

## Organic Fraud Comes Back Home to Roost

Three Nebraska farmers were convicted of knowingly marketing nonorganic corn and soybeans as certified organic as part of a multimillion-dollar fraud scheme, according to US federal prosecutors.

Tom Brennan, 70, his son James Brennan, 40, and family friend Michael Potter, 41, pleaded guilty to felony wire fraud October 12 in federal court in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Prosecutors say they each received \$2.5 million from 2010 to 2017 from sales of corn and soybeans falsely marketed as certified organic.

Potter's attorney, Clarence Mock, said the scheme was led by Missouri businessman Randy Constant, president of Jericho Solutions Inc. (aka "J.S."), who marketed ordinary corn and soybeans as organic. Constant, of Chillicothe, Missouri, hasn't been charged. The investigation is ongoing.

Court documents indicate that the Brennans and Potter are cooperating, signaling that additional charges may be pending against the owner of Jericho Solutions.

The case is getting attention in the fast-growing organic agriculture industry, which usually handles violations of

federal standards through regulatory action instead of criminal prosecution.

Prosecutors allege that the farmers conspired to dupe customers nationwide who thought they were buying grains that had been grown using environmentally sustainable practices.



All three operated an organic farm in Overton, Nebraska that was certified through USDA's National Organic Program. They also farmed other fields that weren't certified. The farmers "convinced themselves to look the other way" while Randy Constant marketed the non-organic corn and soybeans they grew

in Overton, Nebraska, as certified organic, attorney Clarence Mock said. They received significantly higher prices for their grain than they would have on the open market, and improperly rationalized their involvement because they weren't personally making misrepresentations to customers, he said.

Mock told the Associated Press: "It's an old story. These are good, otherwise law-abiding people who were lured into one of these situations where if it's too good to be true, you know it can't be true. Obviously there were  
see **Fraud**, page 27

## Notes from the Chair

by Margaret Weigelt

In October IOIA submitted written and oral comments to the National Organic Standards Board in response to the August 17, 2018 [Compliance Accreditation and Certification Subcommittee's Proposal for Training and Oversight of Inspector and Certification Review Personnel](#).

The IOIA BOD would like to heartily thank **Kelly Monaghan**, accredited IOIA inspector member, for her excellence in presenting IOIA's comments to the NOSB at the October meeting in St Paul MN. Note that she also participated in a pre-NOSB OTA GOSCI (Global Organic Supply Chain Integrity) task force meeting See **Notes**, page 4

**AGM 2019  
Mexico!  
Highlights on  
page 7  
Full details at  
ioia.net!**

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

Terrance Layhew, Wisconsin  
 Laura Davis, Massachusetts  
 (upgraded from Supporting Member)

**Supporting Members:**

Lau Ackerman, California  
 Rebecca Anderson, Wisconsin  
 Ariane Bormann, Mississippi  
 Amy Butler, Pennsylvania  
 Dawn Custer, Pennsylvania  
 Michael DiMarco, New York  
 Mary DiMatteo, Washington  
 Brad Dixon, Missouri  
 M-karim Ezzat, Minnesota  
 Jordan Finkelstein, New York  
 Anders Gurda, Minnesota  
 Jesse Hawker, New York  
 Lisa Henninger, Pennsylvania  
 Jason Hoehn, Illinois  
 Mary Ellen Holliman, Texas  
 Alyssa Kellogg, Colorado  
 Jeffrey Klein, New York  
 Karen Lehto, Minnesota  
 Robert Majchrzak, Iowa  
 Moses McCord, North Carolina  
 Emily McEachern, BC, Canada  
 Tricia Murtha, Pennsylvania  
 Liana Nichols, Minnesota  
 David Obermiller, California  
 Tanner Radig, Illinois  
 Rachael Savage, Kansas  
 Frederick Schafer, Connecticut  
 Enid Wonnacott, Vermont

**IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

— CHAIR —  
 MARGARET ANNE WEIGELT  
 — VICE CHAIR —  
 CHARLES 'CHUCK' MITCHELL  
 — TREASURER —  
 HEATHER DONALD  
 — SECRETARY —  
 LOIS CHRISTIE  
 — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT LARGE —  
 PHILIPPE DESCAMPS  
 — DIRECTOR —  
 RYAN SITLER  
 — DIRECTOR —  
 MATT MILLER

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

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

**WEBINAR Training Schedule**

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

**200 Level Self-Directed Training - AVAILABLE ON-DEMAND**

IOIA/AGA Self-Directed Grassfed Dairy Inspection Training for Organic Inspectors  
 Presenter: IOIA Trainer Harriet Behar \$350 IOIA members

**100 Level Webinar - January 15 & 18, 2019** IOIA Member cost: \$325

Open Enrollment - NOP Crop Standard  
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two, 3 hour sessions.  
 Presenter: Garry Lean and/or Margaret Scoles.

**200 Level Webinar - February 5 & 8, 2019**

Livestock Feed audits: Grazing and non-grazing season  
 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Pacific) Two, 2 1/2 hour sessions.  
 Presenters: Jonda Crosby and Nate Powell-Palm  
 IOIA Member cost: \$275

**200 Level Webinar - February 6, 2019** IOIA Member cost: \$275

IOIA/OMRI COR Processing and Handling Input Materials  
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific). One, 3 hour session.  
 Presenter: Doug Currier, OMRI Technical Director.

**100 Level Webinar - February 12 & 15, 2019**

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

**100 Level Webinar - February 19 & 22, 2019** IOIA Trainer: Luis Brenes.

Open Enrollment - NOP Processing Standard  
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two, 3 hour sessions. IOIA Member cost: \$325

**100 Level Webinar - March 26 & 29, 2019** IOIA Trainer: Luis Brenes

Open Enrollment - NOP Processing Standard IOIA Member cost: \$325  
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two, 3 hour sessions.

**200 Level Webinar - April 9 & 16, 2019** IOIA Trainer: Kelly Monaghan

Audit Trail/Balance: Processing In/Out Balances, Traceability & Recipe Verification  
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two, 2 hour sessions. IOIA Member cost: \$275

**Webinar Discount Note:**

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

**Fraud Prevention in the Receiving Department  
 300 level Webinar - Coming in April 2019**

Formerly called "Client Procedures when Using Uncertified Handlers", this webinar is presented by IOIA Trainer Silke Fuchshofen. We're pleased to offer this comment from participant and IOIA Inspector Member Brian Baker:

*"Please consider this brief evaluation of the IOIA Training Webinar conducted I found the subject very timely, given the growing awareness of how a loophole in the USDA National Organic Program Regulation is being used to commit fraud. Silke was very well prepared and well organized. The cases she presented were clear and relevant. The amount of time spent was about right for a webinar. I find most webinars have trouble sustaining my interest for more than an hour. Having the break in the middle was important, and the flow might have been a little better if the program was more interactive throughout. However, the Q&A at the end was very informative.*

*"Best of all, I was able to apply my new knowledge within a week of the training. I inspected a fresh produce handling operation that was purchasing organic fruits and vegetables through a non-certified broker. The broker was using the certificates of different growers, but the audit trail documents were not linked to the growers. I was all over it. It happened to be my evaluation inspection, and both the evaluator and the ACA were impressed with my ability to address that apparent non-compliance. "In short, I think the training was very useful and should be offered again."*

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

### **January 25, 2019 Guelph, Ontario, CANADA, Advanced Inspector Training**

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training in conjunction with the Guelph Organic Conference. The training will be held at the Holiday Inn Guelph Hotel & Conference Center. This training will include a review of key updates and revisions to the Canadian Organic Standards; the new Aquaculture Standard; Aquaponics; Cannabis, Use of Un-listed Sanitizers and Cleaners; and what's new with Organic Insects. "Inspector's Corner" presentations will include Rochelle Eisen of BC "Travels with Rochelle - Inspector Thoughts on the Road" and Monique Scholz on "Songbird Conservation & Haying Practices". Moderator for the day will be Bill Barkley (IOIA Canadian Committee Chair) with expert presenters including Hugh Martin (Chair of the CGSB Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture) on standards issues; Joel Aitken on sanitizers and cleaners; Tim Rundle (Creative Salmon, Canada's first farm-raised salmon producer to achieve organic certification) on aquaculture and aquaponics; and John Warner (IOIA inspector member) on Cannabis production and certification. [For more info and to register](#) or see the Canada page (p. 9)

### **February 27 - March 1, 2019 Huatulco, Oaxaca, MEXICO**

#### **Advanced Inspector Training with IOIA Annual Meeting March 2**

Organic Apiculture Inspection Training is offered Feb. 27 and will include a field trip. The Mexican regulations for honey are quite similar to the EU regulations. Most of the organic honey marketed worldwide is certified to the European regulation. As an alternative to the apiculture training, participants may opt to take in a day of field trips (coffee and apiculture). Advanced Inspector Training is available on Feb. 28 and Mar. 1 - register for one or both days. **Day 1** will focus on "The Anatomy of an Investigation" to better equip inspectors how to detect and deter fraud with the goal of maintaining integrity in the system. A fish-bowl conversation is included. **Day 2** will focus in the morning on a Mexican organic regulations with a Gap Analysis of US NOP/Mexican regulations, an overview of the Mexican regulations, and a look at trade agreements with a focus on US border import/export issues. Speakers from the Mexican Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development have been invited. Esteban Macias Padilla, Comercializadora G.A.B, will speak in the afternoon on Intricacies of the Soil Plant relationship, especially in container growing and greenhouses, including pest management. He will cover organic plant nutrition, pest management (use of bioinsecticides, biofungicides, oils and extracts), soil microbiology, use of DNA analysis and other modern tools for understanding the complexity of biological systems, and abiotic factors in production, etc. Simultaneous translation services will be provided.

All events will be held at the Isla Natural Beach Huatulco Hotel. Closest airport is Huatulco (HUX), a drive of less than 30 minutes to the hotel. Taxis are readily available. This location is about 5 hours' drive from Oaxaca City, if you plan an extended stay. The hotel has two private beaches and two pools (one with children and one without).

For more information and to register, see the Annual Meeting page (p. 8) and/or <http://www.ioia.net/AGM.html>

### **IOIA Basic Trainings 2019**

The training schedule for 2019 is being established and finalized. This is not a complete list for 2019, but just a beginning list of basic trainings IOIA will offer:

- Austin, Texas - Basic Crop & Basic Processing Training - March / April 2019 (probably running concurrently)
- Marin County, California - Basic Crop & Basic Livestock Training - June 2019 (probably running concurrently)
- Coralville, Iowa - Basic Crop Training & Basic Livestock Training - August 2019 (running sequentially)

Please watch the IOIA website for updates and further details in the weeks to come.

For further details please email IOIA Training Assistant, Teri Lindberg at [ioiassistant@rangeweb.net](mailto:ioiassistant@rangeweb.net).

**Spanish language Basic Farm Inspection Training** with Eco-LOGICA in San Jose, Costa Rica, originally scheduled for late 2018, is being rescheduled in **early 2019**.



## Notes, from page 1

with USDA Deputy Secretary Jenny Tucker for further developing OTA's GOSCI best practice recommendations. Thank you Kelly for your stalwart commitment to global organics and to the IOIA!

While helping develop IOIA's response to the NOSB CACS proposal a number of questions came up for me. In addition to possessing the core knowledge and skills or relevant credentials, and experience with agricultural production, organic standards and food processing - what are the essential characteristics, traits and talents needed to be an effective professional organic inspector?

To begin addressing the question of what the essentials are, I wondered whether there's a certain personality type that works in favor of those who aspire to be an organic inspector professional. Could a person, for instance, use results from the Myers Briggs test or the Strong Interest Inventory to discover whether their personality and interests appear to mesh with the job of an organic inspector? I took a look online at a number of other professions with elements in common with inspecting - the most interesting being auditors and forensic accountants.

How do auditors test on the Myers Briggs and the Strong Interest Inventory? The MBSI results I looked at [careerassessmentsite.com](http://careerassessmentsite.com) indicated that auditors generally fit the *ESTJ personality type* - Extraverted, Sensing, Thinking, and Judging. [Online-accounting-degrees.net](http://Online-accounting-degrees.net) restated that accounting is a profession where there is no one personality type, though they went on to note that 42 percent of accounting students tend to fall into the *ESTJ personality type*. People in the *ISTJ personality type* also can work well



**BOD Chair Margaret Ann Weigelt**

as accountants - Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, and Judging.

The most interesting piece I found was a research white paper at the AICPA (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants) titled '[Characteristics and Skills of the Forensic Accountant](#)' written by Charles Davis, Ramona Farrell and Suzanne Ogilby. The white paper was developed by surveying 770 respondents that included 50 academics, 126 attorneys and 603 CPAs.

The white paper authors conclude as follows, "This research study and the results revealed that analytical characteristics remain the foremost trait that forensic accountants are expected to possess. The results also revealed that communication skills, the ability to simplify the complex, and the ability to present opinions in a legal setting are critical to the effectiveness of the forensic accountant." The white paper was designed to elicit the Top 5 items from the respondents for traits, characteristics and skills of the Forensic Accountant. "Analytical" traits and abilities were in the Top 5 for all respondents with the "Detail-oriented" "Inquisitive" and "Persistent" traits complementing the analytical.

As you can see the common essential traits and characteristics determined in this particular research for forensic accountants is also relevant for the organic inspector professional. I think doing a similar research white paper regarding the organic inspector professional has value, especially as IOIA creates new ways to enhance analytical abilities, develop investigative intuitiveness, and the communication skills required of inspectors for effective fraud detection.

Let us know what you think on any topic including this one. Email any member of the IOIA BOD, IOIA Executive Director Margaret Scoles, or even better, start a conversation with other inspectors on the Inspector's Forum. Thank you always, inspectors, for your grass roots hard work and dedication as the ears, eyes, nose and heart of the organic certification process.

### Side note:

I have concerns for young people entering the organic inspection profession. It seems likely by the time a young person reaches sufficient levels of experience and so on to be a superior inspector they could be in their 30s and wanting to start a family. Is the traveling aspect of the profession conducive to that? Is there adequate compensation to raise a family? My gut says no.



Though this is not the topic I wish to address in this article, this requires further investigation. I frequently bring up the subject when talking to young inspectors, and so far they seem to agree with my conclusion.

## Notes from the ED IOIA 2018 Review – A Year in the Life as *the Voice of Inspectors*

by Margaret Scoles

Inspectors are accustomed to working in the background. Our work is confidential. Sometimes we are so invisible that we aren't even invited to the table. IOIA strives to make sure the voice of inspectors is heard loud and clear. It is heartening how well others in the organic sector usually listen.

A year ago, IOIA was invited to participate in the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary seminar of the International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) in New Delhi, India. First draft of the resulting report "*Improving Conformity Assessment in Organic Production Systems*" was released to the participants for review on August 29. IOIA was a contributor to the seminar and took seriously our opportunity to review and offer edits. We look forward to the final draft, expected by the end of this year.

IOIA participated in both pre-NOSB meetings of the National Organic Coalition. I attended the meeting in April in Tucson. Margaret Anne Weigelt, our BOD Chair, represented us in St. Paul. NOC conference calls have been helpful in preparing for and following up with the NOSB meetings.

We provided written comment to the CFIA Enhancing Openness and Transparency Policy (see summer issue). The next day, I received back this comment: "*Thank you for providing thorough written feedback regarding our consultation. We appreciate the IOIA taking the time to provide meaningful comments on where and how the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) can increase openness and transparency. We also appreciate the offer of IOIA to engage with CFIA in the further development of open and transparent activities and practices. We would like you to know that your comments are duly noted and will be used in our analysis to further develop the CFIA's*

*approach to transparency.*" That kind of personalized feedback doesn't happen every day!

The voice of inspectors was heard in written and oral comments to the NOSB at both the spring and fall meetings. This was a critical year for inspectors, with proposals on Inspector Qualifications and Training on both meeting agendas. Margaret Anne (BOD Chair) and I toiled for about 8 hours to hone our written comments on the CACS Proposal on Training and Oversight of Inspectors and Certification Review Personnel. Kelly Monaghan presented IOIA's oral comments, distilled down to the prerequisite 3 minutes. As an IOIA accredited inspector, IOIA Trainer, and long-time member, her comments on our behalf were well-received. "*IOIA is especially pleased to see that this document focuses equally on inspectors and on reviewers...*" "*IOIA's opinion - what is needed is not a 'one-time improvement' but a structure that allows and supports all players to continually improve their skills and abilities*". IOIA supported the list of proposed topics for training and recommended adding fraud detection, forensic investigation, and risk-based criteria for audit selection. "*IOIA looks forward to working collaboratively – not competitively – with certifiers, the ACA, and the NOP to design and continue to improve an effective, standardized system.*" And in closing, "*IOIA knows that qualifications, training, and continuing education are all important for inspectors and reviewers. **But those factors alone do not guarantee a good inspection.** Well-trained and qualified inspectors can do a poor job without good forms, adequate time, or appropriate compensation. Competence should be outcome based, and not simply measured by having the appropriate qualifications and training. Any proposal should incor-*



**Patti Bursten Deutsch, who nominated Margaret for the award and crusaded to collect and submit at least 70 letters of endorsement, here with Margaret (Patti's original inspector mentor), at the OTA Awards celebration.**

*porate those elements so that a professional inspector is well prepared and supported to conduct efficient, rigorous inspections and find fraud if it exists."*

**What's new for the Voice of Inspectors?** IOIA is working with inspector member Terrance Layhew to put together podcasts about the upcoming annual meeting. And we are deep in conversation with a potential provider for a dramatically upscaled on-line community. As you go into this holiday season, a deep thank you to former apprentice Patti Bursten Deutsch for nominating me for the OTA Leadership Award, which led to a spectacular week with my family in Baltimore. It was special to see my first mentors there – Bob Quinn and Tom Harding, who taught my first and second inspector trainings back in 1988 and 1989 (respectively).

In October, I filled in as a Peer Field Evaluator. My husband drove me

**See ED, page 26**

## SECTOR NEWS

### 2018 Farm Bill

On December 10, the US Congress released [the text for the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018](#), or the 2018 Farm Bill.

The bill has big wins for organic farmers and consumers, including provisions that will help safeguard organic integrity and generate jobs, economic growth, and environmental benefits in communities across the United States.

Organic groups are expressing appreciation to Senators Roberts and Stabenow, and Representatives Conaway and Peterson, for their leadership in advancing the bill, as well as to the many organic champions in Congress who were instrumental in advancing organic agriculture in this legislation.

Big wins include:

- The bill includes a historic boost for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) and increases funding to “baseline” status (\$50 million annually) by 2023, which will help ensure the continuation of this program beyond the life of the current Farm Bill. The cutting-edge research conducted through the OREI program helps farmers become more productive, efficient, and profitable and leads to the development of new agricultural practices that can be used by conventional and organic farmers alike.
- The bill continues funding and authority for the organic certification cost-share program
- The bill expands resources and authorities for organic import enforcement, which will bolster efforts to deter fraud.
- The bill provides \$5 million in funding for organic data collection efforts. This data is vital to policymakers, researchers, and industry participants alike to maintain stable markets, create risk management tools, track production trends, and curb fraud in the organic sector.

This bill represents a significant step forward for organic agriculture in multiple arenas and is a good first step.

### Court grants OTA hearing over OLPP

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia has decided to hear a case brought by the Organic Trade Assn. (OTA) against the USDA over the agency’s failure to put into effect new organic livestock standards. The court ruled on Oct. 4 to deny USDA’s petition to dismiss OTA’s lawsuit challenging its withdrawal of the OLPP rule, and grant OTA a hearing.

In March, USDA withdrew the final Organic Livestock & Poultry Practices (OLPP) regulation, which was supposed to go into effect in May. The agency contends that the Organic Foods Production Act does not give the National Organic Program the authority to regulate animal welfare. OTA is arguing that this claim is a radically different view from any administration since the adoption of the National Organic Program and one that cannot be legally supported.

OTA is also arguing that USDA violated the Organic Foods Production Act by failing to consult with the National Organic Standards Board on this rollback of the final organic animal welfare standard and unlawfully delayed the effective date of the final livestock standards developed by industry and in accordance with the established rule-making processes. The suit argues that USDA’s repeated delays were issued without the required public process and that USDA arbitrarily ignored the overwhelming public record established in support of these organic standards. *From [feedstuffs.com](#)*

### Release of pan-Canadian industry survey on food fraud

<https://www.cirano.qc.ca/files/publications/2018RP-22.pdf>

### New study says consuming organic may lower cancer risk

But we already knew that, didn't we?

### Gould leaves IFOAM - Org Int'l

Beginning in January 2019, David Gould, formerly of IFOAM - Organics International, will begin a new position as Head of Global Sustainability Programs for **FoodChain ID**.

### Lewin leaves CCOF for Intact

Starting January 1, Jake Lewin, formerly of CCOF, will be serving as CEO of Intact US.

Intact US is the North American arm of [Intact GmbH](#), the developers of the Ecert and other innovative software products for the verification, assurance, accreditation and certification markets, in organic and beyond. Lewin will be leading Intact’s expansion in the US and into additional sectors while supporting product innovation and positioning as the de-facto standard tool as it transitions to a true Software as a Service (SaaS) offering globally. Lewin brings a background in certification and audits to this cutting-edge technology and plans to expand the market footprint in North America. Intact’s software currently certifies more than 38% of US National Organic Program entities and will be a huge player in food safety, management certification, supplier audits and more. It contributes to efficiency, cost reduction and performance in the certification sector. The growth, industry leadership, and operational excellence of CCOF certification can be credited in many respects to Intact’s flagship product, Ecert.

Lewin and Intact will be based in the Santa Cruz, CA area. Visit Intact Integrity Management Solutions [www.intact-systems.com](http://www.intact-systems.com).



## Fall 2018 NOSB Review October 24-26 meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota

Along with discussion and votes on proposals, the committee heard an update from Jennifer Tucker, NOP Deputy Administrator. She reviewed the priorities for the 2019 fiscal year, which include efforts to enhance strong organic control systems, farm to market traceability, robust standards, and collaboration with the community. One highlight of the presentation examined efforts to reduce fraud from imported products. The update covered efforts to address recommendations in the most recent peer review.

### Some substances Petitioned for addition to the list (not a complete list) and voted for listing:

**Crop - Sodium Citrate:** Petitioned for the use as a processing aid for producing blood meal, which is then used as a crop fertility input in organic production. Motion: Add sodium citrate to §205.601 with the annotation "For use as an anticoagulant in the production of blood meal." Vote: Yes: 15 No: 0 Absent: 1

**Handling - Tamarind seed gum** was petitioned as a nonorganic agricultural ingredient allowed in or on processed products labeled as "organic," §205.606. It may be used as a thickener, stabilizer, or gelling agent for various foods and exhibits properties that may be different than other materials currently being used. Motion: Add tamarind seed gum, limited to non-acid-hydrolyzed forms at §205.606. Vote: Yes: 11 No: 4

**Proposal: Strengthening the Organic Seed Guidance October 2018:** This proposal continues work from Fall 2017, offers a proposed rule change and seeks to address the barriers to adoption of organic seed/planting stock use and to suggest updates to Guidance on Seeds, Annual Seedlings, and Planting Stock (NOP 5029) to increase use of organic

seeds. The proposed rule change would amend §205.204 Organic seed and planting stock practice standard to add:

*(i) Improvement in searching, sourcing and use of organic seed must be demonstrated every year with the goal of using only organic seed and planting stock.* Motion: Adopt the proposed rule change. Vote: Yes: 15 No: 0

**Paper pots:** Although these have traditionally been allowed based on the allowance of newspaper for mulch or compost stock, in February 2018, NOP told certifiers that paper chain transplant pots were not allowed. Motion: Send a resolution to NOP for an extension for use of the paper pots until NOSB can re-review the material so that potential rule-making may proceed. Vote: Yes: 15, No: 0

***NOP announced to accredited certifiers on Nov. 5th that it is extending the allowed use of paper pots until further notice. Any additional changes to the allowance for the use of paper pots will be communicated to certifiers to provide adequate time to make any adjustments. All certifiers may allow paper pots during this extension period.***

**2020 Sunset Reviews -** Sunset date is March 15, 2022. All materials were voted for re-listing, with the following exceptions.

**Crop: Sucrose octanoate esters.** Used as an insecticide. NOSB vote to remove: Yes: 11, No: 4.

**Livestock: Sucrose octanoate esters.** Used as a miticide for honey bees. NOSB vote to remove su-

crose octanoate esters (SOEs) from §205.603(b): Yes: 10, No: 5



NOSB members with new chair Harriet Behar front and center.

### Compliance, Accreditation & Certification Subcommittee (CACS) Proposal: Developing Criteria for Risk-based Accreditation Oversight:

In an effort to establish criteria for assessing risk factors during evaluations of USDA-accredited certifiers, the proposal lists factors that may contribute to a higher risk of fraud, and offers a starting point for addressing them.

Motion: Adopt the proposal; Motion passed unanimously.

**Inspector Qualifications and Training:** This proposal summarizes public comments regarding improvement of inspection skills, identifies specific areas that could be included in the USDA's Learning Management System (LMS), an online platform for remote learning, and provides further approaches for strengthening inspector and review staff. Topic areas, along with additional specific suggestions, include improved accounting skills, technical and interpersonal skills, and inspector training and oversight. Suggestions for operators include adding sample documents and how they interact to the organic system plan to aid inspector review. Rec-

see NOSB, page 27

## 2019 AGM and Advanced Training in MEXICO

IOIA will celebrate the annual meeting and advanced training in the lovely destination city of **Huatulco, Oaxaca**, on the Pacific Coast of Mexico at Isla Natura Beach Huatulco in Huatulco, Oaxaca, Mexico, from February 27 - March 2. Advanced training with simultaneous translation is planned on February 27 - March 1, followed by the Annual Meeting on March 2. See page 3 for full details on the advanced training.

### Events including field trips:

- February 27. Optional daily except Sunday. [Hagia Sofía](#), (English and Spanish website) is an agro-ecological development with exotic flowers, fruit trees, butterflies, birds, river, and waterfall. Tour is approximately 4 hours. Pickup at hotel.
- February 27 (Morning). Organic Coffee Production and Processing.
- February 27 (Afternoon). Apiculture (beekeeping). Please do not register for this field trip if you are allergic to bee stings.
- Annual Meeting - March 2. Keynote - Luis R. Elizondo, Pro Organico, *Mexico's Organic Market, today and tomorrow*
- Field trip March 3 (afternoon) Parque Nacional (National Park) Huatulco

### Venue and Accommodations

[Isla Natura Beach Huatulco](#) Website is English/Spanish. This is a **5 star hotel** with simple, ecologically friendly decor. The hotel has two private beaches and two pools (one with children and one without).

IOIA's room block is available **until January 11**. Please register early and indicate which nights you need lodging to ensure that you have a room. Rooms are not guaranteed after that date. **Please do not book at the hotel outside this room block. IOIA's fees for accommodations are all inclusive of meals and beverages** (including alcohol). If you book outside the hotel or stay off-site, you will not be able to eat within the IOIA group. A limited number of rooms have been booked for Feb. 25, Feb. 26, Mar. 4, and Mar. 5 for those who wish to extend their stay before or after the training. Transport to/from the airport is not included. Children are welcome! There are a wide variety of activities and tours available on-site at the hotel.

**Amenities include:** Two bars (one on the beach); Digital safety box; Wi-fi - free – reliable in meeting room and common areas, less so in lodging rooms; A/C, **and lots more, please see our website for full information - [www.ioia.net/AGM.html](http://www.ioia.net/AGM.html)**

### Cost for accommodations:

US \$150/day for private room (king bed), all-inclusive - meals, snacks, and beverages.

US \$75/day for shared room (2 double beds), all-inclusive - meals, snacks, and beverages.

Latin American inspector members - \$125/day for private room or \$50/day for shared (2 persons)

### Fees:

Registration Fee for the two days of the advanced training is \$350/day

(Not including accommodations), \$25 per day IOIA member discount

Feb 27 Field trips - \$50 each, including transportation

\$25 for annual meeting registration on March 2

[Register Here](#)

**Huatulco - specifically Santa Cruz de Huatulco** – was recommended by the AGM Organizing Committee. Huatulco is located in the state of Oaxaca where the foothills of the Sierra Madre del Sur mountains meet the Pacific Ocean approximately 500 km south of Acapulco. Huatulco is an area of 9 bays with Santa Cruz being one of the smaller and somewhat less touristy.

Huatulco has been designated as Mexico's only "Green Globe Certificate Community", a sustainability award. Huatulco was the first sustainable tourist community in the Americas and the third worldwide to receive this award.

**A huge thank you to the 2019 AGM Organizing Committee!** Daniel Torres Nava, Ernesto de la Rosa, Martha Castillo, Chuck Mitchell, Garth Kahl, Corinne Kolm, Perla Perez Allende, Luis López Moreno, Daria Zovi, Philippe Descamps, Arthur Bassett, Homero Blás Bustamante.



Luis Elizondo,  
Keynote Speaker





## Canada Organic News

### The First Advanced Training of 2019 is at Guelph!

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training in conjunction with the Guelph Organic Conference. The training will be held at the Holiday Inn Guelph Hotel & Conference Center on January 25 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This training will include a **review of key updates and revisions to the Canadian Organic Standards**, with Hugh Martin (ON), Chair of the CGSB Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture. Tim Rundle (BC), General Manager of Creative Salmon Co. Ltd, and the chair of the Pacific Organic Seafood Association will walk through the **Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standard** – CGSB 32.312-2018 and provide a status update of Organic Aquaculture in Canada, followed by a facilitated discussion on **aquaponics**. Creative Salmon was Canada's first salmon producer to achieve organic certification. John Warner (ON), an IOIA inspector member currently working with Canopy Growth Corporation, will speak on **Cannabis production and certification**. Cannabis can now be certified organic in Canada, based on recent legalization. In the US, Cannabis remains outside the scope of the NOP, even in states where it has been legalized for recreational use. [Click here to learn more about Canada's new Cannabis Act](#). The federal Cannabis Act came into effect on October 17, 2018 and made Canada the second country in the world, after Uruguay, to formally legalize recreational use of the plant. Whereas decriminalization would simply remove laws restricting the use of cannabis products, as has been implemented in many countries, legalization allows for the taxation of legally produced cannabis.

Joel Aitken (ON), IOIA inspector member, will address the prickly issue of **"Use of Unlisted Sanitizers and Cleaners"**. **"Inspector's Corner"** presentations by IOIA inspector members include Rochelle Eisen (BC) "Travels with Rochelle – Inspector Thoughts on the Road" and Monique Scholz (QC) on "Songbird Conservation & Haying Practices".

**"Jiminy Cricket! – Organic Insects"** regarding what's new with Insects in organic certification rounds out one of the most scintillating IOIA's training agendas for some time. And it is not just the agenda that offers something new. [Entomo](#) has donated cricket flour to the catering staff for making cookies. They promote their insect flour as a high protein and healthy alternative to grain. According to the Entomo website, pound for pound, cricket flour has twice the protein of beef. The Canadian organic standard includes a section for insects, another area where Canada is a step ahead of the US.

The moderator for the day will be Bill Barkley (IOIA Canadian Committee Chair).

IOIA typically sponsors advanced organic inspector training every two years at Guelph. The last training was in 2016, so inspectors have not had this opportunity for three years. Although this is focused as an event for Canadian inspectors, this agenda succeeds in offering topics equally interesting to inspectors on both sides of the US/Canada border. Though Cannabis cannot be certified organic in the US, there are many clean, green verification programs.

Deadline to apply is January 4, 2019. Registration fee is \$300 CAD, including lunch, with a \$25 discount for IOIA members, and an additional \$25 discount for CSI and Pro-Cert inspectors. CSI and Pro-Cert are sponsors of the training event.

For full information and to register, see [http://www.ioia.net/schedule\\_onsite.html](http://www.ioia.net/schedule_onsite.html)



*Calling all inspectors – you are invited!*

*What: Inspector Social – beverages and light fare provided*

*Where: Brass Taps Campus Pub, University Centre, University of Guelph*

*When: Jan. 26, 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.*

*Why? Networking opportunities for inspectors are few and far between!*

*Hope to see you there!*

## Livestock Feed Audit Webinar February 5 & 8

### A timely addition to your continuing education agenda

This 200 level course is geared for inspectors, reviewers and organic program managers with an understanding of livestock inspection and review. Participants must have approval from IOIA to sign up for this webinar course if they have not taken the Basic IOIA Livestock Inspection course or a 100-level Livestock Standards Webinar.

The webinar is taught by experienced organic inspectors [Jonda Crosby](#) and [Nate Powell-Palm](#). Jonda and Nate both are livestock inspectors, and have been certified organic operators - Nate with a multi-species livestock operation and Jonda as a crop farmer and livestock feed handler.

This course will specifically cover topics to prepare webinar participants to evaluate organic certification requirements for ruminant and non-ruminant livestock operations, including:

#### Feed:

- Types of feeds - forages, grains, concentrates
- Dry matter content of feeds
- Supplements and additives

#### Feeding and Pasture Systems:

- Examples
- Good working models
- New innovations

#### DMD and feed consumption for:

- Ruminants – cattle - dairy and beef, sheep
- Non-ruminants - poultry, hogs

#### Computing feed audits for:

- Dairy - cows and heifers
- Beef - finishing group
- Ducks
- Hogs - finishing group
- Poultry – layers, pastured broilers, non pastured broilers
- Sheep



For full details and to register, please see our [website](#).

## Welcome New IOIA Trainer Nate Powell-Palm

Nate Powell-Palm first landed in the world of organics when he applied for and received certification from the Montana Department of Agriculture in 2008 as Cold Springs Organics. He currently farms organic grains, grazes organic cattle, and is working to find that perfect dryland crop rotation. Since 2012, Nate has worked as an organic farm and livestock inspector, adding the processing scope in 2013. He has worked as a full time inspector since 2014, conducting inspections year round since then. A livestock expert with significant experience inspecting dairy operations, Nate is excited to help improve the auditing tools available to inspectors working with livestock around the country. Nate holds a B.S. in Environmental Science from Montana State University.

Nate's first organic inspector training assignment was as assistant trainer in California in 2017. Since then, he has assisted at basic crop and livestock inspector trainings and developed materials for livestock feed audit training. In December 2018, he joins Jonda Crosby as a co-trainer for **200 Level Webinar - Livestock Feed Audits, Grazing and Non Grazing Season** and Nathaniel Lewis as a co-trainer for **IOIA Residue Sampling & Responding to Test Results**.





## MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

### Philippe Descamps

Based in Cahuita, Costa Rica, I was born in Belgium 56 years ago and I have lived in Central America since 1988. My mother language is French; I speak fluent Spanish and basic English.

From 1988 to 2000 I worked in projects with a Belgian NGO and local partners in Nicaragua and Costa Rica, mostly promoting and teaching organic agriculture to small farmers. I started to work as an independent inspector in 1999 mostly with Eco-LOGICA and a few times for Ecocert, Soil Association, Aurora-Demeter, OneCert and OTCO. Since 1999 I have done organic inspections in 12 countries of North, Central and South America and worked as a trainer in eight countries. I am a multi-standards inspector: organic, biodynamic, bird friendly, GAP, and GPP. I have been IOIA lead trainer in basic farm inspection courses in Puerto Rico and Ecuador and in an advanced course in Costa Rica in 2014. I was second-instructor in IOIA courses in Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico collaborating with Luis Brenes. I participated as invited speaker in several IOIA – Eco-LOGICA courses in Costa Rica.



Philippe on his farm in Cahuita, Costa Rica

I have written several handbooks on certification, specifically for growers groups and small farmers. I love to teach, so I like to work in training and writing manuals for inspectors and farmers.

I am an organic farmer, member of a PGS certified (Participatory Guarantee System) growers group.

Academic education: Agronomist, Haute Ecole d Enseignement Supérieur Agricole et Technique du Hainaut (Belgium), 1986

My goals for the next years are to help IOIA become more “really International”; improve inspectors commitment (being firm with organic principles but sensitive with rules interpretation); keep certification simple; and avoid the “ISO-Rigid Disease” that negatively effects certification process.

I am currently serving as BOD Liaison to the Scholarship, Training Advisory, and Latin American Committees.

## Board Nominations - Deadline January 1

If you are interested in serving on the IOIA Board of Directors or if you wish to nominate someone, please contact Eric Feutz, Chair of the Membership/Nominating Committee at [ebfeuz@gmail.com](mailto:ebfeuz@gmail.com).

Only inspector members are eligible to serve on the BOD.

Candidates must be nominated at least 60 days before the annual meeting. Deadline to nominate or be nominated is January 1, 2019.

The Nominating Committee will prepare a slate of candidates. Each candidate must provide a candidate bio.



## Baltimore - OTA Awards Dinner, September 12, 2018



L to r, all 3 Awards winners. Margaret (left), Growing Organic Industry Award; Stephanie and Blake Alexandre (center), Organic Farmer of the Year Award, Javier Zamora (right) Rising Star Award.

© 2018 Erika Nizborski Photography

"I am astonished to be standing here before you tonight. I discovered in June that I'd been nominated and that the whole organic industry must have known about it except for me. So my colleagues were a little disappointed because they were trying to keep it a secret. But I consoled them by telling the truth – nothing makes an inspector happier than discovering something really big that everyone was trying to keep a secret!"

"I'm especially happy to be in Baltimore to receive this award. IOIA was founded right here in Baltimore in 1991.

"Thank you to OTA for this award. Inspectors are not accustomed to getting awards. We are used to being pretty invisible. And all the work we do is confidential so all of our work is behind the scenes. But without at least one annual inspection of every certified operation, none of us would be here. Rigorous inspections by competent, well-trained, ethical inspectors is critical to maintaining organic integrity. It's what we do – we make sure organic really means organic."

"Nothing could mean more to me than to be nominated by a former apprentice who has now been inspecting for 20 years. And to be introduced by another apprentice." And it is true that I may be the "grandmother of inspectors" now because I've trained quite a few second-generation inspectors and I'm really proud of that."



Margaret enjoys listening as current chair Margaret Anne Weigelt and former chair Ib Hagsten engage in deep conversation at the dinner. © 2018 Erika Nizborski Photography

Thank you's – "My father, who loved the smell of the newly turned earth and taught me that the only true wealth is the land. My mother, who taught me to garden and to be kind.

And my aunt Marla who passed on all of her Rodale publications at a time when I might have gotten interested in things like lipstick."

"As my friend and former BOD Chair Ib Hagsten said when he accepted a national award, *'When you see a frog on a fencepost, you know he didn't get there by himself.'* It is nice to be up on this fencepost, but I wouldn't be here without a lot of other people.

"Generally when there is an award like this one, there is a family that has sacrificed. Mine is all here with me tonight. And I thank them. My husband Bob of 44 years -he's the one who read the first ad for an organic inspector and said, "Hey, this sounds like you".



L to R – Miles McEvoy, Chuck Mitchell, Ryan Sittler, Bob Scoles, Margaret, Patti Bursten Deutsch, Heather Donald, Margaret Anne Weigelt, and Ib and Patricia Hagsten. The intent was to consolidate all IOIA inspector members for a photo, but no one noticed that Matt Miller had left for a moment. He was there! Just missed the photo...



**Baltimore - OTA Awards Dinner, September 12, 2018** continued



**Lori Wyman, center, jumps at the opportunity to engage with Board members Matt Miller and Heather Donald. © 2018 Erika Nizborski Photography**

“My first inspection was 30 years ago. I never really looked back. It became my life work - inspections, inspectors, and inspector training. As one farmer after another opened their books and their operation to me, I realized what an honor it was to be the inspector – often the first inspector. And I always asked this question in my opening meeting, “Why did you decide to go organic?” I wasn’t a purist; I was just curious. Which is an incredibly important thing for an inspector. Their stories changed me – “

“We are too little to allow ourselves to be fractionated. I’m not saying that we should all oppose any fractions. I’m saying the opposite. We just need to be clear

that we are all in the big fight together. We are still neighbors and friends. We need to maintain bridges.”

R. Buckminster Fuller said, “*You can never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.*” And that’s what we are doing.”

To hear Margaret’s entire remarks, visit IOIA on Facebook for a homemade video (a bit rough, but all there), that captures this moment and makes it possible for all inspectors worldwide to share in it.



***We're so proud of you, Margaret!***



**It's a lovely award, in more ways than one!**



**Family photo. Margaret’s entire family was present, including her husband, son, daughter, and grandchildren. Her sister and daughter-in-law were also there for support. © 2018 Erika Nizborski Photography**

## Balancing In and Out - Down Under

A few years ago, many certifiers and accrediting bodies targeted **in/out balance** as an inspector training topic for continuing education. IOIA developed robust 200 level training on In/Out Balance and Traceability for Crops and Processing, plus 300-level for Processing. These live webinars were successful and continue to fill up each year.

Kathe Purvis, IOIA Inspector member based in Western Australia, took a look at the 200-level training materials in English and metric units. She proposed to develop a self-paced audit training, to be trialed in Australia. All three scopes (Crop, Livestock, Processing) would be included. As self-directed learning is a current and key focus of the IOIA Training Institute, IOIA welcomed her proposal. IOIA paid Kathe to develop the training, which was developed with NASAA Certified Organic (NCO). NCO provided most of the funding and agreed to trial the training module.



Kathe pledged to deliver an introductory session via webinar and to complete anonymous assessments of participants as they completed the training at their own pace. However, the initial proposal was changed and the introductory webinar session eliminated. After a few participants trialed the module they provided feedback which identified their preference for face to face training options. So rather than adding the webinar back in, an in-person preparatory training day was trialed.

On October 7, Kathe delivered a special session Audit Trail (Preparatory to Self-paced) in Stirling, South Australia. IOIA & NCO were the cosponsors. Twenty four certification staff and/or inspectors took the training.

To date, eight participants have completed the self-paced course and assessment exercises.

The training is providing IOIA critical and useful information as we explore how to best provide training on complex subjects in a self-paced format.

## Training in Korea - A Double Take

Working with the Isidor Sustainability Research Institute, IOIA delivered training twice during the summer in Korean language. On June 22, IOIA trainer Isidor Yu delivered advanced training, “EFA update/ Organic Crop Inspection as Process Certification”, in Anyang, Republic of Korea to 20 participants. Two months later, on August 23 and 30, he delivered a supplementary webinar course for “Korea EFA Update/ Tracing Test for Farms” with 15 participants. The next training in Korea in early 2019 will also be cosponsored by Isidor’s institute and will focus on basic crop inspection.





## Mexico Update - Developments from the Organic Sector

By Ana Negrete

According to the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, Mexico is one of the largest and fastest growing markets for U.S. agricultural products. Enthusiasm about the benefits of consuming organic products has also led to growth in this industry, creating new opportunities for U.S. organic exporters. To support and oversee this growth, the Mexican government has increased their involvement by developing and implementing federal organic standards. The implementation, interpretation and monitoring of the standards are the responsibility of the Mexican Secretariat of Agriculture (SAGARPA) by means of the National Service of Health, Food Safety and Quality (SENASICA), a department within SAGARPA.

SENASICA has approved 16 organic certification agencies and is actively working to ensure consistency and correct implementation of the standards among them. SENASICA is also negotiating organic equivalency arrangements with the United States, the European Union and Canada, although negotiations with the United States are farthest along. Once an equivalency arrangement is achieved, one certification to the USDA organic standards will be sufficient for organic producers in the U.S. who want to sell organic products in Mexico.

Although there has been consistent progress in the implementation of the standards, and in negotiations for equivalency arrangements that will promote trade, there are still challenges faced by producers who want to get their products certified organic and access this premium market. Carrie-Anne Palmeri, Latin American Program Supervisor for Oregon Tilth, explains, "As a country with a relatively new national organic regulation and associated national organic market, Mexico's organic sector is still very much aimed toward the organic export industry. This means that in addition to meeting the demands of the national regulation, organic growers must also comply with international organic regulations, as the organic export sector still represents the lion's share of organic sales in Mexico."

Despite this, the number of certified organic producers continues to grow, and this growth is also reflected in the inputs industry. OMRI has seen consistent growth in the number of input suppliers in Mexico who apply to have their products OMRI Listed to the NOP regulations. In total there are close to 1,000 products amounting to 15% of OMRI Listed products that originate in Mexico. Guillermo Cadena is president of the Mexican Association of Producers, Formulators and Distributors of Organic, Biological and Ecological inputs (AMPFYDIOBE) and his company also has products that are OMRI Listed®. He estimates that the demand for compliant inputs has grown 17-20% in recent years. He attributes this growth not only to growth in Mexico's organic industry, but also to the use of these products in conventional agriculture.

Currently, the 16 approved certification agencies in Mexico are reviewing inputs one by one, usually as a service for clients who want to use those inputs. There is no public list of compliant inputs for Mexico, and certification agencies are bearing the significant burden of input review. Many input companies fill this gap by having their products verified for compliance to the U.S. NOP organic standards, by material review organizations such as OMRI that maintain a public list of inputs. However, the need for centralized input review specifically for the LPO standards will most likely continue to increase over time alongside the expanding organic industry in Mexico.

*Ana Negrete is the International Program Manager at OMRI (the Organic Materials Review Institute). She holds a B.S. in Agribusiness Management from Universidad San Francisco de Quito in Ecuador and an M.S. in Agronomy from University of Puerto Rico where she studied the effect of cover crops on organic sweet pepper yield and soil microbial communities. Ana completed her IOIA farm inspector training in 2010, and her professional experience includes working as an inspector and reviewer for Quality Certification Services (QCS), and internships at organic farms in Ecuador and the U.S. Ana joined OMRI in 2013 where she started as a Product Review Coordinator.*



This article was edited for length. To read the full article, please visit [OMRI.org/mexico-update](https://OMRI.org/mexico-update) or en espanol at [OMRI.org/es/actualizacion-mexico](https://OMRI.org/es/actualizacion-mexico).

## Vermont - Advanced Training - Organic in the Supply Chain

Vermont Organic Farmers worked with IOIA to develop advanced training at Knoll Farm in Waitsfield, in the scenic Mad River Valley on September 16. Eleven participants included certification and inspection staff from MOFGA, CSI, VOF; experienced inspectors; and consultants. Miles McEvoy of Olympia, WSDA, was trainer for the day, assisted by Garth Kahl and Margaret Scoles. McEvoy, the former Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program, now inspects, consults, and trains and is an IOIA inspector member.

Learning objectives:

- Improve working knowledge of all organic trade arrangements.
- Obtain solid understanding and skills in evaluating compliance of organic supply chains.
- Understand import process at US Ports of Entry regarding phytosanitary certificates, fumigation, and risks to organic integrity.
- Improve skills for conducting risk-based inspections and investigations.

The training was evaluated well by participants, although many said they would have preferred more time for the topic.



**Miles McEvoy, Trainer for the day, in the swing. Everyone who has known Miles for as long as IOIA as known him thinks he now looks younger (even without the swing) than when he filled his weighty role at NOP.**

## Basic Crop Inspection Training Course - South Burlington, Vermont



**At left, participants in the Vermont Basic Crop course. At right, participant Sara Surabian reviews farm map with the farmer. Photos courtesy of assistant trainer Jonda Crosby**



## Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training, South Burlington, Vermont

by Nate Powell-Palm

Twenty five individuals, hailing from 15 states, brought in the fall season with the Basic Livestock Course in Burlington, VT. From seasoned crop inspectors looking to add the livestock scope to their inspection toolbox, to reviewers getting a look at the certification process from the other side of the inspection report, an informative and stimulating week was had by all.

Vermont Organic Farmers supported the training with their executive director and two lead certification specialists taking the course. Kyla Bedard, of VOF, found four exceptionally dynamic farms to visit on the field trip day of the course. All dairies, the three milking cow operations ranged between 60 and 80 cows, with 7 participants getting the chance to see a robotic milking operation up close. The fourth group inspected a goat dairy, instructed by group leader Jennifer Megyesi, a seasoned inspector based in Vermont.

Due to the high demand, 18 participants spent the week working with Garry Lean, Lead IOIA Trainer and Nate Powell-Palm, assistant trainer. A smaller class was composed of 7 individuals and worked with Margaret Scoles, IOIA ED and Lead Trainer and Garth Kahl, assistant trainer.

While many parts of dairy inspecting are consistent across the country, one attendee noted that the opportunity to experience dairy management systems which would not be seen in their home state was, “eye opening”. A common point of discussion throughout the week was how, as inspectors, it’s a privilege and great responsibility to contribute to the protection of the organic seal integrity through rigorous inspections, and always working towards developing greater expertise.



Outstanding in their field.



Participant Kim Knapp, well-versed in body condition scoring of dairy cows, explains the art to Joseph Black.

Basic training participants with Lead Trainer Garry Lean and Assistant Trainer Nate Powell-Palm seated at opposite ends of the sofa.





## Structured Apprenticeship for Organic Inspectors

by Jonda Crosby IOIA Training Services Director

IOIA and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) teamed up to provide crop and livestock apprentice inspection training for 16 participants in September 2018. The apprentice inspection training included real inspections led by trainers while participants practiced inspecting protocols, processes and articulating concise and accurate reports for the crop and livestock operations. IOIA appreciated our Cosponsor KDA and key staff support from Brent Burchett and Joscelyn Strange, Group Leader Trainers Megan Clark (Crop) Eunice Schlappi (Livestock).

From the start IOIA designed the training as a structured apprentice inspection so that trainees would work in as small group of apprentices and an IOIA Lead Trainer using real inspections to maximize learning, deepen the inspection process understanding and to help new inspectors fine tune a process for completing thorough inspections and concise and accurate reports.

Next Steps: IOIA plans to offer 3-4 Field Training opportunities in 2019. We will be offering this course as both an in-house training or as an open enrollment cosponsored training. We also plan to develop one-on-one mentor/apprentice opportunities. Another option we have explored is using "Inspection Training Sites" where we could partner with the farm, processor, ranch owner to host the training in every region of the country and in every scope, on an as needed basis. We are hoping to work with more member inspectors with an interest in becoming Field Trainers.

Evaluation Results included the following affirmations:

- *The course allowed me to gain much more confidence conducting an inspection.*
- *I'm ready to hit the field.*
- *I am grateful for this class, it is condensed training and allows great feedback.*
- *I feel prepared to do inspections on my own.*
- *Of course, continued improvement comes with practice and continuous learning, but I feel prepared to begin inspections in this scope.*
- *Day 1 was a not-so-perfect farm and we got to see how an experienced inspector handled potential issues. Day 2, we got to practice inspecting a nice farm that would be easy for an experienced inspector (they had good records, no issues).*
- *As a seasoned inspector, this was very helpful to improve my techniques and to get more detailed and helpful for assisting me in being a better inspector for documentation and reviewers.*



Participant Suzanne Wickham, PA

Evaluation Results included the following recommendations:

- *More inspection tools and computer programs are needed and a demonstration on how to use them.*
- *Examples of DMD/DMI worksheets being use in the inspection industry.*
- *The Trainer inspector completing the inspection versus the participant team inspection seemed to be more effective for learning and easier for the producer.*
- *Add classroom time to discuss the most common errors in inspection reports.*
- *I honestly feel this course could be added as an extra day or two to the Basic Crop course.*
- *I would have been willing to pay all IOIA trainer expenses to teach just me in a one on one 2-day session and I think others (new inspectors) would like that option too.*

## Kentucky Field Training, continued

For the Kentucky training, Field Trainers were charged with conducting a systematic, thorough inspection with a heavier emphasis on auditing than we had provided in earlier trainings. IOIA added the extra emphasis on auditing as it is a weakness identified by IOIA trained inspectors coming out of the Basic IOIA inspection courses by certifiers and also from participants in earlier Field Training courses.

We designed the training format as a two-day training with the expectation that at the end of the two days trainees would have completed two pre-inspection reviews and 2 inspection reports. The pre-review process is a pre-course assignment that is completed before arriving for the training. This allows the trainees to more carefully review the information from the OSP, prior inspection documents and outcomes – rather than completing the review the night before the training inspections as is done with basic trainings.

Day 1 is designed so that a small group of trainees shadow a Field Trainer as they complete an inspection. Trainees are encouraged to ask questions at key junctures of the inspection and fully participate in the inspection debrief. Draft reports are due on Day 1, reviewed by the Field Trainer, updated by the trainee and submitted as final before the training concludes. Successful reports are scored as “Satisfactory”, often with additional comments to recognize the well written portions and to suggest other language for explaining a report finding.

On Day 2 two or three trainees lead the inspection as a team, with the Lead Trainer providing feedback as needed. Both days of the inspections included extensive post inspection group debriefing and clarifications. Participants wrote inspection reports using the KDA forms while Field Trainers provided feedback and report edits. Final submissions of the Day 2 reports were also scored.

Some of the keys to successful field training are strong cosponsor support, adequate field trips within reasonable driving distance, Field Trainers who are highly experienced in the scope, and small group size for the inspections.



Training Services Director Jonda Crosby, center back row, with field training participants.



## Building a New Advanced Inspector Training:

### "Assessing Biodiversity and Natural Resources on the Farm" - by Jonda Crosby

IOIA's goal for this training was to make this learning experience an eye opening and confidence-building opportunity for both experienced inspectors and for those who are not sure how to go about inspecting or reviewing for Natural Resource and Biodiversity Conservation (NR-BC) on farms. And to prepare inspectors to assess NOP Guidance 5020 – by learning the key visual cues and indicators for assessing the soil, water, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife, and other features on farms; as per "Role of Inspectors in Policy and Procedures of the 5020 Guidance", it states: "Inspectors must be qualified to assess compliance with 7 CFR § 205.200. More specifically, inspectors must be able to recognize and evaluate areas where: 1) natural resources and biodiversity are already conserved; 2) conservation projects are planned; and 3) improvement is needed."



Trainers for the course in Ohio included 3 amazing farmers that were identified by OEFFA and were quite remarkable in their capacity to explain their NR & BC goals, practices and outcomes. The instructors for the training included agroecologist Jo Ann Baumgartner (Executive Director of the Wild Farm Alliance); geologist Tony Fleming; and Bryan Lee, Ohio NRCS State Archeologist and Organic Champion.



**Jo Ann Baumgartner**

#### **Post Training Summary from Course Trainers Jo Ann and Tony:**

*"Thanks to all of you who participated in this first-of-its-kind IOIA on farm NR & BC training. We really appreciate the many excellent observations, comments, and questions that you posed during our farm visits.*

*"It also was instructive to read your final assignments and see how each person's perspective framed their descriptions of the farms. Based on your responses, it is safe to say that everyone came away understanding the key points that define and differentiate the three farms. Each of you also pointed out crucial details, some of which didn't necessarily occur to us."*

Preparation for the training included a small selection of essential background readings designed to highlight the history, regulatory requirements, and unique challenges involved in inspecting for natural resources and biodiversity, along with an overview of useful metrics to incorporate into an inspection or reviewing routine.

At the training site a brief classroom introduction by trainers Jo Ann Baumgartner and Tony Fleming focused on the key natural resources and biodiversity topics. Following the evening presentations there were three field visits to farms where participants gained hands-on experience assessing the management of biodiversity and natural resources.

A key element of the training was having participants evaluate the farm's OSP sections on biodiversity and natural resources during the farm visit. Another outcome was having participants learn key sensory indicators that can be used for efficiently and effectively assessing natural resources/biodiversity. This first-of-a-kind training featured



**Assessing Biodiversity, continued from previous page**

interactive, hands-on, field-based learning at three contrasting farms including certified organic vegetable, live-stock, and grain operation. The field experience was complemented by in-class exercises and group discussion to help sharpen skills in recognizing and interpreting natural resources on the farm while inspecting to the NOP rule and guidance on this crucial topic. A robust list of additional resources was also provided to all attendees.



**Tony discussing plants: populations, diversity and weeds.**

**Comments from course participants:**

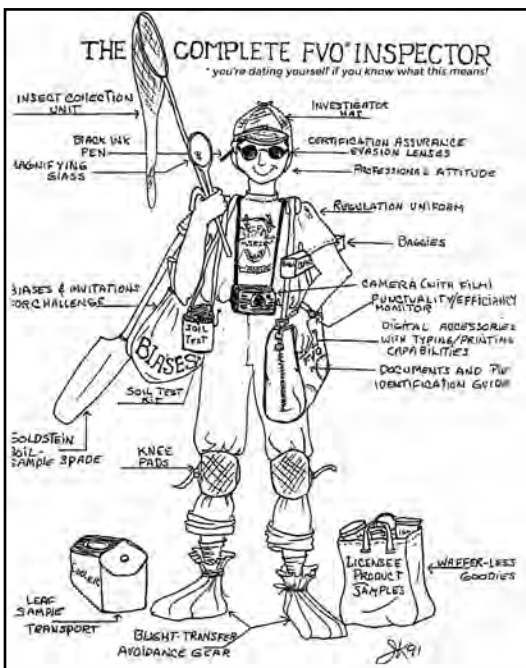
- Excellent instructors, complemented each other well. Knowledgeable, experienced, good communicators.
- NRCS Organic Champion staff member was a great addition to the training and provided core NRCS program information that can benefit organic farmers.
- Like the balance of homework, classroom and field.
- Very helpful – lots more confidence in assessing NR & BD
- I think it's great for experienced inspectors and was one of the best IOIA trainings I have attended.
- I like the shorter format concept (1 day) that was proposed as a post-course option and feel that 2 field trips would be sufficient for this training.



**Tony explains inherent soil properties.**

IOIA is planning to offer 2-3 more of these trainings in 2019. We are currently looking for certification agencies to cosponsor these trainings in several bioregions. Tony and Jo Ann have agreed to continue as instructors for future trainings.

IOIA has already started incorporating the course evaluation suggestions and will beef up the pre-course content so that the onsite field trip portion can be completed in one full day on two farms.



**Which came first, the FVO inspector or Tony?**

IOIA contracted with Craig Shroyer, organic inspector, to film the training in Ohio. IOIA plans to continue to film at future trainings so that by the end of 2019 we will have the classroom and pre-course materials portion of this training as an online course. [Click here](#) to view the video trailer.

IOIA is also appreciative of the efforts OEFFA put forth to cosponsor this training and by providing such knowledgeable farmers for this training!



**Participant Stuart McMillan (Former BOD chair)**



## Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center for Halloween – now an IOIA tradition?

by Margaret Scoles

In late October, a group of 19 participants and the trainer team of Margaret Scoles and Nathaniel Powell-Palm made their way from Montana to Minnesota for the basic Crop Inspection Training. They looked forward once again to fall foliage, corn/soybean harvest season, frost, orange hunting vests, golden maple trees, and a group photo with the flaming red fall foliage in front of the main office. Margaret Weigelt, IOIA Board Chair, of Minnesota joined both trainings for a "meet and greet" and assisted at registration. Matt Miller, experienced inspector and IOIA BOD member from Iowa, joined them as Group Leader mid-week for the third field trip. All hosts were typical corn/soy/small grain/hay operations, so the participants who came from across the US and one from Canada got a good taste of Midwestern farming practices. The participants celebrated Halloween with a bonfire and a bit of down time after their field trips. (continued on next page)



**Larry Richie, field trip host, discusses the challenges of producing food grade soybeans in a very wet spring. He hosted in 2016 and found it an interesting and enjoyable experience, so he said “yes” to an IOIA repeat.**

**There is no substitute for the real-life experience gained from the field trip. Do you use organic seed? Why is there so much foxtail? What do you do for a buffer on this side? Etc.**

**The farmer’s perspective is difficult to teach from the classroom, and is better taught by the farmer.**



## MN Processing Inspection Training

Garry Lean and Corinne Kolm shepherded 18 participants through the Processing Training which ran from November 5-9. Wendy Paulsen of MCIA and IOIA Inspector member joined them mid-week as Group Leader. Field trips hosts produce a variety of interesting organic products -- Prairie Farms Dairy (blue cheese); Gedney Foods (pickles); and Cut Fruit Express (processed fresh fruits and vegetables).

Special thanks are due MN Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) and Midwest Organic Services Association (MOSA) for assistance with field trips.



Mount Olivet now becomes the most frequently used venue in IOIA history. The tradition began with Crop training in 2011, then Crop/Processing trainings in 2012, then Crop/Livestock trainings in 2016, and now Crop/Processing. Located outside of Farmington in farm country, the center is located amid the perfect rural setting, conveniently less than one hour from a major airport (MSP), and surrounded by potential field trip hosts in all three scopes. The chef takes pride in providing organic ingredients and produces herbs, greens, and veggies in raised beds on a re-purposed tennis court. And it is a tradition worth continuing - we've already locked in the date for fall 2020!

## Traceability and Mass Balance Training - Riobamba, Ecuador

Kiwa BCS Oko Garantie - Dec 6-7, 2018



Luis Brenes, (second from right), IOIA Trainer from Costa Rica, delivered four days of Spanish language training, including 2 days of training based on IOIA's 200-level in/out balance and traceability webinar.



## Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

### August 6, 2018 (Phone Conference)

**BOD Members Present:** Margaret Anne Weigelt, Chair; Heather Donald; Lois Christie; Ryan Sitler; Philippe Des-camps; Charles Mitchell; Matthew Miller

**Agenda Item #4 – Treasurer’s Report & 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Financials (Heather):** Positive bottom line - exceeding expectations. Funding Baltimore Trip: Total expense estimated \$7000.00. Promotion Budget still available (IOIA did not attend Expo West). Sources of funding coming from Board of Director Travel and Promotion. Motion to Accept Treasurer’s Report (includes 2nd in-person BOD meeting in Baltimore) and 2nd Quarter Financials (includes the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Budget v. Actual and Balance Sheet); passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item #5 – Revised Bylaws – Legal and Bylaws Committee review for final approval (Matt)** Based on information from the legal review according to MN Statute, the Bylaws Committee recommended that the changes that were made are good. Our attorney, based in MN, stated that there was no problem with the March 3, 2018 changes. Additional changes recommended per Minnesota Law (e.g. 2.5 Special Meetings: Minnesota Law requires 10% or at least 50 members with voting rights must request a Special Meeting in order to meet the quorum. Our bylaws required 25 %.) Bylaws Committee recommended that we implement all changes that were approved at the AGM and distribute a bylaws revision ballot to approve the additional changes at the next AGM. Matt made a motion that we finalize the revisions to the bylaws that were voted on at the AGM in Charleston, SC as per the legal review that we agreed to at the AGM. All in favor.

**Agenda Item #7 – 2020 Joint AGM – Collaborate with ACA:** AGM Charleston: Suggestion was made that we are allowed as inspectors to take the NOP’s ACA trainings. There was also discussion at the ACA training in Texas. Main-tain separation between Independent Inspectors and Certifiers by having some joint training and some separate training. Venue unknown; may be earlier than typical IOIA AGMs - mid-January to mid-February.



Five members of the Board of Directors traveled to Baltimore for the OTA Awards Celebration and two days of meetings. Jenny Tucker, NOP Deputy Administrator met with the board to discuss inspector training, qualifications, and credentialing. BOD members also attended the OTA Annual Meeting, the Awards Dinner, sessions of the Expo including the updates on The Organic Industry and Organic Supply Chain Integrity, and they helped staff the IOIA booth at the Organic Community Resource Fair.

Why are they all smiling so broadly? They have just completed their official roles and are about to try a Baltimore crab cake.

(Left to Right – Margaret Scoles, ED, Matt Miller (Iowa), Ryan Sitler (North Carolina), Heather Donald (Pennsylvania), and Chair Margaret Anne Weigelt (Minnesota). Lois Christie (California) and Philippe Des-camps (Costa Rica) participated in the 2 day meeting via GoToMeeting.

**Agenda Item #9 – IOIA Representa-tion on GOSCI (Presentation by Silke Fuchshofen, guest)** Welcome Silke - Dis-cussed how she could represent IOIA (OTA: Global Organic Supply Chain Integrity); she would be willing to represent IOIA. Joined in January because she discovered black hole in uncertified vendors (over the last two years); created trainings; huge certifier interest and realized the timing was good; the topic of fraud is very important; also invited to panel at the last NOSB meeting. Wants to represent IOIA and to give her voice more weight and could report back to IOIA; has 9 years of inspections; wants to create more project-based work and to contribute on a larger scale. Silke will find out who we need to talk to at OTA. The Board is in agreement that Silke should represent us with the OTA GOSCI; direct personal contact with members of the OTA. Expectations as per Policy Manual with regard to reporting to the BOD.

**September 13-14, 2018, Baltimore, MD**  
**BOD Members Present in person:** Mar-garet Anne Weigelt, Chair; Heather Donald; Ryan Sitler; Charles Mitchell; Matthew Miller. Board Members Present via Goto-

## Board of Directors Minutes Highlights, continued

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

Meeting: Lois Christie Philippe Descamps (not in attendance Sept 13). Charles Mitchell was present via GoToMeeting on Sept. 14.

### **Meeting with Jenny Tucker, NOP Deputy Administrator: re: inspector qualifications, training, credentialing.**

**MS:** We know how to credential inspectors, but do not know how to create a recognized program. Challenges of using an existing 3rd party program (i.e. ISO 17024); expensive, bureaucratic; advantage recognized internally by many governments; or start in a country and be recognized by that government. Certifiers do not see the value of credentialing program; they are not asking for it because they are not required to have it. Presented to the Canada Organic Office (COO) some years ago; approached the ACA this year. New Inspector Credentialing Schematic introduced and reviewed. **JT:** Inspector Qualifications is considered a high-risk area which is why she is with us today. Quality of inspectors was highlighted in the ANSI Peer Review. Would an inspector credentialing system help fix the problem? We need to send signals to the market of the importance placed on the role of inspectors and signal that they are undervalued as specialized professionals. Partner with other training associations so that inspectors' continuing education can feed into a centralized credentialing system. Importance of training and continuing education. NOP's Learning Management System - whatever lives there must be public. Intellectual property – discussion.

**Set 2019 Membership dues:** Two years ago inspector dues were increased to \$200.00. With no money problems we are reluctant to go past the \$200.00 amount. Margaret S. feels the \$200.00 amount has worked. Increased the number of certification level and businesses; growing modestly in all categories. Developed Latin-American rate of \$60.00 (lower opposition to joining and doubled membership). **RS:** May change memberships and/or categories based on possibility of insurance and other add-ons (increased membership services, accreditation, etc.). He would be okay with a tiered membership structure. Consensus that we leave things the same. Motion that all dues remain the same passes unanimously.

**2019 AGM:** Heather cannot attend the AGM; Matt has agreed to be the backup Treasurer at the AGM. Importance of simultaneous translation confirmed by committee. Keynote: Committee prefers someone from Mexico; Advanced Training 2/28 and 3/1 (Thursday/Friday): Esteban Macias: Significant training session. Session on Apiculture (good choice because it is coming into the US; the Mexican standard has apiculture (EU); EU buys most of the honey). Fraud: Best Practices; Fish Bowl with inspectors who have experience with Fraud. **Board Members:** New potential board members discussed. value in connections; Losing Margaret Anne and Matt; Margaret (as potential "Special Past-Chair"): Need new chair; better to have an existing BOD member serve as chair.

**Strategy to implement an inspector credentialing program:** Need a serious action plan. We need to be cautious where we allocate resources. This is a large chunk of money to create this system; be careful not to lose the cushion. Technology?

### **Recap Jenny Tucker discussion:**

- Walked through accreditation schematic with levels, peer evaluations; explained that certifiers are unenthusiastic; she took notes and saw how trained inspectors would reduce the amount of non-compliances and amounts of audits (considered lower risk).
- Recognition: They cannot exclusively require IOIA, but they can recognize us.
- Uploading training certificates into the NOP system?



**Margaret Ann Weigelt and Ryan Sitler (center), visit at the Organic Community Resource Fair with a Rodale intern (right) who is interested in what it takes to become an inspector.**

Continued on page 26



## Board of Directors Minutes Highlights, from page 25

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

- Offered to have quarterly meetings with us; also a direct line to others in the NOP.

**Chuck:** working in the Philippines from October through April. Let me know if there is anything i can do to strengthen ties with the South Pacific.

**Information Technology:** We need to write an RFP.

### October 22, 2018 (Phone Conference):

**BOD Members Present:** Margaret Anne Weigelt, Chair; Heather Donald; Lois Christie; Charles Mitchell; Matthew Miller (Left at 6:00 pm PT); Ryan Sitler; Philippe Descamps (Joined at 5:38 pm PT)

**Agenda Item #4 – Treasurer’s Report, 3rd Qtr. Financials, & IRS 990:** Everyone has been invoiced for their annual dues. Net Income from co-sponsored trainings has doubled compared to the budget projection. Membership is projected to be a little higher than projected; Webinars are holding strong. Net profit budgeting was too high for trainings due to reduction in basic training size to 18. Motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report and Third Quarter Financial Reports passed unanimously. Motion to Approve Submission of the 990 Return passes unanimously.

**Agenda Item #5 – Inspector Professionalism: Fraud, Risk-based inspections, Follow-up to Baltimore events:** CM: Achilles heel in the inspection process will continue to happen as long as it is a segmented system and until we have complete traceability. Cross checks are how fraud is caught. MM: Pre-scheduled inspections are an issue, rather than unannounced when they don’t have time to cover up issues. Everyone should have a portion of their inspection unannounced and the document portion scheduled. MS: As an organization we can promote and make suggestions to improve the system so that inspectors can catch the fraud more easily. Prepare a list for one of our new quarterly conversations with Jenny Tucker. This cannot be done as a rule change; but rather introduce solutions to all sectors (ACA, NOP).

- Prepare a list of 10 weakness and 20 solutions. Engage the membership. Use of term Organic Integrity; Risk-Based Inspections are a piece of Organic Integrity. The BOD is the committee. Query: Request weaknesses and solutions. Uplift profession to do more risk based inspections. Action Points: Schedule a meeting with Jenny Tucker and present our list. Capture on Forum. Constant Contact; compose a query rather than survey.

**Agenda Item #6 – Inspector Protections/Liability:** Heather, Ryan, MAW with Patti Bursten Deutsch in Baltimore. Discussion:

- Act as a collective to figure out a solution to the inspector contracts so that inspectors are less vulnerable to the expenses she experienced.
- Perhaps IOIA should hire a contractual lawyer; tap into the B corporation system; legal webinar for inspectors on how to set up your business; create a best practices guide (e.g. document retention; data deletion, etc.). When we are seeking solutions, we can build the profession.
- Be more relevant to our members with regard to collective bargaining.

**Agenda Item #7 – BOD Goals Check-in; Membership Goals:** Gaining members in all categories. Discussed creating a consumer category.

**Agenda Item #10 - AGM:** We need to discuss the idea of a subsidy. Since we are collecting all the money; we could say the cost is \$75.00/person or have a subsidy for Latin America members. Cap at \$150/75; \$125/50 for Latin American inspector members.

**Submitted By Lois Christie, Secretary**

## ED, from page 5

through 3 states with my rolling office in my lap (laptop and iPhone). The farm where I met up with the inspector had fallen on hard times and had been sold. This was the last inspection and was to facilitate the orderly transfer of certification to the new owners. Turns out I was the first inspector, over 20 years ago. I had forgotten that. As I rode around in the back seat of the truck as the silent observer, watching a much younger version of myself do the inspection, this became one of my most moving experiences in 30 years of inspection. When the inspection was all over, the farmer gave me a hug and she said, “I’m glad you were here for my last inspection”. Sometimes the most important attribute of being an inspector is being human. I was so glad to be watching an inspector who understood that. It wasn’t just the farmer who shed some tears that day.

Have a great holiday season and a Happy New Year – another year where the voice of inspectors will ring loud and clear.

## Fraud, from page 1

serious misjudgments here on the part of the defendants. But their conduct could be characterized as going along for a ride in a vehicle that was driven by Mr. Constant.”

From 2010 through 2017, prosecutors said, the trio sold nonorganic grain directly to customers and to an Ossian, Iowa, company identified in court papers as “J.S.” A spokesman for the U.S. Attorney’s Office declined comment on Constant. Records show Constant voluntarily surrendered a certificate to operate in the USDA’s National Organic Program last year, when prosecutors say the fraud scheme was discovered.

Holly Logan, an attorney for James Brennan, also declined to comment. USDA records show that he voluntarily surrendered an organic certification last month.

The prosecution will send a message to farmers who may have the opportunity to profit by defrauding the growing organic market.

“These large-scale problems have an impact on the entire market and the reputation of the organic label. It’s really very fortuitous that the prosecution is taking place,” according to Mark Kastel of the Cornucopia Institute. “We want these cases to act as a really strong deterrent. They are not the rule. They are the exception. Now that this is almost a \$50 billion industry, it’s so lucrative. Fraud opportunities exist.”

“It is good that the fraud has been uncovered, and that these dishonest farmers were caught, to protect both organic farmers and consumers,” said Rosalyn Lehman, executive director of the Iowa Organic Association, adding that enforcement and oversight should be increased as demand for organic food grows.

Victims of organic fraud also include farmers who buy grain to feed their animals so they can market their meat and milk under the organic label and the consumers who pay a premium for those products.

*Ryan J. Foley, 10/12/2018 AP news site; Omaha World-Herald, 10/13/2018*

## NOSB, from page 7

ommendations include making inspector training more standardized, offer use of USDA’s Learning Management System; facilitating a comprehensive mentorship program and creating a standardized system of tracking inspector skills/knowledge and a standardized system of inspector review/feedback. Motion: Adopt the proposal; passed unanimously.

**Proposal: Genetic Integrity Transparency of Seed Grown on Organic Land:** This proposal designed to improve transparency about GMO contamination levels in seeds will go back to the committee for further work.

**New document exchange technology will facilitate exports:** Businesses and certifiers working with organic product exports to Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and Mexico can now use the USDA Electronic Trade Document Exchange System (eTDE) to submit and approve organic export certificates and send them to participating foreign trade partners.

**NOSB urged USDA to release rules on origin of livestock:** The NOSB unanimously passed a resolution in support of a final rule for the Origin of Livestock. The resolution will be sent to the USDA.

**IOIA Inspector Member to Chair the NOSB! Starting in 2019, new officers will be:**

- NOSB Chair - Harriet Behar, Outreach Specialist with the University of Wisconsin Organic and Sustainable Cropping Systems Program.
- Vice Chair - Steve Ela, partner and manager of Silver Spruce Partners, dba Ela Family Farms.
- Secretary - Scott Rice, Organic Accreditation Manager for Washington State Department of Agriculture’s Organic Program

**Next NOSB meeting:** April 24-26, 2019 Seattle, WA

The deadline to submit written comments and sign up for oral comment at either the webinar or in-person meeting is April 4. The detailed agenda and subcommittee proposals will be available on the NOSB Meeting Web page approximately six weeks prior to the meeting. Written comments can be submitted to NOSB through the open docket between now and April 4.





IOIA  
PO Box 6  
BROADUS, MT 59317 USA  
[WWW.IOIA.NET](http://WWW.IOIA.NET)  
[IOIA@IOIA.NET](mailto:IOIA@IOIA.NET)  
406 - 436-2031

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

## 2019 Calendar

**January 16 & 17** Sustainable Foods Summit, San Francisco, CA.

**January 23 - 26, 2019** EcoFarm Conference, Asilomar, CA

**January 24 - 27** Guelph Conference, Guelph, Ontario Canada

**January 29-31** NOP/ACA Training, Hyatt Regency Greenville, Greenville, SC.

**February 13 - 16** BioFach, the world's largest trade show for organic, taking place in Nuremberg, Germany.

**February 14-16,** Organicology conference Portland, [Oregon.organicology.org](http://Oregon.organicology.org)

**February 15 & 16** New Mexico Organic Farming Conference, Albuquerque, NM [www.nmofc.org](http://www.nmofc.org)  
Contact: [sagefaulkner@yahoo.com](mailto:sagefaulkner@yahoo.com)

**February 20** IFOAM North America annual membership meeting. LaCrosse, Wisconsin. [Registration required.](#)

**February 21 - 23** MOSES, La Crosse, WI

**February 22 - 24** [COABC Conference 2019](#), Vernon, BC

**February 27 - March 1** IOIA Advanced Training in Huatulco, Oaxaca, Mexico

**March 2** IOIA Annual General Membership Meeting, Huatulco, Oaxaca, Mexico

**March 5 – 9** Natural Products Expo West, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim CA

**March/April 2019** IOIA Crop and Processing Inspection Training, Austin, Texas

**April 24 - 26** NOSB Spring 2019 Meeting, Seattle.

**June 2019** IOIA Crop and Livestock training in Marin County, California

---

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