UNITED NATURAL FOODS INC Form DEF 14A December 03, 2009

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UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION Washington, D.C. 20549

SCHEDULE 14A

Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (Amendment No.

)

Filed by the Registrant $\acute{\mathrm{y}}$

Filed by a Party other than the Registrant o

Check the appropriate box:

- o Preliminary Proxy Statement
- o Confidential, for Use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))
- ý Definitive Proxy Statement
- o Definitive Additional Materials
- o Soliciting Material Pursuant to §240.14a-12

United Natural Foods, Inc.

(Name of Registrant as Specified In Its Charter)

(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if other than the Registrant)

Payment of Filing Fee (Check the appropriate box):

ý No fee required.

- Fee computed on table below per Exchange Act Rules 14a-6(i)(1) and 0-11.
 (1) Title of each class of securities to which transaction applies:
 - (2) Aggregate number of securities to which transaction applies:
 - (3) Per unit price or other underlying value of transaction computed pursuant to Exchange Act Rule 0-11 (set forth the amount on which the filing fee is calculated and state how it was determined):
 - (4) Proposed maximum aggregate value of transaction:
 - (5) Total fee paid:

- o Fee paid previously with preliminary materials.
- o Check box if any part of the fee is offset as provided by Exchange Act Rule 0-11(a)(2) and identify the filing for which the offsetting fee was paid previously. Identify the previous filing by registration statement number, or the Form or Schedule and the date of its filing.
 - (1) Amount Previously Paid:
 - (2) Form, Schedule or Registration Statement No.:
 - (3) Filing Party:
 - (4) Date Filed:

UNITED NATURAL FOODS, INC.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 13, 2010

Dear Stockholder:

These matters

other business to be transacted at the annual meeting.

You are hereby cordially invited to attend the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of United Natural Foods, Inc., which will be held on Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. (local time) at our Corporate headquarters located at 313 Iron Horse Way, Providence, Rhode Island 02908, and any adjournments or postponements of the annual meeting. For your convenience, we are offering a live webcast of the annual meeting at the Investor section of our website at *www.unfi.com*, which can be accessed through the "Investors" link on our website.

We are holding the annual meeting for the following purposes:

1.	
	To elect two members to our Board of Directors to serve as Class I directors, each for a term of three years.
2.	
	To ratify the selection of KPMG LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2010.
3.	
	To transact such other business as may properly come before the annual meeting or any adjournments or postponements of the annual meeting.
are more	fully described in the accompanying proxy statement, which is made a part of this notice. We are not aware of any

Only stockholders of record on our books at the close of business on Tuesday, November 17, 2009 will be entitled to vote at the annual meeting and any adjournments or postponements of the annual meeting. For 10 days prior to the annual meeting, a list of stockholders entitled to vote will be available for inspection at our principal executive offices located at 313 Iron Horse Way, Providence, RI 02908, and will also be available at the annual meeting. If you would like to view the stockholder list, please call our Investor Relations Department at (401) 528-8634 to schedule an appointment.

In accordance with rules approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission, this year we are again furnishing proxy materials to our stockholders over the Internet. On or about December 4, 2009, we mailed to all stockholders of record as of the close of business on November 17, 2009 a notice containing instructions on how to access our Annual Report to Stockholders, which contains our consolidated financial statements for the fiscal year ended August 1, 2009, our proxy statement, proxy card and other items of interest to stockholders on the Internet website indicated in our notice, as well as how to vote. Consistent with the prior year, our stockholders have the option of voting over the Internet, by telephone, or mail. The December 4th notice also provides instructions on how you can request a paper copy of our proxy materials and Annual Report to Stockholders if you desire.

If you do not attend the annual meeting, you may vote your shares via the Internet, by telephone or by completing, dating, signing and promptly returning your proxy card to us in the envelope provided, if you received a paper copy of the proxy card by mail. The proxy materials provide you with details on how to vote by these three methods. Whether or not you plan to attend the annual meeting, we encourage you to vote in the method that suits you best so that your shares will be voted at the

annual meeting. If you decide to attend the annual meeting, you may revoke your proxy and personally cast your vote.

By Order of the Board of Directors,

Michael S. Funk, *Chair of the Board*

December 4, 2009

PLEASE VOTE. STOCKHOLDERS MAY VOTE IN PERSON OR BY THE INTERNET, TELEPHONE OR MAIL. PLEASE REFER TO YOUR PROXY CARD OR THE NOTICE OF PROXY AVAILABILITY DISTRIBUTED TO YOU ON DECEMBER 4, 2009 FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO VOTE BY THE INTERNET, TELEPHONE AND MAIL.

UNITED NATURAL FOODS, INC. 313 Iron Horse Way Providence, Rhode Island 02908

PROXY STATEMENT

FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 13, 2010

This proxy statement is being furnished in connection with the solicitation of proxies by the Board of Directors of United Natural Foods, Inc., for use at the Annual Meeting of Stockholders to be held on Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. (local time) at our corporate headquarters located at 313 Iron Horse Way, Providence, Rhode Island 02908, and any adjournments or postponements of the annual meeting. The Board of Directors (which we sometimes refer to as the Board in this proxy statement) is soliciting proxies for the purposes set forth in the accompanying "Notice of Annual Meeting of Stockholders." We will bear the cost of soliciting the proxies.

Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials for the Annual Meeting of Stockholders to be Held on January 13, 2010:

As outlined on the notice we mailed to you on December 4, 2009 (the "Notice of Proxy Availability"), the proxy statement, proxy card and Annual Report to Stockholders for the year ended August 1, 2009 are available on the Internet at *http://cstproxy.com/unfi/2010*.

Record Date and Share Ownership

Only stockholders of record on our books at the close of business on Tuesday, November 17, 2009 (the "Record Date") will be entitled to vote at the annual meeting and any adjournments or postponements of the annual meeting. As of the close of business on November 17, 2009, we had 43,077,556 shares of common stock outstanding. Each share of common stock entitles the record holder to one vote on each matter to be voted upon at the annual meeting. Copies of the Notice of Annual Meeting of Stockholders, this proxy statement, the proxy card and our Annual Report to Stockholders for the fiscal year ended August 1, 2009, are being first made available to stockholders of record on or about December 4, 2009. Our Board of Directors is making these materials available to you on the Internet or, upon your request, is delivering printed versions of these materials to you without charge by mail. On or about December 4, 2009, we mailed to all stockholders of record as of the Record Date the Notice of Proxy Availability, which contains instructions on how to access these materials and vote.

We will, upon written request of any stockholder, furnish without charge a copy of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended August 1, 2009, as filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"), without exhibits. Please address all such requests to the attention of Lisa N'Chonon, Corporate Controller, United Natural Foods, Inc., 313 Iron Horse Way, Providence, Rhode Island 02908. Exhibits will be provided upon written request to Ms. N'Chonon and payment of an appropriate processing fee.

Submitting and Revoking Your Proxy

If you complete and submit a proxy, the persons named as proxies will vote the shares represented by your proxy in accordance with your instructions. If you submit a proxy but do not complete the voting instructions, the persons named as proxies will vote the shares represented by your proxy as follows:

FOR the election of Joseph M. Cianciolo and Peter Roy as Class I directors; and

FOR the ratification of the selection of KPMG LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2010.

If other matters come before the annual meeting, the persons named as proxies will vote on such matters in accordance with their best judgment. We have not received any notice of other matters that may properly be presented at the annual meeting.

You may revoke or revise your proxy whether given by mail, via the Internet or by telephone at any time prior to the start of the annual meeting by delivering written instructions to our corporate secretary at 313 Iron Horse Way, Providence, Rhode Island 02908. Attendance at the annual meeting will not itself be deemed to revoke your proxy unless you give notice at the annual meeting that you intend to revoke your proxy and vote in person.

If you hold shares of common stock in a stock brokerage account or through a bank, trust or other fiduciary or nominee, you are considered to be the beneficial owner of shares held in "*street name*" and these proxy materials are being forwarded to you by your broker or nominee. You may not vote directly any shares held in street name; however, as the beneficial owner of the shares, you have the right to direct your broker or nominee on how to vote your shares. If you do not provide your broker or nominee instructions on how to vote your shares regarding the election of Class I directors, they will not be able to vote your shares on this matter.

If you participate in our Employee Stock Ownership Plan (the "*ESOP*"), you will receive a separate voting instructions card which will serve as a voting instruction for Mr. Robert Huckins, the trustee of the ESOP. If Mr. Huckins does not receive voting instructions for your ESOP shares, he will vote your ESOP shares in the same proportion as other ESOP participants' shares for which voting instructions have been received. Mr. Huckins will vote unallocated shares of common stock in the ESOP in the same proportion as participants have directed the trustee to vote their allocated shares of common stock.

If you participate in the United Natural Foods, Inc. Stock Fund (the "*Stock Fund*") through the United Natural Foods, Inc. Retirement Plan (the "*401(k) Plan*"), you will receive a separate voting instructions card which will serve as a voting instruction for Fidelity Management Trust Company ("*Fidelity*"), the trustee of the plan. If Fidelity does not receive voting instructions for your shares, it will vote your shares in the same proportion as other plan participants' shares for which voting instructions have been received.

In addition to solicitations by mail and the Internet, our directors, officers and employees may, without additional remuneration, solicit proxies by telephone, facsimile and personal interviews. We will request brokerage houses, custodians, nominees and fiduciaries to forward copies of the proxy materials to those persons for whom they hold shares and request instructions for voting the proxies. We will reimburse such brokerage houses and other persons for their reasonable expenses in connection with this distribution.

If you hold shares in street name and you would like to attend the annual meeting, you must bring to the meeting proof of stock ownership, such as an account statement from your broker or nominee which confirms that you are the beneficial owner of those shares. If you would like to vote in person at the annual meeting and you hold your shares in street name, you must bring a proxy letter issued by your broker or nominee to vote your shares in person at the meeting.

How to Vote

You may vote "FOR" or "AGAINST" each of the nominees to the Board of Directors. You may also abstain from voting "FOR" or "AGAINST" any nominee. For each of the other matters to be voted on at the annual meeting, you may vote "FOR" or "AGAINST" or abstain from voting. The procedures for voting follow.

Stockholders of Record: If you are a stockholder of record, there are four ways to vote:

by completing, signing, dating and returning your proxy card, if you request a paper copy of the proxy materials;

by written ballot at the annual meeting;

by making a toll-free telephone call within the United States or Canada using a touch-tone telephone to the toll-free number provided on your Notice of Proxy Availability; or

by voting on the Internet. To vote on the Internet, go to the website address indicated on your Notice of Proxy Availability to complete an electronic proxy card. You will be asked to provide the company number and control number from the Notice of Proxy Availability.

If you plan to vote by telephone or Internet, your vote must be received by 7:00 p.m., EST, on January 12, 2010 to be counted.

Street Name Holders: If you hold your shares in street name, the Notice of Proxy Availability was forwarded to you by your intermediary and you should follow the voting instructions provided by your broker. You may complete and return a voting instruction card to your broker. Please check your Notice of Proxy Availability for more information. If you hold your shares in street name and wish to vote at the annual meeting, you must obtain a legal proxy from your broker and bring that proxy to the meeting.

Holders Through the ESOP: If you hold your shares through the ESOP, a voting instructions card was forwarded to you, which will serve as a voting instruction for Mr. Robert Huckins, the trustee of the ESOP. You must submit your voting instructions to Mr. Huckins by the close of business on January 10, 2010 to allow him time to receive your voting instructions. If Mr. Huckins does not receive voting instructions for your ESOP shares in the same proportion as other ESOP participants' shares for which voting instructions have been received.

Holders Through the 401(k) Plan: If you hold your shares through the 401(k) Plan's Stock Fund, you will receive a separate voting instructions card which will serve as a voting instruction for Fidelity, the trustee of the 401(k) Plan. You must submit your voting instructions to Fidelity by 5:00 p.m. on January 11, 2010 to allow it time to receive your voting instructions. If Fidelity does not receive voting instructions for your shares, it will vote your shares in the same proportion as other plan participants' shares for which voting instructions have been received.

We provide Internet proxy voting to allow you to vote your shares on-line, with procedures designed to ensure the authenticity and correctness of your proxy vote instructions. However, please be aware that you must bear any costs associated with your Internet access, such as usage charges from Internet access providers and telephone companies.

Votes Required

Presence in person or by proxy of a majority of the shares of common stock outstanding at the close of business on November 17, 2009, the record date for the annual meeting, and entitled to vote at the annual meeting will be required for a quorum. Shares of common stock present in person or represented by proxy (including shares that abstain or do not vote with respect to one or more of the matters presented for stockholder approval) will be counted for purposes of determining whether a quorum exists at the annual meeting.

Our bylaws provide that, if the number of nominees for director does not exceed the number of directors to be elected, each nominee for director will be elected as a director if the number of shares voted "FOR" the director exceed the number of shares voted "AGAINST" the director. If the number of nominees exceeds the number of directors to be elected, the directors will be elected by the vote of

a plurality of the shares represented in person or by proxy at the annual meeting and entitled to vote on the election of directors. If a nominee who already serves as a director is not elected, that director must offer to tender his or her resignation to the Board of Directors. The Nominating and Governance Committee of our Board of Directors will make a recommendation to the Board on whether to accept or reject the director's resignation, or whether other action should be taken. The affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the outstanding shares of common stock present or represented by proxy, entitled to vote and voting on the matter is required for the ratification of the selection of KPMG LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for fiscal year 2010.

Shares that abstain from voting as to a particular matter, and shares held in "street name" by brokers or nominees who indicate on their proxies that they do not have discretionary authority to vote such shares as to a particular matter or have not received instructions from the beneficial owner with respect to such matter, will not be counted as votes in favor of such matter, and will also not be counted as votes cast or shares voting on such matter. Accordingly, abstentions and "*broker non-votes*" will have no effect on the voting on a matter that requires the affirmative vote of a certain percentage of the votes cast, although such votes will count for quorum purposes. Brokers and nominees do not have discretionary authority to vote with respect to the election of directors.

Webcast of Annual Meeting

We are pleased to offer a webcast of the annual meeting. If you choose to participate in the annual meeting by means of the webcast, please go to the Investors section of our website at *www.unfi.com* shortly before the annual meeting is scheduled to begin and follow the instructions provided. In addition, the conference call dial-in number for the annual meeting is (480) 629-9692. You will be able to participate in the annual meeting by submitting questions directly from the broadcast site. However, you will not be able to vote your shares of common stock during the webcast. If you plan to listen to the webcast, please be sure to vote your shares in one of the ways described under "How to Vote" above by the date and time (if applicable) specified so that the persons named as proxies can vote the shares represented by your proxy in accordance with your instructions at the annual meeting.

Householding

We have adopted a procedure for stockholders whose shares are held in street name called "*householding*," pursuant to which stockholders of record who have the same address and the same last name will receive only one Notice of Proxy Availability each and, as applicable, one set of any additional proxy materials that are delivered, unless one or more of these stockholders notifies us that they wish to continue receiving multiple copies. This procedure provides extra convenience for stockholders and a cost savings for us. Currently, we are not providing householding to stockholders whose shares are registered in their name.

If at any time you no longer wish to participate in householding and would prefer to receive a separate Notice of Proxy Availability and, as applicable, any additional proxy materials that are delivered, or if your shares are held in street name and you are receiving multiple copies of our Notice of Proxy Availability and, as applicable, any additional proxy materials that are delivered and wish to receive only one, please notify your bank, broker, trust or other holder of record. For more information, please contact our corporate secretary at 313 Iron Horse Way, Providence, Rhode Island 02908.

Stockholders who participate in householding will continue to receive separate voting identification numbers for use in voting their shares, and, if requested, separate proxy cards.



Stock Ownership of Certain Beneficial Owners and Management

The following table sets forth certain information regarding the beneficial ownership of shares of our common stock as of November 17, 2009 by (i) each person or entity known by us to own beneficially more than 5% of the outstanding shares of our common stock based on Schedule 13G filings made by such persons with the SEC, (ii) each member of our Board of Directors, (iii) our current or former executive officers named in the Summary Compensation Table below and (iv) all of our directors, current executive officers and former executive officers named in the Summary Compensation Table as a group.

Number of Shares	Percentage
•	Ownership(2)
5,895,100	13.7%
3,349,107	7.8%
2,516,860	5.8%
324,962	0.8%
182,289	0.4%
179,425	0.4%
79,333	0.2%
58,791	0.1%
54,369	0.1%
45,998	0.1%
42,714	0.1%
40,791	0.1%
34,158	0.1%
29,454	0.0%
13,612	0.1%
6,888	0.0%
0	0.0%
1,175,996	2.7%
	Beneficially Owned 5,895,100 3,349,107 2,516,860 324,962 182,289 179,425 79,333 58,791 54,369 45,998 42,714 40,791 34,158 29,454 13,612 6,888 0

(1)

The address for each listed director and executive officer is c/o United Natural Foods, Inc., 313 Iron Horse Way, Providence, Rhode Island 02908. The address for the Employee Stock Ownership Trust is c/o Robert G. Huckins, Trustee, 19404 Camino Del Aguila, Escondido, California 92025. The address for FMR LLC is 82 Devonshire Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02109. The address for Jennison Associates LLC is 466 Lexington Avenue, 18th Floor, New York, New York 10017.

(2)

The number of shares of common stock beneficially owned by each stockholder is determined under SEC rules, and the information is not necessarily indicative of beneficial ownership for any other purpose. Under such rules, beneficial ownership includes any shares as to which the individual has sole or shared voting power or investment power and also any shares which the individual has the right to acquire within 60 days after November 17, 2009 through the exercise of any stock option or other right. The inclusion herein of such shares, however, does not constitute an admission that the named stockholder is a direct or indirect beneficial owner of such shares. Unless otherwise indicated, each person or entity named in the table has sole voting power and investment power (or shares such power with his or her spouse) with respect to all shares of common stock listed as owned by such person or entity.

- (3) The Employee Stock Ownership Trust ("ESOT") disclaims beneficial ownership of the allocated shares of common stock in the ESOP to the extent that the beneficial ownership of such shares is attributable to participants in the ESOP.
- Includes 123,375 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options and 49,364 shares of common stock held in trust by the ESOT and allocated to Mr. Atwood under the ESOP.

(5)

(4)

Includes 104,675 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options and 1,504 shares of common stock held in trust by the ESOT and allocated to Mr. Funk under the ESOP.

(6)

Includes 113,626 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options and 30,000 shares held by the Thomas B. Simone and Shirley A. Simone 1990 Family Trust Agreement, as amended April 7, 1998, of which Mr. Simone and his wife are co-trustees.

(7)

- Includes 64,966 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options.
- Includes 44,826 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options.

(9)

(8)

Includes 27, 500 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options, 1,721 shares of common stock allocated to Mr. Shamber under the 401(k) Plan's Stock Fund, and 1,748 shares of common stock held in trust by the ESOT and allocated to Mr. Shamber under the ESOP.

(10)

Includes 22,750 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options, 7,117 shares of common stock allocated to Mr. Beaudry under the 401(k) Plan's Stock Fund, and 3,569 shares of common stock held in trust by the ESOT and allocated to Mr. Beaudry under the ESOP.

(11)

Includes 7,500 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options and 5,260 shares of common stock held by, or as custodian for, his children.

(12)

Includes 24,826 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options and 2,000 shares of common stock held for the benefit of Mr. Cianciolo in an individual retirement account.

(13)

Includes 19,826 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options.

(14)

Includes 10,206 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options.

(15)

Includes 3,500 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options and 186 shares of common stock held in trust by the ESOT and allocated to Mr. Stern under the ESOP.

(16)

Includes 619,826 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options, 15,258 shares of common stock allocated to executive officers under the 401(k) Plan's Stock Fund, and 60,976 shares of common stock held in trust by the ESOT and allocated to executive officers under the ESOP.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

We are committed to maintaining strong corporate governance practices and principles. We have closely monitored the recent developments relating to the corporate governance of public corporations and our Board of Directors has consulted with our legal counsel and independent registered public accounting firm to evaluate our current corporate governance and other practices in light of these developments. Our policies and practices reflect corporate governance initiatives that are compliant with the requirements of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, SEC rules and regulations and the listing standards of the NASDAQ Stock Market ("NASDAQ"). For example:

The Board of Directors has adopted clear corporate governance principles, which were revised in August 2008, that outline the roles and responsibilities of the Board and Board committees and establish policies regarding governance matters such as Board meetings and communications, performance evaluations of the Board and our Chief Executive Officer, stock ownership guidelines, and director orientation and continuing education;

A majority of the members of our Board of Directors are independent, and the Board makes an affirmative determination regarding the independence of each director annually;

All members of the key Board committees the Audit Committee, the Compensation Committee and the Nominating and Governance Committee are independent;

The independent members of the Board of Directors meet regularly without the presence of management;

We have designated an independent director to serve as our "Lead Independent Director" to coordinate the activities of the other independent members of our Board of Directors;

We have a clear code of business conduct and ethics that applies to our principal executive officers and all members of our finance department, including our principal financial officer and principal accounting officer;

The charters of the committees of the Board of Directors clearly establish their respective roles and responsibilities; and

The Audit Committee has procedures in place for the anonymous submission of employee complaints on accounting, internal controls or auditing matters.

In addition, our corporate governance principles limit our independent directors to serving on no more than a total of four public company boards and limit our executive officers to serving on no more than a total of two public company boards, in each case, including our Board. Directors and executive officers must notify the Nominating and Governance Committee in advance of accepting an invitation to serve on another corporate board. Directors are also required to notify the Nominating and Governance Committee when their principal occupation or business association changes, at which point the committee will evaluate the propriety of continued Board service.

As discussed under "PROPOSAL 1 ELECTION OF DIRECTORS Majority Vote Standard for Election of Directors," in September 2007, we amended our Bylaws to provide for a majority voting standard for uncontested elections of directors and our Board of Directors approved amendments to the Nominating and Governance Committee's charter to implement the majority voting standard for directors. The amendments to the Nominating and Governance Committee's charter establish the procedures for the Nominating and Governance Committee's charter to resign from the Board if that nominee does not receive more votes cast "FOR" his or her election.

We maintain a corporate governance page on our website that includes key information about our corporate governance initiatives. The corporate governance page can be found at *www.unfi.com*, by

clicking on "Investors" and then on "Corporate Governance." Copies of our corporate governance principles, the charters for each of our Board committees and the charter of the Lead Independent Director can be found on the corporate governance page of our website.

Please note that information contained on our website is not incorporated by reference in this proxy statement or considered to be part of this document.

Director Independence

Our Board of Directors has determined that a majority of the members of our Board are "*independent directors*," as defined in rules governing the listing of our common stock on NASDAQ. For a director to be considered independent, the Board must affirmatively determine that the director has no relationship that would interfere with the exercise of independent judgment in carrying out the responsibilities of a director. To facilitate this determination, annually each director completes a questionnaire that provides information about relationships that might affect the determination of independence, which questionnaires are reviewed by our Nominating and Governance Committee. The Board, upon the recommendations of the Nominating and Governance Committee, has determined that our independent directors are Mr. Barker, Mr. Cianciolo, Ms. Graham, Mr. Heffernan, Mr. Roy and Mr. Simone.

All members of the Audit, Compensation and Nominating and Governance Committees of our Board must be independent directors under NASDAQ listing standards and, with respect to Audit Committee members, Section 10A of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "*Exchange Act*"), and the SEC's rules thereunder. In addition, the charter of the Finance Committee of our Board of Directors requires that Committee to consist of not less than two independent directors. Each member of the Compensation Committee and each independent director on the Finance Committee must also be both a "non-employee director" within the meaning of Rule 16b-3 under the Exchange Act and an "outside director" within the meaning of Section 162(m) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended (the "*Code*"), in accordance with that committee's charter.

Lead Independent Director

The Board has created the position of Lead Independent Director. In accordance with the Lead Independent Director's charter, adopted by the Board in September 2008, the Lead Independent Director must be an independent director, and is responsible for coordinating the activities of the other independent directors and for performing such other duties and responsibilities as the Board may determine from time to time, including:

Serving as a liaison between the Chair of the Board, independent directors, and the President and Chief Executive Officer;

Leading the annual performance reviews of the Chair of the Board and the President and Chief Executive Officer, and leading the full Board in an annual review of the performance and effectiveness of the Board and its committees;

Recommending to the Board the membership of the various Board committees, and recommending to the Chair of the Board the retention of advisers and consultants who report directly to the Board;

Advising the Chair of the Board as to an appropriate schedule of and agenda for Board meetings and ensuring the Board's input into the agenda for Board meetings;

Advising the President and Chief Executive Officer as to the quality, quantity, and timeliness of the information submitted by the Company's management that is necessary or appropriate for the independent directors to effectively and responsibly perform their duties;

Assisting the Board, the Nominating and Governance Committee, and our officers in better ensuring compliance with and implementation of our corporate governance principles; and

Serving as the Chair for executive sessions of the Board's independent directors and acting as Chair of the Board's regular and special meetings when the Chair is unable to preside.

A complete description of the duties of the Lead Independent Director is included in the charter of the Lead Independent Director, a copy of which can be found in the corporate governance section of our website at *www.unfi.com*.

Committees of the Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors currently has four standing committees: the Compensation Committee, the Audit Committee, the Nominating and Governance Committee and the Finance Committee. Committee members and chairs are recommended to the Board by the Nominating and Governance Committee and appointed by the full Board. In addition to the individuals indentified as committee members below, the Lead Director is an ex-officio member of each of the committees described below.

Compensation Committee. The Compensation Committee establishes or approves all policies and procedures related to our human resources function, including employee compensation, incentive programs, our 401(k) plan, and administers our stock incentive plans, including the 2002 Stock Incentive Plan and the 2004 Equity Incentive Plan. Additionally, this committee evaluates and establishes the compensation of our executive officers whose compensation is described below in the Summary Compensation Table, including our Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer. The Compensation Committee also reviews the compensation of the other members of our senior management team and recommends to our Board of Directors the compensation for our non-employee directors. The Compensation Committee receives recommendations from the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Human Resources Officer in connection with its determinations concerning executive compensation. Additionally, the Compensation Committee from time to time has engaged outside compensation consultants to provide the committee with additional assistance when analyzing and setting the compensation of our executive officers, including peer group analysis, compensation structure and other assistance. The Compensation Committee did not engage a compensation consultant to provide this assistance during the 2009 fiscal year. The Compensation Committee also approves our annual compensation discussion and analysis included in this proxy statement.

The agenda for meetings of the Compensation Committee is determined by its chairman with the assistance of our Chief Executive Officer, Secretary, Chief Human Resources Officer, General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer. Compensation Committee meetings are regularly attended by the Chairman of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, the General Counsel and the Chief Human Resources Officer. At certain meetings during fiscal 2009, the Compensation Committee met in executive session. The Compensation Committee's chairman reports the committee's recommendations on executive compensation to the Board of Directors. Independent advisors and the Company's finance, human resources, benefits and legal departments support the Compensation Committee in its duties and may be delegated authority to fulfill certain administrative duties regarding the compensation programs. The Compensation Committee has authority under the Compensation Committee Charter to retain, approve fees for and terminate advisors, consultants and agents as it deems necessary to assist in the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

The Compensation Committee's charter is available on our website, *www.unfi.com*. The Compensation Committee held six meetings during fiscal 2009. The current members of the Compensation Committee are Ms. Graham and Messrs. Barker, Heffernan, and Roy, each of whom is an independent director.

Audit Committee. The Board of Directors has an Audit Committee that is a separately-designated standing audit committee established in accordance with Section 3(a)(58)(A) of the Exchange Act. The Audit Committee is responsible for monitoring the integrity of our financial reporting process and systems of internal controls regarding finance, accounting, and legal compliance; monitoring the independence of our independent registered public accounting firm; and monitoring the performance of our independent registered public accounting firm, management and our internal audit department. Among the Audit Committee's duties are to review the results and scope of the audit and other services provided by our independent registered public accounting firm. The Audit Committee's charter is available on our website, *www.unfi.com.* The Audit Committee held eight meetings during fiscal 2009. The current members of the Audit Committee are Ms. Graham and Messrs. Barker, Cianciolo and Heffernan, each of whom is an independent director. The Board of Directors has determined that Messrs. Barker, Cianciolo and Heffernan are each an audit committee financial expert, as defined by the rules and regulations of the SEC.

Nominating and Governance Committee. The Nominating and Governance Committee is responsible for developing, reviewing and recommending to the Board for adoption our corporate governance principles; identifying and nominating candidates for election to the Board; assessing and making recommendations to the Board regarding the size and composition of the Board and the size, composition, scope of authority, responsibilities and reporting obligations of each Board committee; and assisting the Board in conducting performance reviews of the Board and its committees and members. For additional information regarding the director nomination process undertaken by the Nominating and Governance Committee, please refer to "Nomination of Directors" beginning on page 17. The Nominating and Governance Committee's charter is available on our website, *www.unfi.com*. The Nominating and Governance Committee held four meetings during fiscal 2009. The current members of the Nominating and Governance Committee are Messrs. Barker, Cianciolo and Simone and Ms. Graham, each of whom is an independent director.

Finance Committee. The Finance Committee is responsible for overseeing, reviewing and making recommendations about our financial affairs and policies and evaluating merger and acquisition transactions and investment and financing transactions proposed by our management. The Finance Committee did not hold any meetings during fiscal 2009. The current members of the Finance Committee are Messrs. Cianciolo, Funk, Heffernan, Roy and Simone, all of whom, other than Mr. Funk, are independent directors.

Board Meetings

During the fiscal year ended August 1, 2009, the Board of Directors met eight times and following each of the Board meetings, the independent directors met in executive session without the presence of management (in each case, including by telephone conference). All directors attended at least 75% of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of the committees on which they served. We encourage each member of the Board to attend our annual meetings of stockholders. All of our directors attended last year's annual meeting either in person or by webcast.



PROPOSAL 1 ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Directors and Nominees for Director

We have a classified Board of Directors currently consisting of two Class I directors (Joseph M. Cianciolo and Peter Roy), three Class II directors (Gordon D. Barker, Gail A. Graham and Thomas B. Simone), and three Class III directors (Michael S. Funk, James P. Heffernan and Steven L. Spinner). The term of our Class I directors will expire at the Annual Meeting of Stockholders, unless elected to a new three-year term by our stockholders, in which case the directors will serve until the annual meeting of stockholders to be held in 2013, and until their successors are elected and qualified. Our Class II directors will serve until the annual meeting of stockholders to be held in 2011 and 2012, respectively, and until their respective successors are elected and qualified. At each annual meeting of stockholders, directors are elected for a full term of three years to succeed those whose terms are expiring.

The persons named in the enclosed proxy will vote to elect Joseph M. Cianciolo and Peter Roy as Class I directors, unless your proxy is marked otherwise or unless you hold shares in "street name" and fail to instruct your broker or nominee how to vote your shares. Messrs. Cianciolo and Roy are currently Class I directors.

The Class I directors will be elected to hold office until the annual meeting of stockholders to be held in 2013 and until their successors are elected and qualified. Each nominee has indicated his or her willingness to serve, if elected. If any nominee should be unable to serve, the person acting under the proxy may vote the proxy for a substitute nominee. We have no reason to believe any of the nominees will be unable to serve if elected.

For each member of the Board of Directors, including the nominees for election as Class I directors, there follows information given by each concerning his or her principal occupation and business experience for the past five years, the names of other publicly held companies for which he or she serves as a director and his or her age and length of service as a director:

Class/Name		Position		
Class I:				
Joseph M. Cianciolo(1)(2)(4)		Director and Chair of the Audit Committee		
Peter $Roy(3)(4)$		Director		
Class II:				
Gordon D. Barker(1)(2)(3)		Director and Chair of the Compensation Committee		
Gail A. Graham(1)(2)(3)		Director		
Thomas B. Simone(2)(4)	67	Vice Chair of the Board, Lead Independent Director and Chair of the Nominating		
		and Governance Committee		
Class III:				
Michael S. Funk(4)		Chair of the Board		
James P. Heffernan(1)(3)(4)		Director and Chair of the Finance Committee		
Steven L. Spinner		President, Chief Executive Officer and Director		

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Member of the Audit Committee.

(2)

Member of the Nominating and Governance Committee.

(3) (4)

Member of the Compensation Committee.

Member of the Finance Committee.

Gordon D. Barker has served as a member of our Board of Directors since September 1999. Mr. Barker serves as the Chair of the Compensation Committee and as a member of the Audit Committee and the Nominating and Governance Committee. Mr. Barker served as a contract Chief Executive Officer for QVL Pharmacy Holdings, Inc., a privately-held entity, from October 2004 until February 2007. Mr. Barker has served as President of Barker Holdings, LLC since January 2004. Mr. Barker has served as the principal of Barker Enterprises, an investment and consultant firm, since January 1997.

Joseph M. Cianciolo has served as a member of our Board of Directors since September 1999. Mr. Cianciolo serves as Chair of the Audit Committee and as a member of the Finance Committee and the Nominating and Governance Committee. Mr. Cianciolo served as the Managing Partner of KPMG LLP's, Providence, Rhode Island office, from June 1990 until June 1999. Mr. Cianciolo also serves on the Board of Directors of Nortek, Inc. and Eagle Bulk Shipping, Inc. Mr. Cianciolo is a nominee to serve as a Class I director.

Michael S. Funk has served as Chair of the Board since September 2008, a position which he also held from January 2003 to December 2003, and has been a member of our Board of Directors since February 1996. Mr. Funk served as our President and Chief Executive Officer from October 2005 to September 2008. Mr. Funk serves as a member of the Finance Committee. Mr. Funk also served as Vice Chair of our Board of Directors from February 1996 until December 2002, as our Chief Executive Officer from December 1999 until December 2002 and as our President from October 1996 until December 1999. From its inception in July 1976 until April 2001, Mr. Funk served as President of Mountain People's Warehouse, Inc., one of our wholly-owned subsidiaries.

Gail A. Graham has served as a member of our Board of Directors since October 2002. Ms. Graham serves as a member of the Audit Committee, the Compensation Committee and the Nominating and Governance Committee. Ms. Graham has served as the General Manager of Mississippi Market Natural Foods Cooperative, a consumer owned and controlled cooperative in St. Paul, Minnesota, since October 1999. Ms. Graham served as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of Blooming Prairie Cooperative Warehouse from November 1994 until October 2002. Ms. Graham served as the Chair of the Board of Directors of Blooming Prairie Cooperative Warehouse from November 1998 until October 2000. Ms. Graham resigned from the Board of Directors of Blooming Prairie Cooperative Warehouse in October 2002, concurrent with our purchase of the cooperative and her appointment to our Board of Directors.

James P. Heffernan has served as a member of our Board of Directors since March 2000. Mr. Heffernan serves as Chair of the Finance Committee and as a member of the Audit Committee and the Compensation Committee. Mr. Heffernan has served as a Director for the New York Racing Association since November 1998. Mr. Heffernan has served as a Director of Solutia, Inc., since February 2008, and served as a member of the Board of Directors of Columbia Gas System, Inc. from January 1993 until November 2000.

Peter Roy has served as a member of our Board of Directors since June 2007. Mr. Roy is a member of the Compensation Committee and the Finance Committee. Mr. Roy is an entrepreneur and since 1999 has been a strategic advisor to North Castle Partners. In connection with his role as a strategic advisor to North Castle Partners, Mr. Roy served on the boards of Avalon Natural Products, Inc. and Naked Juice Company. Additionally, Mr. Roy currently serves on the board of directors of West Marine, Inc. From 1993 to 1998, Mr. Roy served as President of Whole Foods Market, Inc. and, for five years prior to that, served as President of that company's West Coast Region. Mr. Roy is a nominee to serve as a Class I director.

Thomas B. Simone has served as the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors since September 2008 and as Lead Independent Director since December 2003. Mr. Simone served as the Chair of the Board

of Directors from December 2005 to September 2008, as well as from December 1999 to December 2002, and as the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors from January 2003 to December 2005. He has been a member of the Board of Directors since October 1996. Mr. Simone is the Chair of the Nominating and Governance Committee and is a member of the Finance Committee. Mr. Simone has served as Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Simone & Associates, LLC and its predecessor company, each a natural and organic products and healthcare investment and consulting company, since April 1994.

Steven L. Spinner has served as our President and Chief Executive Officer and as a member of our Board of Directors since September 2008. Prior to joining us in September 2008, Mr. Spinner served as a director and as Chief Executive Officer of Performance Food Group Company ("*PFG*") from October 2006 to May 2008, when PFG was acquired by affiliates of The Blackstone Group and Wellspring Capital Management. Mr. Spinner previously had served as PFG's President and Chief Operating Officer beginning in May 2005. Mr. Spinner served as PFG's Senior Vice President and Chief Executive Officer Broadline Division from February 2002 to May 2005 and as PFG's Broadline Division President from August 2001 to February 2002.

For information relating to the shares of our common stock owned by each of our directors, see "Stock Ownership of Certain Beneficial Owners and Management."

Majority Vote Standard for Election of Directors.

Our bylaws require directors to be elected by a majority of the votes cast with respect to such director in uncontested elections (that is, the number of shares voted "for" a director must exceed the number of votes cast "against" that director). In a contested election (an election in which the number of nominees exceeds the number of directors to be elected), the standard for election of directors will be a plurality of the shares represented in person or by proxy at any such meeting and entitled to vote on the election of directors. If a nominee who is serving as a director is not elected at the annual meeting, under Delaware law the director would continue to serve on the Board as a "holdover director." However, under our bylaws, any director who fails to be elected must offer to tender his or her resignation to the Board. The Nominating and Governance Committee would then make a recommendation to the Board whether to accept or reject the resignation, or whether other action should be taken. The Board will act on the Nominating and Governance Committee's recommendation and publicly disclose its decision and the rationale behind it within 90 days from the date the election results are certified. The director who offers to tender his or her resignation will not participate in the Board's decision or the Nominating and Governance Committee's deliberations (if the director is a member of that committee). If a nominee who was not already serving as a director is not elected at the annual meeting, under Delaware law that nominee would not become a director and would not serve on the Board as a "holdover director." All nominees for election as directors at the Annual Meeting of Stockholders are currently serving on the Board.

Nomination of Directors

The Nominating and Governance Committee reviews the qualifications of every person recommended as a nominee to our Board of Directors to determine whether the recommended nominees are qualified to serve on the Board. The Nominating and Governance Committee has adopted qualitative standards by which it determines if nominees are qualified to serve on our Board. The Nominating and Governance Committee evaluates recommended nominees in accordance with the following criteria:

Personal characteristics. The Nominating and Governance Committee considers the personal characteristics of each nominee, including the nominee's integrity, accountability, ability to make informed judgments, financial literacy, professionalism and willingness to meaningfully contribute

to the Board (including by possessing the ability to communicate persuasively and address difficult issues). In addition, the Committee evaluates whether the nominee's previous experience reflects a willingness to establish and meet high standards of performance, both for him or herself and for others.

Core Competencies. The Nominating and Governance Committee considers whether the nominee's knowledge and experience would contribute to the Board's achievement of certain core competencies. The Committee believes that the Board, as a whole, should possess competencies in accounting and finance, business judgment, management best practices, crisis response, industry knowledge, leadership, strategy and vision.

Board Independence. The Nominating and Governance Committee considers whether the nominee would qualify as "independent" under SEC rules and NASDAQ listing standards.

Director Commitment. The Nominating and Governance Committee expects that each of our directors will prepare for and actively participate in Board and committee meetings, provide advice and counsel to our management, develop a broad knowledge of our business and industry and, with respect to an incumbent director, maintain the expertise that led the Committee to initially select the director as a nominee. The Committee evaluates each nominee on his or her ability to provide this level of commitment if elected to the Board.

Additional Considerations. Each nominee also is evaluated based on the overall needs of the Board and the diversity of experience he or she can bring to the Board, whether in terms of specialized knowledge, skills or expertise.

Following this evaluation, the Nominating and Governance Committee will make recommendations for membership on the Board of Directors and review such recommendations with the Board of Directors, which will decide whether to invite the candidate to be a nominee for election to the Board of Directors.

For a stockholder to submit a candidate for the consideration of the Nominating and Governance Committee, the stockholder must notify our corporate secretary. To make a recommendation for director nomination in advance of an annual meeting, a stockholder must notify our corporate secretary not less than 60 days nor more than 90 days prior to the date of the annual meeting; provided that in the event that less than 70 days notice or prior public disclosure of the date of the annual meeting is given or made, notice by the stockholder must be received not later than the close of business on the 10th day following the date on which such notice of the date of the meeting was mailed or such public disclosure was made, whichever occurs first. The notice to our corporate secretary must include the information specified in our bylaws, including the following: (a) as to each proposed nominee (i) the name, age, business address and, if known, residence address of each such nominee, (ii) the principal occupation or employment of each such nominee, (iii) the number of our shares which are beneficially owned by each such nominee, and (iv) any other information concerning the nominee that must be disclosed as to nominees in proxy solicitations pursuant to Regulation 14A under the Exchange Act (including such person's written consent to be named as a nominee and to serve as a director if elected); and (b) as to the stockholder giving the notice (i) the name and address, as they appear on our books, of such stockholder and (ii) the class and number of our shares which are beneficially owned by such stockholder. We may require any proposed nominee to furnish such other information as may be reasonably required by the Nominating and Governance Committee to determine the eligibility of such proposed nominee to serve as a member of the Board of Directors. The Nominating and Governance Committee evaluates nominees recommended by stockholders on the same basis as nominees recommended by any other sources.

Notices should be sent to:

Mr. Joseph J. Traficanti United Natural Foods, Inc. 313 Iron Horse Way Providence, RI 02908

Communication with the Board of Directors

Our stockholders may communicate directly with our Board of Directors. All communications should be in written form and directed to our corporate secretary at the following address:

Mr. Joseph J. Traficanti United Natural Foods, Inc. 313 Iron Horse Way Providence, RI 02908

Communications should be enclosed in a sealed envelope that prominently indicates that it is intended for the Board of Directors. Each communication intended for the Board of Directors and received by the corporate secretary that is related to our operation and is relevant to a specific director's service on the Board of Directors will be forwarded to the specified party following its clearance through normal review and appropriate security procedures.

Non-employee Director Compensation

Each year, our Board of Directors and the Compensation Committee of the Board review and determine compensation for our non-employee directors, in part, based on a review of the annual NACD Board Compensation survey. The Compensation Committee and our Board believe that compensation should fairly compensate non-employee directors for work required in a company of our size and scope and that compensation should align the non-employee directors' interests with the long-term interest of our stockholders. Our non-employee directors stock ownership guidelines, which are discussed in greater detail below, also are designed to align the interests of our non-employee directors with those of our stockholders. Employee directors do not receive any compensation for their Board service.

The components of our non-employee director compensation are cash fees and awards of stock options and, in recent years, shares of restricted stock units. Our Board of Directors and Compensation Committee determined, applicable for fiscal year 2008 and all subsequent fiscal years, that our non-employee directors' equity-based awards should consist of a mix of stock options and restricted stock units, rather than our previous historical mix of stock options and shares of restricted stock. The Board of Directors and the Compensation Committee determined that non-employee directors' equity-based awards should include restricted stock units, rather than shares of restricted stock, in order to ease the administrative burden on our associates responsible for administering our equity plans. The change was not intended to, and did not, increase or decrease the number of shares of our common stock covered by equity-based awards our non-employee directors are eligible to receive.

Fees

During fiscal year 2009, each non-employee director received \$2,200 for attendance at each meeting of the Board of Directors and \$1,100 for attendance at each telephonic meeting of the Board of Directors. Each member of the Compensation, Finance and Nominating and Governance Committees of the Board of Directors received \$1,100 for attendance at each meeting of the applicable committee. Members of the Audit Committee of the Board of Directors received \$1,700 for attendance at each meeting of the Audit Committee. Additionally, the Lead Independent Director received an

annual retainer of \$75,000, each other non-employee director received an annual retainer of \$30,000, the chairs of the Compensation, Finance and Nominating and Governance Committees each received an annual retainer of \$8,000, and the chair of the Audit Committee received an annual retainer of \$15,000. Each director was reimbursed for expenses incurred in connection with his or her attendance at meetings of the Board of Directors and its committees.

Stock Options and Restricted Stock Units

In the fiscal year ended August 1, 2009, our non-employee directors, other than our Lead Independent Director and our Chair of the Board, received an annual grant of (i) options to purchase 3,990 shares of common stock and (ii) 4,788 restricted stock units for their participation on the Board of Directors. One-third of the annual grant vested immediately, and the remaining two-thirds vest in equal annual installments over a two-year period from the date of grant. The options have an exercise price equal to the closing price of our common stock on NASDAQ on the grant date. The Lead Independent Director received an annual grant of (i) options to purchase 9,000 shares of common stock and (ii) 10,800 restricted stock units, with a vesting schedule and exercise price consistent with the grants to other non-employee directors. Our Chair of the Board received an annual grant during his tenure as the Company's President and Chief Executive Officer, and that award, which is the only equity-based award he received in fiscal 2009, is included in the table showing Grants of Plan-Based Awards in 2009 to Named Executive Officers.

Deferred Compensation

Our non-employee directors are eligible to participate in the United Natural Foods Deferred Compensation Plan and the United Natural Foods Deferred Stock Plan (collectively the "*Deferral Plans*"). The Deferral Plans are nonqualified deferred compensation plans which are administered by the Compensation Committee. Under the Deferred Stock Plan, which was frozen from new deferrals effective January 1, 2007, each non-employee director participant was eligible to defer between 0% and 100% of such director's compensation from restricted stock awards. Under the Deferred Compensation Plan, each non-employee director participant may elect to defer a minimum of \$1,000 and a maximum of 100% of the director fees earned by such participant in a calendar year. In addition, effective January 1, 2007, each non-employee director participant may elect to defer up to 100% of their share unit awards under the Deferred Compensation Plan. Four of our non-employee directors elected to participate in the Deferred Compensation Plan for fiscal 2009.

The Deferral Plans were established to provide participants with the opportunity to defer the receipt of all or a portion of their compensation, including grants of restricted stock, restricted stock units, and performance stock units. Under the Deferral Plans, only the payment of the compensation earned by each such participant is deferred and there is no deferral of the expense in our financial statements related to the participants' earnings; the Company records the related compensation expense in the year in which the compensation is earned by the participants.

For fiscal year 2009, participants' deferrals under the Deferred Compensation Plan earned interest at the overnight national five-year deposit rate, as reported by bankrate.com (as captured on the first and last business date of each calendar quarter and averaged) plus 3% for the period from August 3, 2008 through December 31, 2008. Effective January 1, 2009, participant's deferrals earned interest at the 5-year certificate of deposit annual yield taken from the Wall Street Journal Market Data Center credited and compounded quarterly (as captured on the first and last business date of each calendar quarter and averaged) plus 3%. The value of equity-based awards deferred under the Deferral Plans is based upon the performance of our common stock.

The following table summarizes the 2009 compensation provided to all persons who served as non-employee directors during our 2009 fiscal year.

				Change in	
				Pension	
				Value	
				and	
				Nonqualified	
	Fees Earned			Deferred	
	or Paid in	Stock Awards Option Awards Compensation			
Name	Cash (\$)(1)	(\$)(2)	(\$)(3)	Earnings (\$)(4)	Total(\$)
Gordon D. Barker	\$ 79,600	\$ 116,924			