



ORGANIC PIONEER RECEIVES FIRST OAK AWARD

Press release, 26th October 2018

Issued jointly by Organic Trade Board, Organic Research Centre, and Natracare

The founder of a pioneering organic company is the winner of the first Oak Award to recognise an individual's outstanding organic contribution, presented on 25 October at the Yeo Valley canteen.

Susie Hewson founder of [Natracare](#) was chosen by judges from the Organic Trade Board (OTB) and the Organic Research Centre to be a topical and worthy recipient of the inaugural award.

Representatives of her company were at the awards ceremony to receive the award, which was made from a 150 year-old oak tree, created by [Parlour Furniture](#), to reflect the natural strength, longevity and resilience of organic principles.

Adrian Blackshaw, chairman of OTB said *"I am delighted that the inaugural Oak Award has been presented to Susie. Her business Natracare is part of the organic sector that continues to grow and strengthen year on year. She is a very worthy recipient who came through a very competitive shortlist. Throughout the selection process, her nomination stood out.*

Going plastic-free in 1993, so far ahead of the curve that this issue wasn't on most businesses agenda at the time, is indicative of her commitment to the environment", he added.

Hewson started her organic feminine hygiene company in 1989 about becoming concerned about the toxic pollution created by the processing and manufacturing of conventional sanitary products.

Natracare created the world's first certified, 100% cotton tampons and plastic-free sanitary pads.

Susie Hewson said "she was honoured to receive the very first Oak Award" and thanked the OTB for recognising her contribution to making organic menstrual products an important category in the organic industry.

"For the past 30 years, I've been fighting a battle in a market dominated by global giants to fulfil my passion of putting people and planet first. At times it has been brutally tough, exhausting and challenging, but the rewards of eventually seeing organic period products becoming established and Natracare's global reach makes all that hard work worthwhile," she said.

There were four other worthy candidates on the final shortlist:

- Anthony Snell, of [Windmill Hill Farm](#) who grows blackcurrants, strawberries, raspberries near Ross-on-Wye and runs British Frozen Fruits, supplying Ribena and Marks & Spencer
- Andrew Wilkinson, who grows organic grain and set up an organic bread making business, [Gilchesters Organic](#), in Northumberland

Director: Prof. Nicolas Lampkin

Council of Management: M. Turnbull (Chairman), V. Agrawal (Treasurer), A. Astor, T. Bennett, A. Blackshaw, D. Peck, A. Stewart, M. Wagner, C. Watson, N. Westaway

Patrons: C.A. Bielenberg, The Duchess of Richmond and Gordon, Peter Kindersley, Juliet Kindersley, Yvonne Pye, Jan Sundt

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- Alex Smith who runs [Alara Wholefoods](#), an organic cereals company founded in 1975 and based in London
- Julie Brown, director of [Growing Communities](#) based in Hackney, east London, which includes the UK's only all-organic weekly farmers' market.

At the ceremony, a presentation of two oak candlesticks was made posthumously to Peter Melchett, a campaigning practical organic farmer, most recently Policy Director of the Soil Association, who died on 5 September 2018. Joanna Lewis of the Soil Association, received the award on behalf of his family.

The Awards ceremony was held as part of a fundraising event for the Organic Research Centre, sponsored by Yeo Valley and attended by nearly 100 guests.

Professor Nic Lampkin, Chief Executive of the Organic Research Centre (ORC) said: *"We are proud to have been associated with the first Oak Awards, and the achievements of all the nominees. ORC's work is focused on practical research in participation with innovative farmers and businesses, and the awards have illustrated the pioneering role played by many organic farmers and businesses."*

He added: *"Ecological innovation is particularly important for the development of more sustainable food and farming systems and it will be important to ensure that the UK focuses more resources on this, as access to EU research funding seems likely to be less easy post Brexit. Farmers and businesses need to be fully engaged with this process."*

Ends

Notes

The two photographs provided show:

- a) receiving the Oak Award on behalf of Susie Hewson of Natracare and Joanna Lewis of the Soil Association receiving the Oak Candles on behalf of the family of the late Peter Melchett, with Adrian Blackshaw, Chair of the Organic Trade Board
- b) (TBC) Susie Hewson of Natracare holding the Oak Award after the event.

The Organic Trade Board is the industry body representing UK organic businesses. Founded in 2009 with one aim: to increase sales of organic which it does through its [Organic. Feed Your Happy campaign](#). The organisation has a vision to make organic an everyday choice, forever. For further information, see www.organictradeboard.co.uk or contact Paul Moore paulm@organicresearchcentre.com Mobile: 07757 510 879

The Organic Research Centre is the UK's leading independent research centre for sustainable food and farming based on organic/agroecological approaches. For further information, see www.organicresearchcentre.com or contact Nic Lampkin, nic.l@organicresearchcentre.com Tel: 07771 961279.

Natracare was founded in 1989 and produces organic alternatives to conventional menstrual products. For further information, see www.natracare.com or contact: Madeleine Graham-Butt, Tel: 01454 613347

Yeo Valley hosted the event in their Canteen kindly donating the facilities and a full three course banquet. For further information about Yeo Valley and its facilities, see www.yeovalley.co.uk.



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Many other members of the Organic Trade Board contributed food, drink and gifts for the silent auction at the event, including: Able & Cole, Alara, Clearspring, Cotswold Organic (Simon Weaver), Daylesford, Doves Farm, Godminster, Goodwood, Luscombe, Nutcrafter Creamery, Organic Kingdom, Pukka Herbs, Riverford, Roots & Wings, Seeds of Change, Stroud Brewery, Sunita, Tideford, Vintage Roots.

Garry Smith of Parlour furniture was commissioned to create the hexagonal-shaped oak award bowl. This shape is known as one of “nature’s building blocks” as it is found in nature, including bee hive chambers. Representing how the recipient’s contribution to the organic sector is in harmony with nature and has a positive impact on the environment. Hewn from 150-year-old oak tree, signifying the lasting impact of the recipients work on the organic and environmental landscape.

Garry also created the mid-century candlesticks for Peter Melchett’s posthumous award, recognising his huge positive impact on the organic and political landscape and beyond, as a staunch campaigner and organic farmer. Every time the candles are lit Peter will be in thought, and the shining light represents how his light shines on and how his legacy lives on.

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