

**New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council**  
**2020-22 Governing Board**  
(in alphabetical order)



**Leiloni Begaye, First Nations Development Institute**

*Yá'át'ééh shik'éeí dóó shidine'é, Shí éí Leiloni Begaye yinishyé. Shi doone'e ei Má'déeshgiizhnii nishli, To'aheedlííníí bashishchiin, Táchíí'níí dashicheii, doo Tl'ááshchí'í dashinali. Díwózhii Bií Tó déé' naashá. Ákót'éego diné asdzáán nishíj.*

Leiloni Begaye is from the Coyote Pass Jemez clan. Born for the Water Flow Together clan. Her maternal grandfather is from the Red Running into the Water clan. Her paternal grandfather is from the Red Bottom clan. Leiloni is a Diné womxn from Dinétah, the homelands of the Diné people. Leiloni is a part of the First Nations Development Institute staff, based in the Albuquerque Field Office. She served one year on the New Mexico Food & Ag Policy Council Governing Board from 2019-2020. Leiloni has a diverse background in Natural Resources (Wildlife, Forestry and Rangeland Management) from Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, and Agriculture with an emphasis in Rangeland Management from New Mexico State University, and completed her Master of Arts degree in Native American Studies at the University of New Mexico in the spring of 2020.

Leiloni is actively engaged in community, she wants to be the ancestor that passes down knowledge that was instilled from generation to generation. She would like to be the ancestor that was kind, compassionate, and strong because Indigenous women are leaders. Lastly, she would like to be an ancestor that advocated for and with communities through the connection and importance of Mother Earth and all living entities.



**Jaime Chavez, Rural Coalition and National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association**

Jaime Chavez is a Native New Mexican from Atrisco (Atlixco) and Pajarito NM. He is the National Field Organizer with the Rural Coalition, Washington, DC. He comes from farm families on both side, and advocates traditional, native agriculture through Milpa Ecology.

The NM Food and Agricultural Policy Council is an important tool for advocating agricultural policy initiatives, on a regional and statewide basis with focus on the NM State Legislature coupled with

Federal Policy. It is an outstanding platform regarding food systems work, building rural infrastructure and economy during this time of unprecedented change in the world.

I am here to help contribute to this collective dialogue to transform our community food systems in the process of developing collaborative team leadership, solutions oriented approaches that are cost effective derived from NM agricultural history land, water and way of life.



**Zoey Fink, Farmshark and National Young Farmers Coalition**

Zoey Fink is a native New Mexican with a passion for local food systems. She and her husband Carlos run Farmshark, a diversified vegetable operation that sells produce through CSA's, restaurants, and value-added production (primarily pickles). Zoey is the NM Campaign Organizer for the National Young Farmers Coalition and has been active in the NM Food and Agriculture Policy Council for two years. She brings boots on the ground experience as a farmer and land manager, as well as experience advocating for legislative change in New Mexico to benefit young and beginning farmers and ranchers. She recognizes the importance of cross-sector collaboration to tackle systemic issues in our food system, and sees the NMFAPC as a powerful collective voice to make legislative change that improves the livelihoods of all producers in New Mexico



**Lawrence D Gallegos, Western Landowners Alliance**

Lawrence D Gallegos grew up in Taos, New Mexico, and is the sixth generation to run his family's ranch in the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado, which he did for almost 30 years. Lawrence studied agricultural and civil engineering at New Mexico State University and has experience in water resource management, NRCS and local government (he served three-terms as elected County Clerk in Conejos County, CO).

Lawrence believes the NMFAPC is one of, if not the most important, policy organizations in New Mexico because the policies that the Council advocates for not only help feed our citizens, but are also the policies that will determine whether we will have the water, lands and natural resources to sustain all our living communities in our state.



### **Chair**

#### **Helga Garza, Agri-Cultura Network**

Helga Garza is the Executive Director of Agri-Cultura Network a cooperative of 9 South Valley family owned farms and 32 allied farms that form the network. For 10 years ACN's vision and mission has been to aggregate collectively as small scale farmers to reach larger markets, keep our production and distribution local through community driven markets and engage with the power of procurement with governmental, and institutional investment in New Mexico grown fruits and vegetables.

As a Native women leading agriculture I have a deep commitment to the development of a sustainable and regenerative local and regional food system and as a community leader with over 30 years experience I have developed skills in collaborations and partnerships for effective strategy through a collective impact approach to move food, farm, and equity agendas forward. I am in gratitude for the opportunity to be the Chair of the New Mexico Food and Agricultural Policy Council.



#### **Isabelle Jenniches, NM Healthy Soil Working Group**

As co-founder of the NM Healthy Soil Working Group I'd be honored to serve another term on the governing board of the NM Food & Agriculture Policy Council. The Working Group is best known for bringing together a large coalition of agriculture related organizations, environmental groups and dozens of farms and ranches, enabling passage of the Healthy Soil Act in 2019. I believe that we must address the root causes of our current interrelated crises and that soil health is offering solutions that are beneficial on multiple levels. I will continue to bring this ecosystem based approach to the policy council, which has been an important ally in this work!



**Eugene Pickett, Black Farmers and Ranchers New Mexico**

I have been an advocate for Small Farmers and Ranchers since the early 70's. Moving to New Mexico in 1990, that advocacy continued with my local involvement with the Atrisco Land Rights Council aka "The Concilio" as their Events Coordinator. Most recently as a Member of the National Rural Coalition and the National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association, I have had the honor of working on their National Events and Annual Winter Forums. Currently I am the Regional Coordinator for NLFRTA. In addition the Owner Operator of Black Farmers and Ranchers New Mexico a not for profit advocacy group for Small Farmers & Ranchers access and prosperity to available resources through multiple agencies both public and private.

I have come to believe the Policy Council is a viable avenue for Agricultural interests in New Mexico to influence equal access for all New Mexicans having healthy food of local generation. This to me is of the utmost importance because it seems to me that the council works to achieve this irrespective of Ethnicity or Financial status.

My overall background in advocacy with an emphasis on the Historically Discriminated Populations is an asset to the Council in any capacity. My passion for all of us to have access to clean water and healthy food will be put to use as a member of the Governing Board. I am honored to do so.



**Anthony Wagner, Wagner Farms**

I am Anthony Wagner of Wagner Farms. I am a 4th generation farmer from Corrales. My family has been growing fruits & vegetables in Corrales & Socorro for over 100 years. I have been involved with the Farm-to-School Program since 2010.

I have enjoyed being part of a team (2 years on Governing Board & over 6 years as a member of the NM Food & Ag Policy Council) addressing issues pertaining to local food & agricultural systems here in New Mexico.



### **Immediate Past Chair**

#### **Susan Wilger, Center for Health Innovation**

I am Susan Wilger and for the past year I served as the Chair of NMFAPC's Governing Board. I am passionate about working with communities and other advocates to promote the things I value, such as health, our natural resources, equity and community well-being. What inspires me about being a member of the NMFAPC Governing Board is its commitment to clear values, a strong connection with a diverse group of food and agriculture advocates and a commitment to working towards structural change and equity. I have worked in the nonprofit sector for over 30 years where I honed my skills in organizational systems, public policy, resource development and program management.

### **Ex officio members**



#### **Kendal Chavez, Student Success & Wellness Bureau, NM Department of Education**

Kendal is the Farm to School Specialist at the New Mexico Public Education Department, where she develops and executes a statewide procurement strategy aiming to increase local purchasing across New Mexico's 214 school and school districts. Kendal is an alumna of FoodCorps and the George Washington University Food Policy Fellowship Institute, and is currently studying public policy and public administration at the University of New Mexico's School of Public Administration. Kendal is passionate about bringing practitioner-based leadership to the NMFAPC to assure that policy platforms and proposals are in-line with the needs of the field.

#### **John Garlich, Bernalillo County Cooperative Extension Service**

John is originally from rural Central Illinois where he grew up on a family farm. He attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he earned a BS in Horticulture (2002) and an MS in Agriculture Consumer Economics (2008). During his schooling, he studied for a semester at Wageningen Agriculture University in the Netherlands and interned in Germany with the Deutsche

Bauern Verband (German Farmer's Union) working at an arboretum and a rhododendron nursery.

John joined the Bernalillo County staff in Spring 2010. He is working with 4-H youth, assisting local farmers with business and production planning, facilitating agricultural educational programs and outdoor classroom projects with area schools, and answering questions from the public concerning the identification of plants and their culture, production, diseases, and pests.



**Dennis Hogan, NM Department of Agriculture**

I am currently the State Food and Beverage Director for New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA). I have been with NMDA for twelve years working to connect NM growers, processors, operators, and associations to grow their business for the good of NM agriculture. I also contribute to market development and promotion of NM products across the Food and Beverage/Hospitality Industry, I also have 30 plus years working in the Food and Beverage/Hospitality Industry.

Photo: Gabriella Marks