

Join IOIA in Ottawa on March 25 for our 25th Annual Meeting!

A trio of anniversaries - IOIA will celebrate its 25th anniversary in Canada's capital city as Ottawa celebrates its 150th anniversary year. And, the historic, locally owned Lord Elgin Hotel, located in the heart of Ottawa, will be celebrating its 75th anniversary.

The Lord Elgin is welcoming IOIA with open and hospitable arms and has committed to using organic and locally sourced menu ingredients for our event. All lodging rooms are being renovated this year; renovation is expected to be complete before IOIA arrives.



The Annual Meeting will be held in the Lady Elgin Room with historic paintings and large windows overlooking Confederation Park. The current currency exchange rate makes the venue attractive for US members. The annual meeting will begin with a lunch and keynote at 1 p.m. to allow members to enjoy downtown Ottawa in the morning. When the meeting concludes, the event will transition to a gala celebration with music, awards, appetizers, beverages, and music.

Advanced trainings on March 23 -24 will be held in conjunction with an optional field trip day (March 22)

to certified organic operations. Monique Scholz, founding IOIA BOD member from across the Gatineau River in Quebec, will coordinate the field trips. Advanced Training will begin on March 23 with poultry inspection topics in the morning, followed by topics of interest to crop inspectors and general interest topics for all inspectors in the afternoon. Inspectors can choose one or both training blocks that day.

On Day 2, March 24, Dr. Jochen Neuendorff of GfRS in Germany will lead 6 hours of training on a risk based approach to inspection. The Canada Organic Office has also pledged to provide a speaker (the speaker and exact time TBA). Cultural field trips are being organized for Sunday, March 26. Spouses and families are welcome at the Annual meeting and festivities including the field trips.

Full details are available on our [website](#).

IOIA was founded in 1991 in Baltimore with a small but committed group of inspectors and a handful of supporting certification agencies. It was incorporated in 1992. We are grateful to be celebrating 25 years of dedication to the ideals of organic integrity!

Notes from the Chair

By Stuart McMillan

I often find myself putting off non-inspection related tasks and jobs until the fall or winter thinking I will have more spare time. Then I seem surprised when I find that time is nearly as busy as the summer. That has certainly been the case this year. It has been a pleasure though to have part of that business representing IOIA on two separate occasions.

The first was very exciting for me to join all sorts of people from the Canadian organic sector in Ottawa for Parliament Day. It was the second time I have been there representing IOIA, but considerably more nerve-wracking to be meeting Members of Parliament, than Canada Organic Office (COO) staff. In the end it was good to realize that MPs are just people as well, but they have a nicer office with a better view. It was also great to be able to meet with COO staff on this trip as well and reinforce the need for clear communication from them to verification officers. I look

Welcome New Members

Returning Inspector Member

Christine Ouellet, QC

New Supporting Business

Members

SCS Global Services, CA
County of San Diego, CA
Van Drunen Farms, IL
Australian Certified Organic, Qsld,
AUSTRALIA

New Supporting Individual Members

Alan Armstrong, SD
Glen Ellickson, IA
Matthew Fitzgerald, MN
Kristen Giacci, WV
Katja Hernandez, MN
Clotilde Hryshko, VT
Nicholas Podoll, MN
Don Rogers, WI
Marjorie Ruggles, PA
Brian Thomas, MO
Dwight Veldhouse, MN
Benjamin Wojahn, WI
Tom Wozniak, MN
Erica Webster, MT

Find full information for our members in our online [directory](#).

IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Editor: Diane Cooner webgal@ioia.net
Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.

Resources

USDA Updates NOP Portal

USDA recently launched an updated version of the USDA organic portal, one of many USDA websites that help new farmers, local and regional producers, veterans, and organic producers or handlers to understand all that there is to offer. The new site features a more user-friendly design with updated content that allows more easily access USDA resources for the organic community from one centralized location.

Whether you're already certified organic, considering transitioning all or part of your operation, or working with organic producers or handlers, USDA has resources for you. This portal connects with programs, services, and educational materials that can help organic farms or businesses including organic certification cost share assistance, organic price reporting, organic crop insurance, and conservation programs.

Visit www.usda.gov/organic to take a look.

OTA Offers Comprehensive Free Resource Guide

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) has a new and enhanced [International Organic Trade Resource Guide](#) available. This valuable resource, accessible online to all at no cost, provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date market, policy and trade information on global organic markets available for American organic exporters and importers.

A worthy resource. While everything listed has a market and trade slant oriented to the US, there is still a lot of useful information for inspectors, including links to pertinent standards by country.

2015 Certified Organic Survey Data Released

On September 15, the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released the results of the 2015 Certified Organic Survey. The survey is an inventory of all known certified organic producers in the United States and provides valuable, detailed, objective information to help determine the scope and economic impact of certified organic production in the United States. For more information, visit www.nass.usda.gov/organics.

OGRain Listserv

Farmers and educators interested in organic grain production can join the new [OGRain listserv](#) to share information about events, production issues, resources, and equipment to buy or sell. Like other electronic listservs, the OGRain service allows any subscriber to send an email to the entire group. Members can reply to all or just to the sender who can post "digests" of the responses they receive. To join the list, send an email to join-ograin@lists.wisc.edu with the subject line "Join OGRain list."

OGRain is a partnership between MOSES and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

IOIA Onsite Training Schedule

full details & applications at: www.ioia.net

IOIA/QCS Organic Crop & Processing Inspection Trainings February 6-10, 2017

IOIA and Quality Certification Services (QCS) will cosponsor Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings, at The Bethany Center, Lutz, Florida. Crop and Processing courses will run simultaneously, February 6 – 10, 2017. Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. The corresponding IOIA NOP Crop or Processing Standards webinar is prerequisite for each course. Webinars will be scheduled for participants a few weeks before the on-site course begins. The Bethany Center is located in Lutz, Florida, about 30 minutes from the Tampa Florida International airport, on 200 acres of wetlands including a lake and walking trails. All on-site lodging rooms are private rooms. Rooms are located in six cottages (5-6 rooms/cottage). Wrap-around porches with rocking chairs provide views overlooking the lake. For more information on the facility, visit <http://www.bethanycenterfl.org>. Please do not contact The Bethany Center for room reservations.

[Crop Training Registration](#)

[Processing Training Registration](#)

IOIA Advanced Organic Inspector Training, Ottawa, Ontario March 23-24 2017

IOIA will sponsor two days of Advanced Organic Inspector Training in conjunction with the **Annual Meeting on March 25** at the Lord Elgin Hotel in downtown Ottawa. Field Trips to certified operations are planned on March 22, and cultural field trip opportunities offered on March 26. This annual meeting will be honoring IOIA's 25th Anniversary. For more details about the training and associated events, see <http://www.ioia.net/AGM.html>.

Basic Training Courses and Field Training under Development in the US for 2017

In 2017, IOIA will sponsor four basic Crop inspection Trainings, two basic Processing inspection trainings, and two basic Livestock inspection trainings. Potential locations under discussion for the next events include central California (Crop and Processing) and the Midwest (Crop and Livestock). Plans are also underway for Field Trainings in all three scopes (Crop, Processing, Livestock) in 2017. For further information, see http://www.ioia.net/schedule_onsite.html.

IOIA/OEFFA Organic Livestock Inspection Field Training, Wooster, Ohio August 2 & 3, 2017

IOIA and Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) will cosponsor Organic Livestock Inspection Field Training in Wooster, Ohio. Field Training as a structured apprenticeship will include two days of practice inspections with an IOIA trainer mentor.

For more information about this course [click here](#), or E-Mail: ioiassistant@rangeweb.net

IOIA Webinar Training Schedule

full details & applications at: www.ioia.net

300 Level Webinar – January 31, 2017.

FoodChain ID Non-GMO Project Product Verification Program Inspector Qualification Training
8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Pacific). One, 6 hour session with break.
Presenter FCID Technical Research Director: Jennifer Schomp.

100 Level Webinar – February 16 & 23, 2017. COR Processing Standard
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific). Two, 3 hour sessions. IOIA Trainer: Kelly Monaghan.

300 Level Webinar – March 17, 2017. Inspecting Organic Wineries
9:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. (Pacific). One, 2.5 hour session. IOIA Presenter: Pam Sullivan.

Notes, from page 1

forward to their presentation at the IOIA AGM in March.

I appreciated being able to represent IOIA at the Organic Connections conference in Regina. The opportunities to meet and learn in the Canadian organic sector are less frequent, but perhaps it makes them more memorable. I was excited to see various people I know from the US organic industry in attendance. That cross pollination of ideas and practices are essential to keeping the sector growing and innovating. I also hope to see many of you either in Guelph in January but most importantly at the IOIA AGM.

By the time this reaches you all we will be nearing the end of the year and the holiday season, so I want to wish you all the best in the New Year.

Emily Brown Rosen Retires from NOP

The NOP has bid a fond farewell to Emily Brown Rosen, who retired at the end of May.



Emily served as an Agricultural Marketing Specialist in the NOP Standards Division for 6 years; she played a pivotal role in working with the NOSB and in providing superb context and subject matter expertise to the development of the USDA organic regulations. She was also an active leader in publishing the first NOP Handbook in 2010. Emily has actively participated in organic agriculture for more than 20 years – including being an IOIA member - we wish her all the best in her future adventures!

Accreditation News

A record number of new and renewing accredited inspectors!!

Congratulations to the following members who have been successfully accredited!

- Lois Christie: Crop, Processing
- Garth Kahl: Crop, Livestock, Processing
- Brian Magaro: Crop, Livestock, Processing
- Nathaniel Powell-Palm: Crop, Livestock, Processing
- Janie Marr Werum: Crop

Congratulations, renewing accredited members!

- Janine Gibson: Crop, Livestock, Processing
- Ib Hagsten: Crop, Livestock, Processing
- Monique Scholz: Crop, Livestock, Processing
- Pamela Sullivan: Crop, Processing

Tis the season...to be thankful and joyous!

It's also a time to **share good news** – so here are some IOIA news bytes:

Good news from Ghana – IOIA scholarship recipient **Evans Kwaku Duah** Skyped from around the world where he was on an inspection trip – because he met **Sandeep Bhargava** in Jeju, South Korea at the IOIA events there. **IOIA connections led to inspection work for him.** And now he is working on plans to attend the events in Ottawa. Sandeep of India was himself a scholarship recipient almost 10 years ago.

Good news from Hawaii – IOIA scholarship recipient **Anna (Kiki) Russell** sent a note that she had run across the names of her IOIA trainers while reviewing reports. She mentioned **how good that felt to have gained competencies through IOIA** that allowed her to do that work.

IOIA continues to make a difference!



Lisa Pierce (L) and Margaret Scoles (R) celebrated several successful days in Baltimore with a ride on the water taxi across the Inner Harbor. They staffed the IOIA expo booth, participated in the IFOAM North America launch, and attended the OTA Annual Awards celebration. They were assisted by Stuart McMillan, IOIA Chair.

Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

The older I get, the more “old friends” I have. And when we don’t see each other so often, we “old friends” can change quite a bit.

In Wisconsin, old friend and IOIA inspector member **Allen Moody** didn’t show up for the Non-GMO Training on Saturday. We waited quite a while for him and finally started without him. About an hour or two later, he and I connected. I learned that he was just too busy to stop for the training. Any inspector can relate to that end-of-the-year angst when you are behind writing reports and leaving in the middle of the night tomorrow for another inspection trip. That was Allen. He apologized for not showing up at the training, especially because he lives right there in Viroqua. I offered him a chance to do penance by delivering our soup and sandwich lunch the following day from the Food Coop. He agreed to come. I looked forward to sharing a sandwich and a chat on Sunday.

Allen and I go way back, probably about 25 years, when I arrived in Kansas to inspect an operation where he worked. We put on quite a few miles in the car together and we learned from each other. For example, he taught me how to make a wonderful fast chile relleno sandwich - 2 slides of bread, cheese, and a canned green chile. Try it - you’ll be impressed. Eventually he went on to Wisconsin and worked developing organic meat markets. Our paths crossed from time to time, but most often it was by phone. About once each year, I call him to thank him for staying an inspector member of IOIA because many other staff inspectors don’t find membership a worthwhile value. He came to Montana when we were founding the Montana Organic Association. But we hadn’t seen each other for quite a while when we were

due to meet up in Wisconsin this time.

The lunch pickup was scheduled for 11:45. About 12:15, right on schedule, I saw a van drive into Nature Nooks. I saw a tall graying man with a beard get out. “Jonda”, I whispered, “can you please go out and help Allen bring in the lunch?” We weren’t really at a good stopping place. Ernie Peterson’s talk on Feed and Feed Mills was extremely interesting. He was engaged in a lively Q&A, and I didn’t want to stop him. The tall man with the beard walked in, smiled at me, and went and took a seat on the futon. “Goodness”, I thought, “That doesn’t look like Allen”. I kept sneaking looks at him, trying to fit him into the image I had of Allen. It didn’t work. So I walked over, and said quietly, “Hello, it’s been a long time”. “Yes”, he said back to me, “I think it was the MOA Conference”. Still not quite right, but that made sense. The MT Organic Association was indeed where Allen and I’d last seen each other.

Finally, the time seemed right. Cheerfully oblivious, I didn’t notice that the soup and sandwiches had not come in with him and Jonda. I went to the front of the room and said, “I’d like to introduce someone. You know how it helps you when you do something wrong and someone

gives you’re the opportunity to do penance?” I didn’t notice Jonda’s quiet but urgent gestures. She gave up being polite and finally said just loud enough for the whole group to hear, **“He’s not the lunch guy...”**. Then it finally struck me. It was **Dr. Guy Jodarski**, the veterinarian who I’d last seen at the Missouri Organic Association a few years back. Well, it was the best laugh of the day. And the laugh was definitely on me. Just then, Allen walked in with soup and sandwiches, looking a little older and bit frazzled momentarily, but very much like Allen. If you are concerned that IOIA’s ED is getting senile, here’s the photo of the look-alikes. Everyone was kind in saying, “It would be an easy mistake to make...”.

Happy Holidays and Joy to All!



Allen Moody on the left, Dr. Jodarski on the right.

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Final Guidance on Materials

The following final guidance was announced December 2, 2016, in the Federal Register: Classification of Materials and Materials for Organic Crop Production.

Classification of Materials (NOP 5033)

This guidance clarifies existing practices used to classify materials as synthetic or non-synthetic and as agricultural or nonagricultural.

Materials for Organic Crop Production (NOP 5034)

This guidance helps organic producers to understand which input materials are allowed in organic crop production, and provides a list of materials that are specifically prohibited in organic crop production.

The final guidance will be used by certified operations, accredited certifying agents, material evaluation programs, and other stakeholders, including producers interested in transitioning to organic production. The guidance will reduce barriers associated with understanding the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances.

The final guidance are available in the [NOP Handbook](#).

USDA Organic Insider

Preserve grassfed label

In response to significant criticism from producers and consumers of sustainable meats following their revocation of the grassfed label claim in early 2016, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has released an animal production claims [guidance document](#) intended to ward against misleading label claims.

USDA Organic Insider, 9/30/2016

California Updates COFA

The California Organic Food and Farming Act (COFFA) was signed into law on Sept. 21, 2016, the first update to the state's organic law and program in more than a decade. The new legislation eliminates duplicative paperwork and fees for organic producers who had to report information to both the state organic program and their USDA-accredited certifier.

COFFA also allows the Secretary of Agriculture and the California Organic Products Advisory Committee to support organic agriculture through education, outreach and other activities. It is the first step in supporting the state's 2,800 organic farmers and lays the groundwork to continue advancing organic agriculture.

California currently produces more organic product than any other state, with more than \$12 billion in sales annually.

LinkedIn Organic Network, post Sept 21, 2016

Compliance Committee formed in U.S.-Mexico negotiations

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has established the Joint U.S.-Mexico Organic Compliance Committee as part of work towards organic equivalency. This committee was established through the exchange of terms of reference documents between AMS and Mexico's National Service for Animal and Plant Health, Food Safety and Quality of Mexico (SENASICA). This past week, AMS Administrator Elanor Starmer and SENASICA Director in Chief Enrique Sánchez Cruz signed the documents in a ceremony held at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC. The committee will collaborate to strengthen monitoring and enforcement controls on organic products traded between the United

States and Mexico, increase transparency, and build stakeholder confidence as the two countries discuss a potential organic equivalency arrangement. AMS has established a [new page on its website](#) to provide background on the Committee, its goals, and its accomplishments. The Organic Trade Association and the Mexico Task Force have worked with USDA to establish this group. OTA has continued to push the importance of maintaining consistent and verifiable organic control systems in both the US and Mexico. OTA is encouraged that NOP has taken formal steps to strengthen the organic industry here and with our **second largest trade partner** for organic products.

OTA Newsflash, 10/25/2016

AMS releases report on FY16 NOP compliance and enforcement actions

AMS/National Organic Program (NOP) published the first annual compilation of its Compliance & Enforcement/Appeals Summary report in early November.

This report, which is published quarterly, outlines NOP's compliance, enforcement and appeals activities for the 2016 fiscal year (October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016). The data highlights the number of incoming and completed complaints; the initial actions taken; and case dispositions, including settlements made and penalties levied.

View the [FY2016 Summary Report](#)

USDA Organic Insider, 11/10/2016

Organic Farmers and US Farm Policy

Two different groups are working on providing a policy voice for U.S. organic farmers. The Organic Farmers Alliance is still in its organizing

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phase, working with organic farmer groups from around the country to develop a democratic structure for regional representation of both organizations and individual members. MOSES Organic Specialist (and past IOIA chair) [Harriet Behar](#) is involved in this organization and can answer questions.

Rodale Institute recently launched another group, the [Organic Farmers Association](#), which is a membership organization for individual farmers. It is managed by Elizabeth Kucinich, Rodale Institute's Board Policy Chair. Both groups have similar goals: providing a platform for organic farmers to advocate for their unique perspective to policy makers and regulatory agencies, a place for networking among organic farmers, and a place to share educational resources. The two groups are discussing best methods for working together.

MOSES Organic Link, Nov 2016

U.S. organic farmland hits record acreage

A [new study from Mercaris](#) reports that U.S. organic farmland reached 4.1 million acres this year—a new record and an 11 percent increase from 2014. The number of certified organic farms in the U.S. as of June 2016 reached 14,979, a 6.2 percent increase of 1,000 farms compared to the 2014 survey data. California, Montana, Wisconsin, New York, and North Dakota are the top five states for organic cropland, with California leading the group with 688,000 acres. Montana has seen a 30 percent organic farmland acreage increase, reaching 417,000 acres in 2016—an increase of 100,000 acres since 2014. Economists at Mercaris attribute the increase to high consumer demand.

OTA Newsflash, Nov 15 2016

Call for Comments - NOP 5037

The draft guidance "[Calculating the Percentage of Organic Ingredients in Multi-Ingredient Products \(NOP 5037\)](#)" is now available for comment.

Although the USDA organic regulations establish labeling categories for organic products based on the percentage of organic ingredients in the product, certifying agents have interpreted the requirements for calculating the percent of organic ingredients differently.

The draft guidance clarifies the standards for calculating organic percentages for finished products, including multi-ingredient products that contain ingredients that are actually composed of more than one ingredient.

The draft guidance, which will help farms, businesses, certifiers and other stakeholders to implement the USDA organic standards consistently, supersedes "NOP Policy Memo 11-9," dated October 31, 2011, which is now obsolete.

The publication of the notice along with the posting of the draft guidance initiates a 60-day public comment period which ends on February 6, 2017.

The draft guidance is available in the [NOP Handbook](#), Section J, at the base of the table of contents. All are invited to provide comments before the deadline. If you would like to comment, please do so via [regulations.gov](#).

USDA Organic Insider

MOSES names new ED

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) has hired John Mesko as its new executive director.

Mesko currently heads the Sustainable Farming

Association of Minnesota (SFA). He will step into the leadership role vacated by the organization's

founding director, Faye Jones, who retired from MOSES in March. He'll oversee MOSES's 10-member staff, which organizes the annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference and on-farm field days, publishes the Organic Broadcaster newspaper, runs the Organic Answer Line, and offers a mentoring program and other services to help farmers learn how to grow organically.

OTA Newsflash, Sept. 13, 2016

**Millennials are growing the organic marketplace**

They are the largest group of organic buyers in the U.S. The Organic Trade Association's [2016 U.S. Families' Organic Attitudes and Beliefs Study](#) finds that parents between

18-34 are now the leading group of organic shoppers.

In fact, more than half – 52% – of organic buyers are Millennials.

Knowledge is power – 77% of millennial parents say they are "well informed," or "know quite a bit" about organic.

They are shifting the marketplace – When shopping for organic, Millennials are more likely to shop online and less likely to make their purchases from a farmers' market than Gen Xers or Baby Boomers.

OTA Newsflash, 12/1/2016

IOIA Peer Evaluation Program - Endangered?

by Margaret Scoles

In 2015, IOIA contracted with 10 certification agencies to perform the field evaluation aspect of the evaluations of 50 inspectors. The program was deemed a success by the certifiers, the inspectors evaluated, and the NOP. As frosting on the cake, IOIA made more of a financial profit than expected.

This year, IOIA was asked to evaluate over 100 inspectors in the field for 11 certification agencies. So 2016 should be a resoundingly successful year, right? Not exactly.

IOIA is in the process of analyzing the program, including the finances, with the certifiers who participated. Maria DeVincenzo, IOIA's Coordinator for the program; Al Johnson, Committee Chair; and Margaret Scoles will be meeting independently with every certifier to look at how the program worked for them and for IOIA. While IOIA expects to offer the services of the program again in 2017, the business plan clearly needs some re-tooling. Where a certifier mostly requested inspectors who were requested by at least one other certifier, the current business model worked. But for others, the revenue generated by a flat rate fee structure didn't cover the costs of evaluating their inspectors. What was the big change? Certifier Instruction 2027 was revised on March 31 this year to allow for evaluation sharing between certifiers. The number of requests per inspector went down. IOIA estimates break-even at about 1.5 requests per inspector. So the revenue went up at a rate that didn't keep up with the additional workload. The Peer Evaluation Committee will also be looking at ways to improve the effectiveness and usefulness of the Peer Evaluation reports.

The program has been highly successful at reducing the number of evaluations each inspector must undergo, improving inspection quality through peer mentoring, and helping certifiers stay in compliance with 2027.

Endangered? Yes. Worth saving? Yes.

"This was my first time being evaluated under the new IOIA system. It was easy to schedule and informative. I came away from the process with some helpful advice on how to be a better inspector, which is what this all really about."

Darren Maum, Inspector

NOSB Spring Meeting Comment Period

The next NOSB meeting will be held April 19 - 21, 2017 in Denver, Colorado at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel located at 1550 Court Place, Denver, CO, 80202 (1-888-627-8405). During the meeting, the board will address several petitions pertaining to changes to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. The agenda of topics and current proposals are available on the meeting webpage at the Spring 2017 NOSB Meeting webpage.

In advance of the meeting, the NOSB is accepting public comments. In addition to written public comments, the NOSB is also accepting oral public comments at the face-to-face meeting on April 19 and 20 as well as via a webinar on April 13. Click on links below for details on providing written or oral public comments.

IMPORTANT DEADLINE - March 30, 2017, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

- Deadline for written comments via www.regulations.gov that address specific topics noted on the meeting agenda. For more information on how to submit written comments, visit the Spring 2017 NOSB Meeting webpage.
- Deadline to sign up to provide oral comments face to face at NOSB meeting. Persons interested in providing oral comments at the meeting must reserve a spot. Registration is not required to attend the meeting, only to provide oral comments. Spots can be reserved via the Spring 2017 NOSB Meeting webpage.
- Deadline to sign up to provide oral comments via webinar. Persons interested in providing oral comments via webinar must reserve a spot. Spots can be reserved via the Spring 2017 NOSB Meeting webpage.

USDA Organic Insider, Nov 29, 2016

CANADA ORGANIC NEWS

The revised Canadian Organic Standards entered into force on 25 November 2016. However, a number of clauses of the revised COS are currently under an amendment process, and so are not immediately applicable.

Last spring, the organic sector initiated an amendment process in order to clarify the scope of some clauses, or to make clauses compatible with industry practices.

Contrary to what was planned, the amendment process is not yet completed. The publication of the amendments is, therefore, delayed until 2017. Hence the clauses currently in the amendment process are not enforceable today, November 25.

Following is the list of these clauses:

General principles and management standards – [CAN/CGSB-32.310](#) Greenhouse crops, clause 7.5.5 b), c) and d)

Permitted substances lists - [CAN/CGSB-32.311](#)

Table 4.2	Digestate, anaerobic Sulphur, elemental
Table 4.3	Biological organisms Formulants
Table 5.2	Acids for water treatment
Table 6.5	Ascorbic acid (vitamin C)
Permitted substances lists for cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers	Clause 7.1.3
Table 8.2	Diatomaceous Earth

[Click here](#) to consult the proposed modifications to these clauses.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has issued a clear directive to the Certifying Bodies: operators with production systems affected by these clauses will be issued a note of 'opportunities for improvement' pending the approval of the clauses by ballot and their enforcement in 2017.

From InfoBio Newsletter, 11/25/2016



IOIA joins Canada Organic Trade Association

IOIA will be joining COTA's voice in Canada. The Board of Directors made the decision on November 30. COTA and IOIA already have a cosponsorship relationship for the COR Processing Standards Webinar. Becoming a voting non-profit Associate member formalizes and strengthens the existing relationship.

The Canada Organic Trade Association is the membership-based trade association for the organic sector in Canada, representing growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and all points along the organic value chain. COTA represents its members to government on sector issues, market development, and the need for strong organic standards and regulations.

COTA maintains an active Canadian media presence, promoting the organic sector, educating the public and protecting organic product integrity. COTA raises public and government awareness to the organic industry through initiatives like the national Organic Week and the Think Before You Eat consumer outreach and education campaign.

For more information about COTA, <https://www.ota.com/canada-ota>

Canada-Switzerland expand equivalency arrangement

Earlier this fall, Canada and Switzerland officials reached [an agreement](#) to expand the current organic equivalency arrangement allowing all Canadian organic multi-ingredient processed products to be exported to Switzerland. The arrangement also recognizes Canadian and Swiss organic wine standards as being equivalent. *OTA Newsflash 10/4/2016*

IFOAM North America is Born by Margaret Scoles

On September 22, 2016, IFOAM North America held an inaugural General Assembly to establish itself as a self-organized regional body within the global umbrella of IFOAM – Organics International. The launch of IFOAM North America was in conjunction with Expo East at the Pratt Street Ale House in Baltimore. The group adopted governing Rules of Procedure. David Gould, IFOAM Program Facilitator and North America Representative says, “The Steering Committee that has carried the process until now is able to confidently put the future of IFOAM North America into the hands of the new Board of Directors.” The BOD election (9 members to be elected out of 13 candidates) followed by electronic voting. The official announcement was made on Oct. 30. The new board includes four elected members who also served on the Steering Committee, which was struck about 18 months ago, plus 5 newly elected members.



This is literally the moment of birth of this new structure. Faces in the foreground are Left to Right Marty Mesh, Sarah Brown, Katherine DiMatteo, Bob Quinn, and Jim Pierce.

Elected to the BOD:

Lisa Pierce, running on behalf of IOIA, won a seat on the BOD. One-third of the Board members are IOIA inspector members - Lisa Pierce (IOIA representative); Brian Baker, and Dag Falck (Nature's Path Foods). Also elected were Elizabeth Henderson; Jeff Moyer (Rodale); Sarah Brown (Oregon Tilth); Bob Quinn (Kamut Intl); Leslie Zuck (PCO); and Ryan Zinn (Dr. Bronner's). By coincidence, Baltimore is the birthplace of IOIA, where in 1991 a group of inspectors put their hands in the air in the same style.

The results of the recent election of the 1st-ever IFOAM North America Board of Directors are now final. You can find all of the background and further details on the IFOAM North America landing page at <http://www.ifoam.bio/en/node/3833>

Who is Lisa Pierce? Avid readers of *The Inspectors' Report* are accustomed to seeing photos of Lisa around the world as an IOIA trainer and reading her training articles. She has been an organic inspector since 1997 and an IOIA Trainer since 2003. She also worked as the International Training Manager for IOIA for four years. Here's more --

Lisa grew up on a farm in the Canadian prairies and currently lives on the west coast of Canada where she is in the process of developing a small market garden. She serves on the board of directors for her local agriculture organization that promotes organic agriculture – The Vancouver Island Collective. She helped standardize the IOIA training curriculum in the US and Canada. She has also collaborated extensively with cosponsors in other countries to deliver organic inspector training that references other organic standards and meets their needs. In addition to working as an organic inspector and IOIA Trainer, she works for the National Farm Animal Care Council regarding the development of on-farm animal welfare assessment programs. Past experience including working outside of Vancouver as an Integrated Pest Management crop advisor.

IFOAM - North America, continued

What inspired Lisa to agree to stand as a candidate for this new branch of IFOAM?

“I was inspired by a presentation by Andre Leu at our IOIA AGM in Korea. I am inspired by Organics 3.0. It was a pivotal point for me: for many years I have talked about what organics IS NOT – not a nutritional claim, not a non-GMO claim and now I think the evidence is in to start talking about organics as a YES – organics as a connector to our health, the environment and solution to global warming.”

The Organic 3.0 Document Has Been Revised

Following the release of “Organic 3.0 for Truly Sustainable Farming and Consumption” at the Goesan International Organic Expo in October 2015, IFOAM - Organics International welcomed feedback from stakeholders all over the world as a way to further refine and improve the ideas contained in it. The response was overwhelmingly positive with a variety of helpful suggestions, which have now been incorporated into the final version, now available [here](#).

Ifoam Organics International Insider Nov 2016



The Organic World Congress of IFOAM - Organics International is held every 3 years in a different country. The aim of the congress and related activities (pre-conference, General Assembly, side-events and organic exhibition) is to share experiences, innovations and knowledge about the organic world, while giving the organizing country global visibility. In 2017, the congress will take place in India.

The 19th OWC is structured in four conference tracks: Main Track, Farmers' Track, Scientific Track, and Marketing Track.

The Main Track, composed of two parallel sessions, is a series of public discussions and debates by leaders from the organic movement on how we can best promote and implement the organic agenda. The overarching theme is “Global Adoption of Organic Principles for Truly Sustainable Agriculture” and the audience is invited to contribute to strategic discussions with the panel experts.

The Farmers' Track provides a forum to highlight farmers' work in organic especially with regards to innovations used on their farms. Presentations will be on the topics of Seeds & Biodiversity, Soil Fertility & Health, Soil Life & Plant Health, and Ecological Farming Practices & Systems.

The Scientific Track is a platform where research results are presented and discussed in 20 sessions of 1.5 hours each. Papers must link to scientific disciplines such as soil, plant, animal, or economics. All papers should give at least an outline of how the research presented contributes to Organic 3.0 - The next phase of organic development. The Marketing Track discusses innovative ideas for shortening value chains, for systems that build trust between actors, for promising marketing methods and for organic and fair trade alliance building. Papers are called for that deal with emerging trends in quality assurance, e.g. PGS (Participatory Guarantee Systems), CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), fair trade and other alternative and integrative systems.

For more information, please visit: owc.ifoam.bio or download [our brochure](#). ([link is external](#))

IOIA AT NOSB

by Margaret Scoles

Ib Hagsten, IOIA Vice-Chair, represented IOIA at the St. Louis meeting. Margaret Scoles, ED, provided comment during the NOSB web-based session on November 3. Both of IOIA's representatives focused their comments on the CACS Discussion Document on *Personnel Performance Evaluations of Inspectors*. Their comments supported a more risk-based approach to inspector evaluation than currently exists under Instruction 2027 *Personnel Performance Evaluations*. IOIA proposed inspector credentialing (i.e. IOIA Inspector Accreditation Program) as an alternative to annual field evaluation. IOIA's membership approved a new inspector certification program in 2015 at the AGM. This new program would include peer field evaluation of inspectors at least every 3 years for 200-level inspectors and at least every 5 years for 300-level inspectors. The definitions of 200 and 300 level inspectors incorporates both the number of inspections and the number of hours of continuing education. These inspector qualifications are consistent with and similar to those proposed in 2011 NOSB in their recommendation on *Inspector Qualifications*. A schematic of the new IOIA Inspector Accreditation Model was presented to the NOSB. **IOIA encouraged the NOSB and NOP to dust off the 2011 recommendation and to be more flexible in looking at other approaches to meeting the requirements for observation of working inspectors in the field.**

Hot Topics Two highly controversial issues dominated the fall meeting. Hydroponics (Bioponics) and Container Growing remain hot topics for the Crops Subcommittee. Whether to maintain or remove carrageenan from 205.605(a) was equally controversial for the Handling Committee.

Key Additions and Deletions from the National List, as recommended by the NOSB. No new materials were added to the list, and no petitions to add materials were successful. The National List doesn't actually change until further rulemaking is completed.

- Ivermectin was petitioned for removal from 205.603 and was voted for removal. 14 yes: 0 no: 1 absent.
- Oat protein concentrate was petitioned for addition to 205.606, but failed. 14 yes: 0 no: 1 absent.
- Carrageenan was voted for removal from 205.605(a). 11 yes: 3 no: 1 absent.

The vote to de-list carrageenan is both stunning and to be expected, given the heavy lobby by some consumer organizations. Carrageenan has been on the list since the list was created. Extracted from a seaweed, it is widely used as a bulking agent, carrier, emulsifier, gelling agent, glazing agent, humectant, stabilizer, and thickener. Based on studies and a Technical Report concerning the health effects of carrageenan, the Handling Subcommittee found that the scientific evidence does not support claims of negative human health effects from consuming carrageenan in processed foods, although some individuals may be sensitive to it. Even so, they voted to de-list.

The future of hydroponics remains in question. Past NOSB recommendations and NOP rules leave gray areas on whether hydroponic/aquaponic systems (now referred to as bioponic) are compatible with organic production, and if so, what standards are needed. Currently, hydroponic production is allowed in the US as long as the producer can demonstrate compliance with the USDA organic regulations. In July, the USDA's Hydroponic/Aquaponic Task Force completed a report outlining pros and cons of allowing organic bioponic production. The NOSB voted to uphold the 2010 recommendation that hydroponic production is not compatible with organic production. There will still be a need for additional rulemaking concerning greenhouse and container production. This was referred back to the subcommittee to clarify definitions of hydroponics, aquaponics and aeroponics, so that each system can be considered individually. A discussion document on Container and Greenhouse production aims to provide clarity to NOP so they can proceed with rules for crops grown in solid substrate in greenhouses or containers. A 2010 NOSB recommendation mentioned container production on compost-based substrate, but it did not quantify the amount of compost necessary. The Task Force Subcommittee that reviewed the 2010 recommendation recommended that organic growing media must have a minimum of 20% compost. Coir-based media for perennials might have a lower requirement. The Task Force Subcommittee that reviewed the 2010 NOSB recommendation suggests that liquid nutrients be limited to 20% of the total nutrients supplied. This issue was referred back to the Subcommittee. **As container growing and soilless media continue to occupy a place on the main stage, IOIA plans to include training at the next advanced training.** Certified operations, certifiers, and inspectors on both sides of the US, Canada, and Mexican borders are all keeping a keen eye on that stage.

NOSB, continued

State of Organic Seed 2016 was presented by Kristina (Kiki) Hubbard to the NOSB. To view the full report, see <https://stateoforganicseed.org/>

State of Organic Seed is a project of Organic Seed Alliance that monitors the status of organic seed in the US and provides a roadmap for increasing the diversity, quality, and integrity of organic seed available.

IOIA Inspector Members on the NOSB: Tracy Favre (current chair), Zea Sonnabend, Dr. Jean Richardson, Harriet Behar and newly appointed Sue Baird.

Changes on the NOSB as of January 2017:

- **New on the BOD:** Five new members have been appointed to the National Organic Standards Board. They begin their five-year terms on Jan. 24, 2017. The appointees and the positions they will hold: Dr. Asa Bradman, Berkeley, CA, an environmental protection and resource conservation expert; Steve Ela, Hotchkiss, CO, an organic producer representative; Sue Baird, Bunceton, MO, a public interest or consumer interest group representative; Dr. David Mortensen, State College, PA, a toxicology, ecology, or biochemistry expert; and Joelle Mosso, Fresno, CA, an organic handler representative.
- **Leaving the BOD in January:** Zea Sonnabend, Tracy Favre, Dr. Jean Richardson, Carmela Beck, and Harold Austin.

Sue Baird Appointed to NOSB

Sue Baird has been appointed to the NOSB as a public interest and consumer representative. Ms. Baird serves as the Executive Director of the Missouri Organic Association, dba Mid-America Organic Association, which educates consumers and farmers about the advantages of organic food and production practices. She also serves as an independent organic consultant, inspector, and reviewer. Ms. Baird holds a Master's in Animal Science and Poultry Diseases, and has served on local, state, regional, and national boards that serve the organic community and industry. Since 1995, she has owned and operated a calf/cow operation.

2014 Sunset Lawsuit

A federal judge has denied USDA's request for dismissal of a lawsuit brought by Center for Food Safety against Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

The suit is regarding 2014 changes to the Sunset provision.

This promises to be the most significant lawsuit in the organic sector since *Harvey v. Veneman*.

ORDER DENYING MOTION TO DISMISS

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Case No. 15-cv-01590-HSG

09-08-2016

CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY, et al., Plaintiffs, v. TOM VILSACK, et al., Defendants.

Read about the case [here](#).

IOIA and MOSA Cosponsor Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Training in Minnesota

Mt. Olivet Conference & Retreat Center in rural Farmington, Minnesota hosted IOIA basic training for the third time since 2011. Any venue that makes the IOIA training schedule that often is clearly a winner. The site is ideally situated, as it is convenient both to the Minneapolis airport and to many certified operations as potential field trip hosts. Each time, the training has been scheduled in early November. Each time, the large maple tree in the parking lot shows some green when IOIA arrives and is usually devoid of leaves by the time we leave. And once again, the group posed with the bright red bush for the group photo.

“Very valuable info for anyone getting involved in the organic industry. The practical application with the farmer during the field trip was the best part.”

Veteran IOIA trainer Garry Lean spent the first half of November in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He was joined by Margaret Scoles as co-trainer for the basic Crop Inspection Training course Oct. 31-Nov 4. Jonda Crosby arrived later as assistant trainer for the basic Livestock Training course Nov. 7-11. Both classes were full with 25 participants in Crop and 20 in Livestock. The training team trio was reunited on November 11. They drove together to rural Viroqua, Wisconsin for three more training events – the IOIA/FCID Non-GMO verification training, IOIA/MOSA Advanced Inspector Training on Livestock topics, and Livestock Field Training. On November 16, they headed back to the Minneapolis airport. Lean and Crosby flew home, and Scoles drove the slow boat home.

A monumental task, well-done. Thank you, Garry, on behalf of IOIA. Much thanks is due MOSA for extraordinary co-sponsor support with field trip organization. Support included sharing the services of Mark Geistlinger, MOSA staff inspector and IOIA inspector member, as a group leader. And perhaps a nod to the weather gods is due. Early November is a little dicey for planning outdoor activities in MN. All groups enjoyed beautiful fall weather for the field trip days. Last, but not least – heartfelt thanks to the staff at Mt. Olivet. Chef Justin proudly gave itemized details of the organic and locally sourced ingredients used in each meal. As a bonus, he offered a tour of the garden where organic veggies and herbs are produced in raised beds on a former tennis court. Talk about a weed barrier!



Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Training in Minnesota



Mark Geistlinger's group burns through the records at the mock crop inspection. William Gorman Farm hosted this field trip.



Sam Kedem Nursery & Garden hosted a training group for the Crop course. They proudly displayed the day's harvest, especially impressive considering the date of November 3.

MN Livestock Training Comments from Course Participants

Garry Lean: *Garry rocks!*

Garry was great. I really appreciate how he cared for our success. He's got a fun style!

Garry is an amazing teacher and trainer, the kind of fella you want to work hard for and do right by - inspiring. His ability to connect with each individual and bring a group together creates a dynamic learning environment. Great flow. Gary could tell when we needed a break prior to information overload. His teaching style was very informative but also fun and engaging.



Jonda's Livestock Field Trip group.

Jonda Crosby: *Jonda rocks!*

Wonderful teacher who kept us on track during discussion sessions. Felt very encouraged and genuinely appreciated. Very organized that allowed for the flow of the class to feel natural and on point. I have learned some skills from Jonda that I will use in my own teaching! Thanks!

Jonda was a great instructor and was very helpful with my specific questions.

Jonda was an excellent assistant and really added a lot to the class. What a gift to this industry! Jonda knows just when to let us loose and went to reel us in! She inspires learning, someone I want to do right by. Her on-hand, practical experience is invaluable!

Jonda really did a lot to enhance learning on the field trip and gave excellent and detailed feedback during the report writing.

IOIA Field Training becomes a Reality

by Margaret Scoles

IOIA is one step closer to a new inspector certification scheme. Field Training is a reality. Eight participants with a variety of backgrounds and training registered for the first ever IOIA Livestock Field Training on November 14-15 at Nature Nooks Retreat near Viroqua, WI. Some had taken both Basic Crop and Livestock training. One participant had been trained in-house by a certification agency. Some had significant crop inspection experience.

The training was cosponsored by MOSA. Field training relies on a strong collaboration between IOIA and a certification agency. In this case, MOSA provided actual inspections to IOIA. The forms used with the standard MOSA report and exit interview forms. On Day 1, the participants were divided into two groups of four. Each group was led by an IOIA trainer and a MOSA staff inspector. On Day 2, the group was again subdivided so that each participant worked with someone they had not worked with previously. Each inspection team was accompanied by one Field Trainer (IOIA Trainer or experienced MOSA inspector). Field Trainers were Garry Lean, Jonda Crosby, Margaret Scoles, Angela Davidson, and Mark Geistlinger. Earning a Certificate of Completion means that IOIA believes the inspector is ready to do 100-level inspections solo. Unfortunately, the definition of 100-level inspection is not commonly understood. What we do know is what a 100-level inspection is **not**. Even a small, all-organic dairy is challenging to inspect and is at least 200-level.



Kim Pohle (Indiana) gives Tom Wozniak (Minnesota) a primer on the assessment of manure.

Learnings from the experience? Participants needed additional time to finalize good inspection reports. Final drafts were submitted to the Field Trainers after the course concluded. Attempting to do real inspections on Day 1 created some frustration for the growers, the participants, and the Field Trainers. A better approach might be to have a local staff inspector for the certifier do the inspection. The task of the participants would be to observe, take notes, and write reports afterwards. And finally, while the intensity of the basic training has softened a bit with the new format, this pilot field training was outright grueling. By the time the participants had finished the two-day course, they'd written at least four reports.

In 2017, IOIA will offer Field Training in all three scopes (Crop, Livestock, Processing). Livestock Field Training is scheduled with OEFFA in early August.

And who is inspecting who? This herd of inquisitive purebred Jerseys at the Mc-Donough farm in Wisconsin followed the inspection team step by step. The team was impressed both with their curiosity and their complete lack of fear of strangers.



IOIA/MOSA Advanced Training focuses on livestock topics

MOSA suggested the training and worked with IOIA to recommend local speakers to keep the training affordable in a one-day format. The pace of the training was just right, with plenty of time for Q&A from the 11 participants who came from Massachusetts to Montana. Their precourse assignment was to submit questions in advance for the speakers.

Cullen Carns-Hilliker, Inspection Manager for MOSA, and Erik Gunderson did a lively presentation on the nuances of evaluating Feed Supplements. Mark Geistlinger, also of MOSA, discussed teat dips and sanitizers. Cullen also gave a presentation on the impact of the Proposed NOP Rule Change on Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices. MOSA did many hours of research with their certified poultry operations to find out how the rule change would affect them.

Ernie Peterson of Cashton Farm Supply addressed Feed and Feed Mill Issues for Inspectors. CFS was established in 1984 and is focused on organic feed manufacturing and distribution. CFS also does organic custom pullet raising, poultry equipment sales and organic seed sales. CFS is certified as an organic feed mill. Ernie fielded a plethora of questions about cleanouts, purges, seed contamination with GMOs, GMO strip tests, and taking grain samples. He discussed common alternatives to ethoxyin (i.e. Naturox) and tackled the tough topic of methionine. He explained how we learned to feed excess protein to birds to avoid feeding too much methionine. Unfortunately, excess protein leads to problems with ammonia levels. He encouraged inspectors to use ammonia test strips. About poultry welfare, "Let's get the birds outside, get the square footage up, and make sure people continue to trust organic integrity". And finally, he emphasized the importance of the organic inspection. "Every time you come in, you help us be better."

Guy Jodarski, DVM is an independent veterinary consultant based in Neillsville, WI. He works in organic and sustainable livestock practice with an emphasis in dairy cattle herd health. Dr. Jodarski has been in practice for 20 years and has

consulted with livestock producers and food animal veterinarians throughout much of the US. He has traveled widely to present information on how to keep food animals healthy without the use of antibiotics, synthetic hormones and chemicals. His presentation focused on calf health and managing for parasite control without the usual range of parasiticides used in conventional livestock. He emphasized feeding adequate milk to young stock for three full months. And he encourages producers to get calves on grass well before 6 months. He discussed practical tips for inspectors such as looking into garbage cans and doing the Drop Knees Test for evaluating bedding. "If your knees are wet, it fails." His presentation was very practical.

Please see **Advanced**, page 23



Ernie Peterson



Dr. Guy Jodarski, DVM



Wisconsin Advanced training group

IOIA and JOIA Cosponsor Farm Inspection Course in Japan

IOIA and JOIA cosponsored a 4-day Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training at the Waseda Houshien Student Christian Center in Waseda, Tokyo Shinjuku, Japan on September 5-8.

JAS Standards were used as the reference and language of the course was Japanese. Lead trainer was Yutaka Maruyama. There were 16 participants.



**Asia Pacific Committee Report:
Isidor Yu, Chair
Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, BOD Liaison**

The Asia Pacific Committee meets every two months by Skype. Active members are Isidor Yu (Korea), Chair; Sandeep Bhargava (India); Akiko Nicholls (Queensland, Australia); Kathe Purvis (Western Australia); Maheswar Ghimire (Nepal); Vitoon Panyakul (Thailand); Mutsumi Sakuyoshi (Japan) and Raymond Yang (Korea).

The committee's current discussion is focused on preparing and sponsoring training in India in conjunction with the IFOAM General Assembly in November 2017 in Delhi. The IFOAM GA occurs every three years. A potential cosponsor could be APEDA (the Indian government agency overseeing organic in India). Venues being explored include the National Center for Organic Farming in Ghaziabad, about an hour east of Delhi. The focus of the training would be grower group inspection training that would be useful for Internal Control System (ICS) coordinators, internal and external inspectors, and those working with Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS). An additional day of processing training would be of value to exporters and ICS coordinators. The committee has proposed a training team to prepare the curriculum.

Next meeting is January 20.



**Thirteen Inspections Logged
By Alvie Fourness**

Last spring, I attended the [International Organic Inspectors Association](#) (IOIA) Organic Crop Inspection training held at Deer Creek Lodge and Conference Center in Mt. Sterling, Ohio. You might have read about this in the spring edition (Volume 25 – Number 2) of the IOIA Inspector's Report [1]. This article is a follow-up to that article and chronicles the story line from the course completion to the point of performing farm inspections on my own.

Once one completes the IOIA Basic Crops training course, the next task at hand is the mentored organic inspector apprenticeship. Anyone who is thinking about an apprenticeship should keep in mind a few important things. First, the inspectors who have enough experience to be good mentors are probably very busy with their own inspection assignments. So, even though they might want to help, they can't always do so. There is definitely a need to be patient and understand that if someone isn't able to help mentor you right way, it's probably because of constraints beyond their control. With that said, I must say that for me, it took longer than I had hoped. But, after having applied a little bit of patience, it did happen.

My apprenticeship consisted of four mentored inspections. The first two were in mid-September. Two different inspectors were shadowed on these inspections for a look at variety of techniques. These first shadowing inspections were filled with awe and admiration at seeing the inspectors perform their work. So here, my role as the apprentice was only to watch and learn. On my third mentored inspection, I was given the seed search verification and crop audit tasks to do at the inspection, which I managed to handle satisfac-

tory. In fact, it felt good to actually contribute something to help my mentor.

And finally that day came in the second week of October; my first inspection shadowed by the mentoring inspector. As it turned out my first inspection was a new client (not usually done but time was of the essence) who was requesting certification of

180 acres of hay and pasture. I said a short prayer, "Please God, don't let me screw this up!" My prayers were answered, and I was given the go ahead to start inspecting on my own. My mentor gave me the following recommend:

"The reports you submitted to me are very thorough in fact I hope I am not held to that standard. I would recommend that you are more than capable to carry out solo inspections." Ok, so it wasn't so much just hope and prayer that got me through this. My IOIA training gave me the sturdy foundation that I needed to have a basic grasp of the task at hand. The accumulation of knowledge gained from the abundance of class work, homework assignments and exercises administered at the IOIA training played a large part in this success. My mentor's tutoring came in very useful, too. The mentor's recommendation to make it a practice to review the Materials Used Form for inputs that are allowed with restrictions and then to check during in-

spection that all of those restrictions are being followed and documented appropriately was most helpful.

Just so you know, everything did not go perfectly smooth. So, the basic plan that day was to meet with my mentor ahead of time, about one-half hour before the scheduled inspection time so that we could drive to the farm together. Inspec-



The author on the job.

tion start time was scheduled at 8 am, and the meet-up time was to be about 7:30; so that put us both on the road starting out around 5 that morning. In Pennsylvania, we have a whitetail deer population. And as it so happened, my first inspection date aligned precisely with the start of the deer's rutting season. This means that the deer are especially active, and are prone to cross the highway at all times of the day or night. So as you might have already guessed, my mentoring inspector hit a deer driving to the inspection. Yup, he had to go back home to "inspect" for damage before continuing. So needless to say we arrived to the inspection about an hour late. And so,

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Organic Standards will exclude next generation of GMOs

The [National Organic Standards Board](#) voted unanimously at the November 2016 meeting to update US organic standards to exclude ingredients derived from next generation genetic engineering and gene editing. This recommendation to the US Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program will ensure that ingredients derived from new genetic engineering techniques, including synthetic biology, will not be allowed in the production or final product of foods and beverages that are certified organic. Synthetic biology is a new set of genetic engineering techniques that include using synthetic DNA to re-engineer organisms to produce substances they would not normally produce or to edit DNA so as to silence the expression of certain traits.

The Board's announcement follows a growing trend of companies stating that they will not use ingredients produced via synthetic biology. The Non-GMO Project, North America's only third party verification program for non-GMO food and products, recently updated its standards so as to include synthetic biology and new gene editing techniques. Companies such as Ben and Jerry's (BJICA: US), Three Twins Ice Cream, Straus Family Creamery, Luna & Larry's Coconut Bliss, Nestlé (NSRGY: OTC US), and General Mills (NYSE: GIS) have committed to "...not source vanilla flavor produced through synthetic biology," a product that is designed to replace natural vanillin flavoring from vanilla beans. Synthetic biology vanilla flavoring, introduced by Evolva (SWX: EVE) and International Flavors and Fragrances (NYSE: IFF) in 2014, is the first major synthetic biology ingredient to enter food and beverages, marketed as "natural vanillin." Other companies that have pledged to avoid synthetic biology ingredients entirely include Nutiva and Dr. Bronner's.

"The Board's hard-fought proactive stance on synthetic biology will both help preserve the integrity of organic standards and raise awareness about this virtually unregulated and unlabeled form of genetic engineering," said Dana Perls, food and technology policy campaigner with Friends of the Earth. "It's critical that organic standards treat new types of genetic engineering that are rapidly entering our food and consumer products as rigorously as the first generation of GMOs."

Like "traditional" GMOs, synthetic biology ingredients are entering food and consumer products in absence of adequate health and environmental safety assessment, oversight and labeling. Many are being falsely marketed as "natural." Products in development include synthetic biology stevia, saffron, coconut and cacao, meant to replace plant-based ingredients, many of which are currently produced by small farmers in the Global South. There is increasing concern that these farmers' livelihoods may be displaced by synthetic biology ingredients. Other products include gene-silenced apples, CRISPR waxy corn and Cibus Canola oil, engineered with gene editing techniques.

"The National Organic Standards Board has made clear that all kinds of genetic engineering are to be excluded from 'organic.' The public expects that government to actually assess the new foods that it is permitting on the market," said Jaydee Hanson, senior policy analyst, Center for Food Safety. "Unfortunately, the government has failed to update its regulations to adequately assess these new kinds of genetically engineering. When the USDA approves that NOSB recommendations, consumers who want to avoid GMOs will be able to use the Organic Seal to know that the product is not a GMO."

Synthetic biology employs a new set of genetic engineering techniques that involve artificially constructing or "editing" genetic material such as DNA in order to create new forms of life, or to attempt to "reprogram" existing organisms. Despite growing concerns about the possible impacts of synthetic biology organisms on human health and the environment and a lack of independent safety assessment, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has allowed synthetic biology vanilla, DuPont's CRISPR waxy corn and other similarly created food and cosmetic ingredients to enter the market without regulation. Existing regulations that identify GE crops and food ingredients as "Generally Regarded As Safe" use an outdated process with minimal testing requirements that rely on companies to self-evaluate the safety of their products.

Source: 11.21.2016. Friends of the Earth. More information about synthetic biology can be found [here](#).

The Genetic Engineering News is produced by the [Ecological Farming Association](#),

edited by former longtime EcoFarm Board Member Thomas Wittman. 11/29/2016

[This article was originally published by Vermont Business Magazine on 11/21/2016.](#)

GMO News

USDA issues memo regarding organic and GMO labeling

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has posted a Policy Memorandum stating how AMS will establish consistency between the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard (Pub. L. 114-216) and regulations to implement the standard with the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.) and the rules to implement the National Organic Program, as required by the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard statute.

With a legal requirement to complete rulemaking within the next two years, AMS is in the initial planning stages of the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard. During the rulemaking process, when proposing standards for a national bioengineered food disclosure program, AMS' policy to ensure consistency between the two programs will be as follows:

- No certified organic products will require disclosure as bioengineered;
- No proposed rules for bioengineered food disclosure will require that modifications be made to the USDA organic regulations.

Throughout the rulemaking process for the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard, AMS aims to create a transparent process with multiple opportunities for public participation, including providing comment periods and public meetings.

To view the policy memorandum, please go to www.ams.usda.gov/

[rules-regulations/gmo](#). You can also [subscribe to get email updates](#) about the progress of the rulemaking process for the national standard. *USDA Organic Insider, Sept 19, 2016*

GMO crops fail to lift yields, ease pesticide use

Despite claims by genetic engineering proponents that GE crop production far surpasses yields of non-GMO crops, an extensive examination by The New York Times indicates that genetic modification in the United States and Canada, in fact, has not accelerated increases in crop yields or led to an overall reduction in the use of chemical pesticides. Writer Danny Hakim authored the article entitled "[Doubts About the Promised Bounty of Genetically Engineered Crops](#)," published in The New York Times.

OTA Newsflash, Nov. 1, 2016

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this serves as example of what can go wrong in this sort of line of work. The good news is that the farmer applicant was on his way to growing organic hay this year, and plans to transition to an organic dairy next year.

After the apprenticeship, I earned the "allowed to do inspections on my own" status. This was truly good and well worth the wait and time spent, I felt. For one thing, I can schedule my farm visits as I wish and go directly to the farms without having to coordinate with a mentoring inspector. My plan to start was straightforward and simple – begin with a couple of nearby hay and pasture farms in order to wring out my techniques and hone my inspector skills.

As fate would have it, that idea didn't go as planned. My first solo inspection came in as an Urgent Inspection Request from a 400 acre Corn, Soybean and Small Grain farmer who had added a few acres of corn, some of which had been harvested and kept segregated on a wagon. The farmer was not able to continue harvesting until the review of the inspection report. Right of the bat, it was baptism by fire, so to say. In spite of this, I was able to satisfactorily complete the assignment and provide the inspection report in a timely manner. The mock farm inspection during the IOIA training hit the mark as the wheat, corn and soybeans production on that teaching exercise prepared me well for that of the farm that needed the urgent inspection.

In hind sight, the Urgent Inspection Request was probably the best learning experience one could have. After that, the remaining assignments didn't look all that difficult. But as I soon learned, each farm had a particular element of uniqueness and every one required special attention to the details during the inspection process. And in that way, this added to the appeal of the job as I realized that no two inspections will ever be exactly the same. Each one, you see is truly a unique experience. So with that being the case, this is where I will end, after having successfully completed twelve solo inspections in my first year of being an organic inspector.

[1] IOIA Inspector's Report (Volume 25 – Number 2) page 16



IOIA/FoodChain ID Non-Gmo Project Product Verification Program Inspector Qualification Training Offered in-person or by webinar

Jennifer Schomp, Technical Research Director at FoodChain ID, presented the 300 Level training course in-person at the rural Nature Nooks Retreat outside Viroqua, Wisconsin, on November 12. This course is geared for those already trained and experienced as organic processing inspectors. Criteria for acceptance include prior training and experience completing in/out balances and audit trail trace backs. The course includes a precourse assignment based on the Non-GMO Project Standards and a post-exam. Nine participants from across the US and Canada completed the Wisconsin course. Following the training, the group celebrated with a no-host dinner and beverages at the locally famous Driftless Café in Viroqua. **Watch the IOIA webinar training schedule for an opportunity to register for the January webinar.**

300 Level Webinar – January 31, 2017.

FoodChain ID Non-GMO Project Product Verification Program Inspector Qualification Training
8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Pacific). One, 6 hour session with break.
Presenter FCID Technical Research Director: Jennifer Schomp.

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

Conference Call - Aug. 19, 2016

Members present- Stuart McMillan (Chair); Ib Hagsten; Pam Sullivan; Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA) Matt Miller, Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, Garth Kahl. Also present, Margaret Scoles (MS), ED.

#6 Treasurer's report- Discussion of whether or not to raise dues. General agreement on raising dues. Mutsumi-reports that language barrier is an impediment for attracting and retaining members in the Asia Pacific region. MS- 1/3 of inspectors being evaluated are not IOIA members. How can we attract these rather than raise dues? Mutsumi-We could get 100 new Indian inspectors rather than raise dues, via a local organization that would pay IOIA.

Matt moves we raise inspector members dues to \$200/yr and give inspector members a 50% discount to 1 webinar every year. 2nd by Garth. Unanimously approved. Matt moves we raise supporting business dues to \$200. 2nd by Ib. Unanimously approved.

#7 Administrative Assistant MS- How to pay for this position was not part of the BoD discussion, but the BoD was adamant that she get some help. MA and Ib have been helping her with the job description. They are becoming her informal "personnel support committee."

#12 ED report-MS is in discussions with Dr. Jochen Neuendorff about IOIA becoming more of a presence in Europe, and how IOIA could lead the charge toward a professional credentialing program (i.e. our new accreditation program).

Conference Call – Oct 6, 2016

Board members present-Stuart, Ib, Margaret Anne (MA), Matt, Garth, Mutsumi, Pam. Also present Margaret Scoles
Added Agenda Item - Asia Pacific Committee: Mutsumi wishes to give committee update -They are discussing how to deliver more trainings for grower groups and Internal Control Systems coordinators. Want to develop their training and present it at IFOAM in India in 2017.

#5 3rd Qtr Financial Reports – Pam presented Treasurer's Report; Balance Sheet; Budget vs. Actual **MA moves that we accept the financial report, 2nd by Garth. Unanimously approved.**

#6 Latin American membership dues rate. Garth points out that Latin American currencies have lost much value this year, so inspector members not earning dollars have lost much of their earning power. **Garth moves we maintain the dues rate for Latin America and Africa at 60 USD. 2nd by MA. Unanimously approved.**

#8 Canada Stuart suggests we survey Canadian IOIA members about topics they feel should be raised with members of parliamentarians. MA suggests Stuart approach members of Parliament who are OG farmers. Stuart feels the issue of enforcement of fraud cases that have not generated response from CFIA should be highlighted.

#9 Employee Benefit Plan MS presents proposed amendment to Employee Handbook as developed by her and the IOIA bookkeepers. **Pam moves we accept this, 2nd by MA**

#12 Hydroponics and other NOSB issues Soliciting member input. General discussion about this issue. Hydroponic Task Force Recommendations? Maarten Samsom feels strongly about this and has approached MS with request that the BoD consider commenting to NOSB. BoD does not have a desire to take a position on container growing.

More Resources

Got cows? Vet's new book offers advice for year-round health management

Four-Seasons Organic Cow Care is an easy, interesting read for dairy farmers. Dr. Hubert Karreman covers all the aspects of cow care, from breeding to feeding and any health issue that crops up in between.

Part of the joy and wonder of farming lies in the changing of the seasons: planting, calving, tilling, milking, harvest. As the seasons pass, any dairy or cattle operation will see its share of problems crop up as well, many with seasonal regularity. Acclaimed veterinarian Hubert Karreman calls on his nearly thirty years of experience in organic and holistic medicine to guide you on how to recognize, treat and prevent a year's worth of problems with your herd. With biology and managing animals, there are no hard-and-fast rules, however, there is a rhyme and reason explaining why certain conditions are associated with each season. From pneumonia in the winter to heat stroke in the summer, this farmer-friendly book will introduce early detection techniques, prevention methods, and the most effective organic-certified treatments available for livestock.

Paperback, 256 pages

Published 2016 by Acres USA

24.00

Available thru MOSES <https://mosesorganic.net/product/four-season-organic-cow-care>

Climate change and farming The National Farmers Union just released a new set of resources, blogs and social groups devoted to recognizing the impacts of climate change and discussing the ways agriculture can play a part in mitigating those impacts. Join the conversation on the [NFU Climate Leaders Facebook group](#), sign up for the [email list](#), or visit the [NFU website](#).

More Useful Links

following links to help understand more about international issues related to import of organic products.

Training Presentation: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/International%20Trade%20Compliance.pdf>

NOP Fact Sheet: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/importing-organic-products-us>

They are not new, but they are really helpful. Totally worthwhile. Patti Bursten Deutsch

An Alternative to USDA's Organic Integrity Database OneCert has developed their own version of this database that you can access at:

<http://www.organicintegritydatabase.com/>

Please send an email to it@onecert.com if you like it or have suggestions for improvements.

Advanced, from page 17

Although many of his best practices for calf management are common knowledge, inspectors often still will see calves consistently kept on the same pasture, grazed too short and therefore prone to infection with parasites. He urged grazing calves on grass at least 4 inches tall, where most of the larvae will be below the level where they will be ingested. Simple pen health (daily cleaning and liming) can prevent coccidiosis. "Manure buildup on the tail of newly weaned calf almost always means coccidiosis". Questions included everything from how to clean boots between farms to 3.0 FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsibly Management) audits. He also stressed the importance of strict standards and good inspection. "If we lose integrity, the consumer goes away."

Final presentation of the day was Garry Lean on Poultry Inspection. He showed slides from actual operations and posed questions to the group. What did they see, what they would ask, and how would they investigate? ☞



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Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!

2017 Calendar

Jan 25 - 28 37th Eco-Farm Conference. Celebrating Diversity! www.eco-farm.org

January 26 - 29 Guelph Organic Conference, <http://www.guelphorganicconf.ca/>

300 Level Webinar - January 31
FoodChain ID Non-GMO Project Product Verification Program Inspector Qualification Training
8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Pacific). One, 6 hour session with break. See page 22 for details.

January 31 USDA National Organic Program Certifier Training, Accredited Certifiers Association hosting events at The Hilton Portland, OR.

February 1 - 2 Accredited Certifiers Professional Development Training for private and state accredited certifiers and supporters. Also, Accredited Certifiers Association Annual Meeting.

February 2 - 4 Organicology 2017. Portland Hilton Downtown. More info. <http://www.organicology.org/>

February 23 Organic University™ is a day of in-depth farming courses offered just prior to the MOSES Organic Farming Conference Thursday, Feb. 23 from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

February 23 - 25 The 2017 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, La Crosse, Wisconsin. Find information about pricing, lodging, and more on the conference website.

March 22 - 26 IOIA Annual Meeting and Advanced Training, Ottawa, Ontario. See page 1 for more info.

November 9 - 11 19th Organic World Congress, New Delhi, India. <http://www.owc.ifoam.bio>

Please see page 3 for the current list of IOIA on-site trainings and webinars