

The

# Inspectors' Report

VOL 16 No 3 FALL 2007

PUBLISHED BY THE INDEPENDENT ORGANIC INSPECTORS ASSOCIATION

## Notes from The Chair

By Garry Lean

IOIA is now the proud owner of the Broadus office building. Our ED, Margaret Scoles is to be commended for her undaunted persistence and for managing the details of the transaction. What's next? We need a new sign.

### What will be the name on the sign?

It's been relatively quiet since the last newsletter when we asked for comment on the proposed name change and the integration of "International" into the name of our organization. Plans are developing to implement a name-change bylaw amendment by mail-in ballot so that we can move ahead with this change if accepted. **A quorum of 25% of the membership is needed for by-law amendments.**

A couple of pressing issues keep surfacing during our BOD meetings:

- ◆ Committees: Structure, membership and activity still need attention. If you have an interest in helping out – please send a note to the Broadus office.
- ◆ Funding of IOIA: There has been significant growth in the organic industry. We need support from the industry so we can continue to play a significant role in providing qualified inspectors who can handle the increasing complexity. Your thoughts, ideas and leads are needed!

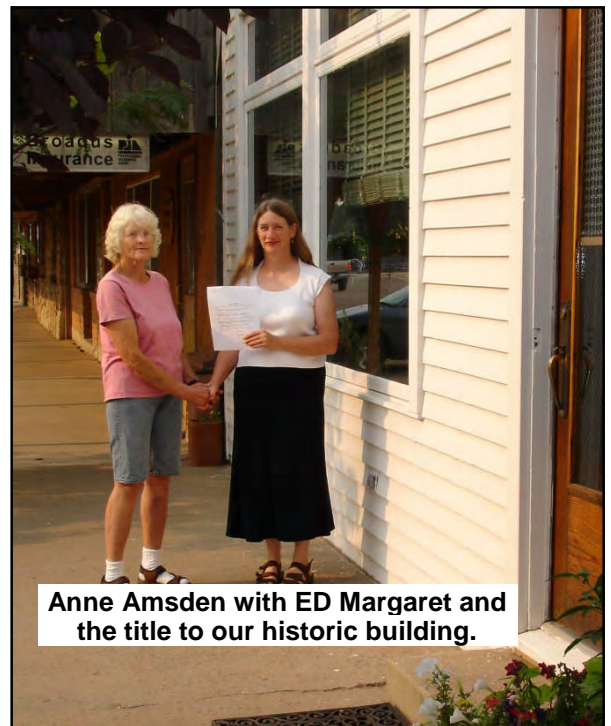
We are moving ahead with plans for a mid-October Board retreat in Montana. **Ideas for strategic development are welcome.** A survey developed by the Membership Committee will be circulated in early October. Early online responses to this survey would be useful input for our [see **Notes**, page 4]

## A HOME for IOIA

**IOIA** is proud to announce that they are the owner of the office building at 117 North Park Avenue, Broadus, Montana, USA. Located conveniently just a block from the post office and the bank, the building features hardwood floors and trim, glass doorknobs, double hung windows, high ceilings, and a full block basement underneath for storage. The size is small, about 800 square feet in 5 rooms on the ground level, but just the right size for IOIA.

**In** early 2006, the owners announced that the building was for sale and invited IOIA to purchase it for the reasonable price of \$50,000. The Board of Directors completed an analysis. Even though the price was right, IOIA was not in a financial position to purchase it. The office staff prepared themselves mentally for a move, but their hearts weren't in it. Fortunately, that wasn't the end of the story. Later in 2006, the owners contacted IOIA and **offered to give it** to IOIA, the largest single donation that IOIA has ever received. The Board of Directors weighed the costs and benefits/risks. Cost of owning would be less than cost of rent, and IOIA wouldn't have to move. They approved taking ownership in January and the process began. That process was complete on August 15 when John Amsden signed the deed, representing the owner, Amsden LLC.

**In** 1999, when IOIA moved on a shoestring from the home of Jim Riddle and Joyce Ford in Winona, Minnesota, office space was needed. New Coordinator Margaret Scoles (the title of Executive Director hadn't been applied yet) knew it wouldn't fit in her small home. An opportunity appeared. Friend Anne Amsden, an ardent supporter of organic and healthy food and organizer of Broadus's Tree Board, invited IOIA to join the Amsden family project - Prairie Winds Trading Co. Amsden LLC had purchased a historic building on the town square and were starting a business to sell local arts and crafts. IOIA could share office space, and Margaret would mind the store. It was a great way to start. This arrangement lasted for two years until IOIA started paying a nominal rent that probably barely covered cost of utilities. That arrangement lasted another four years. Eventually IOIA started paying real rent in 2006 when the Amsden family dissolved Prairie Winds. The Amsdens purchased a farm/ranch store, The Corner Store, a block away, and their energies were diverted. They added a nursery. Anne [see **Home**, page 4]



Anne Amsden with ED Margaret and the title to our historic building.

## In Brief...

**Samsom & Associates** will offer **trainings to processors** who desire to become certified organic. An intensive two day seminar will take place on **September 25 & 26, 2007** near the Baltimore Airport (prior to Natural Products Expo East). A second similar training is slated for early 2008 at a West Coast Location.

A refresher training for processors that already are certified organic is in development.

The objective of the trainings is for processors to learn to efficiently integrate the requirements of the National Organic Program into the processors' existing Quality Assurance Programs.

The NOP standards require that organic applicants monitor their own compliance with standards. To fulfill that requirement the training will show how data can be efficiently stored and maintained as well as being managed to create easy and transparent self auditing.

Trainers for the first Seminar in Baltimore are all veteran organic inspectors.

For more info, please check the web site [www.samsomassociates.com](http://www.samsomassociates.com) or contact Samsom Associates at 802-933-4172

### Opportunity for Organic Livestock Inspectors

Whole Foods Market will hold Animal Welfare Rating Auditor Training in State College, Pennsylvania **November 13-16**.

The session will open with a dinner meeting on Nov. 13 and conclude at noon on the 16th. The first such training was offered in Austin, Texas in June as the launch of the Whole Foods 5 Step Rating system for livestock vendors selling to WFM. Application process is through Whole Foods. Auditors will be expected to pay their own travel to State College and lodging during the training. However, Whole Foods is working on getting a good group rate. Course materials and some lunches will be provided. There is no additional registration fee. Further details will be posted to the IOIA website and distributed to the IOIA list serve when available.

### Welcome IOIA's first Patron Member since 1998!

Organic National & International Certifiers (ON&IC), an NOP accredited agency based in the Chicago, Illinois area, certifies growers, processors, handlers, and co-packers. Pearl Siegel, Marketing Director, says, "We became a Patron Member of IOIA because we think that it is important to set an example and encourage others to follow."

## 2007 Membership Directory Updates 08/07/07

Please make the following changes to your 2007 Membership Directory. Any additions or corrections to information categories other than addresses and contact numbers will be listed in the 2008 Hardcopy Membership Directory or can be viewed in the 2007 Online Directory.

### ADDRESS CHANGES:

#### Inspectors:

Luis Brenes  
Agri Vita S.A.  
P O Box 124-7051  
Oreamuno, COSTA RICA  
Phone/Fax: 506.536.6565

Evan Brooks Kirby-Smith  
47771 Rainbow Canyon Rd  
Temecula, CA 92592

Don Persons  
137 Alexander Hill Rd  
Northfield, MA 01360  
Home: 413-559-7051  
Work: 413-559-7051

John Trinterud  
Email: [jtrint@peacefulglen.com](mailto:jtrint@peacefulglen.com)

### Supporting Members:

Dave Hoyt  
Email: [dave@davewhoyst.com](mailto:dave@davewhoyst.com)

### Supporting Certification Agencies:

O CIA (Organic Crop Improvement Assoc. Int.)  
1340 North Cotner Boulevard  
Lincoln, NE 68505

### Welcome New Supporting Individual Members:

Assman, Mary Beth (Carter, SD)  
Manasseri, Tony (McKinney, TX)  
Nielsen, Sherry L. (Ontario, CANADA)

### Welcome New Patron Member:

ON & IC (Organic National & International Certifiers)  
Pearl Siegel, Executive Director  
3845 W. Oakton Street  
Skokie, IL 60076  
Work: 847.763.0218  
Fax: 847.679.0647  
Email: [info@on-ic.com](mailto:info@on-ic.com)

## OMRI Inputs Training

OMRI is proud to announce that it will co-sponsor the first IOIA advanced training on **inspecting inputs suppliers**. As the organic industry has grown and more companies are now seeking recognition that their fertilizers, pesticides, feed additives, animal drugs, and processing aids meet organic standards, OMRI has faced increased challenges in monitoring compliance of the input sector. Inspectors are needed to observe manufacturing practices, audit the records of input suppliers, and collect samples of inputs to make sure that companies are meeting the organic standards. As OMRI takes on a greater role in fulfilling an essential service once performed exclusively by organic certifiers, those certifiers and their accrediting bodies have raised the expectations for what is involved in input review. While OMRI has always conducted inspections and investigations, these all have been complaint-driven in the past. OMRI plans to inspect 1% of all products at random. Also, an increased number of samples will be taken by inspectors in the channels of trade to ensure that organic farmers are purchasing inputs that comply with organic standards.

The training will be held near State College, Pennsylvania on **November 18 - 19**. For more info, contact the IOIA office.

## IOIA Name Change Comments Sought

Please follow the 'Name Change' link on our homepage, [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net) and send us your comments on this proposal.

### IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Garry Lean, P.Ag.....Chair  
Bob Durst .....Vice Chair  
Gene Prochaska.....Treasurer  
Monique Scholz.....Secretary  
Catherine Cash.....Director  
Maheswar Ghimire.....Director  
Erin Beard..... First Alternate  
Sue Baird..... Second Alternate  
David Konrad...Ex-Comm Member-At-Large

The Inspectors' Report is the newsletter of the Independent Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA). IOIA is a 501 (c)(3) educational organization, whose 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. Editorial Staff: Diane Cooner, Box 1259, Guerneville, CA 95446 USA. Phone/fax 707-869-3017, [ioiaweb@ioia.net](mailto:ioiaweb@ioia.net)  
Deadlines are Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1. Relevant articles are welcomed. We strive for accuracy, but the Editor and IOIA cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions.  
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on recycled paper.



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## Upcoming Trainings

**Hongsung-gun, South Korea** IOIA and Korean Federation of Sustainable Agriculture Organization (KFSAO) will cosponsor a Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training in Hongsung-gun, Korea from **September 11 - 15, 2007**. The course will be instructed using the Korean national organic standards (Law of Environment-friendly Agriculture) and is directed toward residents of Korea. The course will be instructed in English with translation to Korean language provided. Please contact Isidor Yu of KFSAO at e-mail: community02@hanmail.net

**Bogotá, Colombia – MOVED TO Santiago, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – September 24 – 28** IOIA, BCS Costa Rica and BCS Colombia will cosponsor a 4.5 day Basic Organic Crop Inspector Training using USDA National Organic Standards as well as JAS and EU Standards. **Please note the course location and times have changed.** Instruction will be conducted in Spanish. Contact: Sr. Uriel Contreras, Sandra Restrepo T: + 57 1 62 31 86 3 F: + 57 1 25 79 97 3 mobile: +57 300 276 15 30 E-mail: info@bcscolumbia.com

**Guayaquil, Ecuador** IOIA, BCS Costa Rica and BCS Ecuador will cosponsor a 4.5 day Basic Organic Crop Inspector Training using USDA National Organic Standards, JAS and EU Standards as well as a 2 day Advanced Organic Inspector Training. Both courses will be held in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The Basic Organic Crop Inspector Training will be held from **October 15 - 19, 2007** and the Advanced Organic Inspector Training from **October 20 -21, 2007**. Instruction will be conducted in Spanish. BCS ÖKO GARANTIE CIA LTDA Ecuador, Oficina Regional para América del Sur Km. 3 1/2 via a Chambo, pasando el Puente Riobamba, Ecuador. Contact: Sr. Patricio Ajitimbay T/F: + 593 32 910 333 T: + 593 32 910 253 E-mail: info@bcsecuador.com www.bcsecuador.com

**San José, Costa Rica** IOIA and Eco-LOGICA will cosponsor 4.5 day Basic Organic Inspector Farm Inspection training using USDA National Organic Standards as a reference. The course will be held at ICAES Coronado in San José, Costa Rica **November 5 - 9, 2007**. Instruction will be conducted in Spanish. Please contact Luis Iglesias at phone/fax: 506.235.1638, cell: 506.389.8863 or e-mail: liglesias@eco-logica.com for further information.

**State College, Pennsylvania** IOIA and Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) will cosponsor Basic Organic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings, running concurrently on **November 12-16**, followed by Basic Livestock Inspection Training running **through November 20**. IOIA and BCS Öko-Garantie GmbH will cosponsor EU Organic Regulation Training on November 17. Guest presenter is Tobias Fischer of the BCS office in Germany. This 1-day event is geared to experienced inspectors but is also open to basic training participants and other non-inspectors. IOIA, BCS, and the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) will cosponsor Advanced Inspector Training with a focus on inspection of input materials manufacturers on November 18-19. Brian Baker, Ph.D., of OMRI will be the lead presenter. The training will include a field trip to a manufacturer of inputs for organic production. Additional offerings will include advanced livestock topics. Hubert Karreman, V.M.D., of Quarryville, PA will speak on organic livestock health issues. Dr. Karreman is a widely recognized alternative veterinarian, a member of the National Organic Standards Board, and the author of *Treating Dairy Cows Naturally*. Sarah Flack, M.S. in Plant and Soil Science, will speak on the topic *Understanding Dairy Rations*, to prepare inspectors to do feed audits including stored winter feeds, concentrates, and pasture. Flack is an organic/biodynamic inspector and the author of *Organic Dairy Production*, a manual for farmers transitioning to organic. She currently works with the NOFA-VT Organic Dairy and Livestock Technical Assistance Program. Other topics under development, but still tentative, are Livestock Condition Body Scoring and Calculation of Ingredient Percentages in Processed Products.

Location for all trainings is St. Joseph Institute Resort Spa Retreat, Port Matilda, PA. For more information about the facility, visit [www.stjosephinstitute.com](http://www.stjosephinstitute.com) but do not contact St. Joseph Institute directly for reservations. St. Joseph Institute is located in central Pennsylvania, southwest of State College, and 25 minutes from the State College Airport. State College is nearly equidistant from Pittsburgh, Baltimore, New York City, and Philadelphia. Detailed information and application forms for all trainings are currently posted at [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net).

**Guatemala** IOIA will sponsor Advanced Organic Inspector Training on March 3-4, in conjunction with the 2008 Annual Membership Meeting on March 2, 2008. English and Spanish language trainings will be offered.

**Future Trainings:** IOIA and Iowa Organic Association are developing basic organic training to occur in the Cedar Rapids, Iowa area during the first half of 2008. IOIA, CCOF, and Stellar Certification Services are discussing the possibility of joint Livestock and Biodynamic inspection training in northern California. Watch upcoming IOIA newsletters and the website for details as other trainings develop.

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## IOIA Scholarships Available for Organic Inspector Training

IOIA accepts applications for the annual Andrew Rutherford Scholarship Award, which provides full tuition for an IOIA-sponsored organic inspector training course during the following year.

Both prospective and experienced inspectors are eligible to apply for the Rutherford Scholarship. It is awarded to an individual on the basis of need and potential as judged by the IOIA Scholarship Committee. Applicants can choose to attend any IOIA-sponsored training. The Scholarship pays for tuition, room and board but does not cover transportation or other expenses.

IOIA also offers the annual Organic Community Initiative Scholarship, which provides full tuition for an IOIA-sponsored basic organic inspector training during the following year. It is awarded to an individual on the basis of need and their potential to have a positive impact on their regional organic community. The Organic Community Initiative Scholarship is only open to applicants from outside of the US or Canada. Applicants can choose to attend any basic IOIA-sponsored training. The Scholarship pays for tuition, room and board but does not cover transportation or other expenses.

For application materials and information on IOIA training programs, contact Margaret Scoles, IOIA Executive Director, IOIA, P.O. Box 6, Broadus, MT 59317-0006, Email [ioia@ioia.net](mailto:ioia@ioia.net), or visit [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net) to download application forms. The deadline for returning Scholarship applications is October 1. Scholarship recipients are notified by December 15.

## Home, from page 1

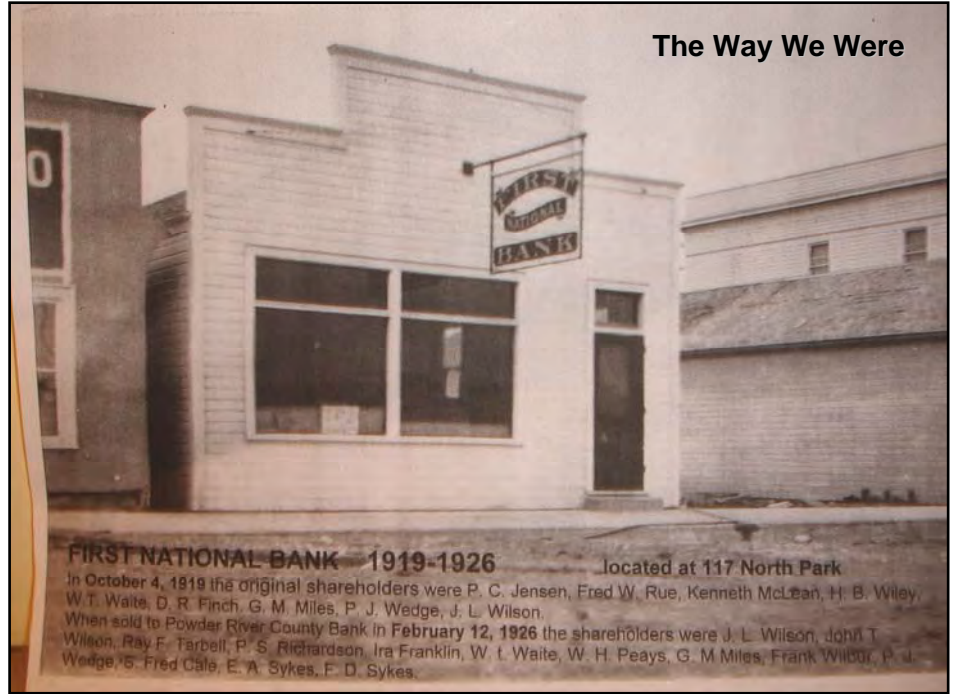
and daughter Jackie revived a Broadus Farmers Market on the deck behind the Corner Store.

The family remains a supporter of the environment and of organic production.

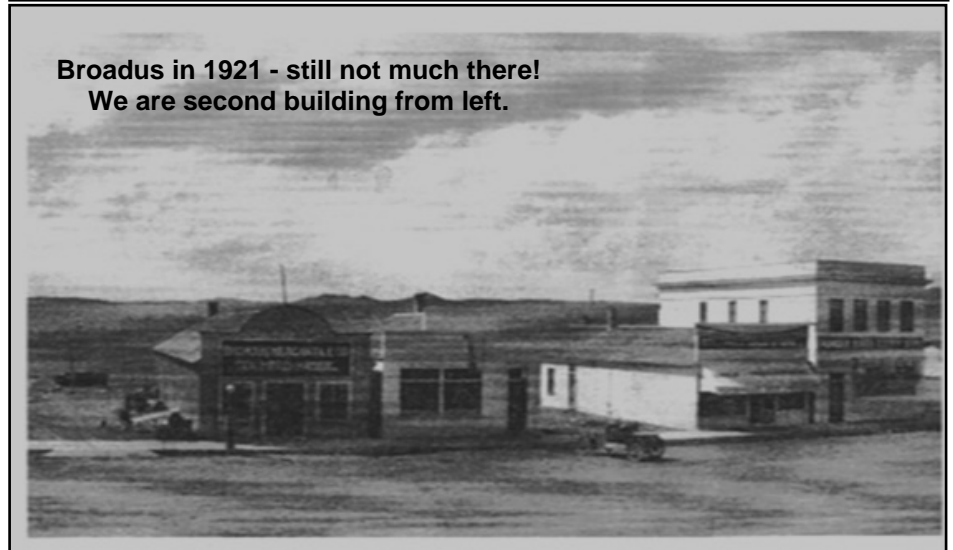
Originally the Piniele Bank (Piniele no longer exists) in neighboring Carter County, the building was moved to Broadus in 1919. Powder River County was born in 1919 and Broadus became the county seat. The building was a bank, which sold to another bank in the mid-20's, and served as a barber shop for several years. The building was purchased in the early 1930's by L.J. Onstad, who served as County Attorney. After his death, his son Chester, also an attorney, returned to the community and took over the practice. Chester worked as an attorney until his death in the mid 1950's. His wife, Marge, continued on into the 90's as a bookkeeper in the building. After her death, the Amsdens bought it in a probate sale and began the task of restoring it. The Onstads had fortunately made no major renovations except some window changes and aluminum siding. The Amsden's removed the siding, restored the original "Old West" clapboard false front, and replaced the windows. Exact age of the building is not known. It is about 100 years old and could be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Who are our benefactors? Amsden LLC is a family corporation, including Lyman and Anne and their three grown children. Lyman, the patriarch, turned 80 last year. He remains active mayor of Broadus after so many years that most Broadus residents have forgotten how many. Anne, a few years younger, is an avid gardener, walks a minimum of 5 miles a day, and stops in on a regular basis on her rounds of the town.

A few remnants of Prairie Winds Trading Co. remain. IOIA took over the organic flax business, so residents can still purchase bulk flax. And IOIA added fresh roasted Yellowstone Coffee last year, so Broadus can have good, fresh, Fair Trade, certified organic coffee. Who are some of IOIA's best coffee customers? --Anne Amsden and her daughter Julie Riley (part-time county extension agent). John Amsden, attorney in Bozeman, Montana has helped IOIA in the past with free legal advice. He says they were motivated to gift the building to IOIA because, "We spent a fair amount in restoring the



**Broadus in 1921 - still not much there!**  
**We are second building from left.**



building, and wanted to make sure the building's historical aspects were preserved. IOIA is a great organization committed to things we believe in, and we were happy that they too understood the benefits from preserving historical buildings and conserving resources."

## Notes, from page 1

retreat discussions – stay tuned.



And – are you planning to attend the 2008? Looking forward to seeing you there!  
AGM in Guatemala, set for March 2,

## WFM Hosts Animal Welfare Audit Training in Austin

WFM Market (WFM) launched a training of its 5 Step Animal Welfare Rating Program in Austin Texas June 11-14. Participants included 14 auditors (13 were IOIA Inspector Members) and 19 representatives of certification and verification organizations, several of which were organic certification agencies. Enrollment was by invitation. Participants arrived with course materials that included standards for pigs, beef, and broiler chickens, and draft scoring forms for each. They left with a much better understanding of how to use the materials. All were allowed ample time to comment and suggest improvements on the standards, forms, and the training process itself. Anna Bassett of the United Kingdom, as the only auditor with prior experience auditing with the 5-step system, was a great resource for those with less experience. Distinguishing between noncompliance and critical noncompliance and the impact of that on the final rating was somewhat challenging.

WFM requires that all suppliers of meat products meet their benchmark standards at a minimum. Suppliers will earn a premium by certifying to one of the higher standards, which are considered more compassionate and animal centered. The standards are prescriptive and more detailed in animal welfare issues than the National Organic Program rule, and more similar to the Canadian organic regulations. Animal confinement, living conditions, physical alterations, and housing are addressed in detail. However, animal welfare certification is clearly not the same as organic certification. For example, the WF standards allow for non-organic feed, some pesticides, and a wider variety of health care products. Growth hormones and antibiotics are prohibited for all species. Dairy and egg standards are still in development. Verification of the benchmark standards is managed in-house by WFM. With the launch of the 5-step program, third party verification will be needed for steps 2-5. These levels are 2-Traceability to Farm; 3-Pasture Based; 4-Animal Compassionate; and 5-Animal Compassionate Gold Standard. WFM anticipates a high demand for auditors competent to verify animal welfare standards for these additional steps. It is not yet clear which verification agencies will administer the audits. WFM invited

existing certification agencies to the training to begin that dialogue.

Qualified auditor candidates must complete an approved WFM Market 5 Step Animal Welfare Rating Training Program and demonstrate extensive experience with auditing livestock systems through a combination of:

- ◆ Experience in auditing livestock systems
- ◆ Experience and training in livestock health/management
- ◆ Successful completion of an approved auditor training program.
- ◆ Approved auditor for an accredited auditing organization or certification agency
- ◆ Direct experience in livestock management

The group converged for an evening dinner and orientation at the WFM Market location in Austin. In-class presentations next morning were followed with 3 field trips over 2 days to broiler, beef, and pig operations. Groups of about 10 auditors used the forms and attempted to complete significant portions of mock audits. To cover the most ground efficiently, each group covered some different sections of the forms and standards. The final morning was for group presentations and debrief. WFM packed lunches for the field trips and provided breakfasts in the meeting rooms. Evenings were on-your-own and resembled evenings at IOIA advanced trainings. Inspectors caught up on their visiting, debriefed, and saw the sights of Austin. One of the most popular Austin sights is the daily evening flight of hundreds of thousands of bats from underneath the Congress Street bridge. Several enjoyed a soak at the natural Barton Springs. The cool water was a welcome respite after the broiling heat of the Texas sun for the field trips.

Bob Anderson, of Sustainable Strategies, and Grace Gershuny facilitated the training. WFM representatives included Margaret Wittenberg, Vice President Global Communications and Quality Standards; Elizabeth Fry (Farm Animal and Meat Quality Standards); Andrew Gunther, Animal Compassionate Coordinator. Wittenberg was a founding member of the National Organic Standards Board. IOIA Inspectors who attended were Patti Bursten Deutsch, Stanley Edwards, Fred Ehlert, Elaine Ferry, Sarah Flack, Janine Gibson, Ib Hagsten, Philip Hale, Garry Lean, Leanne McCormick, Don Persons, Jack Reams, and Margaret Scoles. É

## Notes from the ED

By Margaret Scoles

What a wonderful summer! First we had rain and more rain when we were beginning to doubt the possibility of that ever happening again. Although the garden went in late, it did great. I'm making dill pickles (blue ribbon at the county fair 2 years in a row!) and enjoying time to work in the garden, while making a few weekend trips to do inspections. All that rain grew a lot of fuel for the August fire season. We grit our teeth during every lightning storm. I am so glad to be home.

The big news? **We own our office!** My head is swelled so big that I can hardly get through the door.

### WFM Animal Welfare Audit Training:

After a very long winter of almost constant travel, my last trip turned out to be a treat. Courtesy of Whole Foods Market, this weary traveler made one more trip--to Austin, TX. It was great to be a participant for a change and not in charge. Once I made the mental shift to 'change hats' and audit to a different, non-organic standard, I enjoyed the experience. If we wear the 'organic inspector' hat long enough, we tend to run everything through an organic filter. A night out to Barton Springs and a country blues concert in the park was a highlight. Leslie McKinnon, Director of the TX Organic Program, was a great host to her city for some of the evening outings and even loaned me swimming clothes. It was great to catch up on visits with long-time IOIA members Philip Hale and Janine Gibson.

**National Assoc. of State Organic Programs (NASOP):** IOIA was invited to submit a proposal to NASOP and Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA) for a 2-day training next January in conjunction with the Southern SAWG in Louisville, KY. ACA declined because they felt IOIA did inspector training, not certifier training. However, NASOP's Board voted unanimously to accept the proposal. IOIA and NASOP have enjoyed a friendly informal relationship. This will hopefully strengthen that bridge.

**Pearl Siegel,** from our new patron member ON & IC, has volunteered to help out with fundraising discussions. Pearl should be particularly helpful in figuring out how to encourage more patron members. Every bit helps! É

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## **BOD Minute Highlights** *IOIA BOD Meeting Conference Call (Full BOD) May 31 2007*

Present: Erin Beard (as alternate in place of Maheswar Ghimire), Catherine Cash, Bob Durst, David Konrad, Garry Lean (Chair), Gene Prochaska, Monique Scholz and Margaret Scoles

### **ED Report**

ED presented highlights of report distributed by email.

- CGG and Luis' trip to Washington: Luis is not available to be on call. BOD requests brief written report from him.

**Action Point:** Garry to request brief written report from Luis.

- Finances: Financial situation is stable; no surplus anticipated.

- Training topics: JOIA has requested using the IFOAM/IOIA manual for free rather than \$20 per copy.

**Action Points:** BOD needs more information. What kind of relationship does JOIA want with IOIA? ED to get information from Lisa Pierce. Bob and Margaret to work on this and report back to BOD on the specific \$ question and the broader issues. How can we better describe 'sister organization status'?

- Training for processors was discussed, as in-house or general. David reminded us to work on improving our capacity, not on limiting ourselves. **Action Point:** BOD to make a decision on this question next month.

### **Updates on Committee contacts**

**Action Point:** All are encourage to pursue their Committee Contact persons and report in June.

**BOD Retreat** - After some discussion of the pros and cons of the BOD retreat being in Ontario or Montana, there was a consensus to meet in Broadus, Montana. Oct 10 will be a travel day; BOD meetings will be October 11-12-13-14. October 15 will be a travel day.

**IOIA 2008 AGM** - The date has been set for March 02 in the afternoon. This will be preceded by BOD meeting March 01. The AGM will be followed by advanced training activities March 03-04-05. **Action Point:** Margaret will invite Lidia Girón, who is coordinating the AGM, to participate in June 21 BOD meeting.

### **IOIA BOD Meeting Conference Call (Full BOD) June 21 2007**

Present: Erin Beard (as alternate in place of Maheswar Ghimire), Bob Durst, David Konrad, Garry Lean (Chair), Gene Prochaska, Monique Scholz and Margaret Scoles. Catherine Cash not able to participate.

**Action Point:** Monique to communicate to Sue Baird that she is always welcome on conference calls, to stay 'up to speed', whether or not her presence as alternate is required.

### **Discussion of Financial Audit**

Internal audit: Last review of records was 2002. **Action Point:** Finance Committee to give direction to Gene regarding how to proceed with the internal audit:

- Committee to prepare audit plan for October 2007
- Committee to draft audit policy for our organization
- Committee to investigate using a third party auditor
- Gene is to transmit request to Finance Committee

**Newsletter:** Next newsletter needs committee reports. **Action Point:** everyone contact their committee chair and prepare material for August 01 deadline.

### **Agenda item 4.5: IOIA name change**

The BOD is publishing a discussion paper on the subject of the IOIA name change in the upcoming newsletter. This is expected to generate some discussion. A mail-in ballot to all membership will be circulated in October. If accepted, the name change will then be implemented in early 2008.

### **Updates on Committee contacts**

ED advised Monique that ARP chair Stephen Grealy has resigned. **Action Point:** Monique to recruit a new ARP chair.

### **Canadian Issues**

Moved by David, seconded by Monique, that the BOD to set up a special committee to focus on Canadian training issues, collaboration with CFIA and with certifiers operating in Canada. Adopted unanimously.

### **Training for processors**

Decision to continue with inspector trainings and to move forward with public trainings and especially industry sector trainings. There was NOT a consensus to pursue in-house trainings.

**Action Point:** BOD asked Margaret to make outline of industry training, on the understanding that she would not be the executant. É

### **Committees, from page 7**

This season, five dedicated IOIA inspector/judges, including Elaine Ferry and Bill Barkley, will be wading through each 12-20 page application to find two more qualified recipients! They will also be streamlining the review process while working toward paperless review.

Any questions or comments can be directed to the committee by contacting Margaret Weigelt, 320-974-8751 or e-mail to [organic-inspector@usa.net](mailto:organic-inspector@usa.net). É

## Committee Reports

**Accreditation:** Committee Chair - Jake Lewin  
**Accreditation Review Panel** - Chair is currently pending. Our thanks to outgoing **Stephen Grealy** for his service on the panel since 1999 and his able chairmanship for the past 2 years! ARP members include Linda Kaner and Monique Scholz (Inspector Members), John McKeon (certifier rep); and Ami Greenberg (consumer rep). Composition of the ARP is specified in the Accreditation Program. The Accreditation Committee is one of the few standing committees outlined in the Bylaws. The ARP is seeking a new Chair and hopes to add a member before the fall round (October 1 deadline). There have been 2 new accreditations this year. Current discussions include the possibility of consolidating the Accreditation Committee and the ARP into one committee and making IOIA accreditation more valuable to members and certifiers.  
IOIA Staff Support: Judy Hessong.  
BOD Liaison: Monique Scholz

**Bylaws:** Members: Arthur Harvey (Chair), Lance Christie, Wendy Lee Clark (non-IOIA member), Al Johnson, Sue Baird. No news to report.

**Canadian Committee:** Chair, Janine Gibson. BOD Liaison, Garry Lean.  
IOIA was appointed to a voting position on the Canadian General Standards Board Committee on Organic Agriculture. IOIA has booked a booth at the Guelph Organic Conference in January 2008. Full Report next issue.

**Communications & Marketing:** Chair, Bob Howe. The committee last met at the AGM in Encinitas. The meeting focused on the exploration of a program aimed at servicing the membership of IOIA in a number of ways.

1. Question and Answer – defined as the general request for information, such as interpretation of a standard, request for information about what to expect when inspecting a particular entity, what do other inspectors do in a given situation, etc.
2. Information resource – provide an index to the pertinent issues and information that has been gleaned from the IOIA Forum.
3. Categorize Concerns – to organize the Information Resource index according to relative similarity.
4. Access – provide means to access the information via the IOIA website.

A fifth area of inspector concern appearing in IOIA Forum postings since the advent of the NOP is inspectors observing inconsistencies in USDA-accredited certifying agency interpretations of what is compliant and non-compliant to NOP standards for organic certification of producers, and also of apparent failure by certifiers to act on reports to them by inspectors concerning evidence of major non-compliance found during inspection.

A. Cases where inspectors as a group perceive ambiguity in the organic standards, resulting in

different certifiers enforcing different organic standards because they make different interpretations about what is required

B. Cases where inspectors as a group do not perceive any ambiguity in the organic standards, yet certifiers are imposing different interpretations of the standard in practice

C. Cases where inspectors have reported evidence suggesting fraud or major noncompliance with organic standards observed while inspecting a producer to a certifying agency, and discover a year later that the producer was certified organic by the certifying agency and there is no evidence the noncompliance was ever investigated by the certifier.

The committee agreed that in order to address any of these cases, with the NOP, Certifiers or any other entity, a consensus of IOIA members on the means to address and the format of the address would be required. Thus, any action would be presented to the membership for that consensus. The outcome of the consensus would then determine if and how the matter would be addressed.

It is understood that the addressing of these concerns with the external bodies would be in the name of the Inspectors represented and not in the name of the IOIA BOD.

The first four items are being prepared. This effort is quite enormous and the time available is at a premium; inspectors are busy folk.

The fifth item, as important and timely as it might be, is on the back burner. The members of the committee are all inspectors with a full schedule and commitments in their private lives. Try as we might we have just not been able to come together on any single issue and bring it to the level where it can be presented to the membership.

### Which brings this report to the final item:

The Communications and Marketing Committee is appealing for new members to fill spots as participants in the above and, if you will read the recent IOIA Policy Manual update, you will see that the committee has a rather broad charge. The committee is understaffed. We are asking all members to consider participation, particularly those who have some experience or expertise that can facilitate our fulfilling of the charge and working toward satisfaction of the concerns mentioned above.

### Editorial Review:

Chair, Joe Montecalvo.  
Committee Accomplishments of note this year: Joe's Revised Food Sanitation Manual was presented to IOIA and made available as a training resource and a resource for sale. If you are interested in serving on the Editorial Review Board, please contact Joe.

**Ethics:** The primary function of the Ethics Committee is to investigate and rule on complaints submitted to IOIA on organic inspector and apprentice inspector members, a

job which they take very seriously. The committee is comprised of past or present members of the IOIA BOD (including alternates), the IOIA Accreditation Committee, or the IOIA Accreditation Review Panel. Joyce Ford was pleased to report it has been several years since a complaint has been filed.

**Finance:** The Treasurer is Chair of the Finance Committee. Current 2007 Finance Committee members consist of Gene Prochaska, current Treasurer, Jack Reams, and Brian Magaro (past Treasurers), and 2007 BOD member David Konrad. IOIA Staff Support is Margaret Scoles, ED.

Committee Accomplishments 2007: Adopted an IOIA Cash Reserve Policy establishing a 3 month operating cash reserve to assure operating expenses in emergency situations. In August 2007, IOIA will be having a financial audit, after which the Committee will evaluate the findings and establish long-term IOIA financial audit policy.

**Fundraising:** Would you like to help raise funds for IOIA? Do you have ideas on how we can become more financially sustainable, diversify our revenue sources, and increase our capacity to provide membership services? Do you have special skills in grant seeking, fundraising, or financial strategy? Would you like to help develop IOIA's new promotional brochure for non-membership fundraising? If the answer is 'yes' to any of these questions, please contact David Konrad, Board liaison for the Fundraising Committee, at [dkonrad@gmail.com](mailto:dkonrad@gmail.com) and help energize this important committee.

**Membership:** Chair (pending, tentatively Kelly & Sylvia jointly); Kelly Monaghan, Sylvia Welke, Chris Kidwell.

IOIA regrets the resignation of Sandra Conway, who chaired this committee for the past year. A big THANK YOU! from the members to Sandra for her extraordinary work as Chair of the last Nominations Committee and spearheading the effort for the nearly complete 2007 Membership Survey, slated for distribution by October 1.

### Scholarship: Free Money!

The IOIA scholarship committee is getting ready to accept this year's round of Andrew Rutherford and Organic Community Initiative Scholarship applications. The committee will be pouring their energies into reviewing and scoring applications during the months of October and November.

The Rutherford Scholarship is awarded to a recipient from North America. The Organic Community Initiative Scholarship is reserved for a recipient outside North America. Deadline for application is October 1, 2007. The scholarship awards will be announced by December 15, 2007. For more information Visit [www.ioia.net/scholarship.html](http://www.ioia.net/scholarship.html)

[see **Committees**, page 6]

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## The Keyword Is "Changes"

By Mutsumi Sakuyoshi

Since JAS Organic Certification system was enforced, Japan Organic Inspectors Assn (JOIA)'s activities have been recognized by the government authorities. From 2003, JOIA has held some seminars for inspectors/decision makers, every year on behalf of MAFF (the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry). But JOIA's discretion for such seminars was limited and time schedule was controlled by MAFF as well as the contents of the seminar.

However, I am sure some of the agencies that sent their inspectors to JOIA/IOIA inspector training course could have knowledge on more detail of organic inspection procedures. Recently, the number of attendees coming from the certifiers has been increased. This time, the farm course attendees were 17, and 11 people belongs to the certifiers, but among 3 belongs to a certifier, but not for organic.



Japan training group, late May 2007

In these 4 years, we JOIA trainers, have been struggling to adjust each session of our training according to JAS organic requirements. There are 2 crucial points. One is the manual. We translated IFOAM/IOIA manual in 2001, but some of the parts are not reflected the recent Japanese organic certification. When we translated, we changed the several examples to adjust to our situation. But it has been passed 6 years! During this period, our national certification regulations were revised and certifiers were re-registered. The second stress was less exercises. The time for the practical training was quite limited. Because we always had to spend time to explain procedure, but could not have enough workshop time.

On the other hand, when we started our training for beginners, we opened the doors to the public, as more inspectors were really necessary for our organic activities. We accepted people in the street to attend our training even though their professions were nothing to do with agriculture and food industry. They were simply interested in the study of agriculture and the field work. But our training programs were too difficult for them to follow.

So, this year, we challenged to develop an extra program. We set up a supplementary course prior to the training. The title is "The lecture on basic knowledge for farmhouse (processing plant) visit". In addition, we revised the inspection manual for this year's training. The order of each section in the manual is closer to each lecture in the training compared with the previous one. In order to revise this manual easily, we decided to use a binder but not bookbinding as a handbook. In the farm course, we decided to start something new and the keyword is "changes". It means we prepare a variety of workshops instead of long lectures.

We are busy, but more exciting and practical than before.

The number of certifiers is now 58 in Japan, 10 outside of country. Basically the certification system is based on ISO 65, but the detail of the inspection procedure is developed by each certification agency. Some specific questions in detail by attendees from the certifiers were thrown sometimes and they digressed from the main subject of our lecture. It was not easy to lead them to during the short session. But we tried to give enough information for all attendees. We finally separated the beginners from the advanced people in the workshop. A lot more improvement we need for the next, but, at least, we think we have achieved "changes" and the questionnaire they filled out has shown the results. É





## Improving Inspector Skills in Jamaica

By Camille Leblanc

This workshop was a first time experience for me. Being from the Island of Dominica where, traditionally, most of our elders plant naturally using mostly pen manure or sometimes only the soil in their gardens and the compost collected in a corner from an area that had been weeded from the previous season of planting, this workshop opened my mind to the organic inspection procedures.

Before the June 2007 workshop my idea of organic inspection was, I must say, narrow. I have done inspections for Eurepgap standards in my country for the banana company, and I thought they were very complicated. To my surprise, the inspection procedures are quite straight forward - clear, precise and get to the point.

The 4 days of the training sharpened my inspection skills & my observance methods in complete



I have come to realise that the inspection not only seeks to find out whether an operation is in compliance but also encourages the producers/processors to take control of or carefully manage the on-farm/off-farm activities which would directly have an effect on the outcome of the products which come from his/her farm/processing plant.

**Norma:**  
**(aka Honest)**  
“Let’s get this bus moving!! It is so hot we are composting!!”  
*Outrageous Statement Winner*

Attending this workshop has placed me in a position to enlighten our farmers on the requirements for organic certification and the steps needed in preparing for the conversion to organic.

I don't know about the other participants, but I must say the workshop was well timed and well put together. The facilitators were well informed to hand over the knowledge to us, the participants. I would be willing, as long as I have good health & strength, to attend a follow - up workshop like this one.

To end, I would love to give thanks to all the organisers & facilitators of The JOAM / IOIA Workshop. É



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# Inspector Training in South Korea, July 2007

By Lisa Pierce

## The Training

'It was my pleasure', a phrase oft repeated by **Isidor Yu** as he obtained additional field trip documents or translated another exercise question or acquired copies of labels or arranged an advance meeting with a field trip host....Isidor Yu was the coordinator of the IOIA / KFSAO Organic Crop and Processing trainings conducted in Hong Seong, South Korea from July 02-15, 2007.

This was the second IOIA/KFSAO cosponsored training to be held in South Korea with **Mutsumi Sakuyoshi** and myself as Trainers. The first training was held on Jeju Island in December 2006. Both IOIA trainings in Korea have been cosponsored by Korean Federation of Sustainable Agriculture Organizations (KFSAO) and managed by Isidor Yu of the Heuksalim Soil Research Institute (HSRI).



**Korea Crop training group**

The success of the training was due to the hard work and alchemy between Trainers, **Mr. Jang Sang-joon** (Education Team leader for KFSAO), Isidor Yu (Policy and Planning Team Leader for HSRI), **Ms Hong Hyaekyung** (translator for Mutsumi and Korean inspector) and **Mr Kim Dong Jun** (translator for Lisa and Executive Director of a large organic agricultural organization in Korea). The training used the Korean Organic Standards for the crop course and Codex guidelines as a reference for the processing course. The crop course was a full five days in length and included a session on Community Grower Group inspections. The IOIA/KFSAO crop course field trip included assessment of Internal Control System of Pulmu Agricultural Cooperative and mock inspection of two of its members; a rice farmer and mixed vegetable farmer.

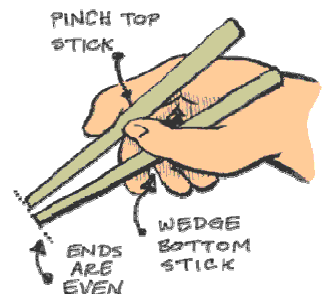
Training presentations were delivered in Korean, Japanese, or English and translated to participants and Trainers as needed. The use of multiple languages was a challenge for all, for example, new terms and concepts such as organic integrity were difficult to translate. All staff, however, worked together to overcome perceived limitations and create an environment of shared learning. Group exercises, games, and role plays were utilized to create the best learning experience possible. The training was a solid team effort; the product of patience, collaboration, dedication and a much needed sense of humour. I discovered, for example, that garbage piles were a good source for labels. And, despite two weeks of practice, I never did master the art of eating noodles and sauce with chopsticks without getting sauce splattered all over my shirt.

And so after grading exams and a day in the big city lights of Seoul, this country girl heads back home to Canada with a suitcase full of stained shirts and Korean food labels. I am ever grateful to a dedicated group of Koreans and their efforts to build an inspector community and organic certification system in their country. Thank you Isidor, thank you Mutsumi, thank you Ms Hong, Mr Kim and Mr Jun and a wonderful group of participants. **It was my pleasure.**

## Where do we go from here?

The trainings in Korea have been a powerful example of the type of outreach that is possible if IOIA is to become a truly international organization. The long term goal of the training was to enhance and build a 'made in Korea' organic certification system.

This was not the first time of course, that IOIA has instructed trainings using standards other than USDA National Organic Program or worked with countries outside of North America, but it may represent a critical opportunity in the evolution of IOIA. As a Trainer, it is not enough to be a 'paratrooper'; to be dropped into a country, conduct a course, and leave. The IOIA mission does not feel accomplished. And here I drop the third person vernacular and speak from the first person perspective. I think as an organization we need to become more inventive and flexible. I think there is value to establishing an international inspector organization but the centralist model of membership that currently exists is not feasible. One of the primary IOIA membership benefits is the IOIA newsletter and inspector forum. How useful is the newsletter or forum or membership at US \$125 per year if you do not speak English or conduct inspections to the NOP standards? How can we restructure IOIA fees and funding to be inclusive and foster the development of regional inspector organizations? É



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## Development of Organic Certification in Korea

By Mutsumi Sakuyoshi

These trainings were held at Hongsung village, well known to Korean people as a Mecca of Organic Agriculture in Korea. The symbol of this village is ducks on rice paddies. Using ducks for weed and insect control in rice paddies was expanded in Japan and exported to Korea. Now the organic rice industry has been developed, and production exceeds consumption in both countries. Some farmers sell organic rice as conventional, without labelling, at a lower price than organic rice.

As mentioned by Lisa, the food in Korea was wonderful. Most of the food provided during the course was local and certified organic, or organically grown. Personally, I remember our first training held in Japan. Year after year, our trainings have become more sophisticated, adjusted to “normal” situations and are now held at convenient places. But we could never forget about our first training in Japan, held about 10 years ago. On July 21st, JOIA (Japan Organic Inspectors Association) had a 10th anniversary party in Tokyo. JOIA’s members are not only inspectors. We were reminded how helpful it is to have a lot of supporters as part of the organization as we gathered together for our big event. It is JOIA’s history.

During the IOIA/KFSAO course, one of the attendees asked, “How we can develop KOIA (Korean Organic Inspectors Association)?” Currently there are over 30 certification agencies in Korea and most inspectors belong to one certifier. According to Isidor Yu, only HSRI hires independent inspectors. Independent inspectors are minor in Korea, like Japan. How can they develop their own society? A lot of certification agencies in Korea belong to a university. The staffs do not have to make a profit by certification.

In Korea, agricultural crop and livestock standards are clearly defined and enforced. But the standards and certification system for organic processed products are still a bit chaotic. Two separate ministries within the government are developing organic processing products standards but, according to staff and attendees, the consumer does not know about either the standards or the labels. “Co-mingling!” Eventually, people want a private certifier’s mark or logo to distinguish certified organic from other processed product in the market place. Over 90% of organic food in Korea is imported; a lot of foreign certifier’s logos are on product labels.

The other unique situation in Korea is that the governmental body, NAQS (National Agricultural Products Quality Management Service) both accredits certifiers and certifies applicants directly. The key person at NAQS (National Agricultural Products Quality Management Service), **Mr. Jun-Kyu Kim**, has studied organic certification for the last couple of years and has tried to develop a system that is equivalent to other countries. He gave a lecture of Korean organic standards in the IOIA/KFSAO crop course, and updated information of standards for processing foods (including organic) in process course. Mr. Jun-Kyu, Kim came twice in two weeks to the training by using his paid holiday. He attended an IOIA training course in the United States and has promoted the use of methods similar to IOIA in the development of organic system in Korea.

Lisa and I had tried to adjust to their situation during each lecture and workshop. This was the first process training in Korea, and most attendees were not from the processing industry. Some participants were from distributors who often visit processors, but no one from a large manufacturer came to this training. The number of course attendees was 13, a good size for working together. On some points, the participants seemed to think too strict and lose sight of the real activity in the food industry. Future discussion among them seems very important for their development. The history of organic certification is particular in each country. I am happy to share my experience in our country to with Korean colleges.



Processing course attendees

## SECTOR NEWS

### **NOP auditors to make surprise visits on Chinese organic farms, processing plants**

U.S. Department of Agriculture auditors are scheduled to make their first — and long-awaited — trip to China in August to check on organic food operations there.

U.S. organic farmers and processors have been asking for closer USDA surveillance over Chinese organics, especially in the wake of recent problems with some products: antifreeze in toothpaste, lead in children's toys and banned antibiotics in fish. Imported Chinese wheat gluten also was the source of toxic melamine blamed in the deaths of scores of American pets. Several USDA-certified organic products are imported from China, but of particular concern to Iowans is the amount of organic soybean imports.

A shortage of organic soybeans in the United States and Canada is forcing more U.S. companies to turn to China. Those beans are used to make foods such as soy milk and tofu, and for feeding organically raised cows, pigs and chickens.

Soybean dealers, processors and some farmers familiar with the USDA's strict rules for organic production doubt that Chinese farmers are complying.

But importers and certifiers say Chinese farms are subject to the same scrutiny as U.S. farms.

The USDA won't say whether it suspects violations. Two auditors with the USDA National Organic Program will make surprise visits to organic farms and processing plants and will inspect the records of four agencies that grant USDA certificates in China, said Barbara Robinson, head of the USDA division that oversees the organic program.

Robinson said the agency expects to issue a report a few weeks after the trip.

Imports now account for about half of all soybeans purchased for organic food and livestock feed, said Lynn Clarkson, president of Clarkson Grain in Cerro Gordo, Ill. Eighty percent to 90 percent of those imports come from China and the rest from South America.

The USDA's visit to China should "do a lot to calm people's concerns," he said. "It also will do a lot to warn people who might be cheating, or thinking of cheating, that we're going to be looking."

Most Chinese farms are certified by the Organic Crop Improvement Association in Lincoln, Neb., which has more than 200 clients in China. It is one of the four

certifiers that USDA auditors plan to visit this month in China.

Jeff See, the association's executive director, said his agency has been inspecting in China since 1994.

Although China's problems with industrial pollution exposed some fields to environmental contamination, they can still be certified as long as growers are following the USDA organic rules, he said.

"If the area of the world you live in has a high background of natural pollutants, then, yeah, you're not getting maybe as pure and clean a product as you should," he said. "But that shouldn't kick anybody out for making the attempt to go organic."

"It's definitely something to worry about," said Tom Frantzen, an organic soybean farmer in New Hampton. "The (organics) train is pulled by an engine of people who want a differentiated food because they believe what they're getting has value. If you water that down, you take away the power of that engine."

Tim Daley, a production agronomist at Stonebridge Ltd., a soybean dealer in Cedar Falls, said some companies have been sensitive to using imported organic soybeans, although none of his customers has specifically ruled out Chinese soybeans. "Some food companies are requiring you to sign letters of authenticity saying that they meet all the protocols," he said.

As long as the organic certificates and paperwork are in order, "we have no problems signing those letters," he said.

Although organic soybeans from China have USDA organic certificates, David Bruce still doesn't trust them.

Bruce is a pool director with Organic Valley, a cooperative based in LaFarge, Wis., that produces organic milk, soy milk, meat and other products. Organic Valley uses only U.S.-grown soybeans in its soy milk and other beverages, and it discourages its farmer members from using imported soybean meal to feed their poultry and livestock.

"There has been a concern, although the USDA did accredit that process, that there are some holes there," he said. "We had somebody who is there look into it ... and led us to believe that it's not entirely clear that the process is free of any people going around the edges."

*The Des Moines Register, 8/15/07*

### **Name Change Not Done Yet**

*Our ED Margaret recently wrote:*

"Dear Organic Standard Editor:

I was pleased to see your recent coverage of IOIA's move to incorporate "International" into our name. However, your headline of "IOIA changes its name" might mislead some readers. Your article accurately reflects IOIA's decisions and our process to date. But the headline suggests that the name has already changed. Much is yet to be done before the name can actually change. Thank you."

*She received this reply from Gunnar Rundgren of The Organic Standard:*

"Sorry, it is always a bit of a challenge to set headlines. As you know they need to be short and a bit catchy. Guess we could have had a question mark in the end."

### **US House Approves Farm Bill with Big \$\$ Boost for Organic**

The US House of Representatives has approved more than \$300 million for organic agriculture as part of the 2007 Farm Bill.

"In addition to the funding, the House...also directed the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation to provide equitable crop insurance to organic producers," according to Caren Wilcox, Executive Director of the Organic Trade Assn (OTA). "Currently, organic producers pay a 5% surcharge, and if losses occur, they are paid at the conventional, not the organic, price."

"The funding for research, data collection, technical assistance for farmers, and conversion and certification assistance, plus the insurance measures are significant for the organic industry and will help organic producers continue to meet the growing demand by consumers for organic products," Wilcox said.

Key organic provisions in the Farm Bill, as passed by the House on July 27, include:

- ◆ \$50 million authorized for organic conversion, and technical and educational assistance. ;
- ◆ \$22 million in mandatory funding for National Organic Certification Cost Share Program;
- ◆ \$3 million in mandatory funding for Organic Production and Market Data;
- ◆ \$125 million for organic research (\$25 million authorized per year, FY 2009 -

- ◆ 2012, plus mandatory funding of \$25 million for FY 2008 - 2012);
- ◆ \$100 million authorized for urban organic gardens and greenhouses operated by residents in the neighborhood, including cooperatives, to produce fruits and vegetables and sell them to local grocery stores;
- ◆ \$5 million in mandatory funding (\$1 million per year) in the Agricultural Management Assistance Program for organic certification cost share payments to producers in 17 states.

The House approved the Farm Bill 231-191.

## Court denies FTC appeal in Whole Foods merger

A federal appeals court ruling late on August 24 cleared the way for Whole Foods Market Inc. to buy its rival Wild Oats Markets Inc.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit denied a request by the Federal Trade Commission to delay the \$565 million deal. The ruling dissolves the Aug. 20 administrative injunction preventing the deal from going forward while the court considered the FTC's motion. Whole Foods said an opposite ruling would have killed the sale.

The Austin, Texas-based organic and natural foods grocery chain said it would move at the first opportunity to close the acquisition. The company's tender offer to purchase all outstanding shares of Wild Oats stock expires Monday at 5 p.m. (EST).

U.S. District Judge Paul L. Friedman ruled against the FTC last week, quickly followed by the federal agency's appeal that a merger between the two would result in less competition and higher prices for natural and organic foods. Federal regulators cited controversial comments made by Mackey online and in corporate documents regarding his intent in purchasing Wild Oats and other competitors.

The FTC complained that Friedman's ruling "utterly ignored the bulk of the commission's case, including clear and authoritative statements by the principals that the rationale for the transaction is to eliminate competition."

The three-judge court panel, in a brief ruling, agreed that the FTC "raised some

questions" about the deal, but the judges said the agency had not proven that Friedman's decision was flawed, according to the Associated Press.

In a 93-page ruling, Friedman rejected the FTC's argument that Whole Foods and Wild Oats compete in a narrow market of "premium, natural and organic supermarkets." The judge cited major supermarket chains like Kroger Co. and Safeway Inc. as selling more fresh and organic produce and redesigning many of their stores to compete for Whole Foods shoppers.

About 60 percent of natural and organic food products sold come from conventional stores, said Friedman.

Keith Hylton, an antitrust law professor at Boston University, told AP in an e-mailed statement that courts in antitrust cases are putting more weight on "objective evidence ... and less on statements" by company executives.

"All firms want to take over their markets and eliminate their competitors," he reportedly said. "Not many are successful. In the end, courts have to look at what the firm did, not what it said, and try to determine whether the firm's actions really harmed competition."

*Sustainable Food News, 8/24/07*

## OCIA Int'l Office Moves

OCIA International, has moved to new offices effective August 10, 2007. Please make a note that they are now located at: 1340 N. Cotner Blvd. Lincoln, NE 68505

All other contact info remains unchanged.

## Growing biofuel demand leading to higher food prices

Increased demand for biofuels is causing fundamental changes to agricultural markets that could drive up world prices for many farm products, according to a new report.

Structural changes are underway which could well maintain relatively high nominal prices for many agricultural products over the coming decade, said the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization in their "Agricultural Outlook 2007-2015" report.

While recognizing that temporary factors such as droughts in wheat-growing regions and low stocks explain in large

measure the recent hikes in farm commodity prices, the report said reduced crop surpluses and a decline in export subsidies are also contributing to these long-term changes in markets.

But underpinning crop prices and, indirectly through higher animal feed costs, prices for livestock products, is the growing use of cereals, sugar, oilseed and vegetable oils to produce fossil fuel substitutes, ethanol and biodiesel.

U.S. annual output of maize-based ethanol is expected to double between 2006 and 2015. In the European Union, the amount of oilseeds (mainly rapeseed) used for biofuels is set to grow from just over 10 million metric tons to 21 million mt over the same period.

In Brazil, annual ethanol production is projected to reach some 44 billion liters by 2015 from around 21 billion today. Chinese ethanol output is expected to rise to an annual 3.8 billion liters, a 2 billion liters increase from current levels.

The report points out that higher commodity prices are a particular concern for net food importing countries as well as the urban poor. And while higher feedstock prices caused by increased bio-fuel production benefits feedstock producers, it means extra costs and lower incomes for farmers who need the feedstock to provide animal feed.

Meanwhile, production and consumption of agricultural products in general will grow faster in the developing countries than in the developed economies - especially for beef, pork, butter, skimmed milk powder and sugar, the report said. OECD countries are expected to lose export shares for nearly all the main farm commodities, but will continue to dominate exports for wheat, coarse grains and dairy products.

Over the 10-year period, import protection is assumed to continue to limit the growth in trade but trade in beef, pork and whole milk powder is expected to grow by more than 50 percent over the next 10 years, coarse grains trade by 13 percent and wheat by 17 percent.

Trade in vegetable oils is projected to increase by nearly 70 percent.

*Sustainable Food News, 7/9/07*

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## Organic Training for Pipeline Construction “Agricultural Monitors”

IOIA collaborated with Northern Natural Gas Co. to provide “agricultural monitor” organic training to 5 environmental inspectors. The curriculum, developed by Joyce E. Ford, IOIA trainer, covered NOP regulations, the National List, labeling, organic farm plans, the Mitigative Actions for Organic Agricultural Lands, and responsibilities of the Agricultural Monitor. Participants took a test and received IOIA Certificates of Completion for Agricultural Monitors.

This story began in 2006 when a crude oil pipeline was scheduled to run through Gardens of Eagan, Martin and Atina Diffley’s organic vegetable farm near Farmington, MN. The Diffley’s rallied many organic farmers and consumers to provide testimony that organic farms are “unique features of the landscape”. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture wrote an Appendix to Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan: Mitigative Actions for Organic Agricultural Land.” This document covers a variety of practices to prevent construction activities from resulting in decertification of the organic farm.

The Appendix calls for an Agricultural Monitor or a USDA-approved Organic Certifier retained by the pipeline company to monitor construction and restoration activities on Organic Agricultural Land for compliance with the Appendix, and to document activities that could result in decertification. The Appendix states further “If the Agricultural Monitor is responsible for monitoring activities on Organic Agricultural Land, he/she will be trained, at pipeline company expense, in organic inspection, by the Independent Organic Inspectors Association, unless the Agricultural Monitor received such training during the previous three years.”

Joyce E. Ford contracted with Northern Natural Gas Co. as the USDA-approved organic inspector (OCIA approved). Because Joyce was unable to be on site for the entire time that the pipeline construction is occurring (6-8 weeks), IOIA was contacted to provide co-sponsorship of an Agricultural Monitor training. This particular Agricultural Monitor organic training is site-specific for Northern Natural Gas Co.’s Northern Lights Expansion Project, as it did not cover all types of pipeline construction activities.

Joyce has had the unique opportunity to observe firsthand a number of pipeline crew activities, including developing the right of way (grade and clearing), stringing, bender, welding, and ditching. She broke the Appendix requirements down into specific pipeline activities and developed a Compliance Report and monitoring records. For instance, all equipment was required to be cleaned, so equipment for each crew moving through cleaned their excavators, bulldozers and trucks until thoroughly cleaned. Joyce was on hand to inspect each piece of equipment and kept an equipment cleaning log for verification. Other examples of requirements are:

- No equipment refueling or routine maintenance on Organic Agricultural Land
- No tobacco use on Organic Agricultural Land
- Use of drop cloths during welding and coating activities
- No trench water from adjacent land will be pumped onto Organic Agricultural Land
- Non organic land will not be used for storage of soil organic land and vice versa.
- Implementation of erosion control methods consistent with the landowner’s organic system plan (must comply with FERC erosion control measures)

Although law in Minnesota, the Mitigative Actions for Organic Agricultural Lands is a model that can be used by any organic farmer nationwide who is negotiating with a pipeline company. For a copy of the Appendix to Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan: Mitigative Actions for Organic Agricultural Land, go to IOIA’s website.



**It's either hairnets or hardhats for Joyce Ford!**

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## Member Profile – Catherine Cash

Catherine Cash, has been an IOIA member since 1993, and was voted onto the IOIA Board of Directors at the 2007 AGM in Encinitas, CA. Cash is a Virginia native with over 15 years of practical farm and livestock experience and 6 years of inspection experience. In 1998 she and her husband Luther had their farm in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia certified organic. She then sold produce at several area farmers markets and helped form the Nelson County Farmers Market in Nellysford, Virginia. In 1999 she helped start and operate a 12 farm certified organic cooperative which sold (in partnership with Joel Salatin's Polyface Farm) to chefs in Charlottesville, Harrisonburg and Lexington. She has also worked as a consultant and is a frequent speaker on organic agricultural issues.

In March 2006 the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) Marketing Division hired her as the states' first "Organic Certification Specialist." Her responsibilities include assisting Virginia organic producers with the requirements to become certified under USDA's NOP; updating the agency and producers about changes and advances in Virginia's organic production; and extending VDACS marketing outreach between buyers and sellers.

Catherine's latest projects have included the development of the state's organic public processing facility for poultry, the state's first Organic Peanut Project, the state's first Organic Grazing Conference, and the creation of the state's first Organic Directory and Certified Organic Resource Guide.

In her spare time (!) Catherine is an old house fanatic. She and her husband renovate and rent out historic properties, you can check them out at [www.3-sisters-log-cabin.com](http://www.3-sisters-log-cabin.com).



Catherine Cash with husband Luther

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## Resources

**The US Congressional Research Service** has produced several pieces on the House Farm Bill, including Specialty Crops, Farm Commodity Programs, Domestic Food Assistance Broadband, Ag Research & Extension, and Ag Credit. For PDF copies, contact [corr@agandruralladders.org](mailto:corr@agandruralladders.org)

**The Organic Center** offers an email list with regular updates on organic research developments. To sign up, contact [shoffman@organic-center.org](mailto:shoffman@organic-center.org).

**The Green Office** Online retailer with a full selection, great pricing, rigorous product screening, greenest supplies, technology etc etc etc! Site features the office footprint calculator, sustainability consulting, greening guide. A member of Co-op America (as is IOIA!), 10% off first purchase with this code: 10PER2007. [www.thegreenoffice.com](http://www.thegreenoffice.com) 800-909-9750.

**Regoverning Markets** This is a collaborative research project analysing growing concentration in the processing and retail sectors of national and regional agri-food systems and its impacts and implications for rural livelihoods and communities in middle and low income countries. [www.regoverningmarkets.org/en/global](http://www.regoverningmarkets.org/en/global)

**The Organic Farm Business Management 2006 Annual Report** was produced jointly by the MN Dept of Ag, the University of Minnesota's Center for Farm Financial Management, and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. It contains data provided by 71 fully or partially organic farms enrolled in farm business management courses offered throughout the state. To protect participant privacy, the summary does not identify the participating farms.

The new report contains 24 tables including financial summaries, a farm income statement, a crop production and marketing summary, and crop and dairy enterprise analyses. According to Meg Moynihan, MDA Organic and Diversification Specialist, the report contains only one year's data but with future reports completed, the quality of the data will improve as the impact of weather and market effects average out.

The Minnesota Organic Farm Business Management Project reimburses organic producers for a portion of farm business management tuition. By participating, organic farmers can track finances and farm performance, benchmark with other producers, and use the data for tax returns and

conversations with lenders. Conventional producers can use the data to help them evaluate whether they want to pursue organic farming. The three-year project is supported by a partnership agreement with the States Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency.

The Report is available online at [www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic/bizmgmt.htm](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic/bizmgmt.htm). A limited number of print copies are available by calling 651-201-6012. To generate detailed farm financial data summaries from other types of enterprises and other years, visit [www.finbin.umn.edu](http://www.finbin.umn.edu).

**Drought 2007: What the Maps Tell Us** Drought (and heat) are killing cattle in the Dakotas and reducing crop yields in Ohio and Kentucky. Parts of Minnesota were just declared federal disaster areas. DY has the latest maps. [www.Dailyyonder.com](http://www.Dailyyonder.com)

**Opportunity to share** The Geofeat initiative is a global undertaking to provide individuals with the opportunity to source products, share resources and participate in projects that are green, eco-friendly and organic by connecting with other like-minded businesses and individuals from around the world. [www.geofeat.com/resources/](http://www.geofeat.com/resources/)

If you have written an article or have a book that you would like reviewed, please feel free to email on [media56@geofeat.com](mailto:media56@geofeat.com) or contact Roger Burrell directly at 323 319 3632.

**Surfing farmers** In the last two years, the number of farmers utilizing high-speed Internet connections has doubled, according to a USDA-NASS report. *The Farm Computer Usage and Ownership* report tallies the number of farmers who own or have access to computers and shows how both computers and Internet access are used on the farm. In general, Internet use among farmers has seen a steady increase over the last two years. [www.agriculture.com](http://www.agriculture.com)

**Detailed Organic Statistics from California** Karen Klonsky and Kurt Richter of the Agricultural Issues Center of the University of California at Davis have just published the "Statistical Review of Organic Agriculture 2000-2005." It includes state, regional, and county-level data for crop, livestock, and dairy production and sales. Organic acreage in California increased from 2000-2005, while the number of organic farmers declined.

## Tema de Actualidad

Sistemas de Garantía Participativos (Certificación Participativa)  
Recopilado y Editado por Carlos A. Escobar F., Conexión Ecológica

En el anterior número se comentó sobre los diferentes programas de certificación que se han venido implementando, paralelamente, a los programas de certificación orgánica en Latinoamérica; imponiendo nuevos retos y requisitos a los productores así como necesidades de formación a los auditores orgánicos. Frente a esta serie de normas y reglamentos, especialmente, desarrollados para el mercado internacional, están siendo reconocidas otras formas de garantizar la calidad orgánica donde el productor y el consumidor cumplen un rol activo. A estos esquemas se les conoce como Sistemas de Garantía Participativo, los cuales están siendo ampliamente estudiados por diferentes entidades como IFOAM y que han sido incorporados por algunos gobiernos nacionales en Latinoamérica puesto que facilitan el mercado local.

De acuerdo a varios documentos y boletines de IFOAM, en estos sistemas la información para la toma de decisiones es sistematizada, es transparente y el objetivo es compartir la responsabilidad de la garantía orgánica. El sistema de garantía es creado por los mismos agricultores y consumidores quienes le dan uso, fomentando y a veces requiriendo la participación directa de los agricultores y consumidores. La confianza es generada a través de la información abierta y la verificación por pares.



*Algunos sellos de garantía participativa en ámbitos no latinoamericanos*

### Elementos Básicos

Según un estudio de 4 casos adelantado por IFOAM en 2005 sobre sistemas de garantía participativo, los elementos básicos de estos sistemas son:

- ♦ Visión compartida, es decir los productores y consumidores están comprometidos con los principios que guían el sistema que implican que ambos deben participar activamente
- ♦ Participativo, ya que la metodología presupone un intenso involucramiento de los interesados en la producción y el consumo de estos productos de tal modo que la credibilidad es un resultado de la participación.

- ♦ Transparencia, debido a que los involucrados, incluyendo a los agricultores, deben tener el conocimiento de como trabajan exactamente los mecanismos de garantía, su proceso y cómo se toman las decisiones. Esto significa la necesidad de que parte de la documentación escrita debe estar disponible para todas las partes interesadas sin comprometer la confidencialidad. así pues debe trazarse una línea entre el acceso a la información y la privacidad y la información comercial delicada de un lado y por el otro.
- ♦ Confianza - “Enfoque basado en la integridad”, donde se reconocen los mecanismos sociales y culturales cualitativos y cuantitativos para demostrar y medir la integridad orgánica. Además, se tiene valora la ética del productor y su familia.
- ♦ Proceso de aprendizaje, que significa que más que brindar un certificado, estos sistemas proveen herramientas y mecanismos para apoyar el desarrollo sostenible comunitario y orgánico en el que se mejoren las condiciones de vida y la posición de los agricultores.
- ♦ Horizontalidad, equivale a la repartición del poder que en la practica implica que todos los involucrados en el proceso de garantía participativa tienen el mismo nivel de responsabilidad y capacidad de establecer la calidad orgánica de un producto o proceso.

### Un Ejemplo

La Red Ecovida de Agroecología surge en los años 80's como resultado de la crisis de la Revolución Verde en el sur del Brasil. Actualmente, la red está formada por 180 grupos de agricultores de los estados del Paraná, Santa Catarina y Río Grande do Sul, involucrando un total de 2.300 familias. Participan actualmente diez cooperativas de consumidores de productos ecológicos y veinte ONG. La unidad operacional de la Red es el Núcleo Regional, que hoy son 21. Los Núcleos Regionales, como la propia Red, están formados por grupos de agricultores, grupos de consumidores y entidades de asesoría. La Red Ecovida es una articulación abierta y estos números están en constante crecimiento. En el ámbito de la Red Ecovida de Agroecología, la certificación viene siendo trabajada como un proceso pedagógico donde agricultores, técnicos y consumidores se integran para intentar buscar una expresión pública de la calidad del trabajo que desarrollan. A esto le llaman Certificación Participativa.



*Sello Ecovida*

Así, la primera instancia de la certificación es la palabra de la familia agricultora. La seriedad del trabajo desarrollado por la familia es ratificada por el grupo del cual él hace parte, a través de la comisión de ética de este grupo. A su vez este grupo tiene su trabajo ratificado por el Núcleo Regional, en el que él participa a través del consejo de ética del núcleo. Los productos originarios de este núcleo son respaldados por todos los demás núcleos, que poseen en común normas de producción y condiciones mínimas de funcionamiento, lo que les permite que se legitimen mutuamente, a través de la Red Ecovida de Agroecología.

La condición de miembro de la Red Ecovida presupone un compromiso con la agroecología, pero esta condición no autoriza de forma automática la utilización del sello. Para esto es necesario pasar por el proceso de certificación. El proceso de certificación ocurre a partir de la demanda de un grupo de agricultores interesados en utilizar el sello Ecovida.

Las etapas del proceso de certificación participativo son:

1. Demanda por parte de un grupo de agricultores por el proceso de certificación. Esta demanda ocurre apenas si el grupo siente la necesidad de tornar público el reconocimiento conferido por la Red en relación a su proceso o producto.
2. Visita a las propiedades del grupo por parte de integrantes de la comisión de ética del grupo, del consejo de ética del núcleo y de la asesoría.
3. Uno de los integrantes de esta comisión, que se constituye para la visita, se encarga de elaborar un informe donde consten aspectos de las propiedades visitadas, ligados a su grado de trabajo ecológico y a otros aspectos que constan en las normas internas de la Red.
4. Reunión entre el grupo, integrantes del consejo de ética del núcleo regional y asesoría. En esta reunión se discute el informe de las visitas, el grado de ecologización de las fincas y del grupo y se planean acciones para lograr superar límites identificados.
5. Decisión por parte del consejo de ética del núcleo sobre la liberación o no del uso del sello para este grupo.
6. En el caso de obtener la autorización, el grupo debe informar a la coordinación del Núcleo Regional sobre qué productos y en qué cantidad el sello será utilizado.

Este proceso es cíclico y deberá ser re-comenzado a partir del paso 2, siempre que se encuentre alguna duda sobre el producto o el proceso en cuestión, o por cualquier otra razón que los involucrados juzguen conveniente.



## Avances

- ◆ El diseño de una metodología de certificación más apropiada a la agricultura familiar, que estimule la integración entre agricultores, consumidores y la organización social, propiciando una participación activa de todos los interesados.
- ◆ Proceso de certificación que cuenta con el protagonismo de los agricultores y consumidores, no concentrando el poder y recursos en la mano de empresas prestadoras de servicios.
- ◆ La integración de agricultores, consumidores y asesores en una lógica de Red, donde la relación que se establece es horizontal y de interdependencia, sin "permitir" jerarquías.
- ◆ La construcción de una legitimidad, ante la sociedad, en relación a la seriedad del trabajo desarrollado por la Red.

## Limitaciones

- ◆ La falta de reconocimiento legal para el proceso de certificación participativa, impide a los agricultores que toman esta opción, vincularse a determinados mercados.
- ◆ La falta de reconocimiento de la validez de la certificación participativa por parte de certificadoras 'convencionales'.
- ◆ El entendimiento de que el proceso de certificación participativa es válido sólo para el mercado local, no pudiendo ser utilizado donde existe un distanciamiento entre el productor y el consumidor.
- ◆ La dificultad en encontrar un punto de equilibrio que permita generar documentos suficientes para conferir transparencia al proceso de certificación participativa, pero que no lo "descharacterice" tornándolo burocrático y oneroso e inviabilizando el protagonismo de los agricultores y consumidores.
- ◆ La baja calidad de la demanda en relación a la certificación, tanto por parte de los agricultores como de los consumidores, donde la cultura del sello muchas veces lleva a la percepción que éste es más importante que el producto o proceso de producción.



Momentos de un proceso participativo

Más información sobre Red Ecológica de Agroecología, puede visitar [www.redecovidia.org.br](http://www.redecovidia.org.br) o [www.centroecologico.org.br](http://www.centroecologico.org.br)

## Reflexiones Finales

Es claro que los procesos de certificación orgánica también se están diversificando por lo cual todos merecen un reconocimiento y apreciación según el interés de los productores. Es preciso decir que los mercados internacionales solo están aceptando productos orgánicos certificados según los reglamentos y normas aplicadas por las certificadoras acreditadas; mientras que los mercados locales pueden enriquecerse y desarrollarse con la ayuda de productos garantizados en forma participativa.

Considerando lo anterior, debemos aceptar la actual diversificación de los sistemas de certificación de tal modo que, además de ser auditores orgánicos de tercera parte, también contribuyamos como consumidores orgánicos en los procesos locales involucrándonos en posibles sistemas de certificación participativa aportando la experiencia sobre los diferentes riesgos que supone cualquier proceso de certificación.

Finalmente, solo queda recalcar que, ningún proceso de auditoría y certificación, de tercera parte o participativo según el caso, no funcionara adecuadamente, sino se fijan los principios de la Agricultura Orgánica como pilares de su funcionamiento. Esto es el más allá de las normas y reglamentos; es la esencia de los Productos Orgánicos.

Fuente: *Revista Semillas No. 21; comunicaciones personales; Libro: 4 casos de estudio sobre Sistemas de Garantía Participativo de IFOAM.*

## Latinoamerica en Acción

Recopilado y Editado por Carlos A. Escobar F., Conexión Ecológica

### La Agricultura Ecológica en la Televisión

A partir de Agosto de 2007, con el apoyo del equipo de producción de la Fundación Agrecolandes ([www.agrecolandes.org](http://www.agrecolandes.org)), en la televisión nacional boliviana se difundirán las experiencias de productores, procesadores y comercializadores de productos ecológicos a través del programa "Bolivia Ecológica TV". Esta iniciativa de comunicación y promoción se suma a otras, principalmente, desarrolladas en radio y medios escritos con la



Momentos del I Congreso Científico Latinoamericano de Agroecología

diferencia que ocupara un espacio televisivo permanente cada fin de semana favoreciendo la visualización real de la agroecología. Fuente: *Fundación Agrecolandes*

### Encuentro de Científicos Agroecológicos

Durante los días 13, 14 y 15 de desarrollo el I Congreso Científico Latinoamericano en Agroecología organizado por la Sociedad Científica Latinoamericana en Agroecología (SOCLA) en Colombia con la participación de diferentes movimientos sociales y agroecológicos como el Grupo de América Latina y el Caribe de IFOAM (GALCI), el Movimiento Agroecológico Latinoamericano (MAELA) y el Movimiento Sin Tierra (MST), entre otros; así como diversos académicos de diferentes países. En total estuvieron presentes más de 400 personas de 13 países tales como México, Cuba, Brasil, Perú, Chile, Argentina y Colombia. El Congreso permitió conocer algunos avances en investigación adelantados en la región en diferentes aspectos como suelos, control de plagas, evaluación de sostenibilidad y comercio orgánico. Además, se convirtió en un escenario para la reflexión sobre el rol de la investigación en el fortalecimiento de los movimientos agroecológicos y sociales. Fuente: *GALCI – Conexión Ecológica*

### Próximos Eventos

- ◆ En Guatemala, del 1 al 5 de Octubre, se llevara a cabo el Segundo Encuentro Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Productoras y Productores Experimentadores y de Investigadores en Agricultura Orgánica. Mayores informes en [www.aolatc.50g.com](http://www.aolatc.50g.com)
- ◆ En Brasil, del 16 al 18 de Octubre, se llevara a cabo Biofach América Latina y Exposustentat 2007; una de las ferias más importantes del sector orgánico donde productores y comercializadores latinoamericanos tienen la oportunidad de encontrarse con compradores internacionales. A la par de la feria, otras actividades de índole académico se llevan a cabo. Mayores informes en [www.biofach-americalatina.com](http://www.biofach-americalatina.com)

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## GMO NEWS

### Rules on GM-free food relaxed as Europe lowers the purity standard

The definition of GM-free food was relaxed on July 12 as European ministers decided to allow a greater proportion of genetically-modified material into products that could still be labelled "GM free".

EU agriculture ministers decided that food could include up to 0.9 per cent of genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) instead of the 0.1 per cent currently used as the gold standard by leading supermarkets. Ministers also agreed a Europe-wide system for labelling foods as organic so long as they contained at least 95 per cent organically-produced material – the same threshold already in use in Britain.

The 0.1 per cent figure for GMOs represents the lowest trace detectable and green campaigners believe that it forces producers to do all they can to keep their food "pure".

Although it will remain prohibited to use GMOs knowingly in organic farming, adopting a 0.9 per cent threshold for labelling food "GM free" will encourage lower standards in keeping produce truly organic, they argued.

Mariann Fischer Boel, the EU Agriculture Commissioner, said that it would be too costly for farmers to achieve higher purity in their organic produce.

Ms Boel said: "It can be very tempting to say 'zero tolerance' but that wouldn't work in real life. To avoid accidental contamination it would be so expensive to produce organic products that it would damage the market completely. It would simply kill the sector."

Helen Holder, GMO campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe, said that the ministers had opened the door for more GMOs in organic food, arguing that "accidental or technically unavoidable" contamination would be routinely interpreted as meaning "acceptable".

She added: "Now that the EU has declared traces of genetic contamination in organic crops acceptable, organic farmers will find it increasingly difficult to keep their crops GM-free."

"The EU must urgently introduce cross-border legislation to protect organic and conventional farmers from genetic pollution." Marco Contiero, of Greenpeace, added: "The lax attitude taken by the European Commission and

some member states disregards the preferences of European consumers and may put the whole organic sector at risk.

"In practice, low levels of genetically modified material could start slipping into all organic food." Food industry experts, however, were last night confident that supermarkets would maintain their stricter 0.1 per cent threshold for GM material in organic produce. This standard is also the one accepted by the Soil Association, the UK's leading organic certification scheme, and is the threshold that also operates in Austria and Italy.

A new EU logo to denote organic foods, however, will make it easier for shoppers to find organic produce in supermarkets. But as it is not due to come into force until January 2009, many producers are hoping that the EU will speed up the design of the logo so that they can use it voluntarily before that date.

Francis Blake, president of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture in the EU, and standards officer at the Soil Association, said that, although organic associations strived for 100 per cent organic ingredients, there were some products that did not have an organic status. These include acorns, passion fruit, dried raspberries, dried redcurrants, Persian peppers, horseradish seed, fructose, rice paper, some pea proteins, sugars and starches.

The labels will apply mainly to organic ready meals, processed foods such as an organic apple pie, organic cereal bars and organic muesli.

A cereal containing less than 95 per cent organic ingredients cannot be described as organic. However, a fruit bar with 80 per cent organic oat flakes could be described as 80 per cent organic but it would not qualify for the EU logo.

The new standards, however, make it easier to introduce farmed fish products under the organic label. In Britain farmed salmon is already certified by the Soil Association and the Organic Food Federation.

Lawrence Woodward, director of Elm Farm Research, said that he hoped the new labelling system would be subject to strict inspection rules. He said that the EU had not yet agreed these implementation regulations.

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By David Charter and Valerie Elliott

## USDA Ag Biotech Advisory Committee Gets an Earful

During the August 1, 2007 meeting of the USDA agricultural biotechnology advisory committee (AC21), Bill Freese of the Center for Food Safety performed a public service by providing some actual data and facts on the adoption of GM crops and the impacts of GM crops on pesticide use.

In his presentation, Freese pointed out that herbicide-tolerant (HT) crop varieties account for 81% of global GM-crop plantings, and therefore, dominate the overall impact of agricultural GM technology. Plus, this is not likely to change any time soon since HT crops account for half of the dozen new GM technologies under review by USDA for "deregulation."

Citing recent USDA data and past work by the Center's Chief Scientist Chuck Benbrook ("GE Crops and Pesticide Use in the U.S.: The First Nine Years"), Freese dismantles the myth that GM crops have reduced pesticide use. One major reason – the emergence of several glyphosate resistant weeds that are spreading fast across the nation's major production regions.

To combat resistant weeds in soybean fields in 2006, compared to 2005 herbicide treatments, conventional farmers had to apply: 42% more glyphosate (Roundup and related products); and, 129% more 2,4-D (known to trigger reproductive problems and birth defects in agricultural communities).

## Agencies plan public meeting on GE food policy

The Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety at USDA and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are sponsoring a public meeting Sept. 6, from 2 to 4 p.m. to discuss the agenda items coming before the Seventh Session of the Codex ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology (FBT) and to present draft U.S. positions on the agenda items. The Seventh Session of the FBT will be held in Chiba, Japan, Sept. 24-28. The public meeting will be held in Room 0161 South Agriculture Building (Basement), 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC (please enter at Wing One). You can access the documents related to the Seventh Session of the FBT at

[http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fedreg/a070808c.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a070808c.html)

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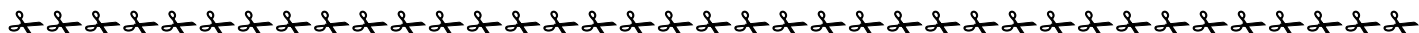
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- " Farming with the Wild: Enhancing Biodiversity on Farms and Ranches; Written by Daniel Imhoff, Watershed Media, 182 p.; 2003; \$20.00
- " Organic Dairy Farming, Edited by Jody Padham, Community Conservation, Project coordinated by MOSES, 156 p.; 2006; \$15.00
- " Building Soils for Better Crops (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), by Fred Magdoff and Harold Van Es. 240 pp. \$20
- " COG Organic Field Crop Handbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Expanded and Rewritten. Published by Canadian Organic Growers. An invaluable resource. While preserving the best of the now out-of-print and no longer available first edition, this edition is updated to include info on GMO's, E. coli issues in manure, and many additions to the crop section. 222 pages, spiral bound, \$30.00.
- " Managing Cover Crops Profitably, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, published by Sust. Ag Network, \$19.00
- " Organic Livestock Handbook, published by Canadian Organic Growers. Edited by Anne Macey, 179 pp, spiral bound, \$30.00
- " Organic Tree Fruit Management, published by COABC, 240 pages, \$30.00
- " Steel in the Field, published by Sustainable Ag Network, 128 pages, \$18.00
- " Introduction to Certified Organic Farming. Published by REAP Canada, 200 pg. 25.00



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## 2007 Calendar

**Sept 12 – 15** Risk Management Strategies for Beginning and Small Farmers and Ranchers Conference, Milwaukee, WI. [www.growingpower.org/rma\\_conference.htm](http://www.growingpower.org/rma_conference.htm)

**Sept 15** 2nd Annual CEFS Fall Festival. Includes demonstrations, tours, hands-on activities for children, workshops. Goldsboro, NC. [www.cefs.ncsu.edu/calendar.htm#fallfest](http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/calendar.htm#fallfest)

**September 25-26** Organic Processor Trainings, Baltimore, MD. Samsom & Associates has trainings for processors to learn to efficiently integrate the requirements of the NOP into the processors existing Quality Assurance Programs. More info at 802-933-4172. [www.samsomassociates.com](http://www.samsomassociates.com)

**Sept 25-26** Organic Trade Show and Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance's Fall Conference Corvallis, OR. For more info contact Doug Sinko, at 541-396-2409 or Joe Ficher at 541- 290-0699.

**Sept 26** Organic Harvest Festival, Expo East, 3 – 7pm, Baltimore Convention Center

**Sept 27 – 29** New Hope Natural Products Expo East. Baltimore, MD. BioFach America running concurrently. [www.newhope.com](http://www.newhope.com), [www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org)

**Oct 3 – 4** Fi India , Mumbai, India  
Fi India 2007 will open your eyes to everything that's happening in the booming Indian food industry. [www.fi-events.com](http://www.fi-events.com)

**Oct 6** Hoes Down Harvest Festival, Full Belly Farm, Capay Valley, Yolo County, CA

The 20th annual Hoes Down Harvest Festival at Full Belly Farm offers educational farm tours, a magical children's area, hands-on workshops, farm products and an abundance of organic food, live music and good times! [www.hoesdown.org](http://www.hoesdown.org), (800) 791-2110 or [info@hoesdown.org](mailto:info@hoesdown.org)

**Oct 10 – 12** BioFach Japan 2007  
Tokyo, Japan. [www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org)

**Oct 16 – 18** BioFach America Latina 2007  
São Paulo, Brazil. [www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org)

**Oct 22** 2nd Annual Business of Organic: Certification, Finance, and Marketing, San Francisco, CA  
[www.almevents.com/conf\\_page.cfm?pt=includes/webpages/webwysiwyg.cfm&web\\_page\\_id=7911&web\\_id=1017&instance\\_id=29&pid=625](http://www.almevents.com/conf_page.cfm?pt=includes/webpages/webwysiwyg.cfm&web_page_id=7911&web_id=1017&instance_id=29&pid=625)

**Oct 27- Nov 2** Organic Exchange's 5th Annual Conference and Marketplace, Pacific Grove, CA. Explore the state of the Global Organic Fiber Industry. Workshops and Networking Events. Post Conference: Organic Cotton Farm Tour and Retail Tour. Find out more at [www.organicexchange.org/meetings/current\\_meeting.php](http://www.organicexchange.org/meetings/current_meeting.php)

**Oct 30 - Nov 1** Introduction to Holistic Management: Whole Farm/Ranch Planning  
Albuquerque, New Mexico.  
[www.holisticmanagement.org/new\\_site\\_05/Info/IR7\\_calendar.html](http://www.holisticmanagement.org/new_site_05/Info/IR7_calendar.html)

**Nov 1 - Nov 4** Healing the Land: Practical Solutions to Complex Problems: HMI 2007

Gathering. Allan Savory, Joel Salatin, Thom Hartmann, and Temple Grandin. Albuquerque, NM.  
[www.holisticmanagement.org/new\\_site\\_05/Info/IR7\\_calendar.html](http://www.holisticmanagement.org/new_site_05/Info/IR7_calendar.html)

**Nov 2 - Nov 4** The 30th Annual Conference of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy. Pittsburg, NC. [www.albc-usa.org](http://www.albc-usa.org)

**Nov 12 – 20** IOIA and PCO will cosponsor Basic Crop, Process, and Livestock Inspection Training in central Pennsylvania. IOIA and BCS will cosponsor Advanced Organic Inspection training in conjunction with this event. Info on p. 3 or [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net),

**Nov 13-16** Animal Welfare Rating Auditor Training in State College, Pennsylvania. Sponsored by Whole Foods Market. See page XX for info.

**Nov 13** Smart Energy Management in Agriculture, Winters, CA. A training program for farmers, dairies, ranchers and wineries. Maximize Efficiency & Conservation for Savings. Info: [www.eco-farm.org/energy\\_or](http://www.eco-farm.org/energy_or) 831-763-2111 x4

**Nov 26 – 29** NOSB Meeting, Washington, DC

**Nov 27** NOSB Organic Aquaculture Symposium, more info at: [www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/MeetingAgendas/Nov2007/OrganicAquacultureSymposium/CallForAbstractsPapers.html](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/MeetingAgendas/Nov2007/OrganicAquacultureSymposium/CallForAbstractsPapers.html)

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



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