

## Abundant training opportunities in 2018!

IOIA has added staff to increase capacity to deliver more 200 and 300 level training both in-person and by webinars. Work plans have been bolstered to diversify the types of trainings available and the work opportunities for inspectors. In 2018, IOIA is continuing the membership benefit for inspector members of one webinar annually at 50% off. This all adds up to more opportunities for affordable continuing education and in more formats. A key focus for 2018 is research into different types of platforms for self-directed learning to provide “training to go”.

What’s on the schedule so far?

- IOIA just completed the second fiber training ever. The first GOTS auditor training was coupled with SAI Training on Social Auditing in Charleston (see page 15).
- More in-person advanced and refresher training (see p. 3 for info about trainings in PA and VT).
- A growing roster of webinar trainings, which will include updated 200 level Feed Audit and Residue Sampling webinars. Also, in light of pressure from accreditors and the media on certifiers to do a better job with in/

out audits, IOIA is preparing to offer more in/out balance training for crop and processing. [Watch the schedule grow and check it often!](#)

- Grassfed dairy self-directed learning module is under development in collaboration with the American Grassfed Association to prepare organic dairy inspectors to conduct add-on grassfed verification. (p. 19)
- 200 level Biodiversity and Natural Resource Assessment training is under development, with the first one to be available in Ohio, working with OEFFA and a trainer team of Tony Fleming, Indiana, and JoAnn Baumgartner, Wild Farm Alliance. Long-term goals include in-person comprehensive training on the topic to be conducted primarily on farms and a webinar to incorporate video content. (p. 9 for more).
- The IOIA/OMRI webinar series is back, with Johanna Miranda presenting 200-level training to the NOP in all 3 scopes, plus COR Processing Inputs. (p. 2 schedule)
- Field Inspection Training planning is underway, to see **Training**, page 4



## Notes from the Chair

by Margaret Weigelt

Here in the upper American Midwest the migrant song birds and water fowl are noisily announcing spring. Though predictions of snow are still forecast, permission has been granted by the calendar to officially have ‘spring fever’. Chipping ice and directing surface water flow is part of the rites of spring, so we pull out our favorite muck boots and go play in the mud. Woohoo!

Hope you had a chance to read the 2017 Annual Report. Once again, IOIA ended the year in a strong financial position. To point, the bottom line on our balance sheet has increased approximately 48% in the past three years. With this strength comes the ability to respond to unexpected opportunities as well as the responsibility to make wise financial decisions going forward.

See **Notes**, page 4

**Welcome New Members****New Inspector Members:**

Eric Campbell, Michigan  
 Chris Elder, North Carolina  
 Andrew Everett, Florida  
 Anna Hanson, Colorado  
 Steven Hearn, South Carolina  
 Miles McEvoy, Washington  
 Yehuda Nestel, Ontario, Canada  
 Elizabeth O'Donnell, Wisconsin  
 Mark Osborne, Virginia  
 Amy Talarico, Georgia  
 Daniel Torres Nava, Mexico  
 Karlin Warner, Nebraska  
 Patrick Wiebusch, Oregon

**Returning Inspector Members:**

Juan Carlos Benitez Izurieta, Ecuador

**Supporting Individuals:**

Anne Bohl, Wisconsin  
 Karen Cahill, California  
 Don Erb, Pennsylvania  
 Pam Erb, Pennsylvania  
 Vizan Giri, California  
 Tom Morgan, Texas  
 Dana Savoie, Oregon  
 Susanne Stover, Oregon

**Supporting Business Members:**

Baystate Organic Certifiers, Massachusetts  
 Maryland Dept of Agriculture

**Certification Member:**

Kentucky Dept of Agriculture  
 Pro-Cert Organic Systems

**IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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*The Inspectors' Report* is the newsletter of International Organic Inspectors Association. IOIA is a 501 (c)(3) educational organization. *Our mission is to address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors, to provide quality inspector training and to promote integrity and consistency in the organic certification process.*

Editor: Diane Cooner [webgal\[at\]ioia.net](mailto:webgal[at]ioia.net)  
 Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.

**WEBINAR Training Schedule**

for details & to register go to: [www.ioia.net/schedule\\_list.html](http://www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html)

**Webinar Discount Note: All IOIA Inspector Members are eligible for 1 half-price webinar in 2018.**

**200 Level Webinar - May 9 & 16  
NOP & COR Crop In/Out Balances and Traceability**

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Pacific).  
 Two, 2.5 hour sessions.  
 Presenter: Monique Scholz

**250 Level Webinar - May 11  
Inspecting Bee Keeping Operations**

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Pacific).  
 One, 2.5 hour session.  
 Presenter: Monique Scholz

**200 Level Webinar - May 17  
IOIA/OMRI NOP Crop Input Materials**

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific).  
 One, 3 hour session.  
 Presenter: Johanna Mirenda

**300 Level Webinar - May 29, also June 1  
Client Procedures when Using Uncertified Handlers**

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific).  
 One, 3 hour session.  
 Presenter: Silke Fuchshofen

**200 Level Webinar - July 17 & 20  
Grower Group & Inspection Certification**

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Pacific).  
 Two, 2.5 hour sessions.  
 Presenter: IOIA Trainer Luis Brenes

**100 Level Webinar - July 31 & Aug 3  
Open Enrollment COR Crop Standards**

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific).  
 Two, 3 hour sessions.  
 Presenter: IOIA Trainer Lisa Pierce

**200 Level IOIA/OMRI Webinar - Aug 7  
NOP Livestock Input Materials**

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific).  
 One, 3 hour session.  
 Presenter: Johanna Mirenda

**300 Level Webinar - September 4  
Client Procedures when Using Uncertified Handlers**

See May 29 listing

**100 Level Webinar - Sept 18 & 21  
Open Enrollment NOP Processing Standards**

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific).  
 Two, 3 hour sessions.  
 Presenter: IOIA Trainer Luis Brenes

**100 Level Webinar - Sept 25 & Oct 2  
Open Enrollment IOIA/COTA COR Processing Standards**

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific).  
 Two, 3 hours sessions.  
 Presenter: IOIA Trainer Kelly Monaghan

**200 Level Webinar - October 18  
IOIA/OMRI Processing Input Materials**

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific).  
 One, 3 hour session.  
 Presenter: Johanna Mirenda

**200 Level Webinar - November 6  
IOIA/OMRI COR Processing and Handling Input Materials**

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific).  
 One, 3 hour session.  
 Presenter: Johanna Mirenda

**200 Level Webinar - December 3 & 5  
Livestock Feed Audits, Grazing and Non Grazing Season**

10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (Pacific).  
 Two, 2.5 hour sessions.  
 Presenters: Jonda Crosby and Nate Powell-Palm

**200 Level Webinar - December 4 & 11  
Processing - Audit Trail/Balance:**

**Processing In/Out Balances, Traceability & Recipe Verification**  
 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Pacific).  
 Two, 2 hour sessions.  
 Presenter: IOIA Trainer Kelly Monaghan

**Residue Sampling Webinar May 1 & 3  
Inspecting Bee Keeping Operations May 11****New Hardcopy Membership Directory Available**

Hard copies of the 2018 Membership Directories will be available soon. If you ordered a hard copy, you can expect it to arrive during April. If you didn't order a copy but would like to receive one, it is not too late to order (please call the IOIA office or email [ioia@ioia.net](mailto:ioia@ioia.net).) Hard copies are provided free to all supporting certification agency members. Other members may purchase them for \$15.

## *On-Site Training Schedule - full details and applications at [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net)*

### **IOIA/PCO Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Trainings, State College, Pennsylvania**

**Crop Course - April 9 -13      Livestock Course – April 16 – 20**

These basic trainings are full. IOIA and Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) will cosponsor these trainings at The Penn State Conference Center Hotel, State College, Pennsylvania.

### **IOIA/PCO Advanced/Refresher Training - April 14, 2018**

IOIA and Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) will cosponsor advanced/refresher training at the PCO offices in Spring Mills, near State College, Pennsylvania on April 14. This refresher course is open to working inspectors, reviewers, and other certification staff.

**Miles McEvoy**, former NOP Deputy Administrator, will cover –

- Evaluating integrity in the organic supply chain
- Investigations – evaluating residue test results, planning, collecting evidence
- Ports of entry – CBP, APHIS, and fumigation

**Garry Lean** of Ontario, IOIA lead trainer and experienced dairy inspector, will cover completing audits on dairy farms; plus opportunities for improvement based on NOP witness audits and the IOIA Peer Field Evaluation Program.

Agenda is under development and will be posted on the IOIA website.

PCO is a USDA-accredited certification agency that performs more than 600 organic inspections annually in Pennsylvania and surrounding states (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia). For more information about PCO, visit [www.paorganic.org](http://www.paorganic.org).

### **IOIA/UDAF Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings, Ogden, Utah**

**Crop Course – June 4-8      Processing Course – June 11-15**

IOIA and Utah Department of Agriculture and Food will cosponsor basic Crop and Processing trainings. Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing.

### **IOIA/VOF Crop and Livestock Inspection Trainings, South Burlington, Vermont**

**Crop Course – September 10-14      Livestock Course – September 17-21**

IOIA and Vermont Organic Farmers will cosponsor basic Crop and Livestock trainings. Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing.

### **IOIA/VOF Advanced Organic Inspector Training, Vermont - September 15**

Agenda is under development. Watch the IOIA website for details to register.

### **IOIA Crop and Processing Inspection Training, Farmington, Minnesota**

**Crop Course – October 29-November 1      Processing Course – November 5-9**

IOIA will cosponsor basic Crop and Processing trainings. Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. Watch the IOIA website for details to register.

### **IOIA Training for Nepal – Finally!**

NEP.CERT and IOIA are cosponsoring International Organic Inspectors Training in Nepal April 10-14, 2018. The training is financially supported by UN-NATI Inclusive Growth Programme, a Project of the Denmark Government. It represents the culmination of years of work to bring IOIA training to Nepal by Maheswar Ghimire- IOIA inspector member, former IOIA BOD member, and current BOD member of NEP.CERT. Sixteen participants are registered. Lisa Pierce of British Columbia is the IOIA trainer and Maheswar will assist her. Nep.Cert has also requested support from certification agencies in the region for internships with senior inspectors to follow the in-person training. This is a requirement by the funder. These internships will improve long-term outcomes and enhance the chances that participants will be able to work as inspectors. Watch for a full report next issue!



**Maheswar and Margaret met up in India at the IFOAM OWC in November**

## Notes, from page 1

Following the 25th Anniversary 2017 AGM in Ottawa BOD members participated during retreat in a funds development session guided by Bruce Withrow, Meeting Facilitators International. From that session five growth goals were set to increase the number of IOIA supporting members. As a result of the planning session we established a new member category for certification agencies that includes staff inspectors – a good value utilized by number of certification agencies.

For 2017 we continued the 50% off discount for one IOIA webinar/year for inspector members, which is also part of the inspector member benefit package for 2018. Don't forget to use your discount! Ten of the thirteen webinar offerings we currently list on the website are 200-300 level sessions.

In 2017 new BOD member Chuck Mitchell from Ontario carried out his pilot program 'Ask the Inspector' with great success – where volunteer inspectors act as 30-second organic ambassadors to explain in simple terms the verification process. The BOD hopes to expand the program into the USA.

During the 2018 AGM fishbowl a related idea surfaced: Should we create a consumer membership category? The BOD intends to work on this idea.

At a second retreat session in 2017 the BOD examined the 5 stages of non-profit organizations. The BOD rated IOIA securely in Stage 4 - Produce & Sustain, with a firm grip on both Stage 3 - Grounding & Growing - and Stage 5 - Reviewing & Renewing. This proved valuable for identifying and strengthening weaknesses and for setting the stage for future targeted capacity building.

During the 2018 BOD retreat we continued the momentum from 2017 by identifying capacity building priorities. Once again the Charleston 'fishbowl discussions' showcased the collaborative wisdom of inspectors – one of the hallmarks of IOIA member culture. Our members' participatory engagement resulted in productive discussions that clarified and prioritized inspector/organic sector concerns for the BOD. Thank you!

With continued input we plan to build IOIA capacity now and into the future for addressing member's issues and concerns, for IOIA programming, promotion, policy and inspector benefits, for the IOIA Training Institute with an eye to finalizing an IOIA inspector accreditation system and to promote consistency and integrity in the organic certification process, for IOIA technology updates and inspector digital productivity apps, for expansion of our scholarship program, and for the support of the IOIA office, especially to our dedicated staff.

Congratulations to newly elected BOD members Lois Christie from California, Philippe Descamps from Costa Rica, and Ryan Sitler from North Carolina. Thank you!



## Training, from page 1

include in-person open-enrollment options in Kentucky for Crop and Livestock. IOIA is working to facilitate other ways to acquire formal apprenticeship, such as one-on-one with IOIA accredited mentors. This 100-level training it is a great way for working inspectors to sharpen their skills or for those who've been retired for a while to get their hinges oiled up to re-enter the inspector work force.

- In Australia, IOIA is working with NASAA as a partner to pilot a self-directed audit trail learning module.
- More member-initiated offerings are being encouraged. These include Silke Fuchshofen's *Client Procedures when Using Uncertified Handlers* webinars, Winery Inspection, and Maple Syrup Inspection. Organic Apiculture is the newest addition to this list of new topics.

### Independent Accountant's Report on Applying Agreed-Upon Procedures

Anderson Zurmuehlen & Co., PC, Certified Public Accountants & Business Advisors, of Billings, Montana performed an AUP on books, records and internal control policies of IOIA for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2016.

This procedure was conducted by the BOD and overseen by Treasurer Pam Sullivan to maintain fiscal oversight in accordance with the IOIA BOD Policy Handbook. Each year, the IOIA BOD determines if a financial review is needed and how extensive it will be.

The report, completed for the IOIA Board of Directors on January 16, 2018, enumerated the procedures performed and associated findings. This AUP procedure included an on-site visit to the IOIA office in December 2017.

## Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

There's a feeling in the air – and yes, although it is already spring as we publish this first issue of 2018, it isn't just spring that I'm feeling. This feeling has persisted since I participated in the NOP/ACA Training in San Antonio, Texas February 6-8. This annual event is hands-down one of my most important activities of the year. It helps me feel the pulse of the sector. There was a big group from Mexico. Even though this is an NOP-centric event, people from Canada, Australia, Europe, and Latin America always attend. IOIA is fortunate to be allowed to attend the NOP training, which is almost exclusively limited to certifiers. Though IOIA is not a certifier, we have been welcomed to participate for several years. Acting on member suggestions in Charleston, I will be taking action to see if IOIA can bring in other contract inspectors under our name in the future. Anyone can register to attend the ACA training, and it is a great bargain. Many inspectors do attend the NOP event, but they can come only under the banner of a certification agency. Contract inspectors are generally few and far between at both trainings.

One of the oddest feelings of the meeting is that of being a minority. At the ACA event, I'm always mindful that not all is cozy between inspectors and certifiers. The "us" and "them" is a real division, whether we are staff or contractors. Even though we are all on the same side, working toward a common goal, there is often an undercurrent of friction and tension between "us" - the inspectors - and "them" - the certifiers. That longstanding reality was why IOIA decided in 2010 to start hosting "IOIA Certifier-Inspector Dialogue" conference calls. Those regular conversations with certifiers provide us with essential direction and guidance on how IOIA can stay relevant and

collaborative, while forwarding the perspective and interests of inspectors.

The feeling in TX this year was a little grim. The discussion largely focused on organic integrity and organic fraud. We are finally unafraid to use the "fraud" word in the US. That's a good thing. OTA and ACA have both developed "Best Practices" over the past months and presented them. NOP is putting such a high profile on the organic import oversight issue that the work plan of the NOSB was affected, with fewer items on the table for the upcoming meeting in Tucson, AZ. Fortunately, everyone recognizes that **Inspector Qualifications** is a key issue in deterring fraud. The NOSB's Certification and Compliance Subcommittee has been tackling the topic of Inspector Qualifications in their work plan. IOIA will be in Arizona in April to comment on the NOSB's discussion document and to speak to the importance of rigorous inspector qualifications and credentialing. Fortunately, IOIA already had considerable input into the NOSB's document. I was involved in an ACA Working Group on the topic. That group decided to use the work that IOIA had done for NOP in 2011 as a starting point. Our work was completed shortly after the TX meeting, with the publication of "Guidance on Organic Inspector Qualifications". The NOSB chose to do the same. IOIA can be proud that our work became the basis for major work in our sector regarding inspector qualifications.

Bringing information from the NOP/ACA training to inspectors is one of my goals for attending. Lars Crail, NOP, brought the information directly to participants at the Charleston meetings. Presentations from the NOP/ACA meeting are now posted on the NOP website, accessible to all.



**The Pineapple Fountain is a focal point of the Charleston Waterfront Park. Pineapple motifs are common in Charleston and represent hospitality.**

IOIA is providing other advanced/ refresher training opportunities on these issues (April 14, PA). Please see the articles in this issue with info on how to be more alert to fraud, especially regarding imports, and contamination via fumigation at the border. We will also be offering more webinar training opportunities on in/out balance, as this is consistently identified by the NOP as a weak area for both certifiers and inspectors.

IOIA is committed to providing you with the tools that you need to do good inspections!

An Interview with the ED aired nationally on PRX.org (Public Radio Exchange), on FoodSleuth Radio with host Melinda Hemmelgarn.  
<https://beta.prx.org/stories/235382>

## SECTOR NEWS

### USDA withdraws OLPP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has withdrawn the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) final rule scheduled to become effective May 13.

The week before the announcement, on March 8, The Organic Trade Association (OTA) requested that oral arguments be heard on its lawsuit against USDA over the Department's failure to put into effect the new organic livestock standards. The case is gaining significant momentum and more organic businesses and stakeholders are taking action to speak out in support of the lawsuit. OTA is amending its complaint to challenge USDA's latest attempt to kill a rule that has been fully vetted over a decade. USDA received approximately 72,000 comments with an overwhelming majority supporting OLPP, and approximately 50 comments supporting the withdrawal--yet another clear disregard of the record by USDA in what is now the sixth regulatory action attempting to kill this final rule by the Administration.

*OTA Newsflash, 3/15/2018*

### OMRI List now over 6000

OMRI has grown to include over 6,000 products OMRI Listed® for organic use. For thousands of organic farmers and processors around the world who rely on OMRI every day, more OMRI Listed products means a streamlined certification process and more time to focus on producing healthful, nutritious food.

*OMRI eNews, March 2018*



### Spring NOSB Meeting

The Spring 2018 National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting will be April 25-27 at the Tucson University Park Hotel in Tucson, Arizona. The tentative [Meeting Agenda](#) has been posted on the AMS site, and the public comment period is open.

OTA has a comprehensive web page of the issues [on their site](#).

Written comments to NOSB are due no later than by midnight Eastern April 4. Interested parties can [register](#) by April 4 to provide oral comments during the pre-meeting webinars April 17 and 19 from 1-4 p.m. Eastern, or sign up to provide oral comments in person at the meeting. This meeting will include the review of 46 National List inputs under the 2020 Sunset Review.

Feedback given to NOSB this spring will help shape their vote during the fall 2018 meeting on whether to renew the allowance of several critical organic production and handling inputs.

### As dairy industry tanks, farmer suicides rise

New York is the nation's third-largest milk-producing state, and each year dairy sales represent roughly half of all farm sales. So the industry's economic drought, now entering its fourth year, has taken an emotional, as well as financial, toll. "The situation has become so grim," writes Corey Kilgannon, "that [NY FarmNet](#), a leading farm support group, has started running suicide prevention training for local agricultural service providers and lenders who deal with dairy farmers."

*The New York Times, 3/19/2018*

### 2017 was the most successful year for U.S. organic exports on record, with products worth \$565 million exported to 87 countries around the world.

On the other hand, the U.S. imported nearly \$2 billion worth of organic products from 94 countries to fulfill consumer demand. With that much product moving over that many international borders, maintaining organic integrity is of paramount concern to the industry. This dynamic has resulted in a multi-layered approach to fraud prevention pertaining to supply chain integrity that will be a primary concern for those in the organic industry from now forward.

*OTA Newsflash 3/15/2018*

### IFOAM names new ED

IFOAM - Organic International has selected Louise Luttkholt as its next executive director. Luttkholt follows Markus Arbenz in this position, who served IFOAM for 9 years.

Raised on a small family farm in the Netherlands, Louise has extensive experience in organic agriculture, fair trade and development cooperation at a strategic, management and regulatory level. Active in the organic movement for over 25 years, she has served as the Director of HELVETAS Germany and Senior Advisor for Sustainable Agriculture at HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation since 2014. She will take on her new responsibilities on July 1.

### IATP Farm Bill Portal

[A really great resource to learn about the Farm Bill](#) – an in-depth look at how it has been used for the past 20 years.

## SECTOR NEWS

### More than 5,000 facilities certified to GOTS

The number of facilities certified to the [Global Organic Textile Standard](#) (GOTS) grew 8.2 percent from 2016 to reach 5,024 facilities in 2017 in 62 countries around the world.

Countries and regions experiencing the largest increase in GOTS certification in 2017 were Bangladesh (up 40 percent), North America (up 39 percent), Portugal (up 39 percent), and Europe (up 29%).

The top ten countries in terms of total certified facilities are:

- India (1,658)
- Bangladesh (534)
- Germany (480)
- Turkey (445)
- Italy (307)
- China (292)
- Pakistan (194)
- Portugal (180)
- United States (99)
- South Korea (69)

In 2017, the 19 GOTS accredited independent Certification Bodies reported more than 1.74 million people work in GOTS certified facilities. GOTS

was developed by leading international standard setters--the Organic Trade Association (U.S.), Japan Organic Cotton Association, International Association Natural Textile Industry (Germany), and Soil Association (UK)--to define global-

ly recognized requirements that ensure the organic status of textiles. GOTS is a non-profit organization.

OTA Newsflash, 3/15/2018

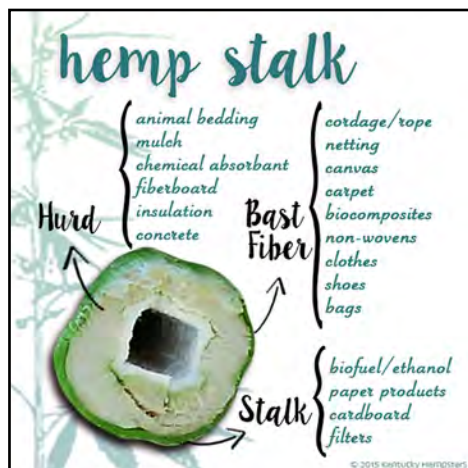
### Hemp's Moment Arrives

On March 27, US Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell previewed legislation seeking to free the plant from its ties to marijuana and let it take root as a legitimate crop.

Hemp – marijuana’s non-intoxicating cousin – would be removed from the controlled substances list under the bill. The result would legalize hemp as an agricultural commodity.

The crop has been grown on an experimental basis in a number of states in recent years, and Kentucky (McConnell’s state) has been at the forefront of hemp’s comeback. Kentucky agriculture officials have approved more than 12,000 acres to be grown in the state this year, and 57 Kentucky processors are helping turn the raw product into a multitude of products.

Growing hemp without a federal permit has long been banned owing to its classification as a controlled substance related to marijuana. Hemp and marijuana are the same species, but hemp has a negligible amount of THC, the psychoactive compound that gives marijuana users a high.



Hemp got a limited reprieve with the 2014 federal Farm Bill. McConnell helped push for the provision that allows state agriculture departments to designate hemp projects for research and development.

Since then, 34 states have authorized hemp research, while actual

production occurred in 19 states last year, said Eric Steenstra, president of the advocacy group Vote Hemp. Hemp production totaled about 25,500 acres in 2017, more than double the 2016 output, he said.

The crop, which once thrived in Kentucky, was historically used for rope, clothing, and mulch from the fiber, hemp milk and cooking oil from the seeds, and soap and lotions. Other uses include building materials, animal bedding, and biofuels.

Hemp advocates have fought for years to restore the crop’s legitimacy. “This is a huge development for the hemp industry,” Mr. Steenstra said. “Sen. McConnell’s support is critical to helping us move hemp from research and pilot programs to full commercial production.”

McConnell acknowledged there was “some queasiness” about hemp in 2014 when federal lawmakers cleared the way for states to regulate it for research and pilot programs. There’s much broader understanding now that hemp is a “totally different” plant than its cousin, he said.

Brian Furnish, an eighth-generation tobacco farmer in Kentucky, has taken the plunge into hemp production. His family will grow about 300 acres of hemp this year in Harrison County. He’s also part owner of a company that turns hemp into food, fiber, and dietary supplements. Furnish said hemp has the potential to rival or surpass what tobacco production once meant to Kentucky.

Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles said he hopes for hemp’s legalization, saying it can “open the floodgates and we can see the true potential of this crop.”

Associated Press, March 27 2018

## Canada Organic News

The Organic Federation of Canada and the Organic Agriculture Center of Canada have presented their first issue of **Organic Science Canada, Science for Producers**, a magazine that describes in everyday language the 37 research activities performed under the Organic Science Cluster II.

March 2018 volume 1 offers 48 pages of articles on topics including field crops, horticulture crops, crop pests, livestock and value added.

Table of contents for first section include:

- Field Crops
- By Organic, for Organic: Farmers Help Breed Organic Varieties
- Organic Oats: New Cultivars for Grain Producers
- Can Reduced Tillage Work in Prairie Soil?
- Restoring yields? How Composted Manure is Rejuvenating Organic Soils
- Can Composted Manure Optimize Prairie Field Crops?
- Better Together: Nutrient Tracking, Green Manures and Biofertilizers for Organic Grain Production
- Is Phosphorus Limiting Prairie Organic Grain Production?

The magazine is a free pdf, available on the [OFC site](#)  
Available soon in French!

### Organic Federation of Canada General Meeting

Wednesday, April 4 2018, from 1:00 to 2:30 EST  
By teleconference, tollfree from anywhere in Canada  
<http://www.organicfederation.ca/>

### New link for filing a complaint on CFIA website

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has added a section to the website of the Canada Organic Regime COR Standards – [File a complaint](#).

**E-LEARNING CERTIFICATE COURSE**  
**ORGANIC VEGETABLE SEED PRODUCTION**  
WWW.COG.CA

- 22 weeks
- 5 courses
- \$1250 + taxes

April 9—November 2, 2018  
Register at [www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca)  
Early Bird Discounts Available

COG THE BAULITA FAMILY INITIATIVE ON CANADIAN SEED SECURITY USC CANADA How We Grow Our Food Matters

## Peer Field Evaluation Program Update

IOIA is contracting with 9 certification agencies to conduct field evaluations for about 50 inspectors in 2018. This is the fourth year for the program, as it continues to provide value to certifiers and to inspectors.

If you are an inspector and you are notified that you'll be evaluated by an IOIA evaluator, please see it as one of those unique learning opportunities with a colleague. Opportunities to watch each other doing an inspection are few and far between.

Changes underway this year will include a re-vamp of the Peer Field Evaluation checklist tool, which will no longer include numeric scores. Most certifiers preferred narrative comments to scores, and IOIA found it difficult to calibrate the scores among evaluators consistently.



**Beth Overs will be coordinating our Peer Evaluation program**



**Maria has accepted a position as Customer Certification Specialist at A Bee Organic.**

IOIA bids farewell to Maria DeVincenzo, who coordinated the Program for us for the past 3 years. At the same time, we welcome Beth Overs, of Ohio, who will be stepping in. Beth worked for Global Organic Alliance for 4.5 years as a certification coordinator, so she has lots of experience working with inspector schedules.

### Interested in becoming Accredited?

The next deadline is **October 1**.  
Available in three scopes (Crops, Livestock, Processing) for \$80. The cost for one scope is \$60 and \$70 for two.  
Renewals are every three years, and cost less.  
Successful applicants receive a certificate suitable for framing, a wallet sized replica laminated card, listings in the hard copy and on-line Membership Directory. They are also eligible to become IOIA peer field evaluators.



## Biodiversity and Natural Resource Assessment Training

Coming in August 2018

IOIA is excited to announce our collaboration with cosponsor Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) and conservation and biodiversity educators Tony Fleming (Indiana) and Jo Ann Baumgartner (Wild Farm Alliance) to offer a 200 Level In-Person Training: "Biodiversity and Natural Resource Assessment." The training will also feature other key experts from regional NRCS offices, universities, NGO's; and most importantly farmers who are actively engaged in improving biodiversity and natural resources on their farms. Our target audience includes inspectors, certification reviewers and inspection coordinators, NOP staff, NRCS technical service providers, and others. Our ideal course size will be limited to 15 participants to allow for in-depth discussion during the training.

The overall goal of the training is to show attendees that they need not be experts in plants, insects, animals, hydrology in order to effectively and efficiently inspect and certify to the NOP rule and guidance concerning natural resources and biodiversity. Instead, the training will focus on teaching the basic visual cues and best practices to use to effectively inspect for and verify conservation and biodiversity.

A central element of the hands-on training will involve evaluating and verifying the farm's OSP sections on biodiversity and natural resources. Participants will learn to identify key sensory indicators (visual, touch, smell, sounds) that can be used to efficiently and effectively assess the quality of natural resources/biodiversity, as well as how to communicate with farmers about their practices. We will include discussions on topics including "How to Have Conversations with Farmers about Native Plants and Wildlife", "How to Discuss Opportunities for Improvement with Farmers", and how to "Incorporate Your Observations Into your Inspection Findings".

The training will be a two-part exercise, starting with a relatively brief classroom introduction to the key natural resources and biodiversity topics, followed by a lengthier field visit to a farm(s) where participants gain hands-on experience assessing the management of biodiversity and natural resources. In this second part of the training, participants will be evaluating the farm's OSP sections on biodiversity and natural resources. They will learn to identify key sensory indicators that can be used for efficiently and effectively assessing natural resources/biodiversity, how to communicate with farmers about their practices, and resources they can share.

Additional Core elements of the Training Will Include:

- Overview of Biodiversity on Farms: What It Is and What It Isn't.
- History of Biodiversity in Organic Farming.
- Biodiversity and Organic System Plans and Inspection Reports.
- Inspecting for Soil and Water Quality and Conservation.
- Visual Cues for Soil Health.
- Visual Cues for Assessing Water Quality in Lakes, Streams, and Wetlands.
- Inspecting for and Visual Cues of Wildlife Biodiversity.
- Beneficial Insects and Habitat As a Barometer of and Proxy for Whole-Farm Biodiversity.
- Other Yardsticks/Barometers for Compliance and How Inspectors Versus Certification Reviewers Use this Information.
- Summary of Best Practices and Methodologies.
- Financial and Technical Assistance Programs for Organic Producers.
- Regionally Important Topics for Biodiversity on Organic Farms.

IOIA is in the planning stages of offering this training as a series of in-person regional trainings in additional ecoregions of the coterminous US, e.g., Pacific Northwest, California, Northern High Plains, Texas, Southern Plains, Great Lakes, New England, Southeast, Mid-Atlantic and the training may also be presented at a future IOIA Annual Meeting.

As an offshoot of this project, we intend to create an online self-directed learning module that inspectors can sign up for and complete at any time of the year. The training module would include video excerpts from the in-person classroom and field site trainings.

More info and registration for the Ohio Training with OEFFA will be available on IOIA's website by mid-May. If you have questions about the training in general please contact [Jonda Crosby](#). Or if your organization would like to sponsor one of the future trainings please contact IOIA ED [Margaret Scoles](#).

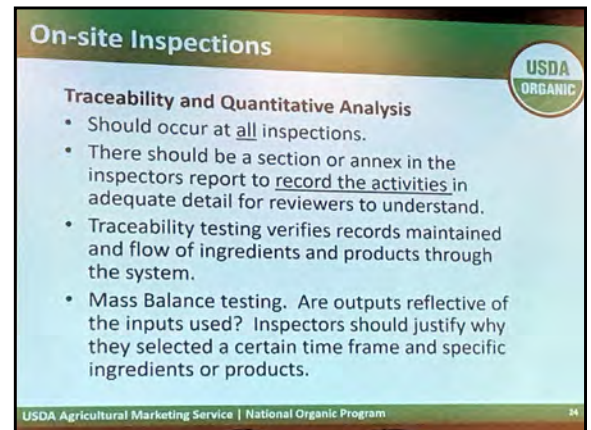


*"Seeds are a gift of nature, of past generations and diverse cultures. As such it is our inherent duty and responsibility to protect them and to pass them on to future generations. Seeds are the first link in the food chain, and the embodiment of biological and cultural diversity, and the repository of life's future evolution." -Int'l Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture*

## NOP Training Highlights - February 6 - San Antonio, Texas

Jenny Tucker, Associate Deputy Administrator of the NOP, opened with updates at this meeting, the first since Miles McEvoy, former Deputy Administrator, left the program. Underlying themes were integrity of the organic seal, enforcement, efficiency and customer service, and technology innovation.

- At 36 people, the NOP is fully staffed.
- Although there were hints that the new Deputy Administrator would be announced “very soon”, there has been no announcement as of 3/30/2018.
- The Organic Integrity Database is complete with release 7 in the fall of 2017. NOP seeks to improve the database by making it closer to real-time. They urged certifiers to report acreage data – only about 1/3 are currently doing so. Several certifiers have adopted the Federal Organic Certificate module.
- Organic is growing – more internationally than domestically – 41,217 certified operations total.
- 431 newly suspended/revoked between **February 2017 and February 2018** – representing about 1% of the certified population. Searchable list of fraudulent certificates available.
- Lars Crail, NOP Lead Auditor, spoke on Audit Priorities and what certifiers and inspectors can expect in accreditation audits in 2018.
- Betsy Rakola, Director of Compliance and Enforcement, NOP, addressed “Verifying Organic Imports”.
- Penelope Zuck, NOP Accreditation Manager, gave a “Pasture Rule Refresher”. A few sound and sensible take-aways:
  - Over-stating DMD exaggerates DMD from pasture.
  - It is essential to know the rations year around and it's required for recordkeeping.
  - Compare the DM fed when animals are temporarily confined to what they get on pasture.
- Rebecca Claypool, NOP Accreditation Manager, gave reminders related to Accreditation and International Activities.
- Jake Lewin discussed how CCOF used LUCI – the Livestock Unannounced Compliance Initiative - to verify that dairy cows were out on pasture as required by the regulations.



### NEW NOP Video Resource The Investigation: The Trail of Evidence

Interactive, scenario-based training program for organic certifiers, inspectors, and compliance professionals. The training follows an organic certifier's compliance and inspection staff as they investigate a complaint. Using a choose-your-own-adventure style video, the training demonstrates how to develop an investigative plan, conduct interviews, collect evidence, and construct a thorough investigative report.

Check it out at:

[The Investigation: The Trail of Evidence](#)

### Training Modules for Certifiers – 2018.

Available on the Training section of the NOP website. Those noted as “Germany only” were presented at BioFach in Germany in February, shortly after the Texas meeting.

[2018 Audit Priorities \(pdf\)](#)

[IA Reminders \(pdf\)](#)

[Appeals \(pdf\)](#)

[NOP Update \(pdf\)](#)

[Pasture Rule Refresher \(pdf\)](#)

[Reinstating Suspended Operations \(pdf\)](#)

[Verifying Organic Imports \(pdf\)](#)

[Adverse Actions Refresher \(Germany only\) \(pdf\)](#)

[Periodic Residue Testing \(Germany only\) \(pdf\)](#)

**CURSO BÁSICO INTERNACIONAL DE INSPECCIÓN DE FINCAS ORGÁNICAS**

ICAES, San José, Costa Rica - 22 al 26 de Enero del 2018

**Reseña Curso**

Eco-LOGICA

Del 22 al 26 de enero del 2018, realizamos el Curso Básico Internacional de Inspección de Fincas Orgánicas en Coronado de San José, Costa Rica.

Contamos con la participación de 23 personas de diferentes países, tales como México, Colombia, Estados Unidos, Panamá, Guatemala, y por supuesto de Costa Rica.



Esta diversidad de países, así como la relación a las áreas de trabajo de cada uno de los participantes, permitió que el curso se enriqueciera de muchas diversas experiencias.

Este curso ha sido impartido continuamente por Eco-LOGICA desde el año 2000, por lo que, nos complace mucho la respuesta positiva de los participantes en la región. Gracias por la confianza en IOIA y Eco-LOGICA.

**IOIA/QAI Basic Processing Inspection Training, Feb 5 - 9, San Diego, California**

by Luis Brenes



After a successful training in early 2017, QAI decided to organize another basic process inspection training in 2018.

This in house training included QAI staff from the San Diego office, food safety auditors from NSF and inspectors from Star K kosher scheme.

Field trips included a certified grain facility and a bakery (yes! a bakery!). Trainer Luis Brenes from Costa Rica was assisted by Katherine Withey during the field trips. Big thanks to Katherine for her great contribution as trip leader and for her passion about adult learning.

IOIA is grateful that QAI has chosen our organization again for their in house training and looks forward to keep the cooperation with QAI and other accredited certifiers in achieving integrity and consistency in the inspection process.

**IOIA/GCIA Basic Processing Inspection Training, March 5 - 9, Athens, Georgia**

Georgia Crop Improvement Association and IOIA cosponsored processing inspection training in Athens GA with 17 participants. Garry Lean, Ontario, and Corinne Kolm, Nebraska were the trainers. Amy Talarico, experienced inspector from the area, served as the third field trip group leader. All were evaluated very positively by the group, which included working inspectors adding the scope, potential inspectors, internal auditors working for certified organic operations, and certification staff.



## Hong Kong - Basic Organic Crop Inspection Trainings - January 8-12, 2018

by Luis Brenes

Back in Hong Kong again! Thanks to the Hong Kong Organic Resource Center HKORC and its director Dr. Jonathan Wong for the continued trust and support to the IOIA trainings.

With the incredibly valuable support of Lisa Pierce as co trainer, we were able to successfully conduct this training which included the farm tour to New Life Farm who has proven to be an excellent host to our field trips.

Special thanks to Thapanee and Liew, who flew from Thailand and Malaysia respectively, to be part of our excellent group of students.

Thanks again HKORC!

Luis Brenes  
Lead Trainer

This course has provided so much information that we were overwhelmed. With the interesting presentation given by the trainers, it makes the whole course so much easier to understand.

Thanks!  
Cass and Gabriel



## Organic aquaculture development in Hong Kong

by Lisa Pierce



**Oyster farmer at the Lau Fau Shan Fish Market**

*I live on the west coast of British Columbia; the land where protesters are currently staging a 'sit in' at a salmon farm and videos of untreated waste from fish processing facilities are circulating on social media. I am being driven to the airport in a car with bumper stickers that read 'Real fish do not do drugs' and 'Salmon are sacred'. Meanwhile, I am on my way to instruct an aquaculture workshop in Hong Kong...*

The acceptance and implementation of organic standards for aquaculture continues to be a controversial topic in the US and Canada, both in the general public, and within the organic community itself. In China, fish ponds have existed on farms for centuries. Fish are cultivated in rice paddies and in polyculture systems where some fish consume plankton and plant residues from crops. In these integrated systems, organic aquaculture seems like a natural extension to organic crop production. In fact, the HKORC organic standard (IFOAM accredited private standard in Hong Kong) currently includes crop, processing and, instead of livestock standards, standards for aquaculture production. HKORC Certification Limited has emerged as a leader in the certification of organic fish operations in Hong Kong. And, the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre (HKORC) has continued to collaborate with IOIA to co-sponsor organic aquaculture inspection workshops. The third IOIA/HKORC Introduction to Organic Aquaculture Inspection workshop was held January 13-14, 2018 at Hong Kong Baptist University in Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong. Participants included a

## Organic aquaculture development in Hong Kong

wonderful mix of HKORC staff, AFCD staff (Agriculture and Fisheries department in Hong Kong) and other persons keen to learn more about organic aquaculture inspections. This year our guest speaker on aquaculture systems in Hong Kong was Sara Stewart - Fisheries Officer (Mariculture Development) of AFCD. Sara spoke to our class of 15 about the Fish Accreditation Scheme (quality assurance and traceability) and aquaculture production in Hong Kong. Following a session on HKORC aquaculture standards, the participants were given case studies and focused on the identification and assessment of organic control points in marine systems.



**2018 Introduction to Organic Aquaculture Inspection (Hong Kong) – group photo taken at Lau Fau Shan Fish Market with Mainland China in the background**

The next morning I navigated the MTR system and met up with the class at Sheung Shui station. From there we boarded a bus to Yuen Long to the fish farm 'Nature's Manor'. Participants were once again given the task of assessing organic control points but this time in a pond system stocked with five different species of fish. On the way back, we went to the crowded Lau Fau Shan Fish Market that had an amazing assortment of seafood products including stalls of sun dried oysters - a special food for the upcoming Chinese New Year celebrations.



**Dried oysters at the Lau Fau Shan Fish Market**

**Certified organic fish for sale at the Farm Fest in Hong Kong January 14, 2018**  
**Soo Fish Farm was the field trip site for our previous aquaculture training.**

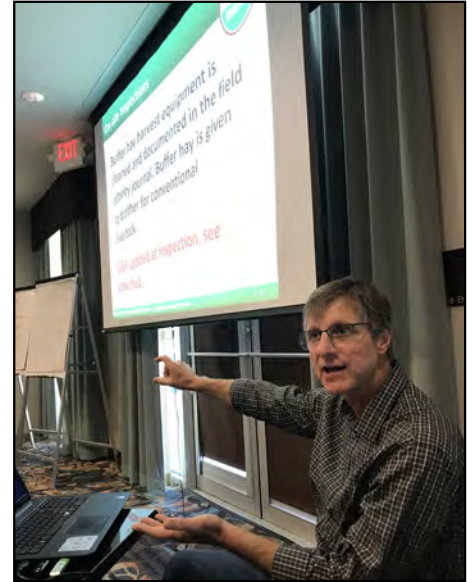
Many thanks again to a wonderful group and lots of gratitude for Chloe Kwan (Senior Certification Officer for Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre Certification Limited) for her tireless dedication to a successful training.  
*-by Lisa Pierce (Trainer and creator of IOIA introductory workshops on organic aquaculture inspection)*



## Advanced Training in Charleston, South Carolina

Lars Crail, NOP Lead Auditor and former inspector, rose to the tall order of speaking on three different topics. Inspectors were grateful for an opportunity to engage questions and ideas with someone from the NOP. Crail has also worked with IOIA as a member of the Peer Field Evaluation Committee, so he is closely in tune with IOIA's work on inspector credentialing and inspector qualifications. His topics were "International Trade Agreements", "Audit Priorities" on what the NOP is looking for on their accreditation audits including inspector protocols such as in/out balances; and "Verifying Organic Imports". All presentations have since been posted on the NOP Training link and are now available to all members. Crail emphasized the importance of rigorous in/out balances on all inspections, including the first year operations or those where no organic product was handled last year. For more information on the Import issue, see page 20.

Bob Durst, Food Technologist from Oregon, spoke on "Processing Ingredients updates, ag and non-ag tricky issues". He reviewed recent changes to 205.605 and 205.606 as well as what is underway in proposed changes, petitions, and what is happening with EPA list 4 inerts. Updating was dropped by EPA years ago and EPA Safer Chemical List is now a more appropriate list, but List 3 and 4 are still referenced in the NOP. NOP and EPA working to fix this issue. He also spoke on "Assessing Organic Control Points in the transition between organic and non-organic runs in split processing operations."



**Lars Crail, NOP Lead Auditor**

Brian Rakita, QCS Inspection Manager, contributed an excellent, salty, and practical "Organic Tobacco Inspection" presentation. This regional topic was recommended by the AGM Organizing Committee. There are 413 organic tobacco growers listed on the NOP website, of which 134 are in North Carolina, followed by VA, PA, KY, SC and others. He detailed production practices from starting seedlings through cultivation and harvest as flue cured (most common for organic) or burley tobacco. He explained the intricacies of calculating "tobacco acres" and estimating yields, and discussed common production problems and pests. Organic tobacco is sold as 100% organic rolling tobacco or MWO cigarettes.

Stuart McMillan gave a lively and eye-opening "Seeking the 2% - Inspector Perspective on Investigations & Fraud". His title was based on a statistic that about 2% of operations have serious noncompliances. Several participants



said this presentation really made them think. "If I'm not finding fraud or serious noncompliance at 1-2% of my inspections, maybe I'm missing it?"

Noteworthy successes of this training included: all speakers were also organic inspectors with specialized expertise so they knew their audience;

## Advanced Training in Charleston, South Carolina

fewer speakers and more time (long requested for IOIA advanced training); certifier perspective; drawing from the knowledge and the wisdom of the group; and more opportunity to ask questions (i.e. the fish bowl). It included regional topics but also topics of broad interest such as those brought by Lars Crail, while pulling in international experts who were at the training (Mutsumi Sakuyoshi on JAS; Janine Gibson on COR).



**What's a Fishbowl?** This was the first IOIA training to incorporate the “Fishbowl Conversation” concept; it was rated as very successful. Margaret Weigelt moderated the first one. Bob Durst, Pam Sullivan (wine inspection), and Margaret Scoles (pullulan) started out. There was one empty chair in the circle. When another participant wanted to



join, they took a seat and someone else had to leave. The only way to talk was to enter the fishbowl. This worked well because only one person could speak at a time, and others did a better job of focused listening. The concept worked so well that it was carried forward into the AGM for a stimulating and dynamic membership discussion. **We will do this again!**



**Training Team** Lori Wyman of GOTS, Angela Wartes-Kahl (OTCO), and Karlin Warner (OneCert) led **GOTS auditor training** on Feb 28-Mar 2. There were 12 participants for the full course. They were joined by a half-dozen others (inspectors and industry professionals) on February 28 for the GOTS standards day. The full course included pre-course assignment and reading, field trip to a cotton gin, report writing exercise during the class, and a final exam. Those with a goal of becoming GOTS auditors also completed a 2-day SAI Training on Social Auditing on May 4-5, which is mandatory for GOTS inspections.



A certifier/mentor/evaluator panel discussed opportunities for improvement they've noted in the inspectors they've evaluated, mentored, or overseen.

## 2018 Annual General Meeting - Charleston, South Carolina USA

Once again, IOIA members were able to enjoy another incredible event that included specialized trainings, the annual general membership meeting, new perspectives and opportunities.



Results of the elections at the Annual Meeting on March 3. Newly elected Board members are:

1. Lois Christie – California, USA
2. Philippe Descamps – Costa Rica
3. Ryan Sitler – North Carolina, USA

Thank you from IOIA to the outgoing BOD members for their dedication and service to IOIA – Stuart McMillan (6 years), Pam Sullivan (5 years), and Mutsumi Sakuyoshi (2 years).



**Keynote Leah Cohen of the Agricultural Justice Project, spoke on 'Whose Voice is Missing? The need for a cultural shift to achieve justice in the food system.'**

The Bylaws Proposed Revisions all passed, although a member wisely added to that vote a motion to have all changes reviewed by an attorney before posting the revised bylaws. That motion also passed.



**Fathiyyah Mustafa, Patti Bursten Deutsch and Stan Edwards. Fathiyyah and her son Shaheed Harris, SCF-Organic Farms, South Carolina were guest speakers at the AGM. Shaheed and Fathiyyah hosted IOIA's making of the Sound and Sensible video "What to Expect at an Organic Vegetable Farm Inspection", a 2015 IOIA project produced for the NOP.**



2018 Rutherford Scholarship recipient Debra Kiliru visits with board chair Margaret Anne Weigelt during a break at the AGM.



**Outgoing board - stayed still long enough to get this photo!**



## 2018 AGM Recap



**Thank you, Mutsumi!**

The Advanced, GOTS, and SAI Training on Social Auditing were all well attended and successful. On March 4, a group of 19 enjoyed a great day of cultural field trips.

The Board of Directors met for two days following the AGM events. One of their first agenda items was to reorganize the board. The officers they elected were:

- Margaret Anne Weigelt, Minnesota – Chair
- Chuck Mitchell, Ontario – Vice-Chair
- Heather Donald, Pennsylvania – Treasurer
- Lois Christie, California – Secretary
- Philippe Descamps, Costa Rica – Executive Committee Member at Large
- Ryan Sitler, North Carolina, Director
- Matt Miller, Iowa, Director

BOD liaisons to committees have been reassigned. Those of you who chair committees can look forward to receiving a message soon.



**Thank you, Stuart!**

We have confirmed the location of the next Annual Meeting – **Mexico!**

We celebrated with sombreros and maracas as table decorations, and some of us enjoyed shots of Lois's organic tequila. Tentatively, the date will be the **first weekend of March 2019** and the location will be the state of Oaxaca. A committee has organized and plans to propose a venue soon. The board now has three Spanish-speaking members, and the rest of us should start brushing up on any Spanish we have.

See you in a year!



**Thank you, Pam!**



**Los Tres Amigos! Board newbies Lois, Philippe and Ryan are already gearing up for the 2019 AGM in Mexico!**



**Stuart sits in with new board.**

**Thank you to the AGM Organizing Committee – Ryan Merck (SC), Ryan Sitler (NC), Justin Hurley (NC), Brian Rakita (VA), and Pam Sullivan (NH) for their assistance in pulling the events together.**

## 2018 Scholarship Winners

The Scholarship Committee annually reviews applicants for two IOIA Scholarships; two were awarded in 2018. Recipients receive free tuition to an IOIA Basic Organic Inspection Training.

### 2018 RUTHERFORD SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO DEBRA KILIRU, NORTH CAROLINA USA



Debra Kiliru's passion and respect for the land began as a child growing up in Kenya. Over the years, much of her personal and professional work has centered around environmental education, community wellness, social justice and access to nutritious, organic food. She is a cultural education facilitator and has provided numerous service-learning programs domestically as well as in Ghana & South Africa with an emphasis on agriculture. She is a permaculture designer, a founder of an organic market and co-founder of Youth P.L.A.N.T, a 3-8 Grade garden-based leadership program. She is a member of the Ghana Ecological Organic Platform and a consultant to the Global Ecovillage Network Ghana. Her research is focused on underutilized edible and medicinal plants in Africa, and exploring ways to ensure land restoration, farmer rights and enterprise capacity. She hopes to inspire young people to get excited about growing food and caring for our planet. She currently works in the public schools in western North Carolina, learning with children outdoors and supporting teachers to connect their curriculum to the natural world.

She plans on becoming a crop and processing Inspector so she can go deeper in her work as a farmer and social entrepreneur, and work along side creative people committed to increasing organic regenerative practices along the supply chain, both in the US and internationally.



### 2018 ORGANIC COMMUNITY INITIATIVE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO LUCIA TOLEDO, BOLIVIA

Lucia hails from Cochabamba, a hilly area with renowned good weather, and learned a lot about farming from her grandfather. She studied agriculture engineering and had a strong inclination to organic agriculture and agroforestry. She currently works for IMOCert Latin America as an office assistant and inspector. She has had the opportunity to participate in inspections to certificate herbs, coffee, and cocoa, and will be using the OCIS to continue expanding her knowledge in organic agriculture.

## Board Highlights, from page 21

not add employee benefit for 15% FTE or lower. Unanimously approved.

**2018 AGM:** Plans for the BOD Retreat were discussed. The value and role of a facilitator was considered. Accreditation, membership and succession planning are all topics that have been requiring in-person BOD attention.

**Report from the Ad Hoc BOD Human Resource Committee:** MAW described the activities of this committee. During the meeting with MS, they went through the ED Job Description line by line, took a lot of detail out that is now obsolete as there are more staff than when it was initially written. Pam put together a job posting for an executive director. This is all part of succession planning.

## Welcome New Staff - Sue Hall

Sue Hall is IOIA's new Webinar Support Specialist. She comes to IOIA with lots of webinar and administrative support experience. Sue jumped right into the position, bringing great organizing skills, enthusiasm and a positive attitude to aggressively grow the schedule of 200 and 300 webinars.

Sue currently resides in northwest Louisiana with her husband and their son and has a daughter who lives in Broadus, Montana, where the IOIA office is located. Sue is also the owner of a business called Slender Suzie where she is passionate about teaching others the importance of eating organic foods and living a healthy lifestyle. In her spare time she enjoys working out at the gym, hunting, fishing and spending time with family and friends.

IOIA is happy to have Sue on our team!!



## IOIA & AGA Partner Up

IOIA will be partnering with **American Grassfed Association** to train inspectors for the newly released AGA dairy standards.

With this partnership, IOIA is developing web based training modules for all inspectors wishing to do on farm dairy inspections for the AGA. IOIA has a strong priority to work on self-directed learning modules. This work is consistent with IOIA's mission to make available training and work opportunities for organic inspectors.



The audience for the training would be working organic inspectors. Applicants would be NOP organic certified first, and the grassfed dairy certification would be an addendum. Efficiency and cost affordability for certifiers and producers would result from combining the two inspections. Later on, the training might be used for auditors for operations that are not organic, and for auditors that are not organic inspectors. But to start, the focus is organic operation addendum inspection performed by organic dairy inspectors who have this training.

### **About American Grassfed Association**

AGA has offered the first and only producer-driven, third-party-on farm inspected grassfed meat and dairy certification program in the U.S. since 2009. AGA standards require that ruminant animals are fed a one-hundred-percent forage diet from weaning to slaughter, live their lives on pasture with no feedlot confinement, are not administered antibiotics or hormones and are born and raised on U.S. family farms. All certified producers undergo a thorough inspection by an independent third-party inspection at least every 15 months.

[www.americangrassfed.org](http://www.americangrassfed.org) February 23, 2018

## Welcome New IOIA Trainer Corinne Kolm!

I was born in the fifth generation on a cow-calf row crop farm in northeast Nebraska. My dad first became interested in organics in the 1980s after I was diagnosed with a rare childhood endocrine disorder. My mom always had a strong environmental ethic and was a conservation biologist. I, on the other hand, had no interest in farming or nature and wanted nothing more than to grow up, leave Nebraska and lead an exciting life in a big city somewhere far, far away. I succeeded by getting into Wellesley College in Boston where I planned to study political science. My attempts to rebel against my roots were thwarted when I soon realized that I missed being outdoors, had a wonderful family, loved Nebraska and really cared about where food came from. I switched to a biology major and did research on livestock fly control for the USDA for a couple of years after finishing my undergrad. I spent a lot of time digging through manure looking for maggots. Eventually I determined that more education might be beneficial and moved to Europe to complete an MS in Agroecology. The Italian portion of the program was particularly rigorous as each farm visit tended to require the consumption of copious amounts of homemade wine, jam and salami.

My first job in organic certification was with OCIA in 2007. I then worked at OneCert for several years before taking a management position at OMRI. I became a fulltime independent inspector in 2014. I am honored to now also serve as a trainer with IOIA. I hope my experience as both an independent inspector and in-house inspector/reviewer adds value to the program. I'm also pursuing an MBA on the side to enhance my business understanding. I am very passionate about helping to train inspectors that both protect the organic sector and help smooth the certification process. My husband and I recently purchased an 80-acre produce, livestock and row-crop operation in southeast Nebraska. I'm quickly learning how difficult it is to apply my theoretical knowledge to the real world. Somehow grad school failed to teach me how to properly attach implements to a John Deere!



## Fraud and Import Oversight

by Margaret Scoles

Inspectors believe in our organic certification system, although by nature the inquiring inspector always carries a healthy dose of skepticism. When I was interviewed last year by the Wall Street Journal, I defended the system as no, not perfect, but credible. Grain from Turkey, Ukraine, or eastern Europe was not suspect just because it was imported. True. But when the story finally broke about a large quantity of non-organic soybeans coming into the US under the organic label, everyone recognized that we could not just defend the system. Given enough motive and an opportunity, fraud is likely to occur. It is time to step up our defense, take the offense, and focus on prevention and detection. Negative fallout included bad press, downward prices for domestic grain, and revocation and accreditation actions. Fraud hurts everyone, including the majority of the operations who are not fraudulent.

Was there any positive fallout? Yes. Humility doesn't hurt anyone, and information helps everyone. NOP stepped up with training for certifiers and handlers and drafted an Interim Instruction. Training was prepared for the ACA/NOP Training in Texas, where we heard that import oversight was a top NOP focus. Bureaucracy may move slower than we like, but it does move and justice is being served. Betsy Rakola gave an excellent NOP presentation to certifiers that addressed the problems of border fumigation of organically labeled products, lack of control over excluded brokers and traders, and handling of bulk products by uncertified operators. Much the same presentation was presented by Lars Crail at the IOIA Advanced Training and as is currently posted in the NOP website "Training" section.

OTA organized a Global Organic Supply Chain Integrity (GOSCI) Task Force to develop a Best Practices Guide. Their goal - a pilot program of leading organic companies that will test-drive the Guide, leading to industry-wide adoption. IOIA

had been eerily and perhaps intuitively ahead of the curve, with our 2017 training in Ottawa on "Risk-oriented preparation of inspections". Inspectors are keenly interested in learning more about how to deter and detect fraud. IOIA strives to provide training and resources.

As an inspector, how much time do you spend thinking about whether fumigation happens at the border as you are inspecting fresh produce, whether it is celery from Mexico or ginger from Peru? Certifiers have not always collected enough information in OSP forms to enable the inspector to verify. However, there are tools we can use. The FAVIR database is publicly accessible to everyone. In Texas, Tim Cunningham of APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine, State Operations Coordinator for the state, spoke on "APHIS Role in Import Process, and demonstrated searches using this link: <https://epermits.aphis.usda.gov/manual/index.cfm>

A chilling example – fresh asparagus from Peru is always fumigated at the border, period. No exceptions. Other produce might be fumigated at certain ports and not others. Import documents always show when fumigation occurred. And if shipments are fumigated at the time of loading, export documents will also show it. Importers are notified when fumigation happens at the border. Importers should notify their certifier. But if the importer is an uncertified handler, that might not happen. Ideally, that fumigated produce will be sold as non-organic. None of the fumigants currently used at the US border by APHIS are materials that are allowed on the National List. More risk-based sampling is a useful approach, but there is no reliable test for aluminum phosphide, one of the most widely used fumigants.

The thorniest problem – that of uncertified excluded handlers – will continue until it is solved. Since it may call for a rule change, it does not look to be solved in the near future. NOP Guidance 5031

"Certification Requirements for Handling Unpackaged Goods" states that operations that handle unpackaged organic products must be certified but clearly excludes transporters. Grain can change hands more than once while in transport across the ocean. What exactly does "enclosed in a container" mean?

Besides developing training and providing resources, IOIA is engaged in policy work. A committee was organized to provide the inspector perspective on import oversight to the NOSB at the spring meeting in Tucson, Arizona. We were proud to see Silke Fuchshofen, an inspector, appointed to the NOSB Panel on Import Oversight after IOIA's BOD nominated her. She has been saying for years – "let's focus on procedures, instead of documents" and developed webinar training to share that perspective. Rather than focusing entirely on oversight through certification, she says, "The certified handler can be our biggest ally in fraud prevention." And, "When I selected my tracebacks on a random basis, I rarely found anything wrong. When I changed and started focusing on the weak links in the supply chain – uncertified and excluded handlers – I found lots."

Inspectors can affect a positive change simply by the questions we ask, by being informed, and by taking a risk-based approach. We look forward to cross-checks, a currently under-utilized tool, and to more information sharing across certifiers. The ACA's "Best Practices for Verifying Traceability in the Supply Chain", offers problems and solutions. The problem/solutions addressing inconsistent audit expectations is 1.5 pages long! That should be a strong indicator that our industry needs to continue to step up our game on in/out balances.

**Resources for this article are listed on the next page →→→**

## Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website.)

### Conference Call – December 7, 2017, 7:30 p.m. EST

**Members Present:** Margaret Anne Weigelt (MAW), Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, Stuart McMillan, Matt Miller, Chuck Mitchell, Heather Donald and IOIA ED Margaret Scoles (MS). Pam Sullivan joined at 7:50 EST

**Report from the chair:** MAW discussed her desire to have suggestions on designing an ED evaluation process that invigorates and re-energizes.

**Financials – Treasurer’s Report:** There have been some further refinements to the 2018 Preliminary Budget which Pam reviewed. Peer Evaluation for 2017 is expected to be break even or may incur a loss. Peer Evaluation is budgeted to be break even in 2018. Pam moves to approve the 2018 Preliminary Budget in principle. Final approval will occur in January. Unanimously approved.

**Financials – Agreed Upon Procedures:** IOIA has committed to having an Agreed Upon Procedure examination this year. The Agreed Upon Procedures is a BOD policy, not a bylaws requirement, and the BOD discussed the merits of other methods of examining the accuracy of financial records without the cost of a full Agreed Upon Procedures conducted by an accounting firm. Pam moves to proceed with the Agreed Upon Procedures with Anderson ZurMuehlen to be completed in Dec. 2017 and Jan. 2018. The move authorized MS to sign the Letter of Engagement. Second by Heather. Unanimously approved.

**Financials – Cash Reserve:** Pam motioned to maintain the cash reserves at \$100,000 for 2018. Unanimously approved.

**Asia Pacific Committee Report:** Mutsumi provided an update. A survey of training needs was distributed in November, with a deadline of Nov. 30. No report of survey results is available yet.

**2018 AGM:** The BOD agreed to invite keynote Leah Cohen who was suggested by the planning committee. The BOD discussed whether the bylaws voting method includes sharing the detailed bylaws changes electronically. Bylaws state that proposed changes are to be “mailed to members”. BOD felt that this included mailing in electronic format.

### Executive Session – Year End Bonus, Future Bonus Timing and ED Compensation (ED left the call):

Pam highlighted key summaries from the MT Non-Profit Compensation Report. The BOD felt it is important that ED compensation is reasonable and similar to other equivalent organizations. Pam motioned that the ED salary be raised by \$4500. Unanimously approved. Matt moved for 2017 that the ED is provided a \$2000 bonus and a \$2000 bonus is allocated to staff. Unanimously approved. The current vacation policy and recording system was discussed. Overall vacation policy, such as if vacation days should accrue from year to year or how they are paid out at the end of employment were discussed. The BOD felt that in the future greater oversight of vacation policy and usage is important.

### Meeting Minutes Jan 18, 2018, 7:30 p.m. EST

**Members Present:** Margaret Anne Weigelt (MAW), Pam Sullivan, Stuart McMillan, Heather Donald, Chuck Mitchell, Matt Miller, and IOIA ED Margaret Scoles (MS). Mutsumi Sakuyoshi joined 7:42 EST.

**Financials – Treasurer’s Report:** Pam provided a synopsis of end of year financials. Pam recommended IOIA transfer some of cash reserves into low risk savings devices. It was noted that there are various projects that could require significant cost outlay, so there was an need to have finances available and not tied up in a long term savings device. The

#### Resources

- [NOP recording 6/1/2017 – “Organic Supply Chain – Ensuring Organic Integrity through the Organic Control System”](#)
- [USDA APHIS Fruit and Vegetable Import Requirement \(FAVIR\) searchable database of crops, ports, and country of origin.](#)
- [ACA Best Practices for Verifying Traceability in the Supply Chain \(with appendix listing all of the required documents for US trading partners\)](#)
- [NOP Training, Verifying Organic Imports, 2/6/2018](#)

number 6 draft of the 2018 budget was reviewed. The agreed upon procedures audit was split between 2017 and 2018 financial years. Motion to approve the 2017 end of year financial report as presented. Pam moves to approve. Motion to approve the 2018 final budget as presented. Stuart moves to approve. Both unanimously approved. The results of the Agreed upon Procedures conducted by Anderson Zurmuehlen was reviewed and discussed. The report was very positive, with few concerns. All of the findings were fairly small and resulted in some changes in practices. Motion that the Agreed Upon Procedure report was reviewed by the board and accepted as written. Pam moves to approve. Unanimously approved.

**Employee Benefits:** Employee benefits were discussed including an Internal Audit of 2016/2017 Employee Benefit. Currently staff working from home receive a home office stipend. The financial amount varies based on the number of hours worked. Heather moves to table the discussion on the home office stipend, moved to approve the proposed changes to the Employee Benefit without including Home Office Stipend, and we would

See Board Highlights, p 18

# 2017 Annual Report - In Brief



At a meeting of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), our Executive Director Margaret Scoles urged the National Organic Program (NOP) and the NOSB, *"It is time to re-focus on consistent inspector qualifications and training."*

## International



- IFOAM 2017 Delhi, India
- IOIA engaged in the Asia Pacific, Canada and Latin America through regional committees
- Celebrated our 25th Anniversary in Ottawa



## Addressing Issues Relevant to Inspectors

- Resources for all inspectors
- Newsletter including technical articles
- Getting the Word out! Promoting IOIA, Inspectors, and Organic
- Growing the Membership
- Meeting Needs of the Certification Agencies and Inspectors
- Increasing Value for members
- Training around the globe - 800 people trained, increase of 29%!



*"Organic inspectors have a unique perspective to share with consumers about what certified organic really means. How many times have you heard, 'How do I know it's organic?'" - Chuck Mitchell, board member who spearheaded consumer outreach and education in 2017.*

## Preparing inspectors for the future

- **Field Training** was launched in 2016 to meet the need for structured apprenticeship, offered first in livestock scope. During 2017, crop and processing field trainings were added.
- **Improved training quality** by reducing the size of the in-person courses and field trip groups.
- **Creative training collaborations** included joint IOIA/QCS training in Florida – a customized refresher course for staff and contract inspectors.
- **IOIA/GOTS Training** was developed for delivery in 2018 – the first fiber training in over a decade.
- **A Crop/Poultry Inspection video** "Organic Inspection Guide for Success" was finalized - a valuable new training resource.
- **Food Safety** – Jonda Crosby, IOIA Training Services Director, worked with two contractors to complete the final phase of a 2-year grant funded project in Montana.
- **Quadrupled 300-level webinars** over the previous year, and added to the roster of "member-initiated webinars" (i.e. Maple Syrup and Winery Inspection).

# 2017 Annual Report and Balance Sheet

## Policy Work

IOIA - members with many perspectives, speaking as one voice? IOIA has frequent opportunity to comment. It is challenging to represent a highly diverse and international membership. In 2017, IOIA's Board with leadership from Margaret Weigelt and Heather Donald, drafted a Comment Policy to outline how IOIA will choose when to speak.

### Where was our voice heard?

- When the US administration halted implementation of the Organic Livestock & Poultry Practices First Proposed Rule and asked for another round of comments, IOIA surveyed inspectors for their comments. An overwhelming 84% of the 86 respondents favored immediate adoption, giving IOIA a sound basis for comments to the NOP.
- On the Canadian General Standards Board Organic Committee and through representation on Canada's Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture. When the issue of aquaponics was up for vote, IOIA's representative, Kelly Monaghan abstained when a survey indicated a split opinion among members.
- At two NOSB meetings, we commented on inspector qualifications, seed purity, and eliminating incentives to convert native ecosystems to organic production. IOIA supported the NOSB's "Excluded Operations in the Supply Chain" proposal, which urged NOP to strengthen guidance.
- When our Chair signed on to a NOC letter urging the new USDA Secretary of Agriculture to support organic.
- When BOD secretary Stuart McMillan submitted IOIA's comments on the "Safe Food for Canadians Regulation".
- While collaborating with Organic Seed Alliance to survey inspectors on how to increase use of organic seed.
- At networking events, such as the OTA Annual Meeting in Maryland; the IFOAM North America General Assembly; the IFOAM General Assembly in India, the Guelph Organic Conference; and the ACA/NOP training, and OMRI's 20th anniversary celebration in Oregon.



93% inspector membership retention!

[The complete 9 page 2017 Annual Report can be found on our website.](#)

<b>International Organic Inspectors Association Balance Sheet (Cash Basis) As of December 31, 2017</b>		
ASSETS	Dec. 31, 2017	Dec 31, 2016
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Total Checking/Savings/CDs	418,150.02	361,356.37
Accounts Receivable	50.92	-904.08
Total Other Current Assets	18,356.48	16,301.33
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>436,557.42</b>	<b>376,753.62</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Total Building	38,768.86	38,768.86
<b>Other Assets</b>		
Accumulated Depreciation	-14,259.50	-12,899.06
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$461,066.78</b>	<b>\$402,623.42</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>		
<b>Equity</b>		
Contributed Property-FMValue	29,031.80	29,031.80
Reimbursables		50.00
Restricted (Scholarship Travel Fund)	220.42	0.42
Retained Funds	373,541.20	289,450.61
Net Income	58,273.36	84,090.59
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>461,066.78</b>	<b>402,623.42</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>\$461,066.78</b>	<b>\$402,623.42</b>



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**Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!**

## 2018 Calendar

**April 3 - 5, 2018** St. Louis, Missouri.  
The Our Farms, Our Future Conference, hosted by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and the National Center for Appropriate Technology ATTRA program.

**April 9 - 13** IOIA/PCO Crop Training, State College, PA.

**April 14** IOIA/PCO Advanced/Refresher Training, State College, PA.

**April 16 - 20** IOIA/PCO Livestock training, State College, PA.

**April 25 - 27** [NOSB Meeting](#) - Tucson, AZ

**May 21 - 24** [Organic Week](#), Washington DC. An OTA event. Briefly:

**May 21 - 22** The Organic Center's Confluences Summit

**May 22** Organic Trade Association Member Meetings + Workshop

**May 23** Organic Trade Association Hill Visits Day

**May 24** Organic Trade Association Policy Conference

**June 4 - 8** IOIA/UDAF Crop training, Ogden, Utah.

**June 11 - 15** IOIA/UDAF Processing training, Ogden, Utah.

**June 13 - 15** [1st International Conference of Wheat Landraces for Healthy Food Systems](#), Bologna, Italy.  
[foam.bio](http://foam.bio)

**September 10 - 14** IOIA/VOF Crop Inspection Trainings, South Burlington, Vermont

**September 12 - 15** Natural Products Expo East, Baltimore, MD.

**September 15** IOIA/VOF Advanced Organic Inspector Training, Vermont

**September 17 - 21** IOIA/VOF Livestock Inspection Training, South Burlington, Vermont

**October 29 - November 1** IOIA Crop Inspection training, Farmington, Minnesota

**November 5 - 9** IOIA Processing inspection training, Farmington, MN

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***Please see pages 2 & 3 for the current list of IOIA on-site trainings and webinars***