

## **2020 Oshkosh Food Cooperative Board of Directors Statement of Nomination**

Name: **Melissa Weyland**

**Brief Biography (150 Words or Less): I dairy farm with my family and I work off-farm for CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley. I've been working in the cooperative business sector for over 13 years, and have worked in the food industry for over 10. I'm a conscious consumer and especially enjoy living off of the land I care for as much as possible. I serve on the Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council, the NWTC Sustainable Agriculture Advisory Committee and am a Certified UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteer. I have proudly served on the Oshkosh Food Co-op Board of Directors since 2017. I was honored to be recognized as one of the Fox Cities Future 15 Young Professionals of the year in 2019. And, I LOVE co-ops!**

Please respond to the following questions:

1. What would you bring/offer to the Oshkosh Food Co-op Board?

**Ultimately, I bring my farmer work ethic, co-op expertise, experience and connections from my professional life to our project. I also bring with me the invaluable experience of serving on the board for the last three years, where we've seen a tremendous amount of progress toward bringing the Oshkosh Food Co-op to life.**

2. What is your dream for the Oshkosh Food Co-op?

**Right now my dream is to get the store open. I dream of seeing that we run it responsibly and successfully, that we are financially responsible and viable, and to ensure that the member voice is heard throughout, and that we stick true to our mission. Given my agriculture background though, I especially dream of how**

**Oshkosh Food Co-op will serve as a stable, year-round market for our local farmers and how through this we can support and grow the Fox Valley's local farm & food movement. OFC is going to do incredible things for the community, and right now I think the priority needs to be getting us to a successful grand opening and through operational maturity to do those great things.**

3. Why do you think the Oshkosh Food Co-op is important to the greater Oshkosh community? **Well, as an organic farmer, I know the food that I produce is some of the highest quality, highest integrity, and highest animal-care and environmentally nurturing food that exists. The problem is accessibility. And, I think everyone should have access both physically and financially to food that aligns with their moral compass, whatever that may be. We are entering a time where consumers (that's us) want more options. We want food options we believe in. We want options that are good for the planet. We want food that is produced in a manner that does not exploit farmers, farm workers or animals. We want food without excessive and single use packaging. That's what this store is all about: options. We need the options to be able to put our grocery dollars towards a food system we want to see. The Oshkosh Food Co-op is part of the puzzle to give us the options that align with our values... it has to. After all, we are the owners.**

4. Why cooperatives? **My connection with cooperatives is actually quite personal. Without one cooperative in particular (Organic Valley), I do not believe that my family farm would be here and be viable at the size we are today. Thanks to the soul work of the generations of cooperatives before me, working with and within cooperatives has become my soul work, too. I often imagine the impact OFC will have on someone's life since a Food Co-op, like other co-ops, bring so much positive to their communities.**

**Additionally, the power of good spewing from well-organized, mission-aligned cooperatives is magnificent. That's where we are at with Oshkosh Food Co-op. We've become well-organized, our mission is clear, we have strong community support with over 1,100 members, we have 100's of volunteers (shout-out to you incredible people serving on those committees), a strong leadership team (100% volunteer) and incredible mentors from across the country rooting for us. We are exhibiting what a cooperative is all about: people coming together from all walks of life for the greater good. That's why I am here. I want to be a part of this movement and you can trust me to make decisions in your best interest as a member-owner.**

5. Please offer any additional thoughts you would like Oshkosh Food Co-op member-owners to

**know about you. I have been a member of Viroqua Food Co-op for 8 years, and have previously been a member of Steven's Point Food Co-op. When traveling, I always**

**seek out food co-ops for their salad/hot bars and to pick-up fresh, local groceries. A local food co-op says so much about the community. I cannot wait to bump into you in our store where we are proud of how it represents our community, our togetherness, our local farmers, our local businesses, our university, our history, our industries and so much more!**