

## 2020 AGM Heads to San Antonio

Bring in the new decade with a splash – plan to join the first ever IOIA/ACA collaborative training in San Antonio, Texas! The Drury Plaza Hotel on the San Antonio River Walk was selected by the Accredited Certifiers Association. This will be the third time for ACA to meet at this venue, a positive recommendation in itself. It is IOIA's first AGM in Texas and the first time that ACA and IOIA have pulled together to sponsor our annual meetings and trainings jointly. Southern locations have consistently been preferred by IOIA members, and this one represents convenient travel for members in Latin America. Central Time Zone makes it easier for travelers from all coasts and regions. The location offers a plethora of dining and drinking options on the River Walk along the San Antonio River, historical and cultural attractions, and an affordable venue.

The training begins on January 28 with the NOP Training, open to all inspectors (both staff and contract) and certification staff with an affiliation to an NOP accredited certifier. This training is free and presented by NOP staff. Field trips to local organic operations and cultural sites is an added option on Jan. 27.

The ACA/IOIA Training begins at 8:30 a.m. on **January**



**29.** The training continues for the following 2 days. The schedule is being arranged so that sessions on the afternoon of January 30 are selected from among those of greater interest to certifiers than inspectors. The training agenda is still under development but will be available soon. "Sharing Our Perspectives" will kick off the training with some sessions for certifiers, some for inspectors, and some for blended groups. Other sessions include Investigations and Fraud, Residue Sampling, Updates from the ACA Materials Working Group (a popular repeat session) which will include using TAP Reviews,

and following up on noncompliances. Day 1 ends with a joint IOIA/ACA Reception with snacks and beverages – super networking opportunity! **Day 2** (January 30) starts with a report-back from the results of the "Sharing..." session from Day 1. Topics under discussion include Inspection Efficiencies, and a Working Group Roundup. Each year, the ACA has several working groups. The purpose of

this session is to highlight the activities of the Working Groups. Working groups in 2019 include Organic Certificate Consistency, Dry Matter Verification, Risk Assessment, and Cross Checks. Joining with ACA allows IOIA to make affordable and quality training available.

See AGM, page 4

## Notes from the Chair

by Lois Christie

When I was elected to be Board Chair, I must admit, not having ever served on a Board, the gravity of the job at hand had not hit me. While it is an unpaid post, it is still a very important one to the running of IOIA. We have had some tough decisions to make. One very important and time-intensive one has been bringing our website and technology current. Diane has done a tremendous job over the years of maintaining the current technology, Forum, newsletter, and website. This new system will be all-inclusive and will build upon programs that we have (Training, Accreditation and Peer Evaluation Programs). It is our hope that it will assist in bringing more professional recognition to inspectors with a platform that will support a great credentialing program. We have come a long way in that now we can get much of our training via webinars and stay abreast of the various scopes, See **Notes**, page 4

**Welcome New Members****New Inspectors**

Wendi Jennings, Lake City, FL  
Emily McEachern, Oliver, B.Columbia

**Returning Inspector Members**

Rosalind Hobart, Clarksburg, ON

**Supporting Individuals**

Gregory Barber, Sanger, CA  
Michael Barnaud, Reliance, SD  
Andrew Boone, Calmar, IA  
Phil Britton, Marquette, MI  
Karen Conant, McKinleyville, Ca  
Chris Cook, Novato, CA  
Lauren Gontram, Bethlehem, PA  
Dean Goodale, Fairfield, IA  
Daniel Hermstad, Felton, CA  
Reagan Hulbert, Sheldon, WI  
Mallory Krieger, Champaign, IL  
Helen Lambert, Portland, OR  
Joseph P. Lambert, Portland, OR  
Tracy Metzler, Fresno, California  
Molly Padilla, Petaluma, CA  
Keren Ram, Davis, California  
Valentina Temerario, Santa Cruz, CA  
Ryan Vieira, Visalia, CA  
Dann Walters, Novato, CA  
John Welton, Old Town, Maine

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*The Inspectors' Report* is the newsletter of International Organic Inspectors Association. IOIA is a 501 (c)(3) educational organization. Our mission is to address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors, to provide quality inspector training and to promote integrity and consistency in the organic certification process.  
Editor: Diane Cooner [webgal\[at\]ioia.net](mailto:webgal[at]ioia.net)  
Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.

**WEBINAR Training Schedule**

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

**100 Level Webinar - September 17 & 24, 2019**

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

**200 Level Webinar - September 25, 2019**

IOIA/OMRI NOP Livestock Input Materials | Presenter: Tina Jensen Augustine  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | One 3 hour session  
IOIA member cost: \$275, \$250 if also an OMRI member

**300 Level Webinar - September 26, 2019**

Fraud Prevention in the Receiving Department | Trainer: Silke Fuchshofen  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | One 3 hour session | IOIA member cost: \$175

**100 Level Webinar - October 1 & 4, 2019**

NOP Crop Standards | Trainers: Garry Lean & Margaret Scoles  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$325

**200 Level Webinar - October 3 & 10, 2019**

In/Out Balances and Traceability Tests for Crop Inspection under NOP and COR  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 2 hour sessions | Trainer: Monique Scholz  
IOIA member cost: \$275

**100 Level Webinar - October 29 & November 1, 2019**

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

**200 Level Webinar - November 8 & 15, 2019**

Livestock Feed Audits: Grazing and non-grazing season  
Trainers: Nate Powell-Palm & Jonda Crosby  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$300

**200 Level Webinar - November 13, 2019**

IOIA/OMRI NOP Processing Input Materials | Presenter: Tina Jensen Augustine  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) One 3 hour session.  
IOIA member cost: \$275, \$250 if also an OMRI member

**200 Level Webinar - December 2 & 9, 2019**

Dairy Feed Audits Grazing and Non-Grazing Season  
Trainers: Nathaniel Powell-Palm and Jonda Crosby  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$300

**200 Level Webinar - December 3 & 10, 2019**

Processing In/Out Balances, Traceability & Recipe Verification under NOP & COR  
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Pacific) Two 2 hour sessions. | Trainer: Kelly Monaghan  
IOIA member cost: \$325

**250 Level Webinar - December 12, 2019**

Maple Syrup Inspection | Trainer: Monique Scholz  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | One 3 hour session | IOIA member cost: \$175

**100 Level Webinar - March 10 & 13, 2020**

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

**Webinar Discount Note:**

**All IOIA Inspector Members are eligible for 1 half-price webinar in 2019.**

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

### **October 1 - 4, 2019 Tokyo, Japan, Processing Inspection Course**

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor a 4-day Basic Organic Processing Inspection Training using JAS Standards as a reference. The course will be held at Waseda Hoshien, Tokyo, Japan, October 1-4 in Japanese language. Please contact JOIA for more information about this training: [info@joia-organic.com](mailto:info@joia-organic.com)

### **October 4, 2019 - Central California Coastal Region, Advanced Inspector Training**

#### **Assessing Biodiversity and Natural Resources on the Farm**

This IOIA/Wild Farm Alliance/CCOF 300 Level Advanced Inspector Training will be held in the Central California coastal region at farms in Watsonville and Hollister. The goal of the training is to give participants confidence that they need not be experts in plants, insects, animals, or hydrology to effectively inspect and assess to the NOP rule and related guidance on natural resources and biodiversity. The training will focus on the visual cues and best practices to use. The bulk of the course is an interactive field trip to two certified organic farms to provide hands-on training and sharpen your observation skills. [More info on our website](#). Trainers are conservation and biodiversity educators **Tony Fleming** (geologist and former inspector) and **Jo Ann Baumgartner** (Wild Farm Alliance Executive Director, farm ecologist, and former organic farmer). **Deadline to apply is September 9, 2019.**

### **October 7 - 11, 2019 - Frankfort, Kentucky**

#### **IOIA/KDA Basic Organic Crop and Processing Inspection Training**

IOIA and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) will cosponsor Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings to run concurrently October 7-11, 2019. Trainings will be held Monday - Friday, at Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort, Kentucky. KDA is organizing a sightseeing day for Sunday, October 6 featuring a visit to local historical attractions including Keeneland racetrack in Lexington. Participants should consider scheduling an extra travel day to enjoy the local sights and Kentucky hospitality. Located in the heart of downtown Frankfort, the Capital Plaza Hotel sits right on the river, across the street from the Riverview Marina. It is an easy walk to the historic district and within walking distance to restaurants. For further details on the venue and to view lodging options visit - Capital Plaza Hotel website: [www.capitalplazaky.com](http://www.capitalplazaky.com). Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. For more information or to register, see the IOIA [training page](#).

### **October 8, 2019 - Northern California, Advanced Inspector Training**

#### **Assessing Biodiversity and Natural Resources on the Farm**

IOIA/Wild Farm Alliance/CCOF 300 Level Advanced Inspector Training, "Assessing Biodiversity and Natural Resources on the Farm", will be held in the Central Valley of Northern California at three farms in Guinda and Winters. **See October 4 listing above for full info. Deadline to apply is September 9.**

### **November 4 - 8, 2019 - Plainfield, Indiana**

#### **IOIA/Ecocert ICO Basic Organic Crop and Processing Inspection Training**

IOIA/Ecocert ICO will cosponsor Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings near Indianapolis, Indiana. Trainings run concurrently November 4-8. The basic trainings will be held at the CRG Event Center in Plainfield, Indiana. For more info on the venue please visit their website at: <https://www.cргеventcenter.com/>. Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. A minimum of 12 participants is required for each course or it will be cancelled. For more info or to register, see the IOIA [training page](#).

## **Under Development!**

- **January 31, San Antonio, Texas, Advanced Training** will be offered in conjunction with the NOP and ACA trainings and the IOIA AGM.
- **June 1 - 5, Crop, Processing and Field Training, Corvallis, Oregon. Cosponsored by OTCO.**
- Also, watch for the launch of the on-line self-directed learning - **200 Level Dairy Feed Audit.**

## Notes, from page 1

without incurring the costs of leaving our home. I am still a strong proponent of the AGM and in-person trainings as a way to stay connected with colleagues, and hands-on trainings are quite effective and necessary (like the wonderful apiculture training we had in Oaxaca). Look for our upcoming first of its kind combination AGM and ACA/NOP training coming up in January. I hope to see everyone there!

The Peer Evaluation Program has created a great tool for inspector improvement – something I think we can all appreciate. While Field

Evaluation is an NOP requirement based on NOP Guidance, inspectors should look at this program as a great opportunity for improvement. We work in isolation most of the time with little feedback other than from the reviewers who see only what is written in our reports. I appreciate the Peer Evaluation Program for giving me an insight to things that perhaps I have become less meticulous about or am unwittingly omitting due to bad habits. Inspecting takes many skills such as interviewing, writing, listening, math, organization and time management, investigative, sampling, and training in the scope that you are inspecting. With all of the things that we have to be good at, inspecting is not an easy job. I am always amazed at how complex it



**Board Chair Lois Christie**

I am especially proud of our new Policy Committee that will give IOIA a better representation of membership voices. Thank you Margaret and Rachel for finalizing this. Read more within this Newsletter.

Our goal is to create more programs that are beneficial to members. If you have any thoughts or ideas we welcome them!

*Lois*

## 2020 AGM, from page 1

The ACA/IOIA Training is just \$275. Meals are not included. The “lunch hour” is 1.5 hours long each day to make it possible to schedule business lunches, catch up with colleagues, or just relax and enjoy the mid-day break in the sunshine.

IOIA will break at noon on Day 2 for the AGM member lunch and keynote address, then return for one more early afternoon session with ACA. The IOIA Annual Meeting will follow beginning at 3 p.m. with an evening gathering planned to include food, beverage, and music.

And one more day of training! IOIA will be surveying members shortly on training topics for IOIA’s Jan. 31 training day. A list has been compiled and it has too many topics for one day. We need your help to focus on what inspectors need and want to know. Other ideas are welcomed. Also, if you would like to participate in the AGM Planning Committee, you will have the opportunity to volunteer through this survey. **To make this training accessible to all IOIA members, the price remains the same as for the past six years, just \$325, which includes lunch.**

Weather should be warm and dry and offer a respite from northern winters. Daytime temperatures are expected to be in the mid-60’s °F (20 °C), lows in the 40’s °F (5 °C). The Alamo is one of two UNESCO World Heritage sites in San Antonio and is about .3 mile walk from the hotel. San Antonio is also known for its commitment to education, with 31 institutions of higher learning, including Texas A&M-San Antonio.

Please check in periodically at [www.ioia.net/AGM.html](http://www.ioia.net/AGM.html) as the IOIA webpage is updated with speaker bios and training agendas.

Group rate for lodging: \$138 + tax for single or double occupancy (deadline December 30, 2019). Each lodging room has fridge, microwave, and free Wi-Fi so you can both economize and eat organic. Free, hot breakfast is available onsite (substantial, though not organic).

IOIA’s Board is extending our hospitality with a pledge to meet and welcome every international member at the airport and personally escort them to the venue.

***Please put this landmark event on your calendars!***

## Notes from the ED by Margaret Scoles

Last year I attended the MT Non-profit Association Conference including a pre-conference workshop by Shelli Bischoff, President and CEO of Conservation Impact. From their website, “30 years of experience in nonprofit management, technical assistance, training, and consulting.... Clients love Shelli’s direct, truth-telling style and no-nonsense approach as she helps them focus on the “business of the business” and challenges them to be even more potent and powerful than they imagined they could be.” That description turned into a reality for me. Shelli promoted an on-line course called “The High Impact Manager and Reshape the Future: Be a Nonprofit CEO”. Like many other nonprofit CEOs, I don’t have an MBA and didn’t end up running a nonprofit because I wanted to be in business administration. I’m here because I care about organic inspectors, inspections, and community. I’ve picked up a lot along the way about running a business. The Board and I have talked for years about the importance of professional development. And as I’ve now been in this chair for 20 years, the need for a transition strategy is growing.

The class was 10 weeks long (April-June), with an average of 4 hours per week to complete the pre-course activity, the post-course activity, and small group or pairing discussions with other participants. That’s a lot of hours to carve out! The cohort was small – just 9 participants. We shared webcams, screens, and homework assignments; and we got to know each other. We came from environmental or social justice nonprofits across the US. Incidental plus – I learned lots about effective on-line learning. The reach of the class was extended by optional reading, post-course group check-ins, and one-on-one dialog with the trainers. Early on, we learned the difference

between priorities (important) and imperatives (critical). We took an assessment called StrengthsFinder, where I learned to capitalize on strengths and forget about weaknesses. I identified what to take off my plate -- things I didn’t have time to do or didn’t have strengths for. We named our “imperatives”, wrote them down, shared them, and referred to them. We were encouraged not to have more than 5 (I had 7). We were to put them where we would refer to them at least weekly. I put mine into the watering can that I use to water the 2 dozen+ plants in my office. That worked! I have to take it out every week when I water the plants. An aside - after taking the StrengthsFinder, it now makes sense to me that I accumulated that many plants without ever intentionally purchasing one! Writing the imperatives down, sharing them, and referring to them weekly all increased accountability.

So, what were my imperatives? You should know. This is your organization. These are what your ED felt important enough to write down and spend the next couple years focusing on. And a note in italics about what is happening with each one.

- **Initiate/work on/complete a new Information Management System as the first critical step toward the new Inspector Credentialing Program.** *We have identified a contractor and are poised to sign a contract with an IT company to commence work on Nov. 1 with a target completion of June 1, 2020.*
- **Update Emergency Plan.** *On track for completion this month is an updated and improved Emergency Plan for IOIA, including a Transition Plan if we need to replace the ED.*
- **Regular Staff Meetings to Build “Team”.** We are now meeting at least quarterly as a whole staff. That’s tricky with Diane in Costa Rica, Sue in Louisiana, Sacha in



IOIA Imperatives in a Watering Can.

South Dakota, and Jonda in Pennsylvania. But technology makes it possible, and it is even more important because we are so far-flung.

- **Nurture new Trainers to maintain adequate competent Trainer staff.** *Garth Kahl, Corinne Kolm, and Nate Powell-Palm are all on track to move into Lead Trainer status by 2020.*
- **Policy Committee poised to respond effectively.** *See page 11. Our new committee is ready for NOSB!*
- **Exercise – Be Healthy!** *This ended up easier than planned, as my car engine started on fire in February and I decided not to replace the car right away. I’ve been walking since.*
- **Ensure basic trainings remain valuable and robust.** *Increasing our trainer staff means we can have meaningful training curriculum discussion and broader input.*

I appreciate Lisa Spicka for taking several things off my plate - serendipity that she joined our team this year. Lisa has that MBA that I don’t have. Thank you, board members, in investing 48 hours of IOIA time into my professional development. And special thanks to the BOD Chairs! I am blessed with two this year, with Margaret Anne as special past chair until the next AGM.

## SECTOR NEWS

### Prison Avoided for Organic Fraudster

[Time Magazine](#) reported on August 21 that Randy Constant, the player behind a massive fraud that netted him 10 years behind bars, subsequently took his life three days after being sentenced.

According to Time, “Police officers found Randy Constant dead in a vehicle in his garage at his home in Chillicothe, Missouri on August 19, hours after federal investigators held a news conference in Iowa to highlight the prison sentence he had received. The county coroner, Scott Lindley, said he concluded that Constant died from carbon monoxide poisoning”.

[AP News](#) reported on August 16 that the key figure in a \$120 million+ fraud to present and sell conventional grain as organic had been sentenced to 10 years in prison for the scam. U.S. District Judge C.J. Williams, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, said Randy Constant orchestrated a massive fraud that did “extreme and incalculable damage” to consumers and shook public confidence in the nation’s organic food industry.

Also on August 16, Williams gave shorter prison terms to three Overton, Nebraska, farmers whom Constant recruited to join the scheme. Williams described the three as largely law-abiding citizens, including one “legitimate war hero,” who succumbed to greed when Constant gave them the opportunity.

Michael Potter, 41, was ordered to serve 24 months behind bars; James Brennan, 41, was sentenced to 20 months; and his father, 71-year-old Tom Brennan, was given a three-month sentence. Williams said the shorter sentence for the elder Brennan reflected his heroism as a decorated platoon leader in the Vietnam War.

All four farmers sentenced had pleaded guilty to wire fraud charges and cooperated with a two-year investigation that isn’t over. A fifth farmer has also pleaded guilty in the case and is awaiting sentencing.

The farmers grew traditional corn and soybeans, mixed them with a small amount of certified organic grains, and falsely marketed them all as certified organic by the USDA. Most of the grains were sold as animal feed to companies that marketed organic meat and meat products.

*Excerpted from multiple articles on the internet*

### Demolition by Relocation – ERS and NIFA Moving Day Looms Closer

In late July, the US Senate Agriculture Committee took the latest action in the ongoing, collaborative effort to reverse the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) relocation of two core research agencies from Washington, D.C. to Kansas City, Missouri. Both ERS and NIFA are already seeing considerable loss of highly-qualified staff, and it is unclear how ERS and NIFA can sustain vital programs that serve the nation’s researchers, producers, and policy-makers without critical staff. <https://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/not-relocation-but-demolition-ers-nifa/>

*NSAC Weekly News, July 26, 2019*

### IFOAM - Call for World Board Candidates

IFOAM - Organics International has issued the Call for World Board Members to be elected at the 2020 General Assembly in Rennes, France. The World Board (WB) is democratically elected by all voting members of IFOAM – Organics International and acts out the mandate given to it at the General Assembly. Following a three-year term, the WB reports back to membership, presenting their achievements. At the 2020 General Assembly in Rennes, France, scheduled for September 26 & 27, 2020, members will cast their vote for WB candidates who have applied for the 2020-2023 term. The World Board is comprised of ten members and should reflect the full diversity of the organic movement it represents.

Responsibilities of Board Members of IFOAM – Organics International include:

- Support the Organizational Strategy and Organic 3.0
- Fundraising
- Supporting the organization’s advancement
- Representation

The deadline for the submission of candidacies is April 30, 2020. On the IFOAM website you will find the full call, with terms of reference and instructions on how to apply. Only complete applications will be considered. Find out more [here](#).

### NOP Compliance Highlights

In July 2019, Basin & Range Organics (BARO) accepted a [suspension of its organic accreditation program](#). All BARO certified operations must apply for certification with a new certifier within 60 days.

Read all about it [here](#).

*If you were subscribing to [USDA's Organic Insider](#), you'd already know this.*

## SECTOR NEWS

### House Ag Committee Grills USDA on Oversight of Organic Seal, Requests More Support for Organic Farmers

On July 17, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Under Secretary Greg Ibach and NOP Deputy Administrator Jennifer Tucker appeared before the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture and Research at a hearing on “Assessing the Effectiveness of the National Organic Program.” They provided updates to the committee on USDA’s implementation of the international oversight and enforcement activities required in the 2018 farm bill. They also fielded several questions from committee members on topics such as transitioning to organic, research and technical assistance, data collection, emerging technologies, oversight and enforcement, and the state of the public-private partnership.

#### State of the Public-Private Partnership

Despite the rosy image painted by USDA’s testimony, House Organic Co-Chairs Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME) and Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL) were not convinced everything is running as smoothly as the NOP claims. Rep. Davis questioned why, of the 20 recommendations to improve the organic standards the National Organic Standards Board has come to consensus on in the last 10 years, none have proceeded to final rulemaking. USDA announced that they plan to move Origin of Organic Livestock through the rulemaking process this year, to which Rep. Davis responded “what about the other 19?” USDA responded that they seek to address NOSB recommendations through avenues other than regulatory actions. USDA was not able to give clear timelines or procedures on how NOSB recommendations for new rules are handled by NOP.

#### Other highlights:

Ranking Member Rep. Neal Dunn (R-FL) brought up the possibility of allowing emerging technologies such as gene editing to the organic standards. USDA responded that they were open to discussion. USDA announced they’ve increased compliance actions and oversight activities in the Black Sea region to prevent fraudulent organic grain imports. They also stated the proposed rule for “Strengthening Organic Enforcement” will be released this fall for public comment. Watch [Archived Video of Full Hearing](#) *OTA special flash 7/17/2019*

### OTA expands its support for “train-the-trainer” program

The hard reality for organic farmers – and farmers who want to go organic – is that the network of agronomists and technical service providers is often just not there to support growers through transition to organic and beyond.

Addressing this critical challenge, the Organic Trade Association has announced significant actions to expand and strengthen its support for a new train-the-trainer program – the Organic Agronomy Training Service (OATS) Project -- for agricultural professionals working with organic or transitioning farmers. OATS is supported by GRO Organic, OTA’s industry-invested organic research, promotion and education program.

The vision of OATS is that every transitional and certified organic farmer has robust access to technical service expertise to provide unbiased, science-based agronomic support for their farming operation.

OATS is a national consortium of independent regional non-profits, universities, businesses and farmer networks who each work to promote and support domestic certified organic crop production.

For more info on OATS and GRO’s technical assistance projects, there will be a workshop at Expo East in September that will highlight outcomes of GRO’s technical assistance projects, details on the OATS accomplishments in 2019, and plans for 2020 programming. *[OTA press release, 8/12/2019](#)*



### One World Award Call for Nominations - Global Recognition and 45,000 Euro Prize Money

It is once again time to nominate innovation ideas, projects, and individuals from around the world for the [One World Award \(OWA\)](#). This prestigious international award will be presented for the sixth time by organic food producer Rapunzel and global non-profit IFOAM – Organics International. **The call for nominations will run until September 30, 2019.** From the nominees, five laureates will be selected to receive this encourager award at a celebratory gala hosted by Rapunzel in September 2020 in Legau/Allgäu, Germany. Endowed at a sum of 45,000 Euros, the OWA honors individuals who steer globalization in a positive and humane direction. Winning projects will incorporate ecological, economic, and social elements. The OWA committee will select 5 finalists from an international pool of applicants in autumn 2019. *IFOAM press release via website*

## Asia Pacific Committee at work - Advanced Training

Chiang Mai, Thailand - January 14 - 16

IOIA's Asia Pacific Committee represents 6 countries (Australia, Thailand, Korea, Japan, Nepal, and India) and decades of combined organic certification, training, and inspection experience. The committee meets virtually and bi-monthly, under the coordination of **Mutsumi Sakuyoshi**, IOIA Trainer and former board member, from Japan. The current initiative of the group is to organize advanced training for certification staff and inspectors, coupled with an internal Train the Trainer refresher course geared to increase regional trainer capacity. Lead Trainer for the open enrollment course, focused on grower group certification, is **Isidor Yu**, IOIA Trainer from Republic of Korea. This first course is offered at a significant discount to encourage participation.



**Mutsumi Sakuyoshi** will be leading the Train the Trainer course.

*Organic in Asia is growing fast, expanding from 4.832 million ha in 2016 to 6.050 million ha in 2017, that's 25% growth!*

### An invitation from Vitoon Panyakul, colleague, and local host for the events---

"Grower groups are the main form of organic certifications in many developing countries, including Asia and the Pacific. An estimate of 1.4 million families with 2.2 million ha (around 4,000 groups) are in organic grower groups in Asia. Inspecting this grower group is quite challenging. The external inspector is not supposed to check the compliance of sampled farmers, but instead to evaluate the effective of the internal control system (ICS) that ensures the compliance of the entire group members to applicable organic standards and requirements.

IOIA's Asia Pacific Committee is pleased to launch its first training workshop on this important topic. We choose to have our first event in Chiang Mai, Thailand, because it is easily accessible by all from the Asia region, both in flight connections and visa requirements. January is the best period to visit Chiang Mai as the weather is more pleasant, e.g. dry and slightly cool." This training will be held at the Phum Come Hotel.



**Vitoon Panyakul**, Chumphon province, southern Thailand.

**Vitoon Panyakul** is the director at Earth Net Foundation and Director at Green Net Cooperative. Earth Net Foundation works together with its sister organization Green Net Cooperative to help develop organic agriculture and fair trade market access for small-scale farmers in Thailand.



**Isidor Yu**



## CANADA ORGANIC NEWS

### Public Review of the Proposed Modifications to the Organic Standards

The Organic Federation of Canada has put together an excellent PDF outlining the proposed changes and ways to provide feedback. [Click here to access this document](#)

Deadline to submit comments is September 30th.

### Requirement for CB's to publish operator info under the Canada Organic Regime published

CFIA is the scheme owner of the Canada Organic Regime (COR) which operates within the legal authority of Part 13 of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR). The International Organization for Standardization standard ISO/IEC 17065, entitled Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services (ISO 17065) is incorporated by reference in Part 13 of the SFCR and CBs must comply with it.

As per clause 7.8 of ISO 17065, CBs are required to:

- maintain information on certified products which contains at least the identification of the product, the standards to which the product has been certified and identification of the operator
- publish the information in a directory (through publications, electronic media or other means) as stipulated by the scheme owner
- Implement the policy

The CFIA requires the CBs to make the following information publicly available:

- name of organic operator
- address and contact information of operator
- certification status of the operator
- list of certified products
- categories under which the products are certified



The CBs are required to publish the above information using an online directory such as a searchable database or Excel document. The CBs will be responsible for keeping this information up to date.

Medium of publication will be decided in consultation with the CBs, national organic associations and the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

The timeline for implementing this policy is fall 2020.

Please also note, Directive 14-01 has been updated to remove the requirements that were transferred in Part C of the COR Manual. The amended directive is posted on the CFIA web site: [English](#) [French](#)

Posted Monday, 12 August 2019 [www.ioas.org](http://www.ioas.org)

### First Canadian Case of Insect Resistance to Genetically Engineered Corn Discovered

In Nova Scotia, corn farmers are observing that the European corn borer, an insect pest, has developed resistance to the genetically engineered trait designed to kill it.

This is the first report in the world of the European corn borer (ECB) developing resistance to a genetically engineered trait used to confer insect resistance. It is also the first report in Canada of any insect pest developing resistance to a genetically engineered trait. The development of resistance in other insect pests targeted by Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) traits in corn has been observed in the U.S., South Africa and Brazil.<sup>(2)</sup> Additionally, in the U.S. and other countries, some cotton pests have also developed resistance to Bt cotton traits.

“This is an important reminder that nature can adapt to and overcome genetically engineered traits,” said Lucy Sharratt of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network.

[Click here to read the full press release.](#)

From COG monthly newsletter, August 2019

## Professional Development Events – Save the Dates!

*NOP, ACA, and IOIA Trainings Hosted by:*



**Drury Plaza San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel**  
105 South St. Mary's Street, San Antonio, TX  
phone: (210) 270-7799

- This training is for NOP-accredited certification staff and contract inspectors.
- Group rate for lodging: \$138 + tax for single or double occupancy (deadline December 30, 2019).
- Each lodging room has fridge, microwave, and free Wi-Fi. Free hot breakfast onsite.
- ACA/IOIA Training: \$275. IOIA Advanced Training: \$350 less \$25 member discount.
- NOP Training is free of charge.
- Registration links and details will be available in fall of 2019.

Date	Time (Tentative)	Event
January 27, 2020	TBD	ACA Board Meets for Strategic Planning
January 27, 2020	12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	IOIA Field Trips (Option for those signed up for IOIA Advanced Training)
January 28, 2020	8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	USDA National Organic Program Certifier Training
January 29, 2020	8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Training Sessions for ACA and IOIA
January 29, 2020	5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	ACA and IOIA Welcome Reception
January 30, 2020	12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	IOIA Annual Meeting Lunch & Keynote
January 30, 2020	1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Training Session, IOIA & ACA
January 30, 2020	3:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	IOIA Annual General Meeting
January 31, 2020	8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	IOIA Advanced Training
February 1, 2020	8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	IOIA Board Meeting
February 2, 2020	8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	IOIA Board Meeting

## Meet IOIA's New Policy Committee!

IOIA's Board seeks to amplify the voice of inspectors, expand our capacity to comment and speak up on organic issues (especially those directly affecting inspectors), and achieve broader input from our membership on these issues. IOIA has frequent opportunities to comment to the NOP, NOSB, IFOAM, OMRI, and CFIA, as examples. It is challenging to allocate staff and board time and to respond in a timely manner. The Policy Committee will increase our capacity to respond more frequently and more timely.

IOIA is now positioned to have the first assignment of the committee to prepare comment on the fall round of NOSB (deadline for comment Oct. 3) We also anticipate that the upcoming proposed NOP rule will include detail about inspectors.

Members of the Policy Committee are encouraged to actively participate on the IOIA Forum, so that they can monitor what is important to their inspector colleagues. This committee will strengthen our ability to speak with a unified voice. We can and do make a difference!

**Lisa Spicka**, Maracuja Solutions, will be the committee's facilitator. IOIA's leadership decided that a paid facilitator is important due to the frequently extremely short turn-around times to respond. Lisa is also working under contract on other roles with IOIA. Many members met her at the advanced training in Mexico earlier this year. She has an MBA, years of experience working as a consultant to organic and sustainable organizations, five years of experience working at OCIA as Latin American Certification Coordinator/Trainer and a Certification Specialist as the NOP came into law, coupled with writing and facilitation skills. Lisa will coordinate the committee meetings and draw up drafts based on group discussion and input.



The seven members of the committee are:

- Allan Benjamin – Missouri, USA
- Luis Brenes – Costa Rica
- Garth Kahl – Oregon, USA
- Yehuda Nestel – Ontario, Canada
- Kate Newkirk – Maine, USA
- Leonard Pollara – Michigan, USA
- Pam Sullivan – New Hampshire, USA

The BOD Comment Policy and Decision Tree (finalized following the 2018 AGM) guides the committee by outlining when IOIA should respond. The decision-making process in a nutshell is –

1. Define the impact to inspectors /inspection process.
2. Is the resulting impact critical enough for investment of time & energy? If no, STOP.
3. If yes, Will commenting serve our mission? If no, STOP.
4. If yes, Will the comment correct a factual inaccuracy OR respond to a potentially controversial issue?
5. If factual inaccuracy – BOD or Policy Committee decides who will write the comment.
6. If potentially controversial issue – Collect membership opinion. There must be a majority of the responding membership in favor of the BOD making a comment in order to move forward with a comment.

Survey Response Parameters:

- Must have at least 50 responses
- Majority must be at least 80% of respondents.

Rachel Cherry Myers has volunteered to act as the BOD Liaison to the committee.

## IOIA's Office Building is 100!

by Margaret Scoles

IOIA's own office building was part of the Independence Day Powder River County Centennial this year. Broadus, a tiny town of just 452 residents, planned a big splash for the Centennial, including a parade, street dance, first class historical musical, and an all-school reunion. A common phrase on the streets, "With so many people in the parade, who is going to be left to watch it?" As it turned out the streets were filled with plenty of residents, former residents, and friends. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July began with a torrential downpour. The clouds parted just in time for everyone to pull their parade floats out of shelter and join the line-up for the most impressive parade anyone could remember.

IOIA didn't join the parade with a float, but we did our part by decking out extra nice for the celebration. Originally the Piniele Bank (Piniele no longer exists) in neighboring Carter County, the building was moved to Broadus in 1919. This was the same year Powder River County was born and Broadus became the county seat. Exact age of the building is not known, but we do know that it has been at its current location for 100 years. The building was a bank, which sold to another bank in the mid-20's, and served as a barber shop for several years. The building was purchased in the early 1930's by L.J. Onstad, who served as County Attorney. After his death, his son Chester, also an attorney, returned and took over the practice. Chester worked until his death in the mid 1950's. His wife, Marge, continued into the 1990's as a bookkeeper in the building. After her death, the Amsden family corporation bought it in an estate sale and began the task of restoring it. The Onstads had fortunately made no major renovations except some window changes and aluminum siding. Amsdens removed the siding, restored the original "Old West" clapboard false front, and replaced the windows. Historic features include hardwood floors and trim, glass doorknobs, double hung windows, and high ceilings. The size is small, about 800 square feet in 5 rooms on the ground level and a full block basement underneath for storage. It was a good size for IOIA. In early 2006, the owners put the building for sale and invited IOIA to buy it. The IOIA Board completed an analysis. Even though the price was right, IOIA was not in a financial position to purchase it. Fortunately, that wasn't the end of the story. Later in the year, the owners contacted IOIA and offered to give it to IOIA. This is the largest single donation that IOIA has ever received. The Board approved taking ownership in January 2007. That process was complete on August 15, 2007 when John Amsden signed the deed, representing the owner, Amsden LLC.



In 1999, when IOIA moved on a shoestring from the home of Jim Riddle and Joyce Ford in Winona, Minnesota, office space was needed. As the new Coordinator, I knew it wouldn't fit in my small home. Friend Anne Amsden, an ardent supporter of organic and healthy food and organizer of Broadus's Tree Board, invited IOIA to join the Amsden family project - Prairie Winds Trading Co. Amsden LLC purchased the historic building on the town square to sell local arts and crafts. IOIA could share office space, and I would mind the store. It was a great way to start. This arrangement lasted for two years until IOIA started paying a nominal rent that probably barely covered cost of utilities. That arrangement lasted another four years. Eventually IOIA started paying real rent in 2006 when the Amsden family dissolved Prairie Winds.



A note about our benefactors -- Amsden LLC is a family corporation, including Lyman and Anne and their three grown children. Lyman, the patriarch, still serves as town mayor in his 90's. He drives his John Deere tractor in the parade every year. Daughter Julie is the local Extension Agent. Son John, an attorney in Bozeman, Montana says they were motivated to gift the building to IOIA because, "We spent a fair amount in restoring the building, and wanted to make sure the building's historical aspects were preserved. IOIA is a great organization committed to things we believe in, and we were happy that they too understood the benefits from preserving historical buildings and conserving resources." IOIA has a bronze plaque by the front door to acknowledge this generous gift. And new this year, just in time for the Centennial, is a bench for enjoying the view, or a parade.

## Two Advanced Inspector Trainings in California on October 4th or 8th “Assessing Biodiversity & Natural Resources on the Farm” by Jonda Crosby

IOIA is excited to expand our collaboration with Wild Farm Alliance (WFA) and California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) to offer two in-person trainings on farms in California in early October 2019.

This is the second year these trainings are being offered. Past participants described the course as *“dynamic,” “stimulating,”* and *“the best continuing education opportunity I have ever participated in at an advanced inspector training.”*

The NOP requires inspectors to recognize and evaluate areas where: 1) natural resources and biodiversity are already conserved; 2) conservation projects are planned; and 3) improvement is needed.

The trainings are designed for everyone who inspects, reviews, or certifies crop or livestock farms. You need not be experts in plants, insects, animals, or hydrology to effectively inspect and assess to the NOP rule and related guidance concerning natural resources and biodiversity. These trainings provide a unique opportunity to learn directly from farmers who are instituting biodiversity practices. Each training will be one full day and include visits to two farms on October 4th and three farms on October 8th.

The course is designed as interactive hands-on learning field trip to certified organic farms. A central element of the hands-on training will be evaluating and verifying the farm’s OSP sections on biodiversity and natural resources.

Participants will learn to identify key sensory indicators (visual, touch, smell, sounds) that can be used to efficiently and effectively assess the quality of natural resources/biodiversity. This course will provide a multitude of opportunities to sharpen participant observation skills.

During each one-day course discussion topics will include **“How to Have Conversations with Farmers about Native Plants and Wildlife”**, **“How to Discuss Opportunities for Improvement with Farmers”**, and **“How to Incorporate Your Observations Into your Inspection Findings”**.

At each location, the farmer will lead us on a comprehensive, interactive tour that mimics an inspection, with the focus being on how they have incorporated NR & BD into their OSP.

By design, this training is limited to a small group size to maximize your personal interaction with the trainers and farmers.

Our training team brings together a rare combination of deep expertise and practical hands-on learning style. Trainers include farm ecologist **Jo Ann Baumgartner** and geologist **Tony Fleming**. Baumgartner is the Executive Director of Wild Farm Alliance and a former organic farmer with decades of experience in educating farmers about how to benefit from and support biodiversity on the farm, and teaching inspectors how to assess and verify what is enough and when improvement is needed. Fleming is a longtime natural resources educator, former organic inspector, and past technical editor for the IOIA newsletter. Tony has years of experience in soils, water, natural communities, and their relationships within the larger landscape. The training will also feature other key experts from regional NRCS offices, universities, NGO’s; and most importantly farmers who are actively engaged in improving biodiversity and natural resources on their farms.

All of the farms were chosen for their outstanding work around biodiversity and natural resources.

To receive an Advanced Inspector Training Certificate, participants must complete both a pre-course assignment, attend one of the one day trainings and complete a post course assessment for one of the operations visited during the course.

Deadline to apply is September 9, 2019.

**Registration Costs:** IOIA members \$500, non-members \$525. IOIA offers an additional \$25 off per person discount for organizations or businesses that register a group of 5 participants or more.

For more information, agenda and to register for each training, [please click here](#) to visit our website. Space is available for individuals who would like to take both courses at a discounted rate. Please contact [jcrosby@mt.net](mailto:jcrosby@mt.net).



## OTA Membership Awards to Recognize Another IOIA Member

Congratulations to Nate Powell-Palm, IOIA trainer and organic inspector member, for being recognized as the 2019 Organic Trade Association "Rising Star" Honoree!

Nate and two other outstanding individuals in organic agriculture will receive Organic Trade Association's Leadership Awards at the Annual OTA Leadership Awards Celebration, which kicks off Expo East on September 11. They all have much in common: they are passionate about organic farming, visionary in their advocacy for strong organic standards, and active in passing on their excitement and knowledge to foster further growth in the sector.

### **Israel Morales Sr., JV Farms Organic - Organic Farmer of the Year Award**

Israel Morales Sr. is JV Farms Organic's lead grower with over 40 years of farming experience. JV Farms Organic in Soledad, CA, is committed to growing organic crops in an innovative and eco-friendly manner. Israel has extensive experience not just in knowing what produce matches the type of soil, but also other factors important to soil health. As ranch manager, he has direct influence on the growing practices on all of the acres in his operation. Described by peers as living and breathing organic farming, he has both an old-school mentality on how to grow organically while also a flare for innovation. A successful large-scale organic farmer, he is known as an excellent steward of land, minimizing disturbance, maximizing soil cover, maximizing biodiversity, and maximizing the presence of living roots.



### **Lynn Coody, Organic Agsystems Consulting**

#### *Growing the Organic Community Award*

Lynn Coody of Eugene, Oregon, has been active as a crucial voice on the organic front since the 1970s. First serving as general manager of an organic farm, in the ensuing decades she has provided invaluable technical assistance to growers, certifiers, producers and regulatory agencies at the local, state, regional, national and international levels. She was one of a three-person team who guided the development and passage of Oregon's ground-breaking Organic Food Law in the late 1980s. Based on that experience, she served as technical advisor to Kathleen Merrigan (Aide to Senate Patrick Leahy) during the drafting of the federal Organic Foods Production Act and to Representative Peter DeFazio's staff on the House version. She has been principal consultant at Organic Agsystems Consulting--her own technical assistance firm--since 1982, focusing primarily on education, standards development, management of quality systems for organic certification, advocacy and research. Described by peers as possessing vision, courage and know-how as a deft facilitator and leader, she is seen as a core expert who provides careful thought based on values of integrity and transparency, as well as good science, while always advocating for organic family farmers.

### **Nate Powell-Palm, Cold Spring Organics - Rising Star Award**

Nate Powell-Palm started farming when he was just 12 years old as part of a 4-H project, and used grants and other opportunities to develop and expand his cattle operation in Bozeman, MT. Raising livestock according to organic standards, he applied for certification while still in high school. During college, he completed IOIA training, and started working as an organic inspector. Since graduation, he has expanded the farm into crop production while also growing his cattle enterprise. A Farmstead member of the Organic Trade Association through Montana Organic Association (MOA), he has been a regular participant in the trade association's Policy Days, and is an effective spokesperson for organic agriculture in D.C. He is under age 30, and already has more than 15 years' experience with organic production. This past April, he provided testimony regarding the economic opportunities for farmers through sustainable agricultural practices before the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food & Drug Administration, and related agencies. He has already proven to be a leader in organic agriculture, not just in Montana but on a broader national stage.



## Conference on Climate Change at Expo West

### Organic Confluences Conference

September 11, 2019 | 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Hilton Hotel, Key Ballroom 6

Baltimore, MD



ORGANIC  
CONFLUENCES

### Conference on Climate Change

The 2019 Confluences Conference will focus on climate change, bringing together scientific experts, farmers, policymakers, and organic stakeholders to address the current impacts of climate change, best practices within the organic sector for mitigation and adaptation, and methods for encouraging the adoption of strategies for fighting climate change. The conference format will include case studies, panel presentations, roundtable talks, and break-out discussion sessions. Check out the [conference schedule](#) and [register now](#) for \$95.

## Test for organic produce detects food fraud

A new method can determine whether an “organic” piece of produce is legit or fraudulently labeled.

By looking at fertilizer for organic plants, the method provides a deeper, more accurate portrayal of whether eco-labelled produce is indeed organic.

Increased consumer demand and higher profits for producers have made organic foods susceptible to food fraud. “While a major eco-labelling scandal has yet to occur in Denmark, we often forget that our diet is sourced globally, and that our foods are often imported from countries where problems have been documented. For example, in southern Europe, where a large quantity of organic fruits and vegetables are sourced,” according to Kristian Holst Laursen, assistant professor in the plant and environmental sciences department at the University of Copenhagen. He has been developing food fraud detection methods for the past decade. “Our method can be used to distinguish organic vegetables from conventionally farmed produce by looking at how plants have been fertilized,” says Laursen.

### Isotopes, not pesticides

The new method focuses on the isotope signature in a plant by isolating sulfate, a chemical compound that can reveal how a particular plant was grown. Humans, animals, and plants all have isotope signatures that provide information about the environment in which we live and how we live—diets included.

The current way of finding out whether an item is organic or not focuses on identifying [pesticide residue](#). According to Laursen, this method is far from secure. For example, the use of pesticides on a neighboring field or traces from former conventional production on a now organic field can taint crops. Moreover, the analysis of pesticide residues is unable to reveal whether all of the rules for organic production have been complied with, such as the absence of inorganic fertilizers. “Our method does not reveal whether pesticides have been used, but whether organic plants have been fertilized correctly. As such, the method complements existing analytical controls and, overall, provides a much more detailed picture of the growing history,” explains Laursen.

### Food fraud

When a consumer purchases an organic vegetable, they’re often paying a premium for the method of cultivation, such as in soil without synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. Organized criminals are trying to exploit these conditions and profit in a global food fraud industry worth billions. “Nobody really knows the extent of this type of fraud, but we have seen bad examples from abroad that extend well beyond organic products. Rice made of plastic, wine with toxins, artificial honey, etc. There is not always a health risk associated with food fraud, but it is clear that when you pay a higher price, you expect the product that you are paying for. And, of course, honest producers must be protected,” says Laursen.

Laursen’s research group is working with the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration and the method is ready for further testing, approval, and use by public agencies and commercial interests. The paper appears in [Food Chemistry](#). *source: <https://www.futurity.org/organic-produce-fraud-2144642-2/>*

*August 2019. Hat tip to Bob Howe for sharing on the IOIA Forum.*

## Iowa Basic Crop Inspection Training, August 12 - 16, 2019



Coralville, Iowa has become one of IOIA's go-back-to training locations, largely due to the high concentration of organic farms in the area and the ongoing support of **Matt Miller** (Iowa inspector, field trainer, and recent BOD member). Confirming field trip hosts is essential to the success of the training and finding enough hosts is always challenging. Who really wants a group of potential inspectors trampling around the farm doing an amateur-hour inspection? It only happens through collaboration with patient, committed organic farmers and supportive certification agencies. Matt Miller confirmed all of the field trips for both Crop and Livestock courses. All host farms were IDALS certified Amish farms. Farms were so close that the typical chartered vans were not needed. Everyone arrived at the farms in energy efficient yellow taxis.

Location was the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center. Corinne Kolm and Margaret Scoles were co-trainers and field trip group leaders. The low enrollment made for a very cozy course, positive course evaluations and outcomes, and lots of small group work and discussion.

### “Organic Roundup Soybeans?”

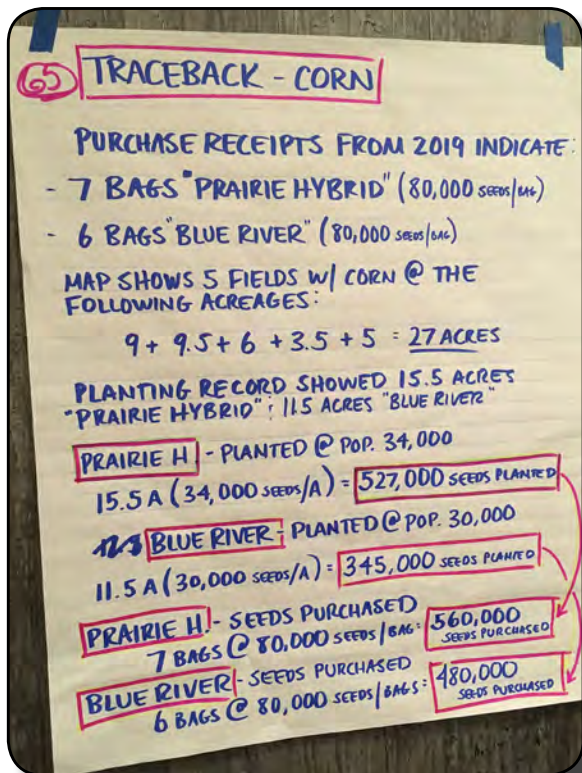
One of the groups walked through fields of corn and hay, evaluated the risk on buffers with organic farms, a small cemetery, and the county road. They established rapport with the grower. It was a beautiful day, overcast to stave off the sun. Perfect weather in fact - totally not what would usually be expected in mid-August in the humid Midwest. The participants stopped to admire the soybean field. One asked the farmer how he got them so clean of weeds. When he answered “Roundup”, jaws dropped until they saw the twinkle in his eye. He followed up, with, “We rounded up the grandkids and the neighbor kids, and we pulled them...!”



Iowa Crop Group, August 2019



## Iowa Basic Livestock Inspection Training, August 19 - 23, 2019



It all comes together on flip charts like this Traceback Audit for corn seed as participants write up their notes for each element of the Field Trip. With feedback from other participants, and clarifications answered, each training participant then makes a final presentation to the entire group. Additional information was also provided for the seed search of the non organic corn and discussion on Form, Quality and Quantity as outlined in NOP Guidance 5029.

IOIA Basic Livestock Inspection Training in Iowa participants Phillip Harris, Steve Cavitt and Jordan Finkelstein discuss the TMR ration provided to dairy cattle. Calculations did determine that the DM provided by the TMR was less than 70 and that the minimum requirement of 30% DM from pasture was being met in this herd.



Participants at the IOIA Basic Livestock Inspection Training in Iowa pose for the post training and pre-exam photo. From left to right:

Jonda Crosby IOIA Training Services Director, Garry Lean IOIA Lead Trainer, Jordan Finkelstein, Karen Gjelhaug, Martin Lichty, Samuel Malriat, Samuel Karns, Mary Ellen Holliman, Phillip Harris, Alyssa Walsh, Brandi Chandler, Bernadette Luncsford, Gretchen Oat, Scott Gootee, Steve Cavitt and Jordon Downton.



Plain Community Organic Dairy Farms were selected as inspection sites at the IOIA Training in Iowa. Farms in some areas of many states use steel wheeled equipment and it was a terrific opportunity for participants to see and work with Plain organic farm hosts. For a few of the training participants it was their first exposure to steel wheeled equipment and the Plain Community.

## Crop Inspection Field training in Iowa City, August 26 - 27, with Matthew Miller

Launched in 2016, IOIA's structured Field Trainings answers the need of aspiring inspectors to obtain more hands-on training under the supervision of a mentor to prepare the trainees to conduct organic inspections on their own. The most recent Field Training occurred in Iowa City on August 23-25<sup>th</sup> with Matthew Miller as the facilitator.

The group size is smaller than a basic training, to allow for more one-on-one interaction with the experienced inspector. Aly Kellogg and Mike Read were the participants for this training. Prior to coming to Iowa City, they reviewed the OSPs and created a plan for the inspections. They watched Matt conduct the first inspection, took good notes, and then completed the inspection report. After receiving a critique on the inspection report, each participant was allowed to complete an entire inspection on their own and was provided feedback by the facilitator. On completion of the course, Mike stated, ***"I found the training highly useful, especially the instructor's feedback on the inspection reports submitted. Now, I have more confidence in the field with farmers, and know I could meet the expectations of certifiers."*** Aly had this to say: ***"Reflecting on the field training, I would say this to others: 'The field training is the perfect bridge between basic training courses and taking on work as an inspector. Spending time in a small group allowed me to receive tailored feedback about my inspection reports. I am certain that I now can meet the expectations of certifiers.'"***

Eight hours of course time was actually spent on the farms. Some of the experiences included checking for adequate buffers, estimating inventory in various storage structures, making yield predictions of crop growing in the field, looking for signs of pest issues in storage areas, viewing cultivation equipment, checking input materials on hand, and of course auditing records. Navigating how to interact with the diverse personalities among organic farmers is another skill experienced during this training. Trainees heard stories from experience about how organic farmers might try to "bend the rules" or just plain cheat (even though this is rare). Getting started as an organic inspector was discussed. They also learned what a certification reviewer is looking for in the inspection report and how to avoid common pitfalls that may get you on the list of "Organic Inspectors Not to Call Unless Desperate." As the organic market continues to grow and more producers enter the system, it is critical that consumers have confidence that what is labeled as "Organic" really is "Organic". **Highly trained organic inspectors making observations in the field are absolutely necessary to make sure fraud gets uncovered.**

**IOIA's Field Trainings have been a great addition in meeting that goal!**

## Blue Fruit Farm makes the news again



Another great article on Blue Fruit Farm can be found on the [Civil Eats website](#):

From the article, shown here is Jim Riddle hosting 50 YMCA campers ages 3-8.

(Photo courtesy of Blue Fruit Farm).

We hope they all end up being future organic farmers!

**Or inspectors at the least!**

## Field Training – Looking to the Future - Seeking Inspector and Certifier Member Input

By Jonda Crosby, IOIA Training Services Director

IOIA has developed a model Apprentice Inspector Field Training course to provide graduates of our basic inspection courses with a structured inspection apprenticeship. We had heard from past trainees “I simply cannot find someone to mentor me,” and from Certifiers “We are providing mentored apprenticeships to students who completed the basic IOIA courses,” and from inspectors “I am getting calls all the time from IOIA course participants asking if I can mentor them,”

Individuals that have taken our course have noted that the training is well designed and implemented. When we offered the course we thought 20-30% of participants from every basic course, especially crop and livestock, would sign up to take the Apprentice Inspector Field Training. But the reality is that in the past three years IOIA has trained less than 10% of the basic crop and livestock participants through the Field Training option.

Barriers for participants wishing to take this course include: the trainings have not been held in the bioregion the trainees intend to seek work, cost of registration and travel, lack of time allowed away from work if they already took time off to take the basic course in the same year and, the trainings are held in the fall rather than the spring when certifiers are adding new inspectors.

### IOIA is rethinking this training and we need your help!

We have ideas on how to re-think this training. This could be a win-win for IOIA, certifiers and independent inspectors alike. We have identified at least two formats that can work:

**Idea 1 - One-on-one guided Field Training:** IOIA could offer the field training as an apprenticeship inspector training to individuals. IOIA would charge them for the training. IOIA would also maintain a list of willing and available Field Trainers in each region, based on scope. Participants would complete IOIA's application that we would to the Field Trainer list to see if anyone in the region where the individual lives or plans to work was willing to take on the apprentice inspector. Participants could be trained in pairs, or singly. The Field Trainer/Mentor would be paid by IOIA and would receive the inspection fees. IOIA has created a training procedure that all trainers, whether they are certifiers or independent contractors, would follow for the apprentice to receive an IOIA Certificate.

**Idea 2 - Certifier-assisted Field Training:** This format was introduced by NICS.

- The new inspector observes a mentor doing a couple of inspections. The new inspector is not paid for their time.
- The new inspector takes on the role of lead inspector, and the mentor observes and provides feedback. The new inspector is paid a reduced inspection rate. The certifier covers the staff time.
- Certain number of monitored inspections follow, where the new inspector is provided more in-depth feedback than is typical for experienced inspectors, and more quickly. The apprentice is paid a discounted rate for a certain number of inspections, determined by mutual agreement.
- When they are completing inspections satisfactorily and have completed this training phase, they can become contractors at the regular inspector rate.

The advantages for the mentored inspector are that they get more feedback over a longer period of time than most inspectors get in apprenticeship or at the in-person field training, and they also get paid. An advantage for the certifier is that they get more closely acquainted with the inspector and they know whether they want to contract with them in the future.

To roll out these or other new approaches IOIA needs feedback from inspector members and certifiers on how Field Training could work. Certifiers and IOIA already agree that lots of inspection experience is essential for mentoring, but not every experienced inspector is a good mentor/teacher. Experience is part of the qualification, but not the only one. IOIA and certifiers could work together to define qualifications for mentors, bring in the good mentors that certifiers are already using, and ensure that mentors are properly compensated. The final outcome for this expanded definition of Field Training would be not only inspectors better prepared to do inspections, but also an IOIA certificate that clearly defines what the new inspector has done (as the basic

See Looking, page 21

## Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

### May 20, 2019 - 7:30 p.m. EDT (Via GoToMeeting)

**Board Members Present:** Lois Christie, Chair; Janine Gibson, Vice Chair; Heather Donald, Treasurer; Margaret Weigelt, Secretary; Ryan Sitler, Director; Rachel Myers, Director; Chuck Mitchell, Exec Member-at-Large (joined at 7:48 p.m. EDT); Philippe Descamps, Director (joined at 8:28 p.m. EDT) Also present - Margaret Scoles, ED

**Maracuja Solutions Contract:** MS reports that she had approached and received response from Lisa Spicka (Maracuja Solutions) about contracting for completion of the IOIA Operating and Emergency Transition Plans. Motion is made to empower MS to create and offer contracts to Lisa Spicka of Maracuja Solutions for two scopes of work – Business Planning for 2019 and Strategic Planning during the 2020 BOD Retreat: Passed unanimously.

**IMS & RFP Response Update:** MS reports that we seem to have narrowed down our choice to two of the four contract bidders for building an IOIA Information Management System (IMS). The other two potential bidders charge from \$30-\$50K per year for platform subscriptions. The expense was deemed to be too large of a commitment for our organization. Lois suggests that if we are concerned about expense we could break the project down into two years. MW suggests a subcommittee meeting prior to the next BOD meeting to work on the motion for contracting, and to prepare for a Q & A with the leading contractor. Ryan suggests a follow-up subcommittee meeting at the end of July to prepare a motion containing the proposed contract details for the August 19 BOD meeting. Lois asks who would like to be on the IMS subcommittee. Ryan, Lois, Heather, MW and MS volunteer. Janine and Lois thank Ryan for his leadership.

**NOP Organic Integrity Learning Center:** Chuck reports on his experience signing into the OILC. He checked out whether its content was collaborative or competitive with IOIA training. He concluded it was both, pointing out that maybe some of our IOIA tools/trainings might fit into the Blackboard Instructors Section.

**Jochen Neuendorff/Miles McEvoy's Discount Offer:** Lois reports that she emailed Miles to inquire what the 88\$ fee covers. The fee is the price for taking all training modules.

**Consumer Outreach:** Rachel states she intends to communicate more with Chuck about what's already been done for the pilot program in Canada. Chuck asks if everyone's seen the 'Ask the Inspector' materials uploaded to the Google folder named 'Steps to Certification'. Chuck suggests we not list sponsors on the 'Ask the Inspector' brochure. Chuck notes that the membership wants us to work on consumer outreach. He said next steps will be to finish brochure for publishing and tailor/adapt a program for the U.S.

**Asia Pacific Committee Update:** MS says the APC should get a Committee of the Year award because they are doing a great job! Mutsumi Sakuyoshi schedules and organizes the meetings. There are six countries represented. The APC has a strategy for increasing inspector trainers and trainings in the region. They propose to act as co-sponsor for trainings in the region. They also propose that any profit earned from APC organized/co-sponsored trainings be used to support an APC Regional Office. To help support the office, IOIA would not charge co-sponsor training fees for the next 2-3 years. Chuck voices his support for empowering this region. MS asks the BOD to accept/approve the APC proposal. Chuck suggests using the \$1500 APC committee budget line as seed money. Motion is made to support the APC's proposal: Chuck/Philippe Motion is made that IOIA support the APC proposal, to the end in establishing a regional office, by foregoing any IOIA co-sponsor training fees until no longer needed/up to 3 years, and by using the \$1500 APC budget line as seed money. Passed unanimously.

## Board of Directors Minutes Highlights, continued

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

### July 8, 2019 - 7:30 p.m. EDT (Via GoToMeeting)

**Board Members Present:** Lois Christie, Chair; Janine Gibson, Vice Chair; Heather Donald, Treasurer; Margaret Weigelt, Secretary; Chuck Mitchell, Executive Member-at-Large; Ryan Sitler, Director; Rachel Myers, Director. Also present - Margaret Scoles, ED. Absent - Philippe Descamps, Director.

**Treasurer's Report:** Budget vs Actual 2nd Qtr; Balance Sheet 2nd Qtr; Approve 2018 990 Return. Heather reports we are on track with budgeted for the quarter. MS notes that at the moment we are running \$20,000 ahead of projected. Motion to accept the Treasurer's and 2nd Qtr. Financial Reports: Passes unanimously. Motion BOD has reviewed and approved the 990 Return for submission: Passes unanimously.

**IMS discussion - BOD Subcommittee:** The June 28 IMS Subcommittee report was reviewed.

Webcam call with Bryan Luisana, Blu Solutions. Intro: BL describes his background and experience, then demos examples of Blu Solutions' work. He currently has four FT employees who custom design solutions to modernize software systems. He said they have worked with a number of systems similar to IOIA's.

Q: MS asks Bryan - Do you do any work that's similar to companies that license their software platforms and retain ownership, or do you do only custom software solutions? Answer: Both. He stated that 90% of their clients own their systems and contract with Blu Solutions for updates as needed. Q: MS asks Bryan to address the money side, explaining that we probably can't pay for this all at once - need to spread over 2 years. BOD agrees we need to refine our needs before we contract. The IMS subcommittee will have another meeting before any final contract. Q: Is it less expensive to integrate external off-the-shelf systems or design things from the ground up? Answer: Bryan states that their ground-up designs are usually pretty cost effective. He recommends Microsoft's Azure cloud hosting system which does have an ongoing fee. IMS Contract - Motions and Decisions. The IMS subcommittee offer two motions to the BOD.

1st Motion that the BOD engage Blu Solutions as our contractor for the IMS. 2nd Motion that we authorize Margaret Scoles to negotiate the contract with Blu Solutions on behalf of the BOD: Passed unanimously. Rachel speaks up about Point 8 and asks if she can report on progress in recruiting members to the Comment Policy Committee.

### Consumer Outreach (move to August 19 Agenda)

### Satellite IOIA Offices, Chapters & Regional Committees (move to August 19 Agenda)

**ED Report:** Notes - We need to schedule another meeting with Jenny Tucker. We need to determine who will be our NOSB representative for the upcoming meeting in Pittsburgh.

Submitted by Margaret Anne Weigelt, Secretary

## Looking to the Future, from page 19

training certificate currently does). This could help move Field Training forward as the new norm for entry-level inspectors.

There are many more questions and great ideas out there that IOIA could consider. What should we charge? What would the Field Trainer/Mentor receive for training the participant? What would be the procedures for acceptance and how to match an apprentice with a matching Field Trainer? To create a training that will work better for apprentices, IOIA would like to work with individuals that are members of IOIA either as an independent contract inspector or staff members of certifiers.

If you have an interest in helping to further develop this new approach, please contact Jonda Crosby, IOIA Training Service Director at ([jcrosby@mt.net](mailto:jcrosby@mt.net)).

## Opportunities from the IOIA Job Board

*IOIA offers the following info as a member service. No employment is implied or guaranteed. Full info + more on the [Jobs page](#) of our website.*

### ACA Seeking Coordinator

The Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA) has an immediate opening for the ACA Coordinator. Qualified candidates are invited to e-mail a resume and cover letter to [aca-employment@googlegroups.com](mailto:aca-employment@googlegroups.com). [Click here for the full job description.](#) posted 8/16/2019

**Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA)** has a job opening for its Operations Coordinator [Please see the full job description here.](#) posted 8/16/2019

**Kentucky Dept of Ag** - is looking for contract reviewers and contract inspectors. posted 8/7/2019

**PCO Seeks Executive Director** - A demonstrated track record of excellent communication skills and the ability to build, cultivate and steward relationships in a variety of settings are essential to the role. Please forward resume and cover letter to: [www.NorthGroupConsultants.com/jobs](http://www.NorthGroupConsultants.com/jobs)

**ICEA Italy looking for independent Inspector** - We are looking for an inspector that could carry out some audit on behalf of our Institute as a free-lance. He/she should at least have some years of experience in auditing and have attended a training in ISO 19011. Competences in textile sector would be highly appreciated. Paolo Foglia [info@icea.bio](mailto:info@icea.bio) Non Food Certification Manager, ICEA - Italy posted 7/31/2019

**Job Opportunities in Organic Compliance** - Program Manager and Regulatory Compliance Analysts MVM, Inc. - We're looking to add a Program Manager, in anticipation of a contract award. The Program Manager will coordinate all case assignment, management and review activities for the NOP's complaint files. posted 7/31/2019

### OneCert has an opening for a full-time Crops Certification Specialist

Please see <https://onecert.com/careers/> for details. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Inquiries and applications may be sent to [jobs@onecert.com](mailto:jobs@onecert.com). posted 7/8/2019

**QAI seeking full time inspectors** - Interested in full time salaried work as an inspector? Join the QAI team! Click here for a job description. posted 6/14/2019

### NSF International seeks Full Time Inspector for California area

There is a wonderful full-time job opportunity as a Senior Organic Inspector in California for anybody with IOIA experience. posted 5/22/2019

### Openings at OMRI - multiple positions

Visit [omri.org/jobs](http://omri.org/jobs) for more information. Positions open until filled. updated 7/27/2019

**QCS is hiring** - We are advertising for a full time Crop / Livestock Certification Reviewer and a full time Processing and Handling Certification Reviewer, both based in our Gainesville office. While the positions are listed as reporting to Gainesville, FL, we may consider well qualified remote staff. Certification reviewer [Processing](#) [Crop](#) posted 5/6/2019

**NICS is looking for experienced inspectors** in the areas we certify. Email Kris Olson at [kolson@naturesinternational.com](mailto:kolson@naturesinternational.com) with your interest and resume. IOIA training or inspection experience is preferred. posted 3/20/2019

**Pro-Cert seeks Inspectors.** Posted 2/10/2019

## Resources

### New OFRF Training Program Offers Organic Basics for Beginning Farmers

Organic Farming and Research Foundation has introduced the first learning module, Organic Soil Health Management, in its free online training program for beginning farmers, existing organic farmers, and farmers in transition to organic production. The content throughout the training program focuses on organic specialty crop production in California. The self-paced program combines descriptive essays, video lectures from university faculty, and virtual field trips to demonstrate organic principles and practices.

In total, the online training program will contain six learning modules: 1) soil health, 2) weed management, 3) irrigation and water management, 4) insect and mite management, 5) disease management, and 6) business management and marketing. The soil health module is now live and the five remaining modules will be introduced as they are completed, with the entire program available in spring 2020.

*OFRF Why Organic? newsletter, 8/14/2019*

### 2017 Census of Agriculture Drilldown: Conservation and Energy

The *Census of Agriculture* is a critical tool for farmers, researchers, and food/farm activists because of the wealth of data it contains about everything from farmer demographics to cover crop acreage. [In this post](#), the first in a series of Census deep dives, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) examines what the Census has to say about conservation and energy and highlights themes and key takeaways for sustainable agriculture advocates.

*NSAC Weekly News 6/21/2019*

### How farmers discuss climate change

Agricultural trade journals have become an important resource and discussion forum for farmers navigating the new realities of our changing climate. "Olive Oil Times's 2018 harvest survey, for which the trade publication polled thousands of olive growers in dozens of countries, reads like a summary of the manifestations of climate change around the world," writes Elizabeth Hewitt. "Connected with 30 writers in agricultural communities around the world, the Times gathers on-the-ground insights into climate change's volatile, local impacts."

[Read the full article at Columbia Journalism Review](#)

*FERN's Friday Feed newsletter 4/19/2019*

### Organic Cotton Fact Sheet - New resource download

The Organic Trade Association's Fiber Council has updated its detailed-filled [Organic Cotton Fact Sheet](#) with information invaluable to companies using the fiber. The fully referenced document addresses such topics as what is organic cotton, how much is grown and where, who are the leading organic cotton users, the market value, and what about the processing of it into finished products.



### The new frontier of genetic engineering: Chestnut trees

Chestnut trees were virtually wiped out in the U.S. in the middle of the 20th century. But now, a genetically engineered version is posing questions about whether and how to move forward with GE trees. "Before it can be released into the wild, the transgenic chestnut has to pass a battery of ecological tests," writes Rowan Jacobsen. "Then it must be approved by the United States Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency. So far the tree has aced all the tests. Approval is looking likely. And that is why, to those who are concerned about GMOs, it is the most dangerous tree in the world."

[Read all about it in Pacific Standard magazine.](#)

*FERN's Friday Feed, 6/28/2019*

### USDA Certified Organic Operations for 2018

USDA recently announced the number of certified organic operations in the United States reached 27,494 in 2018, up by 1,093 over the 2017 count. The number of international operations certified was up 713 to just over 15,500. Together these totals represent a 4.4 percent increase, bringing the total USDA Certified Organic Operations to just over 43,000.

A complete list of certified organic farms and businesses is available in the [Organic Integrity Database](#). The database discourages fraud by providing accurate and timely information about operations certified to use the USDA organic seal.

*From USDA Organic Integrity, June 19, 2019*



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

## 2019 Calendar

**September 11 -14** New Hope Expo East, Baltimore, MD.

**September 11** Organic Confluences Conference. 9-5. Hilton Hotel, Key Ballroom 6, Baltimore MD. Focusing on climate change.

**September 11** OTA Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner.

**September 12 - 14** Biofach America 2019 at Expo East.

**September 25** 1-2pm ET, 10-11 PT Organic Center webinar on the Biodiversity Calculator.

**October 1 - 4** Tokyo, Japan. IOIA Processing Inspection Course

**October 4** Central California, Advanced Inspector Training - "Assessing Biodiversity and Natural Resources on the Farm".

**October 7 – 11** Basic Organic Crop and Processing Inspection Training, Frankfort, Kentucky.

**October 8** Northern California, Advanced Inspector Training "Assessing Biodiversity and Natural Resources on the Farm."

**October 22** National Organic Coalition pre-NOSB meeting, Pittsburgh, PA. Scholarships to attend NOSB meeting available until 9/13 for certified organic farmers.

**October 23 – 25** Fall 2019 National Organic Standards Board meeting. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel & Suites Pittsburgh City Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219. 1-800-222-TREE (8733). Materials related to the meeting will be posted as they become available to the [NOSB Fall 2019 Meeting webpage](#).

**October 29** Organic & Non-GMO Forum <https://www.ongforum.com/>

**November 4 - 8** Plainfield, Indiana IOIA/Ecocert ICO Basic Organic Crop and Processing Inspection Training

**January 22 – 25, 2020** 40<sup>th</sup> Annual EcoFarm Conference, Asilomar, CA.

**January 23 - 26** Guelph Organic Conference, Guelph, Ontario.

**January 29 - 30** ACA/IOIA training, San Antonio TX.

**February 27 - 29** MOSES conference, LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

**Sept 21-27** 2020 IFOAM Organic World Congress General Assembly, Rennes, France.

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