

Non-GMO Verification Training Now Available

IOIA is pleased to announce that Food Chain ID and IOIA will cosponsor 300 Level NGP Product Verification Program Inspector Qualification Training on May 29. The training will be offered periodically via both webinar and in-person format. This is the first such collaborative IOIA/FoodChain ID training since similar training was offered in person in California in 2011. Training on this topic has been frequently requested by IOIA members over the past two years.

The webinar is a 300 level training course, designed for experienced inspectors already familiar with auditing to a standard. It includes pre-course reading and assignment, seven hours of in-class instruction via distance presenter, and a post webinar exam. Presenter will be Jennifer Schomp, Technical Research Director at [FoodChain ID](#). The webinar component will include in-class discussion, examples, exercises and the opportunity for questions and answers. The training will be presented in two 3.5-hour sessions with intermittent breaks.

Training is based on the current Non-GMO Project Standard. Non-GMO Project Verified is the fastest growing label in the natural products industry, representing more than 26,000 verified products and \$11 billion in annual sales, according to the FoodChain ID website.

The training was offered previously four times in 2008 in-person and again in 2010 by webinar.

Participants who meet minimum requirements will receive a IOIA/FoodChain ID Letter of Attendance for 300 Level NGP Product Verification Program Inspector Qualification Training.

Cost for the webinar is \$300 for IOIA Members and \$325 for non IOIA members.

Space is limited. Inspectors interested in taking this training may register through <http://ganconferencing.qualitywebconference.com/register/49661430773400>. Or contact Lili Bartes, Inspections Coordinator at FoodChain ID at lbartes@FCID.com or 641-209-4634 as soon as possible to ensure a space. Depending on the level of interest and enrollment, more webinars will be scheduled.

FoodChain ID is a founding member and lead developer of the Non-GMO Project Product Verification Program (PVP). FoodChain ID was also the first technical administrator for the Non-GMO Project Standard.



For more information about FoodChain ID, see www.foodchainid.com. For more information about the Non-GMO Project Standard, see www.nongmoproject.org.

Notes from the Chair

By Stuart McMillan

It is hard to believe that it is already six weeks since the IOIA AGM and board meeting at Chico Hot Springs in Montana. As board members we meet with regularity, but rarely in person. This is of course the same for us inspectors. We do similar work in various countries, but rarely meet face to face. One of the best parts of the AGM or any IOIA Advanced Training is the chance to meet colleagues and friends face to face, albeit briefly. This is one of the reasons I am happy for the opportunity to serve on the IOIA board. The chance to work together with fellow inspectors for the betterment of our organization is a true satisfaction. I know speaking to various inspectors who attend the AGM while of course they find the advanced trainings educational, they appreciate the opportunity to be involved with the AGM, the real reason they attend is the chance to meet with their inspector colleagues and friends. We too often work alone on the road, write reports in our home offices and are geographically separated from our fellow inspectors. With that said I hope to see lots of you in Korea, the location for the 2016 AGM.

Welcome New Members!

Inspectors:

Karine Bertrand - Montcalm, QC
 Ryan Merck - Clemson, SC
 Patricia Dougherty - Viroqua, WI
 John Hollinrake - Silverton, OR

Supporting Individuals:

Annemarie Feenstra - Nobleford, AB
 Patricia Jones - Raleigh, NC
 Anna K. Russell - Hakawao, HI
 Duncan Bowie - Wallingford, PA
 Bryan Hindert - Tampa, FL
 Stefan Jirka - Ithaca, NY.
 Farrakhan Muhammed - Albuquerque, NM
 Alex Restaino - Arlington, VA
 Steven Straits - Walnut Creek, OH
 Arthur Bassett - McNeal, AZ
 Laura Austin - Longmont, CO
 Debbie Harrison - Oxnard, CA
 Diana Horan - Viroqua, WI
 David Raubenolt - Jeromesville, OH
 Karen Davis-Brown - Antioch, TN
 Eardley Barrett - Port St. Lucie, FL
 Michael Gessel - Wooster, OH
 Joshua Bogart - Forksville, PA
 Travis Meier - Bangor, MI
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The Inspectors' Report is the newsletter of the International Organic Inspectors Association. IOIA is a 501 (c)(3) educational organization. Our mission is to address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors, to provide quality inspector training and to promote integrity and consistency in the organic certification process.
 Editor: Diane Cooner webgal@ioia.net
 Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.

**On-Site Training Schedule -
 full details and applications at www.ioia.net**

Tokyo, Japan, Farm and Processing Courses

August 31 - September 3, 2015

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor 4 day Basic Organic Farm and Processing Inspection Trainings using JAS Standards as a reference. The courses will be held concurrently at the Waseda Hoshien Student Christian Center in Waseda, Tokyo, Japan. The training language will be Japanese. The trainer for the Farm course will be Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, and the trainer for the Processing course will be Yutaka Maruyama. Please contact JOIA for more information about these courses. E-Mail: info@joia-organic.com

Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings, Oregon

September 28 - October 2, 2015

IOIA and Oregon Tilth Certified Organic (OTCO) will cosponsor Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings Sept 28 - Oct 2, running concurrently at The LaSells Stewart Center at Oregon State University in Corvallis. Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. Advanced inspector offerings under discussion include IOIA/Demeter Biodynamic Inspection Training with Stellar Certification Services, Technical Service Provider training with OTCO/NRCS, and Gluten-free Inspection Training with the Gluten-free Certification Organization. Advanced trainings are not confirmed at this time.

Oregon Tilth Certified Organic is the certification program of Oregon Tilth, a nonprofit that supports biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture through education, research, advocacy and product certification. OTCO certifies organic operations both nationally and internationally. Visit: www.tilth.org for more information.

The LaSells Stewart Center is located on the beautiful Oregon State University campus in Corvallis (pop. 52,000). A room block has been reserved at The Hilton Garden Inn, located on the OSU Campus directly across the street from LaSells Center.

Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Trainings, Iowa

November 2 - 13, 2015

IOIA and Iowa Organic Association (IOA) will cosponsor Crop and Livestock Inspection Trainings Nov 2 - 13, in Des Moines. Crop Inspection training is scheduled Nov 2- 6, followed by Livestock Inspection training Nov 9 - 13.

San José, Costa Rica, Farm Inspection Course

November 23-27, 2015

IOIA and Eco-LOGICA will cosponsor a 4.5 day Basic Organic Farm Inspection training using USDA National Organic Standards as a reference. The course will be held at ICAES, Coronado in Costa Rica on November 23-27, 2015. Instruction will be conducted in Spanish. Please contact Sue Wei at ph.: (506) 4010-0232 or (506) 2297-6676, fax: (506) 2235-1638 or e-mail: swei@eco-logica.com for further information.

**2015 IOIA WEBINAR Training Schedule
 for complete details please go to: www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html**

200 Level Webinar - July 9 & 10, 2015. Basic GAP On-Farm Food Safety Training and Regional Independent Verifier Certification. The two, 3 hour sessions will be July 9 from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. and July 10 from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PDT). IOIA Trainers: Karen Troxell & Jonda Crosby.

300 Level Webinar - July 13, 2015. Grower Group Inspection and Certification. Two 2 hour sessions, both taking place on July 13, 2015. Session 1: 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Session 2: 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (PDT). Trainer: Luis Brenes.

100 Level Webinar - September 9 and 11, 2015. NOP Crop Standards. Two, 3 hour sessions. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PDT). Trainers: Garry Lean and Margaret Scoles.

200 Level Webinar - September 25, 2015. Basic GAP On-Farm Food Safety Training and Regional Independent Verifier Certification. Two, 3 hour sessions. 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (PDT). Trainers: Karen Troxell & Jonda Crosby.

100 Level Webinar - October 6 & 8, 2015. IOIA/COTA COR Processing Standards. Two, 3 hour sessions. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PDT). IOIA Trainer: Kelly Monaghan.

Watch upcoming IOIA newsletters and website for details as these and other trainings develop.

New - 200 and 300 level Audit Trail Webinars

Monique Scholz, IOIA trainer, launched two new webinars for IOIA in the first months of the year. On February 25 and March 4, she delivered "200 level In/Out Balances, Traceability Tests, and Recipe Verification for Crop Inspection under NOP and COR" to a class of 15. And on April 23 and May 7, she delivered "300 level In/Out Balances, Traceability Tests, and Recipe Verification for Processing Inspection under NOP and COR" to 9 participants from the US and Canada. These webinars were designed for working organic inspectors who have completed at least some basic training. The courses are rich in examples and exercises based on fictitious case studies, with lots of opportunity to work with simulated documents and real calculations.

The 200-level courses are designed so that participants can choose US Standard or metric units. The 300-level course assumes that participants will be ready to work in a combination of both units. These webinars were designed to respond to an identified need for more consistency in in/out balances. The 200-level Feed Audit webinar fills the same niche for livestock inspectors. Scholz will next be delivering the 200-level processing webinar as in-house training for an Australian certifier.

Comments from experienced inspector participants' evaluations following the 300-level course:

"I found the material quite helpful in improving my ability to conduct thorough inspections."

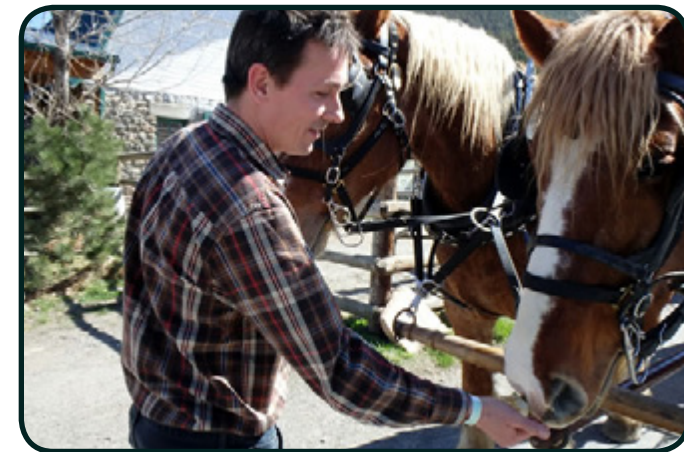
"The webinar has been very helpful for me and is/was much needed in my opinion."

"Do certifiers know about this webinar? It seems like it could be very useful to them."

Notes, from page 1

It is very exciting that there are so many projects in various stages of development. The board is working hard on multiple fronts to ensure that the issues facing inspectors are addressed. I am amazed by how much my colleagues seem to get accomplished in a short time. I often feel that I need to learn from them how to better balance a very full inspection schedule, extra board of director tasks, IOIA committee liaison work and actually having a life beyond inspections. I am reminded of the Margaret Mead quote *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

Of the current projects I think the one taking the majority of attention is the Peer Field Evaluation Committee. That group has done a tremendous amount of work in a short time in order to build a solid program able to fulfill the needs of meeting the NOP requirement outlined in 2027. Without the development of this program, many contract inspectors doing a small number of inspections for a certification body may have been at risk of losing that work since the cost to evaluate them in the field by that certification body would be too great. While the program is designed to meet a USDA requirement, the checklists and processes developed are applicable to any country. It is



New board chair Stuart McMillan gives a tasty apple treat to the carriage team at Chico Hot Springs.

an exciting project and that subcommittee should be recognized for the many long night conference calls straddling various area codes and their huge efforts - all of which has been done on a voluntary basis. I think their project demonstrates the issues addressed in Tony Fleming’s thoughtful article on Inspector Compensation. This is yet another intangible cost of being an independent inspector that these committee members have taken on, but it was not for their own personal need but for the needs of all inspectors. Again, I thank that committee sincerely for their dedication and hard work. There are many other big projects for the year ahead for IOIA being undertaken by the staff, inspectors, and the board of directors. I encourage you all to stay engaged, assist where you can and watch the newsletter or forum for updates. Thank you all for the opportunity to serve IOIA and all of you.

GMO News

USDA develops a verified GMO-free labeling system

The Agriculture Department developed a voluntary system to certify and label food as free of genetically modified organisms, says the [Associated Press](#). Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack described the system in a letter to employees at the start of May, said AP, which obtained a copy of the letter. There has been no formal announcement by the department of a GMO-free label.

Such a label would dovetail with the Pompeo-Butterfield bill in the House to pre-empt state GMO labeling laws, keep labeling voluntary on the federal level and create a voluntary system run by the USDA to certify that foods do not contain GMOs.

In the letter, Vilsack said the GMO-free labeling system was developed at the request of “a leading global company that wanted proof that corn and soybeans used in its products do not contain GMOs, said AP. Vilsack said other companies were interested in the verification system as well. Companies would pay for the USDA to review their supply chains to see if materials are GMO-free, and if approved “the foods would be able to carry a ‘USDA Process Verified’ label.” The USDA has verification systems for a number of other products. *Ag Insider, May 15, 2015*

GMA files appeal in Vermont

The [Grocery Manufacturers Association](#) said it filed a notice of appeal in U.S. district court against the April 27 ruling that allows Vermont to proceed with a law requiring special labels on foods made with genetically modified organisms. The first-in-the-nation law, enacted a year ago, would take effect July 1, 2016. The federal court denied a GMA request for an injunction against the law and rejected its arguments that the law violated the U.S. Constitution.

Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

Inspectors as “Street Level Bureaucrats”?!

I learned a wonderful new term while serving on the capstone committee for Alison Kent, MPA graduate student at the University of Colorado Denver. Her capstone paper, *“Policy Implementation on the Street Level: Assessing the Regulatory Role of the Inspector in the Organic Food Industry”*, was presented on May 5. I sat in from the IOIA home office via Skype.

I first met Alison early last year at the ACA meeting. She and her colleagues, David P. Carter and Sara Miller Chonaiew, were all graduate students from Indiana University-Purdue or the University of Colorado Denver. They reported the results of research conducted for the Accredited Certifiers Association and funded by the National Science Foundation, looking at how the NOP was being implemented. As they researched, they became more aware of just how important inspectors are to that “street-level” implementation. That led to an inspector survey conducted last year. She conducted 16 interviews with organic inspectors and had a 41% response rate on 260 email surveys including IOIA members and non-IOIA members, and independent and contract inspectors working for state agencies, for-profit, and non-profit certifiers. One of Alison’s capstone references was Street Level Bureaucracy (Lipksy, 1980). I doubt many of us think of ourselves in those terms, exactly, but that’s precisely what we are – **street level bureaucrats**.

Alison’s research questions might not pique the curiosity of the average person. I found them fascinating. **1. Are there causal relationships between inspectors’ perception of role, backgrounds and experiences, and aspects of reporting and reporting behavior?**

2. What are the causal mechanisms underlying inspectors’ reporting and monitoring behavior, and further, what are the implications of agency oversight, expertise, and informal sources of information?

She aimed to understand inspectors’ backgrounds and training, the oversight that certifiers exercise over inspectors, how inspectors perceive their role within the organic food regulation system, the resources upon which inspectors rely, and the discretion that they exercise while fulfilling their monitoring and reporting functions. In short, what makes inspectors tick? And how does that influence the actual implementation of the regulations we are inspecting to? This is an over-simplification that doesn’t do it justice, of course. Her paper was 55 pages long.

What Alison found in her research was a relationship between experience as an inspector and the rigor with which we report noncompliances. Experienced inspectors exercise more discretion based on their experience – resulting in more sound and sensible implementation. In other words, *the amount of experience we have as an inspector and how they perceive their role is a significant factor in how we perform as ‘street level bureaucrats’*. I was pleased to find cited within those pages, the IOIA white paper presented early in 2013 *“An IOIA White Paper: Solving the Organic Certification Paperwork and Process Logjam.”* Her paper ended with eight recommendations for IOIA. One of those was a suggestion that we internalize discretion within our codes of conduct. She suggests that we incorporate the concept of ‘Street Level Bureaucracy’ into the codes that govern us. One side benefit and a practical application of this research – IOIA has more published research to cite

when applying for grants and other funding. It was nice that someone noticed what many people in the organic sector forget – **the essentiality of experienced organic inspectors.**

Quick Notes: A big thank you to **Christopher Kidwell** for helping staff the IOIA booth at Expo West in Anaheim on March 6-8. We took a wild trip to a nearby suburb to retrieve the IOIA display from



David Gould & Chris Kidwell at the IOIA booth, Expo West

the bowels of the UPS customer center and ended up having a good Korean dinner. **Maarten Samsom** stopped by, helped out, visited, and attended the OFRF Fundraising Luncheon with me. He helped staff the FoodChain ID booth. Expo Badges have become much scarcer and expensive; with our free booth, we get two badges. The event ended with a dinner with old high school classmates, **Donn Randall** of the WY Department of Agriculture and his wife Julianne. I attended the meeting sponsored by **Peggy Miars**, new IFOAM BOD member; **David Gould**, IFOAM staff based in Oregon; and **Andre Leu** of Australia, IFOAM President. IOIA is engaged in supporting the initiative to organize a IFOAM North America, and will meet again at Expo East in Baltimore. On April 17, I presented “Organic Opportunities” to the southeastern Montana extension agents.

SECTOR NEWS

Origin of Livestock Proposed Rule Now Open for Comments

The National Organic Program (NOP)'s proposed rule on the Origin of Livestock is now available for public comment through July 27. The proposed rule clarifies the requirements for the transition of dairy animals into organic production. The rule would update the USDA's organic regulations by requiring that milk or milk products labeled, sold, or represented as organic be from dairy animals that have been organically managed since the last third of gestation, with a one-time allowance for a producer to convert conventional dairy animals to organic milk production after a one-year transitional period.

Under the proposal, the producer, rather than the herd, becomes what is regulated, and allows a producer a one-time transition period of one year; all animals must end transition at the same time. After the transition, the producer would only be able to expand the number of dairy animals or replace culled dairy animals on any dairy farm in two ways: (1) Add dairy animals that had been under continuous organic management since the last third of gestation, or (2) add transitioned dairy animals that had already completed the transition on another dairy farm during that producer's one-time transition. Breeder stock, however, may be brought from a nonorganic operation onto an organic operation at any time.

Comments may be submitted through [regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Wolf, DiMatteo + Associates, May 2015

IFOAM 2014 Annual Report

The IFOAM Annual Report is now available - click [here](http://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/ar2014_web.pdf). Or go to http://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/ar2014_web.pdf

Mexico Officially Extends Deadline to Comply with Organic Regs

On May 8, 2015, the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries, and Food (SAGARPA) published a notification in the *Diario Oficial de la Federación* (Mexican Federal Register) extending the deadline to comply with Mexico's organic regulations to **October 29, 2016**. This extension allows products certified as organic under the NOP to continue to enter and be sold in Mexico as organic. For more info see the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) report [MX5020](#).

Organic Check-off Closer to Reality

The Organic Trade Association (OTA), in collaboration with the GRO Organic Core Committee, formally petitioned the USDA on May 12 to begin steps to conduct a vote on a research and promotion check-off program for the organic industry. The [Executive Summary](#) for the proposed organic check-off and [full application](#) are available to download.

OTA NewsFlash, May 12, 2015

NOP releases 2015-2018 Strategic Plan

The NOP has released its [2015-2018 Strategic Plan](#). This document includes information about NOP's vision, mission, and strategic goals, as well as a summary of successes over the past five years and priority projects for the coming years. Priority regulations include animal welfare standards, origin of livestock, organic practice standards (for aquaculture, apiculture, mushrooms, and pet food), and revisions

to organic regulation enforcement provisions to tighten certification requirements and better detect and eliminate fraud.

Minnesota Governor Presses for Mandatory Buffer Strips

Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton says he won't relent on requiring farmers to leave a buffer strip along sensitive waterways, although he is willing to compromise on his proposal for a 50-foot strip along all waterways, according to the [Associated Press](#). "I'm going to be able to do what most politicians can't do in a farm state, which is to take on some of the agriculture interests," said Dayton, who is in his final term. During an interview, the governor "acknowledged that passage of a legislative proposal depends on buy-in from farmers, but he said he'll go toe-to-toe with them to ensure any plan protects Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams," said AP.

The strips are intended to filter water running off fields and trap sediment and nutrients. Environmental groups were heartened by Dayton's proposal. Farm groups said the governor ignored the soil- and water-conservation projects that growers have undertaken voluntarily. Dayton told the AP he plans action on other water issues, such as improving drinking water and upgrading wastewater treatment plants.

"We had some real concerns that one size does not fit all," Minnesota Farm Bureau president Kevin Paap told [Brownfield Ag News](#). The governor softened his stance and, Paap says, all interested parties are looking at short- and long-term solutions.

SECTOR NEWS

NOSB Meeting Recap - April 27-30, 2015

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency reported recently that water quality varies across the state, from good in the wooded northeastern region to poor in the southwest, where agriculture is dominant, says the [South Washington County Bulletin](#), of Cottage Grove, Minnesota.

Ag Insider, May 7, 2015

NOP Policy Memo on Nanotech

On March 24, 2015, NOP issued a policy memorandum to certifying agents and material evaluation programs to provide clarification on the use of nanotechnology in organic production and handling.

[PM 15-2 Nanotechnology](#)

This policy memo is part of the NOP Handbook, which includes all guidance, instructions and policies under the USDA organic regulations.

Nominations deadline extended for new NOSB members

NOP's Deputy Administrator Miles McEvoy has announced that USDA is extending the NOSB nomination process by one month. Nominations are sought for two organic farmer/producer seats, two public or consumer interest group representatives, and one USDA accredited certifying agent. Appointed individuals will serve a five-year term, from January 2016 to January 2021. The original deadline for applications was May 15. It is being extended by 30 days. [Check out the nominations page](#).

Garth Kahl, Director, testified on behalf of IOIA at the NOSB meeting. His comments focused on the definition of excluded methods and GMO avoidance. He also attended the National Organic Coalition meeting and spoke to the need for consistency in application of outdoor access for poultry.



The Board votes followed the sub-committee recommendations for both new petitions and 2016 sunset materials. The most controversial, a recommended change to **methionine**, passed by a 2/3 majority. The petition changes how the maximum allowed amount of synthetic methionine for poultry is calculated. Instead of limiting how much is in feed rations, the plan is to measure methionine use on average over the life of the bird. Key Discussions: **Excluded Methods Terminology** and **Prevention Strategy Guidance for Excluded Methods in Crops and Handling**. Look for these again on the Spring 2016 NOSB agenda. The latter included recommendations for best management practices that could reduce exposure to GMOs in seed, crop and livestock production and during handling as well as how certifiers could best oversee adequate prevention measures. The subcommittee suggested a requirement for testing the purity of any non-organic seeds.

HANDLING KEY VOTES

Three votes on **glycerin**:

- If organic glycerin is not available in the required quantity, quality or form, then glycerin from agricultural forms could be used; synthetic glycerin will no longer be allowed. Vote: Yes
- Motion to list glycerin at §205.606, produced from agricultural source materials and processed using biological or mechanical/physical methods. Vote: Yes
- Motion to remove glycerin - produced by hydrolysis of fats and oils - from §205.605(b). Vote: Yes

NOSB voted against adding: **Whole Algal Flour, Polyalkylene Glycol Monobutyl Ether (PGME)**, or **Triethyl citrate**. 2016 Sunset Review: The NOSB voted to remove **Egg White Lysozyme** and voted to keep **L-Malic Acid, Microorganisms, Activated Charcoal, Peracetic Acid/Peroxyacetic acid, Sodium Acid Pyrophosphate** on the National list. They voted to remove **Tetrasodium Pyrophosphate (TSPP)** and the following volatile amines: **Boiler water additives for package sterilization: Cyclohexylamine; Diethylaminoethanol; Octadecylamine**. The Ancillary Substance Policy was tabled until Spring 2016.

CROPS KEY VOTES:

NOSB voted against adding **Exhaust Gas** for control of burrowing rodents; against adding synthetic calcium sulfate (gypsum) to §205.601; and against adding **3-decene-2-one** -as a sprout inhibitor for potatoes. 2016 Sunset reviews: NOSB voted to re-list **Ferric Phosphate** and **Hydrogen Chloride** for delinting cotton seed for planting.

LIVESTOCK KEY VOTES: In addition to the methionine annotation change, they voted to add two petitioned Substances: **Acidified Sodium Chlorite (ASC)** and **Zinc Sulfate**

NOP Head 'Not Sure Organic is Better'

by Ib Hagsten, Ph.D.

Recently, the Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program (NOP), Miles McEvoy, was interviewed by the The Washington Post, with the heading of the article "Is organic food safer and healthier? The guy in charge of U.S. organics won't say."

IOIA Chair Stuart McMillan saw it and forwarded it to the BOD members for information and review. A few days later the Cornucopia Institute came out with an article lamenting that "Miles would not say organic is healthier." Perhaps they are under the mistaken impression that Miles's role is/should be as an advocate for organics, whereas his task is to uniformly administer the standards that NOP has set forth.

Allow me to respond to the above question, in a manner I use regularly both in official meetings and in one-on-ones, when asked, "Is Organic Tastier/Healthier?"

Since I do not believe there is a standard correct answer, I answer as follows:

Let's say you go to a local farmers' market where there are two organically-certified produce farmers present (with certifier signage, etc). One booth (#3) is that of a newly-certified farm while the 8th booth (around the square where the local farmers display and sell their produce) is that of a farmer who has been certified for nine years. Both are organic, but is their produce equal in health benefits and taste?

You stop to talk with the "new arrival" (3rd booth) and you purchase three of her tomatoes. As you proceed to look at all the other

booths, you stop also at booth #8 to chat with the long-time organic farmer, and although you don't really need more tomatoes, you buy one of his (of the same variety) in order to support the market.

At home you sample all four tomatoes over the next couple of days and make two observations, namely (1) booth 3's (newly-certified) tomatoes do not taste any different than the ones you get at the grocery store, and (2) booth 8's (longer-certified) tomatoes taste like the ones you remember grandma serving. What's going on? You tell yourself that you need to try that test again next week to see if it was just a "fluke." And, to your amazement, you decide booth 8's guy has much better organic tomatoes than booth #3's!

Officially both are certified by a NOP-accredited agency for organic produce, yet the organic tomatoes tested in this mini-experiment are surely quite different. We need to remember that organic certification is an on-going "process", not a destination. Might this account for the difference? *So, maybe Miles is justified in not answering unequivocally that ALL organic tomatoes are nutritionally and/or tastefully superior to conventional tomatoes.*

I have written several dozen USDA/NRCS Transition to Organic (CAP-138) Plans, so perhaps I am able to clarify ... while in no way wishing to discourage beginning organic farmers. Get to know your farmer ... ask questions!

As it happens, the newly-certified organic ground used by booth 3's operator had been unimproved pasture that had not received chemicals in three years, thus

immediately it qualified for organic certification. That ground may only have 2%OM (Organic Matter), lack earth worms, and, for all practical purposes, not been capable of making available to the growing tomato plants all the microorganism-induced soil nutrients that grandma used to have in her garden, i.e. no extra taste or nutrient density.

The organic ground certified for nine years by the other operator had actually been managed organically for 12 years (following 3 years of transition). His organic matter content may well be 7%; the microorganism flora in his ground is buzzing with an abundance of large earthworms, medium-sized nematodes, etc, and millions of miniscule bacteria and fungi, which in symbiotic coexistence make a myriad of easily-digestible macro- and micro-nutrients available to the roots, that in turn provide the plant produce (in this case tomatoes) with exceptionally tasty and nutritionally-rich food for the consuming public, who has enough common sense to realize why these are the organic tomatoes to buy from this particular local farmers market.

In summary, these are the two "word pictures" I paint regularly in the minds of my audience (of one or one hundred) when I am asked, "if organic is better?" *The additional advantage of taking a few minutes to paint these two pictures is the indelible concepts I leave in the listener's mind of (1) why organic is better, (2) organic management takes time and effort, and that (3) the added cost per unit is, (a) well worth it, and (b) well deserved by the farmer.*

CANADA ORGANIC NEWS**Late-Breaking News**

Kelly Monaghan, IOIA's representative on the Organic Technical Committee in Canada, has confirmed that IOIA's vote for the 32.310 standards revision, based on decisions reached at the OTC meetings May 11-12, will be "yes". IOIA originally voted "no" in March, based on the initial input gathered from the IOIA membership. Kelly did an outstanding job of seeking, gathering, and summarizing inspector input for the ballot. Thanks, Kelly!

Last meeting of the Technical Committee May 11 -13 2015

Launched in the fall of 2013, the review of the Canadian Organic Standards is entering its final phase: the last Technical Committee (TC) meeting, followed by the second ballot and public review.

The Working Group responsible for the proposed merger of the organic aquaculture and agriculture standards has been very active, and the Technical Committee analyzed the proposed merger at the May meeting to make recommendations and submit the merged organic standards to public review, where the Canadian sector will have the opportunity to issue comments.

Some agriculture issues were also addressed by the TC at the May meeting, including the use of biodegradable mulch, outdoor access for poultry, and parallel production. The TC is responsible for resolving all negative votes issued under the first ballot.

The May meeting was the last meeting of the TC. Subsequent discussions following the public review and the second ballot will be addressed by the Conveners of the Working Groups, and any necessary TC approval would be done via electronic messaging.

The Organic Federation of Canada will announce the launch of the public review as soon as the May recommendations from the TC will have been inserted into the merged organic agriculture-aquaculture draft.

Next Phase of CFIA Regulatory Consultation

Canadian Food Inspection Agency has announced the next phase of its consultation on the proposed Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR), with a special focus on the impacts for micro and small businesses. This will supplement the previous two rounds of consultations held in 2013 and 2014 on a new regulatory framework and approach for bringing the Safe Food for Canadians Act into force. The Organic Products Regulations will be integrated into the new SFCR.

Quebec Injects 9 Million into Organic Agriculture

To support economic prosperity of the growing organic sector, Quebec will invest \$ 9 million over three years. It is a major shift, declared Pierre Paradis, the Quebec Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The main ministerial orientations will be the protection of the supply and the transition towards organic agriculture.

"Quebec organic market is \$400 million. But only 30% of this market is supplied by Quebec producers," added Paradis.

Above articles courtesy of Info-Bio, OFC Newsletter, May 2015

Organics in Canada

The 5000 Canadian organic operators are part of the 2 million organic producers of the world (extract from IFOAM Annual Report, April 23, 2015. http://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/ar2014_web.pdf)

IOIA's Inspector Accreditation Program Revisited

By Margaret Scoles

IOIA's BOD met in October 2014 to focus on re-envisioning an inspector certification program (aka Accreditation). Their starting point was the work of staff, past BOD members and trainers, plus the work IOIA completed under contract to USDA in 2011 regarding criteria, training content, and concepts of operations for training and licensing both organic inspectors and reviewers. The BOD next met with IOIA's Accreditation Committee and finally with a group of the most active IOIA trainers. With this collective perspective, a dramatically new concept for Inspector "Accreditation" Program was finally, for the first time in over 20 years, presented to the membership for endorsement. The members enthusiastically supported the new concept in principle. The outcome will enhance the professionalism of inspectors and help long-term experienced inspectors differentiate themselves.

The current model for training is a 4.5 day basic training in each scope, with some precourse assignment/reading before each one. The course includes a graded report assignment and an exam. Those who successfully complete the course receive a Certificate of Completion, but they are not ready to do inspections. They still need field training. Unfortunately there is wide variation in what happens next. Some highly promising candidates become discouraged by the difficulty in finding mentors. They give up without ever becoming inspectors. Some start working without adequate apprenticeship. Some are fortunate enough to find certifiers willing to find mentors for them. And eventually, a few decide voluntarily to go through the process of IOIA Accreditation. Meanwhile, mentors are often working for

free, sometimes lamenting that they are training their own competition.

The new model recognizes that a 4.5 day basic training does not make an inspector. The new model for training still includes 4.5 days of training with a Basic Trainer. However, the participants will have already taken a basic standards webinar (i.e. COR or NOP). The three days in the classroom will be restructured - more interactive and less intense for deeper learning and better retention. The proposed model has documents for the mock inspection handed out on Day 2 and the field trip on the afternoon of Day 3.

Day 4 would be spent entirely writing the report as a group learning exercise, not a graded assessment. Later, the participant will have the opportunity for two days of field training, focused entirely on doing inspections under supervision of a Regional Trainer, including writing the report for assessment. This formal, structured field training will replace the current variable and inconsistent "apprenticeship". Passing both the test and the report will be required for a Certificate - no different than the current system. However, a re-take option will be included, which is not part of the current system.

IOIA proposes that the person who receives this Certificate can be a certified 100-level inspector, ready for 100-level inspections. That Certificate of Completion will not expire. However, if the inspector wants to be certified as a 200 or 300 level inspector, they will need to complete a minimum number of inspections, a minimum number of hours of appropriate level continuous education, and have a Peer Evaluation

periodically (3 years for 200-level, 5 years for 300-level). Action is required to maintain 200 or 300 level status. Otherwise, the inspector drops back to 100-level. The term "accreditation", more appropriately applied to institutions than to persons, will be replaced by "100 level certified inspector", "200 level certified inspector", or "300 level certified inspector".

Now comes the hard part - actually building the new program and making the transition. The current program was voluntary and separated from training, although a limited amount of IOIA training is required for initial accreditation. The new program will be a continuum through training. Funding will be sought to build and implement the new program. IOIA basic training is IOIA's largest revenue center, and one of our primary activities. A major change in the basic training program will take some financial planning. So the transition to a new training/certification program will take some time.

IOIA will begin in the US and Canada. Basic training will likely continue as per the current model in most other countries, at least for some time.

IOIA's current Accreditation Program is 20 years old and currently 11 members (less than 1%) are accredited. The program is voluntary, rigorous, and inexpensive. It was hard wrought through the work of a small number of inspectors with passion and diverse backgrounds. It was endorsed by the membership and has stood the test of time. But clearly, most inspectors are not finding a compelling reason to accredit, and it is time for a change.

IOIA Peer Evaluation Program – Time to Launch

By Margaret Scoles

In just one year, an all-volunteer committee has developed IOIA's robust response to NOP Certifier Instruction 2027 Personnel Performance Evaluations. NOP 2027 said that certifiers must evaluate all staff annually, and for inspectors that evaluation should include a field evaluation by a supervisor or peer (at least annually). IOIA welcomed the move to greater rigor in field evaluation, but requiring every certifier to evaluate every inspector annually didn't make sense. Not only would this greatly add to costs for certifiers, it would create burdensome, multiple evaluations for independent contractors. And IOIA could see the inevitable removal of those inspectors who did a few inspections for many certifiers from the inspector lists of at least some of those certifiers. Creating an IOIA-managed peer evaluation program could solve the problem for inspectors and certifiers. But it would take a lot of work - and fast.

How did they create a new program in one year? – a lot of hard work, including thirteen conference calls, on the part of the committee (IOIA inspector members Al Johnson, Lois Christie, Amanda Birk, Patti Bursten Deutsch, and Garth Kahl). Al joined two IOIA BOD calls to keep the BOD involved and wrote newsletter articles to keep the members informed. Either Al or Lois, co-chairs of the committee, also attended four conference calls of the IOIA-sponsored Certifier-Inspector Dialogue over the past year to keep certifiers apprised of the developing program. Al traveled in February to Arkansas to present the program to the annual meeting and training of the Accredited Certifiers Association and to solicit certifier input. When IOIA asked NOP to provide input, they provided the best kind – in the person of Lars Crail, NOP Lead Auditor, IOIA supporting member, and former inspector. Lars has been invaluable at ensuring that the NOP perspective is addressed.

So what has been accomplished? A Peer Evaluation Tool was developed and tested in March with members of the committee evaluating each other to try it out. An Evaluator application and job description was developed. The program was presented to the membership at the AGM and resoundingly endorsed. A letter has been written to the NOP requesting affirmation that this program would meet the intent of NOP 2027. The pilot program was finally ready to launch in early May - just a year later. But the acid test will be whether certifiers will see the program as an attractive alternative to evaluating their inspectors themselves. Several certification agencies agreed to come on board as part of the pilot program. An IOIA-certifier agreement has been drafted and circulated to the certifiers for review. IOIA anticipates that the program will be launched this summer.

And where does that leave us? Inspectors should be aware that they may find themselves evaluated by one of the IOIA Peer Evaluators this year. When that happens, welcome the opportunity for improvement and know that IOIA is working for you!



Ib presents a 'Friend of IOIA' Award to Al for his work on the Peer Evaluation project.



News from Nepal

We are relieved to report that a message was received on the IOIA Forum from inspector and former board member Maheswar Ghimire, who lives in Kathmandu, a few days following the 7.8 earthquake there.

"Dear ...friends, Thank you for your mail. Sorry for long silence as we were having problems with internet, phone and electricity. Me and my family, we are safe. Kind regards, Maheswar"
We continue to send prayers to the country.

Food Safety Workshops Deliver

Jonda Crosby, IOIA Training Services Director, and Karen Troxell, IOIA trainer, delivered three Produce on-farm food safety workshops in Montana in March and April. One of the three was held in conjunction with the IOIA trainings at Chico Hot Springs. Others were in Helena and Great Falls. A total of 58 people were trained, including seven organic inspectors.

Following the training, Crosby wrote an article, "Food Safety Begins on the Farm: Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for Vegetable and Fruit Growers in Montana" for the newsletter of the Montana Organic Association. A percentage of her IOIA time is paid for 2015 and 2016 so that she can serve as a food safety resource to specialty crop farmers in Montana through a Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center project funded by the Specialty Crops Grant program at the MT Dept of Ag. Jonda is responsible for a total of six workshops, three of which are now complete. Troxell and Crosby will also be co-presenting two webinars (July 9/10 and Sept 25) on Basic GAP On-Farm Food Safety Training and Regional Independent Verifier Certification. These webinars can provide organic inspectors additional work opportunities and also familiarize organic inspectors with on farm food safety issues, risk and assessment tools.

Following is an excerpt from her article that may be useful for inspectors of produce growers in most states and provinces.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) gleaned from the Montana trainings -

Q: Do I have to have a written food safety plan for my farm?

A: No. Food safety plans are not required if your buyer (s) have not requested it and you are selling directly to the consumer without any post-harvest handling (washing, chopping, bagging, mixing etc).

Q: If I am Exempt under the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, do I have to have a food safety plan for my farm?

A: No. Food safety plans are not required if your buyer (s) have not requested it and you are selling directly to the consumer without any post-harvest handling (washing, chopping, bagging, mixing etc).

Q: Our Farmers' Market is thinking about requiring a Food Safety Plan, will I need one to sell there - even if I am Exempt under the Food Safety Modernization Act?

A: If any buyer requires that you have a GAP Food Safety Plan -then, yes, you will need to complete one if you want to sell through their market.

Q: What pathogens do we as farmers need to be primarily concerned about?

A: Bacteria including: E. coli (primarily the more virulent strain 0157:H7), Salmonella, and Listeria.

Q: Where do these bacteria come from?

A: Generic E. coli is in the intestinal tract of mammals; cattle and other ruminants are the most common source of the most toxic E. coli variants. Listeria is found naturally in soil and water. Salmonella's primary reservoir is in the intestinal tract of animals.

Q: What are the most important practices I should be instituting on my farm to help prevent contamination from these pathogens?

A: 1) Keep livestock and other domestic animals out of growing, harvest and packing areas, and minimize the presence of wildlife and rodents. 2) Know the source of your fertility inputs. When using manure add to soil at least 120 days prior to harvest of crops. If using compost, be certain it has been prepared with adequate levels and duration of heat and turnings to kill pathogens. 3) Use water that has been tested for pathogens before using it to irrigate. Water used to hydro-cool crops must be potable (quality equal to Safe Drinking Water Act), 4) For everyone working directly in harvested crops that are typically eaten raw, like apples, peas and beans, be sure harvest tools, and the harvest and packing containers are clean, that workers have convenient access to restrooms, soap, potable water to wash hands, and single-use towels for hand-drying.

Q: So what are the major food safety risks that I would need to include in a Food Safety Plan for my farm - exactly?

A: A farmer must include all of the following categories including: 1) Water source (s) and use (s), 2) Farm land - history of land being used for growing fruits and vegetables and adjoining land use (remember blowing manure from a cattle feedlot over a mile away caused one of the worst food borne illness issues), 3) soil inputs including manure and compost, 4) ag chemical inputs, 5) field worker hygiene, 6) the ability to trace all crops from the farm to the marketplace, 7) capacity and a system to control animals and pests, 8) safe harvest, packing and transport systems and procedures.

Food Safety, from page 12

Q: So, how will my system be verified that I am following these practices?

A: Once you have your food safety plan in place - verification of your plan can be completed by a 2nd party verifier to "test" your food safety plan. The verifier will observe both your plan and your field practices while onsite. You will receive feedback on the areas of weakness in the plan and the operation, and in areas of what you are doing well. If a full GAP audit is needed to satisfy your buyers request then an audit by a qualified Gap Auditor will be necessary and they will follow the same procedure as the verification to assess your operations procedures and practices.

Resources that are free and readily available to the public include sample food safety plans, audit checklists, and FAQ's. Recommended sites include: North Carolina <http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org> Cornell University (<http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/educationalmaterials.html>) The University of Minnesota (<http://www.extension.umn.edu/rsdp/community-and-local-food/good-agricultural-practices/>) FamilyFarmed.org Wholesale Success (<http://www.familyfarmed.org/our-work/farmer-training>)

Jonda Crosby is a qualified PrimusLabs GAP Auditor. She also recently completed extensive food safety training including; HACCP, USDA Group GAP & GHP, Cornell Cooperative Extension GAP and Farm Food Safety Plan Writing.

A USDA TIPSHEET ON BIOSECURITY IS AVAILABLE - CLICK HERE.

Avian Influenza Observations

By Ib Hagsten, Ph.D.

AI (Avian Influenza) is extremely serious for the birds and devastating to the owners of those units hit by the disease.

We keep "looking for and at" bird flyways and wildfowl, yet, the trail does not seem to be leading there in most cases, in my humble opinion.

Most outbreaks thus far have been limited to large commercial operations that have one common denominator: "roving crews" who provide dirty and hard labor.

Those crews show up when requested to perform various functions (loading/unloading/debeaking/cleaning/etc.). They are, in my opinion, poorly supervised and not quality-minded.

An example shared with me from Missouri might help to provide a plausible critical control point of disease spreading "within the system" rather than by wildlife. "A load-out crew showed up in the middle of the night to do their job. To the utter surprise of the bird owner/manager, they brought several dogs along. The dogs were let out of the van and allowed to 'run around freely' until time to 'load up and leave' again. The owner found the designated foreman of the crew and complained, yet was told to 'talk with my boss' who, of course, was not present at that time of day."

As a member of PFI (Practical Farmers of Iowa), I have access to their member list service where there have been numerous comments/concerns voiced back and forth about and from the many backyard poultry operators scattered across the state. They are, and should be, concerned about the disease itself and its spread.



However, the consensus among the smaller Iowa operators whose birds are allowed plenty of access to the outdoors, i.e. roaming the farmstead and the surrounding pastures during daylight hours is that (1) we have never seen or heard of an AI concern with a backyard flock, and (2) we are going to continue raising our birds outside - as our package label asserts - until and unless we are closed down by the government.

According to recent AFHIS-published data of the various flocks and different species of poultry that have been affected by the Avian Influenza, only one single backyard flock, in each of the states of Minnesota, Kansas, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Idaho, has been affected by the disease. First it was the big commercial turkey operations that were affected; then it was large layer and broiler operations. Our hearts go out to these producers who lost everything. What/where is the source of the spread?

I propose the industry might well direct attention to evaluating what effect the usage of the outside crews by large commercial operations might well be having on the spread of this AI virus.

2016 IOIA AGM to be held at Jeju Island, Korea

IOIA's first AGM in Asia was unanimously endorsed by the membership, after Director Isidor Yu presented a proposal on behalf of the BOD at the AGM. The move to choose the location of upcoming AGMs two years in advance was born at the 2014 AGM in Costa Rica. Members suggested that choosing just one year in advance makes it difficult to secure a good venue and to allow members to plan their schedules and budgets. As the members confirmed the proposal of Chico Hot Springs, Montana for the 2015 AGM, Leonard Pollara suggested Asia for 2016. In BOD follow-up, Isidor Yu proposed Jeju Island, a popular destination in Asia with a strong environmental ethic. For the past year, Isidor, with the encouragement of the BOD worked to bring together a proposal and secure local support. His presentation at Chico was the culmination of a year of hard work on behalf of IOIA.

Isidor approached the Jeju Special Self-Governing Provincial Council and asked for funding support. Jeju is one of 9 Korean provinces. Then he took the idea to the Asia Committee (now the Asia Pacific Committee) and easily won their support. Recognizing the added cost for international travel, the Board voted to keep BOD travel costs reasonable by paying one-third of their own airfare.

Tentative schedule includes basic organic inspection courses (English and Korean) running concurrently on April 4-8, advanced training April 7-8, AGM and field trip options on April 9-10, and Train the Trainer on April 11-12 geared to bolster the number of IOIA trainers in Asia. Possible field trips options: mandarins, vegetables, olives, aquaculture, tea, aloe, dairy, and organic horse. First-time travelers to Korea can look forward to a cuisine that is rated one of the healthiest in the world, including the local fermented kimchi and miso. Jeju Island will offer plentiful options including grains, seaweed, seafood, and mushrooms.



Isidor Yu presents IOIA with a gift symbolic of the decision to hold the 2016 Annual Meeting in Korea - an original painting of the famous mountain on Jeju Island. Ib Hagsten, BOD Chair, accepts.

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Korean folk village

Why Jeju Island - an island off the southern tip of Korea? Jeju is a very special place and a cultural treasure to Koreans. Because of the relative isolation of the island, the people of Jeju developed a culture and language that are distinct from those of mainland Korea, including a matriarchal society. Jeju is home to thousands of local legends. Perhaps the most distinct cultural artifact is the ubiquitous dol hareubang ("stone grandfather") carved from a block of basalt. The Jeju economy has traditionally been supported by primary industry, agriculture and fishing, but tourism has taken a more and more important role as the island receives ten million visitors per year. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeju_Province]

Jeju is also a natural history treasure including Mount Hallasan park (dormant volcano) at the center of the island and many waterfalls. Hiking the lava tubes and caving are popular activities for visitors.

In addition to its international significance in natural heritage, Jeju has special significance for organic and for IOIA. Jeju Island was the site of the first IOIA course in Korea - a basic crop inspection training taught by Lisa Pierce and Mutsumi Sakuyoshi in Jeju 2006. Shortly afterwards, Isidor Yu completed his mentorship as an IOIA trainer. Since 2006, 18 courses have been held including basic crop, processing, and livestock as well as two advanced courses. A total of 321 people have been trained. The Korea Organic Inspectors Association was

the advanced training. In 2011, IOIA participated in all of the IFOAM events when IFOAM's General Assembly was held in Korea. IOIA is recognized as an official training body. National Agricultural Product Quality Management Service (NAQS) accredited IOIA as a training body for organic agriculture inspectors in 2008. Inspectors are required to pass both a test and an exam by an accredited training body, like IOIA. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fishery (MIFAFF) accredited IOIA as a training body for organic processing inspectors. IOIA is the only accredited training body which is located outside of Korea. In short, IOIA has strong ties with the Republic of Korea.

Five percent of IOIA inspector members are in Asia, almost as many as Latin America. IOIA has five inspector members in Korea - the most of any country in Asia. Jeju is also an attractive and convenient location for IOIA members in Japan, with the next highest number of IOIA members. From many locations in Asia, direct flights are available into Jeju.

For the US and Canadian members traveling to Korea, no travel visa is currently required. Passports are required, and IOIA recommends checking on travel requirements well in advance. For most international travelers, it will be necessary to travel through the main international airport (Incheon) outside of Seoul before continuing on a smaller regional airline to Jeju. Accommodations and food will be available in a wide range of budgets.

Goals of the event include:

- Engage regional and local organic inspectors
- Encourage JOIA and KOIA for revival of IOIA activity in Japan and Korea
- Promote training and expansion of membership in Asia
- Nurture inspectors' movement of Asian countries

Partnerships and Alliances:

- Jeju Special Self-Governing Provincial Council accepted the proposal of financial support and discussion is underway with the Jeju Governor to help subsidize funding
- Korean Association of Organic Agriculture is helping with logistics
- Organic Partners Co. represented by Raymond Yang provided IOIA a booth with no charge in Organic Expo 2015. Isidor Yu nominated Raymond as Chair of the 2016 AGM Committee. One of Raymond's first moves was to offer IOIA his own booth at the Expo to promote the event regionally.

Isidor Yu and Nanyoung Kim, IOIA members in Korea, staffed a booth to promote IOIA at the International Organic Industry Expo 2015, which was held April 23 - 25 in Seoul. IOIA's activities, trainings, and 2016 AGM were open to people interested in the Korea organic market. This booth was donated by Raymond Yang, IOIA member, who was a co-organizer of this exhibition. Raymond is also the chair of IOIA's 2016 AGM Committee.



The famous Mount Hallasan



Bibimbap, aka 'mixed meal.'



Sound & Sensible Project Travels South

IOIA's Sound and Sensible Project **Video team** (Margaret Scoles, Jonda Crosby, and Kathy Bowers from IOIA and Rich Myers, videographer from NCAT), headed south in April from Montana for three intense days of filming. Their goal was to gather footage for a "What to Expect at Organic Inspection" video. After an intense effort to find a suitable and willing host farm with both diverse crops and livestock had failed, two separate farm hosts were confirmed. Kenneth Mugg of Mugg Family Farm in Tallapoosa, Georgia accepted to host the livestock aspect. On his farm of about 100 acres, he has Katahdin hair sheep (certified organic), chickens, goats, cattle, draft horses, bees, guard dogs, and a lake for fish production. Azeez Mustafa and Shaheed Harris (father/son) agreed to host the diverse crop aspect at their farm in central South Carolina. They had no livestock, other than a few chickens as pets. They requested the date of April 25, adamant that the filming should occur the same day of the culmination of a series of workshops on "Heritage Dry Farming", funded by the USDA. Video scripts were written, submitted to the NOP, and revised accordingly.



Videographer Rich Myers patiently waiting with camera



Kenneth Mugg with goats at Mugg Family Farm, Tallapoosa, GA

After two beautiful, sunny days at the Mugg farm, the lily white Montanans had gathered just a hint of a tan. The team left Tallapoosa, on the border of Georgia and Alabama, loaded into the rented van and raced across Georgia for 5 hours to spend a short night in Sumter. They woke to rain, much to the chagrin of the videographer. But that wasn't the biggest challenge. When they arrived at the farm, they were met by Fathiyyah, Azeez's wife and Shaheed's mother, wearing the workshop logo T-shirt and a black shawl. Azeez had passed away just days earlier, on April 20, at the age of 67. Shaheed and Fathiyyah insisted that Azeez would have wanted the video to continue, along with the workshop. As the day wore on, what started out as an instructional video couldn't help but take on the hint of a memorial in honor of a man who had farmed organically for more than 30 years. The family raises vegetables, works with a cooperative marketing effort, and teaches people to garden with minimal inputs, with a special interest in improving food deserts.

The videos will, after clearance and approval by the NOP, become available to the public to help reduce barriers to organic certification. Uncertified growers will have a free, publicly available resource with the capacity to lower the intimidation factor and help them prepare for inspection. IOIA has one more movie scheduled in June. All three videos will have Spanish subtitles to increase their usefulness.

IOIA thanks our hosts, **Kenneth Mugg** and **Shaheed Harris and Fathiyyah Mustafa**, for incredible hosting, patience with the development of scripts, and being willing to be filmed in as real-life as possible mock inspections. Both of the host farms had a passion for education.

In a second Sound and Sensible project, IOIA recently submitted the first draft of the on-line learning module entitled "Organic Slaughter Certification". It includes a video of a mock inspection of a slaughter plant, also created with NCAT as a partner. After NOP approval, this will also become publicly available as a resource to lower barriers to certification.



Shaheed Harris and Fathiyyah Mustafa at Asya's Organic Farm, Sumter, SC

Biodiversity and Natural Resource Assessment on Organic Farms

Garry Lean of Ontario, Agroecology/ Ecosystem Management professor for 25 years, inspector, and IOIA trainer, was the ideal person to develop and launch the 200-level Biodiversity and Natural Resource Assessment webinar. He delivered it in 2013 and then coordinated a significant update this year. He delivered the updated webinar on April 21 for the largest webinar group in IOIA history - 34 participants. The update included a pre-recorded webinar "National Resources Conservation Service: Opportunities for Organic" by Sarah Brown, Education Director at OTCO and Joint Organic Specialist with NRCS, and co-presentation with Jo Ann Baumgartner, Executive Director of the Wild Farm Alliance.

The NRCS program was added as an optional pre-recording to ensure that the program is equally relevant for participants located outside of the US. Brown addressed NRCS programs, EQIP Organic, NRCS Conservation Planning, and CAP 138 planning. Although organic inspectors do not act as consultants while inspecting, it is helpful for them to be familiar with publicly funded programs. While some of these programs are geared specifically to assist organic and transitioning farmers, others are useful to all producers wishing to enhance conservation practices. Many current certified operators are already taking advantage of these programs.

Baumgartner provided excellent slides depicting biodiversity and natural resource assessment in "ideal", "needs improvement," and "inadequate and potentially non-compliant" examples. Participants had the opportunity to discuss scenarios related to each example and brainstorm potential outcomes of the observations and what follow-up questions or further evaluation measures were needed to determine compliance. She also provided feedback on the current NOP Natural Resource and Biodiversity Draft Guidance.

The course focused on topics including how to evaluate, verify and report biodiversity and conservation components of an Organic System Plan, farming practices, and the operators commitment to soil building practices and management, water use and conservation, woodlands use and biodiversity, and wildlife enhancement practices. It addressed how to assess a farmer's commitment to biodiversity and conservation, verify if a biodiversity and conservation monitoring plan has been implemented, and determine if the farmer is maintaining and improving (or degrading) biodiversity and conservation on the farm. Also included as pre-course materials is a list of Biodiversity and Natural Resource assessment tools available to inspectors to help them assess and record improvements of an operation over time. These assessment tools included methods to establish benchmarks for water, soil, pollinator, wildlife, woodlands, wetlands, birds, crop and native plant biodiversity and natural resource improvements.

Lean will be handing over the presentation reins for the next webinar to Tony Fleming, hydro geologist, long-time inspector, and current Technical Editor of IOIA's quarterly newsletter. Flemings' "Fumbling Towards Complexity" series is one of the required precourse reading assignments for the webinar.

Inspectors must be able to recognize and evaluate areas where:

1. natural resources and biodiversity are already conserved;
2. conservation and restoration projects are planned; and
3. improvement is needed.

Inspectors must:

1. verify the accuracy, implementation, and monitoring approach in OSP.
2. NRCS practices can count.

Inspectors may note exceptions such as:

1. extreme climatic conditions, or
2. damage to the ecosystem beyond the control of the operation.

Advanced Training and Field Trips, Chico Hot Springs, Montana

About 30 participants attended each day of the two-day advanced training, March 26-27, at Chico Hot Springs, MT.

Day 1 (March 26) focused on livestock topics. Joseph W. Ward, Ph.D., inspector and ruminant nutritionist, spoke on "What inspectors should know about livestock nutrition and feed formulation – ruminants and nonruminants, feeds and additives". Ib Hagsten, inspector and ruminant nutritionist, presented "Nuances in Ruminant Inspections" and "Nuances of Poultry Inspection" including animal welfare factors. Becky Weed, a Montana certified organic producer who developed an on-farm wool processing business, presented "A few lessons learned: Organic Sheep and Wool Production". Weed is co-owner of Thirteen Mile Farm and a BOD member of the Wild Farm Alliance. She and her husband David Tyler hosted a field trip of the wool mill on March 30 following the training. Monique Scholz gave a short but highly rated presentation on "Songbird Conservation and Haying Dates". She addressed haying dates, equipment notes, and haying techniques to minimize injury to songbirds. Lisa Pierce of BC paired up with Georgana Webster of the Montana Department of Agriculture. Pierce presented "Measuring Up" – Understanding animal outcome measures and their application to organic inspections", followed by Webster and "Livestock Evaluation – evaluating livestock species by type, breed, and production status". Pierce worked recently as a contractor as the national facilitator of the Animal Care Assessment Program for dairy for the National Farm Animal Care Council in Canada. She has been trained by the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization. Webster is an experienced livestock inspector and has been a 4-H livestock leader for 17 years and a 4-H judging coach for 6 years. Her academic credentials include Livestock Production Management, UC Davis Veterinary Teaching and Research Center Staff Research Associate, and B.S. Animal Science. The day ended with a Sound and Sensible Animal ID panel. Speakers for the day were joined on the panel by Elizabeth Whitlow of CCOF. Whitlow has worked as a regional representative, inspector, reviewer and inspection supervisor for California Certified Organic Farmers since 2002. She is currently serving as the Inspection Operations Manager. Elizabeth has also been responsible for the CCOF livestock inspection program for nearly a decade.



Lars Crail, NOP, speaker and participant for training, AGM, and field trips.

Day 2 (March 27) offered more topics of general interest. Lars Crail, former inspector, provided a comprehensive NOP update. As NOP's current Lead Auditor, he is responsible in his work with the Accreditation and International Activities Division for ensuring that audits and reviews of operations, certifying agents, and foreign governments throughout the world are conducted according to prescribed criteria and regulatory requirements. Dr Jean Richardson, inspector and current Chair of the NOSB, gave the NOSB update and encouraged inspectors to comment to the NOSB in writing and



Georgana Webster, speaker and course participant, and Dawn Bales, both from MT Dept of Ag.



Trainers Ib Hagsten and Monique Scholz relaxing at the end of Day 1 of Advanced Training

orally. Jill Clapperton, Ph.D., the Principal Scientist and Co-founder of Rhizoterra Inc. and a well-known researcher, international lecturer and advocate for practices that promote soil health presented "Evaluating and Enhancing Soil Health" and everyone wished for more time when she finished. She brought soil evaluation equipment and made herself available after the session. Monique Scholz presented "Approaches to and Usefulness of Formula Verification in Organic Processing Inspections" including a short exercise. Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador of OMRI presented "How OMRI Evaluates and Lists Inputs – and that formidable upcoming Sunset Review list" via Skype. Scholz spoke again on "Thoughts on how the Lac Megantic train disaster has influenced – and will continue to influence – my organic inspections". The training ended strong with a late finish and the highly rated session, "Technology Tips and Tools for the Organic Inspector", with inspectors Lois Christie and Garth Kahl. This session was so appreciated that IOIA is considering offering this as a webinar.



Sunny Yu and Salix Wartes-Kahl visiting the kids.

Basic GAP On-Farm Food Safety Training for Regional Independent Verifier training was held March 26, running concurrently with Day 1 of the Advanced training under the leadership of Jonda Crosby and Karen Troxell.



Field Trips (March 29), a longstanding tradition, were rated outstanding. About 25 people stayed over after the AGM to participate in the full day of field trips. Thirteen Mile Farm - organic sheep production and wool and textile processing. Predatory friendly wool. <http://www.lambandwool.com>. Amaltheia Dairy - organic goat dairy, cheese plant, pigs, vegetable production (high tunnels and field production), and on-farm composting <https://www.amaltheiadairy.com>. Hosts were Melvyn, Susan, and Nathan Brown.



Becky Weed, Thirteen Mile Lamb & Wool, explains the wool to yarn process.



Nate Brown of Amaltheia shows the mob feeder for baby goats as Leonard Pollara looks on.



Amaltheia Dairy field trip group



Becky Weed was invited to speak during the advanced course. She stayed for the whole day, and did double duty by knitting a wool hat (that later found its way to the Fundraising Auction). Although there was no Outrageous Statement Award given at this event, one of the most memorable was heard during an animated discussion about whether chickens should go outside or not and whether they choose to go outside. Becky described the enthusiasm her chickens had for the outdoors, even in the winter. "I know a lot of kids who watch TV and eat Hersey bars and they don't go outside either, but that doesn't mean it's a good thing."

2015 AGM Delivers the Goods!

IOIA's Annual General Meetings are always packed, full-day events!

Key decisions of the membership:

- With this AGM, IOIA implemented the recent bylaws change which provides for 3-year terms for BOD members. Some of the BOD members elected this year took 2-year terms and others took 3-year terms, so that from here forward IOIA will have fewer open positions to be elected each year. IOIA should experience greater continuity and stability on the BOD.
- The members endorsed in principle the new accreditation format for inspectors as proposed by the BOD and developed with the input of IOIA Trainers and Accreditation Committee. Lisa Pierce presented a pilot field training concept developed in BC in collaboration with COABC.
- A key topic was the work of the Inspector Peer Evaluation Committee.
- The location of the next IOIA AGM will be Jeju Island, Republic of Korea!

In keeping with the decision made last year to choose locations two years in advance, an animated discussion of where the 2017 AGM should be resulted in the southeastern coast of the US. Charleston, South Carolina or Richmond, Virginia are potential sites.



Group photo on the steps of the Conference Center, featuring the next generation of inspectors, Emery & Salix.

The sight of Ib chairing the meeting this year with a full head of hair was a welcome sight. In 2014, a chemotherapy bald Ib chaired via Skype from Missouri.

The day ended with music of three fine local musicians - James Schlender and friends - and dancing.

Graduate students **Alison R. Kent** (Colorado) and **Sara Miller Chonaiew** (Oregon) presented "*Inspectors in the U.S. Organic Food Industry: Characteristics, Roles, and Experiences*" published Nov 2014. This may be the first time anyone has presented a paper researching organic inspectors at an IOIA event.



Longtime board member Eric Feutz enjoys the venue now that he's off the IOIA clock!



Chris Kidwell receives a surprise 'Friend of IOIA' award for his many years of chairing the Membership Committee, leading the big task of filling the slate for the Board of Directors, and volunteering for IOIA.



Wendy Paulsen won a door prize - 50% discount on an IOIA webinar. Emery (son of Patti Bursten Deutsch) presented.



The sight of Ib chairing the meeting this year with a full head of hair was a welcome sight. In 2014, a chemotherapy bald Ib chaired via Skype from Missouri.



Montana Senator Jon Tester was unable to join us live, but he did send along his Keynote presentation via DVD, which is also posted on IOIA's website. In his remarks the senator said that "(Organic Agriculture) has been the fastest-growing segment of agriculture for decades now and it continues to grow exponentially thanks to the work that (IOIA) does in upholding strong standards and making sure that folks in agriculture as well as processors are following the rules and giving consumers the bang for their buck."

Wes Henthorne of B Bar Ranch presented the story of how the ranch saved the Ancient White Park heritagecattle breed from the brink of extinction and now sells all of the meat from about 400 cows as certified organic grass-fed beef.

FUNdraising Success!! IOIA raised \$4055 in the benefit auction, held at the AGM. Thank you to everyone who donated, everyone who bid, our auctioneer Brian Magaro, and everyone who assisted.



The highest selling items included a MOSES conference registration.

I-Ho Pomeroy, Bozeman restaurant owner, garbed in traditional Korean dress, explained the Korean dish of bibimbap, which was served for supper with the cooperation and assistance of the on-site catering staff.

New BOD Members

Congratulations to the following five candidates who were elected:

- Amanda Birk, Pennsylvania
- Ib Hagsten, Missouri
- Garth Kahl, Oregon
- Pam Sullivan, California
- Margaret Weigelt, Minnesota

Following the annual meeting, the BOD convened for meetings and elected the following officers:

- Stuart McMillan, Chair (Manitoba)
- Ib Hagsten, Vice-Chair
- Pam Sullivan, Treasurer
- Garth Kahl, Secretary
- Isidor Yu, Executive Committee At Large (Republic of Korea)
- Margaret Weigelt, Director
- Amanda Birk, Director

BOD liaison changes:

Pam Sullivan – Accreditation
Membership – Ib Hagsten
Nominations – Ib Hagsten
Fundraising – Amanda Birk

There are no changes to any Committee Chairs.



Al Johnson and Ib talk Peer Evaluation while enjoying the hot springs. Al received a "Friend of IOIA" award for all of his work on Peer Evaluation.



Leonard Pollara quizzing Bob Scoles about his Navajo rugs. Bob donated one to the FUNdraising auction where it ended up the top selling item - bringing \$600.



Ona Magaro, glass artist; Monique Scholz, proud buyer of one of the top sales items in the auction (center), and proud father and auctioneer extraordinaire Brian Magaro.



The board getting taken for a ride at Chico Hot Springs.

IOIA Basic Crop Inspection Course – Flat Rock, North Carolina

Under the guidance of IOIA Trainer Garry Lean, assisted by Margaret Scoles as assistant trainer and Amy Talarico as group leader, 23 participants who were extremely diverse in geography, language, training, and experience completed the basic Crop Inspection course in Flat Rock, NC on April 27-May 1. Participants came from nonprofits, the National Organic Program, certification agencies, and the private sector. Some were farmers, some were retiring from farming, and some were enthusiastically getting into farming. Some came with audit experience from other programs, such as food safety. Three spoke English as a second language and another was originally from Jamaica. Just one person came from North Carolina. The common denominator was the determination they brought to



Danielle Hutchinson explains the New Sprout production system and answers questions.

pass the course and their willingness to work together.

Flat Rock is located about 30 miles south of Asheville, in southwestern North Carolina. Until this year, the most active certifier in the area has been Clemson University. Due to changes in Clemson's program structure, Clemson is discontinuing certification outside of SC. Finding field trips for the basic courses is always a heady challenge. Certifiers who worked with IOIA on the field trip aspect for this training included ICS, AmeriCert, and Clemson. Ryan Merck, of Clemson University's Organic Certification Program, helped identify potential hosts. IOIA owes a special note of thanks to Clemson University, to Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, and to Blue Ridge Food Ventures in Asheville for their help in making connections and securing the field trips. Confirming field trip hosts is especially challenging for the processing course. Several small regional organic food manufacturers got their start in the state inspected kitchen at Blue Ridge.



Participants hear how liquid fish emulsion is added to the drip irrigation system.

The high level of cooperation from regional nonprofits and certifiers, the concentration of nearby organic

farms interested in helping to educate inspectors, the extraordinary food catering service that provided delicious meals sourced with mostly organic ingredients, and the hospitable Mountain Lodge venue all make this a "come-back-to" repeat East Coast location for the future. Conveniently located between two airports (Greenville, SC or Asheville, NC), Flat Rock is a short drive to history, scenery, mountains, art, and organic food.

Field trip hosts included Thatchmore Farm, New Sprout Organic Farms, and Balsam Gardens (newly certified urban garden) <http://balsamgardens.com>. Thatchmore is a 10 acre family farm growing certified organic produce as well as ornamentals, mushrooms, and Christmas trees. The farm is active in CRAFT, an association of area organic growers and their staff which meets monthly to tour other farms and to share information on organic agriculture <http://www.organicgrowersschool.org>. New Sprout Organic Farms recently downsized their farming operation because they were growing so fast. They continue to farm a small acreage, which worked great



The tallest person in the group with an iPhone - Arthur Bassett (AZ) - and Colleen O'Brien check out the inside of the Clampco for the rest of their group.

for a field trip, and they coordinate the marketing of produce from growers across the southeastern US while striving to reduce food miles. <http://www.newsproutfarms.com/>.

Comments from participants:

"I have probably never learned more in a single week in my whole life."

"Great job, guys....this course was very challenging to what I'd initially thought."



North Carolina Crop Inspection course participants

Thoughts on Taking an IOIA 'Training'

by Stanley Edwards

Anybody reading this newsletter has likely taken a basic training with IOIA and understands it as a rite of passage. In the past year and a half, I've experienced "training" at an accredited university, and two, 5-day auditor training provided by private organizations, including SQFI and BRC. IOIA's trainings are well in line with the rest of the industry, we address auditing protocols, standards, guidance documents, using a combination of presentations, in class exercises and case study scenarios. But IOIA raises the bar; we include skits, interactive presentations and group exercises, graded assignments throughout the classes, visits to facilities with graded mock inspection reports, plus a rigorous, 3-hour final exam. It is a challenge for both students and instructors to fit all of it into the allotted time. This translates to long days and late nights, much like those typical summer inspection trips; expectations are high for quality work, clear concise and accurate reports, under the pressure of tight deadlines. IOIA trainings attract a special group of people, from certification agency staff, to professionals in the food industry needing additional trainings or opportunities, to inspectors and others looking at gaining the knowledge and perhaps a chance at a new career. Anyone emerging from this experience, including the instructors, is a changed person. Students get to take their auditor minds into the world, and test them in all types of situations, whether at work or throughout life. While a few will make a career of organic inspecting, all are reliable members of the community that upholds organic integrity. As an instructor, I was humbled by the experience and it's nice to be back, I've enjoyed the opportunity to meet and work with so many interesting individuals at the NC training.

Stanley Edwards, IOIA trainer from Utah, led the seventeen participants from across the US through IOIA's basic processing inspection course in Flat Rock, North Carolina on May 4-8. He was assisted by IOIA trainer Garry Lean for the first two days of the course and Amy Talarico of Georgia as a group leader for the field trip.



North Carolina Process Inspection course participants

**Inspector Compensation - Are Inspectors Charging Enough?
The Answer Depends on How Well You Understand Your Costs
By Tony Fleming**

Inspector members can read the entire article by [clicking here](#). Part 2 will be printed in our next issue.

A recent thread on the forum prompted me to revisit the topic of inspector compensation and all the time-management issues that go along with it. I hadn't thought about the subject since I stopped inspecting several years ago, but with most inspectors (and more of the workforce generally) now working as "independent contractors", it seems like a timely subject. This essay is written through the lens of my own experience and circumstances, which will differ from those of other inspectors in some important ways, but will presumably ring true in many others. Possibly the most important distinction is that I never considered myself a full-time inspector—even though there were several years when inspecting occupied most of my working hours, I always maintained at least some level of activity in my native field of earth science, because I knew that someday I might well return to it as my primary career, and because I felt the natural resources dimension of being a geologist (think soil, water, landscape, geochemistry) brought a different and valuable perspective to my role as an organic inspector.

Though they aren't the main focus of this article, the questions of whether it is feasible, or perhaps even economically necessary, to have a second career alongside being an inspector—and how to make the two mesh effectively—are closely intertwined with the other issues raised herein. When I began inspecting in the 1990's, most inspectors were part time, with dual careers, and that is still the case today, according to the IOIA office. Agriculture-related fields were well represented among this bunch; more than a few inspectors were farmers themselves, although as I learned

from personal experience, the ability to carry on such an exquisitely weather-sensitive activity as growing produce was easily undermined by the sometimes unpredictable demands of inspecting. There were professional musicians, accountants, and artists like my friend and mentor, Philip Hale. Others consulted in the organic industry. The list could go on, but the point is, having all of these different skills and perspectives working together in the field arguably made the inspection process much more robust than it might have otherwise been, and laid a strong foundation for certification programs in the NOP era.

On the other hand, an increasing number of professional and bureaucratic requirements being placed on inspectors in the current era—not to mention the heightened liability exposure—are eroding the return on being a part-time inspector while creating distinct time-management challenges to maintaining another career, particularly if that other career is anything more than very part time with considerable flexibility. Yet, in my case, I needed the predictable income stream from my other career to balance out what was often a rather uneven amount of inspection work, even in the years when I did the most inspections.

Intangibles: An Inspector's Tale

As in any business, the organic inspector incurs both direct and indirect costs. I like to think of them as tangible and intangible costs. Most tangible costs are fairly obvious, for example, travel expenses, postage, and the time you actually spend working on the inspection. These are the things that might appear as line items on your invoice. Others are less obvious, but no less tangible,

like technology upgrades or general supplies you have to keep on hand but might not need at every inspection. Regardless, all tangible costs have a direct monetary value that makes them fairly straightforward to quantify.

Intangible costs, on the other hand, are often extremely difficult to assign a direct value to. They typically present themselves in the form of opportunity costs and are often laden with value judgments. How much is spending a majority of nights away from home worth? What about having to frequently interrupt precious family time, or forego work in a parallel career, because of the contingencies that inevitably appear (often through no fault of the inspector)? These intangibles were always the hardest aspect of inspecting for me to manage, both from an accounting standpoint and the personal toll—at the time, it seemed like being an inspector entailed far more of these intangible costs than any other profession I was aware of—and they ultimately became the tipping point for me. This article considers both kinds of costs and, while it doesn't offer any universally applicable method to account for the intangibles, perhaps it will at least encourage you to look at the value of your time in a more holistic manner.

Consider the following scenario, involving an independent inspector with more than 10 years of experience and hundreds of inspections under his belt. During the late winter, the inspector attends the IOIA annual meeting, followed by 2 days of advanced training that include presentations by NOP staff, certifiers, and others in the certification chain. Though it costs close to \$1,500 to attend and travel to these events,

the inspector returns full of new ideas and practical knowledge, and feels particularly well equipped to handle several new NOP policies and requirements that will directly impact the inspection process.

Shortly thereafter, the inspector is notified by one of several certifiers he works for that he must attend the certifier's training—a 4-hour webinar right in the middle of a Wednesday during the first week of April. The inspector also happens to be a professional in another field that is typically very busy in the spring. Nevertheless, there is no alternative but to attend the certifier training, causing the inspector to have to choose between forgoing previously scheduled work or postponing it until the weekend, interfering with family time and other obligations. Virtually the entire certifier training is taken up with two topics: how to complete the certifier's inspection forms, and the same new NOP policies the inspector just spent \$1,500 to hear about directly from the NOP at the IOIA training. Basically, the inspector interrupted his work and personal life to hear nothing he didn't already know.

A week later, just as the inspector is beginning to get caught up on things, its time for another certifier's mandatory conference call, also scheduled right in the middle of the week, causing the cycle of disruption of work and family life to begin anew. And, during this conference call, inspectors are informed that the certifier will henceforth require the inspector to carry errors and omissions insurance, a costly proposition (if you can even find a policy suitable for organic inspectors). On top of that, a third certifier for whom the inspector has done a lot of inspections decides it will no longer do business with individuals (sole proprietors); the inspector must incorporate in order to maintain that

line of work. Such a change will, in turn, require completing a second tax return every year and maintaining another set of records to support it—not a huge burden, but yet another in a long list of nickel-and-dime-sized chunks of time (and money, if someone else prepares the return) out of the inspector's life and income. Nothing like this has ever occurred in the inspector's other career.

Amidst this whirlwind, the inspector also spends the better part of a week on the road performing 3 handler inspections, struggles to schedule and reschedule several others, has to spend hours contacting another certifier who sent incomplete paperwork for yet another inspection, carries on his parallel career as a professional in the other field, and organizes the paperwork and prepares his tax return. And devotes late hours to researching E&O insurance and the mechanics and merits of incorporating. The recurring chaos has caused the inspector to think long and hard about dropping the other career, but it is steady, familiar, satisfying work that balances out the uneven income and often stressful job as an organic inspector. Moreover, the work in the other field is closely related to some of the duties of an inspector, and so allows the inspector to bring valuable experience and perspective to the job.

Does this sound familiar? If it does, then you may not be charging enough.

Although the details have been modified, the events described above could fairly accurately describe my final years as an inspector. They prompted me to take a hard look at the costs I was incurring, both tangible and, especially, intangible, and to try to put some reliable numbers on them. In the timeline above, when direct and indirect (i.e., forgone work opportunities) costs are properly accounted for, in the space of

a few weeks, on the order of \$8,000 flew out of my pocket (or could have, had I followed through on everything being demanded of me), with no clear return on investment, outside of the always-valuable IOIA training. After all, attending mandatory certifier trainings and jumping through all the other required hoops provides no guarantee of a specific volume of work, or any at all. Ultimately, the numbers I was seeing painted a dubious picture and forced me to make a choice.

The point of this essay is not to complain about the profession: that's pointless because the kinds of things mentioned above come with the territory. Instead, it is to call attention to the one thing that you do have at least some control over—your time—and perhaps prompt you to think about it differently, and properly account for it. Let's face it: being an inspector/auditor is a uniquely challenging occupation that requires regularly updating specialized knowledge, and demands significant personal sacrifices. It can be possible to make a decent living from it, but the lifestyle is not for everybody. And, chances are, some (most?) of you may not be charging enough to give yourself a shot at making that living, much less compensating for the disruptive lifestyle. I'm pretty sure I wasn't, at least on the latter count.

Or you may be subsidizing your inspector "lifestyle" with income from a second job or career. For many, that may be OK. There is no single answer to whether a dual career is feasible or necessary. There are simply too many individual variables. One thing does seem clear, however: you need to have quite a bit of built-in flexibility in that other career to make a decent go of being an inspector.

In this context, it is really important to distinguish between the tangible

See Compensation, page 27

Compensation, from page 25

costs, like attending the IOIA training, versus the *intangible* costs the independent inspector typically incurs—things that are extremely problematic to put a price tag on, yet are often of enormous value, like family time and keeping stress levels below unhealthy limits. Intangible costs are essentially value judgments, and to a considerable extent, their impact and how they are valued will depend on individual circumstance. That said, I found it instructive and ultimately rather eye-opening, to keep a running inventory of every minute I spent on these required but uncompensated tasks, and every dollar spent on required insurance or other such legal entanglements. Once tabulated against the common denominator of time, these intangibles become a type of recurring cost, and if you have a reasonable idea of the number of inspections you perform over a given period of time, then you can distribute at least some of these costs accordingly among inspections when you establish your rates.

Before moving on to the better-known tangible costs inspectors typically incur, let's stop and consider one of the overarching facts of this profession: (I'm speaking mainly to independents here): you may consider yourself to be one of the best-trained, most experienced inspectors around—absolutely true if you regularly participate in IOIA trainings—but ultimately, you are a contractor working under terms set by the certifier. Translation: you have few legal rights (read that contract lately?), and many of the costs and liabilities once borne by other entities in the industry are increasingly being shifted to you. This is very much in keeping with the trend in the rest of the corporate world these days, which aims to externalize as many costs (and risks) as possible onto others in the

supply chain, and to society at large. Since you are being asked to shoulder these added costs and risks, what you charge needs to account for that.

Here, it might be useful to consider what other kinds of experienced private-sector auditors charge. Take independent quality auditors—the ones who perform things like ISO accreditation, and safety and quality audits of processors and produce handlers. It may surprise you to learn that many of these auditors can earn thousands of dollars for a single audit. You read that right, *thousands*, not a few hundred, and sometimes several thousand dollars depending on the length and complexity of the audit. Why so much? Simply put: time, professional qualifications, and liability. Likewise, auditors who review the financials of both public and private companies—in principle, not unlike the kinds of audit control exercises performed at an organic inspection—typically earn many thousands of dollars for a large, complex audit. Granted, financial audits of a major company are much more comprehensive than a basic organic audit, but you get the idea. All of these auditors seem to be acutely aware of two really important things, which are reflected in their fees: 1) that their ass is on the line if something goes really wrong (and sometimes when they do everything right); and 2) that being on the road constantly is not sustainable. One audit every week or two is typical in those industries.

Known Unknowns

With that backdrop, let's tabulate the tangible, or direct, costs an organic inspector might typically incur; these are easier to quantify because they typically have a direct monetary value associated with them. Among these, of course, is the time spent directly working on any aspect of a particular

inspection, but the list of tangible costs directly related to a career as an independent inspector is long. I call them “known unknowns” because they often change from year to year. Many of these items will be old hat to experienced inspectors, but this abbreviated rundown will hopefully be useful to those who haven't yet systematically considered all of their costs. I'll start by simply listing my tangible fixed costs for a typical full year as an inspector, and then consider their implications, rate-wise.

- Health Insurance: \$5,000 (probably higher now under the Affordable Care Act)
- Retirement savings: \$6,500 (the current maximum IRA contribution for those over 55)
- Trainings and Industry Conferences: \$1,800
- Materials/Supplies/Postage: \$875
- Technology upgrades/cell phone plan: \$950
- Office space: \$1,000 (using the IRS simplified home office value of \$5/sq ft)
- Business Auto Insurance: \$200 (the added cost of covering an insured vehicle for business use)
- Commercial liability insurance: \$350
- Additional social security/medicare tax on the self employed: \$3,825 (7.65% of a \$50K salary)
- Total: \$20,500

That's \$20,500 just to get out the door, and we haven't even done an inspection yet! And these figures are in 2010 dollars, and some numbers are conservative.

Tony Fleming is a professional hydrogeologist, naturalist, and self-described “plant geek” who has worked in the fields of water resources management and geo-ecology for more than two decades. He frequently consults with conservation organizations on the interpretation, management, and preservation of natural areas. He worked as an organic inspector for more than a dozen years,

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

Conference Call, December 4, 2014

All Board Members Present: Ib Hagsten-Chair, Stuart McMillan, Pam Sullivan, Margaret Weigelt, Isidor Yu, Garth Kahl **Also present:** Margaret Scoles-ED

TREASURER'S REPORT: Garth makes motion to accept the 2015 budget with the provision that this is a preliminary budget – and items could be changed at our January 9 board call. Motion carried.

INSPECTOR MEMBERSHIP DUES RATES in DIFFERENT REGIONS: BOD consensus was voiced to invoice trainers at regular rate. MS stated that all members were invoiced at the \$175 rate. Discussion followed regarding our previous decision to set a reduced membership rate at \$60 for Latin America and the status of our discussion of dues rates for other parts of the world. **MS Action Point:** Latin America members (except trainers) will be contacted immediately and given the option to pay reduced rate.

OCIA CANADA INSPECTOR ISSUE: Garth makes suggestion that we obtain written confirmation that organic inspectors will not be penalized because of the confusion created by the disagreement. MS and Stuart agree to talk through ideas in the next few days about how IOIA might advocate for inspector members from a neutral position.

ED EVALUATION: Ib states we will schedule a conference call meeting before the end of the year for the ED Evaluation.

Conference Call, Friday, January 9, 2015

All Board Members Present: Also present: Margaret Scoles-ED

TREASURER'S REPORT: Pam asks for approval from the BOD for the 2015 Budget. Garth makes motion to approve the 2015 Budget as presented. Motion carries unanimously.

Inspector Membership Dues Rates in different regions of world: Isidor confirmed MS' understanding of the Asia Committee conference call that the Asia Committee does not recommend lowering dues. They recommend raising the value of IOIA membership to Asia members with needed services by IOIA allocating more funds for translation of materials and other support services to the regional commit. Decision: Based on the input from the Asia Committee, BOD will not take the 3-tiered dues structure to the AGM for membership discussion.

Conference Call, February 26, 2014

ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Also present: Margaret Scoles-ED

PEER EVALUATION COMMITTEE REPORT to the BOD, Al Johnson guest: Al describes where the committee is in the development of Peer Field Evaluations. Al then continues by saying that the committee is hoping that the new program would be structured under IOIA administration with the certifiers paying IOIA for evaluations. Pam suggests we do a pilot program with about 3 certifiers to trial the program and that “we may need to risk some money that's not in the budget” to get this going in a timely manner. Ib suggests we approach some of the certifiers at the 2015 AGM about starting a pilot program. Consensus is to do so.

NEW ACCREDITATION PROGRAM: MS suggests getting current input and feedback from the core trainers before the AGM because what we have is a few years old. A conference call with the BOD, accreditation subcommittee and trainers is suggested. MS suggests and Isidor agrees that Asian trainer input should also be included.

ACCREDITATION DECISION: Consensus is reached that the current documentation needs to be examined by a subcommittee to clarify wording, policy and procedures before the fall round. (There are no applicants for the spring 2015 round.) MS, Pam and Stuart express interest in joining the subcommittee to examine ARP program.

ED REPORT: MS states that some inspector members have suggested IOIA join the National Organic Coalition NOC in order to add the inspector's voice.

Respectfully submitted by Margaret Weigelt, Secretary

The Board of Directors met at Chico Hot Springs, MT on March 29 and 30 in conjunction with the AGM, and again by conference call on May 3. As minutes are approved, the minutes are posted on the “Inspectors Only” section of the IOIA website.



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Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!

2015 Calendar

June 10 - 13 BioFach Latin America, São Paulo, Brazil. Held in conjunction with BioBrazil, the event represents the biggest organic event in Latin America, with hundreds of companies in attendance.
<http://www.biofach-americalatina.com.br>

August 29 - 31 4th Annual World Congress of Agriculture in China. More info at <http://www.bitcongress.com/wca2014/>

September 16 OTA Annual Membership Meeting, TBA.
www.ota.com

September 16 - 19 ExpoEast, Baltimore, MD. www.expoeast.com

September 28 – October 2 Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings, Oregon. Info page 2.

October 26 - 29 The October 2015 meeting of the NOSB will be held in Stowe, Vermont.

November 2 – 13 Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Trainings, Iowa (under development). Info page 2.

November 5 - 7 BioFach India, ADLUX Convention & Exhibition Centre, Kerala, India
<http://www.biofach-india.com/>

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