

## IOIA Goes to Asia for 2016 Annual Meeting

Why Asia? And if Asia, why an island in the middle of an ocean?

Inspectors are fact-oriented thinkers. Consider the statistics. Since IOIA was founded in 1991 and 1992, the general membership has met annually to consider the burning issues of organic inspectors, including quality inspector training and promoting organic integrity. Of 24 annual meetings, IOIA has held 58% in the USA, 21% in Canada, and 21% in Latin America. How does that compare to IOIA membership and training involvement? IOIA's membership is 68% based in the USA, 20.5% in Canada, 5.5% in Latin America, and 5% in Asia. And IOIA's trainings have occurred 48% in the US, 11% in Canada, 21% in Latin America, and 20% in Asia. Not once yet has IOIA met in Asia for an annual meeting. Clearly, the time has come, or is, in fact, over-due. Mark your calendars for an annual meeting you cannot miss – Jeju Island, April 9! Jeju Island has special significance, as the location of the first IOIA training in Korea (2005). This event will mark the 10 year anniversary of IOIA training in the Republic of Korea.

Training events planned include Organic Aquaculture Inspection (English language) on April 6, Advanced Organic Inspector Training on the topics of International Standards and Equivalency Agreements (April 7, in English with translation to Korean), and Organic Control Points and HACCP for the Organic Processing Inspector (April 8, in English

with translation to Korean). Field trips are organized for Sunday, April 10, including aquaculture. On April 11-12, a Train the Trainer will be offered to increase the number of qualified IOIA trainers in Asia. All events are offered at a discounted price to offset the extra travel costs and encourage broad participation. NOP standards-based Basic Processing Inspection Training (English) will be offered

See **AGM**, page 4



*Isidor Yu, far left, stands next to Mr. Zhou Zejiang (China), the current president of IFOAM Asia. Yu was promoting the AGM and associated training events at the ISOFAR 2015 Goesan – International Organic EXPO in the Republic of Korea. ISOFAR is the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research. Also shown are Mr. Donggeun Choi, ED of KFSAO, Korean Federation of Sustainable Agriculture Organizations (3rd from left), and an unidentified event attendee.*

## Notes from the Chair

By Stuart McMillan

I hope all of our members have had a busy and productive organic inspection season, which is starting to slow down a bit. I was surprised to find myself continuing to be busy throughout the autumn which has typically been a slower season. There were many new operations pushing to get inspected before the 2016 season. It is a good sign that the efforts to increase the number of organic operations are working.

As I went to write the notes from the chair I found myself thinking of some words around the recent election in Canada. For ten years the Conservative party had either a minority or majority government, but that got turned on its head with the Liberal government who started in third place winning a majority. One of the things that stood out from the victory speech was the statement that “Conservatives are not our enemy, they are our neighbors”.

I thought of this in the context of the recent NOSB meetings. I have been sufficiently busy I have not digested completely how the proposed changes under sunset were approached and the outcomes. I know there was some heated debate

See **Notes**, page 4

## 2015-2016 WEBINAR Training Schedule

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

### Accreditation Application Review - Volunteer Needed

IOIA is seeking an IOIA inspector member willing to review applications from members seeking first-time or renewal accreditation. Applications are accepted twice annually (March 1 and October 1). If you are interested, please [contact](#) the IOIA office.

### Welcome New Members

#### New and returning inspector members:

Caputo, John, Oregon  
Kinder, Steve, Michigan  
Kwiatkowski, Michael, California  
Smith, Gary, Saskatchewan

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### IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*The Inspectors' Report* is the newsletter of the 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@ioia.net](mailto:webgal@ioia.net)  
Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.

*Note: The 2016 Webinar Schedule is in process and will be posted shortly.*

#### 300 Level Webinar – January 21, 2016. Maple Syrup Inspection

8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (PST). One, 3 hour session. IOIA Trainer: Monique Scholz  
This webinar will prepare inspectors and certifiers to understand the requirements of the standards being used in Canada and the United States for organic maple syrup (and birch syrup) production. It will provide tools for use by inspectors in the woods and sugar camps, as well as in more industrial maple syrup processing situations. The course gives a historical perspective and industry context for maple syrup inspection. The course information will differentiate the organic maple production methods at the producer level from those used by their conventional counterparts. Organic control points related to site selection, forestry practices, sap gathering methods, equipment, sap storage, reverse osmosis, evaporation, filtration and maple syrup packing will be covered. The permitted substances used during processing and for cleaning will be presented and discussed. Record keeping as well as traceability examples and in/out balancing will also be covered. Further considerations for on-farm processing (taffy, butter, candies) and industrial blending/bottling will also be discussed. The course is designed for persons with organic inspection or certification review experience. The course will have a pre-course assignment (which will be reviewed during the webinar) and a post-course assignment, which will be graded. **Cost** for the webinar is: \$200, with a \$25 discount for IOIA members.

#### 200 Level Webinar – February 5 & 8, 2016. Livestock Feed Audits – grazing and non grazing season

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (PST).  
Two, 2-hour sessions. Presented by Sarah Flack.

This course is geared for inspectors, reviewers and organic program managers with an understanding of livestock inspection and review. Participants must have approval from IOIA to sign up for this webinar course if they have not taken the Basic IOIA Livestock Inspection course or a 100-level Livestock Standards Webinar. The course will include information and practice on doing feed audits for NOP and the COR Standards. This course will specifically cover topics to prepare webinar participants to evaluate organic certification requirements for ruminant and non-ruminant livestock operations including review of organic standards sections related to feed audits; additional resources useful for feed audits; types of feeds - forages, grains, concentrates; dry matter content of feeds; feeding and pasture systems: examples of rations; types of grazing systems; DMD and feed consumption for ruminants and non-ruminants. Participants practice feed audits for poultry, dairy, hogs, beef and small ruminants. Ruminant audits will include grazing season pasture DMI calculations. **Cost** for the webinar is: \$300 for non-IOIA members, \$275 for IOIA members, and \$225 for participants who have previously completed IOIA's Verifying Compliance to NOP Pasture Rule webinar.

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

#### Fukuoka, Japan, Processing Course, January 23-26, 2016

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor 4 day Basic Organic Processing Inspection Trainings using JAS Standards as a reference. The training language will be Japanese. The trainer for the Processing course will be Yutaka Maruyama. Please contact JOIA for more information about this course. E-Mail: [info@joia-organic.com](mailto:info@joia-organic.com)

#### Advanced Inspector Training, Guelph, Ontario, January 29, 2016

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training on Friday, January 29, in conjunction with the Guelph Organic Conference. In recognition of the new revision of the Canadian Organic Standards, the training will focus on standards updates. Following the training, IOIA will host an informal reception combined with inspector discussion. Speakers will include Margaret Scoles on learning from the pilot peer evaluation program; and Stuart McMillan, IOIA chair.

#### Advanced Inspector Training, Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, April 6-8, 2016

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training in conjunction with the 2016 Annual Meeting. Organic Aquaculture Inspection Training (one day, in classroom) is scheduled April 6. IOIA Trainer Lisa Pierce of Canada will lead this course, with an invited speaker expert on aquaculture production systems. A field trip to a local aquaculture operation is planned for April 10, as one of several field trip options. Advanced Training on April 7 will focus on international standards and equivalency agreements. Advanced Training on April 8 will focus on processing inspection issues and HACCP for the working processing inspector. Bob Durst, food scientist and researcher at the Linus Pauling Institute in Corvallis, Oregon, will serve on the training team. All training fees are discounted to encourage broad participation among IOIA members traveling to Asia and to those within Asia. Train the Trainer, geared to increase the number of IOIA Trainers in Asia, is planned for April 10-11. Complete details and a course application will be posted on the IOIA website in December.

### Developing Trainings

#### Basic Organic Crop and Livestock Inspection Training, Ohio, Spring 2016

IOIA and OEFFA are developing cosponsored basic crop and livestock inspection training. Dates have not been determined. Tentatively, this training might also include Processing inspection training.

#### Basic Organic Crop and Livestock Inspection Training, Minnesota, Fall 2016

IOIA and MOSA are developing cosponsored basic crop and livestock inspection training the first two weeks of November 2016, in Farmington, Minnesota.

**IOIA will sponsor basic Crop and Processing trainings on the West Coast. Date TBD.**

### Welcome New Supporting Individuals, from page 2

#### Supporting individual members:

Christie Badger - Pennsylvania	Cindy Logsdon - Illinois	John Gadbois - California
Andy Bennett - Oregon	Joseph Mack - Texas	James Jones - Alberta
Boyd Bresnahan - Alberta	Aaron Mazurek - British Columbia	Corey Miller - Wisconsin
Laura Davis - Maine	Rob Milner - California	Richard Ordonez - California
Dale Doram - Alberta	Dennis Norton - Iowa	Thea Rittenhouse - California
Alexis Henzel - Hawaii	Elizabeth O'Donnell - Wisconsin	Jonathan Stern - California
Francine Henzel - Oregon	Frederick Schafer - Maine	Christopher Lincoln - New York
Kelly Hill - Montana	Richard Ehlers - Iowa	Noel Zimmer - Colorado
Helena Krebs - California	Levi Lyle - Iowa	Kyle Lindstrom - California
T. Layhew, Wisconsin	April Duffy - California	Matthew Steele - Michigan
	Kari Fiedler - South Dakota	Kevin Ellis - Texas



## Notes, from page 1

about what products should be retained and which ones removed. Debate is a great thing, and essential to the process of determining which tools organic farmers should have available. What is not a good thing is animosity towards those with different opinions, rancorous name calling or calls for the removal of the USDA staff involved with the NOP. Those sorts of things only serve to weaken the organic industry. It is far better for those opposed to organic agriculture to have our sector divided by infighting. Those with different ideas about what tools we should have available as organic farmers are not our enemies. We are all working together towards a more sustainable and ecological way of farming and producing foods.

I found it interesting that even within the 7 person board of directors of IOIA we had a wide range of opinions about different inputs. We had to determine what inputs schedules for sunset that we wanted to comment on as an organization. Debate was thorough, but in the end we were all able to hear the varied voices without acrimony and come to a consensual decision. I hope the NOSB process mirrored that microcosm of the IOIA Board. We operate with a wide variety of regional challenges across different production systems. In the end, we all choose different tools for our farms based on a wide variety of factors. What is essential on my farm may be useless on yours. Simply because it is of no use for you doesn't mean it has no use for me.

By the time this reaches you all we will be nearing the end of the year and the holiday season, so I should take the opportunity to wish you all the best in the New Year. Hard to believe that 2015 is nearly over.

*Stuart*

## AGM, from page 1

concurrently April 4-8 with Korean standards-based basic training.

Isidor Yu, Executive Member-At-Large on the IOIA Board of Directors, served a pivotal role in developing this training. He was joined by Mutsumi Sakuyoshi (Japan), Chair of IOIA's Asia Pacific Committee meeting; and Raymond Yang (Korea), Chair of the 2016 AGM Organizing Committee. The Asia Pacific Committee draws its members from Nepal, India, Australia, and Thailand. Planning the event is a logistical challenge. Nearly two years are already invested since the Asia location was suggested at the 2014 AGM.

For info about the venue, transportation suggestions, field trips, and trainings including training applications to all training events, please visit the IOIA website, which will be updated regularly – see the [2016 AGM link](#) at the top of our homepage. Booking early is strongly recommended, as Jeju Island is a popular Asian destination and is often called “the Hawaii of Asia”. Affordable airfares take some shopping and pre-planning.

## More on our cover photo:

IFOAM Asia's meeting was scheduled during the Expo. The entire Expo ran Sept 18 - Oct. 11. IOIA was one of the 250 participating enterprises and organizations. Raymond Yang and Isidor Yu prepared fliers that promoted the IOIA events and organized staffing for the IOIA booth Sept 18-23. Yu had the opportunity to meet with inspectors and certifiers from other Asian countries. Yang met with **Andre Leu**, current IFOAM President, who will offer the keynote address on April 9.

## Distance AGM Parties? Yes!

## IMPORTANT NOTE!

In recognition that in-person participation by US and Canadian members may be less than usual, an effort is being made to arrange distance participation via Skype or other means.

Upside-down time zones offer a challenge – though not unsurmountable.

A Saturday, April 9, 10:00 a.m. meeting start time in Korea corresponds to:

6:00 p.m. Pacific,  
7:00 p.m. Mountain,  
8:00 p.m. Central, or  
9:00 p.m. Eastern time  
on Friday, April 8 in the western hemisphere.

**Brian Magaro** (Pennsylvania) sparked the idea that members who don't make the trip could organize regional gatherings/overnight parties. Clusters of IOIA members who don't make the trip can still participate. He offered his barn as the site of one of these “IOIA AGM parties”.

Interested in organizing such a gathering? [Please contact IOIA.](#)

## Resource

## NRCS releases handbook on organic

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) [has posted a blog](#) introducing the new **National Organic Farming Handbook** and explaining the potential benefits of conservation programs for organic producers.

Link to:

[Teaching Organic Farming & Gardening: Resources for Instructors, 3rd Edition](#)

## Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

**First**, please – don't forget to renew your membership! I love this time of year; I get the chance to catch up with so many friends. A recent delight was seeing two long-time, long-gone members return to IOIA – **Dale Doram** of Alberta and **Gary Smith** of Saskatchewan.

**Next**, a rumination. Sometimes I question my wisdom in juggling inspection work with my work in the IOIA office. Should I still be training, apprenticing, and doing inspections? I only do a handful of inspections, really, barely enough to take on any apprentices. But should I do any? Is it appropriate for an executive director to be taking a day off, driving 450 miles and doing an inspection all in one day? I do too few inspections to be very efficient anymore; each one feels like the first one of the year. Yet a bigger question – should I be evaluating inspectors in the fledgling pilot Peer Evaluation Program (9 evaluations so far)? And, should I be speaking at “Organic University” at the Montana Organic Association conference this week? Should I be wrestling with the thorny issue of business liability insurance to do a handful of inspections for the one agency that requires it? Should I be adding Non-GMO verification to the types of inspections I do, and should I really be thinking of pursuing Gluten-free as yet another option?

A part of my brain says, “STOP”! But ultimately and unequivocally, I think the answer is “no”. I should not stop. I should continue.

How else will I understand what our members who do hundreds of inspections each year face in the mind-numbing travel schedules, impossibly inconsistent reporting formats from different agencies, or hours of mandatory certifier trainings? It is no surprise that so few inspectors take IOIA 200 and 300-level webinars. They are too busy traveling, inspecting, keeping up with certifier requirements and mandatory updates, and of course, just paying the bills. If this sounds like you, and you think no one cares or understands – **IOIA actually does understand**. We know that we are likely to hear from you only sporadically, you will forget whether you paid your dues, or you'll pay them twice. You are busy people and **without you, the organic sector would come to an immediate and grinding halt**. IOIA is your “home” and your voice.



IOIA vice Board chair Ib Hagsten during Q&A after his presentation at the Soil & Water Conservation Society annual conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, July 2015.

This is Thanksgiving week in the USA. I want to take a moment to acknowledge IOIA members and the incredible work of your Board of Directors, many of whom are full-time inspectors. They, too, understand your lives. I am in awe that they find time to volunteer for the Board meetings. They have even volunteered to pay a significant amount of their own airfare to Jeju, just to keep their BOD travel budget in check. Most importantly, they think like inspectors. There is no substitute for being in the trenches together to keep perspective.

**And last, but not least, best wishes to you as you celebrate the holiday season, complete with organic ingredients!**

## SECTOR NEWS

**FDA issues final FSMA Produce Safety Rule**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has published three final rules to implement the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA): the Produce Safety rule, Foreign Supplier Verification Programs (FSVP) rule, and Accredited Third-Party Certification rule. The publication of these [final rules](#) is a major implementation milestone for this landmark legislation. Of particular interest to the organic sector is the [Produce Safety rule](#). The final rules clearly indicate that FDA listened to the feedback from organic producers and handlers, and responded to the unique requirements of the organic system.

Regarding manure and compost The final Produce Safety Rule is consistent with the supplemental rule in eliminating the waiting time for properly produced compost and deferring the proposed 9-month minimum interval requirement for untreated manure. The rule also commits FDA to conducting research into determining an appropriate science-based application interval. While this research is being conducted, organic operations will continue to follow the established National Organic Program (NOP) regulations for application of raw manure, with 90- or 120-day application intervals. There is important new research underway in this key area. A \$50,000 grant was recently awarded by USDA to The Organic Center to study the use of animal-based manure and compost in organic agricultural practices to best prevent the risk of soil pathogens.

Regarding proposed water testing requirements The final water quality standard adopts the general approach in the supplemental rule and continues to reflect a more realistic risk-based approach, and has less potential to impose economic hardship on organic farmers. Regarding biodiversity and the use of domesticated and wild animals FDA's language explicitly states that carrying out the new regulations will not require farmers to exclude animals from outdoor growing areas, destroy animal habitat or clear borders around growing or drainage areas. Organic farmers across the nation had expressed concern that the language in FDA's initially proposed rules could conflict with the organic farmer's requirement to maintain and improve the natural resources and biodiversity of their farms.

FDA will soon issue important companion guidance documents with more detailed information about compliance requirements. Fruit and vegetable growers will have as long as six years to comply with a landmark FDA rule that, for the first time, sets food safety standards for produce farms. The Produce Safety Rule was issued at the same time as a rule that requires importers to verify that imported food meets U.S. standards and a rule establishing a program for accredited auditors to inspect foreign food facilities. Large farms that grow sprouts - "especially vulnerable to dangerous microbes" - would have one year to implement steps to prevent contamination, the shortest timeline for compliance, while very small

businesses with less than \$250,000 in average annual sales could have six years to satisfy rules for water quality, according to an FDA fact sheet.

*OTA News Flash, November 17, 2015*

**US and Mexico agree to work toward organic equivalency**

On October 26, the US and Mexican agriculture officials signed a letter of intent to determine if US and Mexico's organic production and control systems are equivalent. The US National Organic Program and Mexico's General Directorate of Food Fisheries and Aquaculture Safety will spearhead the efforts, and expect to complete the agreement by 2017. See article on page 10 of this issue for more details.

**First USDA visit to Cuba since 1961**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was in Havana on November 11 - 14, leading the first official USDA visit to Cuba in half a century as part of the administration's decision to normalize relations with the nation. "Food and agricultural goods are the dominant U.S. exports to Cuba and agriculture can serve as a bridge to foster cooperation, understanding and the exchange of ideas," said Vilsack in a statement. Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon and Reps. Teri Sewell of Alabama, Suzan DelBene of Washington State and Kurt Schrader of Oregon accompanied Vilsack on the trip. During the visit the Secretary met with Cuba's vice-president Ricardo Cabrisas, Minister of Agriculture Gustavo Rodríguez Rollero and Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez. The Secretary also met with Cuban farmers and producers, visiting an agricultural cooperative

## SECTOR NEWS

and an urban fruit and vegetable market. Vilsack held an open conversation with Cuban farmers to understand how their cooperative memberships work, learn about their irrigation and equipment techniques and challenges, and discuss climate change and other common issues faced by farmers in the United States and Cuba.

*from the Ag Insider, Nov 10, 2015*

**NOP Handbook Updates**

The National Organic Program is pleased to announce two updated

NOP Handbook documents.

**NOP 2005:** Accreditation Assessment Checklist provides a detailed checklist outlining tasks that NOP follows when completing accreditation assessments.

**NOP 2100:** Equivalence Determination Procedures describes the procedure the United States follows to determine if equivalency arrangements will be consistent with the USDA organic regulations.

To see the updated documents: [NOP 2005: Accreditation Assessment Checklist](#) [NOP 2100: Equivalence Determination Procedures](#).

To see all NOP guidance, instructions and policies: [NOP Handbook](#).

**Update on NOP compliance, enforcement**

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has posted a [new NOP Compliance & Enforcement/ Appeals Summary report](#). The report outlines NOP's compliance, enforcement and appeals activities for Fiscal Year 2015. The data

highlight the number of incoming and completed complaints; the initial actions taken; and case dispositions, including settlements made and penalties levied. The report also summarizes select administrative proceedings. Future NOP Compliance & Enforcement/ Appeals reports will be published quarterly.

**EPA prohibits sale of pesticide sulfoxaflor**

In the wake of an appellate court decision, the EPA barred the sale or distribution in the U.S. of sulfoxaflor, a pesticide used on produce but highly toxic to honeybees. The cancellation took effect on November 12, but growers will be allowed to use up their stocks of the chemical, approved for use on crops such as citrus, cotton, canola, strawberries, soybeans and wheat, according to an article in the [Los Angeles Times](#).

The appeals court ruled on Sept. 10 that the EPA had improperly approved the pesticide. The decision became final on the same day that the agency cancelled the registration. *From Ag Insider, November 16 2015*

**Wild Farm Alliance Expands Reach into Minnesota**

With this new presence, WFA intends to collaborate with consumers to reconnect food systems with ecosystems by expanding organic and sustainable food production that promotes biodiversity and habitat protection and push corporations to have stronger biodiversity practices in their supply chains; support the next generation of farmers implement conservation practices and increase

biodiversity on the farm through creation of a technical guide and training events for farmers; and advance federal and state policies to support on-farm biodiversity through the Farm Bill, Food and Drug Administration, and the National Organic Program.

**IFOAM Apiculture Forum Established prior to World Beekeeping Conference 2016 in Argentina**

In order to encourage organic beekeeping and contribute to saving the honeybee, IFOAM – Organics International has established an Apiculture Forum. The new forum pools the interests and experiences of beekeepers, traditional honey collectors, farmers, civil society and other organizations involved with bees and organic beekeeping.

The main aim of the IFOAM Apiculture Forum is to advance the development of organic beekeeping and to encourage the traditional practices employed by sustainable beekeeping. At a time when beekeepers the world over are suffering from the severe depletion of their bee colonies, the forum also sees its job as a lobby and platform designed to raise awareness of the need to combat practices that damage the environment and are harmful to bees and, last but not least, to guarantee beekeepers a sustainable source of income.

The first major task for the forum will be the organization of the World Conference on Organic Beekeeping. It will be held between 6th and 10th September, 2016, in Argentina.



**IOIA Peer Field Evaluation – Preliminary Early Assessment - Success!**

By Margaret Scoles

This abbreviated synopsis of the Pilot Peer Evaluation Program is provided as the forerunner for a more complete report to be presented to the Accredited Certifiers Association (scheduled January 15, 2016 in Savannah, Georgia) and to the USDA National Organic Program (early 2016). The Spring issue of the newsletter announced the launch of the program and the recent Summer Issue addressed what this program means for inspectors.

**How many certifiers participated?** Ten certification agencies participated, requesting that IOIA evaluate from one to 30+ of their inspectors. These certifiers included large, small, private, and governmental agencies.

**How many inspectors were evaluated?** Fifty inspectors have been evaluated. A few of those are still in process; most evaluations are complete.

Fifty-eight evaluation requests were received. Eight were requested but missed because they had no inspections left during the year, because there was too short notice to schedule an evaluation, or because they were located too remotely. One declined the evaluation. Although that is an option for the inspector, it generally means the certifier won't use them next year. One was so difficult to schedule that the certifier "traded" them out and evaluated that inspector themselves. With more advance planning and starting earlier in the year, IOIA is confident that in future years they will be able to schedule virtually all evaluations. IOIA will successfully fulfill all certifier contracts before the end of this year.

*"I found the IOIA Peer Evaluation process to be the most educational experience I've had in a long time. We have talked about doing shadow inspections as long as I've been involved in IOIA and now it's finally here. It's great to learn directly from others in the field. The peer evaluator voiced improvement points in our evaluation exit meeting. They are valid points that I can now improve on."*  
**Christopher Kidwell**

**Who are the Evaluators?** Nine inspector members of IOIA participated as evaluators. Five of the nine are accredited in the IOIA Inspector Accreditation Program. The other four were members of the Peer Evaluation Committee and have either already applied or are in the process of applying to be accredited. Evaluators are required to become accredited inspectors to maintain their Peer Evaluator credential. Fifteen inspectors were eligible to be evaluators. Not every one of those applied to be an evaluator or worked as an evaluator during the pilot. All evaluators were required to attend a training via webinar, provided at no charge by IOIA on September 2.

**Costs and Administration?** Staff time and contractor time – approximately \$200/inspector evaluated. The flat rate, requested by certifiers, seemed to work. IOIA's goal to cover costs was to average two evaluation requests for every one inspector evaluated. Fortunately, those 50 inspectors represented 100 evaluation requests. IOIA acknowledges the extraordinary service of part-time contractor Maria DeVincenzo, who joined the IOIA team to help manage logistics. IOIA covered all costs of the pilot program this year, and promises to make a small profit. This is good news. The evaluations almost all happened within four months, so it was difficult to predict final outcome until they were mostly completed. IOIA took a chance and took on all of the inspectors they were requested to evaluate, with a constant watchful eye to the overall ratio of evaluation requests to inspectors. In a few cases, IOIA approached certifiers and requested additional fees before accepting late additions.



**Maria DeVincenzo,**  
**Coordinator**

**The future?** The future of the program depends largely on the response of the certifiers and the NOP. However, IOIA is encouraged with the participation by certifiers and the potential value of the process in improving inspection, inspectors, and inspector training. Surveys are being prepared for inspectors who were evaluated, and for the certifiers who contracted the service.

**Canada Organic News**

**The 2015 Canadian Organic Standards have been published!**

Link to Organic Principles and Management Standards:  
<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ongc-cgsb/programme-program/normes-standards/internet/bio-org/pgng-gpms-eng.html>

Link to Permitted Substances lists -  
<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ongc-cgsb/programme-program/normes-standards/internet/bio-org/lsp-psl-eng.html>



This revised standard will guide the production and preparation of organic food in Canada until 2020. Certified operators have a full year to come into compliance with the revised standard.

**Canadian Organic Inputs Directory**  
 Now online at [organicinputs.ca](http://organicinputs.ca)  
 By Organic Federation of Canada  
<http://organicfederation.ca/>

InfoBio November 25 2015



January 28 to 31, 2016  
 Guelph University Centre

Mark the Date!  
 Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia  
 Conference 2016  
 Friday February 26 to Sunday February 28, 2016



**Advanced Inspector Training, Guelph, Ontario  
 January 29, 2016**

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training on Friday, January 29, in conjunction with the Guelph Organic Conference.

If you would like more information or would like to participate in this training, contact IOIA. Registration will be on-line via the IOIA office.

This inspector event was initiated in 2009 and has grown into a popular biennial gathering. All inspectors attending the Guelph Conference are invited to attend an informal IOIA reception following this training which is expected to wrap up in time for all to attend the Organic Food and Wine Dinner.

**Quebec plans to restrict neonics**  
 In a major development, the [Quebec provincial government has announced](#) it will begin consultation on limiting farmers' use of neonicotinoids and other pesticides, such as atrazine. When the legislation passes, Quebec will join Ontario as the second Canadian province to have put in place restrictions on these products tied to pollinator deaths—the only two jurisdictions in North America to do so to date. The new regulation is planned to be in place by the fall of 2016.

**New Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food**



[Lawrence MacAulay](#) is the new federal minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. MacAulay is Prince Edward Island's longest-serving MP, representing Cardigan for over 25 years. Before entering politics, he was a successful seed potato and dairy farmer. He remains active in P.E.I.'s agricultural community.



## Mexico's Organic Program

By Lois Christie, Christie Organic Consultants, Inc.

It is an exciting time in México with organics in its adolescence, and getting a fresh start under México's new regulations. These new regulations will not only open up the Mexican market for larger operations who have been exporting organic products to the U.S. for several years (as well as Canada, the EU and Japan via the U.S.), but it will lead to an increasing number of smaller operations having the ability to market through smaller venues, such as Farmers' Markets.

Operations in México have been certified organic by U.S. agencies accredited by the USDA National Organic Program (NOP), since the late 1990's; however, México's revised production guidelines (Lineamientos) were not published until October 2013, and scheduled for implementation six months later on April 29, 2014. The implementation has now been extended until October, 2016. This extension means that operations previously certified under the USDA NOP may continue to sell their products in México as organic. México's organic program requires that all organic operations in México be certified to the Mexican standard by a certification company accredited by the Mexican government. **It is important to note that products exported from the U.S. to Mexico must also be certified to México's standards.** The organic law (Ley) was published in 2006, and the regulations (Reglamentos) were initially published in 2010 by SAGARPA (Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food). One of the first operations to successfully create an organic market in México under the brand name of Mr. Lucky (certified by CCOF as Comercializadora G.A.B.) selling organic items such as bagged lettuces, greens, radicchio, and celery to Wal-Mart and Costco in México.



Mexican organic program logo

Several certification companies have been accredited by SAGARPA to certify to the Mexican standard (Certimex, CCOF, OCIA, TCOCert, IMO, Mayacert and Metrocert), while others are currently undergoing the accreditation process. Producers and processors from the U.S. selling in México who complete CCOF's México Application may continue to sell in México and to use México's organic logo, under the labeling requirements.

Officials of the USDA and SAGARPA have met on several occasions in México, and in the offices of the USDA in Washington, D.C., to begin negotiations for an equivalence agreement through a bi-national working group. OTA's Mexico Task force has been very active in supporting a potential equivalency agreement.

CCOF recently approved the creation of a chapter for its certified Mexican producers, Productores de CCOF de México. Chapters organize local events, promote and educate consumers, advocate for organic research and programs and reach out to educational institutions. The first CCOF Chapter Meeting was held on November 25, 2015 at the Mr. Lucky processing plant in Celaya, Guanajuato. The meeting included an introduction by the president, Esteban Macías Padilla, to the CCOF certification representative located in Guadalajara, Mexico, Luis Moreno, followed by a tour of the leafy green processing plant, an organic salad and luncheon. The meeting also included tickets to Expo Agroalimentaria in Irapuato, which includes tractors, seeds and all farm-related expositions, including a booth by Oregon Tilth.

*Lois Christie, Fallbrook, California, is a bilingual organic inspector, IOIA member, educator, consultant, and advocate working primarily in the US and Mexico.*



## IFOAM North America: Is there enough critical energy for another organic organization?

By Margaret Scoles, Executive Director

IOIA thinks "yes", but the final answer is yet to be decided. IOIA has been a staunch supporter and affiliate of IFOAM for more than 20 years. We have participated in several IFOAM General Assemblies – held every 3 years. The most recent GA in North America was in British Columbia, CANADA (2002). IOIA was there. We celebrated an alliance forged in the publishing of the jointly copyrighted IFOAM/IOIA International Organic Inspection Manual (published in 2000 in English, French, and Spanish). That manual remains the standard textbook for all IOIA basic courses around the world. Most recently we participated in person at the 2011 AGM in Korea and voted by proxy in Turkey in 2014. The next GA is scheduled for India in 2017. IOIA plans to be there.

A small group of IFOAM affiliates, including IOIA, volunteered earlier this year to spearhead a Steering Committee that could lead to forming an IFOAM North American self-organized structure. The idea is not new. It dates back through many years of informal meetings, mostly held in conjunction with other major events. The IOIA BOD budgeted a modest allotment of hours of IOIA staff time to support the Steering Committee. Sacha Draine, IOIA's International Training Manager, stepped in to join the Executive Director in IOIA's space.

The Steering Committee met on Sept. 16 in Baltimore - by coincidence, the same location where IOIA was founded in 1991. The group explored the idea of a regional structure and took it a step further to draft Proposed Rules of Procedure. In the months prior to the meeting, a survey had been distributed to all IFOAM affiliates located in English-speaking North America. The survey was prepared by IOIA with input from the committee, and distributed by David Gould, IFOAM Value Chain Facilitator & North America Representative. The committee extended an invitation to participate to all English language countries in the Caribbean. Mexico is part of North America but participates in IFOAM Latin America, based on Spanish language.

There are currently 51 members of IFOAM in Canada and the US, and 25 of those members responded – a great response as surveys go. The survey produced extremely helpful information. The feedback was generally positive. Timing seems especially ripe with a North American currently on IFOAM staff (not often the case in the past) and a North American on the IFOAM World Board (Peggy Miars). However, some of the respondents questioned the wisdom of yet another organization or structure. Some hard and valid questions were asked. How will this structure deliver something unique and valuable? The biggest question yet to be answered – is there is enough energy in our organic community or is it already spread too thin? The Committee is in the process of organizing a follow-up communication to all IFOAM NA members, reporting on the work of the Steering Committee, and asking for a general up/down vote of support.

The Steering Committee was attended by Bob Quinn (Kamut International and certified organic farmer), Margaret Scoles (IOIA), David Gould (IFOAM), standing in photo from left to right, Peggy Miars (OMRI and IFOAM World BOD) and Stuart McMillan (IOIA and certified organic farmer), seated.

The committee interacted with Leslie Zuck, a member of the Steering Committee who was not able to attend either of the two meetings in Baltimore, due to conflicts with her OTA Board meetings. The public IFOAM meeting on Sept 18 was attended by additional Steering Committee members Jim Pierce and Ryan Zinn (Dr. Bronner's), and by Katherine DiMatteo, former IFOAM President. Connie Karr of OTCO has since replaced Pierce on the committee.





**NOSB Meeting Report - Stowe, Vermont - October 26 - 28**

IOIA was represented in-person by Vice-Chair Ib Hagsten at the NOSB meeting and associated events. The NOSB meeting was chaired by Dr. Jean Richardson. IOIA submitted written comments to the Crops, Livestock, and Handling Subcommittees in advance. The comments did not address every material up for Sunset Review but were generally in favor of keeping most materials on the respective lists.

The week began with the National Organic Coalition meeting on Oct. 25. Steve Etko, NOC, and Laura Batcha, OTA, gave an update on organic policy. "State of Organic Seed" was presented by Adrienne Shelton, Organic Seed Alliance; Tom Stearns, High Mowing Seeds; and Jim Gerritsen, Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association. "Hydroponics and Organic Agriculture" was another topic, with the atmosphere generally against soil-less production systems as organic. Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont gave the Welcome Address for the NOSB meeting via video. Miles McEvoy gave the NOP Update, and Dr. Lisa Brines of the NOP gave the Materials Update. Vermont's Secretary of Agriculture, Chuck Ross, helped set the tone for the meeting by encouraging everyone to focus on what they had in common, rather than on differences.

The Accredited Certifiers Association hosted a meeting and reception on Oct. 26. Ib Hagsten attended. Topics of discussion included audit trail expectations for producers and inspectors.

Vermont Organic Farmers held a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary party on the evening of Oct. 27 to celebrate the signing of OFPA in 1990. IOIA members attending the party included Dr. Jean Richardson (Outgoing NOSB Chair), Tracy Favre (NOSB Vice-Chair and incoming Chair); Zea Sonnabend (NOSB member), Harriet Behar, Sarah Flack, Maarten Samsom, Kelly Monaghan, Bill Barkley, and Ib Hagsten.

The NOSB faced an impressive agenda of decision-making, including voting on whether or not to keep 175 different materials on the list, plus other proposals. The board did not vote in favor of adding any new materials to the list. Key decisions that will result in materials coming off the lists are listed below. Changes to the list occur only after a final rule is published in the Federal Register.

**Crop** - The annotation for the following material was changed: [§205.601\(l\)\(4\)](#) Lignin sulfonate (floating agent).

NOSB recommended relisting it as a chelating agent and dust suppressant, so it will remain on the list.

**Also, a Motion was passed** to revise the Micronutrients annotation in §205.601(j)(6) from "Soil deficiency must be documented by testing," to "Deficiency must be documented".

**Livestock** - The following material was not relisted and will be removed from the National List §205.603: §205.603(a)(10) Furosemide

**Handling** - The following materials were not relisted and will be removed from the National List §205.606, because organic sources are available.

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| (c) Chia ( <i>Salvia hispanica</i> L.) | (p) Lemongrass-frozen        |
| (e) Dillweed oil                       | (t) Peppers (Chipotle chile) |
| (i) Galangal, frozen                   | (x) Turkish bay leaves       |
| (l) Inulin-oligofructose enriched      | (z) Whey protein concentrate |

**NOSB Meeting Report, from page 7**

In addition, the Handling Subcommittee considered petitioned materials:

- **Motion was passed to revise the Flavors annotation §205.605(a)** to read: *Non-synthetic flavors may be used when organic flavors are not commercially available. All flavors must be derived from organic or nonsynthetic sources only, and must not be produced using synthetic solvents and carrier systems or any artificial preservative.*
- **No vote was taken on whether to list Sodium Lactate and Potassium Lactate in 205.605(b)** for use as an antimicrobial agent. The materials were referred back to subcommittee.

**New book:** "Reclaiming the 'O' Word: Memoir of an Organic Revolutionary" by Grace Gershuny, IOIA Member. NOSB members received preview copies from the author, a Vermonter who helped draft the original US organic regulations. If you are interested in how the regulations came to be, look for it early next year.



Dave Chapman, Long Wind Farm, and 20 Vermont farm families demonstrated peacefully with tractors and a float with a banner "SOIL NOT HYDROPONIC for ORGANIC".

**Don't Let Your Membership Expire!**

As an IOIA member, you're part of a team making sure that "organic" really means organic. Organic certifiers, growers and processors depend upon us as the market for certified organic goods and services expands. Our work as inspectors becomes more important with each passing year.

You should have received our reminder to update your Membership Directory and renew your dues in October. If you've already paid, thank you. If not, please contact us right away! Renewals can be processed on our website but we're also standing by to take your call during normal business hours.

We'll need to know by December 31 if you wish to subscribe to either The Organic Standard (inspectors only) through IOIA's group rate, the Inspector Report (all members) hard copy edition or both.



**Important:** The Membership Directory will be published in February and we do not print updates throughout the year so please modify your listing, as necessary, prior to the end of the year. For a printed copy of the 2015 directory, please reserve now. As usual, we'll publish the mini-directory as an insert to the Winter Edition of the Inspector Report and make it available digitally to all members.

IOIA is working for you (a few examples: Peer Evaluation Program, webinar training options for accessible continuing education, and technical articles in each issue of the newsletter). Honor the work you've done, the purpose we serve and the future we share.

**Please renew today!**



**Comments about Advanced In-Out Balance course with BioAgricert, Mexico, September 2015**

Compiled and translated by Sacha Draine

This course was taught by Luis Brenes, of Costa Rica, shown in group photo, front row second from right.



**Fiorella;** El curso fue práctico, bastante aplicable a mi área de trabajo e interesante porque vi y reforcé puntos que tenía duda o que desconocía al momento de evaluar una empresa o reporte de inspección.

**Fiorella;** The course was practical, rather applicable for my field of work and interesting because showed and reinforced points where I had doubts or didn't know when evaluating a factory or inspection report.

**Sami;** El curso impartido por Luis Brenes, además de ser explicito, fue interesante y lo aprendido, sobre norma NOP e IFOAM sirve para desarrollar mi trabajo de manera más acorde a la interpretación de las normas ya mencionadas.

**Sami;** The course given by Luis Brenes, in addition to being detailed, was interesting and I learned about the NOP and IFOAM standards. It served in doing a better job at the interpretation of the above mentioned standards.

**Mariana;** El curso que impartió Luis Brenes me pareció muy dinámico y los temas actualizados sobre la norma IFOAM para la producción Organica y de proceso. También me pareció muy interesante el tema de análisis de residuos de plaguicidas, era un tema que a mí se me hacía un poco confuso para poder interpretar o entender un poco más los análisis, lo cual Luis Brenes lo explico de una manera sencilla para poder entender, del cual este tema en particular varios colegas de trabajo hicieron varias preguntas y bajos puntos diferentes de opinión y se hizo un intercambio de ideas y preguntas las cuales todas fueron respondidas y aclaradas. Me agrado mucho lo profesional del instructor pues no avanzaba de tema hasta que no nos quedara a todos claro el tema del cual se estaba hablando.

**Mariana;** The course Luis Brenes gave was very dynamic and the subjects current concerning the IFOAM Standard for organic production and processing. The subject of residue analysis of pesticides was very interesting. It had been somewhat of a confusing subject to me to interpret or to understand the analysis of, which Luis Brenes explained in a way easy to understand. Specifically about this subject several work colleagues asked questions based on different opinions, and an exchange of ideas and questions followed, all of which were answered and clarified. I am very thankful for the professionalism of the instructor because he did not move on to the next subject until we understood the one we had been discussing clearly.

**IOIA/OTCO Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings**

**Corvallis, Oregon Sept. 28 – Oct. 2**

Oregon Tilth cosponsored Crop, Processing, and Advanced trainings, all running concurrently. Several OTCO certification staff participated in the courses. The Oregon weather was extraordinary, as was the hospitality. OTCO provided an evening reception on Sept 29 at their office for everyone who could tear themselves away from evening homework. Kelly O'Donnell of OTCO provided support in confirming field trip hosts and arranging documents for the trips. Past IOIA BOD Chair Bob Durst, of nearby Philomath, joined Garry Lean as Assistant Trainer for the basic processing course, including a Group Leader assignment. Peter Bungum of OMRI delivered OMRI generic materials lists on his way to the basic processing training on a bicycle all the way from Eugene – almost 50 miles!

The participant list represented an unprecedented number of different agencies. About half of each basic course came from national, state or private agencies including OTCO, Demeter, OR Dept of Ag, WA Dept of Ag, CO Dept of Ag, MT Dept of Ag, Monterey County, Marin County, SCS, CCOF, NCAT, OMRI, and NOP.

Field trip hosts included Minto Island Growers of Salem, Circle h Farm of Dexter, and the Lewis-Brown Farm on the OSU campus for the crop course. Truitt Bros. of Salem and Wildtime Foods of Eugene hosted the processing groups. IOIA thanks Garth Kahl for Group Leader duty in the Crop course, and Kathy Bowers of the IOIA office who helped with on-site logistics.

Sarah Brown of OTCO/NRCS joined with Jo Ann Baumgartner of Wild Farm Alliance and speakers from the NRCS in two days of IOIA/OTCO Technical Service Provider & Biodiversity Training, for eight participants Sept. 30-Oct. 1.



**Trainers Margaret Scoles and Jonda Crosby with one of the largest classes in recent years – 27 participants on the steps of LaSells Stewart Center on the Oregon State University campus. This is the third IOIA training at this venue. From Florida to Washington and southern California to Alberta, participants learned together and from each other.**



**Assessing pest management and biodiversity amid the Brussels sprouts with Sarah Hucka, Circle h Farm.**



**Processing group with trainer Garry Lean, seated far left.**



**Angela Wartes-Kahl (left) practices good interview technique with Sarah Hucka (right) about her on-farm composting process.**



**To Iowa, To Iowa, To Train for Crops**

By T. Layhew

I was excited when I got to the Stoney Creek hotel, in Des Moines IA, for the Crops inspection training, and not just because of the movie theatre next door. This course was something I had been planning on for a year, and I was excited to see what it would be like. My fellow classmates were from almost every corner of North America, several were from Canada, some from the west coast, and I was pleased to meet a few fellow Wisconsinites there. Our course instructor was Garry Lean, and he was assisted by Jonda Crosby. Between the two of them we learned our OCP's and 205.000's.



**Matt Miller, IOIA inspector member and current president of training cosponsor Iowa Organic Association, was a Group Leader for one of the three field trip groups. Here, he gives an impromptu mini-lecture on determining the potential yield of field corn.**

The first day was the most grueling of the week. After cramming pages of NOP instructions into my brain I thought I was on overload, but at the end of the day I was pleased to discover how much I actually retained. Playing "NOP Rule Bingo," was a blast! From what I could see the entire class was impressed with the recall they had of their knowledge, and that was just the beginning of the course!

The days went by quickly, before I had time to blink we were already taking our field trip. Each group toured great farms in Iowa. My group was actually led by the man who arranged the farms for the field trips, Matt Miller. He told us that Iowa leads the country in organic production of soybeans and corn. We got to see this first hand, since my particular tour was of a classic Iowa row crop farm. It was a new experience for me, my background being in grass-fed beef cattle. As we walked through the field, one of the classmates remarked on the richness of the soil. He picked up a clod of dirt, despite being early November it was still clear of snow, the dirt was dark and firm, high in humic matter.

When we returned from our field trip we distilled our observations from the trip. Each sharing what we noticed about the operation, each focused on a particular aspect of the operation when we were the "inspector." One of the

most interesting things about this class was sharing and hearing the observations of other people from varying backgrounds. My experience led me to notice certain things quickly, while I might have missed something else unless it was mentioned.

After our collective field trips and debriefs, our next obstacle was the report. Everyone had their own method of writing them, some met in the class room and worked independently as a group, personally I wrote it in my room while listening to jazz music. From what I gathered from talking with the other students it was a restless night for everyone. Despite this, we were all ready for the test. I arrived in class a little earlier than everyone else, picking a seat in the back, closer to the snacks.

In life we need to summarize events like these, mostly so that we can somehow manage to explain to people what we experienced. My summary would have to be this: It was educational and thought provoking, I found it delightfully challenging. Age has a habit of making us forget things, and I regret to say I might forget some of the things that happened while there, but one thing I will never forget is this: The duty of an Organic inspector is to report what they see, not what they think.



**Trainer Team – Garry Lean (Ontario, Canada), Lead Trainer, Margaret Scoles, and Jonda Crosby.**

**Iowa Basic Livestock Inspection Course, November 9 - 13**

The group of 15 participants, guided by Garry Lean, Lead Trainer, and Margaret Scoles, Assistant, included both those who had and had not taken a basic crop inspection course, and those with and without inspection experience. A few didn't plan to inspect but needed the course for their regular jobs providing technical assistance to producers.

The biggest challenge for this training was finding a livestock producer in the middle of Iowa willing to allow a group to tramp through their pastures and pens. Iowa was hard hit by the avian flu and biosecurity remains a serious concern. Rosmann Family Farms in Harlan not only agreed to host the entire group, they proved to be hosts extraordinaire.

Rarely does the livestock course have an opportunity to practice inspecting multiple species on one field trip site. Participants divided into two groups for the exercise. One visited the farrow to finish swine operation and the pastured cattle. The second group visited the fat finishing cattle and the layer operation. Then they swapped. Ron and Maria Rosmann and their sons David and Daniel all helped with the field and records inspection. The weather presented a minor challenge. Considering that tornadoes had inflicted damage across Iowa just one day before the field trip, no one complained too much about the snow, a stiff and chilly wind, or the post-storm mud. Walking in the mud with boots covered with plastic booties was just a little bit harder than otherwise, but good modeling for livestock inspectors. Consistently, course participants rate the field trip experience as one of the most valuable experiences of the basic courses. This was no exception.

After a warm lunch at the family's restaurant Milk & Honey, the group debriefed back at the hotel using flip charts. Finally, they took on the task of writing the inspection report before the test next morning.



**Layers on Rosmann Farm produce eggs for the on-farm store and a farm-to-table restaurant in town.**



**The group enjoyed coming in out of the cold & mud to a delightful hot lunch at Milk & Honey, the family's restaurant. Meats and eggs come from the family farm.**



**Iowa Crop Course - 25 participants – a full house.**



## The Pacific Welcomes IOIA to Fiji

reported from <http://www.organicpasifika.com/poetcom/news/training-pacific-organic-inspectors/>

A training targeted at improving Pacific organic producers' ability to access the growing billion dollar global organic market was held in Nadi, Fiji on November 9 – 13. The Organic Inspection Introduction Course equipped 17 organic practitioners from Samoa, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Australia and New Zealand with skills in 3rd party certification. Developing Pacific capacity in this area will ultimately lower certification costs and facilitate the export of organics.



The Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom), housed within the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and the International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA) provided the training with the support of two European Union funded Programmes – the “Pacific Agriculture Policy Project” and the “Increasing Agricultural Commodities Trade Project”, both implemented by SPC. Support was also provided by the National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA), Biogro and Fijian fruit pulp exporter AGRANA.

Currently, a Pacific island producer wanting 3rd party certification in order to meet the requirements of an export market must foot the often expensive costs of getting an organic inspector to inspect their farms or production processes.

“This is an introductory training and trainees will need to undergo more training, field exercises, even shadowing qualified organic food inspectors to qualify as an organic inspector,” said POETCom coordinator Karen Mapusua.

“They will then offer their services to accredited organic certification bodies that hire them to carry out organic certification in Pacific island countries.”

Veteran organic inspector and trainer Luis Brenes from Costa Rica said the Pacific will need more than just organic inspectors to build a strong organic farming landscape. “The Pacific will need lots of extension officers to help farmers get certification by guiding them on the principles, and rules of organic farming,” he said.



George Moli

“So even though some in this training don't become inspectors they will become extension officers for farmers.”

George Moli from the World Vision project in Vanuatu attended part of the training to learn about managing an organic certification system for the benefit of 600 farmers back home.

“We support farmers in growing organic coconuts for sale and the focus is on improving their income levels to alleviate poverty,” he said. “Organics is helping them.”

The training included field trips involving mock inspections of organic farms.

*“The Organic Inspection training was very well conducted, and although intense, it has given me the opportunity to expand my experience from being an organic producer and processor to the next level. I look forward to using this opportunity to carry out further training, in the hope of becoming an inspector from the Pacific for the Pacific.”*

*“A key part to the success of the training was the trainers, (Mr) Luis Brenes and (Mrs) Kathe Purvis. Their combined wealth of knowledge and experience in the field was paramount to the success of their presentations and their practical and common sense application of the IFOAM standards which made it an interesting and rewarding 5 days.”*

Sharmayne Ryan, Papua New Guinea - 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015

## A Foodie writes on the Organic Experience

By Glenda Hamilton, Fiji course participant

It was probably sometime in the sixties when the word Organic was first uttered in relation to healthy food. I imagine it would have been part of a larger Greenie rant. Maybe some kind of protest in opposition to the sawtoothed skyline and smoke stacks of food factories. They didn't love our ugly babies. Margarine. Aerosol cream. Instant noodles. It was about what they didn't want. Fake foods full of poisons. Endless acres of mono crops. Terminator genes and a drug like dependency on synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. Seeds on annual subscription from a multinational. Slave wages. Later it seemed to have a more positive note. It's also what they did want. Healthier land, healthier foods, healthier livelihoods. The sky full of birds, the rivers full of fish. A place to pass on to our grandchildren.

In the Food Industry in Australia for a long time we didn't take it seriously. It was an impractical wish list dreamed up on some commune. That's how we saw it. Then there was a National Standard. Then we were all listening.

We were gathered in Nadi Fiji from many countries to learn about Organic Certification. Poignantly, it was the middle of El Nino drought. The landscape around Nadi looked more like summertime Australia than lush Fiji. Or Keith Richard's face. Water failing in the taps. Dust and Sugarcane soot in the air. We came from afar. Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Australia, Samoa, New Zealand, France, Palau, Costa Rica, and Vanuatu. If we pinned our homes on a map and joined them with string, the circle would have been bigger than Europe.

We learned that most of the major standards today sprung from one mother standard, the IFOAM. We learned about regional offspring standards like tectonic plates, and our place in the Pacific where these plates join. It may mean we need more than one standard for export to Europe, one for Export to Australia, one for Japan. In the Pacific we will need to be the best in the world. Multilingual. Adaptable. As we always are. Then we dismantled those standards and put them back together. Like a clock. Piece by piece.

Finally it was excursion time. Time to put our knowledge to the test. First to a farm, and then to a factory. It's where theory met reality, scribbling down notes in the baking midday heat, and shouting out questions over the clunking metal sounds of a factory. It was hard to fit the information in the right places in the forms. We all felt it; the paperwork confusion. Somehow, we pulled it all together.

The participants were terrific. After hours we ate and talked and drank kava, made a fire on the beach and sung songs of home for each other. I have answers to questions about farming that it never occurred to me to ask. How people in the Pacific have to kill a half tonne animal without a gun, how to make irrigation that flows uphill, how to press the oil from native nuts to heal burns.

For many years I have been a cog in an important mechanical behemoth that is Industrial Agriculture and Food Supply. Feeding the world, but laying waste to the land. I thought on this when I closed my eyes that night, and dreamt of Castles in the Sky. Then it was Saturday. I went with another participant to the mud pools of Nadi. We smeared ourselves in mud, and baked in the sunshine until it dried. We washed and swam and felt clean. Really clean. I was changed in some way by this week. The machine of large scale food supply must remain, but we can step in time to its natural rhythms, we can nourish the earth that nourished us. The behemoth is greening, one cog at a time.



Fiji attendees relax at the end of a long day.



**Assessing Soil Quality in the Field: Common Indicators and Their Interpretation**

by Tony Fleming

2015 is the International Year of the Soil, so this is an opportune time to check up on your skills for assessing how well soil is being managed at the farms you inspect

Soil is a complicated ecosystem—so complex, in fact, that it is commonly likened to an organism unto itself. But unlike their more visible aboveground counterparts, the organisms that make up this ecosystem inhabit a subterranean, and mostly microscopic, realm that goes largely unseen. The interactions of these organisms, among themselves and with soil and plants, are the basis for organic agriculture, not to mention essential to a habitable planet, yet our understanding of this hidden soil food web is far from complete.

As inspectors, the management of the soil should be first and foremost in our considerations, because everything else follows from a healthy soil. But, because most of the key organisms and processes are not directly observable by the naked eye, the question becomes: how can we, as inspectors, meaningfully and reliably assess soil quality within the limitations of our typically brief visits? Engaging the operator to articulate their knowledge and management philosophy is, of course, essential. Beyond that, however, there are several indicators, both visual and sensual, that we can use as proxies to gauge soil quality and determine whether an operation is on the right track. Most involve nothing more than your own senses and a few simple tools (hand lens; shovel, knife, or soil probe), though items like a jar of water and a Munsell soil color chart can also be useful.

The following table summarizes these indicators and their significance viz soil ecosystem services and processes. Indicators are broadly grouped into categories, but it is crucial to keep in mind that: a) there is much overlap and synergy among categories; and b) each indicator is qualitative in nature, and by itself, does not provide a complete picture of soil quality. As a group, however, these indicators have significance for assessing compliance with the rule, but determining whether something about the soil management program constitutes a “noncompliance” is often fraught with judgment – not unlike assessing biodiversity and other “natural resources of the operation” – and is best left to a separate discussion.

Numerous web resources offer further explanation of the terms and concepts presented herein. The NRCS soils website contains well illustrated descriptions of soil properties and processes, and is a good place to start. Many land grant universities also have substantial soil resources on their websites, often geared to specific regions.

**CATEGORY: Significance**

Indicator (useful tools)	Qualitative Rating		
	Best	Fair/Average	Worst

**SOIL STRUCTURE:** Soil structure (sometimes called “tilth”) directly influences a variety of other soil qualities, such as drainage, water holding capacity, rooting ability, and erosion resistance, to name a few. Structure also is closely related to organic matter cycling in most soils. In soil science, structure is characterized by a set of well-defined qualitative and quantitative terms to describe the appearance of soil aggregates, such as “granular”, “angular-blocky”, etc. Structure is important in both the topsoil and subsoil, but for our purposes, we will focus on the topsoil, where we can more easily observe structure.

Indicator	Qualitative Rating		
	Best	Fair/Average	Worst
<b>Aggregation</b> (visual-sensual; jar of water*)	Strong crumb structure; masses of soil easily fall apart or break into crumbs with light finger pressure; tills easily, leaving few or no clods; aggregates stable after 5 minutes submerged in water, water remains clear*	Some crumb structure, larger aggregates may be abundant; significant pressure required to break soil apart; tillage leaves some to many clods; aggregates partly disintegrate in water, water turns cloudy*	Mostly larger aggregates, often not uniform in size and shape; hard to till or break apart; tillage results in many large clods; aggregates completely disintegrate when submerged in water, water quickly turns muddy*
<b>Consistency</b> (tile probe, soil probe, thin wire, or knife)	Loose; easily penetrated to depth of 12” or more with a probe or wire (indicates good subsoil structure); plants have extensive root systems with no evident depth restrictions	Firm; requires more force to penetrate beyond upper few inches; hard horizons may be present at places, though not generally widespread	Dense; typically has a shallow plowpan or other compacted layer that is impossible to penetrate with a small probe or wire. Roots restricted to uppermost part of soil

**Assessing Soil Quality - continued**

<b>Soil Surface</b> (use knife or fingers to expose the top 1-2” of soil)	Open and porous; no evidence of a crust; little or no puddling after heavy rains; uniform and vigorous seedling emergence	Some soil sealing or platy soil aggregates visible, but usually thin and discontinuous; some puddling; some areas may show uneven seedling emergence	A hard crust is visible, and may give the soil surface a “platy” or thinly layered appearance; aggregate shapes parallel soil surface; puddling common; seedling emergence inhibited
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**HYDROLOGY:** Hydrology includes soil drainage, water holding capacity, and susceptibility to erosion, and is thus a key measure of soil health. Soils that do not drain well may experience anaerobic conditions during part of the year, which radically changes the soil ecosystem, geochemistry, and structure in ways not conducive to terrestrial crops. Poorly permeable soils are also sensitive to erosion, causing further losses in productivity and soil biodiversity. Hydrologic problems in soils may be inherent—e.g., the field occupies a former wetland with heavy soils and high water table—or they may result from mismanagement. Some knowledge of the geologic setting can help resolve this question.

<b>Surface drainage</b>	Water drains quickly after heavy rains; little or no standing water in low-lying parts of fields; soil feels moist but not wet after a rain; delays in fieldwork rare and of limited duration; weed populations composed of almost entirely of upland species	Water slower to drain; fields dry and warm more slowly in spring; low-lying areas commonly wet; lengthy fieldwork delays may occur following wet periods; uneven crops; facultative wetland plants may be abundant at places among field weeds	Soil stays wet late into spring; ponded areas common; delays in fieldwork common and/or of long duration; crops yellowed, stunted, or low yielding (lack of oxygen); weeds dominated by facultative or obligate wetland plants
<b>Water-holding capacity</b>	Crops weather dry periods with little loss in vigor or yield; deep topsoil with ample organic matter (promotes water storage)	Crops may start showing signs of water stress during a moderate dry period, especially on knolls and hillsides	Crops lose vigor and appear water stressed during moderate dry spells; thin topsoil and/or low organic matter content
<b>Erosion</b>	Water readily soaks into soil; minimal runoff, even during heavy rains; no rills or other visible evidence of soil movement; few stones visible on soil surface (stones may represent a lag of coarse particles)	Soil absorbs some water; appreciable runoff during heavy rains, some during moderate rains; rills and sediment fans common; localized concentrations of stones on surface in exposed places	Water runs off faster than it can soak into soil; numerous rills and sediment fans; fresh gullies visible on steeper slopes; surface stones abundant on knolls and other places exposed to wind and water

**SOIL ECOSYSTEM:** The health of the soil ecosystem generally determines the long-term success and sustainability of an organic farming enterprise. An out-of-balance soil ecosystem usually reflects a problem in the organic matter cycling in the soil, and may indicate application of inadequate amounts or the wrong kind of organic matter by the operation. In some cases, it may indicate a more systemic soil problem, such as compaction and poor drainage. Imbalances can also result from recent use of synthetic fertilizer or pesticides, the presence of antibiotics (such as in manure), and/or persistent pesticides lingering from before transition to organic. In the field, ecosystem health is estimated from simple qualitative indicators. Laboratory analyses are much more specific.

<b>Earthworms</b>	Abundant—at least 5 visible in a shovelful of soil; soil riddled with tunnels and casts	Sparse—less than 5 in a shovelful; a few tunnels and casts visible	No evidence of earthworm activity
<b>Arthropods</b>	Numerous in a shovel-sized sample; several kinds (ants, sowbugs, springtails, etc.) typically visible	Sparse, may have to hunt to find them, limited diversity of types present	None visible
<b>Residue appearance</b> (note: timing of observation is crucial relative to plowdowns, harvest, etc.)	Residue at all stages of decomposition present in and on topsoil, in broadly subequal amounts; ~50% of added organic matter disappears within a few weeks (ask farmer)	Some un- or minimally decomposed residue visible in or on topsoil; much less than 50% of added organic matter disappears within a few weeks	Little or no undecomposed residue visible in topsoil (decomposition too rapid), or most residue is little decayed (decomposition too slow)

See Soil, page 22



**Soil, from page 21**

<b>Odor</b>	Rich, earthy smell, like a forest floor or well-made compost	Little or no smell	Sour, rank, or moldy smell; astringent, chemical odor
<b>Color</b> (Munsell color chart)	Several inches of dark brown or black topsoil; much darker than subsoil	Topsoil thinner, light to medium brown, distinct from subsoil	Topsoil thin or light colored, not distinct from subsoil

**CROP VIGOR:** *It is well understood that the performance of organic crops is closely linked to soil quality. Most inspectors already have a pretty good idea of what to look for in the way of crop vigor: uniform, deep green color; even stands with few/no gaps; rapid, even seedling emergence and growth; no evidence of stress or serious disorders under normal growing conditions, etc., so I won't devote much space to this category. The emphasis here is on what we can see in the soil, namely root systems. An important caveat is that crop vigor is perhaps more indirect than some of the other soil quality indicators, since other factors can influence field performance: for example, even the best soil conditions may not be able to entirely overcome extreme short-term climatic fluctuations (a cold, wet spring, or protracted drought during the growing season). Thus, crop performance must be interpreted in context.*

<b>Root System</b>	Large, spreading root system fills out soil structure with no apparent constraints; abundant fine roots; soil adheres strongly to roots; many rhizobia on leguminous crop roots	Root system less filled out; fewer fine roots; some evidence of lateral or vertical restriction; sparse rhizobia; some soil particles cling to roots	Root system small and obviously constrained; few or no fine roots; large areas of soil lack roots; soil adheres to roots weakly or not at all
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**ORGANIC MATTER MANAGEMENT:** *Many soil assessment systems include organic matter as just one indicator within a broader "Soil Fertility Management" category, along with nutrient levels (as determined from soil tests), soil pH, and other traditional indicators. In organic systems, however, organic matter management is perhaps THE single most important determinant of both short- and long-term soil fertility, which depends on stimulating and maintaining a healthy, balanced population of soil microbes and macroinvertebrates, whose action on organic matter in turn supplies the nutrients at the rate needed by the crop. Moreover, how organic matter is managed has a major influence on other aspects of the operation, including nutrient budgets, soil conservation, and water quality. In this category, assessing the operator's understanding of organic matter may be just as important as direct observation.*

<b>Rotation</b>	Operation consistently follows a long, diverse rotation that includes liberal use of multiple cover crops including legumes and grasses	Operation consistently follows a shorter rotation with occasional use of mostly one species of cover crop that may or may not include a legume	Operation follows a short rotation consisting mainly of cash crops; cover crops seldom, if ever, used; fertility mainly from soluble nutrient sources (e.g., poultry litter)
<b>Residue Management</b>	Residues of most or all crops left on surface of soil or worked into top 2-3" of soil to decompose	Residues of some crops left on surface or worked into topsoil	Residues mostly removed during harvest or by wind erosion

(see also Residue Appearance, under Soil Ecosystem)

<b>Other Sources of Organic Matter</b>	Organic matter additions occur on a regular schedule designed to maintain all stages of organic matter (labile, active, passive)	Organic matter additions more sporadic; operator may not be familiar with concept of organic matter cycling in soils	Organic matter additions irregular or incidental and consist mainly of cash crop residues or incidental OM present in purchased fertility inputs
<b>Frequency</b>	Operation derives bulk of fertility from compost, manure, and use of cover crops timed to release or catch nutrients needed by following or preceding crops	Fertility derived in part from manure, compost, and cover crops, and partly from more soluble sources of nutrients. Cover crop timing may not be optimal	Fertility derived chiefly from more soluble sources of nutrients with low organic matter content and limited biological activity

**Soil, from page 22**

**SOIL TEXTURE:** Soil texture refers to the proportion of sand, silt, and clay in the soil matrix, as well as the proportion of larger particles (gravel, cobbles, boulders) relative to the matrix. Soil texture is a function of several variables, most importantly, parent material and geologic (weathering) history. Position in the landscape is another key factor.

Soil texture is inherently neither good or bad, nor can it readily be changed (if at all) by management practices, ergo, it is not rated here like the other categories. However, the texture of any given soil greatly affects other soil properties and often influences the choice, timing, and efficacy of various management practices.

For example, silty soils tend to be prone to wind erosion, while clayey soils are more susceptible to water erosion and may be seasonally wet. Sandy soils, on the other hand, tend to be warmer and more permeable, and thus are prone to losing nutrients to leaching and organic matter to oxidation more rapidly than finer-grained soils. Therefore, having at least a general idea about the soil texture can be quite useful for understanding and interpreting other characteristics and management practices that influence soil quality.

Hand texturing is a very simple way to identify the soil texture, and doesn't require any special tools or expertise. But rather than filling up another page describing the steps, I recommend watching any of several, short instructive videos on the topic. Go online and search for "soil texture by feel videos".

Another way to obtain soil texture information is via Web Soil Survey (<http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>), where you can easily generate a custom soil report for any place in the US and its territories, down to the individual farm level. The report includes a soil map and data about the properties of each soil series mapped in the area or farm of interest. The published county soil survey (typically available in libraries and NRCS offices) contains the same information.

**SOIL COLOR:** Like texture, the color of the soil is neither good or bad in and of itself, but can reveal important clues about environmental conditions and soil health. Judging soil color can be done just with your naked eye, but I like to use a Munsell Soil Color Chart, which contains standardized color palettes with the names (e.g., dark grayish brown) and specific numbers (e.g., 10YR 4/2) for each color in the palette. Either way, this is best done when the soil is moist.

Soil color is useful for many kinds of assessments. For organic production, three common applications are organic matter management, moisture status, and historical erosion. Examine the topsoil and, if possible, the top of the subsoil. In a healthy soil, the topsoil should be *distinctly* darker than the subsoil (several values lower on a Munsell soil chart), indicating the presence of appreciable organic matter. Healthy topsoil is usually dark brown (moist color), while subsoil tends to be yellowish brown or lighter in color. If a color difference is difficult to discern, then there is a problem, such as inadequate organic matter or historical topsoil erosion.

There also is a sharp color contrast between well drained soils and those that are periodically or chronically wet. Well-drained soils typically exhibit bright colors – combinations of brown, yellow, orange, red – indicating oxidizing conditions, whereas wet soils usually exhibit dull, gray-green colors. Soils with a seasonally high water table that fluctuates through the soil profile typically have mottled colors, most commonly expressed by brightly colored mottles in a dull gray matrix. Gleyed soils are a special case that indicate chronic anaerobic conditions, manifested by olive to bluish-gray colors. If gleyed colors are present, the producer really needs to think about putting those areas in the wetland reserve program (or switching to rice and watercress as the cash crops)! ☺



**Ariel Russell (California) assesses soil quality up close on a field trip during the basic organic crop inspection course in Oregon. Russell was taking the course with the assistance of the Andrew Rutherford Scholarship for 2015.**



**Board of Directors Minutes Highlights***(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website.)***Conference Call - July 30, 2015**

BOD members present: Stuart McMillan (SM - Chair), Pam Sullivan (PS), Amanda Birk (AB), Isidor Yu (IY), Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), and Margaret Scoles, ED (MS). Joining later: Garth Kahl (GK), Secretary. Notetaker: Margaret Scoles. Absent: Ib Hagsten (IH).

**Treasurer's Report:** PS presents her report and the 2nd quarter financial reports. The Profit/Loss Budget vs Actual shows that we are on track. Both Total Income and Total Expense are running about \$20,000 less than projected. **AB moves/MA seconds to accept the Treasurer's Report and 2nd Quarter financials.** Unanimous approval.

**IRS 990 approval:** The IRS 990, as prepared by IOIA's accountants (Gardner and Billings, CPAs) and reviewed by IOIA's ED, Treasurer, and Bookkeeper, was provided to the BOD members by email. **AB moves/IY seconds to approve the 990 for submission to the IRS.** Unanimous approval.

**IOIA Audit Policy:** MS gave a summary of the supporting documents provided to the BOD, plus a note that she had spoken to Melissa Billing, CPA at Gardner and Billing about the Audit Policy. IOIA approved the current Audit Policy in 2008, IOIA has had one audit (2007 audit of 2006 books) and one Agreed Upon Procedures (in 2013 of 2012 books), both by certified accountants. IOIA is not required to have an audit, other than by IOIA's policy. When IOIA adopted the policy, the BOD was not fully aware of the cost of a full audit, or that "a formal financial audit by an independent auditing firm" had a very specific definition. It is time to change the policy or abide by it. Consensus is to present a revision to the Audit Policy to the BOD for vote at next meeting. Expand the current "formal financial audit" to include a range of options available to the BOD including Agreed Upon Procedures. IOIA should budget for it annually, knowing that it is unlikely to happen every year. Timing and determining if one occurs is the BOD's responsibility. MS notes that it is very helpful to have the BOD Treasurer present in the IOIA office for any type of audit activity. Decision to ask for a draft revision created by Gardner and Billings, IOIA accountants. They are very familiar with the history, and have provided letters of opinion and explanation to guide the BOD on the topic of audit for many years.

**Expo East and OTA AGM - Baltimore - Sept 16-19:** IOIA has received a free nonprofit booth at Expo East. IOIA's booth is in Korea for the IFOAM Conference, so a new display, slightly updated, has been ordered, complete with shipping case. The older display will stay in Korea for the 2016 AGM.

**Food Safety Initiative: Jonda Crosby, IOIA Training Services Director, joins the call.** MS gave brief background. IOIA originally got involved with the Local Farmer program in 2013. In 2014, Jonda agreed to spearhead the initiative for IOIA. She and the IOIA team went to California and were trained. They developed the Regional Independent Verifier training for second party verifiers. The training has been offered both in-person (Costa Rica in 2014 and 3 trainings in Montana in 2015) and by webinar - once in 2014. IOIA expected that this would provide another work opportunity for organic inspectors. The cost of developing the program was significantly more than we expected, and the payback through trainings has been very modest. Largely due to Jonda's efforts, IOIA joined as a partner in a project in MT, funded federally and administered through the MT Dept of Ag, that has recouped all of the actual cash expense in the program. This is the first of a two-year project, and IOIA expects to generate profit for next year. Jonda has been trained as a RIV trainer, a GAP auditor, and is certified in HACCP. This all makes her more valuable to IOIA. In addition, she is currently doing RIV verifications through the MT project which is adding to her experience and expertise. BOD members express their appreciation to Jonda for her work on this initiative and for her part in securing funding. Jonda provided the results of a Survey Monkey done with all RIV participants to date. We have learned that there are more GAP auditors than we thought at first. And there is less participation in the Local Farmer program than was initially expected. We are ahead of the curve - we trained more people than there is work for just yet. Another Food Safety option

**Board Minutes Highlights**

has emerged. In the 3 MT trainings delivered in 2015, most of the participants were farmers. Our partner (Lake County Community Development Corp/Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center) has asked IOIA to reorganize the second year of the project to gear the training for farmers rather than verifiers. Enough verifiers have been trained in the state. IOIA would make a new training (GAP/GHP). GK - Doesn't think the members would support putting money into it, but if it generates money for IOIA, good. No decision required a vote. No vote taken. Yes, work with our MT partner to develop training for farmers.

**2016 AGM in Korea:** IY visited Jeju Island last week. He reported on the results of the survey of Asian members.

**IOIA Accreditation Program: Next steps?** The new inspector accreditation program would grow hand in hand with Peer Evaluation and the re-vamped training structure. Consensus - Let's keep IOIA ownership of it. It is possible that we will end up +\$20,000 at the end of the year, and that would give us the seed money we need to start the new program. We can fund it with 3 legs of the stool - Inspectors pay something to participate, certifiers pay through the Peer Evaluation program, and we need to further explore how to access public/private funding support from the sector. **No decision required a vote. This topic will stay on the agenda for future meetings.**

**Conference Call – Sept. 11, 2015**

All BOD members present: Stuart McMillan (SM - Chair), Ib Hagsten (IH), Pam Sullivan (PS), Garth Kahl (GK), Secretary, Amanda Birk (AB), Isidor Yu (IY), Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), and Margaret Scoles, ED (MS). ED: Margaret Scoles. IH chairs the meeting until SM can take over.

**Set 2016 Membership Dues:** PS suggest we not raise dues because we are looking at a positive bottom line and have already implemented gradually increasing dues for certification agencies. **PS moves/GK seconds that we do not change the dues structure for any category for 2016.** Unanimous approval.

**IOIA Audit Policy:** Discussion of IOIA Audit Policy Change. **GK moves/PS seconds to accept the modified IOIA Financial Audit Policy.** Unanimous approval.

**Accreditation Question from Accreditation Committee Chair:** Discussion of Christopher Warren Smith's email to MS of 9/1/15 regarding BOD's position with respect to appeals of ARP decisions and whether or not an applicant will be able to submit additional information. Stuart will respond to CWS in his role as chair.

**Peer Evaluation Program:** MS has needed to put many unforeseen hours into Peer Evaluation. Certifiers are mostly grateful, although there is a lot of pushback against NOP 2027 on the part of certifiers. Cost issue- are we prepared to lose money on this? Single or far-flung inspectors will be costly to evaluate at this point. **IH moves/PS seconds that we authorize MS to lose up to \$5K on Peer Evaluation.** Unanimous approval.

**Agenda Item #13 NOSB meeting:** Discussion of NOSB sunset materials. **GK moves/IH seconds we approve IH going to NOSB if it fits into his schedule and his health allows.** Unanimous approval.

**Conference Call – Oct. 16, 2015**

Present: Stuart McMillan, Ib Hagsten, Pam Sullivan, Isidor Yu, Margaret Anne Weigelt, plus Margaret Scoles, ED (MS). Absent: Garth Kahl and Amanda Birk (due to the anticipated birth of her child). Notetaker: MS



**Minutes Highlights, from page 25**

**Treasurer’s Report – 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr:** Pam presents the report – we are currently in a very positive financial situation – a remarkable difference from this time last year. Refers BoD to the Balance Sheet (previous year comparison). The Draft 2016 Budget is presented to the BoD, but Pam asks that we hold discussion for the Dec. 1 meeting, after the Finance Committee meeting on Oct. 27. **(MA moves to accept Treasurer’s Report and 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. Financial reports. Ib seconds.** Unanimously approved.

**IOIA’s NOSB Comments:** The ED will be commenting on Oct 20 on the web session. For the first time, this meeting is being preceded by two web-based comment sessions. IH will attend the meeting in Vermont. He will comment in person, attend the NOC meeting, and attend the ACA Reception on behalf of IOIA. IOIA submitted written comments on Oct. 8 to the Crops, Livestock, and Handling subcommittees. We did not comment on all materials, and we tended to make most of our comments positive – which materials we thought should stay on this list. MS sent a thank-you to Gwendolyn Wyard of OTA for their work on surveying their members, consolidating those comments, and sharing them with OTA members. OTA’s work was significant in helping us to organize IOIA’s comments. Stuart commends IOIA for having 3 different people from among the BoD and staff commenting this round.

**Report from Korean Expo:** Isidor reported on the activities at the ISOFAR 2015 Goesan – International Organic EXPO in Goesan. ISOFAR is the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research. IOIA’s booth was up and staffed Sept. 18-23 during the international segment. IOIA was one of the 250 participating enterprises and organizations. Raymond Yang and Isidor prepared fliers that promoted the 2016 events in Korea. Raymond met with Andre Leu, the IFOAM President. Action Point: MS will communicate by email to follow up with the minister of Bhutan. Stuart will also work with MS to prepare a letter from the BOD. MS is also to communicate with IFOAM Asia president.

**Peer Evaluation Report:** MS gave a summary. Peer Field Evaluation has been a key activity since Aug. 1. The pilot is very successful, and it seems likely that IOIA will cover our costs at least. We have turned down no inspectors, but it was not possible to evaluate a few. We received 100 evaluation requests total from 10 certification programs, representing 56 inspectors. Of the 100, 71 have been completed, 11 are in the process of being scheduled. Action Point: IOIA should survey the inspectors who have been evaluated.

**IFOAM North America:** MS and Stuart refer BoD to the ED Report summary of activities to date, including the Steering Committee meeting in Baltimore. The survey prepared by MS and Sacha, and distributed by David Gould, IFOAM, produced extremely helpful results. There are currently 51 members of IFOAM in Canada and the US, and 25 of those members responded. The Steering Committee agreed that there should be no additional membership dues to participate. The budget available will probably be less than \$10,000 to start, because it is based on a percentage of IFOAM Global dues paid by members in North America. The decision of the committee was to extend an invitation to participate to all English language countries in the Caribbean. Mexico, although part of North America, participates in IFOAM South America, based on Spanish language.

The Steering Committee was attended by David Gould (IFOAM), Stuart (IOIA and certified organic farmer) Margaret (IOIA), Bob Quinn (Kamut International and certified organic farmer), and Peggy Miars (OMRI and IFOAM World BoD member). The committee interacted with Leslie Zuck, a member of the Steering Committee who was not able to attend either of the two IFOAM NA meetings in Baltimore. The IFOAM meeting on Sept 18 was attended by additional Steering Committee members Jim Pierce and Ryan Zinn (Bronners), and by Katherine DiMatteo, former IFOAM President.

The Committee is in the process of organizing a follow-up communication to all IFOAM NA members, reporting on the work of the Steering Committee, and asking for a general up/down vote of support.

**Drones Slated for Registration**

Owners of drones in the US will soon have to register their machines with the US Department of Transportation, as the federal government attempts to regulate the devices more tightly. As reported by NBC News, the government will work with drone manufacturers and owners to create a system for drone registration, in new regulations that could be in place in time for Christmas, when drones are expected to be a popular present. Governments all around the world are growing more concerned about drones, which have recently disrupted air traffic or flown into sensitive areas.

However, the US government is one of the first to take steps to introduce full registration and regulation. In March this year, the House of Lords called on the EU to introduce a compulsory system of registration, but the plans have stalled. Currently, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is responsible for regulating the use of drones in the UK, with the rules stating that no unmanned aircraft can be flown within 150 metres of any busy area, or within 50 metres of any vehicle or structure not controlled by the drone operator. Drone owners in the UK do not have to register their devices with any authorities, although operators need to get permission from the CAA to fly drones for commercial use, or to fly their unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) above 400 metres in altitude or further than 500 metres horizontally from themselves. The civilian use of drones was practically unheard of a few years

ago but it has recently exploded in popularity, with sophisticated ready-built drones available for as little as £100 on the high street. Reliable and advanced drones can be bought fairly cheaply, and a mounted camera that can provide a live video feed to the operator is fairly easy to set up. This increase in popularity has coincided with a number of close calls - in July, a jet with 159 people on board narrowly avoided colliding with a drone as it came into land at New York’s John F Kennedy Airport.

*Doug Bolton independent, UK  
Monday 19 October 2015*

**GMO News**

**FDA publishes final guidance on voluntary GM labeling**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published final guidance in late October for companies who want to voluntarily label whether foods have or have not been produced or processed with genetically modified organisms. This guidance from FDA has been 14 years in the making: FDA released draft guidance on voluntary GMO labeling on Jan. 18, 2001, and public comment closed on March 19, 2001. FDA finalized this guidance without reopening the process for public comment. FDA also made the decision to not endorse the term Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) as an acceptable term to describe the use of modern biotechnology. However, FDA did reaffirm that organic certification by NOP is sufficient to substantiate a claim that a food was not produced with GMOs.

*OTA NewsFlash, Nov 24, 2015*

**GMO News**

**Mexico Blocks Monsanto**  
Opponents of GMOs have claimed victory after Mexico’s Supreme Court blocked a move that would allow the cultivation of GMO soy in the Mexican states of Campeche and Yucatan. In a separate appeals court decision, a federal judge upheld a 2013 ruling that barred companies such as Monsanto and DuPont/Pioneer from planting or selling their GMO corn within the country’s borders.

**FDA approves GM salmon**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved salmon that has been genetically modified for commercial production and sale. Developed by Massachusetts-based AquaBounty Technologies to grow faster than regular Atlantic salmon, this is the first genetically modified farm animal approved for sale in the United States. AquaBounty first sought approval for the product in 1995 and estimates it will take several years for the fish to hit the market. According to the FDA, AquaBounty will not be required to label its salmon as genetically engineered because they only require labeling “if there is a material difference – such as a different nutritional profile.” In the AquaBounty case, they “did not find any such differences.” So far, three major US retailers – Target, Whole Foods and Costco – have indicated that they will not sell the salmon when it becomes available. Starting today, FDA will accept public comment on its draft guidance for voluntary labeling indicating whether food has or has not been derived from GE Atlantic salmon.





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

### 2016 Calendar

**January 13 - 15 2016** Accredited Certifiers Assn. Annual Meeting and training and NOP training, Savannah, Georgia

**January 20** Organic Agriculture Research Symposium, Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, CA. [Learn more](#)  
[Online registration](#)

**January 20 - 23** [36th Annual EcoFarm Conference](#). Regenerating Our Lands and Water.

**January 28 - 31** [Guelph Organic Conference](#), Guelph University Center.

**January 28 - 30** Virginia Association of Biological Farmers, Bedford, VA.

**January 29 - 31** The Mexican Healthy Products Summit....Your Connection to the Mexican Market - Puerto Vallarta, Mexico  
Info: [www.healthyproductssummit.com](http://www.healthyproductssummit.com)

**February 3 - 6** Organic Seed Alliance (OSA), along with co-hosts Washington State University, Oregon State University, and eOrganic, will hold the 8th Organic Seed Growers Conference in Corvallis, Oregon, "Cultivating Resilience."

More than 90 experts will present at the conference. A full agenda with speakers can be found at [www.seedalliance.org](http://www.seedalliance.org).

**February 25 - 27** [27th Annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference](#), La Crosse, WI.

**February 26 - 28** [COABC 2016 Conference](#), Vandana Shiva keynote.

**March 9 - 13** Expo West. [Education, Events & Trade Show](#). Anaheim, CA.

**May 23 - 27** Washington, DC OTA's Policy Conference & Hill Visit Days 2016

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