

Conversation for A New Decade

Conversation for a new Decade? Come to San Antonio “In Search of Common Ground”. IOIA’s 2020 Annual Meeting will be a historic one, paired for the first time with NOP and ACA annual trainings in Texas. The week kicks off with field trips on Jan. 27, followed by NOP training. Advanced Training on Jan. 31 will finish off the week.

Collaboration takes work and openness to truly listen to different perspectives. In that spirit, IOIA is sponsoring a public conversation (not a debate!) about what is happening in and to our beloved community, open to IOIA members and certifiers following the AGM on Jan. 30.

How do we keep focus on quality and integrity – both in inspections and certification? And truly grow into Organic 3.0? How do we raise the bar without scapegoating inspectors? How do we get the public-private partnerships to work better without resorting to inflammatory anti-government rhetoric? How do we keep the soul of organic while embracing everyone? Are we really all on the same side? How can we collectively as IOIA, and individually, make a positive difference? Should IOIA engage with Regenerative Organic, Real Organic, and other labels and programs to train in-

“...this swirl of how to better manage our market success without losing our soul...”
– Michael Sligh

spectors to inspect to them? If we do that, are we burning down the house that we built? IOIA struggles to give voice to inspector concerns when our members are so diverse. We have members in a dozen countries. Some of them hate hydroponics. Some of them inspect it. Some of them might grow or market organic hydroponic produce. Contract inspectors may be increasingly endangered as certifiers seek to have more reliable, more controllable staff inspectors. At a time when so many impassioned, seasoned inspectors are retiring, we still have much to offer. Can we harness that collective wisdom for good, at the same time embracing younger and broader perspectives?

So, let’s talk! Who will be up front and center on the panel after the AGM on January 30?

Michael Sligh recently retired from RAFI-USA, a part of Rural Advancement Foundation International. He is current president of the IFOAM IOAS and was a founding NOSB member (chair for the first 3 years). **Sarah Brown** –small-scale organic farmer in Oregon, Education Director at Oregon Tilth, current president of IFOAM North America. **Nate Powell-Palm**, organic inspector, IOIA trainer and organic farmer. **Terrance Layhew**, of *The Intellectual Agrarian*, will moderate.

See AGM, page 9

Notes from the Chair

by Lois Christie

As I sit on the veranda of my hotel in San Carlos (Guaymas) Sonora, Mexico), I look out at the beautiful harbor with its boats and the striking desert rocks that jut up into the sky against the deep blue of the Sea of Cortez and I realize that as stressful as travel can be in our work, let us not forget these tiny windows of beauty – whether it be the cities or the rural areas of the United States, Mexico or the many countries we work in.

See Notes, page 4



Welcome New Members

Upgraded to inspector:

Dawn Custer

Supporting Individuals:

Emmett Codd, Stafford, VA

Joannée DeBruhl, Pentwater, ME

Brian Geier, Williams, OR

Dennis Hoepfner, Morden, MB CAN

Sarah Indries, Seattle, WA

Kelly Iverson, Ankeny, IA

N. Lyle Johnston, Ph.D., Santa Rosa, CA

George Kalogridis, Indianapolis, IN

Katherine Kelly, Merriam, KS

Kristine M. Lang, Brandon, IA

Bernadette Luncsford, St. Francis, KS

Dana McWayne, Eugene, OR

Porter Mitchell, Atlanta, GA

Abim Oyelade, Hertfordshire, UK

Joel Reiten, Cottage Grove, OR

Megan Robertson, Santa Rosa, CA

Anthony Silvernail, Frankfort, KY

Returning SI Members

Gretchen Oat, West Spring, PA

IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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

Webinar Training Schedule

for details & to register go to: www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html

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 | Trainer: Kelly Monaghan

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Pacific) Two 2 hour sessions. | 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 - January 14 & 17, 2020

NOP Crop Standards

| Trainer: Garth Kahl & Margaret Scoles

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$325

100 Level Webinar - February 18 & 21, 2020

NOP Livestock Standards

| Trainer: Garry Lean

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$325

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

300 Level Webinar - March 19, 2020 - Organic Cosmetics

Two 2 hour sessions. With Gay Timmons, Oh,Oh Organic.

IOIA member cost - \$325.

To include materials and materials review of the non-organic ingredients, the various standards, and what inspectors need to know. Timmons owns and operates Oh, Oh Organic, Inc., an organic and specialty ingredient distribution company committed to the development and delivery of sustainable agricultural ingredients for the cosmetic and personal care industries.



Since 1991, Gay has worked as a producer and marketer of organic ingredients and an advocate for regulatory clarity for organic and natural producers and consumers. She graduated from UC Davis, has an MS in Physiology.

200 Level Webinar - Spring, 2020

Crop In/Out Balances, Traceability & Recipe Verification under NOP & COR

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Pacific) | Two 2 hour sessions | Trainer: Monique Scholz

IOIA member cost: \$275

300 Level Webinar - Late winter or early spring, 2020 Audit Trail

Webinar Discount Note:

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

On-Site Training Schedule

full details and applications at www.ioia.net

December 4-5, 2019 Chungju-si, Korea, EFA Update Training

IOIA and Isidor Sustainability Research Institute will cosponsor a 2 day EFA Update – Organic Crop Inspection as Process Certification Training using the Korea Organic Regulation as a reference. The training will be in Korean language and held in Chungju-si, Korea. For enquiries, please contact Saetbyul Lee, phone: +82-10-3840-3086 Email: saetbyul821@gmail.com

January 13-19, 2020 Hong Kong, Basic Crop Course & Aquaculture Workshop

IOIA and Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre (HKORC) will cosponsor a 4.5 day Basic Organic Crop Inspection Course and a 1.5 day Organic Aquaculture Workshop. The courses use the HKORC-Cert Organic Standards as a reference and will be held at Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong, PRC. Courses will be in English. Application forms and info about the courses are available at the HKORC website www.hkbu.edu.hk. For enquiries, please contact Samantha Ko or Cecily Wong at samanthako@hkbu.edu.hk or cecilywong@hkbu.edu.hk. Phone: (852) 3411 2542 / (852) 3411 6670 Fax: (852) 3411 2373.

January 15-17 Chiang Mai, Thailand, Advanced Inspector Training: Grower Group Inspection

IOIA's Asia Pacific Committee will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training for Grower Group Inspection. This training will include a review of standards requirements for grower groups and key techniques for inspections. This training is developed and delivered to improve the competence of organic inspectors in Asia and the Pacific region. The desired outcome is to develop the skill of inspectors for grower groups. This training is also helpful for farm managers and internal inspectors of grower groups. Reviewers and coordinators at Certification Bodies could also gain additional knowledge about conducting a grower group inspection and improve their risk analysis. The course will be conducted in English. Moderator is Isidor Yu (South Korea), with expert presenters Vitoon Panyakul (Thailand) and Sandeep Bhargava (India). Deadline to apply is January 4, 2020. [Detailed info including agenda and registration.](#)

January 31 San Antonio, Texas, Advanced Organic Inspector Training

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training in conjunction with the ACA Annual Training (January 29-30); the NOP Certifier Training (January 28); and the IOIA Annual Meeting (January 30). Theme of the IOIA training is “*Mind the Gap*”. Topic areas include fraud investigations, risk assessment, international import/export requirements, tips and do's and don'ts for successful in/out balances, and biodiversity/natural resource assessment on organic farms. The training will be held at The Drury Plaza Hotel on the San Antonio River Walk. More details, a draft agenda, and registration link will be available at <https://www.ioia.net/AGM.html>.

Late April – early May, Burlington area, Vermont, Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Training

IOIA is working with Vermont Organic Farmers to develop basic Crop and Livestock inspection training, which will run sequentially, Livestock following Crop. Each basic course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing.

June 1-5 – Corvallis, Oregon, Basic Crop and Processing Training & Field Training

IOIA and Oregon Tilth will cosponsor basic Crop and Processing Inspection training and Field Training at the LaSells Stewart Center on the campus of Oregon State University. Basic Crop and Processing trainings will run concurrently. Field trainings are under development.

Early fall, 2020 Maine, Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Training

IOIA and MOFGA Organic Certification Services will cosponsor basic Crop and Processing trainings in Maine.

November 2-13, Farmington, Minnesota, Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Training

IOIA will cosponsor basic Crop and Livestock Inspection training at Mt. Olivet Conference and Retreat in rural Farmington. Basic Crop training is scheduled November 2-6 and Livestock training will follow November 9-13.

Notes, from page 1

It is hard to believe that nearly two years have passed since I was elected to the Board of IOIA. I resisted being nominated for the Board for many years because of my busy inspection schedule (Chris Kidwell and Margaret Scoles, thank you for being persistent!). It has been an amazing experience. I did not have any prior experience with any board. While there is a learning curve, we will lessen that this year with an introduction to new Board members.

Leadership does not come easily to me and learning the language of the board can be complicated. I appreciate the Board's patience (thank you Margaret Anne Weigelt and Janine Gibson for your insights). I think it is important for us all to understand what roles Board members play in making IOIA such a successful association. I have particularly enjoyed working with our Executive Director, Margaret Scoles, and supporting her work in any way that I can.

Margaret Anne Weigelt:

Margaret Anne is the Board Secretary and we were lucky to be able to seat her as Past Chair for another year. She attends the weekly mini-Board conferences with the Executive Director, Margaret Scoles and me. Her knowledge of the Board's history and her insights are invaluable. Her Board focus is to support IOIA with capacity building. As a librarian, it is only fitting that she is responsible for the Minutes and documenting IOIA's Board meetings and decisions. She was privileged to attend the recent Montana Nonprofit Association's Annual Conference with Margaret Scoles in Billings, Montana (which gave her a deeper understanding of IOIA's place in the greater nonprofit world), and to meet with Jenny Tucker with the Board in Baltimore.

Charles Mitchell: Chuck has been working with the Canadian Committee on getting the CFIA in Canada to write into the standards, specific "inspector qualifications" that certifiers need to follow in hiring inspectors. This is following the NOP. Also, working on an effort called "*Ask the Organic Inspector*" project where inspectors can volunteer their time to do community education in consumer outreach, supporting the organic community. If anyone is interested, we have signs and brochures to assist you (such as setting up a table at a local supermarket).

Heather Donald: During her time on the board, her primary focuses have been developing a **Comment Policy and Decision Tree**, updating the **Policy Manual** and performing the duties of the Treasurer. She has enjoyed working on updating our policies and practices to improve efficiency and participating in IOIA's growth as an organization. She also created our **Goals Worksheet** which has been extremely helpful in keeping the Board on track.

Philippe Descamps: Philippe participates on the **Latin American Committee** as the board liaison. He has contacted the Latin American inspectors to find out what they expect from IOIA with the intent of creating a Latin American Committee and more active Latin American memberships and trainings in Spanish.

Janine Gibson: Janine is working on encouraging both fundraising and a continued vigorous, engaged board of directors. She shares her time from gratitude to IOIA members who have mentored and inspired her. She is supporting the **Membership Committee** from her respect for Eric Feutz's long service

as the Membership Committee chair. She is assisting in putting together the 2020 slate. She is also requesting two budget items (staff hours for grant writing and payment for access to a targeted foundation data base).

Rachel Cherry Myers: Rachel states that working with the Board has been a valuable experience! Rachel has been working with the newly strengthened **policy committee**. It is important to her and she understands the need for inspector representation, which was made even more clear while attending the NOSB in Pittsburgh with Margaret Scoles. She has really enjoyed being part of the greater organic community!

We will be meeting in conjunction with the NOP and Accredited Certifiers Association training, January 28-30, 2020, in San Antonio, Texas. Our AGM will be held on January 30 (Thursday). Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to interact with certifiers and the NOP. It has been a long time coming! For more information: <https://www.ioia.net/AGM.html>

See you all there!



Board Chair Lois Christie

Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

On 9/17, I received the following invitation:

“Greetings from Ecuador. The Fito and Zoosanitary Regulation and Control Agency – Agrocalidad, is an entity attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, and it is the National Agency for the Regulation and Control of organic production in Ecuador.

Organic production in Ecuador begins its official recognition since 2002. Currently there are about 38.000 hectares that are destined for the production of organic food under the responsibility of 14.000 registered growers. Ecuador’s organic food production has a national and international consumer destination, and has now become an important alternative production system with a growing demand worldwide and nationally for its benefits: to human health, social, environmental and economic.

From this context, with great pleasure, I inform you that AGROCALIDAD intends to hold the “II International Congress of Organic Production in Ecuador”, as a support strategy to improve the technical capabilities of current producers and attract new stakeholders. The objective of this event is to strengthen the country’s organic production as well as access to new national and international markets.

Knowing that the IOIA (International Organic Inspectors Association), has high level professionals; and convinced of their deep commitment to the development of quality organic production; very respectfully, request your collaboration with participation as an expert speaker for the congress. The theme that is proposed to be exposed is:

1. *Fraud impact in the organic production at international and local level.*
2. *Organic Production Nacional Control System NOP - USDA.*

The Congress will be held from October 29 and 30, 2019, in the city of Guayaquil in the Auditorium of the Escuela Politecnica del Litoral ESPOL of Guayaquil, whose agenda will be sent later, once you have the confirmation of all experts.”



Margaret with Juan Carlos Benitez, who provided excellent impromptu translation. When it became apparent that there was no translator for my talks – Juan Carlos, IOIA’s only current member in Ecuador, leaped to help. He volunteered to translate my talk on Day 1. On Day 2, he not only translated my entire Powerpoint presentation into Spanish, he then verbally translated the talk. Thank you, Juan Carlos!



Inspectors out for dinner – same all around the world. Inspectors from QCS, Kiwa BCS, and Control Union gathered together for a meal and to teach me how to eat congrejo (crab). Delicious!

To say I was surprised is an understatement. I don’t speak Spanish. But in line with IOIA’s desire to strengthen our engagement with inspectors in Latin America, I could hardly say no. To help make the decision easier, they offered 100% support for travel expenses. On behalf of IOIA I accepted. An airline ticket was purchased. The very next day, turmoil erupted in Ecuador as their president attempted to remove a fossil fuel subsidy. In just one day the Secretary of State travel advisory changed from Level 2 to Level 4. Fortunately, the ensuing conflict was resolved before my travel began.

I was one of four ‘international experts’, along with Patricia Flores, IFOAM (Peru); Alvaro Becerra, Ecovalia (Spain), and Ana Negrete, OMRI (originally from Ecuador, now living and working in the US). As the only non-Spanish speaker, I was surprised to find that simultaneous translation was not available. Deep gratitude to Juan Carlos Benitez for stepping in to translate!

Best Wishes for the Holiday Season to Each and Every One!

SECTOR NEWS

NOP reopens Origin of Livestock Comment Period

On October 1, USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) [reopened](#) the comment period for the proposed rule on Origin of Livestock originally published in April 2015. **The new comment period is open until December 2.** To support a robust comment period, the Organic Trade Association has developed the [Origin of Livestock – Take Action Toolkit](#) that includes critical background resources, key talking points, and links to our new [digital advocacy platform](#) for quick-and-easy comment submission. All stakeholders can use the toolkit and our digital advocacy platform to submit comments. It is critical that USDA hears a unified voice from the organic community that we support the Proposed Rule to clarify and narrow the allowance for transitioning dairy animals to organic milk production.

OTA Newsflash 10/23/2019

USDA announces domestic hemp production program

USDA has posted a [draft version of an interim final rule](#) that establishes the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production, as required by the 2018 Farm Bill. The interim rule creates a consistent regulatory framework around hemp production throughout the US, allowing hemp to be grown under federally approved plans and making hemp producers eligible for a number of agricultural programs. The long-awaited hemp regulations are welcomed by organic farmers and USDA accredited certifiers because they also clear the pathway for updated NOP instruction around the organic certification of hemp and hemp products. Under the 2018 Farm Bill and the establishment of U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program, organ-

ic producers will now be eligible to grow certified organic hemp on a commercial scale. Prior [USDA policy in accordance with the 2014 Farm Bill](#) (NOP 2040), limited certification of domestically grown hemp for research purposes only. The interim final rule will become effective immediately when it is published in the Federal Register on October 31, with a 60-day comment period ending December 30. A preview of the draft interim rule is posted [on USDA's website](#). Contact [Gwendolyn Wyard](#) for more information.

OTA Newsflash, 10/30/2019



Fifth Farmer Sentenced in Fraud Case

A Missouri farmer who played a role in the largest organic grain fraud scheme in U.S. history has been sentenced to nearly two years in federal prison.

John Burton became the 5th farmer to receive prison time in the "Field of Schemes" case on October 28, when he was sentenced by a federal judge in Cedar Rapids, Iowa to 22 months behind bars.

Prosecutors said that Burton grew grain that he knew was not organic and sold it to Missouri farmer Randy Constant, knowing that Constant was going to market and sell it as organic.

Burton also worked for Constant, often spraying his fields with chemicals and fertilizers that are not allowed to be used on organic fields.

Constant is considered the mastermind of the \$142 million fraud scheme, which tainted countless products that were marketed as organic. He died by suicide in August, weeks before he was to report to prison to begin serving a 10-year term.

Three Nebraska farmers have also received prison sentences in the case.

Associated Press, Oct. 28, 2019

Followup Hearing on State of Organic Agriculture in the US

The US House Agriculture Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture and Research held a [hearing](#) on October 30 titled "Reviewing the State of Organic Agriculture: Producer Perspectives." The hearing was a follow-up to the hearing this past July that featured USDA AMS Undersecretary Greg Ibach. The hearing consisted of an all-farmer panel that represented diversity across scale, region and production type including specialty crops, dairy and cotton.

It was an opportunity for Congress to hear directly from farmers on the challenges and opportunities in organic, including the transition process, soil health benefits of organic, and the importance of maintaining high standards and continuous improvement. The witnesses that testified included trade association members Jeff Huckaby (CEO and President of Grimmway Farms/Cal-Organic) and Steve Pierson (a dairy farmer representing Organic Valley) as well as organic vegetable, flower and herb grower Benjamin Whalen of Maine, organic cotton farmer Jeremy Brown of Texas, and organic fruit and vegetable grower Shelli Brin of the Virgin Islands. [Watch the hearing on youtube.](#)

OTA newsflash 10/30/2019

SECTOR NEWS

NOP publishes two rules to amend National List

NOP has published a [proposed rule](#) to amend the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. These proposals are in response to recommendations submitted by the National Organic Standards Board following its fall 2018 meeting. NOP will accept public comments on this proposed rule until **December 17**.

For crop production, the rule proposes to:

- Add blood meal - made with sodium citrate to §205.601(j) as a synthetic substance allowed for use in crop production as a plant or soil amendment. Sodium citrate is as an anticoagulant used in the manufacture of dried blood meal, which is then used as a crop fertilizer.
- Add natamycin to §205.602 as a non-synthetic substance prohibited for use in crop production. Natamycin is a naturally occurring compound produced by soil bacteria used for its antifungal properties. This action would prohibit any use of natamycin in organic crop production, including both pre-harvest and post-harvest treatment.

For processing, the rule proposes to:

- Add tamarind seed gum to §205.606 as a non-organic agricultural substance allowed for use in organic handling only when the product is not commercially available in organic form. Tamarind seed gum is a polysaccharide derived from the seed kernels of the tamarind tree, used in food processing as a thickener, stabilizer, or gelling agent in foods such as cheese, fruit preserves, sauces, and ice cream.

In addition, NOP published a **final rule** to amend the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances that will become effective on November 22.

For crop production, the final rule:

- Adds elemental sulfur to 205.601(h) as an allowed synthetic molluscicide bait to control slugs and snails
- Adds polyoxin D zinc salt to 205.601(i) as an allowed synthetic fungal disease control.

For processing, the final rule:

- Moves magnesium chloride from 205.605(b) to 205.605(a), thereby reclassifying this substance as an allowed non-synthetic ingredient. As a result of this action, only non-synthetic forms of magnesium chloride (which are more common and widely available) would be allowed, and synthetic forms would be prohibited. Magnesium chloride is commonly used in organic food processing as a firming agent in tofu processing and source of the essential mineral magnesium in organic infant formula.

OTA Newsflash, 10/23/2019

NOP Settlement agreement with Texas over dairy issue

NOP has [posted the results](#) of a Settlement Agreement with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) concerning non-compliant enforcement of the organic dairy regulations. Such Settlement Agreements are used to resolve proposed adverse actions and bring a certifier into full compliance. Under the agreement, TDA agreed to: (1) resolve outstanding non-compliances generated during NOP's August 2018 livestock-focused site visit; (2) have livestock inspectors and reviewers complete an additional eight hours of livestock training by the end of 2019 in addition to training already done; (3) conduct at least one unannounced inspection of each of its livestock operations by the end of April 2020; (4) confirm inspectors have the knowledge and experience needed to inspect assigned operations; (5) conduct a program review of its livestock scope, and provide NOP with the report and corrective actions; (6) not accept new livestock clients until NOP approves; and (7) undergo an NOP compliance review by the end of April. This agreement is in response to non-compliances identified with TDA's organic livestock program.

OTA Newsflash 8/28/2019

GOTS tops 100 certified companies in the US

The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) has announced that there are now more than 100 individual companies in the US certified to GOTS. Canada now has eight and Mexico three companies certified to the program. The [GOTS public database](#) allows consumers and retailers to search for GOTS certified products and companies. According to the GOTS Annual Report 2018, worldwide, there were 5,760 GOTS certified facilities reported - an increase of 14.6% from 5,024 facilities in 2017.

For more info please see www.global-standard.org

NOP, ACA, and IOIA Advanced Training Coming in January

IOIA has teamed up with the Accredited Certifiers Association to present these great training opportunities in conjunction with the NOP. We hope that you will join us! [Complete details here.](#)

NOP Training, January 28!

This training is free and open to all NOP accredited certification agency staff and to contract inspectors through IOIA. Register through the ACA registration portal. If you have questions about whether you can register, feel free to contact IOIA at mscoles@rangeweb.net

ACA Training, January 29-30!

Final agenda will be available soon. Topics include “Sharing our Perspectives” round table discussions on the morning of Jan. 29, followed by these topics over the next day until the IOIA Annual Meeting begins.

- Investigations and Fraud
- Noncompliance process and follow up
- Contract or Staff Technical Employees
- Quality Inspections



“Mind the Gap” Advanced Training, January 31!

Based on a member survey and with consideration of topics that did not make it onto the agenda for the ACA training IOIA chose the following topics for the advanced training. Sessions include Biodiversity and Natural Resource Assessment on the Farm (1 hr.) with Sarah Brown, OTCO/NRCS and others; Fraud Investigations (1.5 hrs.) to include cross-checks and brokers & traders; Risk Assessment (1.5 hrs.) with a panel of seasoned inspectors, International Import/Export Requirements (1 hr.); and In-and-Out Balances, tips for completing them effectively and efficiently and pitfalls to avoid (1.5 hrs.). Speakers for this audit session will include **Kathe Purvis** of W. Australia. Purvis has developed and delivered audit training with IOIA. Final agenda and speaker list are under development. Watch the IOIA website as the details are finalized.

Cost:

Advanced Training on Jan 31 (IOIA member cost \$325, includes snacks and lunch).

ACA training on Jan 30-31 (\$275, includes snacks but no meals)

Field Trips on Jan. 27 (\$50/person, includes transportation, no meals)



Drury Plaza San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel

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

Group rate for lodging: \$138 + 18% tax for single or double occupancy (deadline Dec. 30, 2019).

Each lodging room has fridge, microwave, and free Wi-Fi. Free hot breakfast onsite. Family owned and operated. Historically renovated. Heated, outdoor, rooftop pool.

For lodging reservations, a block of rooms has been reserved at the training venue: the Drury Plaza San Antonio, Texas.

Book early to ensure a spot. To book visit here: <https://www.druryhotels.com/bookandstay/newreservation> and at the top left corner "enter a group number" enter 2376434 Shared lodging option is available through IOIA.

2020 AGM is Just Around the Corner!

2020 Annual Meeting, January 30!

The annual meeting is scheduled 3 to 9 p.m. It will include the Annual Report by Chair Lois Christie, election of 2 directors, and discussion of the location of the 2021 Annual Meeting. Other topics will likely grow out of the 2 days of joint training that precedes the AGM. Bring your concerns and ideas. The Annual Meeting begins at lunch with a keynote by **Michael Sligh**. IOIA will re-join the ACA group after lunch for one more session before breaking to a separate room at 3 p.m. The business meeting ends at 6 p.m. and the evening includes food and a lively public conversation (Michael Sligh, Sarah Brown, Nathaniel Powell-Palm). Agenda and ballot will be mailed to members in December – please watch for your mailing! The Annual Meeting is free to Inspector members, with a nominal registration fee (\$25), that includes lunch and dinner. Supporting Members may also attend (\$50/person).

To Register

[For the NOP or ACA trainings](#)

[For the IOIA Advanced training on Jan. 31, field trips, or IOIA Annual Meeting](#)

Logistics!

Getting there:

San Antonio International Airport (SAT) is the closest airport.

There is no shuttle to the hotel.

Take Uber, Lyft, local taxis, or Super-Shuttle.

AGM, from page 1

Michael Sligh – originally from Texas, recently retired after 33 years with RAFI-USA, a part of Rural Advancement Foundation International. He is currently president of the IOAS. He was a founding NOSB member (chair for the first 3 years). He is on the Advisory Board of the Center for Food Safety and Organic Farmers Association. He was active in the organization of the Ag Justice Project.

Sarah Brown – small-scale certified organic farmer in Oregon, Director of Education and Advocacy at Oregon Tilth where she designs, develops, and manages diverse educational programs serving thou-

sands of farmers and professional agricultural service providers annually. Current president of IFOAM North America.

Nathaniel Powell-Palm – organic inspector, IOIA trainer, certified organic producer (crops and livestock) since 2008. Nate holds a B.S. in Environmental Science from Montana State University. He is a farmstead member of OTA and a current board member of the Organic Farmers Association. He has been a frequent spokesperson for organic agriculture in Washington, DC and was the 2019 recipient of the OTA Rising Star Award.

The panel will be moderated by **Terrance Layhew**, inspector member from Wisconsin. Layhew produces a podcast called “[The Intellectual Agrarian](#)”. His inspiration for that name was drawn from Thomas Jefferson, who proved that farmers could not only be cultivators of the earth, but cultivators of the mind as well. This Podcast shares the stories of other farmers and agrarians around the world. IOIA inspectors may recall his podcast produced about one year ago to build interest for the 2019 IOIA Annual Meeting. He is an excellent interviewer with a buoyant style at the same time fearless and joyous.



Around San Antonio:

The historic Alamo is just a few minutes from the hotel. Admission is free. IOIA will organize a one-hour guided tour. You can also book your own tour on-line at <https://www.thealamo.org/> Audio tours are available for \$7.

Other field trips are in development. There are 18 certified operations in San Antonio. One afternoon farm field trip will focus on natural resources and biodiversity.

NOSB News - Pittsburgh PA, October 22-25

In addition to submitting written comments in advance of the meeting, IOIA was represented at the National Organic Coalition Meeting and the NOSB meeting by Executive Director Margaret Scoles and IOIA Board member Rachel Cherry Myers. Rachel serves as BOD Liaison to the Policy Committee and assisted in preparing IOIA's comments. Scoles provided oral comment, focusing on the need for better in/out balance expectations and the problem of top-loading inspector tasks to the detriment of time on more important tasks.

Pre-NOSB NOC meeting, Oct. 22: Steve Etka, NOC Policy Director, encouraged everyone to comment regarding Origin of Livestock. NOP has stated that it is unnecessary to comment again if you commented in 2015.

NOSB meeting, Oct 23-25: Jenny Tucker opened the meeting, noting that 13 NOSB members were present, 2 absent, and that 9 votes are needed to advance a recommendation. Harriet Behar, Chair, followed with opening remarks (see page 18 of this issue). Jenny provided the NOP Update ([the full presentation is available](#) on the NOSB Meeting webpage).

NOP Update:

- **Complaint Investigations** – dairy compliance, imports, and grain handling: NOP suspended the Turkey office of one certifier: Note – the operations remain certified, must apply to a new certifier within 60 days. Outcomes: >376 operations lost certification, high profile criminal cases, highest number of appeals ever, 412 investigations, 250+ inquiries resolved. Number of complaints completed by Fiscal Year, continue to steadily go up. 415 operations were suspended or revoked since Jan. 2019.
- **On the near horizon - Strengthening Organic Enforcement Proposed Rule: What is in the rule?** Fewer exemptions – more handler certifications. Close loophole. Electronic Certificates for all imports Strengthen Accreditation & Certification through Robust Inspections (Unannounced Inspections, Inspector Training/Qualifications, Traceback and Mass Balance Audits – will be codified, Grower Groups) and Confirming Organic Status (Nonretail labeling, Standardized Organic Certificates); Overseeing Certifiers. Early pilot testing of Import Certificates – expected in 2020, using the CBP – ACE (Automated Commercial Environment)
- **Organic Integrity Learning Center:** 1500+ accounts. Every lesson has completed 200 times. Topics include Advanced Investigations; Fraud Prevention (OTA); Certificates Administration; Materials Reviews (OMRI); Tools for Traceability
- **Gene editing is not allowed, period.** “Changing the definition of Excluded Methods is not on the USDA regulatory agenda.”
- **Container Growing** – Even when pressed, Dr. Tucker's responses were confusing. Does the 3 year rule apply to greenhouses not on soil and hydroponic operations? She declined to answer directly.
- **Panel of experts on Marine Algae** - should certification of kelp used as a crop input be required? From comments: Aquaculture production of grown algae is 18X greater than wildharvest. Over the past 75-80 years, the global harvest of seaweed has moved from nearly 100% wildharvest to no more than 4%. Sandy Mays of Wolf, DiMatteo + Assoc. said that there is no damage happening due to the wildharvest of marine algae. Global harvest of wildharvest is huge but only represents a small % of what is there. Discussion will continue.

Ashley Swaffar, Tom Chapman, Harriet Behar, and Lisa de Lima will be leaving the NOSB this year. New appointments have not been announced.

The NOSB voted to remove alginic acid (as non-essential) and dairy cultures (duplicated by microorganisms already on the NL), and to add potassium hypochlorite as a sanitizer. [Complete voting chart here.](#)

Frequently commented materials:

- **Fatty Alcohol for sucker control in Tobacco production** – A long line of commenters, mostly in favor of listing, included multi-generation farmers of all scales. Many said that their organic farms were not viable without this material. Others explained how their certifiers had allowed it for years, having mistakenly assessed it as a nonsynthetic. Bill Collins, a retired professor from NCSU – explained tobacco production as vegetative for 60 days – first 30 days establish roots, then next 30 days creates leaves, with potential of producing 3 suckers. MUST control them or can't grow tobacco because leaves are too small if suckers aren't removed. The only ways to remove suckers are fatty alcohol or grueling manual labor. NOSB voted to list.

IOIA Policy Committee - NOSB Recommendations

- **Celery Powder** – Both pro and con for re-listing on 205.606. So far, there are no organic alternatives with the same functionality. NOSB voted to re-list.

Other interesting comments:

- Kelly Pepper, Texas Organic Cotton Marketing Co-op: It is essential that hydrogen chloride be renewed for de-linting cottonseed. Only 25 to 35,000 acres of organic cotton in the US. Takes 1 oz. to de-lint the seed used for 1 acre of organic cotton; 6-8 lb. of pesticide and 100-500 lb. of fertilizer would be used on that acre if it reverts to non-GMO cotton. The NOSB voted to re-list.
- Garth Kahl – organic farmer since 1993, inspector since 1996. Need to focus on bringing on lots of organic acreage. We need to address how to get more organic farmers on board. Stop concentrating on minutiae.

IOIA's Policy Committee worked many hours, pouring over proposals and discussion documents to prepare IOIA's comments for the fall NOSB meeting. The full comments are available on the Federal docket. Following is the Overview of IOIA's positions. *Thank you, IOIA Policy Committee and Lisa Spicka, facilitator.*

Item	Commenting?	Position
Handling Sunset Reviews	Yes	IOIA supports the NOSB Handling Subcommittee recommendations.
Fatty Alcohol	No	No position.
Potassium Hypochlorite	No	No position.
<i>Sunset Reviews: Crops</i>	Yes	IOIA supports the NOSB Crops Subcommittee recommendations.
Paper (plant pots)	Yes	IOIA strongly supports that paper pots be listed on the national list.
Induced Mutagenesis & Embryo Transfer	Yes	IOIA supports the Materials Subcommittee recommendation.
Genetic Integrity Transparency	Yes	IOIA strongly supports the Materials Subcommittee recommendation.
NOSB Research Priorities	No	No position
Marine Materials	Yes	IOIA does not support requiring certification of marine algae ingredients in crop inputs.
Vaccines- Excluded Methods	Yes	IOIA generally supports the Livestock Subcommittee recommendation, but has concerns around implementation resources.
<i>Sunset Reviews: Livestock</i>	Yes	IOIA supports the NOSB Livestock Subcommittee recommendations.
Fenbendazole – poultry (Discussion Document)	No	No position

NOP Proposed Rule on Strengthening Organic Enforcement Coming Soon! What we know: This Rule will affect inspectors. | The normal comment period is 60 days. Jenny Tucker stated that it might be possible to lengthen this comment period. | IOIA's Policy Committee is poised to prepare meaningful and relevant comment on behalf of inspectors.

NOSB Opening Remarks

by Harriet Behar, Chair, National Organic Standards Board, and IOIA Inspector Member

We thought these comments should be shared with all. Ed.

I am Harriet Behar, I sit in the environmentalist seat on the Board and my organic roots go deep. My farm has been certified organic since 1989, growing vegetables, bedding plants, medicinal and culinary herbs, small grains, with small commercial operation of laying hens and honeybees. I have been an organic inspector since 1992, and organic advocate before that. For the past two decades, I have been an organic educator, with the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service, the International Organic Inspectors Association and currently with the University of Wisconsin in Madison. In 1989, I helped to start Organic Valley, the largest organic farmer cooperative in the United States, I was a grower/member for 30 years. I serve on boards and am active in numerous local and national environmental organizations. I gain great satisfaction from seeing biodiversity of plants, animals, fish, birds, reptiles, insects and more increase on my own 216 acres, as my husband, Aaron Brin, hi Aaron! and I control invasive species, reintroduce native ecosystems, improve the spring fed streams that have natural reproduction of endemic brook trout and create habitat for endangered and at risk birds, plants and animals.

On my own farm, and with the hundreds of organic farmers I interact with annually both as an inspector and educator, I see the many benefits organic agriculture has on local, regional and global ecosystems, the economic security it provides to individual families and larger rural communities. I also visit with numerous organic handlers, from seed producers to input suppliers as well as all types of human and livestock food

processing, that provide needed tools and markets that keep farmers in business as well as choosing ingredients and processes that lessen the use of toxic materials in their facilities and the negative impact these unneeded materials have on our lives. While there may be different viewpoints and needs of the various stakeholders which results in lively conversations within the NOSB and with all of you, we all share the same desire to protect the value and meaning of the organic label in the marketplace. Participating in organic certification is a conscious and voluntary act.

I understand that the National Organic Program works within the constraints of the larger U.S. government, and political process and slow is the work of rulemaking. But I do see organics at a crossroads where many issues need immediate attention and solutions. The NOSB does their work with recommendations, based upon extensive public input illustrating the need and support for both work on an issue, as well as the final recommendation. Too many of our recommendations are in limbo, and as time passes, the need becomes more urgent. Examples are numerous: our recommendation to protect native ecosystems from destruction and then immediate organic certification has not been implemented. How many 1000s of acres in the newly burned Amazon, will be ap-



proved for organic crop production, which would have been prevented by that recommendation? The ongoing problems of fraudulent organic grain, both domestic and imported, continues to bring pain to organic grain producers, even though the NOP is working on problem. The long delayed implementation of the origin of livestock recommendation has resulted in great financial stress for those dairy operations that are doing the right thing and currently meet that rule. We are looking forward to a speedy resolution to this issue. The lack of consistent and strict implementation of the pasture regulation, ignores the thought that the organic rule is scale neutral; instead it supports and encourages large scale dairy operations to the detriment of small and mid-sized operations that actually pasture their animals in a significant way. The NOP accreditation program is not as robust as it needs to be in bringing consistency and trust to certification, with the NOP recognizing there are many organic cows not meeting the pasture rule and there had been use of herbicides under landscape cloth on organic land, two issues that were not caught during the certifier audits. There are many issues

NOSB Opening Remarks, continued

with hydroponic operations, but the NOP has not allowed the NOSB to work on this issue. Our vote on hydroponic in Jacksonville did not have the required two-thirds vote to be considered decisive, illustrating there is still work to be done, to truly address this issue. At this meeting, there were 10s of 1000s of public comment stating that hydroponic operations should not carry the organic label. This issue, even though the NOP wishes it so, has not been decided and will keep coming up. Lastly, how can sodium nitrate remain on the National List, without going through the 5 year sunset process as mandated on the Organic Food Production Act? The organic community will keep talking about these issues until they are solved, we are passionate and tenacious, I think the USDA already knows that.

We need the NOP to make official the definitions and list of specific technologies considered to be excluded methods under the organic rule. While it is clear that gene-editing is not allowed under the current rule, the NOSB has been having continuing dialog about specific methods since 2016, and unanimously voted to exclude the long list of methods, including gene-editing such as CRISPR, at each meeting. We have also found methods to not be excluded, illustrating that our dialog is thoughtful and comprehensive. More than 10,000 members of the public took the time to provide comments for this meeting against gene-editing, and it is clear that the greater organic community is united in their opposition to the allowance of genetic engineering under the organic label.

One of my favorite musicians, Joni Mitchell, wrote a song with the refrain “You don’t know what

you’ve got, till its gone.” ***We cannot let the promise of organic get lost in confusing and ineffective regulatory oversight.***

We have all experienced and know of the effect of human-caused climate change, with weather events becoming more extreme and negatively affecting agricultural production of all types. A recent study had determined that North America has lost 30% of the volume of birds since 1970. Thirty percent! Ecosystems of all types are in collapse with 100s, if not 1000s of species in danger of extinction. Our quality of life, our livelihoods, and our futures are at stake.

Organic agriculture provides concrete solutions to many environmental crises. The carbon we sequester in our sod crops and use of cover crops can slow climate change and as more farmers around the world adopt organic production methods, can even work to heal the damage humans have caused. Our reliance on naturally based inputs instead of fossil fuel-based chemicals, illustrates organic is a viable and productive way of farming. Our dismissal that toxic materials and genetic engineering have no place on our land or in our food, offers a practical and proven pathway to healthier practices for the production of food and fiber, that support other forms of life rather than endangering them. Organic agriculture can feed the world, in fact, we must be THE path of the agricultural future - if we plan to have one.

Nature can be resilient and with understanding of the cause of the problems, many times related to industrial agriculture and reliance on farm chemicals, organic agriculture can turn things around. The steep

decline of monarch butterflies over the past decade has raised awareness in North America that we need to do something, and homeowners as well as large land owners have planted milkweeds, the prime forage for reproducing monarch caterpillars. We have seen a promising increase in the number of monarchs this past year. I have brought monarch butterflies for each of you to take home and display on your computer, in your hair on your clothes, let’s see a room full of monarchs! This is a symbol that organic provides so many answers that result in a resilient and healthy future for ourselves and our planet.

We must keep improving the implementation and meaning of our organic regulations. We cannot take short cuts, we cannot ignore the difficult issues, we cannot let those that are powerful overtake the organic label for their own economic gain. The NOP must seek out, listen and learn from those who are doing the right thing on their farms and handlers who prepare organic foods for market. I understand it is difficult to take a complex system like organics and put it into a regulation that has no loopholes and mandates certifiers and operators be consistently good to excellent in their regulatory implementation. We all have to be committed to the path of organic integrity and continue our work, however difficult, to do what needs to be done. I have no doubt the public will keep the pressure on the NOP and the NOSB, and in return the will of the organic community must be heard and acted upon in a timely way.

Harriet presented her opening remarks at the October 2019 NOSB meeting.

Organic Inspection Opportunities in Oil and Gas - Guest Article

by Doug Raubenolt, IOIA Inspector Member

IOIA trained organic inspectors are now being sought out by the oil and gas industry to serve as monitors on organic farms affected by drilling and pipeline activity. Farmers can request this service at the expense of the oil or pipeline company.

In the last 5 years, I have monitored construction on 4 different pipelines in Ohio and Illinois. As all of you know, Ohio and Pennsylvania are in the middle of an oil and natural gas boom, and multiple pipelines have been built to move these products to consumers. All pipeline representatives share one opinion in common- there are lots more pipelines coming.

The underground network of pipelines boggles the mind. All three major pipelines, The Rover, Nexus and Utopia transport gas and ethylene through Ohio to connect to existing pipelines. Defiance, Ohio sell point takes products south to the gulf for export and final destination at Ann Arbor, Michigan takes gas back to the Eastern Coast through Canadian pipelines. It is cheaper to go west to go east than over the Alleghany Mountains.

This path, unfortunately, travels through Ohio's richest organic area, affecting Organic Valley and Horizon Dairy producers, and Greenfield produce growers in northeast Ohio and southern Michigan. A minimum of 20 producers that I know of have been affected by the 3 pipelines constructed in the last 2 years.

Thanks to the foresight of some individual certifiers, organic farmers have been given the option through mitigation agreements to have all pipeline construction and repair activities monitored by an on-site IOIA trained organic inspector to ensure their farms organic status remains intact, which has

been a good first step. However, our enforcement is challenging due to the fact that the NOP regulations involve farming practices, not construction activity or soil disruption.

Here are the areas where more clarification is needed:

1. Prohibited inputs: we have denied the use of polyurethane foams for pipe stabilization and required the use of sandbagging as an alternative. Sandblasting and weld residue must be blanketed and removed, and no additives used in the water for boring fluids. It is unclear, however, on the status of products used in blasting of rock formations such as nitroglycerin compounds and dynamite. Once a substance is exploded, is it still a concern? And, is there a depth where a prohibited input is no longer a concern? For example, foam pillows used under a pipeline to prevent stone from rupturing the pipe are located 15-20 feet from the topsoil. Pipelines have requested this answer and I can't answer it.

2. Topsoil replacement- nowhere is it addressed in the NOP regulations. This is the biggest concern I have witnessed. Pipelines have aggregate suppliers contracted. They supply fill, including topsoil, and have PLU statements with the soil for organic use. The main problems are soil types being totally different than on the farm. It is brought in from over 100 miles away. I have witnessed clay, lakebed soils put on Wooster Massillon silt loams. I couldn't enforce it or stop it. I also had no authority to stop operations in wet conditions, when mixing of topsoil and subsoil was being witnessed in plain sight. One of the problems is that pipelines are multiple contractors and each do their own thing. Once the farmers sign off, contractors have control. The farmer can be escorted off the right of way on his own land.

3. Hypothetical situation for both NOP representatives and certifiers - Watching these right of ways for now 3 years, it is apparent that the construction activities affect organic land far worse than conventional tracts. Chemical fertilizers bring land back to close to normal production fairly quickly, usually 2 years as promised by pipelines. Organic recovery, however is much slower due to disruption of soil biology. A minimum of 3 years was observed before any production is restored. In some cases, it may be more beneficial to take the ground out of organic for 3 years in exchange for 3 years of crop damage compensation from the pipeline, then recertify in 3 years, should the certifier approve and if foam breakers are marked and can be treated as well heads and buffers. This would be attractive to pipelines due to the costs of inspectors and protocol but could not be reasonable for grazers. It would also be more financially beneficial to the farmer since the land does not produce much for 3 years anyway. This again would have to be done with the blessing of the certifier, since all are now aware of issues with pipelines.

4. Lastly, the hiring of any organic monitor has had tremendous benefit in allowing organic certification to see first hand what goes on in a very protective industry. I am concerned, however, about the way the on-site inspector is compensated. My compensation has varied. In Illinois, monitoring was paid for by the certifier. Ohio work was paid for by an agricultural contractor in 2 cases and direct by the pipeline in 2 cases. The best alternative is with a certifier, because the other 2 options created serious unease due to conflicts of interest. Pipeline companies continually remind

See Pipeline, page 16

CANADA ORGANIC NEWS

2020 Inspector Trainings under development in Canada!

- **Spring** - IOIA is in discussion with the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP) to explore developing cosponsored 1.5 day training in British Columbia in March 2020 to focus on “Assessing Biodiversity and Natural Resources on the Farm” IOIA held similar trainings in Ohio and California in 2018 and 2019 respectively. The training would capitalize on local conservation resources and host operations including perennial fruits and livestock. Please stay tuned and watch the IOIA website training schedule if you are interested in this opportunity.
- **Autumn** - IOIA is developing Advanced Organic Inspector Training in conjunction with the Organic Connections Trade Show & Conference at Prairieland Park, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan for November 4. Planning Committee includes Stuart McMillan, Janine Gibson, Denis Brodner, and Wendy Ziehl (all experienced inspectors in SK or MB), plus the Organic Connections team of Marla Carlson and Carla Borsa. The training will be patterned after the success of the advanced training in Guelph, offering a full day of training topics at an affordable price. **The team will be seeking sponsorships to help defray costs and would welcome ideas for topics.** Registration will be through Organic Connections to keep Canadian funds on the Canadian side of the border as much as possible. The Organic Connections Conference occurs every 2 years. More info about the conference - <http://www.organicconnections.ca/>. Watch for further details and a registration link on the IOIA website.

Guelph Organic Conference - ECO SCHOLAR PROGRAM Now Open!

Become one of five conference Eco-Scholars at the Guelph Organic Conference and receive the following...

- \$500 Honorarium
- An Organic Food & Wine Dinner Ticket
- Workshop Passes for Saturday & Sunday
- Incredible networking experiences with fellow Eco-Scholars, the Eco-Scholar Coordinator, sponsors and others.

Apply by November 30th!

Applicants must be a registered student at a high school, community college or university (undergrad or grad) or recognized nutrition school located in Canada, and interested in organic food and agriculture. (If successful, applicants may be required to provide proof of enrolment).

The application deadline for the 2020 Conference is November 30th, 2019.

More information and application available [here](#).

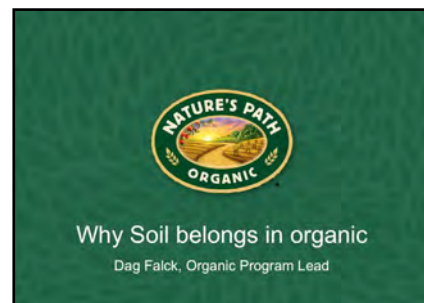


Why Soil Belongs in Organic

During [Organic Week](#), Dag Falck of Nature's Path Organic gave an excellent webinar on Why Soil Belongs in Organic.

In case you missed it - [Click here](#) to watch a recording.

It's a compelling webinar!



Japan Crop Training: August 2019

This training ran from August 27 - 30.

Waseda Hoshien, Tokyo, was the site of this training, sponsored by Japan Organic Inspectors Association (JOIA).

The standard for the course was JAS.



Lead Trainer was Mutsumi Sakuyoshi.

She has been an IOIA trainer since 1998 and currently facilitates IOIA's Asia Pacific Committee.

Pipeline, continued from page 14

you that they are paying you well, plus they can overrule your objections, which happened multiple times in my case. We need to get more teeth in enforcement. Certifiers should become a contractor.

In summary, should your services be requested by a pipeline or drilling company, it can be a very rewarding experience, as it takes your expertise in organic agriculture to an entirely new level.

Doug Raubenolt is part of the IOIA Inspector-Class of 2006, Binghamton, New York. Doug sat on a panel at the National Organic Coalition pre-NOSB meeting on October 22, entitled "Impacts of Energy Infrastructure on Organic Operations" with four others representing certifiers, NGO's, and farmers.

Kentucky Crop Inspection Training

When IOIA lost a training in development last spring, Margaret Scoles sent out an urgent request to certifiers. Who would be willing to work with IOIA to develop one of the two fall trainings? Kentucky Department of Agriculture responded. KDA cosponsored both basic Crop and Processing courses. The Crop course was uncharacteristically small (9 participants plus Ike) and was delivered by Garth Kahl and Margaret Scoles. Participants came from across the US from Oregon to Georgia, plus one participant originally from Nepal. Participants expressed appreciation for the Garth/Margaret team and for the small course size. Next door, Garry Lean and Nathaniel Powell Palm delivered the Processing course with 16 participants. Both events occurred at the Capital Plaza Hotel in downtown Frankfort. One of the most unusual features of the hotel was a rushing waterfall, which both groups chose as a backdrop for their group photos.



The Kentucky Crop group. It may have been a first - "Ike", front and center, was probably the first service dog to complete an IOIA course. He took the course with Joseph Lambert of Oregon.

The odd background is a waterfall (it seemed like a good idea at the time...)



Ryan Burnette of KDA organized a fun pre-day for the participants who could arrive early. He made a monster pot of **burgoo** - made from pork and chicken from his own certified organic farm - and organized a tailgating party at Keeneland Race Track. Rumor has it that those who took his advice on betting the racehorses won a little. This was almost an alumni meeting for four of the participants. Ellen Jackson, Bud Wimer, Katie Poppiti, and Ryan Burnette all met when they took the basic Crop course in Texas last April. Then all four converged again in California for the Livestock course in June. From there, there was only one course left for them to take - Processing - so they met again in Kentucky.

Crop course host farms had intriguing names. Kentucky Castle Catering - yes, you guessed it, had a real castle! Salad Days Farm (host Maggie Dungan) sounded like it probably produced lots of salad greens. But here from their website, is more to the story. "Yes, they do grow lots of lettuce, but that wasn't the concept for the farm name. The "salad days" is actually a term coined by Shakespeare and first appeared in his 1606 *Antony and Cleopatra*. It originally indicated a distant time of youthful naïveté, but has been adapted to mean a time in one's life when things are vibrant, full of vim, vigor and at the peak of one's abilities. Farming encompasses both of these meanings, so Maggie and Jarrod can happily say they're always living the salad days."



Kentucky Processing group with trainers Garry Lean and Nate Powell-Palm.

Assessing Biodiversity and Natural Resources on the Farm

Advanced Inspector Training in California October 4 and 8, 2019 by Jonda Crosby

There is a reason people love California. It's sunny and warm there, the growing zones range from 5-11 and it's home to CCOF and Wild Farm Alliance. In October IOIA, WFA, and CCOF collaborated to offer Advanced Inspector Training at two farms in the Watsonville/Hollister area and three farms in the Winters area.

Host farms were outstanding examples of long-term commitment to biodiversity and natural resource conservation. The depth of the farmers' understanding and progress to improve their biodiversity and natural resource conservation practices over time was impressive. So impressive that the participants could appreciate seeing and hearing what is possible when an innovative-minded operator and a decade or two of time to implement soil, water, wildlife, wild land, and wetland practices can do to improve a farm.



Oct 4 participants - Front: Tony Fleming (Trainer), Tom Page, Rune Rainwater, Jessica Black. Back: Alisa Petrov, Rick Katterman, Jo Ann Baumgartner (Trainer), Sam Earnshaw (Training Specialist), Nadene Gurule, Shannon Morris, Stephen Petersen (Host Farmer), Mira Dick (NRCS Organic Champion), Lois Christie, Ann Baier, Cristiana Shaw.



IOIA Biodiversity and Natural Resources trainer Jo Ann Baumgartner sets the stage for the California Biodiversity and Natural Resource Advanced training by describing how the Preamble to NOP Rule emphasizes conserving biodiversity. She explains what the NOP natural resources standard means by "maintaining or improving woodlands, wetlands, wildlife, soil and water," and how that must occur on all parcels throughout the production season.

Click the photo to watch this video clip on youtube.



The participant course evaluations returned very positive feedback and suggestions, including *"It was an amazing training. I am thrilled to have participated and it will be extremely helpful in the work I do with my clients."*

Some participants expressed that for a future training, having farms and farmers included that are in their beginning stages could give the training more balance. *"Although it was inspiring to see the farms it would be helpful to be on farms/parcels with less biodiversity and natural resources and less history of actively seeking ways to maintain and improve the land."* This could give the participants more of an opportunity to practice *"How to talk to farmers about issues when biodiversity and conservation practices have not been implemented."* This evaluation result will be considered in future trainings.

Left: "What did we net?" The group gathers round to see what types of insects Phil Foster has in his net. Pinnacle Organically Grown farm.

Assessing Biodiversity - Advanced Inspector Training October 4 and 8, 2019 - Continued

Participants, Co-sponsors and trainers for the October 8 Biodiversity and Natural Resources Advanced Inspector Training in California.

Pictured here at Craig McNamara's Farm.

L-R: Casey Walsh Cady (CDFA), Luke Petersen (NRCS), Megan Robertson (CA), Debbie Leverenz (CA), Jo Ann Baumgartner (Course Trainer & WFA), JJ Mack (OR), Tony Fleming (Course Trainer), Jonda Crosby (IOIA), Benjamin Lewis (OR), Sean Feder (CCOF).



A significant inspector resource is ["How to Conserve Biodiversity on the Farm: Actions to take on a continuum from simple to Complex"](#) by Wild Farm Alliance.

With much gratitude, IOIA recognizes the host farms: **Pinnacle Organically Grown, High Ground Organics, FullBelly Farm, Sierra Orchards, and Free Spirit Farm.**



Click on the photo at left to go to this short video clip recorded in California, where IOIA Biodiversity and Natural Resources trainer Tony Fleming describes how a long term approach to improving Biodiversity and Natural Resources yields myriad positive benefits to both crops and biodiversity by establishing a self-sustaining balance among all the various microbial, insect, bird, and other species that inhabit the farm ecosystem. At each farm, Tony and the farm owner also took the participants through a detailed, 'hands on' history of the soils and the landscape they occupy, highlighting how different soil types respond to a variety of management practices aimed at improving soil structure, microbial activity, water holding capacity, and many other qualities.

IOIA Staff Projects - Hoofin' for Hunger

By Jennie Olson IOIA office Staff

Montana Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers, along with Fort Keogh Research Station, host the Hoofin' for Hunger Race. The race is set on a scenic trail that takes runners through fields, pastures and along the banks of the Yellowstone River just outside of Miles City. Run/walk the 1 mile, 5K, 10K or 1/2 marathon...all for a good cause! All proceeds go to the Montana Food Bank Network.

IOIA donated two 12 oz French Roast Coffee Beans to the Hoofin' for Hunger Race. My husband John and I are both Young Farmers and Rancher Members of our local Farm Bureau Chapter. We help man a station for the event runners.



Plainfield, Indiana Crop Training

Participants at the November IOIA/ECOCERT ICO Indiana Crop Inspection Training pose for the final day group photograph on a very cold but sunny morning. From Left:

Joannee DeBruhl (MI)
 Kristine Lang (IA)
 Megan Morris (NE)
 Vincent Finnell (ECOCERT ICO)
 Victoria Lewis (KDA)
 N Lyle Johnston (CA)
 Anne Drehfal (MI)
 Zachary West (CA)
 Morrison Hughes (OR)
 Corinne Kolm (IOIA Trainer)
 Carolyn Dolezal (ECOCERT ICO)
 Megan Robertson (CA)



Host Field Trip farm owner explains crop rotations and the benefits of daikon radish as part of the soil building, disease, and pest prevention strategy for her operation of mixed vegetables, fruit and flowers.



This farm was a perfect match for an IOIA host site. The site was compact, it was within the city limits, and it was a three season crop operation with fruits, vegetables and flowers. It had hilly and flat areas. Most remarkable was the biodiversity. Even at the tail end of the season there were bluebirds, a fox, and a hawk right in the yard. The operator noted the owned, surrounding woods provided habitat, and her flowers and flowering crops were just humming with insects!

Plainfield, Indiana Basic Crop, November 4 - 8



Reviewing the paperwork on the field trip.



Post Harvest on-farm handling was part of the field trip mock inspection.

Plainfield, Indiana Basic Processing, November 4 - 8

Indiana Processing Course Participants:

Brad Schnitz (ECOCERT ICO)
Garry Lean (Course Trainer)
Megan Clark (KDA)
Peter Miller (ECOCERT ICO)
George Kalogridis (IN)
Scott Herrera (PA)
Kimberly Pohle (IN)
Dylan Burge (CA)
Ashley Buhler (ISDA)



IOIA is deeply appreciative of the work that ECOCERT ICO staff contributed to facilitate the field trip selection and confirmation. Field trips were the highlight of the training for the Crop and Processing courses taught in Indiana. A special shout out to Leslie Zuck, US General Manager; Brad Schnitz (field trip host extraordinaire); and Peter Miller (who ferried participants back and forth from the overnight accommodations to the training site night and morning).

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

Aug 19, 2019 - 7:30 p.m. EDT (Via GoToMeeting and Google Drive)

Board Members Present: Lois Christie, Chair; Janine Gibson, Heather Donald; Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), Chuck Mitchell; Philippe Descamps; Ryan Sitler; Rachel Myers. Also present - Margaret Scoles, ED

2020 Dues: MA: Notes the BOD previously agreed it best to time any needed increases in 3-year intervals. MS: Supporting Individual member dues haven't increased in 7 years while no other category rates have increased for 3 years. CM: According to our polls the cost of dues is a barrier for new members. MA: Maybe we wait until the IMS project is finished (an added benefit) to increase inspector member dues? RS: Let's look at supporting membership fees. Slight increases may be less of an issue because they join for a different reason than inspectors - to support the organization. Lois concurs and suggests a 4% increase for the category. MA asks about creating the consumer category. Chuck points out we ultimately work for the consumer and the category would dovetail with our 'Ask the Inspector' consumer outreach focus. MA suggests the consumer category campaign could be focused to directly support some aspect of IOIA like the Scholarship Fund. MS offers some financial calculations, budget considerations, and consequences related to various category dues increases. Motion is made (JG): to keep Inspector Member dues the same, raise the fees for the 3 Supporting Member categories, and add a Consumer Member category. The Supporting Individual fee will be raised from \$135 to \$145, the Supporting Certification Agency category from \$500 to \$520, and the Supporting Business category from \$200 to \$210. We will set the Consumer Member category fee at \$25. Second (HD). Motion passes unanimously

IMS (Information Management System) Discussion – Blu Solutions Contract: MS reports Blu Solutions start date for the IMS is Nov 1, 2019. She notes that Diane is checking eligibility w/ TechSoup for nonprofits software discounts. Diane and Bryan are also comparing capacities of our current (100% solar powered) server AISO with AZURE. Diane Cooner joins the meeting and reports she is going to re-apply to TechSoup to pursue Microsoft software discounts. She is exploring options with Bryan. Diane leaves the meeting. Bryan Luisana joins the meeting: MS starts conversation with question about continuing with our current server AISO. BL: IOIA would need to maintain a virtual server system. He hopes to have a call in a week or so with AISO to get pricing and logistics information. MA asks question whether a virtual server system is more vulnerable to hacking or privacy issues. BL: No, same configuration can be set within AISO. Lois asks question about staff time needed for maintaining our own virtual server. BL: could do the maintenance or IOIA could find a third party. Updates and backups are what need to be done. He will develop the estimated time/cost for Blu Solutions to do the maintenance and try to find a third party to do an estimate. BL: the system proposed is going to be a replacement for our current website, the inspector member database and payment system, and will be capable of handling an inspector credentialing system. MA asks about the system's capacity for global interaction. BL: That was the reason he recommended AZURE though it will probably still be OK to have our own virtual server.

Policy Committee, Comment Policy & Policy Manual – Heather and Rachel: Heather reports she finalized the flow diagram/policy decision tree. She had emailed with MS about revising how the comment policy is worded so it accurately reflects the participation/role of Lisa Spicka and Policy Committee. MS screen-shares a copy of the policy document via Google Drive. BOD reviews, discusses revisions and MS edits according to consensus. Motion: to finalize the decision tree and comment policy with revisions suggested tonight. Passes unanimously Motion to approve the members of the Policy Committee as listed in the ED Report - Luis Brenes, Pam Sullivan, Garth Kahl, Kate Newkirk, Allan Benjamin, Leonard Pollara, Yehuda Nestel. Janine. Passes unanimously. Rachel Cherry agrees to be BOD Liaison to Policy Committee. Discussion regarding the Policy Committee Coordinator contract with Lisa Spicka. Rachel shares Policy Committee member Leonard Pollara's suggestion that IOIA develop proactive comments.

2020 AGM: MS screen-shares the '2020 Training Topics for Ranking' document describing which training topics were favored and which are part of the current ACA draft Agenda. She asks for additional input from the BOD to narrow the remaining topic choices down to 10 for an IOIA membership survey to poll preferences. Discussion about the AGM schedule. Consensus is to have lunch and keynote approximately Noon-1:30 pm, then take a break so inspectors can attend the ACA training session, reconvene at 3:00 pm for the AGM Business Meeting followed by a second keynote in the evening with a catered party of organic hors d'oeuvres and drinks, and maybe some entertainment, all depending on costs.

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights, continued

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

Latin American Committee: Philippe reports he's working on recruiting Mexican members for the AGM Planning Committee and inviting Latin American members to the AGM.

Emergency Plan, Short Term/Interim, Harnessing Social Capital for Sales, Marketing & Advocacy: MS brings a couple questions for the BOD from Lisa Spicka who is developing our transition/emergency plan.

IOIA BOD Meeting Minutes

September 30, 2019 - 7:30 p.m. EDT (Via GoToMeeting and Google Drive)

Board Members Present: Lois Christie, Chair; Margaret Weigelt, Chuck Mitchell, Rachel Cherry Myers. Also present - Margaret Scoles, ED. Absent - Heather Donald, Treasurer; Philippe Descamps, Director; Ryan Sitler, Director; Janine Gibson, Vice Chair. Lois opened as Unofficial Meeting for Discussion Only at 7:38 p.m. EDT. Quorum was established at 8:13 p.m. when Chuck joined.

NOSB Comments Review; Policy Committee - Confirm Representation: MS shares the newest version of NOSB draft public comments from the IOIA Policy Committee. Motion is made to submit 'as revised' the public comments to the NOSB. Passes unanimously.

IFOAM North America - BOD vacancy: MS shares additional information from her meeting with Sarah Brown, IFOAM NA President. MS was invited to fill out the BOD term vacated by Jim Pierce. She explains that they have monthly meetings and guide meeting via bylaws & strategic plan. She describes who is currently on the IFOAM NA BOD; that every BOD member serves on one committee. Discussion and consensus is that she should go ahead and accept the invitation - if she thinks she can do it. MS expresses how much she's looking forward to representing IOIA in this capacity.

2020 AGM - Keynote Speaker; Advanced Training; BOD Slate BOD consensus is to suggest to the AGM Committee consideration of Michael Sligh as Keynote. Advanced Training: Topic survey result chart is screen-shared. Comments & topics are reviewed and discussed. Responses were from 48 inspectors. BOD consensus is to highly suggest the topics of Biodiversity, Fraud, Risk Assessment, EU Regulations, Cross-Checks, Brokers & Traders, and Sharing Our Perspectives MS will send the highlighted chart to Lisa Spicka and the AGM Committee.

Draft Emergency Plan: BOD consensus is to approve the document so it can move on to the next step.

Consumer Outreach: Organic Voices and uniform messaging was discussed. Chuck explained OCO's online consumer initiative Ask the Expert. Lois updated the "Ask the Inspector" brochure and Chuck shared with Dag. Chuck's vision is that maybe 5-8% of inspectors might consider going into stores to participate. It was suggested that Chuck outline the concept during the AGM and present a Digital Toolkit. He suggested he put up a demo table set up in the hallway too. MS suggests we need to stay in conversation with Organic Voices. MS will send a message to Organic Voices and cc Chuck.

ED Report: Recommendation that we increase the limit to \$5,000 before 2 signatures would be needed on checks. Motion is made to increase the limit on checks needing 2 signatures to \$5000 and add Melissa Billing's name to the Policy Manual wherever we have David Gardner listed. Passed unanimously.

Submitted by Margaret Anne Weigelt, Secretary

Help shape the future of IOIA! IOIA's Board of Directors will be meeting for a 2-day Strategic Planning retreat following the Annual Meeting and training events in Texas. Lisa Spicka, Maracuja Solutions, will facilitate. If you receive a phone call from an IOIA Board member or from Lisa in the next month or so, please take time to visit with them. They are collecting member perspective and ideas to inform the planning retreat.

Want to nominate yourself or someone else for the Board of Directors slate? Please contact Eric Feutz, Membership/Nomination Chair, ebfeutz@gmail.com or Janine Gibson, Board Liaison, creativehealthconsulting@gmail.com before November 30!



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Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!

2020 Calendar

January 3 Organic Agriculture Research Forum (OARF), Little Rock, Arkansas, as part of the 2020 SSAWG Conference.

January 14 - 16 Asia Pacific Committee at work - Advanced Training. Chiang Mai, Thailand.

January 22 – 25 40th Annual EcoFarm Conference 20/20 Vision, Asilomar CA. Keynotes include Vandana Shiva, Jonathan Lundgren and more.

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

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

January 30 IOIA Annual General Meeting

January 31 IOIA Advanced training, San Antonio, TX

February 27 - 29 MOSES conference, LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

February 28 - March 1 BC Certified Organic Conference 2020.

March 3 – 7 Expo West, Anaheim Convention Center

March 5-6 Prairie Organics: Think Whole Farm 2020 Conference. Brandon, MB

April 29 - May 1 NOSB Spring Meeting. Arlington, Virginia. Make room reservations by April 6, 2020 by calling 800-937-8461

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

October 27 - 29 NOSB Fall Meeting, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

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