



## Organic Integrity Learning Center Enhancement Project, United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, National Organic Program

Every certified organic farm and business is inspected at least once a year by a network of organic certifiers and inspectors. In response to COVID-19, some renewal inspections are being conducted virtually or are being delayed. This has directly impacted some independent organic inspectors, some of whom can't travel right now.

To maximize the benefit of these inspectors' expertise, a collaborative team that includes the USDA National Organic Program,

A P Ventures LLC, and the International Organic Inspectors Association, has launched a project to pull in experienced organic inspectors to develop new learning content for the Organic integrity Learning Center.

Experienced professionals with unique knowledge are invited to contribute to the Learning Center Enhancement Project. This funding source for inspectors will result in specific additions to the Learning Center.

To support this project, the International Organic Inspectors Association is working collaboratively to contract with experienced professionals to protect organic integrity. Leveraging their unique and relevant knowledge, these professionals have been assigned to complete project-based tasks. Assignments include conducting an opportunity analysis, developing an enhancement plan, creating knowledge checks, writing new content, and developing instructional media.

**Project Sponsors:** United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, National Organic Program ([USDA AMS NOP](#)), A P Ventures, LLC ([APV](#)), International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA).

**Note:** Complete information, job descriptions and applications links were posted to the IOIA [Job Board page](#) in early May. Contracts were offered to two dozen IOIA members a few weeks later as the first step in completing this project.

## Notes from the Chair

by Lois Christie

Even through this difficult time of COVID-19, wonderful things have happened. I am nearly 90 days into the isolation and when this started, it was cold, wet and rainy, and now spring has arrived. As I walk around my small property at Casa Aziz in Fallbrook (aptly named because I bought it "as is"), I see so many different flowers and fruits in bloom (blueberries, blackberries, loquats). It is amazing because I only have what will grow without much care because I travel so much – and most of my landscaping has been here for 60 years. For me, being off the road has been wonderful, although I am busier than ever, and I really miss my family (2 kids and 7 grandkids)! It has been an incredibly busy time for IOIA in support of the members' needs. We created and held the weekly See Notes, p 4

**New Inspector Members**

Susanna Dzejachok, Cleveland, OH  
Ive Eddy, Longmont, CO  
Verónica Marquez Ledesma, Chula Vista, CA

**Returning Inspector Members**

Tim Barnaud, Belle Fourche, SD  
Jessica Black, Venice/Los Angeles, CA  
Joseph Black, Rutledge, MO  
Trish (Grim) Clarkweiss, Rutledge, MO  
Trish Dougherty, Viroqua, WI  
John Gadbois, Cheshire, ME  
Ariel Herrod, Ellicott City, MD |  
Evrett Lunquist, Raymond, NB  
Jill Morganelli, Pasadena, CA  
Jennifer Silverman, Embudo, New Mexico  
Bill Stoneman, McFarland, WI  
Antonin van der Lely, Kelowna, BC  
Canada

**Upgrading to Inspector**

Pamela Coleman, Ithica, NY  
Lisa Easler, Portland, OR  
Steve Jack, Vega, AB, Canada  
Wendi Jennings, Lake City, FL  
Kim Knapp, Rome, PA  
Dana McWayne, Eugene, OR

**New Supporting Individuals**

Megan Allen, Reno, NV  
Amy Fariss, Cedar Creek, TX  
Ann Marie Hourigan, Austin, TX  
Christopher T. Lent, Shickshinny, PA  
Margaret Liddiard, Susanville, CA  
Keith A. Moehn, Hilbert, WI  
Laura Natrasony, Fork River, AB,  
Canada  
Abbey Roggenbuck, Ft. Lauderdale, FL  
Rachel Winograd, Kingston, NY

**IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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The Inspectors' Report is the newsletter of International Organic Inspectors Association. IOIA is a 501 (c)(3) educational organization. Our mission is to address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors, to provide quality inspector training and to promote integrity and consistency in the organic certification process.  
Editor: Diane Cooner [webgal@ioia.net](mailto:webgal@ioia.net)

**WEBINAR Training Schedule**

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

**100 Level Webinar - June 29 & July 2, 2020**

**NOP Processing Standards**  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two 3 hour sessions.  
Trainer: Garry Lean IOIA member cost \$325

**100 Level Webinar - August 18 & 21, 2020**

**NOP Processing Standards**  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two 3 hour sessions.  
Trainer: Luis Brenes IOIA member cost \$325

**300 Level Webinar - September 1, 2020**

**Organic Cosmetics**  
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two 2 hour sessions with a 1 hour break.  
Trainer: Gay Timmons IOIA member cost \$325

**100 Level Webinar - September 22 & 29, 2020**

**IOIA/COTA COR Processing Standards**  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two 3 hour sessions.  
Trainer: Kelly Monaghan IOIA member cost \$325 (IOIA and COTA, \$300)

**100 Level Webinar - October 27 and 30, 2020**

**NOP Processing Standards**  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two 3 hour sessions.  
Trainer: Luis Brenes IOIA member cost \$325

**200 Level Webinar - November 17 and 20, 2020**  
**Livestock Feed Audits - Grazing and Non Grazing Season**

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two 3 hour sessions.  
Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm IOIA member cost \$300

**200 Level Webinar - December 1-8, 2020**  
**Processing In/Out Balances, Traceability & Recipe Verification under NOP & COR**

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two 3 hour sessions.  
Trainer: Kelly A. Monaghan IOIA member cost \$275

**Webinar Discount Note:**

All IOIA Inspector Members are eligible for 1 half-price webinar in 2020.

**In Memoriam: David Dahmen**

CCOF Staff Inspector and IOIA Inspector Member David Dahmen passed away peacefully in his sleep at his home in Santa Maria, California in mid-May. IOIA learned of his passing from a neighbor and later received a communique from CCOF. David was passionate about organic and known by everyone to be a kind, trustworthy, and friendly person. He took his first IOIA training in 1998 and was a member for 20 years, often upgrading his credentials with IOIA advanced training and other continuing education. He was IOIA accredited in the Processing scope 2005-2019. He worked previously for Horizon Organic Dairy (Director of Quality) and Morningstar West (QA Manager). He held a B.S. in Microbiology from Cal Poly, with Minors in Biochemistry & Organic See Dahmen, p.4



**David Dahmen is survived by his wife Kim**

**LIVE Online and Onsite Training Schedules**  
 full details and applications at [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net)

Due to the pandemic, we have shifted our spring and summer courses to a **Live Online** format. We were hoping to be able to offer in-person courses in late fall but it remains to be seen whether this is possible.

**June 22-26, 2020**

**Live Online Basic Crop Inspection Training**

The course provides basic level training to develop skills required for inspecting and reporting on the management of an organic crop production unit according to USDA NOP standards. **This course is full and will be offered again in the fall.**  
[Course Agenda](#)

**July 6-10, 2020**

**Live Online Basic Livestock Inspection Training**

To take this course, you must complete a 100-level NOP Livestock Standards Webinar (2 sessions of 3 hours each). **Separate registration is required for this webinar unless previously completed.** Additional Requirements for the course include participant reliable internet, a computer, and computer literacy.

**The application Deadline of June 4, 2020 has been extended.** Registration and Application is a 3-step process.

[Detailed Course Information - PLEASE READ BEFORE REGISTERING](#)  
[Course Agenda](#)

**July 20-24, 2020**

**Live Online Basic Processing Inspection Training**

To take this course, you must complete a 100-level NOP Processing Standards Webinar (2 sessions of 3 hours each). **Separate registration is required for this webinar unless previously completed.** Additional Requirements for the course include participant reliable internet, a computer, and computer literacy.

**Application Deadline is June 19, 2020.** Registration and Application is a 3-step process.

[Detailed Course Information - PLEASE READ BEFORE REGISTERING](#)  
[Course Agenda](#)

**Onsite Trainings**

**October 5 - 9, Saco, Maine This training has been postponed to 2021.**  
**Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Training**

**November 2-13, 2020 - Farmington, Minnesota**  
**This course is still scheduled, but this may change.**  
**Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Training**

**Postponed!**

A recent decision has been made by the Organic Connections Board of Directors. They have made the difficult decision to **postpone** the 2020 Organic Connections Conference & Trade Show in November. This will **include the Inspector Training** that had been organized. The decision was made in response to the provincial government's announcement that large gatherings are unlikely to return until 2021. OC looks forward to including this inspector training in the next event as soon as it is possible.



**Advanced Inspector Training**  
 Hosted at  
 2020 Organic Connections Conference & Trade Show  
 Nov. 4, 2020 8:30am-5pm  
 Prairieland Park, Saskatoon, SK




IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training in conjunction with the Organic Connections Conference. This training will include a review of key COS updates, a hands-on audit exercise, technology tips for inspectors, and fraud detection.

For Training Info, Phone:  
 1 (406) 436-2031

For info about Organic Connections:  
 1 (306) 221-7950  
[www.organicconnections.ca](http://www.organicconnections.ca)



**Dahmen, from page 1**

Chemistry and an emphasis on Sanitary & Environmental Bacteriology, & Food Plant Quality Control. In his spare time, he was a Dojo Sensei for the Kodakai Organization, of which he was a founding member.

If you would like to send a personal card to his wife Kim & daughter Stephanie, the address is 4453 Foxenwood Lane, Santa Maria, CA 93455.

A memorial fund has been set up for donations in David's name to support preservation of the Daito-ryu Aikijujutsu Kodokai.

Here is the link. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-david-dahmen-sensei-kodokai-memorial-fund>

*David had a fun side. A fond memory is at an Expo West in Anaheim when David asked if I would like a ride in a pedal buggy. He immediately stopped one, loaded me up, and wheeled me up and down the sidewalk. We were both laughing all the way. It is how I will remember him.- Margaret Scoles*

**Notes, from page 1**

Town Hall meetings, which have included round tables, sharing of remote/virtual inspection ideas and trainings, and hosted by the amazing Terrance Layhew (thank you T) and the wonderful committee who have put so much time and effort into these Town Halls (thank you Patti Bursten Deutsch, Amanda Birk, Garth Kahl, Rachel Cherry Myers and, well, myself - our committee is named PAL's). It has been a joy working with all of you and moving forward to creating a training for virtual/remote inspections that was just presented by Garth Kahl – Garth is so knowledgeable and did a great job with the training – we have all had a lot of hands on experience with performing remote inspections, and that made all the difference.

We are now in another crises – the protesting and unfortunate rioting that has come along with the protesters. One of my inspections was located in Los Angeles where both rioting is occurring and COVID cases are strong. I was given approval to change this inspection from a hybrid to a full remote inspection. This is a new challenge for our inspectors

and something I am hoping can be addressed with our new remote practices.

Margaret has been isolated in her office and very busy indeed. Our Monday calls and the Board meetings have opened up a whole new world of IOIA to me. I have always considered IOIA to be my one support in this lonely world of inspecting, and it is now an honor to understand the inner workings of IOIA as the Board Chair and what it really does for inspecting and inspectors -- I cannot imagine our industry, nor my work without it. During these trying times, IOIA has stepped into an important role of protecting our inspectors, bringing forth information, trainings and support, and by asking the USDA NOP if there was any emergency funding available for inspectors, a contract was signed that has translated into work for inspectors, many of whom have had little income during these tough times. Two dozen IOIA Inspector members will benefit from this incredible opportunity to help enhance the Organic Integrity Learning Center.

See you at the next Town Hall!

*Lois*

Lois Christie  
IOIA Board Chair

**Thought for the times**

**Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.**

**— Margaret Mead**



## Notes from the ED by Margaret Scoles

Alive and well and keeping our heads above water? No, IOIA is doing much better than that. Since last issue, when COVID-19 was just rearing its dragon head, IOIA has essentially turned an ocean liner around in the middle of an ocean with a small steering wheel. We did it. How? HEROES – many heroes. The response of staff, board, and members has been nothing short of heroic.

After decades of ever-expanding growth in our sector and in the need for organic inspectors we were stopped in our tracks. Inspectors had to stop moving. Our largest revenue stream (basic training) was frozen. Neither participants nor trainers nor staff could travel to our trainings. We are an organization of members who travel for a living and IOIA makes its “living” serving people traveling to our trainings. We didn’t freeze and we didn’t panic. We rose to the challenge, and we re-directed energies.

These notes are a “Reader’s Digest Condensed version” of the issue. Articles within cover every major initiative that IOIA has undertaken in the last 3 months. And there are SO MANY!

### A bit of chronology –

**March 13** – National Emergency declared in the US.

**March 14-** IOIA cancelled the first of its series of spring trainings, beginning on March 16 in SC. The day started with a phone call to every participant.

**March 15** – Special (aka Emergency) BOD meeting called – every Director was present! The BOD has put in countless hours since they were elected in early Feb. – HEROES every one.

**March 16 – a busy day!** – IOIA’s Board met with the NOP’s Deputy Administrator. We explained the dire situation of independent inspectors, including the risk that experience would exit the organic inspector field even more quickly in the face of COVID-19. The risk of losing human capital was urgent. We asked about potential

sources of funding support for inspectors. Ultimately, this conversation led to the OILC Enhancement Project and contracts with two dozen IOIA inspector members. We created a link on our website for related news, and we posted our position about organic inspections during the pandemic. ACA invited IOIA to join a Working Group on Contingency Planning.

**March 17 (+/-)** Margaret Anne Weigelt and Patti Bursten Deutsch both independently suggested a “Town Hall” for members.

**May 16-21** - Before the week ended, IOIA Trainer and past BOD Chair Garry Lean and Training Services Director Jonda Crosby had started reformatting basic courses into a Live OnLine format. We added the GoToTraining platform and started creating inspection videos. This format would replace cancelled trainings in SC and VT. Diane Cooner, our Communications Director, took on massive video editing. Their work has been nothing short of HEROIC. Revenue and number of participants trained went down, but it helped maintain and meet the need for new inspectors.

**March 20** – Several IOIA members, Board members, and I participated in the organizational group of the ACA Working Group on “CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR VERIFYING COMPLIANCE WHEN ON-SITE INSPECTIONS ARE NOT POSSIBLE”. A key committee was born of those inspectors on the call: Patti Bursten Deutsch, Amanda Birk, Garth Kahl, Lois Christie (BOD Chair), Rachel Cherry Myers (BOD). T. Layhew was drafted as the Town Hall emcee – All HEROES. Town Hall was scheduled 6 days later with the goal of creating training for Remote Inspections. MANY HOURS of preparation went into a series of successful Town Halls ranging in member engagement from 32 to 73.

**March 26** – IOIA’s First Town Hall – 70+ members in attendance - almost one-third of inspectors!



**April 27-May 8** Live OnLine trainings replaced the scheduled Vermont Crop/Livestock Trainings. Another 3 trainings have since been completed in this format, including Processing. Garth Kahl and I co-trained 1 of the 3.

**May 4** – The OILC Enhancement Project went live, with solicitations for four different roles. 30+ inspectors applied – 15% of our entire membership.

**June 1** – IOIA’s Remote Inspection Training (nearly 100 participants, and 40+ registered for self-directed training).

**June 15** – IOIA training for Comisión Interamericana de Agricultura Orgánica (CIAO) in Spanish. The first Spanish Remote Inspection Training for Latin American inspectors is scheduled June 26.

The IOIA and ACA Boards have been meeting almost weekly for the past 2 ½ months. We jointly published the ACA Best Practices and created a Local Inspector Network.

The measure of a non-profit is not the bottom line. It is how well the mission is served. Our members and our mission were served well. There have been both savings and extra costs. Some staff went to reduced hours - the IOIA office closed to the public for about two months. Unemployment provisions of the CARES emergency funding programs helped. Staff and BOD travel went to zero. We should weather the storm due to a healthy cash reserve.

I’m a bit red-faced. It sounds like a “brag-list”. But, I am proud, actually. Proud of all our HEROES.

## Sector News

### OTA again refutes USDA claim about costs of Animal Welfare Rule

Hundreds of organic farmers, business, consumers, and other stakeholders submitted comments in advance of the May 23 deadline to respond to an [Economic Analysis Report](#) for the Organic Livestock and Poultry Production (OLPP) final rule published by USDA. The vast majority of comments support reinstatement of the OLPP rule.

**The [Organic Trade Association's substantive comments and expert economist's report](#) revealed numerous errors in the USDA's Report and identified a pattern of erroneous manipulation of economic variables that intentionally understated the benefits of the OLPP Rule and overstated the costs.**

The trade association's economic analysis targets and refutes specific data points used in the cost-benefit calculation for organic egg production, such as baseline egg production rates, mortality rates, and consumer willingness to pay for organic eggs that USDA had intentionally changed so that the cost-benefit calculation would result in higher costs and lower benefit.

USDA published this Economic Analysis Report in response to a **Court order that agreed with the Organic Trade Association's lawsuit against USDA that the OLPP final rule was withdrawn based on a flawed economic analysis.** Finding that USDA had voluntarily conceded the Organic Trade Association charges rather than proceed to judgment, the court ordered the matter returned to USDA for a 180-day period for the agency to correct its errors. *OTA Newsflash, May 27 2020*

### Court Reverses EPA Approval of Dicamba

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) broke the law in approving agricultural weedkilling products sold by Bayer and two other chemical giants, ignoring clear evidence that the new herbicides would cause widespread damage to crops, a federal court ruled on June 3.

The decision by the US court of appeals for the ninth circuit invalidates the registrations for dicamba-based herbicides made by Monsanto, which is owned by Bayer AG, BASF and Corteva Agrisciences that are designed to be sprayed on genetically engineered soybeans and cotton. The court order effectively makes it illegal for farmers to continue to use the dicamba herbicides this summer as they tend to millions of acres of crops.

In a stinging rebuke, the court said it had no choice but to cancel the EPA's approval of the herbicides because the agency had strayed so far from its duty to properly assess the dangers presented by the "new use" of dicamba. "The EPA made multiple errors in granting the conditional registrations," the court said.

An EPA spokesman said the agency was currently reviewing the court decision and "will move promptly to address the court's directive".

The issue at the heart of the court case is a crop and chemical system designed by Monsanto, which was acquired by Bayer in 2018. The company said that soybean and cotton farmers could plant "dicamba-tolerant" versions of the crops and then spray new types of dicamba herbicides directly over the top of their fields to easily kill weeds. Previously, farmers used dicamba sparingly and were largely restricted from using dicamba during the growing season because the chemical can easily drift long distances, killing or injuring a wide array of crops and other plants it settles on. Monsanto, BASF and Corteva Agriscience told the EPA that their herbicides would have low volatility and if farmers followed instructions on the product labels, they could prevent drift. But since the introduction of the new dicamba crops and herbicides, farmer complaints have been filed with state agricultural officials, reporting dicamba damage across several million acres in at least a dozen states.

The Guardian reported in March that Monsanto predicted its dicamba crop system would lead to thousands of damage claims from US farmers but pushed ahead anyway, and risks were downplayed to the EPA.

The court found that the EPA "refused to estimate the amount of dicamba damage", failed to acknowledge that restrictions it placed on the use of the dicamba herbicides would not be followed, and did not acknowledge evidence that the new use of dicamba herbicides would "tear the social fabric of farming communities".

The court said it knew its decision could be costly for farmers who planned to use dicamba on their GMO soybeans and cotton fields, but said the EPA's failure to acknowledge and address risks to other crops left the court no choice.

"We acknowledge the difficulties these growers may have in finding effective and legal herbicides to protect their (dicamba-tolerant) crops ..." the ruling states. "They have been placed in this situation through no fault of their own."

*Guardian Online, June 4, 2020*



## Sector News

### Proposed Changes to the National List for Organic Livestock and Handling

The U.S. Department of Agriculture today published a proposed rule in the Federal Register to amend the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List). The proposed changes are based on April 2019 recommendations from the National Organic Standards Board.

This action proposes adding:

- Oxalic acid dihydrate as a pesticide for organic apiculture.
- Pullulan as an ingredient for products labeled, “Made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s)).”
- Collagen gel casing as a nonorganic ingredient allowed when an organic form is not commercially available.
- The 60-day comment period will close on August 7, 2020.

### Electronic Organic Import Certificate Now Available

The 2018 Farm Bill called for tech enhancements to improve the ability of the USDA AMS NOP and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to oversee imported organic products. The electronic organic import certificates envisioned in the Farm Bill will provide critical organic import data and make it easier to monitor organic imports.

At the end of April 2020, the electronic organic import certificate (or “message set”) was deployed in CBP’s primary import system, known as the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE). Proposed requirements related to the electronic organic import certificate are described in the document [Notice to International Trade Community](#). The electronic organic import certificate is expected to become required with the publication of the final rule. AMS invites public comments on the rule once published.

*AMS organic insider 4/28/2020*

### U.S. and Taiwan reach an organic equivalence arrangement

USDA announced a new U.S.-Taiwan equivalence arrangement, effective May 30, 2020, that streamlines organic trade with Taiwan. The arrangement allows organic products certified in the United States or Taiwan to be sold as organic in either market. It also protects access for American organic farmers, ranchers, and businesses to this significant export market. Taiwan is estimated to be the fifth largest organic export market for U.S. producers.

The arrangement covers certified organic products grown, produced or with final processing in the U.S. or Taiwan and eliminates the need for organic producers and processors to have separate organic certification to the U.S. and Taiwan standards, avoiding a double set of fees, inspections, and paperwork.

The U.S. currently maintains organic equivalence arrangements with Canada, the European Union, Japan, Korea and Switzerland. *USDA Organic Integrity news, June 4, 2020*

### PCO Announces New Executive Director

Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) Advisory Board is excited to announce the selection of Diana Kobus as Executive Director, beginning June 15, 2020. Diana comes to PCO with over a decade of non-profit leadership in an environmental certification organization. Diana has a Masters in Environmental Science and Management with a focus in Organic Agriculture and has been Executive Director of the Institute for Environmental Practice (IPEP) for the past twelve years following work for Whole Foods Markets in the early 2000s. She is currently the President of the Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards (CESB). She brings extensive leadership experience along with a passion for organic production and the critical impact it has on climate and the environment.

### IFOAM North America has a New Coordinator - Meet Ken McCormick

Ken is a passionate long-time advocate of organic agriculture who brings to a broad range of experiences working with organic farmers, processors, retailers, certification bodies, research and education non-profits, environmental advocates, consumer organizations and government agencies in both Canada and the US. During his long career, Ken has created an impressive portfolio of publications, advocacy programs, consumer packaging and branding programs for organic supportive organizations.

Ken will help IFOAM NA speak with a unified voice in the international conversation on the organic movement in a way that reflects the significance, integrity and diversity of the organic agricultural community in North America.

# Policy Committee & NOSB

## OVERVIEW: IOIA POSITION ON NOSB PROPOSALS AND DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

IOIA's comments to the NOSB Spring meeting, held virtually April 21-30 with more than 150 stakeholders on-line each day, appear below. Comments were prepared by the IOIA Policy Committee and presented in writing on behalf of the membership. IOIA might not comment on every NOSB proposal or discussion document. Those that do receive comments have been identified by the IOIA Policy Committee and leadership team as critical to safeguard the interests of organic inspectors and the integrity of the organic industry.

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Item	Commenting?	Position
Paper (Plant pots and other crop production aids)	Yes	IOIA <b>supports</b> the NOSB Crop Subcommittee motion, but is concerned about toxic residues that may result from synthetic additives or process residues.
Wild, Native Fish for Liquid Fish Products	No	No position
Biodegradable biobased mulch annotation change	No	No position
2022 Crops Sunset Reviews: §205.601 & §205.602	Yes	IOIA <b>supports</b> maintaining these lists as they currently exist, with an exception about the EPA List 4 – Inerts of Minimal Concern.
L-Malic Acid	No	No position
Ion exchange filtration	No	No position
Fish oil annotation	No	No position
2022 Handling Sunset Reviews: §205.605 & §205.606	Yes	IOIA <b>supports</b> maintaining these lists as they currently exist, with a exception of a request for a revised annotation on the Kelp listing.
Fenbendazole	No	No position
2022 Livestock Sunset Reviews: §205.603	Yes	IOIA <b>supports</b> maintaining these lists as they currently exist, with an exception about the EPA List 4 – Inerts of Minimal Concern.
NOSB Research Priorities 2020	No	No position

Originally planned to be an in-person meeting in Crystal City, Virginia, this plan was one of many events altered by COVID-19. Meeting materials, including a recording of the meeting, can be found [online](#).

NOSB members discussed a proposal on paper-based planting aids, seven discussion documents, and sunset materials used in crops, livestock and handling operations. The board referred the paper-based planting aids proposal back to the subcommittee for additional discussion based on public comment. The board will vote on materials in the fall.

The fall meeting is planned for October 27-29, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. That meeting will feature a panel of experts on assessing sanitizers used in organic crop, livestock, and handling. That panel was postponed from the spring meeting, to allow for a more robust discussion.



## Welcome to the Local Inspector Network!

It was an initiative of the Accredited Certifiers Association's Working Group to develop Best Practices for "Contingency Plans for Verifying Compliance When On-site Inspections are not Possible" during the COVID-19 pandemic. IOIA hosts the Directory. Certifiers and inspectors worked together to propose and implement creative solutions to the challenges of verifying compliance. Remote inspection utilizing trained inspectors and the best available technology is one of those solutions. The Network is another.

Remote inspections are not an option for first-time applicants. This tool will assist certifiers in connecting with inspectors who can work with a minimum of travel and without overnight stays to help serve those first-time applicants. The Network helps inspectors reduce risk, get work, and return to on-site inspections as soon as possible and safe to do so. It provides a connector for experienced inspectors and less experienced inspectors. It increases the potential for team inspections, a practice IOIA has long promoted. Added benefits can include reduced carbon emissions, reduced travel cost and time for everyone, reduced exposure risk for operators, and mentoring help for entry level inspectors.

Participation is voluntary. Anyone with the link can access the Directory, so please consider the information you provide to be public. The link will be shared among certifiers and inspectors. IOIA membership is not required to participate.

The Directory will expire on May 15, 2021. If the Network directory is continued after that date, everyone will receive a message to opt in or out.

### How to participate?

Link to Sign Up Form: <https://bit.ly/SignUpForNetwork>

Link to Local Inspector Network Directory: <https://bit.ly/LocalInspectorNetwork>

To Edit Contact Information in the directory: Please email Sue Hall at [webinars@ioia.net](mailto:webinars@ioia.net)

## IOIA Virtual AGM 2021!

VIRTUAL Annual Meeting in 2021 – first ever for IOIA! IOIA's Board proactively decided that the 2021 Annual Meeting will be virtual, offered via IOIA's GoToMeeting platform, which can accommodate all of our inspector members. IOIA still hopes and plans to join ACA in New Orleans the last week of January, arriving on Jan. 24. IOIA will host some type of event on Jan. 25 (probably advanced training), if ACA's event proceeds. The NOP annual training is Tues. Jan. 26, followed by the ACA annual training Jan. 27-28. All plans are contingent upon the COVID-19 situation and whether it is deemed prudent to meet in-person. If ACA meets, IOIA will join! The event just won't include our AGM. The board was encouraged to make the move to an on-line meeting format for two reasons: (1) the enthusiastic participation in IOIA's weekly Town Halls, averaging more than 50 members per meeting. IOIA's in-person meetings, even in a non-COVID world, do not attract that many members. Virtual meetings work! And (2) rather than waiting until later, let's start planning now.

Date for the Annual Meeting? Not yet determined. It will no longer be on Saturday before the events in New Orleans, and it will not be on either weekend. This will allow members who wish to travel to New Orleans an easier time to travel.

Interesting in helping to plan it? IOIA welcomes volunteers. We have members on 5 continents. Let's strive to make that 6, and get everyone represented next year.

## Basic Crop Inspection Training, Guadalajara, Mexico



Basic crop inspection training held in Guadalajara, Mexico, February 2-6. Field trip hosted by Lidea on agave field. Training cosponsored by Quality World.

## Landmark Remote Inspection Training with CIAO for Latin America

by Lisa Spicka

This June marked a very special training event in IOIA history. As part of its mission to promote organic inspector training worldwide, IOIA worked in cooperation with the Interamerican Organic Agriculture Commission ([CIAO](#) – its acronym in Spanish) to deliver a three-hour Spanish-language version of IOIA’s groundbreaking *Remote Inspections* training course.



This was no ordinary training. CIAO was created in 2008 by order of the Ministers of Agriculture in the Executive Committee of the Interamerican Institute for Agricultural Cooperation ([IICA](#) – its acronym in Spanish). Through its various efforts, CIAO contributes to the growth and development of organic agriculture across its 19 member countries (primarily Spanish-speaking except the United States), plus Spain and Portugal as permanent observers. This means that out of the sixty five people attending the June training from 17 countries, many of them were the head of their NOP-equivalent divisions.

Even while IOIA member-inspector Garth Kahl led the training, the response was tremendous. The chat box was lit up with comments such as “excellent,” “magnificent,” and “so needed.” The Executive Director of CIAO, Graciela Lacaze, praised the training as being a “wealth of information.” Attendees indicated desire to go deeper in future trainings, and explore topics critical to the organic landscape in Latin America, such as protocols to be used with grower groups in areas where remote access technology isn’t plausible, or how to verify yields. IOIA is pleased to be working with CIAO to identify future training and facilitation opportunities to address this critical issue as COVID-19 continues to take a stronger foothold in many Latin American countries.

This training could not have existed without a tapestry of dedicated efforts from many people in the IOIA community. IOIA member Luis Brenes of Costa Rica catalyzed the conversation through his connection to CIAO. Board members Lois Christie and Philippe Descamps worked with Lisa Spicka, who works with IOIA in an Industry Relations role, to cement this new relationship and set up training logistics. Both Lisa and Christie Organic Consultants’ team member Jazmin Cardenas worked to translate the original materials into Spanish (in just a few days!).

This brings us to our final point of thanks—to IOIA’s PALs committee, whose dedication, expertise, and camaraderie catapulted the idea of a Remote Inspection Training from concept to reality. Thank you, thank you, thank you to the following IOIA inspectors who were on the committee and made the significant contributions listed: Amanda Birk (Committee Chair and content contributor), Patti Bursten Deutsch (content contributor), Garth Kahl (trainer), Lois Christie (live/on-demand training slides), Rachel Meyers (website!), and Terrance Layhew (moderator). Your hours of work brought this training to life, and now may very well be saving the lives of hundreds of people across Latin America, and planting the seeds for IOIA’s growth and support of the organic community across the globe.



## IOIA Town Hall x 10

IOIA held our first Town Hall meeting on March 26 with 65+ in attendance, and our second with 52 members on April 2. Due to this overwhelmingly positive response, IOIA upgraded our GoToMeeting capacity so the entire IOIA membership could potentially join and share webcams. We will continue as long as there is interest. The Town Hall meetings are open and free to all IOIA inspector members. We plan continue to sponsor them as a member service, but less frequently than every week. In June we moved from every week to every two weeks. They are un-recorded and candid conversation and questions are welcome.

The Town Hall committee is Patti Bursten Deutsch, Amanda Birk, Garth Kahl, Rachel Cherry Myers, and Garth Kahl. Terrance Layhew was drafted to assist as the emcee for what has turned into a multi-month assignment and training development. Why was it initiated? We knew that verifying compliance while protecting health safety and organic integrity and deterring fraud in the midst of a pandemic would not be easy. The ultimate goal of these sessions was to plan and produce trainings on remote inspections and useful technology. At the same time, IOIA was fully engaged in the ACA Working Group to develop **Contingency Plans for Verifying Compliance When On-Site Inspections are not Possible**, which was divided into 5 subgroups: Justification/Risk Assessment; Remote Audit Process and Software; Non-technical communities/operators; Inspector Financial Support; and Local Inspectors Network. As information became available from the ACA-IOIA Working Group, it was shared in Town Hall. And ideas moved the other way from Town Hall to the ACA Working Group. Remote inspections with the inspector not on-site was one solution. Most inspectors and certifiers had no experience with this model.

Topics included **Remote Inspection Training; the 2021 IOIA Virtual AGM; Local Inspector Network** – how to participate; **Low Tech Inspections; Steps to a Virtual Inspection; Safety in the Field; sharing Virtual Inspection Experiences; ACA Best Practices (Marni Karlin, and Connie Carr, ACA Chair); Georgana Webster, Montana Dept of Ag, shared their COVID Inspection Policy; Global Updates – How are Inspectors Around the World Adapting to COVID-19?; Desk Audits - What’s Working; Scheduling Virtual Inspections; and Billing for Virtual Inspections.** Also, **Brian Elsasser**, CPA, spoke on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, & Economic Security (CARES) Act - implications for inspectors including independent contractors, sole proprietors, and those incorporated as small businesses.

There is also a very popular **Inspector Roundtable - Q & A!**

A few member comments:

- *“I’m certainly glad this Town Hall took place. it’s helped answer some questions I’ve had at the back of my mind lately. If nothing else, it’s good to know so many people are invested in ensuring compliance still takes place and we keep eating as a bonus.”*
- *“The Town Hall meetings have been a saving grace, I’d be a little lost without IOIA this year :)”*
- *“Thank you all so much for your knowledge, suggestions, and expertise! I feel reassured and it’s so nice to see all your faces/hear your voices. Glad I tuned in - this has been very valuable.”*
- *“I found the topics and shared information very helpful and I even feel a little less frustrated and concerned about our jobs as inspectors right now.”*
- *I feel reassured and it’s so nice to see all your faces/hear your voices. Glad I tuned in - this has been very valuable.”*

**Read all about it:**  
[ACA Best Practices for Inspection Contingency Plans](#)

Town Hall continues. Please join us to - share time together to discuss... things we’re thinking related to inspecting in the current certification environment, and our knowledge of technology and methods for best practices for remote inspections.

**NEXT MEETINGS -  
 June 18, July 2, July 16, July 30  
 (Thursdays)**

12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Pacific,  
 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. Mountain;  
 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. Central; and  
 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. Eastern.

Reminders with the meeting link are emailed to all IOIA inspector members a few days prior.





## IOIA's First-ever Organic Cosmetics webinar

IOIA and Gay Timmons, organic cosmetic consultant and former organic inspector, launched a new 300-level webinar on March 19 with 11 participants. The webinar is conveniently offered in two two-hour sessions with an hour break in the middle to minimize the loss of work time. This course is geared to persons with organic inspection or certification review experience, and concludes with a final exam. Course participants preferably will have completed an IOIA Basic Inspection course and/or are already working as inspectors or reviewers.



The webinar prepares participants to audit to organic cosmetic standards from North America and the EU, both public and private. It provides an overview of the operations and management practices of materials in cosmetic manufacturing as well as basic FDA limits for those ingredients. This course examines and review the laws and scientific work used to underpin the private standards (COSMOS, NaTrue, etc.) as well as the information and resources needed to review the non-organic ingredients common to cosmetics.

Timmons discussed topics including the 12 Principles of Green Chemistry, over-the-counter products; when is a product a synthetic (i.e. soap)?; scope of what FDA covers; allergens in cosmetics as opposed to foods; calculating organic content; sanitizers; GMO issues; fragrances; the relative uses and value of Spec Sheets, TDS, and SDS; organic control points; and much more. Participants commented very positively after completing the webinar. A complex topic was presented with technical expertise, clarity, a good flow and lots of room for questions. Exactly what experienced inspectors have asked for!

Timmons owns and operates Oh, Oh Organic, Inc., an organic and specialty ingredient distribution and consulting company founded in 2000. Oh, Oh is committed to the development and delivery of sustainable agricultural ingredients for the cosmetic and personal care industries. Over the past 18 years she has supported the development and growth of hundreds of organic and natural cosmetic brands. Since 1991, she has worked as a producer and marketer of organic ingredients and an advocate for regulatory clarity for organic and natural producers and consumers. Her introduction to the field began as a ten-year job co-managing an organic farm and production facility. She served as the Chair of the California Organic Products Advisory Committee, serving on that committee for eleven years. During this period she was instrumental in writing and advocating for the Calif. Organic Products Act of 2003 which regulates organic claims on cosmetics. Today she is a founding member and President of the Natural and Organic Health and Beauty Alliance, an international trade association. Gay graduated from UC Davis, has an MS in Physiology and lives in Point Richmond, California

The next scheduled webinar is September 1. Enrollment is limited to 20 participants. To register, see the IOIA Webinar Schedule.

## Live Online Basic Crop Inspection Training, aka Greenville SC



Garth Kahl and Margaret Scoles were scheduled to present the basic Crop Inspection Training March 16-20 in Greenville, SC when it was cancelled due to COVID-19. Clemson U's organic program was the cosponsor. Trainees had already begun bonding with their group with the prerequisite Crop Standards webinar. Two months later, the group (almost intact) completed the Live OnLine training with their trainers, calling in from Mexico to Michigan. One of the original group moved to an earlier LOL Training. One person decided to wait for an in-person event.

## LIVE ONLINE: IOIA Delivers Basic Trainings in New Format

By Jonda Crosby

IOIA's basic in-person inspection trainings were on the brink of cancellation in mid-March due to Covid-19. In response IOIA Lead Trainer Garry Lean proposed developing an alternate format Live Online (LOL) which launched on April 27.

In just six weeks the IOIA Board supported budget adjustments and reassignment of key staff. Garry worked with IOIA trainers and staff to restructure the Basic in-person Crop and Livestock Inspection courses as a live online format.



*Crop group*



*Livestock group*

The process of reformatting an established training onto a web-based platform required long hours of reviewing and redesigning materials. We wanted the Live Online delivery to provide the same opportunity for learning as the in-person trainings have for two decades. We incorporated discussion rooms for participants to work together, complete interactive exercises, and to watch recorded presentations and virtual inspections.

Much appreciation to Trainers: Garry Lean, Luis Brenes, Garth Kahl, Nate Powell-Palm and Margaret Scoles.

IOIA is grateful for the support and time of farmers whose farms we utilized for the virtual practice inspection exercises. Shaheed Harris and family of South Carolina and Meg and Kevin Stuedemann, from Minnesota.

The evaluation feedback from the first two LOL Basic Inspection courses was invaluable. The following are examples of feedback, some of which has been implemented.

- *I feel this is a good (training) option. It could be an excellent addition to IOIA training program.*
- *I believe an in-person class would have been ideal. That being said, I still feel this was very useful training, and the instructors were exemplary.*
- *In the future, participants would benefit from a tour of the technology/platform to learn more about functions and capabilities.*
- *As the "Beta Tester Class" all things considered the training went well and I learned what I expected and needed to.*
- *Trainers – superb instruction, great real-life examples and perspectives, great communicator and facilitator, explained things clearly, was a great listener, and showed a great understanding of the subject matter.*



*The LOL Basic Processing Inspection training held June 8-12 was also a "Beta Tester Class". Many thanks to this very capable group who deepened the course discussions and provided valuable feedback on the training process, content and technology. Appreciated inspector member Nate Powell-Palm's videotaped training inspection with Sarah Brown of Amaltheia Organic Dairy processing plant.*

Crop, Livestock, and Processing Live Online Basic Inspection trainings are scheduled for summer 2020. The fall basic inspection trainings may be held in-person, Live Online or a combination of the two. We will keep you up to date on our decisions through our website [ioia.net](http://ioia.net).



## IFOAM North America's First Town Hall, May 6

Guest article by Stephen Walker, IFOAM NA Board Secretary, and Accreditation & Industry Affairs Mgr. at MOSA Certified

On May 6th, our wider organic community engaged in some valuable thinking forward, in an online “Organic Spring 2020 Town Hall” meeting hosted by IFOAM North America, representing the US, Canada, and the English-speaking Caribbean. The Town Hall looked at “lessons from the pandemic,” with focus on:

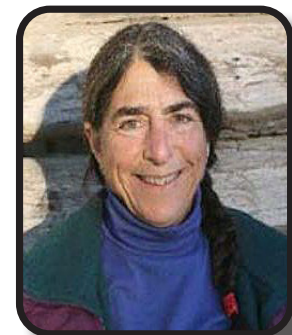
1. The COVID-19 pandemic and shared experiences of the organic community with the loss of markets, distribution bottlenecks and labor shortages.
2. Steps we all can make to build resilience into the food system to better prepare for the next food security crisis, and
3. Scaling up organic agriculture to make it the norm.



About 55 people from the US, Canada, Ecuador, and the EU found optimism amidst COVID challenges through a lens of IFOAM's vision - worldwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound food systems based on IFOAM's Four Organic Principles of Health (of people and planet), Ecology (nourishing living ecological systems and cycles), Fairness (relationships with fairness among people and other living beings), and Care (for wellbeing of current and future generations).

IFOAM NA Board President Brian Baker (*and IOIA Inspector member*) kicked things off with an overview of IFOAM, including attention to the Organic 3.0 concept paper, which aims to enable a widespread uptake of truly sustainable farming systems and markets based on organic principles and imbued with a culture of innovation, of progressive improvement towards best practice, of transparent integrity, of inclusive collaboration, of holistic systems, and of true value pricing. Four panelists included former IFOAM NA Board Member Elizabeth Henderson, and current Board Members Monique Marez, Jennifer Taylor, and Arzeena Hamir.

For over 30 years, Elizabeth Henderson farmed organically grown vegetables for the fresh market at Peacework Farm in Wayne County, NY. She is co-chair of NOFA-NY Policy Committee and represents NOFA Interstate Council on the Board of the Agricultural Justice Project. Elizabeth co-wrote *Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture*. She described how the New York Organic Action Plan was created, over 8 years of listening sessions, and with a top priority of legislating a soil health program for the state. She presented a [NYOAP infographic](#) showing how there's something that everyone can contribute. She has tried to bring alive IFOAM's Organic Principle of Fairness through her work with the AJP's domestic fair trade certification.



Monique Marez, from Colorado, is an ambassador for the U.S. organic movement, leading projects in over 30 countries. Monique completed IFOAM EU's organic leadership course. She explained how she is incorporating organic support while coordinating her city and county's (Pueblo, CO) emergency hunger relief response during the COVID-19 crisis. Pueblo has the highest poverty rate in the State. She described her approach: providing accurate information to citizens in this uncertain time; ensuring the efforts she's executing are inclusive, culturally responsive, healthy and nutritious, and create an opportunity to spark joy rather than some form of stigma related to obtaining food assistance; and coordination among food system leader and actors in the community.

Jennifer Taylor is an organic small farmer. She is an advocate for underserved farming populations including: small-scale farmers, indigenous farmers, minority farmers, and their communities. She is also a Board Member of the Organic Farmers Association, the Rodale Institute, National Organic Coalition, and Georgia Organics. She previously served as NOSB member, and is presently Associate Professor and coordinator of Small Farm Programs at FL Agricultural and Mechanical University. Her work with the University assists and equips underserved populations toward sustainable development. IFOAM's Principle of Health is a central focus. She said, “We need to act inclusively and work to specifically share information and knowledge, provide hands-on training and technical knowledge to the underserved farming population about the benefits of organic agriculture. This is how organic can gain access and outreach into all communities. This is how we can grow organic agriculture outside of our own neighbors and communities. This is how we work together to grow organic and enable all human beings.”





## IFOAM NA - First Town Hall

Arzeena Hamir and her husband run a 26-acre certified organic vegetable/fruit farm on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and is a founding member of Merville Organics Growers Cooperative. She sits on the Board of the Investment Agriculture Foundation and is the President of the Mid-Island Farmers Institute. She talked about starting a farmers cooperative.



Questions and discussion followed opening remarks from panelists. One asked, what policies would meet fair prices for farmers and cover the full cost of ecological farming practices and pay living wages? Henderson noted a return to parity pricing (covering the full cost of production - true cost accounting) with supply management and required set-asides for conservation. Current data shows that most farms in the US are losing money.

To a question, how do we influence government? Marez noted the advocacy on behalf of consumers and citizens to actually change the ways politicians think takes a lot of work. "There are a ton of different ways to get involved... Participate on a working group... Make meetings with local and state representatives... contribute comments..." Henderson noted working with consumer organizations enables development of a majority that can make policy changes. Hamir noted success at the provincial and local levels by having organic farmers in public offices.

How do we reorient policy? Steve Crider, Consultant at Stone Soup Advisors, answered from a Pacific Northwest perspective. "The feeling here is this is our moment. We've been building towards this point for years now and this is our time. The seed that got planted years ago - food hubs, farm to school, local incubators, food banks... have all matured. Now we're connecting the dots. This crisis has forced the issue and now there's a new level of synergy and collaboration and a feeling of not waiting for permission, but, let's just do it.

Ann Baier, of the National Center for Appropriate Technology, noted she's been working with pastured poultry. "Doing the really local stuff is really great, but in order to have the efficiency to make this really mainstream we're going to have to figure out the regulatory and policy ways that meat is processed, meets regulations, and is safe... It's a challenge and an opportunity." From Salt Spring Island, BC, Anne Macey noted that small abattoirs are doing well with social distancing.

Marez noted that IFOAM's Four Principles of Organic Agriculture illustrate the link between organic and social justice and come back to food as a right, not a privilege. This thinking ladders up through all levels.

Chris Schreiner, Oregon Tilth's Executive Director, said we should ask, "what parts of normal are worth rushing back to, and which are worth leaving behind?" He said, cruel as it may seem, the COVID crisis has accomplished what a lot of long-running global climate change efforts have failed to accomplish.

Discussion included the US organic standards not addressing all market demands, such as for strong regenerative practices and social justice. Baker asked, "are there ways to address this outside of a regulatory and market approach?"

Fred Ehlert, a retired organic inspector, noted that one way we can bring along nonorganic consumers is to educate them on how the food system works. Hamir added that as supply chains start to break, she sees far fewer complaints about fair pricing for local food, as consumers recognize their dependence on long supply chains is not healthy.

Ken McCormick, IFOAM NA Coordinator, summarized what we've learned from the pandemic. The value of international cooperation. That we're all linked. We hope to move the conversation ahead in the next IFOAM NA Town Hall meeting.

**IOIA's GoToMeeting platform was used to host this very robust online discussion.**

For information about IFOAM North America and why IOIA members in North America should join – <https://www.ifoam.bio/about-us/our-network/regional-bodies/ifoam-north-america>

IFOAM North America Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ifoamnorthamerica/>

Think Globally!

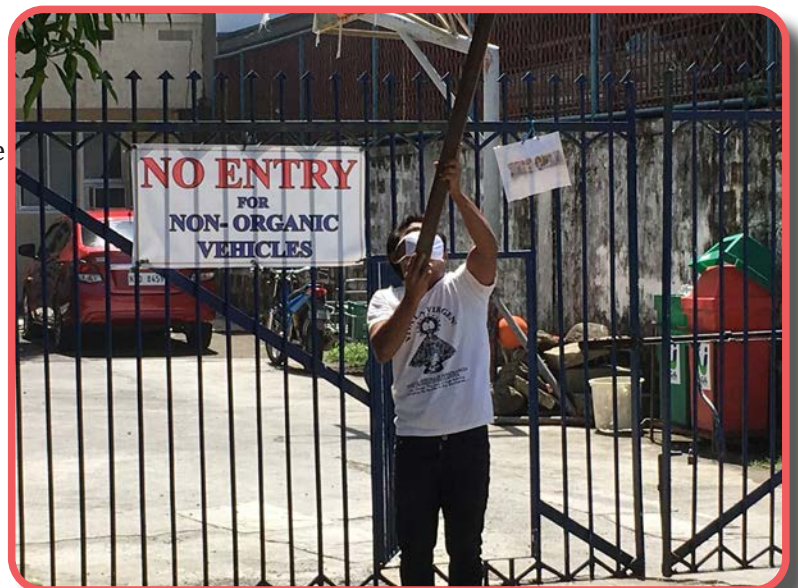
## Asia Pacific Committee News

The Asia Pacific Committee met on February 24 with IOIA staff Margaret Scoles and Sacha Draine and on April 20 with Margaret Scoles and BOD Liaison Chuck Mitchell. The February meeting debriefed the APC's first solo training in Thailand in January. **In April, each of the committee members shared the COVID-19 experience from their countries:**

- **Isidor Yu – Korea** – Most inspections were being postponed. No on-site inspections were happening on farms or in facilities. The government is the accreditor and recommended no on-site inspections. Length of postponement is not defined. The government guideline doesn't mention remote inspections, so all inspections were simply postponed. He suggested remote audits, but most inspectors are not trained to do remote inspections.
- **Kathe Purvis – Australia** – The government took COVID-19 seriously early on with very early lockdown and social distancing. She had been doing virtual inspections for several weeks. She finds it challenging and more time consuming. An app on the phone that registers whenever it gets close to another phone was being discussed. That would allow anyone who got sick to be able to track everyone they were in close proximity to. Some concerns with privacy rights. The government said they couldn't stop surveillance, that they had to find an way to continue (the opposite approach to Korea). They must complete inspections within 3 months of their due date, or they will lose certification. She has done quite a few inspections just on the phone and asked the operator to send photos or do video real time on the phone. Biggest pressure is getting it done within the 3 months. She shared a template that she developed for doing remote inspections. Bottom line in Australia (Business as Usual, Stay Home!)
- **Sandeep Bhargava – India** – Closed down since March 24. No inspections. Everyone is at home. They have a large population and lots of migrant workers. The lockdown was extended to May 4. Work is allowed with very strict restrictions. Allowing certification without inspection until June 30. Best policy is allowing extending certification 3 months, based on document review because all standards have some version of an extension if inspection is not possible. He described a very productive case of using an experienced inspector from India to work with a "junior" less experienced inspector in Thailand. No international travel for 6 months to a year.
- **Maheswar Ghimire – Nepal** - Complete lockdown until end of April. No movement. Everyone stays home. No international travel for a minimum of 6 months. Not a lot of certification in Nepal, so not a large impact. Personally, he was planning to inspect, but everything is now postponed.
- **Vitoon Panyakul – Thailand** – Remote inspections are happening in Thailand. No on-site inspections. Travel restrictions, to be assessed in one month. An inspector could possibly do a local inspection, traveling only within the day. No air travel, usually a 14 day quarantine before and after you fly, so it would take a month to do an inspection!
- **Mutsumi Sakuyoshi– Japan** – One of the biggest certifiers started postponing in March. Did a virtual inspection that is only 2-3 minutes from her. Did not find it difficult because she was very familiar with the product, the process, and the plant. Government allowed extending certification for 6 months. Normal is 12 months, so now 18 months total monitoring period. Remote inspections are accepted. Certifiers don't have to approach the government if they plan to do them. Government wants to gather info (impact on cost, energy, and risk), so they surveyed the certifiers.
- **Chuck Mitchell – Philippines** – Martial Law. Food supply disrupted. Quite sure no inspectors were moving around.

The committee normally meets every 2 months.

**"Philippines organic standard includes vehicles!"  
Harvesting mangos during COVID.  
Photo by Chuck Mitchell (still stranded in the  
Philippines by COVID-19 and hoping to be back in  
Canada this month).**



## Remote Inspection Training on Demand!

This training was a direct outcome of the IOIA Town Hall. The committee (inspector members Patti Bursten Deutsch, Amanda Birk, Lois Christie, Garth Kahl, and Terrance Layhew) knew from the onset that they were headed for training in how to's of remote and hybrid inspections. They wanted to keep operators and inspectors safe, keep inspectors working, and above all, continue the work of verifying organic compliance. They wanted to make at least some of the training free to IOIA inspector members as a member benefit. Those goals and motives were clear, but the vehicle was uncertain. Would it be live webinar training? A pre-recorded webinar?

Many, many hours of discussions among these hard-working, experienced inspectors moved the initial idea of a SOP document on how to conduct remote inspections with imbedded links, all the way to the concept of a self-directed website resource. This would be a site where inspectors could return multiple times and access the training as they needed it and when they needed it. Because COVID-19 had sidelined them, these full-time inspectors were home with time on their hands for the first time in years. They threw themselves into new volunteer roles with enthusiasm, meeting weekly to prepare Town Hall agendas, find speakers, attend each one, and field questions from members as the training took shape.



Rachel Cherry Myers, IOIA Board member, was the primary impetus behind the creation of a new website, [www.ioiavirtualinspections.com](http://www.ioiavirtualinspections.com). At first it seemed overly ambitious. A new training website in one month?! But the committee pitched in and made it happen. They made videos; researched YouTube links; shared, wrote and refined SOPs provided by other members and certifiers; prepared a test; and created PowerPoint presentations. Garth Kahl and Lois Christie represented inspectors on an OTA webinar to help applicants understand what to expect and how to prepare for remote inspections.

The IOIA Remote Inspection Training was presented first in a live webinar training on June 1 with nearly 100 participants. Kahl delivered it and will deliver the same material in Spanish. Another 40+ are registered to complete the training in the self-directed format. The June 1 webinar was recorded and is among the resources on the new training website. The training is free to IOIA inspector members and \$200 to non-members, with group discounts for certifiers. The fee covers a year's subscription to the site, with will be updated periodically throughout the year. If you register for this training, you will be provided an individual password to access the training website. The password is good for one year from registration.

*"OMG – this is the most amazing training I have EVER seen IOIA put out. This site is just incredible!" – Connie Karr, OTCO Certification Director and current ACA Chair*

More details can be found here in our [promotional flyer](#).

Registration is a three step process - Learn about it and **Register thru our website, [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net).**

You may request to take an online exam. The webinar exam is optional. However, successful completion of the **online Exam is required to receive a Certificate of Completion.**



## Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

### January 13, 2020 7:30 p.m. EST Via Go To Meeting

**Board Members Present:** Lois Christie; Janine Gibson; Heather Donald; Margaret Anne Weigelt; Chuck Mitchell; Ryan Sitler; Rachel Cherry Myers. **Also present** - Margaret Scoles, ED; Sacha Draine, IOIA Intl Training Manager, invited guest. **Absent:** Philippe Descamps, Director

**Intro to BOD of IOIA Intl Training Manager Sacha Draine** Sacha has a strong role in the IOIA Emergency Transition Plan and is a senior member of the staff (14 years). Sacha explains that she was born in Switzerland and moved to the US when she was 23. She speaks Swiss, German, French, English and Spanish. Her degrees are in Business & Foreign Languages. Sacha explains that if the need arises and the Emergency Transition Plan is triggered she would step in and work the time necessary. (The plan calls for Sacha to cover for the executive director during the first 3-months.) MS suggests Sacha be involved in the final review of the Emergency Transition Plan with MW and MS to examine for substantive changes. Sacha leaves the meeting.

**Financial Reports: 2019 Budget VS Actual:** MS says that Lisa Spicka is interested in fundraising and recruiting new supporting membership businesses. MS notes that we lost about \$1K in **Peer Evaluation**. Money collected and charged was balanced but an overage occurred in administration costs for the program. BOD discussion moves to the point that evaluating singles is not cost effective. RCM suggests we request that agencies interact enough that an inspector is only evaluated once for multiple agencies. Ryan suggests he would pay extra on top of his IOIA membership for us to facilitate only one evaluation per year universally accepted by certifiers. MS notes, per today's Certifier Inspector Call, that certifiers now seem to be open to the idea of sharing their yearly inspector lists with IOIA and letting us propose a schedule to avoid multiple evaluations for the inspector. It may be possible to obtain agreement amongst the requesting certifiers to rotate the cost of the initial 'single' evaluation every three years MS asks for input regarding a modest increase for in-person training fees. Discussion follows. Consensus is to increase \$50 after the SC training. **Motion to approve the 2020 Budget by Janine/2<sup>nd</sup> by Rachel. Approved unanimously.**

**Accreditation Issue** Discussed the meaning of the requirement of <IOIA approved training> to be accredited. Rachel suggests for criteria consistency that an evaluation has to be done in order to determine if it's equivalent. Consensus is to seek detailed information about curriculum or a description of internalized understandings of inspection in order to vet the applicant's previous training in comparison to IOIA basic training perhaps using our peer evaluation questionnaire. MS suggests we need to create a process to evaluate training equivalency.

Submitted by Margaret Anne Weigelt, Secretary

### February 25, 2020 - 4:00 p.m. EST Via GoToMeeting

**Board Members Present:** Lois Christie; Janine Gibson, Ryan Sitler, Heather Donald, Rachel Cherry Myers; Philippe Descamps (joined at 4:25pm). **Also present:** Margaret Scoles, ED; Lisa Spicka, Strategic Planning Facilitator, attended for the duration of Point 6 BOD Strategic Planning only; Garth Kahl (at 5:25 pm). **Absent:** Chuck Mitchell. **Members in attendance:** Margaret Weigelt. Discussion that seconds are not needed to vote on a motion unless the item is contentious. Board members present agree.

#### **BOD Retreat Reflections from the BOD & MS:**

RS - Demonstrated how much we can get done meeting in person. Structured help guided how much we were able to get done. Priorities or questions for the chairs of the strategic buckets: **Chairs will facilitate initial meetings of their Strategic Bucket groups.** Global Community – Chuck Mitchell; Sustainable Future – Janine Gibson; Vibrant Membership – Rachel Cherry Myers; Enhanced Training – Lois Christie

**Asia Pacific Committee** {Ryan Sitler joined the meeting during this topic} There are 3 initiatives in progress. One is a grower groups training – CM has carried on the interest from our strategic planning meeting for a training on grower groups and PGS training will be with Vitoon. APC will develop a curriculum for grower group training

## Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

directed at the internal grower group inspectors. Second - Kathe Purvis is working on a MOU in order to source funding using IOIA as the fiscal agent to do training in the south Pacific region. Third – APC has decided the next basic training will be in India (to NPOP standards). **BOD has general agreement to put language in the contract stating Trainers may not promote one CB over others.**

**Inspector Co-Op** (Garth joined the meeting at 5:25pm). Working group has met once and talked about a vision statement and mission. Common theme is to form a coop, may be non-profit or not, but would like to be connected with IOIA. Maybe become a for-profit branch of IOIA – the coop would handle the inspection scheduling, and would contract with IOIA who would do the inspector training. Idea being to provide services to inspectors, possibly reviewers (to be determined) – the coop would set up schedules for inspectors and assign the inspectors. Long-term goal is to make scheduling easier for inspectors, keep inspectors more localized, provide leverage for a better pay rate so inspectors don't have to be on the road as much, and eventually provide both E&O and health insurance. Still a long way to go to have anything concrete.. – Garth Kahl, Yehuda Nestel, Nate Powell-Palm, Angela Wartes-Kahl, Patti Bursten Deutsch, Amanda Birk attended the meeting. Rick Katterman, Ryan Sitler– also interested in participating.

**Latin America Report:** Since there is no LA committee, PD would like to meet with MS, Sacha, Lois, Chuck, Rachel about doing something about trainings in LA. Thinks we should start by training regional trainers, then see if we can set regional trainings and then see if we can talk about a regional office.

**Accreditation – ARP Appointment:** Janine moves to appoint Kym Snarr to the ARP as one of 3 Inspector Members. **Passes unanimously.**

Submitted by Heather Donald, Secretary

[LINK to 2020 AGM Draft Minutes](#)

## Resources

**Keep up to date on the impact of COVID-19 on trade and agriculture issues by visiting Institute for Agricultural Trade Policy's website [COVID-19 hub](#).**

The [COVID-19](#) pandemic has created a worldwide health crisis, upending day-to-day life, destabilizing the global economy and impacting international politics. This ever-evolving tragedy will impact our food systems, federal food assistance programs, farmers and farmworkers, ranchers and fisherpeople, and food producers.

### [New Book Food or War Outlines How to Avoid a Soylent Green Future](#)

Julian Cribb's sobering new book gives dire climate change warnings but also reasons for hope.

FERN Friday Feed, 2/7/2020

### 2019 Peer Review Report and NOP Response

NOP recently published the 2019 Peer Review Report and the program's response: [2019 ANSI Peer Review](#).

The annual peer review process evaluates the U.S. Department of Agriculture's organic accreditation program against a set of objective criteria, and is conducted based on the Handbook document, [Peer Review of National Organic Program Accreditation](#).

Independent external auditors determine if the NOP has followed its quality management procedures. The auditors compile results of the review and submit them in a report to the NOP. NOP develops action items that respond to peer review feedback as part of its continuous improvement work.



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KEEP IOIA STRONG – LEND YOUR STRENGTH AND GET INVOLVED!

## *2020 - 2021 Calendar*

*Many live events have moved to a virtual platform at this time.  
Please check your favorite event's website for updates.*

**July 1** WEBINAR: The Organic Center Presents: Biodiversity and Profitability on Organic Farms - Environmental and Economic Benefits of Organic Practices. Open to all. [More info.](#)

**Sept 21 - 27** 20th Annual IFOAM Organic World Congress, Rennes, France. Postponed until 2021.

**September 23 - 26** Natural Products Expo East - **Cancelled until 2021!**

**October 5 - 9** IOIA Basic Crop and Processing Training, Saco, Maine. Postponed until 2021.

**October 27 - 29** NOSB Fall Meeting, Cedar Rapids, IA.

**November 2-13** IOIA Basic Crop and Livestock Training Farmington, Minnesota. Still scheduled at this time but this may change.

**November 4 - 6** Organic Connections Conference, and Trade Show, Saskatoon, SK. Postponed until 2021.

**January 26 - 28, 2021** - NOP and ACA trainings, New Orleans, LA

**February 2021**, tentative - IOIA Virtual AGM - date to be announced. See article page 9.

PLEASE SEE PAGES 2 & 3 FOR THE CURRENT LIST OF  
IOIA LIVE ONLINE, ONSITE AND WEBINAR TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

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