a more dedicated, passionate organic farmer to receive the OTA Farmer of the Year award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Calfo".

Cathy Calfo
Executive Director/CEO