

## IOIA to celebrate 25th anniversary in Ottawa!

IOIA will celebrate its 2017 annual meeting and 25th anniversary in Ottawa on March 25. The meeting will be led by Stuart McMillan from Manitoba. For the first time in IOIA history, an BOD Chair from Canada will lead the Annual Meeting in Canada.

Ottawa, the capital city of Canada and the fourth largest city in Canada, will itself be celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2017. The historic [Lord Elgin Hotel](#), located in the heart of downtown, was selected as the host venue for both the AGM and advanced training. The locally owned hotel is celebrating its own 75th anniversary with a major renovation of all lodging rooms this year.

**Dr. Jochen Neuendorff** of GfRS, a certification agency in Germany, will be the lead speaker for the advanced training on March 24. He will speak on the topic of risk-based inspections. He leads a program for a Train-the-Trainer course on risk-based inspections as an outcome of the project IRM-Organic, [www.irm-organic.eu](http://www.irm-organic.eu). Project partners for IRM-Organic included 6 inspection bodies from four EU member states. Some IOIA members may remember Dr. Neuendorff as a speaker in Boston at the AntiFraud Initiative meeting in 2010. More recently, he

spoke at an in-house training for CSI inspectors. Inspectors who participated in that training highly recommended him as a speaker.

**More about the venue** -- Features include a fitness center, pool, whirlpool, sauna, and an onsite restaurant - Grill 41. The meeting room for the annual meeting is the Lady Elgin Room with historic paintings and large windows overlooking Confederation Park. The IOIA rate is a very attractive \$169/night, plus 3% DMF and 13% HST, totaling just under \$200 CAD or about \$150 US. Shared room options will make it affordable for all IOIA members. The current US-CAD currency exchange makes this especially attractive for US members. Taxis are about \$30 from airport.

### More about the training

Inspectors can select one or two days of training. Topics being considered include:

- **Poultry Topics for inspectors** – based on the significant revisions being implemented this year in Canada and the significant revisions in animal welfare standards that were proposed in the US.
- **Use of Technology by Inspectors** - ways to streamline inspection and save time and money.

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## Notes from the Chair

By Stuart McMillan

Oh Boy! The thick of the season is upon us inspectors as I write this Note from the Chair. In many ways, my delay in writing this Note is typical for all of us members of IOIA. Barely keeping our head afloat of updates and new requests from certification bodies we work for, revisions to the inspection plan as farmers change their availability and the inevitable changes on a personal level.

Initially, I was feeling in the thick of those issues. Overwhelmed, overworked and overlooked in our critical role in the organic certification process. On reflection, my Note is far more positive. What have I seen in the past months since the last Note? Innovation across different sectors. **Lots of new farmers.** Lots of eagerness of those new applicants who are excited about the opportunities in the organic marketplace.

This means that efforts around the world to build the capacity, capability and supply of organic grains are working.

See **Notes**, page 4

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

Caryl Zook, Vero Beach, FL

**Supporting Business:**

Envirocann, Mike Black,  
Trinidad, CA

**Supporting Individuals:**

Janice Chumley, Kenai, AK  
Kim Cook, Clermont, GA  
Robyn Doan, Fountain Valley, CA  
Michael Dunklee, Sutter Creek, CA  
Liz Milazzo, Santa Cruz, CA  
Oliver Rivas, Long Beach, CA  
Jeff Schlaf, Dearborn, MI  
Michael Wildfeuer, Portland, OR  
Hoyt (Buster) Williamson, Decatur, AL

**NOSB meeting and agenda**

The next meeting of NOSB will be November 16-18 at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel in St. Louis, MO. The [Preliminary Meeting Agenda](#) has been posted and the public comment period is now open. The draft agenda and other related meeting materials are being made available on the [Fall 2016 NOSB Meeting web page](#).

**IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

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

**On-Site Training Schedule –  
full details and applications at [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net)****Waseda, Tokyo, Japan, Farm Course - September 5-8, 2016**

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor 4 day Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training using JAS Standards as a reference. The course will be held at the Waseda Houshien Student Christian Center in Waseda, Tokyo Shinjuku, Japan September 5-8, 2016. The training language will be Japanese and the lead trainer will be Yutaka Maruyama. Please contact JOIA for more information about the course. Email: [info@joia-organic.com](mailto:info@joia-organic.com)

**IOIA/MOSA Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training, Oct. 31 – November. 4****IOIA/MOSA Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training, November 7 – 11**

IOIA and Midwest Organic Services Association (MOSA) will cosponsor two, 4.5 day trainings using the NOP Standards as a reference. The courses will be held at the Mt. Olivet Conference and Retreat Center, Farmington, Minnesota. Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training will run October 31 – November 4, 2016. Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training will be held the following week, November 7 – 11, 2016. Please contact IOIA for more information about these courses, see the IOIA website, or E-Mail: [ioiassistant@rangeweb.net](mailto:ioiassistant@rangeweb.net)

**IOIA/MOSA Livestock Inspection Field Training, November 14-15**

IOIA and Midwest Organic Services Association (MOSA) will cosponsor 2-day Livestock field training. This training is based in Viroqua, Wisconsin at Nature's Nook near Viroqua. Shared lodging is available. The course will include two days of mentored inspections on dairy or poultry inspections in the Viroqua area. This training has been developed closely with MOSA to provide actual organic inspection experience. Participants must have successfully completed IOIA Basic Organic Livestock Inspection training. Participants without that training will be considered for acceptance on the recommendation of a certification agency. For more info about the training or to apply, see the IOIA website, or E-Mail: [ioiassistant@rangeweb.net](mailto:ioiassistant@rangeweb.net)

**Basic Organic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings are under development, tentatively scheduled February 6-10, 2017 in Florida, running concurrently.****IOIA Advanced Organic Livestock Inspector Training, Ottawa, Ontario, March 23-24, 2017**

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Organic Inspector Training in conjunction with the Annual Meeting on March 25 at the Lord Elgin Hotel in downtown Ottawa. Field trips to certified operations are planned on March 22, and cultural field trip opportunities offered on March 26. This annual meeting will be IOIA's 25th Anniversary.

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

IOIA and Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) will cosponsor Organic Livestock Inspection Field Training in Wooster, Ohio. This training is based at the Best Western Wooster Hotel. The course will include two days of mentored inspections on dairy or poultry inspections in the Wooster area. Participants must have successfully completed IOIA Basic Organic Livestock Inspection training. Participants without that training will be considered for acceptance on the recommendation of a certification agency.

**WEBINAR Training Schedule  
for full details & to register please go to: [www.ioia.net/schedule\\_list.html](http://www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html)****200 Level Webinar – September 20, 2016. IOIA/OMRI COR Crop and Livestock Input Materials Update**

One, 3 hour session. Presenter: Johanna Mirenda, OMRI Program Director. This webinar will highlight the revisions to the Canada Organic Standards that were published in November 2015. Operators have one year to come into compliance with the new standards. The course is geared for persons with an understanding of COR Crop & Livestock Standards and farm inspection or certification. Course participants preferably will have completed the IOIA Basic Crop or Livestock course or the IOIA 100-level COR Basic Crop or Livestock Standards webinar course.

**100 Level Webinar – September 22 & 29, 2016. COR Processing Standards**

Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainer: Kelly Monaghan. This course will focus on topics including the Organic Products Regulations, the General Principles and Management Standards & the Standard and the Canadian Permitted Substances Lists. Participants will gain skill in navigating the Organic Products Regulations as well as the Standard and PSL, understanding the labeling rules, inspection and certification requirements. It will also cover the issues relating to Canada's two equivalency arrangements with the USA and the EU.

**100 Level Webinar – October 12 & 14, 2016. NOP Crop Standards**

Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainers: Garry Lean & Margaret Scoles. This course is designed to prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Crop Standards. This webinar training course will focus on topics including the National List of allowed synthetic and prohibited natural inputs for crop production. Participants will also gain skill in understanding and navigating the NOP regulations.

**100 Level Webinar – October 19 & 21, 2016. NOP Livestock Standards**

Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainer: Garry Lean. This webinar is a 100 level course will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Livestock Standards. This webinar training course will focus on topics including the National List of allowed synthetic and prohibited natural inputs for livestock production. Participants will also gain skill in understanding and navigating the NOP regulations.

**200 Level Webinar – November 29, 2016. IOIA/OMRI COR Processing Input Materials Update**

One, 3 hour session. Presenter: Johanna Mirenda, OMRI Program Director. This webinar will highlight the revisions to the Canada Organic Standards that were published in November 2015. The course is geared for persons with an understanding of COR Processing Standards and processing inspection or certification. Course participants preferably will have completed the IOIA Basic Processing course or the IOIA 100-level COR Basic Processing Standards webinar course.

**300 Level Webinar – November 30, 2016. Winery Inspection Webinar**

One, 2.5 hour session. IOIA Presenter: Pam Sullivan. This course will prepare participants to conduct winery inspections. The course is geared to experienced inspectors or reviewers who wish to familiarize themselves with the scope and idiosyncrasies of winery inspections. Basic wine making techniques, vocabulary, and equipment will be reviewed. There is a strong focus on identifying winery-specific organic control points during all stages of production from receiving, through labeling. Detailed information including the role of sulfur dioxide and the differences between the US and the EU standard regarding inputs will be discussed. The presentation will include sample audit trails, which will be reviewed and decoded. At the conclusion of the course, inspectors will have a practical understanding of winery operations and the confidence to tackle complicated winery inspections.

**300 Level Webinar – December 6, 2016.****Gaps in Receiving Procedures with Special Emphasis on Non-certified Wholesalers.**

One, 3 hour session. Presenter: Silke Fuchshofen. See page 6 for details.

*Watch for more Winter Webinars in November and December to be scheduled soon.*

Notes, from page 1

I was recently [quoted in an article](#) in a major farming newspaper in Canada. While the quotes were from [quite a while ago](#), my sentiments remain accurate, just with a new year of 2016. While it serves as a sobering comment on efforts to build the number of organic producers, there is part of the article I do not agree with. I am more in line with the comments from the certification manager of Pro-Cert that **we need more new entrants to the market** to make up for attrition of older existing organic farmers. And while there has been growth in the organic market, it has been far from the point to saturate the market.

What has gotten me excited recently is seeing the youth, the often elusive alchemist's gold in agriculture. "Where are the youth in agriculture" so many ask. I know the answer - **RIGHT HERE in the organic sector.** Their optimism and enthusiasm is infectious. But it is not just the young blood that I have met over the past three months; it is also the older farmers adopting new practices. The thoughtfulness regarding multi-species cover crops, integration of grazing green manures, innovation in technology by older long established organic farmers has gotten me excited.

I have seen such interesting adaptation to the various bioregions I have travelled to it gets me energized for the sector. We are NOT farming in our grandparent's image. There is embracing of new concepts, technologies and ideas. We as inspectors are at an important intersection of that. No matter how many reports you are behind, no matter how many emails have not yet been responded to – remember we all play a critical role in one of the most innovative and exciting fields of organic agriculture.

Keep your heads out of water! The season of winter conferences, trainings and webinars is upon us soon so we too can keep up with all of the developments in the field. ☘

Ottawa, from page 1

- **Others?** IOIA will be sending out a survey to members to determine topics. The goal is pertinent, useful inspector topics with broad appeal to inspectors from Canada, the US, and everywhere IOIA inspector members live and work.

**And field trips!** Twice past BOD member Monique Scholz of Quebec has volunteered to spearhead the field trips. Two field trip days are planned. On March 22, field trips will be scheduled to area certified organic operations. On March 26, groups will organize for cultural field trips to enjoy the many attractions. There are many National Historic Sites of Canada in Ottawa, including the stunning Parliament Buildings (gothic revival architecture). The city's national museums and galleries include the National Gallery of Canada and The Canadian War Museum. The Canadian Museum of History, across the Ottawa River in Gatineau, is the most visited museum in Canada. Designed by Canadian aboriginal architect Douglas Cardinal, the complex also houses the Canadian Children's Museum, Canadian Postal Museum, and a 3D IMAX theatre. Since 1969, Ottawa has been the home of the National Arts Centre, a major performing arts venue that houses four stages and is home to the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra and Opera Lyra Ottawa.

Ottawa sits at the confluence of three major rivers: the Ottawa River, the Gatineau River and the Rideau River. The city neighbors Gatineau, Quebec. The Rideau Canal is the oldest continuously operated canal system in North America, and in 2007, it was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city name "Ottawa" is derived from the Ottawa River, which is a word derived from the Algonquin word "Odawa", meaning "to trade", according to Alan Rayburn (2001). Naming Canada: Stories About Canadian Place Names.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend!



**Dr. Jochen Neuendorff** will be speaking on the topic of risk-based inspections for the advanced training on March 24.

An agronomist, he is the managing director of Ressouce Protection Ltd. (GfRS Gesellschaft fuer Ressourcenschutz mbH) since 1989.

Neuendorff is also managing director of Inspection and certification of organic farms, processors and importers of products from organic agriculture for GfRS since 1991 in Austria, Germany and other member states of the European Union (GfRS is not active in third countries as a certification body).

Since 1998, he has worked as an assessor of different accreditation bodies, mainly DAkkS, for EN 45011 / ISO 65 and ISO 17021. Various evaluations of control bodies certifying to equivalent standards active in third countries, in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Chairman of the accreditation advisory board "consumer protection" and chairman of the sector committee Agriculture, Nutrition and Sustainability of DAkkS.

Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

Succession Planning??

It was my idea. It is my responsibility to encourage and inform IOIA's Board of Directors of their responsibilities. And one of those key responsibilities is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization. That includes being prepared for when the CEO leaves. I have been sitting in this chair for more than 16 years. It would be a major change for the organization if I were to leave, retire (inevitable at some point), be replaced, or worse yet, to become suddenly incapacitated or no longer able to fulfill the role of ED. Over the past many years, I've brought up the topic to BODs. Not much ever really moved very far, partly because it was hard for me to be enthusiastic about NOT being IOIA's ED. I love my job!

Though critically important to the organization, succession planning often gets shoved to a back burner. More urgent, and sometimes less important, day-to-day issues meanwhile drain away the energy of the BOD and the ED.

A simple incident brought it to the front burner. Last December, while helping my husband load our calves for market, a 650 lb. calf inexplicably whirled around and ran right over me. Through me would probably better describe what happened. She stepped on a foot, rammed my stomach as she ran through me, and missed stepping on my head by an inch or so. Fortunately, I don't remember any of it. My head hit the frozen ground and I came back fully to my senses about 15 minutes later. As far as I know, there were no lasting ill effects from the concussion. But our emergency plan came into effect. I informed Sacha, and she informed Stuart. I went to the hospital and came back fine. The only lasting effect is that I still wake up



Ali Dermond, WSDA staff inspector, received an appreciation gift of an IOIA cap from Margaret Scoles after doing a superb job as an IOIA field trip group leader/field trainer during the Crop course.

every morning astounded and happy to be here. But it did make me think. IOIA has now lost four of our founding BOD members. Nothing is forever. And it brought the issue to the front burner for the BOD.

Our BOD met for two days of facilitated retreat on Jeju Island, Korea. The major topic was succession planning. During that time, we agreed upon some key goals.

- I would prepare a cohesive Emergency Plan so the BOD would be prepared with the key organizational documents if they were suddenly without an ED. That document was 99% complete in June and is still under review by the BOD. Articles of Incorporation, building deed, IRS determination letter for nonprofit status, insurance policies, etc....it was a long list. Documents are scanned and compiled into a solid start on comprehensive Emergency Plan. The plan is uploaded securely to the BOD section of our passworded

section of the website, available at a keystroke by any BOD member.

- The BOD would write an Executive Director job description for the person they would seek as a replacement. We are not seeking a new ED, but we need to be ready if that search needs to be initiated.
- The BOD and I discussed how to best prepare for inevitable transition and determined that we needed an Executive Administrative Assistant, now. This person would assist me, free up some of my time from administrative detail, and provide continuity in the case of the need for an ED search. What a good idea! My task is to prepare a job description for that position. Please watch for a Job Announcement coming up soon.

Something good generally comes out of everything that happens. In this case, that calf may have done IOIA a favor. It got my attention, and it may have been the spark that precipitated the BOD devoting serious focus to this issue. Although it isn't always comfortable to think about inevitabilities, it is essential.

## 2017 IOIA Member Dues and a New Benefit!

IOIA dues will increase for inspectors and supporting businesses this fall to \$200/year. Dues for Inspectors have stayed the same for three consecutive years. The BOD decided against an increase, given the banner 2015 year with the strongest bottom line in history. Then 2016 became the fourth consecutive year without an increase. BOD decided to hold off on increasing dues and instead focus on increasing membership. That means making membership more attractive to inspectors. While increasing membership is still a major goal, the BOD decided that it was finally time for an increase next year. At the same time, they instituted a **new member benefit** that will reward current members and hopefully encourage non-member inspectors to join.

Starting in 2017, members will enjoy a **significant new benefit – 50% off one webinar of their choice** during the calendar year. actually a dues *reduction* as the webinar discount more than offsets the \$25 increase in dues.

**A bit of history** – annual dues were \$50 until 1996, \$75 until 2000, \$100 through 2005, \$125 through 2007, \$150 for 2008-2011, and \$175 since. Membership data shows that membership has never decreased when dues increased, with the exception of 2007, when dues dipped slightly after increasing dues just \$10. Analysis of webinar participation shows fairly low participation by inspector members. This change has the potential to increase membership benefit and webinar participation at the same time. **We encourage members to take advantage of this new benefit!**

## Wanted! Peer Evaluators in the Midwestern US

Are you a highly experienced organic inspector interested in an inspector-related work opportunity? Are you interested in raising the bar for inspector quality and consistency? Are you an IOIA accredited inspector member, or willing to apply to become accredited by October 1?

If yes to these questions, please contact Maria DeVincenzo at [ioiaevaluator@ioia.net](mailto:ioiaevaluator@ioia.net) and request an application form.

IOIA is experiencing a shortage of evaluators in the Midwest. IOIA received twice as many requests for evaluations in 2016 as last year. As the program continues to grow, the pool of evaluators needs to grow to meet that demand.

## IOIA Members Develop New Webinar Topics for Inspectors

**Maureen Bostock**, experienced inspector from Ontario, presented on the changes to the COS Crop Standards and on GMOs and other Plant Breeding Technologies at the advanced training in Guelph, Ontario. After her presentation was well-received, she offered to develop and deliver a webinar on the same topic. She is Convenor of the Canadian Organic Technical Committee's Crops Permitted Substances List (PSL) Working Group & chairs the GMO Task Force.

See her article starting on page 14 of this issue and look for the webinar on IOIA's Webinar Schedule this winter.

**Silke Fuchshofen**, experienced processing inspector from New York, found that gaps in receiving procedures are a systemic problem with companies that purchase from non-certified wholesalers. After several years of developing a clearer understanding and a set of risk assessment skills for those situations, she approached IOIA with a concept for a webinar on receiving procedures with special emphasis on non-certified wholesalers. What should inspectors look for to find out if there are uncertified wholesalers in the supply chain? Her training includes case studies with real-life examples where even a seasoned inspector would need to dig a little deeper to find the gaps. IOIA Executive Director Margaret Scoles had just been invited to a conference call with representatives from several organic certification agencies discussing about a Best Practices document and the question about how this work could be incorporated in trainings. Silke says, "Due to the exclusion for handlers of products in retail packaging in §205.101(b), organic products leave the oversight given through organic certification when purchased by a non-certified distributor and then later re-enter it when purchased by a production facility. This point of re-entry needs to be given strong attention at an inspection. This webinar is about just that and offers a complex risk-based approach into this topic." The webinar is still under development and is scheduled for December 6. The webinar is a 300-level course. To receive credits, a pre- and post-course assignment will be available.

## IFOAM North America - 1st General Assembly - An Open Letter from David Gould, IFOAM

On behalf of the ad hoc Steering Committee, it is a pleasure to announce the first-ever **General Assembly of IFOAM North America**.

- Date: Thursday, September 22, 2016
- Time: 5:00 - 8:00 PM
- Location: Pratt Street Ale House, 206 W Pratt St, Baltimore, MD 21201.

**We shall also have capability for people to attend virtually, for anybody who will not be able to attend in-person.** Please contact me directly in advance of the date for more details if you would like to use this option.

We shall also make provision for members to cast votes via proxy. If you wish to use this option, please complete the attached proxy form and have your designated proxy holder carry it to the GA.

While the meeting is primarily for affiliates of IFOAM - Organics International, the meeting is open to additional interested guests that attendees may wish to bring, for example persons/organizations interested in joining the group.

We welcome your comments in advance of the Assembly on any of the above, and heartily encourage

your participation both before and during the meeting. Please come forward and share your ideas openly. If you are interested in running for the Board, we recommend you indicate that ahead of time if possible. We also kindly request that you RSVP to this invitation, so that we can properly estimate the number of people attending. We shall be providing food for those coming to the Ale House.

The proposed agenda:

1. Welcome and roll call
2. Appointment of meeting Chair and Secretary
3. Approval of agenda
4. Rules of Procedure - discussion and approval
5. Election of the Board of Directors
6. Open discussion, potential activities of IFOAM North America
7. Next General Assembly
8. Adjournment

We are excited by the establishment of this new self-organized structure under the umbrella of the global organic movement, and anticipate new opportunities and synergies coming from it. Thank you for being part!

**David Gould**

Program Facilitator and North American Representative  
Phone: +1-503-235-7532 - Skype: davidfgould

## Scholarship Applications Due October 1

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.

The late Andrew Rutherford was a farmer, organic inspector, and organic agriculture researcher from southern Saskatchewan. He served on IOIA's initial steering committee and then several years as a Founding Board Member.

IOIA also offers an annual **Organic Community Initiative Scholarship (OCIS)**, 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.

The Deadline for returning Scholarship applications is **October 1**.

Scholarship recipients are notified by **December 15**.

Download applications for either scholarship program [from our site](#), also available in Spanish language.

## SECTOR NEWS

**Green Waste Guidance Ruling**

On June 20, 2016, a judicial decision from the United States District Court for the Northern District of California ruled that the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) published guidance titled Allowance of Green Waste in Organic Production Systems (NOP 5016) was a legislative rule subject to notice-and-comment rulemaking under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA). The court prospectively vacated NOP 5016, effective on August 22, 2016, and grandfathered in compost purchased or used between 2010 and that date.

In response to the court's decision, the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) plans to conduct a notice-and-comment rulemaking. A proposed rule is under development. In the interim, accredited certifying agents must continue to review and approve all materials used by organic producers, including compost, as part of an operation's organic system plan. Certifying agents are responsible for ensuring that all materials used by organic producers comply with the USDA organic regulations. Certifying agents may request additional information deemed necessary to evaluate compliance with the regulations (§§ 205.201(a)(1) and 205.201(a)(6)). To determine whether a compost product may comply with the regulations, certifying agents may gather information from the compost supplier and/or from the organic producer, including the type and source of feedstocks used. Information may include results of bioassay testing or other quality assurance testing from the compost supplier or results of any on-farm bioassay testing. The information gathered must be sufficient to verify compliance with the USDA organic regulations. As always, testing is performed at the discretion of certifiers and state organic programs "when there is reason to believe that

the agricultural input or product has come into contact with a prohibited substance or has been produced using excluded methods." 7 C.F.R. § 205.670(b).

**Treated Lumber Draft Guidance**

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) National Organic Program (NOP) is pleased to announce that an interim instruction on material review has been published in the *Federal Register* along with draft guidance on treated lumber. All interested individuals are invited to provide comments by October 31, 2016.

**Draft Guidance & Interim Instruction Treated Lumber (NOP 5036)**

This draft guidance clarifies that using lumber that has been treated with prohibited substances prior to certification does not affect a producer's timeline for obtaining certification, as long as the lumber does not contact crops; it also outlines where treated lumber can be located on organic farms and explains how organic producers can prevent crops and livestock from coming into contact with lumber treated with prohibited substances. [View draft guidance NOP 5036 within the National Organic Program Handbook.](#)

**Material Review (NOP 3012)**

Intended for USDA accredited certifying agents, this interim instruction, which replaces Policy Memo 11-4, specifies the criteria and process that certifying agents are to follow when approving substances for use in organic production and handling. [View interim instruction NOP 3012 within the National Organic Program Handbook.](#)

**Public Comments Welcomed**

The publication of the draft guidance and interim instruction in the *Federal Register* initiates 60-day public comment periods which end on

October 31, 2016.

To [provide comments on NOP 3012](#).

To [provide comments on NOP 5036](#).

*Per "Agency Good Guidance Practices" promoted by the Office of Management and Budget, AMS announces draft guidance in the Federal Register to facilitate public comments. In addition, in response to stakeholder requests for the opportunity to comment on instructions, AMS is also announcing interim instructions and inviting public comments through the Federal Register.*

**GMO Labeling Attempt Derailed**

See guest opinion article, page 8.

**Substances Removed from the National List**

In response to recent National Organic Standards Board recommendations, the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service published a final rule removing five substances from the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. The following substances will no longer be allowed in organic production or handling after Sept. 12, 2016.

- egg white lysozyme
- cyclohexylamine
- diethylaminoethanol
- octadecylamine
- tetrasodium pyrophosphate

Read [the announcement here](#).

**NOP updates instruction 2040**

**NOP 2040: Organic Certification of Industrial Hemp Production.** This instruction applies to all NOP-accredited certifying agents, and replaces the version of NOP 2040 issued in February 2016. The document clarifies U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy regarding the organic certification of industrial hemp production by USDA-accredited certifying agents.

**IOIA's Versatile Training Institute - at work in Australia, Kentucky, Washington, and Ohio**

New this year, IOIA started marketing our webinar program more aggressively to certifiers for in-house trainings. To date, Australian certifiers and other certifiers outside the US have been the best customers for distance training in-house for certification staff and inspectors. This year, IOIA increased in-house webinar training in the US. The advantage for the certifier, no matter where they are located, is a discounted group rate. The advantage for IOIA is that no time is required for promotion or marketing and the administration is much simpler. Only one invoice must be processed instead of a dozen or more. Precourse materials can be distributed and collected by the certifier, which saves IOIA time. And an advantage for both is that the webinar can be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time.

In June, IOIA delivered two in-house webinars for certification agencies in the US. IOIA trainer and curriculum developer Monique Scholz delivered the 200-level In/Out Balances and Traceability Tests for Crop Inspection via webinar for OEFFA to 12 participants. And IOIA trainer and curriculum developer Garry Lean delivered the 100-level NOP Crop Standards webinar for WSDA's Organic Certification Program.

Transition Trainer Workshop, developed by IOIA Trainer Garry Lean, was delivered as a hybrid webinar/in-person event. Four hours of preparatory webinar training on the NOP Crop and Livestock Standards were followed by three days of intensive on-site training. The training was organized by Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK). Two farm tours were included. Hosts were the UK Horticultural Research Farm CSA for Crops and Elmwood Stock Farm in Georgetown for Livestock. Former NOSB member Mac Stone hosted the Elmwood Stock Farm tour.

In July, IOIA worked to develop and deliver a hybrid in-person/webinar training with new IOIA Trainer Kathe Purvis and Australian Certified Organic (ACO) in Brisbane, Queensland. ACO delivered one day of training and invited IOIA to deliver one day of advanced/refresher training. Kathe spoke on tricky NOP issues, with regionally appropriate training on biodiversity and natural resource conservation to address Guidance 5020. She worked with Margaret Scoles, IOIA ED, to develop the NOP Standards update and the "Tricky Issues" list. The ED spoke on learnings from the Peer Evaluation Program and stayed on-line with Kathy during the NOP update. Thirty participants attended the training. During interactive exercises, ACO organized the table groupings to include a senior inspector, trainee inspector and office personnel per table, which worked very well. With three NOP-accredited certifiers in Australia, IOIA is usually doing training with one or more certifiers each year. Under discussion now is basic NOP-based inspection training in Australia. Without a unifying national standard, the prospect of Australia-NOP equivalency seems to be a far goal. Inspectors must be prepared to inspect both to the certifier's standard and the NOP.



Extension agents learn how to help producers make the transition to organic at University of Kentucky Horticultural Research Farm under the guidance of IOIA Trainer Garry Lean of Ontario, Canada.

**Indices of NOSB Recommendations Now Available**

Since it was first established, the NOSB has made 599 recommendations regarding organic food production standards. Of these, 179 were regarding practice standards, 287 regarding the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List), and 133 regarding the Sunset Review process.

Approximately 86 percent or 518 of the recommendations have been addressed and most of these have resulted in rulemaking by the National Organic Program (NOP). As of June, 2016, NOP is in the process of addressing 54 recommendations. Thus a total of 27 recommendations are outstanding. Of the 27 outstanding recommendations, the majority are related to changes to the National List which are anticipated to be addressed by 2017.

To facilitate public awareness of the status of all recommendations, the NOP has developed three indices, one each for recommendations related to practice standards, the national list, and the sunset review process. For each recommendation, the indices shows the date the recommendation was made; the action associated with the recommendation (rulemaking, guidance, etc.); the status of the action (outstanding, in process, or complete); and any relevant notes.

The [NOSB Recommendations Indices](#) will be living documents that will be regularly updated and posted on the AMS website. Questions or comments related to the indices can be submitted via [nop.guidance@ams.usda.gov](mailto:nop.guidance@ams.usda.gov).

## IOIA and Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre present series of trainings in June

by Lisa Pierce

Apparently in China, “wearing a green hat” is an expression that Chinese use when a woman cheats on her husband or boyfriend.....

That would explain why my brandishing of green IOIA caps as a prize was not the successful motivational tool I had envisioned at the recent crop training in Hong Kong!



Lisa with Ms So – manager of So’s Aquafarm and the first recipient of a ‘sort of’ green hat (thank goodness she was a farmer and still smiling since I had not yet figured out my cultural blunder).

The IOIA/HKORC Basic Organic Inspectors course was part of the 6<sup>th</sup> training co-sponsored by IOIA and the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre (HKORC) since the organization was established in December 2002 to provide an independent organic certification service for farmers and food processors in Hong Kong. This round of events was held over period June 11<sup>th</sup> – June 24<sup>th</sup> and included 1.5 day Aquaculture Workshop, Basic IOIA Crop Inspectors training and Basic IOIA Process Inspectors training. All courses were customized to reference the private HKORC standards.

The series of trainings began with the aquaculture workshop - kicked off by a special guest, Dr Jim Chu, a Senior Fisheries officer with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) of Hong Kong. Dr Chu was an engaging speaker who introduced participants to ‘Types of Aquaculture Production Systems in Asia’. The rest of the workshop was facilitated by Lisa Pierce (IOIA Trainer), that be me. Using HKORC aquaculture standards, assessment skills and knowledge gained about production systems, participants spent the afternoon working on various case studies. The next day was a field trip to visit So’s Aqua-

farm – a pond culture system that produced HKORC certified organic Jade Perch. The aquaculture workshop was attended by 16



participants in total including 13 residents of Hong Kong and 3 persons from the Philippines.

Next was the very successful IOIA/HKORC crop course co-instructed by Luis Brenes and I (Lisa Pierce). The course was attended by a superb group of 20 local residents with lots of energy, questions, and a motivation to succeed (no green hats required!!) Special thanks to Cyber Hung and Emily Chang of the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre Certification Ltd for your great coordination and meeting our demands with a smile.

We had a break in the weather when touring the farm but lots of rain on our departure. Aquaculture group – still a bit wet from the field trip!

Thank you Cyber Hung for a great event! (And yes, I am wearing a green IOIA hat....)



## Hong Kong Basic Process Training

by Cyber Hung

The Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre (HKORC) co-organized A Basic Organic Processing Inspection Training with IOIA in Hong Kong from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2016. This was the fourth processing inspection training held in Hong Kong since 2006 with a total of 10 participants coming from food industry, food science students, organic inspectors and HKORC certification officers.

We were happy to have Mr. Luis Brenes from Costa Rica as the trainer for this year’s inspector training, who was also the trainer for the past three inspector trainings. Students enjoyed the experienced lectures provided by Luis and students actively participated in class discussion and experience sharing. Following the extensive lectures and discussions, students took a break not just to enjoy the organic snacks prepared by the HKORC staff but also a good opportunity to learn about organic labeling through examining the packaging on the snack.

In addition to the normal lectures, an excellent field trip and mock inspection was made to the Vegetable Marketing Organization (VMO), which is the major operator to handle and pack organic vegetable for local organic farmers in Hong Kong. We would like to express our sincere thanks to Mr. Kenneth Law, the marketing manager in VMO who helped and spared the time to make the field trip possible. Even though the whole inspector training was so intensive with a very tight schedule, students really learnt a lot from our experience trainer Luis. The newly qualified inspectors will soon participate the processing inspection of HKORC.

Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre Certification Ltd. (HKORC) is a non-profit organization promoting organic certification and organic production with funding support by the Agricultural Development Fund of the Vegetable Marketing Organization in Hong Kong. The certification system has been accredited by IFOAM and ISO/IEC 17065 since 2012.



**Cyber Hung with Trainers Luis Brenes and Lisa Pierce.**



## The Top Five Things Inspectors Should Know About GMO's by Maureen Bostock

### Introduction

The 2015 revision of the Canadian Organic Standards provided the Canadian organic sector with an opportunity to grapple with the challenging issue of GMO contamination. The GMO Task Force brought forward a set of revisions which clarified the responsibilities of farmers to develop and implement a risk management approach to prevent contamination on their operations. Mitigation strategies are required if isolation distances are not adequate between an organic crop and a GMO crop of the same type. Organic storage bins on split operations must be labeled 'Organic'. Organic signs are also required on temporary storage bins where crops are being dried or roasted and on wagons used to transport the organic crop to and from temporary bins. Under the Canadian Organic Standard, the non-compliance does not arise from the presence of contamination, but rather whether or not there is a risk management program in place which is as effective as possible, with the least possible residues at the lowest possible levels. As farmers implement this more rigorous risk management program, contamination sourced from pollen drift, handling and storage commingling is expected to decline. The role of the inspector is critical to the success of this revision. To be able to evaluate the potential success of a risk management program, inspectors need a good understanding of the GMO traits, knowledge of mitigation strategies, and an awareness of some of the changes to come in biotechnology over the next few years. So let's review the basics about GMOs.

### Transgenic GMOs

Prior to 2014, all genetically modified organisms were transgenic, in that the modification introduced DNA from

a species which would not normally reproduce with the host. Examples include glyphosate tolerance from a strain of agrobacterium and insect resistance from bacillus thuringiensis introduced into field corn. Currently there are at least 29 crops which have been genetically modified around the world, some of the better known being canola, cotton, creeping bentgrass, eggplant, eucalyptus, maize (field corn), papaya, poplar, potato, rice, soybean, sweet corn, summer squash and sugarbeet. Five crops in North America have been identified as threats to organic crops: field corn, canola, soybeans, alfalfa and apple. Field corn, a wind pollinated crop, experiences the highest threat of contamination in the field. Canola, alfalfa and apples are insect pollinated and are also highly vulnerable. Soybeans can be protected with a 10 meter isolation distance. Other GMO crops are less likely to contaminate their organic counterparts. Genetically modified sugar beets are biennials and only threaten organic seed in seed-producing regions. Potatoes in the field are grown as tubers which are clones, identical to the parent plant. All new potato seed is generated in the laboratory and greenhouse. Mushrooms are grown from laboratory-produced spawn. Of course, contamination is possible at the seed production level and during research trials. Our experience has shown that laboratory and field research trials are notoriously leaky resulting in the escape of 'ghost' DNA. Three well-known instances include the contamination of Canadian flax due to the unauthorized release of CDC Triffid flax seed in 2009, the escape of Starlink in 2000 and 2013, and the discovery of MON71800 GE wheat in 2013 on a farm in Oregon.

### Traits - Herbicide Tolerance

Most inspectors are familiar with the

glyphosate tolerant modification. There are four generations of glyphosate-tolerant traits: GA21, RR, RR2 & RR2Y. Round-up Ready™, RR2™ and RR2Y™ are identical genes but the method of insertion into the corn DNA has evolved. RR2Y (DeKalb Genuity Roundup Ready 2 Yield™) is the newest version and utilizes an insertion technique involving agrobacterium tumefaciens, which is a major underpinning of the New Plant Breeding Technologies mentioned below. RR2 Plus™ is not a new technology, but a product which is supplied with discounted herbicide to help Midwest growers deal with glyphosate resistant weeds.

GA21 was the first glyphosate-tolerant trait developed by Monsanto, which Syngenta purchased and has kept in circulation as under the trade name, Agrisure™. Strip tests for glyphosate tolerance will not include GA21 unless it is specifically listed in the GMO test profile. Romer Labs<sup>1</sup> markets the only strip test able to detect GA21. Any PCR test conducted in the lab can pick up GA21 if it is included in the requisition. For farmers using strip tests to monitor contamination, it is helpful to know that GA21 is usually stacked with glufosinate tolerance (known as Syngenta's Liberty Link™). The GA21 trait does appear on its own, however, as seed for a separated refuge used to reduce the buildup of insect resistance in BT corn fields. Separate refuges for BT crops are rare these days as most refuges are built into the seed bag as in Refuge-In-A-Bag™. In all other uses GA21, is combined with glufosinate tolerance as a stacked trait.

In response to weeds developing resistance to glyphosate (palmer amaranth, water hemp, common & giant ragweed, and kochia), glufosinate, dicamba and 2,4-D tolerance traits have been developed recently. 2, 4-D tolerance is now on the market in the

1 www.romerlabs.com

## Top Five Things, continued

US, stacked with glyphosate tolerance in corn and glufosinate tolerance in soybeans. Glyphosate tolerant alfalfa was commercialized in the U.S. in 2011. HarvXtra™ combines glyphosate tolerant alfalfa with a new cisgenic low lignin trait. Low lignin alfalfa is very attractive to conventional hay producers, resulting in broader uptake of GMO alfalfa. The loss of seed purity in alfalfa seed may be a significant problem in coming years as GMO alfalfa plantings become more widespread. Sulfonylurea tolerance (SURT) comes from two sources. The first SURT varieties are not classed as GMOS, but are a product of Accelerated Mutagenesis. They are derived using natural selection from SURT plants found to have survived in fields which were sprayed. The cellular tissue is then exposed to either irradiation or ethyl methane sulfonate to speed up the rate of mutation (example: Clearfield™). Most jurisdictions consider products of Accelerated Mutagenesis to be "novel foods" but not genetically engineered. The most recent development of a sulfonylurea tolerant canola by Cibus used marker assisted accelerated mutagenesis, one of the new plant breeding technologies. Marker assisted accelerated mutagenesis does not introduce foreign genetic material, only promoters and markers which are bred out in later generations and thus are not detectable. Neither the Canadian or the U.S. government consider SU Canola™ by Cibus to be genetically engineered.

### Traits- Insect Resistance

The other significant group of traits is based upon the characteristics of the soil bacteria, Bacillus thuringiensis, which offers insect protection to the host plant. BT corn has been on the market for a number of years and more recently has been stacked with herbicide tolerant traits. BT corn

is always supplied with a refuge of herbicide tolerant corn to reduce the potential for resistance to BT development in insect populations. Various genetic components of BT have been found to be effective against ear worm, corn borer, cutworms and armyworms. BT soybeans are not yet on the market but have been approved by both the Canadian and US government. BT cotton has been planted since 1995. The other insect resistant trait under development is Soybean Cyst Nematode protection, but it has not yet been commercialized.

### New Plant Breeding Technologies

Just when we thought that we had a good grasp of GMOs and were beginning to understand how GMOs impact our sector, biotechnology has taken an enormous leap forward and we are now confronted with the speedy commercialization of New Plant Breeding Technologies (NPBTs) or gene-editing techniques. The new GMOs are primarily cisgenic in that they manipulate the plant's own genetic make-up to bring about a desired effect. Arctic™ apple, Innate™ potato, low lignin alfalfa, and a non-browning mushroom variety have all been developed using this technology. Recent developments in biotechnology including the enhanced ability to read plant genomes, the ability to write genetic code, and new insertion techniques have resulted in modifications which can be replicated species by species with extraordinary speed. These technologies occupy a space outside of the regulatory frameworks that were developed in response to transgenic modifications, resulting in a gold rush mentality as inventors race to the patent office.

Cibus is a good example of a company building a set of marketable traits on its patented process, Rapid Trait Development System. Having released

their first product, SU Canola, Cibus is working on the development of a non-transgenic glyphosate tolerant flax which will be marketed in 2019, followed by a rice variety with double herbicide tolerance and a new potato cultivar resistant to late blight to be released in 2020.

The development of a targeted delivery system has enabled biotechnologists to be precise in the insertion of a modified gene sequence. The insertion technique uses Agrobacterium tumefaciens, a soil bacterium responsible for the production of galls (read: tumors) in tree branch nodes. The bacterium enters the cell of the host plant's node and alters the host's genetic code to produce the gall. Stem nodes have been described as essentially equivalent to human stem cells as they control the plant's growth. The bacterium either acts as a carrier for the novel gene in transgenics or presents a gene sequence for deletion in a cisgenic modification. The discovery of CRISPR/CAS 9, a cellular mechanism for acquiring immunity which has been harnessed to alter genetic sequences once the code has entered the cell. CRISPR identifies foreign material and stores a copy of the DNA sequence. When the same DNA is encountered, the CAS 9 protein cuts it out. By introducing a chimeric version of the DNA sequence being modified, CAS 9 can be directed to delete the actual sequence from the DNA strand.

The Arctic Apple™ was the first commercialized cisgenic modification. Arctic apples can be cut and will not turn brown, improving their shelf life. The modification turns off a gene sequence which is present in mature fruit but not in immature apples (polyphenol oxidase). The Innate Potato™ also employs gene silencing, resulting in a modified potato that is resistant to black spot bruising and also con-

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tains lower levels acrylamide, a suspected carcinogen that is heightened when potatoes are fried. The 2nd generation of Innate Potato released in 2016 added late blight resistance to the list of modified traits.

**Detection of Cisgenic Traits**

Detection of a cisgenic trait is problematic as there is no traceable level of foreign material to uncover in a PCR or strip test. Using PCR or Elisa tests, cisgenic traits can be identified by testing for the neomycin/kanamycin marker (NPII). However, it has been noted that ELISA tests set to detect as low as 1/10th of a part per billion have been unable to detect the NPII marker in the samples of Arctic™ Apple.<sup>2</sup>

It is a nightmare to think of a future in which GMO genetic pollution cannot be tracked. As each successful cisgenic transformation can be applied to a huge range of crops with only minor tweaking, it is reasonable to expect that the rate of commercialization of new modifications will increase exponentially. Without the ability to test for these traits, we will not be able to monitor contamination levels. If we cannot efficiently monitor contamination levels, we either accept genetic pollution or enact stricter isolation requirements such as requiring vulnerable organic crops to be grown in GMO-free agricultural zones. Neither solution is palatable. The Challenge for Organic Regulators These are serious issues which organic regulators face. Does our definition of genetic engineering protect organics from cisgenic modifications? If the marker and promoters used to fashion the genetic modification are bred out in succeeding generations, is the resultant cultivar a product of genetic engineering? If a cisgenically modified

plant is not marketed as a GMO variety and the government chooses not to regulate it because it is not transgenic, can we keep them out of organics?

In coming years organic regulators may be under pressure to accept environmentally-beneficial cisgenic modifications. An example is the modification of Cammelina sativa (known as False Flax, an emerging oilseed crop) in which omega fatty acids are being enhanced. A modified Cammelina could totally replace fish oil in human diets, thus reducing human reliance of depleted fish stocks. A recent study evaluated the European consumers' response to cisgenic modifications and found that more than 50% of respondents registered acceptance where previously genetic engineering had been rejected almost entirely.<sup>3</sup> It will likely take years, and maybe decades, for these larger issues to play out in the regulatory arena, with the outcome being highly uncertain. In the meantime, the best approach for inspectors is to stay informed about developments in the biotechnology industry, the changing nature of the risks to organic crops, uses and limitations of testing methodologies, and, perhaps foremost of all, the efficacies of different mitigation strategies.

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*Maureen Bostock is an IOIA inspector member and Chair of the Canadian Organic Technical Committee's GMO Task Force.*

**Organic Revolutionary now available in pdf**

Grace Gershuny's latest book, *Organic Revolutionary*, is now available in PDF!

The book tells the story of how a marginal social change movement grew into today's \$39 billion dollar organic industry. Where did the ideas embedded in the true organic vision come from? In Grace's words: "My own story--recounting my intellectual influences and friendships, my life changes and my passions--is intertwined with the story of the work of defining 'organic' and attempting to unify a rather disparate bunch. Many of the philosophical and ideological controversies that divided the movement early on persisted as it entered the mainstream.

PDF version \$8  
Print version \$16

You can read more about Grace's new book and find ordering details at <http://www.organic-revolutionary.com/>

Or you can order your print copy here: <http://lulu.com/spotlight/organicrevolutionary>

**Washington Crop and Processing Inspection Training**



More photos and complete reports on the training event in Washington state will be coming in our next issue.

Bainbridge Island, Washington - Crop Inspection Training Group. Participants in the crop course hailed from Alaska, Georgia, Colorado, Alabama and from our host organization the fabulous WSDA!

All smiles!! IOIA Trainers for the Crop and Processing inspection training course held on Bainbridge Island WA, headed home on the ferry after a great week with terrific participants in a beautiful setting.



WSDA staff, Liz Bell and Sarah Wiley dig through farm records to confirm traceability at the WA Crop mock inspection training.



Nicole Capizzi, WSDA Organic Inspector and IOIA Field Trip Leader for the Processing Course mock inspection debriefs in breakout session with participants.



Seriously: The Washington Processing Inspection participants took the Ferry From Bainbridge Island to the Processing Facilities to complete their mock inspection training! IOIA Lead Trainer Garry Lean, second from the left and Group Leader Nicole Capizzi WSDA staff right front, provided guidance for this portion of the training!



## Why the GMO-label campaign fell short by Sam Fromartz

*One of the more thoughtful pieces regarding the recent GMO labeling legislation. Sam Fromartz is the editor-in-chief of the Food & Environment Reporting Network. This piece originally appeared in FERN's Ag Insider (August 21, 2016), an online daily briefing of food and ag policy available by subscription.*

*Article reprinted with the permission of the author.*

In the past year, major food companies have trumpeted the changes they are making in how they produce food — rolling out long-term plans to remove antibiotics from livestock production, reformulating favorites like mac-and-cheese to get rid of artificial ingredients, and in some cases vowing to improve the lives of animals destined to be eaten.

There's debate, of course, on how meaningful these changes actually are. Yet one major campaign has stood out for its inability to achieve what activists hoped: GMO labeling. President Obama this month signed into law legislation requiring mandatory disclosure of GMO ingredients. But the law does not require a clear, on-package label. Instead, it gives companies a choice—either disclose via a label or use a QR-code scanned by a smartphone.

“This was a bad bill, with a lot less than we wished for,” says Gary Hirshberg, chairman of Stonyfield Farm and the Just Label It campaign for GMO labeling. But he doesn't think he lost the war.

As food issues go, labeling for GMO ingredients was contentious, opposed by a bevy of heavyweight lobbying groups, from the American Farm Bureau Federation to agro-chemical and big food companies to the Grocery Manufacturers Association. They were trying to override Vermont's first-in-the-nation labeling law with federal action, because state labeling would have meant *de facto* national labeling. Six companies had already decided to

meet Vermont's requirements, that were to take effect July 1 — General Mills, ConAgra, Kellogg's, Campbell, Mars and Dannon — by identifying GMO ingredients on their labels nationally.

GMO labeling required no expensive retooling of production lines, no banning of ingredients, no new practices. It was a label that advocates said amounted to a “consumer's right to know.” Plus, labeling wasn't unprecedented. As food-studies professor Marion Nestle of New York University points out, “These multinational companies were already labeling in Europe.” As for labeling in the U.S., “I didn't notice sales of [Mars'] M&Ms dropping off a cliff,” she said. Yet getting a full GMO label proved tougher than the campaigns by the Humane Society of the United States and others to get millions of egg-laying chickens out of battery cages and pregnant sows out of gestation crates. So why are the animal-welfare advocates succeeding while the GMO labeling camp is falling short? The reasons tell us a lot about how change happens in the food system.

First, the issue of humane treatment of animals has a visceral, emotional pull that can shock someone without any awareness of, or even interest in, food issues. You just need to be an animal lover—or at least someone who thinks animals shouldn't be abused. Animal-rights campaigners knew that, which is why covert investigators filmed especially egregious practices, such as crowded, dirty battery cages; sow gestation crates, where pigs can't even turn around; and blatant brutality against cows. The videos went viral and the often-slow-to-respond USDA in several cases launched immediate investigations. Companies buying products from these operations worried about risk to their brands. The GMO issue didn't have that kind of shock value. The issues activists

articulated — corn and soybean monocultures, corporate concentration in the seed sector, Big Bad Monsanto, the rising use of herbicides with GMOs, the proliferation of herbicide-resistant weeds, and the move to combat those weeds with even more toxic chemicals — were important, but lacked the emotional punch of animal cruelty. Although polls have long shown that Americans by a wide margin support GMO labeling, the sentiment did not produce a consumer uproar. The issue hasn't even surfaced in the presidential campaign. Second, companies are happy to slap labels on their products (Gluten-free! Low-fat! Low-carb!), as long as they don't appear to disparage the product. So despite all the talk of “transparency” and “knowing where your food comes from,” most food companies didn't want to disclose their GMO ingredients. Despite arguing that GMOs were crucial to feeding the world, food producers never wanted to celebrate them on their labels. Maybe they were worried by other polls showing a majority of Americans, in stark contrast to scientists, worry about the safety of GMOs.

The animal-welfare camp avoids pushing companies on the issue of labels entirely. “We haven't sought to get companies to disclose animal practices,” said Paul Shapiro, vice president of farm animal protection for the Humane Society. “What we've really tried to do is to outlaw them, and we're succeeding because the practices are so heinous and cruel that people are outraged.”

Third, proponents of GMO labeling had limited political success. Beyond Vermont, Alaska has a law requiring labels on genetically-modified salmon, while Maine and Connecticut passed labeling laws that only took effect if neighboring states adopted their own laws. But opponents of

Continued on next page

## GMO, from page 8

labeling spent tens of millions of dollars fighting ballot measures on GMO labeling in California, Oregon and Washington State, and voters defeated those measures, albeit by narrow margins.

Meanwhile, animal-welfare activists have been quite successful at the ballot box, beginning in Florida in 2002, with a ban on gestation crates (which passed 55 percent to 45 percent). Another measure passed in Arizona in 2006 (62 to 38). Two years later, California voters passed proposition 2 (63 to 37), which outlawed gestation crates, veal crates, and battery cages. So far, nine states have passed measures, by ballot or legislation, to ban animal confinement. Another measure is on the November ballot in Massachusetts.

There has been no corporate outcry to get Congress to overturn these state animal-welfare measures. In fact, Burger King and McDonald's, among dozens of others, agreed to stop using eggs from hens raised in battery cages. The nation's second-largest egg producer fell into line, too, after reportedly spending half a million dollars to try to defeat California's Proposition 2. The animal-rights camp didn't fight to get these ballot measures passed in every prime farm state, but they didn't need to, because industry shifted when it saw the consumer tide turning.

Fourth, mainstream animal scientists and veterinarians, including some of the highest-profile scientists on animal behavior, vocally backed these campaigns and explained why gestation crates for pigs and battery cages for hens were inhumane.

GMO activists did not have the weight of the scientific establishment on their side. Scientific bodies repeatedly stated GMOs were safe. This wasn't a green light to avoid evaluation and regulation of new plants (a point stressed by the National Academy

of Sciences that GMO proponents often ignore). But those who painted GMOs as Frankenfoods ended up pigeonholed as extremists. Although the labeling camp got a boost when a panel of the World Health Organization deemed the herbicide glyphosate, used with GMO crops, a likely carcinogen, the decision was more of a setback for the herbicide than for GMOs.

This isn't to say the animal-welfare activists had it easy. They continue to face opposition from corporate and commodity farming entities that have long championed large-scale, concentrated livestock production in the same way they have championed GMOs. But the activists' use of investigative techniques, political and industry pressure, targeting practices in well-chosen states, and appealing directly to voters, has produced change.

It's important to note that GMO-labeling activists did not walk away empty-handed from this latest fight. They got mandatory labeling — even if only with QR codes. And some observers feel that opens the door to the innovative use of new apps for greater transparency in the food system. As for Hirshberg, he says, “The outcome [on labeling] could have been much worse.” Just Label It is now working to influence the regulations USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack has promised to push ahead with before he steps down in January, though the USDA has two years to complete the process. The campaign will also pressure industry to use an actual label. Whether it will be as successful as animal-welfare activists in getting industry to alter their stance remains to be seen.

*The Ag Insider contains original reporting as well as a survey of top news on food, agriculture and the environment. Emails are welcome at [chuck@thefern.org](mailto:chuck@thefern.org).*

*[thefern.org](http://thefern.org). I am on Twitter @chuckabbott1. If you received this briefing from a friend, please note that these are merely the summaries. If you wish to receive the newsletter directly and read the full articles, you can subscribe by clicking [this link](#).*

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*Sam Fromartz is the editor-in-chief of the Food & Environment Reporting Network. Follow him @fromartz.*

## USDA issues guidance on organic label claims

USDA [has issued guidance](#) that will now allow organic companies to make label claims that organic meat and poultry were produced from livestock or poultry not fed genetically engineered feed. USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued this guidance in response to the recently passed GMO labeling legislation, which President Obama signed as the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard. FSIS formerly did not allow the term non-GMO on certified organic products without further documentation.

The new GMO labeling law addresses negative claims and allows the terms GMO in negative claims provided the label or labeling is truthful and not misleading.

OTA NewsFlash, 8/23/2016

**Board of Directors Minutes Highlights***(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website.)***Conference Call - May 16, 2016**

Members present: Stuart McMillan (Chair), Pam Sullivan, Garth Kahl, Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), Matt Miller. Others present: Margaret Scoles (MS), Executive Director.

**Treasurer's report, Pam:** Korea training was not nearly as profitable as anticipated, i.e. we lost money, but in general our expenses continue to be below budget. At the end of 1st Qtr. we were about \$20,000 below projected bottom line for the quarter, but this is improving already. **Matt moves to approve Treasurer's report. Unanimously approved.** Discussion of whether Pam should prepare for Agreed Upon Procedures financial review of 2015 or 2016 books. The BOD has voted to have AUP completed for 2015 books, but now Pam's schedule doesn't look like it would allow her to participate in person if we do an AUP this year. The Treasurer's presence is helpful in any type of financial review/audit, but is not mandatory. Pam suggests that a review of the 2016 books perhaps in January would be more useful. Pam will work up a proposal after she gets professional advice from an external accountant. She will also have a private chat with IOIA's accountants, Gardner and Billing, CPAs, then with MS.

**BoD orientation:** MS had prepared a summary of the responsibilities of a nonprofit BOD, and details on how the BOD members can access BOD documents.

**2016 AGM Minutes & Short Version of 2015 Annual Report:** Discussion of the length and format of the Annual Report. Suggest making a comment on the "AGM recap" pages noting that this (short version) is the new version of the Annual Report. General agreement that we are happy with the new version.

**Conference Call - June 20, 2016**

Present: Stuart (Chair), Ib, Pam, Mutsumi, Margaret Anne. Absent: Garth Kahl. Matt Miller joins a few minutes into the discussion. Others present: Margaret Scoles, ED (for part)

**Agreed-Upon-Procedures – Pam:** Discussion of Agreed Upon Procedures. Stuart-Two decisions to make: 1) Is Pam going to attend in person or remote? 2) Do we review both 2015 and 2016 or just one year? Pam-would be great to do two years unless it drastically increases the price. It would be good to see that a professional from outside of the organization is confirming we have proper checks and balances.

**Expo East and IFOAM North America representation:** Discussion of attendance at Expo East. Sept. 21-24. Stuart-Lisa Pierce has expressed her interest in attending Expo, as well as being IOIA representative with IFOAM North America. Lisa, rather than a BOD member, will attend Expo. MS and Lisa to attend IFOAM North America meeting before Expo. MS proposes that IOIA pay travel and lodging for Lisa. **Margaret Anne moves that we support the idea of Lisa Pierce as the nominee for IFOAM North America Board and to help at Expo East. Unanimously approved.**

**Work Schedule - Moving ahead following BOD Retreat:** MS joins the call.

BOD will review draft of Emergency Plan - a compilation of important documents prepared by MS. Part that is missing is the "retirement notice" in case we need to find a new ED. Stuart-Also missing the rough job description and hiring plan. MS-Membership drive and fundraising will require some action. She needs clarification on the proposed Executive Administrative Assistant position. Emergency and Succession Plan are probably the biggest things. Re: Membership - We could concentrate on inspectors who are evaluated and not IOIA members. Stuart- one corporate member giving \$500 is easier than getting 5 new inspector members, but the 5 new inspectors members are more meaningful. Let's make sure that peer evaluators have IOIA materials to distribute. Ib-What about providing each evaluator with a 1-page sheet we can hand to non-IOIA members that we evaluate?

**Discussion of NOP's proposed animal welfare issues:** MS, Matt, Ib, Garth have been on subcommittee.

MA-If we comment it should align with our mission. Thinks we should comment directly on the elements of the proposal that will directly impact inspectors. MA went to the Forum to get more input.

Stuart- We in Canada already have these requirements. It has merely led to more time on site.

Matt- He feels it is important to comment on how it affects inspections. This will substantially increase cost of inspection and will require many more livestock inspectors. This will add another layer of expectation for inspectors.

Stuart- Experience in Canada making the standard more prescriptive has made inspections longer, but has made inspections more lucrative from the inspectors he has spoken to. Feels it gives more teeth and meaningfulness of the standards.

MA- Notes that NOP said this will add another 3 hours to a livestock inspection in addition to the 10 that the NOP already estimates that it takes for an OLP inspection, including prep, inspection and report writing. Is concerned we may face some push back and pressure to undervalue our work.

**Board of Directors Minutes Highlights**

MA- Relates Kathy Turner's post on the forum. This will require inspectors will spend even more time than NOP estimate because we will be providing more explanation of the standards.

Matt- Crop/livestock farms often require more time than either a crop or livestock farm by itself. When you add complexity, it doesn't just double time, but triples it. This will require inspectors to multi-task more-to be an OG inspector as well as an animal welfare inspector.

Stuart- has done Humane inspections along with OG. It does take a lot more time. Notes that most OG inspectors don't have a lot of experience in best practices for animal welfare. The risk is that the conventional industry may surpass the OG industry in terms of metrics for sustainability or humane handling for livestock.

**Conference Call - July 15, 2016**

Present: Garth Kahl, Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, Pam Sullivan, Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), Ib Hagsten, Stuart McMillan, Matt Miller Others: Margaret Scoles, ED.

**Garth reported back on trip to Cuba.** See also spring newsletter.

**Treasurer's report.** Pam-notes we are \$130K ahead of where we were a year ago. Peer evaluation-we are hoping to break even. Not getting any many inspectors to evaluate who have multiple agencies requesting evaluation. Food safety and webinars are generating income, esp. because new training model requires people to take webinar for first part of basic training. **Matt moves we accept Treasurer's report and balance sheet. Approved unanimously.**

**Agreed-Upon-Procedures:** Pam- reviewed information sent to her by Eric Feutz, former treasurer, so see what items were reviewed at last Agreed Upon Procedures review. Mainly process is to ensure there are checks and balances and that all written procedures are being followed. Pam-We're only going to review 2016. Hopefully this will only take the auditor one day.

**Ib moves we approve Agreed Upon Procedures by Philip Emmons as recommended by Pam, second by Garth. Unanimously approved.**

**Employee Handbook Issues:** MS- We need to clarify employee handbook with respect to employees on leave. We have no current leave of absence policy.

**Executive Assistant.** MS- needs input. This is not in the budget, do we advertise for this? What's the timeline? Garth-Not sure if the executive assistant was foreseen to be necessarily in Broadus. Pam-One of the things we did not discuss in Jeju was how to pay for this person. We need to generate more revenue. Raise dues, raise rates of training? MS-Feels that one stressor in her job is number of part time employees. Adding another person will not necessarily relieve her stress. Matt- Part time employees are not as stable long term. MS- Wants some BoD members to review job description. Would love to work with Margaret Anne. Ib-volunteers to help too. MS-what's happening with the Job description for the ED? Stuart feels strongly that the BOD should write this. He will lead the project to write the ED job description.

**2017 AGM Venue and Schedule for BOD events: Pam moves we schedule the AGM at the Lord Elgin Hotel and the Board retreat at the Strathmere. Second by Ib. Unanimously approved.**

**Resource**

***The Art and Science of Grazing – How Grass Farmers Can Create Sustainable Systems for Healthy Animals and Farm Ecosystems.*** by Sarah Flack

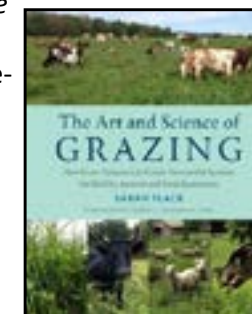
This book covers the basic principles shared by all successful grazing systems, and many real descriptions of grazing systems working well on dairy, beef, goat, and sheep farms in different regions of North America. *The Art and Science of Grazing* presents information first from the perspective of pasture plants, and then from the livestock perspective—helping farmers understand both plant and animal needs before setting up a grazing system. It is written in farmer friendly language and includes illustrations and color photos.

You can order a copy from [Chelsea Green Publishing](http://www.chelseagreen.com)

<http://www.chelseagreen.com/the-art-and-science-of-grazing>

Or you can order from your local bookstore.

Or you can get it on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/author/sarahflack) <https://www.amazon.com/author/sarahflack>



If you want a signed copy, go to: <http://www.sarahflackconsulting.com/publications-and-video/books-and-audio-cds/> for more information.



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!**

## 2016 Calendar

**September 17-25** 7<sup>th</sup> Annual National Organic Week, featuring celebrations and activities all across Canada.

**September 21** OTA Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration, during Expo East, Baltimore

**September 21-24** Natural Products Expo East, Baltimore

**November 3, 4, & 5** [Organic Connections Trade Show](#), Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

**November 16 – 18** The Fall 2016 National Organic Standards Board meeting, St. Louis, Missouri at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel, 212 N. King-highway Blvd.

**January 26 – 29, 2017** Guelph Organic Conference, <http://www.guelphorganicconf.ca/>

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

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

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

**November 9 – 11 2017** 19<sup>th</sup> Organic World Congress, New Delhi, India. <http://www.owc.ifoam.bio>

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