

## **Allyn L. Brown, III**

Maple Lane Farms, LLC  
Connecticut Currant, LLC  
Preston, CT

**Appointed by** Governor Dannel P. Malloy

**Representing** agricultural production

**Background:** Allyn established Maple Lane Farms in 1978. It is a 200-acre farm specializing in pick-your-own strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, apples, and pumpkins, along with cut-your-own Christmas trees. It is also the largest black currant grower in the United States and the country's sole producer of black currant juice. Allyn designed and built a unique oyster mushroom growing facility that produced 100,000 lbs. per year exclusively for Franklin Mushroom Farm, and recently converted it into a hydroponic growing facility that produces 150,000 heads of Boston Bibb lettuce per year. He manages a full-time staff of six and a staff of 20 during the peak growing periods.

Allyn studied agricultural mechanization at the University of Maine in Orono, and nursery management at the University of Connecticut's Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture in Storrs. Allyn is a member of the Governor's Council for Agricultural Development, North American Strawberry Growers Association, North American Bramble Growers Association, and the New England Produce Council. He is past director of the Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers Association and a past Christmas tree judge for Eastern States Exposition.

## **James F. Guida**

Guida's Milk (retired)  
Avon, CT

**Appointed by** Speaker of the House Christopher G. Donovan

**Representing** agricultural processing

**Background:** Jim grew up on a farm, which gave him a fondness and appreciation for animals. As the eldest son of one of Guida's founders, he worked at the company as a teenager after school and during summer breaks. Jim earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biology (concentration in microbiology) from the University of North Carolina, then worked as a pharmaceutical salesperson while he pursued his dream of becoming a veterinarian by applying to many schools. The Vietnam War contributed to the large number of applicants, and Jim was placed on a waiting list.

Meanwhile, Guida Seibert Dairy was growing at a rapid pace, and Frank Guida, Jim's father, asked him if he would be interested in bringing what he had learned and applying those skills to help manage Guida's. In 1974, Jim decided to return to Connecticut to join the family business. His previous work experience and analytical savvy contributed greatly to the organization. As the company grew, Jim worked his way through the ranks up to his position as senior vice president, which included overseeing sales, marketing, customer service, and logistics.

# **George Hindinger**

Hindinger Farm  
Hamden, CT

**Appointed by** Governor Dannel P. Malloy

**Representing** agricultural production

**Background:** George is a fourth-generation farmer who started full time on the family farm in 1980. For the past 31 years, George has been running the production and wholesale aspects of the 120-acre operation. The multigenerational farm was started in 1893 and the development rights were sold in 1980, making it the second farm protected under the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program. George is constantly changing the focus of the farm. Originally established as a wholesale operation, the farm now focuses more on the retail aspects. It offers a CSA, has a farm store, and participates in farmers' markets in addition to wholesaling. The farm also diversified by expanding beyond its largest crop—peaches—into 26 additional crops, including vegetables and flowers.

George serves on the board of directors of the Connecticut Farm Bureau Association and has served as first vice president of the association and on the majority of its subcommittees. He has also served as president of New Haven County Farm Bureau. Currently he is chair of Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Advisory Board and has served on several advisory board subcommittees.

# **Jason Hoagland**

Connecticut Agricultural Education Foundation  
Windsor, CT

**Appointed by** Senate Minority Leader John McKinney

**Representing** agricultural education

**Background:** Jason received an undergraduate degree in agricultural and resource economics in 2001 and an M.B.A. in 2008 from the University of Connecticut. Since 2006, he has served as president of the Connecticut Agricultural Education Foundation, a nonprofit that supports agricultural education in the state through various programs. He has also served on the Farm City committee, helping coordinate annual field trips to farms for inner-city children.

As a senior loan officer and assistant vice president at Farm Credit East, Jason's primary responsibilities are centered on successfully developing and growing a diverse loan portfolio, consisting of operating, term, and mortgage loans for customers affiliated with farms, part-time farms, hobby farms, residences, recreational properties and niche agricultural endeavors. He manages a \$65 million loan portfolio in the Enfield branch and is also responsible for training new credit staff and mentoring summer interns. In 2010, Jason was selected by the *Hartford Business Journal* as a "40 Under 40" award winner for his career and community achievements.

## **Herb Holden Jr.**

Double H Acres  
Broad Brook, CT

**Appointed by** Governor Dannel P. Malloy

**Representing** agricultural production

**Background:** Herb Holden Jr. is the general manager of Double H Acres, a family-owned farming operation that has been in existence since 1977. Double H Acres is a 65-acre cow-calf operation with 63 mother cows currently on the farm. Herb worked throughout the country for 10 years with a large agricultural company, before returning to the family farm in 2006. Taking notice of the “buy local” movement, he began investigating state initiatives to promote local farm products and got involved in the Connecticut Grown and Farm-to-Chef programs, launching Broad Brook Beef in 2010. Herb has developed his program based on consumer feedback and other successful models, with the idea that a 100-percent-sustainable operation could serve both restaurant and homeowners alike who were interested in local, all-natural beef.

Herb studied animal sciences and industry at Kansas State University, where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in 2002, specializing in meat science. At Kansas State, Herb worked in the university’s state-of-the-art meat lab for three years and was honored as the 2000 American Royal National Champion meats judge. He also assisted in the development of the now internationally recognized hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) guidelines for food vendors and meat processors.

# **Jamie Jones**

Jones Family Farms  
Shelton, CT

**Appointed** by Governor Dannel P. Malloy

**Representing** agricultural production

**Background:** Jamie is a sixth-generation farmer working at his family's 150-year-old farm alongside his parents, Terry and Jean Jones. Jamie oversees all of the agricultural operations. In 2004, Jamie started his own agricultural operation, the Jones Winery, which has received numerous awards including *Connecticut Magazine's* "Best Connecticut Wine" in 2010 and 2011, and the Big E Wine Competition's "Best Wine in Show" in 2008.

Jamie studied plant science at Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He is first vice president of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, president of the Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association, member of the Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council, and secretary of the Shelton Zoning Board of Appeals. In 2009, Jamie received an Agricultural Achievement Award from the American Farm Bureau as the runner-up in this national competition recognizing young farmers for their agricultural excellence. He was named "Connecticut Wineperson of the Year" in 2009 by the Amenti Del Vino Society, and was included in *Fairfield County Business Journal's* "40 Under 40" list of 2011.

# **Michael T. Keilty**

Maple Spring Farms  
Morris, CT

**Appointed by** Senate Majority Leader Martin M. Looney

**Representing** an agricultural trade association

**Background:** Since 1974, Michael has been the owner and operator of Maple Spring Farms, a diversified livestock, produce, fruit, and Christmas tree farm. He is also an author-educator focused on sustainable agriculture systems, and in 2006 co-author *Alternative Health Practices of Livestock* (Blackwell Publishing). Michael has been a sustainable agricultural educator at the University of Connecticut since 1998.

Michael received his Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture from the University of Connecticut and has pursued graduate studies in ecology, cell physiology, biology, and educational and regional planning at the University of Connecticut and Central Connecticut State University. He studied "Herbal Medicine and Your Health" in continuing education at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. He is a farmer member of the Connecticut Food Policy Council, a founding director of the Connecticut Community Gardening Association, and a member of the Connecticut Risk Management Team. He is also a member of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, Connecticut NOFA, and the Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers Association.

# **Shelly Oechsler**

Botticello Farms  
Manchester, CT

**Appointed by** Governor Dannel P. Malloy

**Representing** agricultural production

**Background:** For more than 20 years, Shelly switched back and forth daily from high heels and suit dresses, which she wore at her “real job” as a senior purchasing agent at a Fortune 100 company, to jeans and sneakers as she worked nights and weekends on the family farm. Eleven years ago, she joined her father, brother, and brother-in-law full time on the farm started by her father’s parents. She found that both her corporate and farming employment helped shape her business acumen and her understanding of how necessary it is to be flexible in a constantly changing environment.

Botticello Farms has grown slowly and steadily for the past 40 years to a family venture that farms nearly 400 acres and has 50,000 square feet of greenhouse space. The farm also raises hay and straw and sells mulch products. Three generations now work side by side, striving to keep the farm successful. They continually endeavor to create new ways to keep costs low enough to allow them to compete and expand their agricultural markets and to stay current in a dynamic climate. They work with many smaller and larger farms to ensure they all maintain or sustain growth in this challenging industry.



## **Peter Orr**

Fort Hill Farms  
Thompson, CT

**Appointed by** Governor Dannel P. Malloy

**Representing** agricultural production

**Background:** Peter is the chairman of the family-owned, diversified Fort Hill Farms. He, his wife Kristin, and three generations of their family provide on-farm experiences for people interested in the pleasures of agricultural life and the outdoors. Spanning 1,000 acres in three towns and featuring a spectacular three-state view, Fort Hill Farms has been featured in *Yankee* magazine (twice), *Reader's Digest*, *The New York Times* (twice), *The Boston Globe*, numerous other publications, and on television. It won the 2012 Connecticut Tourism Ambassador Award and was honored twice by *Yankee* magazine with a Best of New England designation.

Peter is a founding member of The Farmer's Cow and a member and county director of the Connecticut Farm Bureau (CFBA). He is a member of CFBA's Dairy Committee, the Connecticut Milk Promotion Board, and the Connecticut Milk Regulation Board, and a past voting regional farmer representative for Agrimark, New England's largest dairy cooperative and marketer of Cabot and Mcadam. Peter received a Master of Science degree in agronomy from Penn State University and a Bachelor of Science degree, cum laude, from the University of Connecticut. Peter firmly believes that Connecticut agriculture is in a renaissance and represents a great opportunity for the state.

# **Steven K. Reviczky**

Connecticut Department of Agriculture  
Hartford, CT

**Appointed by** Public Act No. 11-189

**Background:** Steven K. Reviczky was named commissioner of agriculture by Governor Dannel P. Malloy in January 2011. In announcing his selection, Governor Malloy described Steve as well known and well respected in Connecticut's agriculture community, and stated that "his leadership at the Department of Agriculture will be invaluable to thousands of family farms across our state." In his first year leading the agency, Commissioner Reviczky has focused on opportunities to create jobs and strengthen the state's agricultural economy. He also directed one of the most successive agricultural legislative agendas in the agency's history.

Steve is a Connecticut native and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in public policy and government from Eastern Connecticut State University. From 2006 until his 2011 appointment as commissioner, he served as the executive director of the Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, where he was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the association and was directly engaged with state and local officials and Congress, advocating on matters important to Connecticut's farmers. From 1998 to 2006, Steve was a property agent with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program, where he worked to identify and protect the state's prime and important agricultural soils. Prior, he served for nine years in various capacities at the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, supporting state parks, forests, fisheries, and wildlife management areas, and worked for five years at the state Capitol as a special legislative assistant to the secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, clerk of the Public Safety Committee, and assistant clerk of the Education Committee. In 1985, while still a student at the University of Connecticut, he was elected Ashford's first selectman, becoming one of the youngest chief elected officials in the state.

## **Kevin Sullivan Jr.**

Chestnut Hill Nursery  
Stafford, CT

**Appointed by** House Minority Leader Larry Cafero

**Representing** The Green Industry

**Background:** Since 1983, Kevin has been the owner of Sullivan Horticultural Services and Chestnut Hill Nursery LLC, horticultural/agricultural businesses based in Suffield and Stafford, Connecticut. Kevin holds a Bachelor of Science degree in ornamental horticulture from Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

Kevin is active in numerous trade associations and serves as a board member of the Connecticut Nursery Landscape Association; a participant in the Leadership Development Program of the New England Nurseryman Association; and a charter member, steering committee member, and business subcommittee member of BuyCTGrown.com. He is also a committee member of the USDA Aphis Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey Program, a committee member of the Governor's Steering Committee on Climate Change Agricultural Workgroup, an active board member of the Tolland County Farm Bureau, chairman of the Suffield High Agriscience Program Consulting Committee, a steering committee member of Working Lands Alliance, and a delegate for policy development for the American Farm Bureau. In addition, he was a committee member of the Agricultural Business Cluster.

# **Henry Talmage**

Connecticut Farm Bureau  
Windsor, CT

**Appointed by** Public Act No. 11-189

**Representing** The Connecticut Milk Promotion Board

**Background:** Henry Talmage is the executive director of Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, the voice of Connecticut agriculture. CFBA is a 5,000 member, non-profit organization dedicated to farming and future of Connecticut agriculture by focusing on the economic viability, land use, labor, taxation, and the protection of farmland. Prior to his current position at CFBA, Henry served as executive director of the Connecticut Farmland Trust for five years. Established in 2002, the Connecticut Farmland Trust is the only private statewide conservation organization dedicated to protecting Connecticut's working farmland.

Henry is a graduate of Cornell University with a degree in agricultural economics. He is a native of Long Island, New York and has extensive experience in farming, agribusiness, and real estate. Before coming to Connecticut from Long Island, he was director of operations for Talmage Farm, a family-owned wholesale greenhouse and nursery business with a retail farm and garden store. He has served on many agricultural committees and advisory boards including the Advisory Council of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University.

# **Gregory J. Weidemann**

University of Connecticut  
Storrs, CT

**Appointed by** Public Act No. 11-189

**Background:** Greg Weidemann serves as dean and director of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources the University of Connecticut and has responsibility for all aspects of the academic, research and outreach missions for the college. Prior to his current role, he served as dean and associate vice president for academic programs in the College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences at the University of Arkansas, and as dean and associate vice president for research and Agricultural Experiment Station director from 2002 until 2008, after serving as interim dean in 2001. He served as associate director of the Agricultural Experiment Station and associate dean for research from 1996 until 2001.

Greg is a native of Wisconsin and holds a bachelor's degree in zoology and a Ph.D. in plant pathology from the University of Wisconsin. He joined the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Arkansas in 1983, where he served as an assistant, associate, and full professor until being appointed as interim associate director and associate dean in 1995. As a faculty member, his research focused on the taxonomy and biology of plant-pathogenic fungi and biological control. As a teacher, he received several teaching awards, including the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture 1990 Award of Merit, the John W. White Teaching Award and the Gamma Sigma Delta Teaching Award of Merit. In 1993, he was elected to the University of Arkansas Teaching Academy. Dr. Weidemann has served in a number of leadership roles within the land grant university system including serving as chair of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and as chair of the Administrative Heads section for the Northeast region.