



Functional
Mushroom
Council

Functional Mushroom Council Who We Are

Dr. Julie Daoust, Co-Founder of the Functional Mushroom Council and Chief Science Officer at [M2 Ingredients](#) (headshot [here](#))

For Dr. Julie Daoust, mushrooms aren't just a field of study—they're a lifelong passion. Born into a family who loved mushrooms, she learned to forage from her grandparents at an early age, developing a fascination with the natural world that would ultimately shape her career. That early love of discovery led her to pursue a Natural Product Chemistry PhD, driven by a desire to uncover new ingredients and molecular pathways in nature that could improve human health. Her scientific journey took her deep into the chemistry of the natural world, exploring the diverse bioactive compounds that make plants and natural systems such powerful sources of nourishment and healing—eventually leading her back to the organism that first inspired her: mushrooms.

Before joining M2 Ingredients, Julie applied her expertise in food science and natural product chemistry to create plant-based innovations for leading brands including Vega and Silk. While those experiences deepened her understanding of nutrition and product development, she felt a pull back to her roots—mushrooms—as she became increasingly convinced they represent the next great frontier in human health and nutrition.

Today, Dr. Daoust serves as Chief Science Officer at M2 Ingredients, the largest grower of organic functional mushrooms in North America, where she leads a multidisciplinary team of mycologists, chemists, food scientists, and quality experts. She also is the co-founder of the Functional Mushroom Council, helping to advance scientific transparency and quality standards across the industry.

With a distinguished career developing nutritional products for some of the world's most recognized wellness brands, Dr. Daoust now leverages her expertise in natural product chemistry, whole-food nutrition, and mycology to create the most effective and clinically supported mushroom formulations available. Her commitment to rigorous research drives innovation at M2 Ingredients—ensuring every product reflects both the power of nature and the precision of science.

Among her proudest moments at M2 are leading the company's breakthrough studies on the gut-brain axis, cellular health, and prebiotic activity of full-spectrum mushroom powders—research that has helped establish mushrooms as a transformative new category in nutritional science. For Julie, it's deeply rewarding to see the world finally beginning to understand what she's known since childhood: mushrooms are one of nature's most extraordinary systems—complex, intelligent, and profoundly connected to human health.

Paul Stamets, Founder and Owner of Fungi Perfect (headshot [here](#))



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Paul Stamets, D.Sc. (Honoris causa), speaker, author, mycologist, medical researcher, and entrepreneur, is considered an intellectual and industry leader in fungi: habitat, medicinal use, and production. He lectures extensively to deepen the understanding and respect for the organisms that literally exist under every footstep taken on this path of life. His presentations cover a range of mushroom species and research showing how mushrooms can help the health of people and planet. His central premise is that habitats have immune systems, just like people, and mushrooms are cellular bridges between the two. Our close evolutionary relationship to fungi can be the basis for novel pairings in the microbiome that lead to greater sustainability and immune enhancement.

Paul Stamets is the author of eight books, including *Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save The World*, *Growing Gourmet and Medicinal Mushrooms*, *Psilocybin Mushrooms of the World*, and a new book released in June 2025, *Psilocybin Mushrooms in Their Natural Habitats*. He has discovered and named numerous new species of psilocybin mushrooms, and is the founder and owner of Fungi Perfecti, LLC. He is an invention ambassador for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and was inducted into The Explorer's Club in 2020. He has received numerous awards, including the National Mycologist Award (2013) from the North American Mycological Association (NAMA), the Gordon and Tina Wasson Award (2015) from the Mycological Society of America (MSA), The Disruptor Award from NextMed (2023), and the SynBioBeta Lifetime Achievement Award (2024). He has named four new species of psilocybin mushrooms. In 2023, a new psilocybin mushroom species was named after him to honor his lifelong work: *Psilocybe stametsii*.

He served as the primary guide to the mushroom documentary *Fantastic Fungi*, which first appeared in theaters in fall 2019 and maintains a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

Kyle Garrone, Production Manager of [Far West Fungi](#) (headshot [here](#))

Kyle Garrone is the production manager for Far West Fungi, one of the largest vertically integrated exotic mushroom farms in the country.

He has been the production manager of Far West Fungi since graduating from UC-Davis in 2010 with a degree in plant biology with a focus on plant pathology and mycology.

At Far West Fungi, Kyle increases yields, reduces needed labor, and experiments with new varieties of mushrooms that have potential for wholesale customers. Kyle has traveled throughout the world to find the most successful and efficient growing methods and the most resilient and highest yielding mushroom varieties. He is passionate about bringing modern technologies to the industry and sharing what he has learned with those who are interested in exotic mushroom cultivation.



Amir Karian, Co-founder of the Functional Mushroom Council & Director of Monterey Nutra (headshot [here](#))

Amir Karian is a third-generation mushroom farmer and director of Monterey Mushrooms, the largest vertically integrated mushroom company in the world. Since the 1970s, his family has shaped the modern mushroom industry under the leadership of his uncle, Shah Kazemi. Monterey Mushrooms pioneered many of the industry's most transformative innovations—including sliced mushrooms, high vitamin D mushrooms, and the popularization of the iconic portabella—laying the groundwork for how mushrooms are grown, processed, and enjoyed today.

Amir's passion for mycology was born from personal experience. After a sudden autoimmune diagnosis, he turned to alternative medicine when conventional approaches failed. Through this journey, he discovered the profound healing potential of functional mushrooms, which played a central role in his recovery. Inspired by this transformation, Amir committed himself to bringing the power of medicinal mushrooms to a wider audience.

In 2017, Amir officially joined the family business with a clear mission: to expand Monterey Mushrooms beyond culinary varieties and into medicinal and functional mushroom ingredients. Two years later, Amir launched the nutra division of Monterey Mushrooms, introducing 10 new medicinal varieties into the company's portfolio.

By leveraging the scientific expertise of Amycel, Monterey's genetics division and decades of farming experience, he converted legacy infrastructure into high-tech cultivation facilities and developed novel extraction methods to produce some of the highest-quality mushroom extracts in the industry. Today, Amir continues to drive innovation at Monterey Nutra with the purpose of enhancing people's lives.

Taylor Bradbury, director of marketing at [Aloha Medicinals](#) (photo [here](#))

Taylor Bradbury helps lead Aloha Medicinals, a vertically integrated functional mushroom ingredient company located in Carson City, Nevada. As director of marketing and operational excellence, she works to blend strategy, science, and storytelling to make functional mushrooms more accessible and exciting for today's wellness consumers. With a background in the natural and organic food ingredient and dietary supplement space, Taylor is driven by a passion for innovation and integrity in U.S.-grown mushrooms. As a founding member of the FMC, Taylor brings a fresh perspective on how millennial and Gen Z audiences are reshaping the wellness space, championing transparency, education, and modern connection in a rapidly growing industry.