

IOIA Launches Five New 200- and 300-Level Webinars

IOIA is pleased to announce five new webinars that will be offered starting in June.

200-level Webinar, Residue Sampling and Responding to Test Results, June 5 and 12, 10 a.m. – 12 noon (PDT)

This course will prepare inspectors and certifiers to comply with the requirements of the USDA National Organic Program final rule on residue sampling. Published November 2012, the rule requires sampling of at least 5% of certified operations annually. The course will cover all relevant NOP regulations and Program Handbook documents. The roles of certifiers and inspectors will be discussed, as samples are followed through the entire process: setting up a residue sampling program, creating a sampling plan, providing inspectors with sampling directions, communicating between the certifier and the inspector, taking an appropriate sample in the field, maintaining the integrity of the sample, and responding to the results of sample analysis. The course will cover the sampling of organic crops before and after harvest. References to information on sampling soil and water will also be provided. Participants will gain understanding of the requirements of the USDA NOP regulation related to residue sampling, including responding to results and learn how to follow lab protocols to collect appropriate and valid samples of organic crops or plant material. The course is geared for persons with an understanding of NOP Standards and organic inspection or

certification review. Course participants preferably will have completed the IOIA Basic Inspection course and are already working as inspectors or reviewers. This course is comprised of 3 components: self-study, webinar, and evaluation. Presenter is Nathaniel Lewis, Organic Handling and Material Input Certification Coordinator, Washington State Department of Agriculture – Organic Food Program. For more info: http://www.ioia.net/schedule_ex.html#residue. Participants who meet minimum requirements will receive a Certificate of Completion for IOIA Residue Sampling Webinar. Cost for Webinar is \$325 for IOIA members \$350 for non-IOIA members.

200-level Webinar, Natural Resource Assessment on Organic Farms, June 26, 10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (PDT)

The course is geared to prepare those who are currently organic inspectors or file reviewers to evaluate Natural Resource requirements as described in the NOP/COR. The course is also highly recommended for organic producers, consultants, educators, extension, and certification agency staff. Learn how to evaluate, verify and report biodiversity and conservation components of an Organic System Plan, farming practices, and the operator's commitment to soil building practices and management, water use and conservation, woodlands use and biodiversity, and wildlife enhancement practices; verify if a biodiversity and conservation monitoring plan has been [see **Webinars**, page 4]

Notes from the Chair

By Ib Hagsten

In first quarter 2013, your chair spoke on your behalf at two events: Two organic Power Point presentations were given to worldwide Environmental Health audience in Boston; and another message on "don't forget the inspector," when making certification more sound or sensible, was presented at NOSB meeting. (All three presentations will appear on IOIA's website). The AGM was very well attended, energized, and you have a strong board representing you during 2013.

The first week in March two IOIA-sponsored speeches were presented in Boston at the Elsevier Environmen- [see **Notes**, page 4]



Food Justice Training October 30 – November 1

Food Justice Certified: Domestic Fair Trade Label

from the Agricultural Justice Project

Binghamton/Ithaca, New York, October 30 – November 1, 2013: Directly after the IOIA advanced organic training, the Agricultural Justice Project (AJP) will conduct a 3-day training on Food Justice Certification in New York for organic certification program staff and farm worker organizations. This training will provide organic certifiers and farm worker organizations with the information, skills, and paperwork they need to implement Food Justice Certification for farms and businesses.



The AJP training has already been successfully developed and presented in Oregon, California, and Wisconsin. This will be the first training held in the Northeast. The training devotes a day-and-a-half to presentations and discussions, and then conducts three field inspections where the participants first observe, then assist the trainers in guided inspections, and finally perform an inspection while observed by their trainers. Classroom work alternates formal presentations with participatory exercises and covers the following topics:

- *What is AJP? (history, background, mission),
- *Overview of AJP certification system, eligibility, the Food Justice labeling,
- *The challenges of social auditing: skills and characteristics of a good interviewer, and
- *The AJP verification process: the cooperative relationship between certifier and farm worker representatives, selecting workers to interview, inspection process, final review, and decision on certification.

The training concludes with a written exam. Once the exam and final paperwork are completed a certificate is awarded to the participant, enabling them to participate in the first domestic social justice certification program to launch in North America.

If you would like to register to attend or would like more information about the standards, trainings, and technical assistance to prepare for certification, please contact AJP at ajproject@gmail.com or call 919-809-7332.

Our Logo is Legal!

We are happy to announce that after a 9-month registration process, IOIA's new logo, adopted on March 1, 2012 at the annual meeting, is now IOIA's legally registered trademark!

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.
Published quarterly on recycled paper.

Member Updates

Please welcome the following new members.

New Inspector Members:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Robert Bales, Billings, MT | bobbales@bresnan.net |
| Zach Heth, Coloma, MI | imaginegardens@gmail.com |
| Corinne Kolm, Eugene, OR | ckolm@yahoo.com |
| Jonda Crosby, Helena, MT | jcrosby@mt.net |
| Mark Keating, Belvedere, NJ | tenorganicfarms@earthlink.net |
| Osiris Abrego, Fair Oaks, CA | oabregoplata@gmail.com |

Supporting Individuals:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
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| Cynthia Skala, Nerstrand, MN | cynthia.skala@yahoo.com |
| Cindy Douglas, Capitola, CA | cvdouglas@yahoo.com |

Supporting Businesses:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Wyoming Business Council, Cheyenne, WY | donn.randall@wyo.gov |
| Zhenpins Technologies, Ltd., Shenzhen City, China | hqrong@gmail.com |

IOIA On-Site Training Schedule

Clovis, New Mexico - Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training, July 29 - August 2

IOIA will sponsor Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training July 29 to August 2 in Clovis, about 220 miles east of Albuquerque. The training will be held at the La Quinta Inn in Clovis. The course includes three days of in-classroom instruction, one day with a field trip to a certified organic operation that focuses on inspection and reporting, a graded written assignment (inspection report), and one half-day for testing. The Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training includes classroom instruction on organic livestock standards; livestock materials; risk assessment; audit trail requirements; report writing; inspector conduct, confidentiality, and ethics; understanding the difference between inspecting and consulting; effective communication; and organic inspection procedures for meat and dairy animals; fiber-bearing animals; and poultry (meat and eggs). A room block has been reserved under the name "IOIA"; room cost is \$85 plus tax. The block will no longer be available after June 28. The hotel has free wireless internet and a continental breakfast with hot items included. The "Make Connection" shuttle can provide transportation from the Albuquerque airport (ABQ). Closer airport options are Lubbock (LBB) or Amarillo (AMA), Texas, both about 100 miles from Clovis. This course is highly recommended for both inspectors and certifier staff, such as reviewers. The location was chosen for its proximity to a certified organic dairy, the first in the US to receive a variance to the pasture rule due to drought. This training will allow participants to see first-hand how the pasture rule is applied in low rainfall areas of the West. Training includes gaining proficiency with calculations on dry matter intake from pasture and feed.

Kyurian, Tokyo, Japan - Basic Farm and Processing Inspection Trainings, September 2 – 5

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor 4 day Basic Organic Farm as well as Processing Inspection Trainings using JAS Standards as a reference. The courses will be held concurrently at Kyurian in Tokyo Japan, September 2-5, 2013. The training language will be Japanese. Please contact Mutsumi Sakuyoshi at JOIA for more information about the courses. E-Mail: mu-saku@cap.ocn.ne.jp website: www.joia.jp

Loveland, Colorado - Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training, September 9-13

IOIA and Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) will cosponsor Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training September 9-13 at the Sunrise Ranch near Loveland, Colorado. The course includes three days of in-classroom instruction, one day with a field trip to a certified organic operation that focuses on inspection and reporting, a graded written assignment (inspection report), and one half-day for testing. The 4 ½ day Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements which include: classroom instruction on the organic standards (focus on the USDA National Organic Rule); working with organic system plans; how to inspect organic farms; audit trail requirements; risk assessment; investigative skills; report writing; approved input materials; assessing natural resource management; inspector conduct, confidentiality, and ethics; understanding the difference between inspecting and consulting; and effective communication. The course also includes a pre-course webinar "Crop Input Materials".

Nestled in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, Sunrise Ranch is about one and one-half hours N of Denver or 15 miles from Loveland. The ranch a 350-acre working sustainable farm and ranch (since 1945) that is currently home to permaculture vegetable gardens, grass fed beef, pigs, goats, and pasture-raised poultry and eggs.

Binghamton, New York - Basic Organic Crop, Livestock and Processing Inspection Training; and Advanced Training, October 21-November 1

IOIA and NOFA-New York Certified Organic (NYCO) will cosponsor Basic Organic Crop, Livestock, Processing Inspection Trainings and Advanced Inspector Training at the Binghamton Riverwalk Hotel & Conference Center in downtown Binghamton. Crop and Processing Inspection courses will run concurrently October 21-25, followed by Livestock training October 28-November 1. Advanced Training is scheduled October 28-29. The Agricultural Justice Project (AJP) will conduct 3 days of training for inspectors on Oct 30-Nov 1 at the same location, following the advanced course. Each 4 ½ -day basic course follows IOIA's curriculum requirements and includes 3 days of in-classroom instruction, 1 day with a field trip to a certified organic operation that focuses on inspection and reporting, a graded written assignment (inspection report), and ½ day for testing. For information on the Agricultural Justice Project training, please contact AJP at agjusticeproject@gmail.com or call 919-809-7332. (see also full article, page 2)

See the IOIA website, www.ioia.net, for application forms and more details on these and other trainings.

Please see page 7 for a list of upcoming IOIA webinars - for full info and to register, please go to www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html

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Environmental Health Conference (475 attendees from around the world). They both addressed benefits of organic farming on the subsequent health benefits to the consuming public. The abstracts were mentioned in the prior newsletter, and the actual PPT presentations are available on the IOIA website. Our organic messages were very well received by the attendees, whose primary research activities center around the environmental concerns present in the world today.

The third week in March, IOIA held the AGM on Saturday and a record number of inspectors attended the various training opportunities either before and/or after the AGM. The outgoing 2012 board of directors met twice before the AGM and the 2013 BOD met for two days afterwards. Thank you to the retiring members for your hard work; and to the new BOD members, too. The formational meeting was very enjoyable, as there was a spirit of cooperation, a sense of "let me use my talents in the best possible way to move IOIA forward," and a feeling of cohesiveness. Let's have a terrific IOIA year together!

IOIA was invited to an "invitation-only" pre-NOSB meeting in Portland in early April, to dialogue with ACA and NOP on how to take the "Sound and Sensible" Certification concept to the next and more practical level. As Margaret was in Florida for two concomitant IOIA training classes, as chair I was asked to attend. The group size, make-up, and scope allowed us to move the concept forward in a sound and sensible manner. While I was in Portland the pre-requested four-minute public comment slot during the first day of the NOSB meeting allowed a slightly shortened version of the talk, "don't forget the organic inspector as you move forward with improved certification guidelines." A

Webinars, from page 1

implemented; and determine if the farmer is maintaining and improving (or degrading) biodiversity and conservation on the farm. IOIA Trainer, Garry Lean will present the course. His qualifications include a background in soil science and farming (beef, dairy, poultry, field crops and vegetables) and over 20 years of organic inspection experience in crops, livestock and processing (both in Canada and the United States). Garry also taught Agroecology and Ecosystem Management for 25 years at Fleming College in Ontario, Canada. This webinar includes pre-course reading and assignment and a post webinar exam. Participants who meet minimum requirements will receive an IOIA Certificate of Completion for Natural Resource Assessment Webinar. Cost for the webinar is: \$250, with a \$25 discount for IOIA members. To register for the webinar, go to: <https://gan-conferencing.qualitywebconference.com/register>

300-level Webinar, Grower Group Inspection and Certification, July 16 and 26, 9 - 11 a.m. (PDT)

The first webinar session will cover the history and background of Grower Group certification and will describe in detail the current requirements based on the NOSB 2002 and 2008 recommendations. The second webinar session will provide training on how to prepare, conduct and report an organic inspection of a Grower Group. Experienced IOIA Trainer and inspector, Luis Brenes of Costa Rica, will present the course. Brenes has many years of experience in consultation and inspection of grower groups. With 16 years of experience as an organic inspector, he has audited farms and food processing facilities throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia. Luis is an agronomist with post-graduate studies in tropical Crop Protection who served as an organic extension and on-farm research agent. This webinar could be useful as part of the professional development to meet accreditation requirements that ask for inspector and certifier's qualifications if inspecting and reviewing Grower Group files. The training is highly recommended for organic producers, consultants, educators, extension, and certification agency staff. The course is comprised of 3 components: self-study, webinar, and a final exam. Participants who meet minimum requirements will receive an IOIA Certificate of Completion for Grower Group Inspection and Certification. Cost for the Webinar is: \$350, with a \$25 discount for IOIA members. For more info, go to http://www.ioia.net/schedule_ex.html#GG

300 Level Webinar – Inspecting Organic Wineries, November 25, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.(PST). One, 2 hour session. Presenter: Pam Sullivan. This course is still being developed.

300 Level Webinar - Maple Syrup Inspection, December 5, 8 a.m. (MST). One, 3 hour session. Presenter: Monique Scholz. Course still in development.

For full information on each webinar, please see the Training Schedule page of the IOIA website, www.ioia.net

copy of the full text is available (elsewhere in this newsletter or posted on the inspector-only website spot).



Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

Spring greetings! We had enough April snow to green things up and bring on a flush of spring wildflowers. So it is indeed Spring here, even if only a tenuous one. We are hoping in Montana for a break in the drought. Lots of livestock are headed for auctions because feed is so short. Last year, we put up zero hay, and we are trying to stay optimistic that we won't continue another year in that same vein. Spring outdoors means that we can expect frosts to abate soon and it is time to plant gardens. In the IOIA Office, though, spring means something else. It means we enter our slow season, as certifiers and inspectors are both attacking the peak of the inspection season. It also means you might not have time to read this entire newsletter in one sitting. If you haven't time to read it all, please do note that IOIA has been working hard to bring useful information to you in the affordable and green webinar format. We are launching several new webinars. I hope you support them, so that we can continue to offer them.

Expo West, Anaheim: Daylight Savings Time broke as it usually does for IOIA, in Anaheim, California at Expo West. We were pleased to receive a free booth in the nonprofit section located right next to OMRI. I was also pleased to take **Kathy Bowers** as my support staff this year -- her first IOIA trip. On our first day, we attended the OFRF Fundraising Luncheon (fabulous lunch!) and networked, including a visit with keynote speaker and old friend Karri Stroh of North Dakota. Karri is the Executive Director of the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society. She and her husband have a certified organic farm and in the past she was an organic inspector. Over the 3 days of staffing the booth, we networked, answered questions from consumers and farmers, inquiries about training, promoted our new webinar series, and worked on de-

veloping livestock training. Kathy took on Anaheim and the Expo with her usual cheerful, fearless, and positive determination. It was her first trip to Anaheim. We threw in some fun activities such as the Organic Valley 25th Anniversary Party. By the end of four days, she was an old hand

at traveling on public transportation, and we even ended up at the beach with our pile of luggage and the expo display long enough to get a bit sunburned! We are also planning for Kathy to take the basic crop inspection training in Colorado in September. What better way for her to complete her understanding of the IOIA training program? She processes applications, handles acceptance packages and pre-course assignments, organizes rooming lists, and compiles the course binders and exercises before each course begins. Then she follows up after the course by checking scores and entering them into the database, printing the certificates, and mailing out the post-training packages. Kathy is a very service-minded employee, and this added training will help her provide even better customer service to the participants in our courses and webinars.

Sound and Sensible: Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this industry wide initiative is that everyone seems to be on the same page -- from NOP to NOSB to ACA and yes, IOIA. At IOIA, we have thrown ourselves into support of the concept. We've offered our unique perspective as the only people who are typically on-site to represent the NOP or the certifier. Read the full article on page 8 of this newsletter. If this is the first time you are reading about it, please go back to the front



Kathy Bowers, IOIA US Training Services Coordinator, (center) with Mostafa and Nikki Chtain, at the IOIA booth. Mostafa has worked for 10 years with IOIA to try to bring IOIA inspector training to Morocco.

cover of our last, winter 2013 issue. An interesting comment heard in California was Jake Lewin noting that IOIA's white paper included ideas that would make inspectors work easier. No one had thought about that before! The primary concern was making things easier for operators, especially smaller ones, so they would stay in certification. But as inspectors know, if we don't streamline the inspector's part of the certification process along with the rest of the improvements, inspection costs will not go down. The loss of certification cost-share is a critical problem, perhaps even the single largest driver in the urgency to streamline certification and reduce the time that operators, inspectors, and certifiers need to spend.

Food Safety: The BOD is exploring with PrimusLabs the idea IOIA becoming a trainer of food safety verification auditors. The idea was brought to us by Julia Govis, IOIA supporting member from Illinois, in relation to her work with the Farm to School program. Although food safety regulations often exempt smaller growers, those same growers still can't always access the markets they need without a verification audit. The cost of government GAP auditors or third-party audits often prices smaller growers out of the market. GAP training could provide more training work for IOIA, [see ED, p 22]

Meet Our Newest Board Members

Garth Kahl – Oregon, U.S.A.

Garth has worked as an organic inspector since 1996, working as both an independent contractor and as a staff inspector at various periods. He previously served as an alternate board member for IOIA in the late '90s. In February 2012 he returned to being an independent contractor after a stint of 5 years working as Latin American Program Manager for Oregon Tilth. During 2012, he performed an average of 4-5 contract reviews a week, with a smattering of inspections (<25), the vast majority in Mexico. Fluent in Spanish and English, he “feels it is very important for IOIA to maintain a strong and growing presence throughout the Americas.” In 2013 he anticipates performing more inspections both in the US and Mexico, in addition to performing consulting services for operators in both countries and tending his own small certified crop and livestock operation. He has a B.S. degree in Agriculture from Cornell University and a Certificate in Ecological Horticulture from the University of CA, Santa Cruz.

Goals for IOIA? “I believe the most important goal for IOIA in 2013 will be to prepare inspectors to comply with the new requirements for residue sampling. It is also encouraging to see the extent to which IOIA has been recognized by the NOP as a training entity. I feel two of the key issues in the next five years will be to ensure that IOIA training continues to be recognized as the world standard for organic inspectors as well as helping inspectors to continue to make a decent living while becoming more cost effective, particularly if cost share for organic certification and inspection costs is not included in the next farm bill.”



The IOIA Board of Directors, Asilomar, California, March 25. Left to right: Stuart McMillan (Manitoba), Vice-Chair; Pam Sullivan (California), Treasurer; Ib Hagsten (Missouri), Chair; Garth Kahl (Oregon), Director; Margaret Weigelt (Minnesota), Secretary; Isidor Yu (Republic of Korea), Director; pointing to Bill Stoneman (Wisconsin), Executive Committee-At-Large, who attended the two-day post-AGM BOD meeting via Skype.

Bill Stoneman – Minnesota, U.S.A.

Bill is an independent organic inspector working primarily as a contractor with MOSA in the Midwest. His inspection credentials include IOIA training and five years of inspection experience on a part time basis conducting 25-30 inspections annually. Bill comes from a dairy farming background and has a B.S. in Forestry and Masters degree in Soils and Agronomy, both from the University of Minnesota. He is the Executive Director of the Biopesticide Industry Alliance (BPIA). He also serves as a director and bylaws and personnel committee chairman on the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) Board. He was recently appointed to the Wisconsin DATCP Organic Advisory Council. Other business interests include contract production services for biological pesticides and inoculants and federal and state/provincial regulatory services for biopesticide manufacturers in both the US and Canada.



Goals for IOIA? “to grow its membership, ensure the long term fiscal and program health of the organization and to reinforce the mission of IOIA *“To address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors, to provide quality inspector training, and to promote consistency and integrity in the organic certification process.”* Promoting consistency and integrity in the organic certification process is a high standard for our organization and one we should all carry in our individual roles as organic inspectors.”

Pamela Sullivan – California, U.S.A.

Pam has been working as an organic inspector since 2005. She is a full-time inspector, conducting 180 inspections (crop and processing) across the US and Canada in 2012 for CCOF. In the past she also worked for several years as a part-time file reviewer. She has a diverse work history, including international experience working in Africa as a safari camp manager; restaurant owner/chef; general store specialty food market owner/operator; manager of Earthbound Farm Stand; and has authored cookbooks and a guide to South Africa. She has worked with IOIA twice as an assistant trainer for basic processing courses and once as trainer for advanced training. In 2011, she developed and delivered an Advanced Training module on Organic Winery Inspections. This tutorial is scheduled to be offered in late 2013 as an advanced 300-level IOIA webinar. She holds a B.A. degree from Wheaton College.

Goals for IOIA? “I am committed to helping IOIA maintain and expand its role as the premier training and accreditation organization for organic inspectors. I would like to work with the Board to help achieve its fundraising goals to ensure that financial resources are reliably available to support IOIA projects. I believe that [see **New Board**, page 22]

IOIA Webinar Training Schedule

To register please go to: http://www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html

200-level IOIA/OMRI Webinar, USDA NOP Processing Input Materials, May 31, 9 a.m. - 12 noon. (PDT)

The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) will provide the technical expertise of Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador, OMRI Program Director, as lead presenter. She has been the Program Director at OMRI for two years.

200-level Webinar, Residue Sampling and Responding to Test Results, June 5 and 12, 10 a.m. – 12 noon (PDT)

See front page for course description and information on how to register.

200-level Webinar, IOIA/OMRI Webinar, USDA NOP Crop Input Materials, June 6, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon (PDT)

200-level Webinar, Natural Resource Assessment on Organic Farms, June 26, 10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (PDT)

See front page for course description and information on how to register.

300-level Webinar, Grower Group Inspection and Certification, July 16 and 26, 9 - 11 a.m. (PDT)

See page 4 for course description and information on how to register.

100-level Webinar - USDA NOP Organic Crop Standards (Spanish language), July 17 and 24, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (PDT).

Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainer Luis Brenes has over 18 years of experience as an accredited organic, inspector, has audited farms and food processing facilities throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia. He is an agronomist with post-graduate studies in tropical Crop Protection who served as an organic extension and on-farm research agent.

100 Level Webinar – USDA NOP Processing Standards, September 17 and 20, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PDT). Two, 3 hour sessions. This course will focus on topics including the National List of approved ingredients both natural and synthetic. It will also cover labeling, inspection, and certification requirements. Participants will gain skill in navigating the regulations. It is highly recommended for organic handlers, processors, consultants, educators, extension, and certification agency staff and can be used as a credential to seek work as an entry-level certification file reviewer. The IOIA Trainer for this webinar is experienced organic inspector and trainer Stanley Edwards, of Utah. Stanley has 15 years of experience in organic inspection, technical review, training and consulting. He has a Bachelor’s of Science in International Agronomy and minor in Human Nutrition from Colorado State University.

200 Level Webinar – IOIA/OMRI Livestock Input Materials, August 15, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.(PDT). Presenter: Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador.

200 Level Webinar – IOIA/OMRI Crop Input Materials, September 19, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.(PDT). Presenter: Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador. See www.ioia.net for course description and information on how to register.

200 Level Webinar – October 3. IOIA/OMRI Processing Input Materials, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.(PDT). Presenter: Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador. See above for course description and information on how to register.

300 Level Webinar – Inspecting Organic Wineries, November 25, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.(PST). One, 2 hour session. Presenter: Pam Sullivan

Other webinars currently being scheduled include:

100-level Canadian Organic Crop Standards	100-level USDA NOP Organic Crop Standards
100-level Canadian Organic Livestock Standards	100-level USDA NOP Organic Livestock Standards
100-level Canadian Organic Processing Standards	

IOIA Contributes “Sound and Sensible” White Paper

An industry-wide initiative, “Sound and Sensible Certification” grew out of simultaneous concerns rising from within the NOP, the NOSB, the Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA), and IOIA. One of the sparks was a CCOF letter sent to the NOP, entitled “Opportunities for the Organic Program – “Practices not Paperwork” in November 2012. The initiative found ready support from Mac Stone, certifier representative on the NOSB. IOIA’s ED, Margaret Scoles, attended the ACA meeting in Florida and participated in discussions there on the topic. (See last issue for more history and details of the Sound and Sensible initiative.)

IOIA’s BOD created a subcommittee in January (Ib Hagsten, Chair; Jennie Clifford, Special Past Chair; Eric Feutz, Treasurer; Stuart McMillan, BOD member; and Margaret Scoles, ED). Volunteer Matthew Miller, IOIA Inspector Member from Iowa, was invited to join the effort to produce a IOIA White Paper. Input was solicited from members and considered. The Subcommittee worked through February and by early March, IOIA’s paper, entitled “Solving the Organic Certification Paperwork and Process Logjam” was complete. Acknowledgment and appreciation is due Jennie Clifford for her work as Subcommittee Chair.

IOIA’s White Paper was mailed to Miles McEvoy, NOP Deputy Administrator, on March 15 with a cover letter addressing “the critically important matter of paperwork reduction in the organic sector.” From the letter, “In addition to describing the problem, the document includes recommendations for resolving key issues. We are also sending copies of this white paper to leaders of the NOSB and the Accredited Certifiers Association, plus our organization’s membership, all of whom have a vital interest in the mat-

ter.” And “IOIA respectfully requests the NOP take the lead in formulating a plan to reduce the paperwork burden. Our organization is available to engage with the NOP and other members of the industry to create such a plan.”

The letter to McEvoy and the Paper are posted under IOIA Announcements on the IOIA website.

The paper was shared with ACA and Mac Stone. It was also provided to certifiers who participate in the IOIA Certifier-Inspector Dialogue (quarterly conference calls).

IOIA’s White Paper is a super-condensed document with weighty content. It addresses three aspects of a certification system: Organic System Plan; Redundancy; and Inspection, Review and Decision Process. For each of these three aspects, it states the problem, the considerations, and proposes solutions.

Separately, the ACA Sound and Sensible Working Group expanded on the “Sound and Sensible” ACA Training Discussion from January to develop a ACA white paper, entitled “A Roadmap to “Sound and Sensible”. It was released it on March 25. In the introduction, the document states, “Community conversations at trainings and testimonials at NOSB meetings have highlighted the need to reduce the burden of organic certification on operations and certifiers, to support the ongoing growth of the organic industry. Recordkeeping requirements have in some cases driven operations out of certification that are otherwise compliant. Additionally, a reliance on paperwork to demonstrate compliance has increased the costs of accreditation audits.

Since 2009 NOP has promoted a “Strict but Sensible” philosophy of certification. The Program reiterated its commitment to Sound and Sensible certification at the 2013 ACA training. While certifiers, operations, and

IOIA strongly supports reduction of unnecessary paperwork in the organic certification system as paperwork often consumes more than half the time spent at the on-site inspection. IOIA seeks to shift the focus from processing paperwork to the certification process and the inspection itself provided, of course, that the integrity in the organic label is maintained.

the Program agree that certification should be Sound and Sensible, there are systemic barriers to our common goal. Some certifiers have developed creative solutions to minimize the barriers and stay in compliance with the Regulation. If certifiers and accreditation auditors can be trained on examples of Sound and Sensible and consistently accept this approach, organic certification will remain accessible to a diversity of operations and effective at ensuring compliance.” The ACA paper organized examples into three categories: The Organic System Plan, Education of / Consulting with Organic Operations, and Focus on Compliance.

IOIA dedicated significant time to this topic at the 2013 AGM. Invited speakers Miles McEvoy and Jake Lewin (CCOF) both spoke on the topic. Perhaps the best measure of IOIA’s support for this initiative was a standing ovation at the IOIA Annual Meeting at the conclusion of Miles McEvoy’s keynote address on the topic of “Sound and Sensible”. IOIA will remain engaged in this conversation,

Canada's organic market now worth \$3.7 billion

Canada's organic market grew to \$3.7 billion in 2012, with national sales of certified organic food and non-alcoholic beverages reaching \$3 billion. The value of the Canadian organic food market has tripled since 2006, far outpacing the growth rate of other agri-food sectors. A diverse consumer base is driving the sector, with 58% of all Canadians buying organic products every week.

Canadian Standards Revision

The Standards Council of Canada (SCC) has reached a long-sought agreement with the Canadian General Standards Board to fund a full review and renewal of Canada's organic standards and permitted substances list. By some estimates, the Canadian organic standards have over 300 active work-list items for consideration, and also require a full five-year review of all sections. The permitted substances list will also be fully reviewed. SCC is said to be committing up to \$600,000 over two years to the standards review.

IOIA/COG Canadian Standards-based Basic Crop Inspection Training – March 4-8 in Guelph, Ontario

Sixteen participants from across Canada met for training at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) offices in Guelph. Originally scheduled for November, the course date and location were reorganized when that training failed to reach adequate enrollment. Local inspector and IOIA Canadian Committee Chair Bill Barkley came in to assist

trainer Garry Lean for two days. Trout Lily and Burkhardt, both local certified organic greenhouse operations, hosted the field trips so the course participants could learn and practice report writing skills. This was the first training cosponsored by



Guelph Crop Inspection Training Group

IOIA and Canadian Organic Growers. Based on the success of this training, IOIA and COG will continue the collaboration to provide all three types of basic training (crop, livestock, processing) in Canada that was initiated in early 2012. IOIA and COG are discussing a IOIA/COG Canadian Standards-based Basic Livestock Inspection Training in the same region later this year.

COG Elects IOIA Members to BOD

Congratulations to Rochelle Eisen, IOIA Inspector Member, who was elected in March as President of the COG Board of Directors. Also note that Janine Gibson, IOIA member, is serving as COG Secretary.

Sound & Sensible... and we anticipate addressing the NOSB if the topic appears in the agenda.

From the Conclusion:

Clearly, there are opportunities to reduce the paperwork burden and to streamline paperwork handling processes. Achieving both would contribute to the viability of current systems and would enhance the validity of organic certification. An over-emphasis on paper documentation actually weakens organic integrity. Plus, making everything about the certification process less cumbersome would encourage wider operator participation.

IOIA proposes a super committee including representatives from all sectors of the organic industry; Operators, Certifiers, Reviewers, Inspectors, NOSB, and the NOP including the USDA NOP. Auditors to decide what can be changed and how best to set priorities and manage that change. The goal should not be to simply streamline and reduce paperwork. The larger goal should be to achieve greater consistency in standard protocols and expectations for all levels from operators to reviewers and inspectors to decision-makers at the certifiers and to the accreditor at the USDA NOP.

We can accomplish both once there is general agreement that constructive improvements to documentation requirements and administrative systems are both imperative and feasible. IOIA stands ready to participate in this process. We look forward to contributing the unique and valuable perspective of those who are often the only representatives of the organic certification system who are on-site at the certified operations – organic inspectors.

2013 AGM Recap - Asilomar

IOIA was pleased with excellent participation in the 2013 IOIA Annual Meeting on March 23, with 37 voting members attending, plus many proxies. A total of 51 people attended the Annual Meeting at the Asilomar State Park Conference Center. It was a full day, jam packed, including guest presentations by Jake Lewin (CCOF) on “Practices, not Paperwork”; Miles McEvoy (USDA NOP Deputy Administrator) on “Sound and Sensible Certification” –he seemed surprised by the standing ovation he received; William Tsai (Vancouver, BC) and Isidor Yu (Korea) with excellent short presentations on organic developments in Asia; and a very lively and interesting conclusion “Legal Issues for Inspectors – How can you limit your risk?” by Gene Summerlin and Marnie Jensen (Partners, Husch Blackwell LLP). Donations of organic wine from Frey Vineyard and organic berries from Driscoll’s Strawberry Associates were a great touch to the refreshments. The day ended with sunset on the Asilomar beach and a lively evening of entertainment, dancing, and snacks to the music of the Banana Slug String Band with added music from Sean Feder of CCOF and IOIA member Leonard Pollara.



Getting a group photo was sort of like trying to hit a moving target, because the participants changed every day.

Photo by Jonda Crosby



Garry Lean, Stanley Edwards and Sean Feder (CCOF).

Ib Hagsten chaired the meeting. He set a new record in short business meetings to maximize the time available to the impressive roster of other speakers. He summarized the 2012 Annual Report with a presentation in which he described the activities of the IOIA in the past year organized by the three different “legs” as they are stated in the IOIA mission statement: membership, professional inspector trainings, and preservation of organic integrity. Committee reports were included, with additional oral reports provided by Chris Kidwell (Membership Committee), and Margaret Weigelt (Scholarship Committee). Outgoing BOD members, Eric Feutz (4 years), Deb Bunn (2 years), Jennie Clifford (3 years) and Hélène Bouvier (almost 2 years) were acknowledged with framed handmade calligraphy statements of appreciation.

Importance to having been provided with the inspector’s perspective of the issue via IOIA’s white paper on Sound and Sensible Certification. The “Sound and Sensible” presentation by Miles McEvoy, NOP Deputy Administrator included hot topics for inspectors such as clarifications about consulting, handling of OSPs during inspections, sampling, unannounced inspections, recalibrated NOP auditor training and streamlined audit reviews, and the organic literacy initiative within the USDA. His presentation validated the role of organic inspectors and the IOIA. A YouTube video presentation by

Joe Whalen explained IOIA’s social media initiative and announced IOIA’s new Facebook page. The presentation was received with enthusiasm.

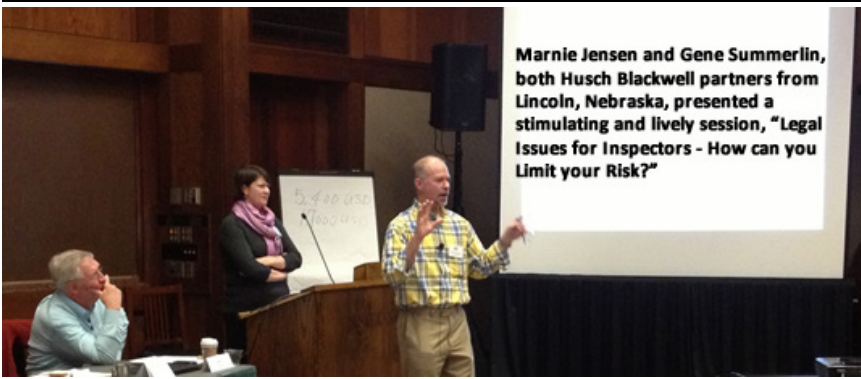


IOIA Annual Meeting, March 23, Asilomar Conference Center, Fred Ferr Forum Room, location for the advanced trainings and the Annual Meeting.



Stan Hildebrand, Missouri, tastes kelp straight from the ocean.

Organic Asia and IOIA China, report by William C. Tsai of the Maple Overseas Cultural Foundation, gave an overview of the state of the organic market in China, which launched their organic standard in 2012. In his report about the changes and challenges of the Korean organic program, Isidor said he sees his role as an IOIA board member in representing Asian inspectors. There has been discussion in India that they need an Asian Inspector Organization. Isidor wants to see more Asian inspectors in the IOIA meeting and hopes to see an IOIA



Marnie Jensen and Gene Summerlin, both Husch Blackwell partners from Lincoln, Nebraska, presented a stimulating and lively session, "Legal Issues for Inspectors - How can you Limit your Risk?"

meeting in Asia.

Gene Summerlin and Marnie Jensen, lawyers of Husch Blackwell, LLC, are representing Everett Lunquist in the lawsuit Rosberg v. Lunquist et al. After a series of recommendations of how to communicate with clients and in reports (such as: use Best Practices, "stay in your lane", use citations in the reports, be clear where the information was gained, follow policies, do not disclose clients you will be inspecting to others, be familiar with the

handbook, IOIA code of ethics, etc.), they spoke about risk protection for inspectors.

Tips from the Attorneys:

- Insurance must be business coverage, and include Errors and Omissions.
- Ensure that the policy covers claims of defamation, libel, slander, and general tort claims, such as tortious interference with business relationships (those are often excluded from general E&O, although they are more expensive).
- It should cover cost of defense and pay costs of any judgment, protect personal or property damage while in course of duties,
- "Understand that you can always be sued. The insurance does not protect from that, but it buys you the lawyer."
- A separate LLC or other business entity may protect you. The entity must also have insurance, and the costs of such coverage may be different.

Advanced Training Team - Ann Marie Hourigan (QAI Reviewer/Policy Team), Gwendolyn Wyard (OTA Regulatory Director, Organic Standards &

Food Safety), and Jessica Walden (QAI Technical Reviewer/Reviewer Supervisor/Policy Team). Ann Marie delivered a 3 hour workshop on "Mass Balance Challenges: The Do's & the Do Not's, The Road Map, and the Obstacles". Gwendolyn spoke on the new Food Safety Modernization Act. Jessica covered "Demystifying Quirky Materials on the National List - 205.605 and 205.606". Gwen and Jessica teamed up to cover Colors and Flavors. They presented to a room packed with 35 participants, plus other speakers and staff.



Advanced Training Team - Ann Marie, Gwen and Jessica



Shannon Murphy, Karen Troxell, and Debbie Leverenz, all IOIA inspector members from California, at the AGM party.



Banana Slug String Band with Leonard Pollara on trombone and Sean Feder on slide guitar. The music was great and the dancing was fun and wild!



Miles McEvoy, NOP Deputy Administrator, (left) and Isidor Yu, IOIA BOD member from Korea (right) grab a rare opportunity to speak face to face. McEvoy presented to the advanced training group on Responding to Results of Residue Sampling and as the AGM keynote on "Sound and Sensible" Certification. He also participated fully in the entire advanced training.

Aquaculture Field Trip

By Suzanne Sawyer

On the last day of the IOIA General Meeting, about a dozen inspector members participated in a field trip to the Monterey Bay Aquarium (MBA). We first toured the Aquarium's Tuna Research and Conservation Center (TRCC), which is a collaborative research effort between Stanford University's Hopkins Marine Station and the MBA. The mission of the TRCC is to increase knowledge of tunas and other migratory marine fishes through research, education, and conservation. Chuck Farwell, who is the Curator of Pelagic Fishes, gave us a tour of the tuna facility and an overview of current research programs. The TRCC facility primarily cultures Bluefin tuna, but also has Yellowfin tuna, some Mahi-mahi and Ocean Sunfish. Chuck first explained the seawater system and the mechanics of removing nitrogen and other gasses from the system. We arrived in time to watch the morning feeding of squid, mackerel and anchovies. Chuck said one challenge of keeping large predatory fish in an aquaculture system is getting them to eat food that is not alive and swimming. Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) can reach eight feet in length and weigh 900 pounds at maturity. They also have a huge economic value as the most prized fish for sashimi. It is not uncommon for mature Bluefin to sell for prices well over \$100,000 per fish at Tokyo seafood auctions.



Aquaculture Field Trip Group. Suzanne Sawyer (key organizer and author of the article) is fourth from left.

TRCC research projects include DNA analysis of Bluefin, which has determined that there are two distinct populations of Bluefin in the Atlantic. The TRCC also tags wild Bluefin to better understand migration patterns and spawning activity. More scientific knowledge of Bluefin will help to set realistic fishing limits for this rapidly declining species. When asked if Bluefin could ever be kept in an aquaculture system for harvest as a seafood product, Chuck said "probably not". They have an extremely high metabolism and require 20 pounds of food for every pound gained. They also require high levels of oxygen and are fairly slow growing. All of these factors make them an unlikely candidate for successful aquaculture ventures, despite the high economic value.

After the TRCC tour, we went to the MBA's Seafood Watch facility for an overview of their seafood conservation partnership program. Seafood Watch raises consumer awareness about seafood products through educational pocket guides, a website, mobile applications and outreach efforts. Their recommendations indicate which seafood items are "Best Choices," "Good Alternatives," and which products you should "Avoid". They encourage restaurants, distributors and seafood retailers to purchase seafood and farmed fish from sustainable sources. Seafood Watch recommendations are science-based, peer reviewed, and use ecological criteria to determine sustainability of seafood products. Seafood companies who meet the programs criteria, can become a Seafood Watch partner, which increases consumer confidence and marketability of their products. Seafood Watch staffers, Sam Wilding and Brian Albaum gave us an overview of the worlds fisheries and an introduction to "Best Management Practices" for successful aquaculture.

Suzanne Sawyer, IOIA member and independent contractor with the Idaho Department of Agriculture – Organic Program, is a former employee of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, facilitated the aquaculture field trip.

Residue Sampling Training, March 21, at ALBA in Salinas

Fifteen participants attended Residue Sampling training at ALBA in Salinas to learn from Nathaniel Lewis (WSDA), Wil Sumner (SCS), and Brandon Nauman (SCS) about the new NOP regulations, guidance, and instructions related to sampling. They learned both theory of sampling in the classroom and had the opportunity for hands-on practice in the surrounding certified organic fields of ALBA.



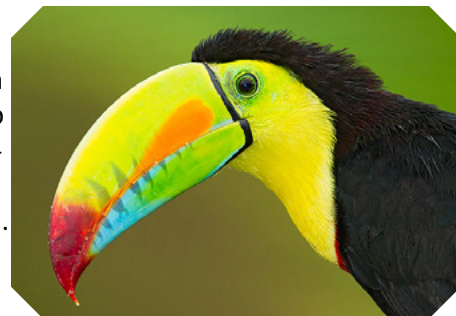
Wil Sumner of SCS shares essential resources on residue sampling for the organic inspector/reviewer, including the USDA Maximum Residue Level (MRL) Database. <http://www.mrlatabase.com/>

IOIA to Host 2014 Annual General Meeting in Costa Rica

At the 2012 AGM in British Columbia, IOIA members considered a number of locations for their next AGM. How to decide and what goes into that decision?

The vast majority of IOIA members appreciate an AGM in a sunny, mild climate. Also, IOIA strives to be in Canada for about one-third of our AGMs, in the USA for about 2/3, and in Latin America every 4th or 5th year. This roughly corresponds to the location of our membership. After the 2012 AGM, three locations were offered to members: Costa Rica; New Orleans, USA; and southern California, USA. California clearly won out, with about 30% more votes --not a surprise. The state in the US with the largest number of members is California (15% of all inspector members). Costa Rica and New Orleans came out exactly even. What Latin American country has the largest membership? -- Costa Rica. IOIA celebrated annual meetings in 1995 and 2004 in Costa Rica. The last annual meeting in Latin America was in Guatemala in 2008, 5 years ago. The Board and members are in agreement that it is time to return to Latin America. So the BOD decided to promote Costa Rica for 2014, far in advance, to encourage participation in a Latin American AGM. Passports, additional travel money, and international travel all take a little more planning. The BOD's tentative proposal was announced to the members a year ago.

At the 2013 AGM in California, the proposal of Costa Rica met strong support from the members, influenced partly by Luis Brenes, IOIA member from Costa Rica, who was in attendance. He offered to sleuth out potential venues. And he initiated conversation with Miles McEvoy, USDA NOP Deputy Administrator, to include a Spanish language 2-day NOP training for certifiers (still tentative and not yet confirmed).



Costa Rica, known for its warm hospitality for both Spanish and non-Spanish speakers, is also famous for its beaches, eco-tourism, biodiversity, and volcanoes. Members visiting Costa Rica for the first time are encouraged to plan a few days for sightseeing before or after the event and to bring their families. From San Jose, the capital city, many tour choices are operated as one-day-excursions. Visitors enjoy an array of activities, from mountain biking, golfing, and deep-sea fishing to snorkeling, rafting, and diving. The Yellowstones and Yosemites of Costa Rica-- the lure for 90% of all visitors to the national park system--are Manuel Antonio, with its beautiful beaches; Braulio Carrillo, with its rainforest beside a highway; Tortuguero, a watery, forested world teeming with wildlife; Irazú, where on a clear day you can see both the Caribbean and the Pacific; and Poás, where you can peer into a steaming volcanic crater.

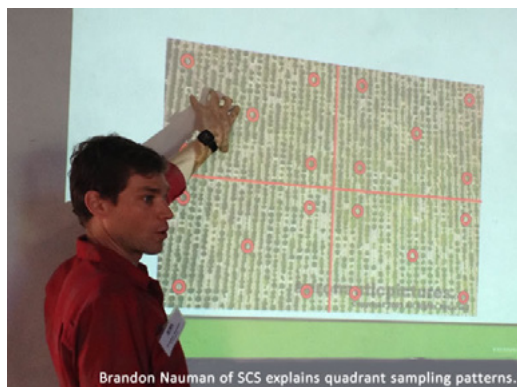
The IOIA BOD expects to select date, location, and venue by June. Date is likely to be the second half of March. The most promising site at this time is a conference center located on a certified organic, biodynamic farm. Although airfare to Costa Rica will typically run a little higher for US and Canadian members than travel within US and Canada, this can be easily offset by the lower cost of lodging and meals within Costa Rica. Maximum daily meal and lodging cost should be around \$100/day/person and will likely be lower, depending on the final selection of venue. Weather is typically pleasant in March, spring-like and fairly warm with sunny days, no rain, no mosquitos, and cool evenings.

Keep your eye on the IOIA website, plan to get a passport if you don't already have one, check with the appropriate authorities in your departure country for passport and any vaccination requirements, and mark your calendars!

Residue Sampling Training



Nate Lewis



Brandon Nauman of SCS explains quadrant sampling patterns.



Hands-on demonstration and practice in the field at ALBA with Brandon Nauman.

IOIA Inspectors Training: Basic Crop Course - Lutz, FL

By Jan Garrett

I took the IOIA Crop Inspectors Training Course in Lutz, Florida in April, 2013. Before taking the course I had several years of experience in managing certified organic plots at Auburn University research stations and also as a certified organic grower. So, I had some familiarity of the National Organic Program regulations and the inspection process. However, this training filled in some important details about the inspection and certification process that I would need in order to become an inspector and also to be more

successful as a certified organic grower. I intend to continue to be a certified grower, but I wanted to be able to supplement my farming income with some farm inspections as an independent contractor with a certification agency. The training also included a session on how to do business as an independent inspector, which I found to be very informative.

The course sessions were very organized and very interesting. The instructors really knew the material, had extensive experience in the field, and engaged the students to participate in the learning process. The intensive all-day sessions were broken up into group activities and simulated situations that made the days fly by and allowed us some opportunity to get to know one another.

The meals were prepared from mostly local organic ingredients and were nutritious as well as delicious. I ate far more than I intended to and the vegetarian options were very generous. During mealtimes I found myself sitting at a round table with people from many different states and countries. I had some very interesting discussions with people from Pennsylvania, California, Florida, Washington, Montana, Canada, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and other places that I don't remember. It was very informative getting their perspectives on organic certification in their different regions.

The training venue was also very comfortable and conducive to learning and networking. We stayed at a Catholic retreat in Lutz, Florida. There were lakes and woods and the hotel style rooms overlooked the lakes with rocking chairs and porches. During breaks and after classes in the evening we could take walks around the grounds and around the lakes. The rooms were spacious, comfortable, and clean, and they were equipped with Wi-Fi. We walked from our rooms to the conference center. It was very quiet; no cars were allowed in the grounds.

I would recommend this course to anyone who wants to become an inspector, learn more about organic certification, or be a certified grower. Even if I do not conduct one inspection, what I learned during this course will help me as certified grower. The field trip to the organic strawberry farm and our inspection report assignment instilled in me the importance of keeping good records, and of notifying my certifying agency before using inputs that I have not listed in my OSP. In summary, the course was a great experience. I learned a lot and met a lot of very nice, knowledgeable, and interesting people.

Spring Training Florida Style

By Johanna Good, Marin County Dept of Ag.

We had perfect Florida weather for the spring 2013 basic crop training.

The tranquil and peaceful surroundings of Bethany Center, near Tampa, was the ideal setting for the rigorous and intensive 4 ½ days of training. The gracious and helpful staff and the locally sourced, mostly organic food that was provided were much appreciated by all. There were two lakes and a very intriguing swamp on the property, complete with alligators and water moccasins, and plenty of places for walking, quiet contemplation and reflection after a long day in the class room.

In class, I had a farmer from Alabama to the left of me and a farmer from California to the right. We were from North, South, East and West; farmers, ranchers, inspectors, reviewers and various other professions. Each person stepped up many times to share their perspective, experiences and challenges.



Garry Lean and Margaret Scoles did a fabulous job of getting an astounding amount of information from documents, manuals and power points into our brains. Their methods included group exercises, quizzes, discussions and daily homework. We were also fortunate enough to have Luis Brenes fly in from Costa Rica for a couple of days to help out.

Our field trip to the beautiful and diverse Sweetwater Farm, an oasis right in the middle of Tampa, was a highlight. I was expecting an array of tropical delights, but instead found many of the same crops that our local growers produce here in Northern California, although our growing season is much different.

Although the training was rigorous, even downright exhausting at times, I have a much greater understanding of the NOP standards, my role as an inspector, materials/inputs, risk assessment, report writing and too many other things to mention. I feel much more confident which will hopefully make me a better inspector. And the friendships and connections that were made by many of us will prove to be invaluable in the future, both personally and professionally. I had fun, learned a lot, ate great food, got to see snakes and alligators, and made friends. I would say it was a week well spent. Thank you IOIA!

Processing Basic Training

by Stanley Edwards

The Bethany Center could be our go-to location for many training opportunities: It is located less than 45 minutes from a major airport, there are farms and processing plants all around, the facility is clean, comfortable, high speed internet everywhere, in a beautiful natural setting. And last but not least, the food is so good, that I had a difficult time leaving! Maybe it could be the organic inspector's retirement home???

The fifteen participants were a typical mix of farm inspectors wanting to diversify, industry people and individuals with a thirst for knowledge, and certifier staff. They all buckled down through the 4.5 days of rigorous lecture, exercises and a field trip to Santa Sweets in Plant City, Florida. A special thanks goes to Margaret, and the IOIA staff who organized and helped make this course go so smoothly!



Experiencias Curso IOIA

de Sue Wei Salas, Eco-LOGICA Costa Rica, Cosponsor

El pasado 22 de Abril dimos inicio, una vez más, al curso Internacional de Inspectores Orgánicos, en Coronado de la ciudad de San José, Costa Rica, el cual logró reunir a 14 técnicos y personas del sector, de diversos países como Colombia, México, Panamá y Costa Rica. Fue una semana intensa y de gran cantidad de información, y el curso se enriqueció en gran manera con la experiencia de cada uno de los participantes. Gracias a cada uno de ellos por hacer posible este curso de la mejor manera.

Una vez más desde Eco-LOGICA estamos muy complacidos por haber culminado esta semana con mucho éxito, en la cual estamos seguros que los participantes se llevaron mayor conocimiento para fomentar la agricultura orgánica en cada uno de sus países.



Blanca Myriam Salguero Londoño, Colombia, Universidad de Ibagué “El curso de Básico de Inspectores Orgánicos, ha sido una experiencia que nos enriquece como personas y profesionales a quienes tuvimos la oportunidad de asistir, un esfuerzo que vale la pena por todas las experiencias y por la gente que conocemos, me pareció una oportunidad de aprender y sobre todo apoyar procesos de implementación en nuestros países en el tema de producción orgánica”.

Olman Salas Ávila, Costa Rica, Dole

“El Curso brindado por IOIA a pesar de ser un curso desarrollado en una semana con un extenso temario, por su forma de realizarse logra abarcar de forma explícita todos los temas agendados, ensañando de forma teórico – práctico a través de la gira que se realiza de una forma muy general el rol de un Inspector Orgánico”.

Design, Execution, and Interpretation of Risk-Based Water Quality Tests

To get a meaningful answer, you have to ask the right questions

by Tony Fleming

Designing and implementing an effective water test is often highly site- or facility-specific and requires an understanding of: the water source; what contaminant(s) pose a risk, what their source(s) are, and how they might migrate into a water supply; the configuration of the water system and any water treatments incorporated therein; and sampling protocols appropriate to the target analyte(s). Beyond that, background knowledge of regional water-quality trends, local land-use history, characteristics of the site, as well as current and emerging water-quality research and regulations are extremely helpful both for designing a test and interpreting the results.

In short, a vast body of knowledge accompanies the field of environmental water sampling, and this article makes no pretense of covering even a fraction of that. Instead, it highlights several overarching aspects of the process that an inspector or certifier need to know and can use as decision tree to identify higher-risk situations, and thus focus resources most efficiently. Inspectors are strongly encouraged to review the “water” pages in the technical resources section of the IOIA website for a more comprehensive discussion of these and many other water-related topics.

Which certified operations are good candidates for certifier-initiated water testing?

Not that many, at least if a risk-based approach is the primary factor. Other elements of the organic production and handling system with higher risk profiles (soil, crops, inputs, processed products) will likely constitute the

vast majority of samples collected by inspectors under the NOP’s ramped-up periodic residue testing protocols. Several factors support this observation.

First, most operations that use potable water as an input of any kind—and virtually all processors—already are regularly testing their water supplies for at least a few basic parameters, or staying abreast of the latest water-quality results provided by their public water utilities. Most of these operations have established a documented water-quality history that is available to certifiers and inspectors, and thus are unlikely candidates either for water-quality issues or additional periodic testing, at least if the goal is allocate resources to most effectively identify potential organic-integrity issues.

Second, the large numbers of organic farms that raise only grains typically use no water in their operations. Likewise, at least a few processors are “dry” operations that involve no water in handling and sanitation.

Third, it has historically been the case that when a certifier deems water testing to be in order, the operator arranges sample collection and lab analysis. There is no compelling reason for this arrangement to change under the new program—processors, in particular, commonly conduct a variety of quality tests that go well beyond water, using either qualified contract labs or their own in-house analytical capabilities—though a certifier could, in theory, require the operation to contract with a different laboratory that meets NOP’s accreditation requirements.

Excluding these low-or no-risk operations leaves a much smaller pool that might be perceived as being “at risk” of water quality issues and, therefore, appropriate candidates for periodic residue sampling. These higher-risk operations utilize a range

of water sources for purposes as varied as livestock water, irrigation of fruits and vegetables, post-harvest handling, on-farm processing, and even some highly seasonal, specialized processing operations (cherry pitting, for example). Seasoned inspectors will no doubt be aware of many other examples. Regardless of the type of operation, however, answering a few key questions before heading to the field will result in a logical, easier, and legally defensible water sampling process more attuned to the stated goals of monitoring NOP compliance, deterring fraud, and discouraging mislabeling of agricultural products. Just as importantly, the existence of characteristics that make an operation’s water supply more “at risk” need to be communicated to certifiers via both the organic system plan and observant inspectors.

Who is responsible for the water supply: public or private?

The first question is whether the operation uses a private or public water supply. This may seem elementary, but the type of water supply determines everything else in the process. Under the EPA’s source water protection program, maintaining and reporting on the quality of a public water supply is the responsibility of the water utility, whereas a private water supply is the responsibility of the individual or company that owns it. In the former case, the size of the water utility and the characteristics of the water source determine which contaminants regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) are tested for, and on what schedule. A large utility may test for many contaminants on a daily or weekly basis, while the scope and frequency of testing may be much less for smaller utilities with no history of SDWA violations.

In all cases, the utility is required to issue an annual water-quality summary, known as a “consumer confidence report”, which includes

the minimum, average, and maximum observed levels of each analyte for the past 12 months. Moreover, SDWA violations trigger a sequence of remedial requirements (typically enforced via state environmental agencies) that escalate according to the nature and frequency of the violations. Thus, it seems superfluous to collect water samples from certified operations served by a public water supply for random or risk-based periodic residue testing; in contrast, the lack of routine regulatory oversight makes some private water supplies more at-risk.

Surface water or ground water?

The second question is, What is the water source? Surface water (such as a pond, stream, lake, or spring*) or ground water (i.e. a well)? All other things being equal, surface water is inherently more vulnerable to contamination by virtue of its direct exposure to runoff, atmospheric deposition, and other inputs. While ground water exhibits a considerable range in its sensitivity to contamination, it is typically much less vulnerable than surface water. Furthermore, there are important differences in the natural chemistry of surface water vs. ground water. Ground water in many regions tends to be hard and to contain significant concentrations of common ions, such as calcium, magnesium, iron, and sulfur. In a processing plant, this often necessitates various forms of treatment that may present their own risks to organic integrity: RO membrane cleaners are one example. In contrast, surface water is soft and (except in some arid regions) contains few minerals, but often has measurable levels of bacteria,

turbidity (from algae and suspended sediment), and nutrients. All things considered, surface water-derived supplies used in direct or indirect contact with organic products represent the more at-risk sources.

On the other hand, ground-water in some regions contains naturally-occurring elements (e.g., arsenic, radium) that complicate the assessment of risk. While such elements sometimes exceed SDWA limits and thus present a risk to organic integrity, a more common scenario is for one or more of them to be present at low levels that may vary within a narrow range over time. Thus, it is crucial to recognize these regional differences, as well as the geochemical distinctions between ground water and surface water: measurable arsenic levels in well water, for instance, may not signify human-derived contamination and are likely to remain at a similar concentration over time. But measurable arsenic levels in most surface waters are not natural and are cause for additional monitoring.

What are the regional water quality issues and trends?

Understanding what types of “prohibited substances” may pose a risk in the particular cultural and geo-hydrologic setting of the operation is essential to an effective sampling program. It makes little sense to test a water supply for nitrate and atrazine if the operation is located in a non-agricultural area served by public sewers. On the other hand, testing that same water supply for benzene might be highly appropriate if the operation is proximal to the corner gas station or a lagoon used to hold

hydraulic fracturing fluids. The scope of sampling must be realistic, and the certifier and inspector need to be fully aware of water quality issues in the region to make an informed decision. Reviewing consumer confidence reports issued by public water supplies in the region offers a free and effective way to become informed about regional water quality issues that could reasonably be expected to affect other, private water supplies. Likewise, the operator may be aware of these kinds of issues. Ask!

Do site-specific characteristics put the operation at greater risk?

This gets back to understanding the specific water source. If a well, when was it constructed? How deep is it? Does the operator have a construction report? Are there any abandoned wells on the property (look for the old windmill or its foundation)? Newer drilled wells tend to have greater integrity because the annular space between the borehole and the well casing is continuously grouted with bentonite, which swells up and seals the annulus, thereby preventing surface runoff from migrating down the side of the casing to the aquifer. Most wells more than 25-30 years old are not grouted and are inherently more risky. Really old wells (or the large-diameter wells commonly used in areas of low ground-water yields) are often dug or bored and offer little protection against surface runoff.

The location of a well also is critical. Where is the wellhead in relation to the septic system? The barnyard or feedlot? It might surprise you how many wells are located in barnyards or flower beds amended with copious amounts of fertilizer or fresh manure! Last but not least, what does the landscape look like? Is it pocked by sinkholes or depressions that promote rapid, direct recharge from surface runoff?

If a spring, or [see **Water**, page 23]

***Note:** Springs should be regarded as a hybrid between surface and ground water. They appear where the water table intersects the land surface, so technically they are supplied by ground water. But from a risk-based perspective, they are best treated as a form of surface water because the water table that supplies them typically is quite shallow and relatively vulnerable to pollution, while the spring itself may be accessible to wildlife, surface runoff, and other factors that can impair quality.

BOD of Directors Meetings – Meeting Highlights

Note: full BOD meeting minutes are posted in the Inspectors Section of the IOIA website.

IOIA BOD Meeting December 19, 2012 – Conference Call

Present: Ib Hagsten, Chair; Stuart McMillan; Deb Bunn; Silke Fuchshofen, Secretary; Eric Feutz, and Margaret Scoles, ED.

Absent: Hélène Bouvier and Jennie Clifford.

Agenda Item #5: Agreed Upon Procedures and Treasurer Guidelines (AUP details reported in V22N1) - Silke moves to have Gardners Financial Services do the HRA assessment. Five in favor. Stuart abstained. Silke moves to authorize Eric to approve the AUP letter of engagement and the Executive Director to sign it. Deb seconds, all in favor. Silke made a motion to accept Treasurer Guidelines to be added to BOD Policy Manual. All in favor.

Agenda Item #6: Preliminary Budget (Set Cash Reserve amount), Health Insurance Benefits, Executive Director Compensation Deb moves to increase the cash reserve amount from \$42,500 to \$60,000, Silke seconds. All in favor. The BOD discussed possible next steps regarding health insurance, given the fact that we are discontinuing the HRA benefit. General agreement that we desire to provide some benefit, although it is not yet possible to provide health insurance. We will continue to pay a monthly amount designated as a separate line item, but it will appear as taxable compensation. We hope that employees will use it to obtain health insurance. Motion to approve the Draft Preliminary 2013 Budget in principle, final draft Jan 30 meeting. Deb/Stuart, motion carried. All in favor.

Agenda Item #9: “Practices not Paperwork” - NOSB, ACA, NOP initiative. Ib speaks to how important it is to inspectors what happens on this issue. Should we have a Subcommittee or should we just stand by and live with what NOSB-NOP-ACA does? He is willing to be the point person. Stuart and Eric volunteer. Jennie has expressed interest in the topic. Silke moves to make a donation of \$1,000 to Evrett Lunquist’s legal fund, Deb seconds, All in favor. (We will request that if he does not need the money to cover legal costs because the costs are covered by other donations, it will be reimbursed to the IOIA.)

IOIA BOD Meeting January 30, 2013 – Conference Call

Present: Ib Hagsten, Stuart McMillan, Deb Bunn, Silke Fuchshofen, Eric Feutz, Isidor Yu, Jennie Clifford, Margaret Scoles(ED) **Absent:** Hélène Bouvier. Chair: Ib; Secretary: Silke Fuchshofen

Agenda Item #5: Treasurer and Financial Reports (Review of 2012 End-of-Year Financial Reports). Balance Sheet was approved by BOD for printing and distribution with the mailing.

Comments on Agreed Upon Procedures: Eric - The Agreed Upon Procedures was a positive experience. The auditor spent a full day on Saturday, Jan 26, and the report was in on Tuesday. There were no significant issues in completing the Agreed Upon Procedures. The process was helpful in identifying some other concerns and issues above and beyond the Agreed Upon Procedures.

Agenda Item #7: Sound and Sensible Certification. A subcommittee was formed with Stuart, Ib, Eric, Jennie, and Margaret. Matt Miller, IOIA member, has expressed interest and will be invited to join the subcommittee. The first meeting was January 17. There will be a subcommittee meeting on Feb 11. The goal is to create a White Paper that will be submitted to the NOSB. Mac Stone is NOSB chair; he is one of the drivers of this initiative. It is a joint effort by NOSB, ACA and NOP to find procedures that help reduce paperwork in certification.

Agenda Item #8: Hélène’s Resignation. Deb moves to accept Hélène’s resignation, Stuart seconds. Confirmed by all.

IOIA BOD Meeting February 28, 2013 – Conference Call

Present: Deb Bunn, Ib Hagsten, Stuart McMillan, Silke Fuchshofen, Isidor Yu, Jennie Clifford, Eric Feutz, Margaret Scoles, ED Chair: Ib Hagsten; Secretary: Silke Fuchshofen

Agenda Item #6: 2012 Budget Approval – Staff compensation and benefit discussion – HRA follow-up. Jennie moves to approve the budget, Deb seconds, all in favor, Eric abstains. Silke moves to fully correct the HRA situation as described by Dave Gardner. Deb seconds, all approve. Stuart abstains.

Agenda Item #7: Draft Paper from Sound and Sensible Certification work group. Motion by Jennie to accept the draft IOIA white paper with or without emendations. Deb seconds, all in favor.

IOIA BOD Meeting March 13, 2013 – Conference Call (Special meeting to prepare for AGM)

Present: Ib Hagsten, Stuart McMillan, Deb Bunn, Isidor Yu, Jennie Clifford, Eric Feutz, and Margaret Scoles, ED. Chair: Ib; Secretary: Eric **Absent:** Silke Fuchshofen

Agenda Item #5: Sound and Sensible - next steps. Jennie indicated one objective was to send the white paper to the NOP

with a cover letter with some type of request, such as a written response, meeting or including IOIA in a committee. ED suggested to copy the white paper to the ACA Sound and Sensible working group and Mac Stone (NOSB chair). Agreed to send to the ACA, NOSB, and NOP as quickly as possible.

Agenda Item #6: Health Reimbursement Arrangement-second opinion. ED had obtained a second opinion. The BOD agreed that the ED should pursue the second opinion discussion with our accountant before taking the final step to correct the situation.

IOIA BOD Meeting Mar 25, 2013 - Asilomar, CA (9:00-12:30 & 1:45-6:00 pm)

Present: Garth Kahl, Isidor Yu, Ib Hagsten, Stuart McMillan, Pam Sullivan, Bill Stoneman (via Skype), Margaret Weigelt, ED Margaret Scoles. Chair: Ib Hagsten Secretary: Margaret Weigelt

Introductions & time to reflect on hopes & aspirations of each member

Each member provided background information regarding family and work obligations, experiences, how long they have been inspecting and the pronunciation of their name. Meeting times were scheduled for 2013.

Board Orientation & Board Organization by ED.

Election of BOD Officers: Each member described their preferences for serving IOIA and indicated their strengths. Consensus was called for through motion by Pam and seconded by Isidor to elect members to the following positions: Ib: Continue as Chair. Stuart: Vice Chair. He will oversee nominations. Pam: Treasurer. Margaret: Secretary. Bill: Executive Member-at-Large. Isidor: Director. He will develop Asian Regional Offices. Garth: Director.

BOD terms: Options described to BOD by Margaret S to correct the problem of un-even staggered terms which resulted from eliminating BOD alternates in 2010: Decide by BOD vote; One board member could resign after 1st year or mid-term. This corrects issue next year; One board member serves a 3-year term. This doesn't correct issue for two years. If BOD chooses this option, authority to do so is not granted in our bylaws; Bylaws change. This could be done by membership mail-in or AGM vote. Consensus appeared to be to defer the handling of this to the Bylaws chair. We have the year to decide.

Liaisons to committees were decided.

Discussion about fundraising: We discussed reasons why folks should support IOIA: To make sure organic is really organic by supporting high quality education for inspectors which will benefit the organic sector and the donor. It was suggested that donors could be recognized by putting their company logos/artwork on our website and in our newsletter. We discussed ways. No decision was made.

Location of next AGM: Consensus was reached to have AGM in Costa Rica. We discussed the option of having concurrent Spanish-language advanced livestock training and English-language Community Grower advanced training. Miles McEvoy could conduct NOP training for certifiers.

Food Safety Modernization Act: IOIA member Julia Govis from Chicago Farm to School program suggested that IOIA consider training organic inspectors to do organic-friendly GAP "verification" to help small producers satisfy food safety concerns of buyers so the producers can more easily sell to Farm to School and similar markets. Small producers are not required to be GAP or HACCP certified. This would be a "Certificated" program. Inspectors are already doing food safety and other verifications while doing organic inspections. Are we interested? Julia connected with Debra Garrison of PrimusLabs. Debra emailed Margaret S a PPT proposal. We viewed the PPT. The slide presentation laid out a scheme for the training of trainers.

Isidor mentioned that ACAs outside the US (Korea) have the responsibility for training their inspectors and reviewers. Maybe IOIA could partner and cooperate with IOAS for certifier staff trainings?

Stuart mentioned that certifiers in Europe and Canada have less need to show that inspectors have IOIA training because they no longer need USDA certifier accreditation. Perhaps we might convey to folks at CFIA that the reason for IOIA training is to promote certification consistency?

IOIA BOD Meeting, Mar 26, 2013 (9:00-11:30 am) - Asilomar, CA

Present: Isidor Yu, Ib Hagsten, Stuart McMillan, Pam Sullivan, Bill Stoneman (via Skype), Margaret Weigelt, ED Margaret Scoles **Absent:** Garth Kahl Chair: Ib Hagsten Secretary: Margaret Weigelt

Margaret S began by explaining the thought process used to organize information on the updated IOIA website. She gave credit to previous BOD member Silke Fuchshofen for masterminding its layout based on the 2011 BOD retreat decisions. The site is divided into four key sections: Membership Organization, Training Institute, Inspector [see **Minutes**, page 22]

GMO NEWS

Biohackers Kickstart Some Unregulated Experiments

By Jim Thomas

Research Director, ETC Group

You may have heard of Kickstarter -- the darling crowdfunding site where artists, designers, moviemakers, and others pitch pet projects to an online funder audience. Kickstarter may have just taken on a new and unwelcome role -- as the one-stop shop for risky biotech companies looking to execute an end run around regulation. Generally Kickstarter projects promote such innocuous products as comic books, and sensibly, Kickstarter even has its own ethical limits on what it will host: Guns, drugs, and porn are forbidden for obvious reasons. But as reported in early May, three biohackers from California have hijacked the Kickstarter machinery for something far more controversial than sunglasses. They have made Kickstarter the conduit for a nationwide release of untested, unregulated and unmonitored bioengineered organisms by mounting a Kickstarter funding project to use Synthetic Biology to engineer glow-in-the-dark plants.

Synthetic biology is a new and exploding field of extreme genetic engineering techniques. It makes the sort of genetic tinkering used for GMO soybeans look quaint. Computer programs are harnessed to design and print out novel artificial sequences of DNA on a machine called a DNA synthesizer. This synthetic DNA is then engineered into a host organism to do unusual things.

Controversy dogs the field because of the safety risks attendant on such novel genetic interventions, as well as bioweapons risks and social impacts. Billions of dollars of corporate money is flowing into the technology from the likes of Monsanto, Du Pont, BP, Shell, Chevron, Exxon, Dow. Even the

Kickstarter biohackers have their own private biotech startup -- this is not Kickstarter's usual field of struggling artists. Last year 111 organizations called for a moratorium on synthetic biology, as did several countries at meetings of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

As with GMO crops, there is a growing fight over the future of synthetic biology. Making a glow in the dark plant amounts to a quirky gimmick -- hardly the cutting edge of syn bio. But what's really driving Kickstarter success for the glowing plant geeks is a seedy offer: For \$40 the syn bio hackers promise to mail all U.S. donors up to 100 bioengineered seeds to release at will into backyards or beyond. To date, almost 5,000 backers have stumped up the cash for seeds, which means **up to 500,000** engineered synthetic biology seeds may be posted randomly to all corners of the U.S.A. This amounts to a nationwide unmonitored release of these novel glowing organisms. And here's the kicker in the Kickstarter: The USDA has said that it does not need to assess, regulate, or monitor those glowtlesque organisms. This is because they have elected to use a genetic engineering technique falling outside of government regulation. In effect, the biohackers could make all manner of weird and worrying organisms for widespread release and the government is apparently powerless to stop them.

For those of us who have been watching synthetic biology for some time this is doubly worrying. Never mind that Arabidopsis is weedy and can outcross. This isn't just normal genetic engineering. While claim and counterclaim trade back and forth in debates over syn bio, one point of tentative agreement has so far been a healthy respect for unknowable ecological and safety consequences of these techniques.

Unlike GMOs, which use naturally-sourced DNA sequences, synthetic biology trucks in DNA sequences invented on a computer. It's unclear

how to assess the real world-impact of those sequences on both the organism and its ecological context. To date there has yet to be any deliberate environmental release of an avowedly "synthetic biology" organism. All projects remain contained in labs or production vats. One after another bioethics commission or weighty expert group has advised "utmost precaution," "prudent vigilance," and other sensible and sobering cautions. In 2009, The U.S. President's Bioethics Commission pointed out that: "At this early stage of development, the potential for harm through the inadvertent environmental release of organisms or other bioactive materials produced by synthetic biology requires safeguards and monitoring." The sentiment echoed in a decision from the UN Convention on Biological Diversity which urged countries to apply the precautionary approach «to the field release of synthetic life, cell, or genome into the environment.» Yet here it is -- probably the first ever deliberate environmental release of a synthetic organism (or rather 400,000 of them) and not a whisper of precaution in sight. Of course, the biohackers claim that everything they are doing will be safe and the plants won't turn into weeds -- but then they would say that.

That's why oversight and regulation is so important. Bizarrely the only entity to assess this project with the power to veto it is the team of young Brooklynites at Kickstarter HQ. And it seems they are happy to kickstart a new era of synthetic biology pollution -- so long as the glowing plants don't come with sunglasses. The long-term implication is that Kickstarter's motto of "bringing creativity to life" just took on a bizarre new twist in meaning. Once the glowing plant biohackers have blazed a trail, we can expect many more synthetic biology projects to start heading off down the Kickstarter route -- especially if the glowing plant guys really

do succeed in a widespread environmental release that evades regulatory scrutiny.

Part of the Syn Bio dream is to engineer life forms for general release as if they were living apps -- bacteria that make biofuel, yeast that make fragrances, algae that pump out industrial oils and lubricants. With a nod from Kickstarter and a wink from the U.S. government, we could see a snowballing app store of syn bio startups lining up on Kickstarter to offer mail-order unregulated engineered organisms. That would be making a mockery of "precaution" and "vigilance" and could potentially make a mess of nature too.

This article was originally published by The Huffington Post on May 10, 2013.

Secretary Vilsack Addresses Monsanto Rider

At a recent U.S. Senate Agriculture Appropriations subcommittee hearing, Secretary Vilsack testified that the biotech rider (that has become known as the "Monsanto Protection Act") in the March Continuing Resolution is of questionable legality, and has made it more difficult for the USDA to develop rules and programs to allow for the coexistence of organic, conventional and biotech crops. He explained that the Obama Administration "didn't ask for the rider," and is not sure it is legal.

Monsanto Protection Act put GM companies above the federal courts

By John Vidal

Monsanto and the US farm biotech industry wield legendary power. A revolving door allows corporate chiefs to switch to top posts in the Food and Drug Administration and other agencies; US embassies around the world push GM technology onto dissenting countries; government subsidies back corporate research; federal regulators do largely as the industry wants; the companies pay millions of dollars a year to lobby politicians; conservative thinktanks combat any political opposition; the courts enforce corporate

patents on seeds; and the consumer is denied labels or information.

But even people used to the closeness of the US administration and food giants like Monsanto have been shocked by the latest demonstration of the GM industry's political muscle. Little-noticed in Europe or outside the US, President Barack Obama last week signed off what has become widely known as "the Monsanto Protection Act", technically the Farmer Assurance Provision rider in HR 933: Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act 2013.

The key phrases are a mouthful of legal mumbo jumbo but are widely thought to have been added to the bill by the Missouri republican senator Roy Blunt who is Monsanto's chief recipient of political funds. For the record, they read:

"In the event that a determination of nonregulated status made pursuant to section 411 of Plant Protection Act is or has been invalidated or vacated, the secretary of agriculture shall, notwithstanding any other provision of law upon request by a farmer, grower, farm operator, or producer, immediately grant temporary permit(s) or temporary deregulation in part, subject to necessary and appropriate conditions consistent with section 411(a) or 412c of the Plant Protection Act, which interim conditions shall authorise the movement, introduction, continued cultivation, commercialisation and other specifically enumerated activities and requirements, including measures designed to mitigate or minimise potential adverse environmental effects, if any, relevant to the secretary's evaluation of the petition for nonregulated status, while ensuring that growers or other users are able to move, plant, cultivate, introduce into commerce and carry out other authorised activities in a time manner ..."

According to an array of food and consumer groups, organic farmers, civil liberty and trade unions and others, this hijacks the constitution, sets a legal precedent and puts Monsanto and other biotech companies above the federal courts. It means, they say, that not even the US government can now stop the sale, planting, harvest or distribution of any GM seed, even if it is linked to illness or environmental problems.

The backlash has been furious. The liberal press and blogosphere are outraged. One petition notes, "It is unnecessary and an unprecedented attack on US judicial review."

It has also offended the Conservative right and libertarians. FreedomWorks, the conservative thinktank that helped launch the Tea Party, says corporations should "play by the rules of the free market like everyone else, instead of hiring insider lobbyists to rewrite the rules for them in Washington...This is a situation in which a company is given the ability to ignore court orders, in what boils down to a deregulation scheme for a particular set of industries".

Even Monsanto appears a touch embarrassed. The company whose seeds make up 93% of US soybeans, 88% of cotton and 86% of maize and which on Wednesday announced a 22% increase in earnings, has sought to align itself with others in the industry, even though it is far and away the main beneficiary.

The only good news is that because the "Monsanto Protection Act" was part of the much wider spending bill, it will formally expire in September. The bad news is that the precedent has been set and it is unlikely that Monsanto will ever agree to give up its new legal protection.

This article was originally published by The Guardian on April 4, 2013.

ED, from page 5

GAP verification could provide alternative work for organic inspectors, and these verification audits could make food safety verification more accessible and affordable for growers. This topic will be on the next agenda for the IOIA Certifier-Inspector Dialogue Conference Call in June. Membership input will be solicited. Stay tuned for more on this concept soon!

Radio Interview: IOIA’s Office Administrator Joe Whalen connected me to Brian Kahn, talk show host of the program Home Ground on Yellowstone Public Radio. Brian invited me to do a 30-minute interview. The interview happened Dec 3 and aired April 30 – on both Yellowstone PR and Montana PR. If you are interested to hear it, here’s a link to the home page, where the past shows are archived http://www.ypradio.org/programs/local/home_ground.html. I was a little surprised at how far back he went back with his questions, starting with “what was it like to grow up in Biddle?”!

I ended up responding to questions about the pre-NOP era, implementation of the NOP, the ‘take-over’ of organic by large companies. Here was one nice comment that trickled in from a certified organic farmer I’d inspected in the past. “BRAVO! I was especially glad that you were able to drive home the local vs. certified organic issue. Most think that local is naturally organic,....A marketing scheme that is misleading but very effective. If they can confuse people with the term sustainability and interchange it with organic, they let the people believe what they “think” they heard. You really were able to size up this issue in a straightforward and simple manner.”



Minutes, from page 18

Accreditation, IOIA and the Organic Sector.

Inspector Accreditation

Margaret S introduced the idea that the word “Accreditation” may not be the correct term to use. She said the previous BOD had begun the process of re-imagining our accreditation program and noted that Debra Bunn had researched extensively creating a body of work regarding such a program. Margaret then noted 3 options for developing an accreditation system: 1) IOIA does it all; 2) We seek outside cert body accreditation like ISO; 3) We include governmental involvement so state employees/other governments can participate. Framework used for IOIA accreditation proposal submitted to USDA NOP: the assumption for the proposal was that government would have to be involved for licensing. The scheme would be a Public-Private partnership. Margaret S noted that our inspector accreditation program was started in 1994 and there are fewer people interested in it now than when started. She suggested we are using the wrong term, accreditation. Since we are not ready to license, perhaps we should have a registration process. Margaret S presented registration and training scheme. BOD gave feedback.

Continuing Ed -- What if people have to be mentored or are required to do a witness audit by certifier or experienced inspectors to continue registration? This might present an opportunity for “peer mentoring” or “team inspecting”. Discussion Grandfathering

Social Media: Stuart explained how he has started using Google aggregator to collect internet information about organic inspectors and had Joe Whalen put a link to an article about member Chris Barnier on IOIA’s Facebook.

Margaret explained about IOIA financial affairs, including Audit Policy.

New Board, from page 6

expansion of the membership base is a priority in achieving that goal. Over the next several years, I hope to be involved as IOIA expands its advocacy and collaborative roles at the statutory and regulatory levels.”

Margaret Weigelt – Minnesota, U.S.A.

Margaret is a part-time independent contract organic inspector and part-time public librarian. In 2012 she did 10 crop, 12 dairy, one beef and eight processor/handler inspections for 4 certifiers. She also did a small number certification reviews for MCI. For the past 7-8 years, Margaret has chaired the IOIA Scholarship Committee. She describes her work with the committee reviewing and awarding the Rutherford and Organic Community Initiative Scholarships as “an exceptional privilege”. Her academic background includes an Occupational Degree for Apprenticeship Farming.

Goals for IOIA? “IOIA’s 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. I suggest in the next year we use our interviewing skills to do a membership survey and collect data on how well-aligned we are with our mission, especially in addressing the issues and concerns relevant to membership. We could utilize a three-pronged survey approach, collecting data from as many members as possible by Internet, phone and mail. I would like see us expand our membership and design new ways to offer free, discounted membership benefits for: continuing education and webinars (live and archived), business insurance and other inspection business services.”

Water, from page 17

creek supplies water, where is the watershed and what are its characteristics? In many jurisdictions, you can easily find out by going to online maps and aerial photos provided by the state, county, or town. Is the watershed mostly or entirely within the certified property, where the operator can exercise control over land use? Or does it extend well beyond the property line? Is the watershed mostly forested, agricultural, (sub)urban, or some combination of land uses? Many market gardens are located on the rapidly urbanizing fringes of cities, for example, where urban runoff (often carrying bacteria, nutrients and pesticides from landscaping, and petroleum byproducts from street runoff) is a significant water-quality issue for local waterways. Likewise, concentrated livestock operations in the vicinity should raise a red flag regarding not only nutrients and pathogens, but also a variety of related substances, such as antibiotics and parasiticides, commonly excreted in livestock feces and urine.

Prior land use history on and adjacent to the operation should also be considered. Was there a conventional orchard nearby in decades past? If so, you might be well served to sample for arsenic, a common and highly mobile pesticide that was widely used in fruit production. On the other hand, it makes little sense to sample water for copper (which has largely replaced arsenic-based pesticides), because copper is essentially immobile in soil and present in vanishingly small concentrations in water. Are potential sources of organic compounds and other contaminants present in the area, such as landfills, Superfund sites, and heavy industry? Websites of many state environmental agencies have lists or maps showing the locations of past and present contamination sites; these can be a useful tool for selecting operations for risk-based water sampling. The operator, however, is likely to be the best source of information about local land-use history.

Be observant: Sometimes the water system itself is the source of problems...

Back in that prehistoric time known as "Before NOP", I inspected an orchard with on-farm processing. One of the requirements from the previous inspection was for the operation to have test results from the new on-farm well available for this inspection. As it turned out, three samples obtained 2 weeks apart from a faucet in the farmhouse all tested positive for coliform. With processing season coming up, the operator was over a cider barrel, to put it mildly; she also noted that no one in the house had experienced any gastro-intestinal symptoms or otherwise become ill from drinking the water. I included these observations along with the test results in my report, but before leaving the inspection, I recommended they do additional testing, both in the processing building and directly from the well itself. I received a call from the operator a few weeks later reporting that the water in the processing shed also tested positive, while water taken directly from the well did not, and they were having a hard time understanding this. To me, that suggested a problem with the plumbing, not the water supply, and I suggested they hire a water contractor to investigate further. The story had a happy ending. A jubilant operator called me a week later to report that the main water line leading from the well was compromised: it was an old metal pipe that had not been replaced when the new well was drilled, and had subsequently corroded through, allowing soil bacteria to enter the system. Moral: think logically and test accordingly.

But wait...There's more!

You can read the rest of this in-depth article on our website - www.ioia.net, login to the Inspectors Section....

Kathleen Merrigan Resigns Post

Merrigan's last day on the job was May 3. About her resignation, Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack said, "USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan has helped USDA achieve record results over the past four years. She has played a vital role in the Department-wide focus on the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food initiative, as well as our efforts to achieve budget efficiencies and savings during an uncertain budget time. Deputy Secretary Merrigan has led USDA's efforts to implement important regulations, and she has been an important advocate for a strong National Organic Program."

The White House has named Michael Scuse, most recently Undersecretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS), as Acting Deputy Agriculture Secretary. Before joining the Obama Administration, Scuse was Agriculture Secretary for the state of Delaware, and served as president of the Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture. Darci Vetter has been named as Acting Undersecretary for FFAS to fill Scuse's former post.



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Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!

2013 Calendar

June 26 – 28 Expo Organicos 2013, Mexico City. 12th annual event. http://www.impulsoorganicomexicano.com/?page_id=120

June 27 – 30 BioFach Latin America, São Paulo, Brazil. Held in conjunction with BioBrazil, the event represents the biggest organic event in Latin America with hundreds of companies in attendance. <http://tinyurl.com/d9rxvxf>

July 2-4 7th European Organic Congress, Vilnius, Lithuania. www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org

July 29 - August 2 Clovis, New Mexico - Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training

September 9-13 Loveland, Colorado - Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training

September 16 New deadline for comments Produce Rule and Preventive Controls (Food Safety Modernization Act) <http://tinyurl.com/bytx43f>

Sept 25 – 28 Expo East, Baltimore, MD. <http://www.expoeast.com/expoeast2013/public/enter.aspx>

Sept 27 – 29 Oakland California. Eat Real Festival. Jack London Square. www.eatrealfest.com

October 21-November 1 Binghamton, New York - Basic Organic Crop, Livestock and Processing Inspection Training; and Advanced Training

October 30 – November 1 Binghamton, New York Food Justice Certification training: Domestic Fair Trade Label from the Agricultural Justice Project. Held immediately after the Advanced Training. See page 2 for more info.

October 22 -24 Fall 2013 NOSB meeting, Louisville, Kentucky. <http://tinyurl.com/c3qtgnd>

Please see page 3 for the current list of IOIA on-site trainings
Please see page 8 for the current list of IOIA Webinars