

Advanced Inspector Training Opportunities in Corvallis, Oregon

IOIA and Oregon Tilth are collaborating to deliver **IOIA/OTCO Technical Service Provider & Biodiversity Training on September 30 – October 1, 2015**. The two day training is primarily for experienced organic inspectors.

The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) CAP 138 provides a unique opportunity to work with transitioning-to-organic producers through the EQIP Organic Initiative. With its recent revision to more closely align with the requirements of an Organic System Plan, there has been significant interest from inspectors in becoming NRCS Technical Service Providers (TSP). Current capacity at NRCS to provide the necessary training to get these parties trained and certified is limited. Oregon Tilth has been working with NRCS since September 2010 through a contribution agreement aimed at providing technical assistance and outreach support to the agency related to organic agriculture.

The training will be led by **Sarah Brown**, Education Director of Oregon Tilth. This training will provide participants with the training and tools they need to apply for TSP certification with NRCS. Preceding the course, a short webinar will introduce the course, requirements, and provide guidance on how to gain access to the NRCS online system.

The training will include:

- biodiversity and natural resource management
- conservation planning
- the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide
- introduction and training on conservation planning tools.

Participants will leave the course with a completed CAP 138 to submit with their application for TSP certification and a TSP Profile in **TechReg**.

IOIA and Demeter are collaborating to deliver **IOIA/Demeter Biodynamic® Inspector Training on September 28 – 29**. The training is primarily for experienced organic inspectors. A limited number of spaces are available for new inspectors with knowledge of Biodynamic® practices.

The training will be led by **Jim Fullmer**, Executive Director of Demeter Association. The training will include:

- Demeter Farm Production Standards and differences from NOP Standards
- Biodynamic® Preps
- Demeter Processing and Wine Standards
- Report Writing Process, Demeter policies and expectations for inspectors
- Off-site field trip to a certified Biodynamic® farm

See **Oregon**, page 4

Notes from the Chair

By Stuart McMillan

Consumer demand for organic foods has resumed some of its earlier growth rates following the dip around the time of the economic recession. North American production is not meeting current demand and as a result it is being met with foreign imports. Large buyers of organic foods are being told to curb introduction of organic lines until the supply grows. This has been leading to call in both Canada and United States for more organic farmers.

I recently decided to accept a request to volunteer with a project in Canada to increase the number of organic farmers. While I hardly have spare time to contribute to the project with my current inspection load and volunteer commitments with IOIA, I felt it important to participate. It is an important endeavour for IOIA members as more organic farmers mean more inspection opportunities for existing and new inspectors. It is important for reasons beyond this obvious one though.

I write this while being in the area of the highest concentration of organic farmers in Canada and possibly in North America. It is a pleasure during an inspection to ask a farmer about adjacent land use and find that See **Notes**, page 4

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. Deadline to apply is August 17.

Advanced inspector offerings include IOIA/Demeter Biodynamic Inspection Training with Stellar Certification Services and IOIA/OTCO Technical Service Provider & Biodiversity Training with OTCO/NRCS Sept 30-Oct 1. (see front page for details)

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, near Des Moines at the Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center, Johnston, Iowa 50131 (Ph: 515-334-9000). Crop Inspection training is scheduled Nov 2 - 6, followed by Livestock Inspection training Nov 9 -13. Deadline to apply is September 21.

Non-GMO Program Verification training is under development in conjunction with this event. Tentatively scheduled for November 7.

Iowa Organic Association is a non-profit umbrella organization and the only organization in the state dedicated to advancing opportunities in organic agriculture. Core focus areas include education; policy; promotion and market development; and research. Several certification agencies, including the state of Iowa, certify organic operations in the area. For more information about the Iowa Organic Association visit www.iowaorganic.org.

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.

Advanced Inspector Training, Guelph, Ontario: January 29, 2016

IOIA will cosponsor Advanced Inspector Training on Friday, January 29, in conjunction with the Guelph Organic Conference. In anticipation of the forthcoming revision of the Canadian Organic Standards, the training will focus on standards updates and equivalency issues. Other topics are under development. Following the training, IOIA will host an informal reception combined with inspector discussion.

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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.

2015-2016 WEBINAR Training Schedule for complete details please go to: www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html

100 Level Webinar – September 9 and 11, 2015. NOP Crop Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PDT). Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainers: Garry Lean and Margaret Scoles. [Click for more info](#)

100 Level Webinar – September 15 and 17, 2015. NOP Processing Standards

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (PDT). Two, 3 hour sessions. IOIA Trainer: Stanley Edwards. [Click for more info](#)

200 Level Webinar – September 25, 2015. Basic GAP On-Farm Food Safety Training and Regional Independent Verifier Certification

8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (PDT).
Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainers: Karen Troxell & Jonda Crosby. [Click for more info](#)

100 Level Webinar – October 6 & 8, 2015. IOIA/COTA COR Processing Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PDT). Two, 3 hour sessions. IOIA Trainer: Kelly Monaghan. [Click for more info](#)

300 Level Webinar – November 17, 2015. Inspecting Organic Wineries

11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.(PST). One, 2.5 hour session. Presenter: Pam Sullivan. [Click for more info](#)

200 Level Webinar – December 2 & 9, 2015. In/out Balances, Traceability Tests and Recipe Verification for Processing Inspection under NOP & COR

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. (PDT). Two, 2 hour sessions. Trainer: Monique Scholz. [Click for more info](#)

300 Level Webinar – December 3 & 10, 2015. In/out Balances, Traceability Tests and Recipe Verification for Processing Inspection under NOP & COR

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. (PDT). Two, 2 hour sessions. Trainer: Monique Scholz. [Click for more info](#)

200 Level Webinar – December 4 & 7, 2015. Livestock Feed Audit

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (PDT). Two, 2 hour sessions. Trainer: Sarah Flack. [Click for more info](#)

300 Level Webinar – January 21, 2016. Maple Syrup Inspection

8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (PDT). One, 3 hour session. IOIA Trainer: Monique Scholz [Click for more info](#)

Late-Breaking Training News

Non-GMO Verification Program Inspector Qualification Training - IOIA is collaborating with the Non-GMO Project to make Non-GMO verification training available again soon. That training is tentatively scheduled in conjunction with the basic trainings in Iowa in November.

IOIA, NASAA, and POETCom Collaborate in Fiji IOIA, the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA), and The Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) are collaborating to bring introductory crop and processing inspection training, grower group inspection training, and international standards training to Fiji. IOIA Trainer Luis Brenes of Costa Rica will join with Kathe Purvis of Western Australia as the training team.

The training is scheduled November 9-13. For more information about this training, contact Karen Mapusua at KarenM@spc.int. For more information about POETCom, see www.spc.int. POETCom manages the Pacific Organic Standard. POETCom's vision is that Organics and Ethical trade will be the key contributors to sustaining our cultures and communities; improving farmer livelihoods, communities, people's health and the environment in the Pacific.

New Webinar in Development for Processing Inspectors – for delivery in Spring 2016 by Silke Fuchshofen, IOIA Accredited Inspector Member, who proposed the concept to IOIA. Silke describes the webinar, "Quite frequently companies do not have receiving procedures in place that sufficiently cover documentation requirements for distributors that are exempt from organic certification under the NOP. Verification has to go beyond the viewing of supplier certificates and the procedural shortcomings are often not obvious. This training will give examples of commonly found gaps in receiving procedures and some methods to detecting them at an organic inspection." One 3-hour session is planned.

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on three sides of his field are organic fields operated by three different organic farmers. Organic seed use is very high as there are ample choices of different varieties. The sharing of equipment and resources increase when you have a variety of organic neighbors in close distance. Equally important is the sharing of ideas and experience when there are many other organic farmers in the exact same soil and climate conditions. You don't feel so crazy farming organically when there are few hundred others all around you.

The drive for more new farmers does come with some questions for the organic inspector. Do we change how we approach the inspection knowing the operator may have converted for economic reasons alone? While new entrants often have more non-compliances due to inexperience with the organic record keeping and production requirements – are they more likely to commit intentional fraud? In trying to attract new producers does one focus on small farmers who can convert all of their acreage to organic agriculture relatively quickly or does one try to attract large farmers with greater resources at their disposal, but may end up only converting part of their operation to organic production methods. If the latter, then that comes with its own potential compliance risks.

I am reminded of the years I lived in Sweden. Organic agriculture looks very different when the share of organic production exceeds 10% compared to conventional ag. Many North Americans I speak to remain surprised that at that time you could not even buy conventional milk at McDonalds in Sweden. There was one choice – organic milk. With more organic production, the retail costs come down, increasing consumer demand and growing yet more demand for organic products. This does not have to mean lower profits for the farmers though, because the farm level cost of production also comes down when there are more organic neighbors around you. I think it is important that we continue to grow the number of organic operators around the world. It is important for biodiversity, important for climate change, important for the local environment, and it is also important for organic inspectors. I hope you all have been having a productive and enjoyable inspection season so far, and I wish you all the best with the remainder of it.

Oregon, from page 1

Demeter is associated with Stellar Certification Services (SCS). SCS was formed to offer organic certification for farms, processors, and handlers according to the National Organic Program. Demeter Biodynamic® Certification and Aurora Certified Organic® are options for producers seeking whole farm certification.

Both trainings will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Corvallis, located on the OSU Campus. If you require accommodations, a room block has been reserved at The Hilton, www.hgicorvallis.com. **You must book by 9/01/2015 and request by group name (IOIA) to get the discount rate.** [To register for the Biodynamic Training:](#)

[To register for the Technical Service Provider & Biodiversity Training](#)

Transportation: Individuals are responsible for making their own transportation arrangements to and from the training. The largest major airport is Portland (PDX), 81 miles. Nearest Airport is Eugene (EUG), 45 miles. Shuttle Service is available directly to OSU/Hilton Garden Inn through OMNI Shuttle. OMNI Shuttle service from Eugene costs around \$65 each way for the first person, \$5 for each additional person up to 13 people who book at the same time. Shuttle Service is available directly to OSU and from PDX.

Welcome New Members!

Supporting Individual

Ruth Ann Miller - California

Inspector Member

Kathleen Purvis -
Western Australia

Contact Info Update

Terry Hollifield - new email:
terry.hollifield@georgiacrop.com

IOIA Accreditation Deadline

The fall deadline to apply for IOIA Inspector Accreditation is **October 1**.

Obtain new or renewal application forms from the [IOIA home page](#).

Review the IOIA Accreditation Program, also available on the home page.

- Prepare a complete application. Questions? Contact the IOIA Admin, Joe Whalen, at ioia@rangeweb.net.
- Start early - you must submit a Certifier Evaluation from all of the certifiers you've worked for in the past 3 years.
- Submit fees with your application (\$60 for 1 scopes, \$70 for 2 scopes, \$80 for 3 scopes) Renewals are \$30, \$40, \$50 depending on the number of scopes.
- Accreditation is good for 3 years.
- Next deadline is March 1.
- Why wait?

Note of thanks to the **all-volunteer Accreditation Review Panel**, chaired by **Christopher Warren-Smith**. The ARP includes 3 inspector members, a non-IOIA member, and a certifier representative.

The 2015 AGM Recap page is now available on our website

Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

Summer Highlights - getting to work with other inspectors three times! Inspection is a solitary business. It is good to be with colleagues; this is a primary reason that IOIA exists. The first experience was being evaluated. I work primarily for the MT Dept of Ag, and their organic program has always required annual field evaluation. I've been fortunate to have an annual evaluation in the field a dozen times. In Montana, it works more like a dual-peer evaluation. I am evaluated by my supervisor (also a peer), and I evaluate her – as a peer. We typically have one inspection where she evaluates me, one where I evaluate her, and another one or two where we inspect as a team – a rare treat. Next, I mentored apprentices. I do so few inspections I can't often accommodate an apprentice, but I do enjoy mentoring. Nothing is more satisfying than helping a promising new inspector get started and then watching. I've had a lot of apprentices over the years. Many of them are still inspecting which gives me great pleasure. The time in the car together is great. I love the long MT or WY miles - wildlife and scenery with little traffic to get in the way of sharing ideas and information. I love being challenged – “why didn't you do...?”, “why did you do...?”, “what do you do if the farmer does...?” Rewards come in new ideas and insights. I learn, too. And occasionally they say something like, “... now what I learned at IOIA training makes sense.” This summer I will have another opportunity to be with other inspectors – new endeavor, Peer Evaluation! I will be taking road trips over the next month to evaluate a list of seven inspectors for several programs. This will help me get more familiar with the Peer Evaluation Program. And it will help manage the big list to be evaluated as we near the end of crop inspection season for both in-

spectors and evaluators. There aren't many ways that inspectors truly get to work together as colleagues in the interest of improving the inspection process. This summer, I've enjoyed more opportunity for that than usual.

Sound and Sensible: Our projects for the USDA NOP are near completion. We are finishing up on the videos made in GA and SC. The work seemed almost all-consuming for the past



The ED with Meg Bishop, Helena, Montana, in a “selfie” with a backdrop of the eastern Montana badlands after a long day of inspection together. Although Meg is new to organic inspection, she brings a life career which included monitoring the progress of conservation measures as they were implemented on farms.

year, even though we scaled back on webinars and basic trainings. Good news -- we stayed on budget, learned that we'd budgeted time and money realistically, and produced the projects we set out to do. Most of the deliverables are accepted. Outcomes will improve resources available to producers and inspectors. We look forward to seeing links to “What to Expect at Organic Crop Inspection” and “What to Expect at Organic Livestock Inspection”. We also eagerly await to see how the NOP posts the on-line “Organic Slaughter Certification” module. We worked hard to make this a highly interactive training resource that will be useful to organic livestock producers, slaughter plants, and inspectors/certifiers who have few resources for preparing to inspect slaughter. We'll

let you know as soon as the deliverables are public.

Expo East, Sept 16-19: If you are planning to attend Expo East in Baltimore, please stop by our booth - T9 on Level 400 outside the ballroom. I will be attending the OTA Annual Meeting and the Awards Gala on the evening of September 16. Tom Harding is receiving the “Growing the Organic Industry Award” that night. A former inspector, Tom was on the Steering Committee that formed IOIA back in 1990-1991. And he taught the first formal inspector training that I attended. That was 1989; it was OCIA in-house training. There was no IOIA then, nor was there any open-enrollment organic inspector training. The reason I say “first formal” training is that my first training was in the back of The Real Food Store in Helena, MT. We had a short day of training from pioneers like Bob Quinn (now famous for Kamut International). At the end, the question was asked, “Who would like to do this?” About six of us put our hands in the air. I was assigned four inspections. On my first inspection, I realized that I had found a vocation that fit me perfectly. I never looked back. Shortly afterwards, OCIA announced that all inspectors must attend OCIA-sanctioned training. Fortunately, the next training was in Denver, only about 400 miles away. Seeing Tom get the award brings back memories. One of the best things about the Expos is running into old friends - like Dave Vetter of Grain Place Foods, Nebraska. Dave also helped teach that Denver training and hosted the field trip venue at the OCIA-OGBA training in 1992 that was the forerunner to the first IOIA the next year. Jim Riddle and I coordinated that training in Nebraska. And the rest is IOIA history. Seeing Tom being recognized brings back memories - of life before organic inspection and before IOIA.

SECTOR NEWS

Life sentence urged in salmonella outbreak in peanut butter

The U.S. Probation Office, in a pre-sentencing report, recommended life in prison for Stewart Parnell, the former chief executive of Peanut Corporation of America, says **Food Safety News**. Parnell and two other defendants were convicted of criminal charges in an outbreak of salmonella from peanut butter produced by PCA in 2008 and 2009. The recommended sentences for the three “far exceeded earlier estimates” of likely punishment and “could be the most severe penalties ever imposed for food safety-related infractions since federal regulation of food started a century ago,” said Food Safety News.

The recommended sentences included from 17.5-21.8 years in prison for Parnell’s brother, Michael, a peanut broker, and from 8-10 years for Mary Wilkerson, the quality-assurance manager for the company.

U.S. District Judge W. Louis Sands will announce his decision on punishment at sentencing scheduled for Sept. 21 in Albany, Georgia. Parnell’s attorney called the recommendation of a life sentence “truly absurd.” The defendants were convicted last summer on charges ranging from fraud and conspiracy to selling misbranded and adulterated food. The outbreak was linked to nine deaths and more than 700 illnesses.

House Goes DARK

On July 23, the US House of Representatives passed H.R. 1599, the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015, also known as the “Deny Americans the Right to Know” or DARK Act. The final vote was 275 to 150.

The bill preempts existing state mandatory labeling laws, such as the labeling law passed in Vermont, from

taking effect. It also establishes a national, voluntary non-GMO certification program through the Agriculture Marketing Service of the USDA.

Supporters of this bill claim it will eliminate the “patch-work” scenario of GMO labeling laws. If the seed, chemical, and food industry is truly concerned about the patchwork state-by-state approach, then it is unclear why supporters of this bill would not support a uniform federal standard for GMO labeling. A bill to do just that, introduced by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Representative Peter DeFazio, has languished without even being considered by the relevant committees. Clearly, the House vote is more about serving the interests of the food industry than it is about providing transparency to consumers and clearing up confusion in the marketplace. The approval of the DARK Act comes at a time when there is overwhelming bipartisan support for GMO labeling across the country.

Following the approval of the DARK Act by the House, attention turns to see if the Senate takes interest in acting on the issue. As of now, there is no companion bill in the Senate, and no indication that the issue will be on the Senate’s agenda this fall. With the House vote behind them, however, proponents are likely to look for chances to attach their corporate interest bill to other must pass legislation in an attempt to force it onto the Senate’s agenda.

From National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition Blog, July 23, 2015

Proposed rule to implement Sunset Review recommendations

USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service published the 2015 Sunset Review [proposed](#) rule to remove marsala wine and sherry wine from the National List as recommended by the National Organic Standards Board.

The proposed rule would also remove two expired substances—streptomycin and tetracycline—from the [National List](#). The organic community, stakeholders and others are invited to submit written comments by August 31 on [Regulations.gov](#).

[View Proposed Rule](#)

Biodegradable Biobased Mulch Films

On July 24, 2015, the National Organic Program (NOP) issued a memo to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) related to biodegradable biobased mulch film.

The memo announced the availability of a new summary report on biodegradable biobased mulch film. The NOP commissioned the report following the publication of a January 2015 policy memo clarifying the review requirements for biodegradable biobased mulch film under the USDA organic regulations. Stakeholders have indicated that no products on the market currently comply with the requirements for biobased feedstocks. The memo to the NOSB requests that the NOSB review the report and determine if additional action is recommended.

[Summary Report on Biodegradable Biobased Mulch Film](#)

OFRF 2015 National Survey of Organic Farmers

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) is reaching out to certified organic farmers across the U.S. to complete their [2015 national survey](#). The confidential survey asks for data on farm size, production and location, and farming challenges. Survey results will be used as a roadmap for research institutions, identifying issues critical to the success of organic farms. The survey deadline is **Aug. 30, 2015**.

SECTOR NEWS

NASS organic survey to be released in August

USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has announced that the 2014 Organic Survey will be released on August 31 at Noon ET. This report will provide the latest data for all known U.S. organic producers that are certified, exempt from certification, and transitioning to organic production.

NASS also announced its intention to conduct an organic survey in Fiscal Year 2016 focusing squarely on data gaps that would support USDA’s Risk Management Agency in its Farm Bill mandate to develop price elections for organic crops. NASS also announced its intention to continue the census of organic certifiers that had previously been conducted by USDA’s Economic Research Service tracking specific acreage, crops, and livestock numbers to provide data to the industry not available elsewhere.

NRCS Webinar on Environmental Benefits of Organic Systems

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is hosting a four-part webinar series exploring the environmental benefits of organic agriculture. The series is moderated by Betsy Rakola, Organic Policy Advisor, USDA, Washington, DC.

The third webinar entitled “Environmental Benefits of Organic Agriculture: Soil” will be on Thursday, August 27 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. EST. It will present scientific research examining the benefits to soil of organic farming practices. The speakers will be Michel Cavigelli, Ph.D., Soil Scientist, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Beltsville, MD and Michelle Wander, Ph.D., Director of the Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture Program, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL. Pre-registration is not required for this webinar session.

[Learn more and join the webinar.](#)

Global Organic Study Findings – Organic More Profitable

Forty years, 55 crops and 5 continents. That’s the scope of a just-published study on organic farming, and it’s a must-read piece. Click here for a [summary of the global study](#) from Washington State University that conclusively shows that organic agriculture is significantly more profitable than conventional agriculture -- and that profitability is key to expansion of organic acres. The study concludes that “with its environmental benefits, organic agriculture can contribute a larger share in sustainably feeding the world”.

The findings show organic agriculture is 22 to 35 percent more profitable than conventional. That’s not just figuring in the price premiums that the higher value of organic deservedly commands. It reflects a combination of lower input costs for organic (that offset the higher cost of labor), reliable yields, and beneficial farming practices like crop rotation and diversity.

Organic agriculture’s contributions to our world are enormous: the most nutritious food available without pesticide residues, energy efficiency, soil improvement, an increase in ecosystem diversity, less ground and surface water pollution, more humane treatment of animals, increased farm employment and even more cooperation among farmers.

Laura Batcha, Executive Director of OTA, in a [recent memo to OTA members](#)

Supporting Organic Agriculture

Approximately two years ago, US Agriculture Secretary Vilsack issued Department-wide guidance calling on all USDA agencies to support organic agriculture. USDA’s Agriculture Marketing Service has played a leadership role in coordinating these organic-re-

lated initiatives, and would like to highlight key successes:

- The Risk Management Agency (RMA) is providing more effective insurance coverage for organic crops, and better risk management tools for organic producers.
- The National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has provided \$21.5 million in 2015 in funding to improve the productivity and success of organic agriculture.
- The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has issued its third Organic Producer Survey, providing essential information for rulemaking and program development.
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has continued to provide financial and technical conservation assistance to organic farmers; in the last two years, farms have received \$15 million in assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Organic Initiative
- The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has implemented a streamlined procedure to allow processors to apply non-genetically engineered (non-GE) claims to approved labels of certified organic meat or poultry product
- The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has invested \$60 million in research supporting organic production.

In addition to these agencies and AMS’ own work, other agencies significantly contributing to organic agriculture include the Economic Research Service; Forest Service; Rural Development; Animal Plant, Health and Inspection Service; Farm Service Agency; and the Foreign Agricultural Service.

IOIA Peer Field Evaluation – What does it mean for you?

By Margaret Scoles

The last issue of the newsletter announced the launch of the pilot IOIA's Peer Evaluation Program – the fruit of a year's hard work by the IOIA Peer Evaluation Committee. The pilot program is now fully implemented and working great. IOIA is grateful to the certifiers who answered our invitation to participate in creating the pilot. They have been joined by more certifiers. Nine certifiers (OTCO, MOSA, ICS, OCIA, CCOF, GOA, OEFFA, NICS, OneCert) have signed contracts and put a total of 55 inspectors into the program. By year end, the program anticipates evaluating at least 17% of our members (mostly in the US). A resounding success!

A bit about the program - IOIA developed the program in response to the NOP Certifier Instruction 2027 regarding Personnel Performance Evaluations. This instruction came down hard on the certifiers when it was published in mid-2013. When NOP said certifiers should evaluate every inspector every year in the field, it was a big change. Most certifiers didn't do field evaluations, at least not of every inspector. It wasn't long before we heard rumblings from certifiers that they would rather cut back on the number of contract inspectors. Everyone was concerned about the cost. IOIA's first action was to participate in a working group with the Accredited Certifiers Association. One outcome of that group was a letter to the NOP. Even though both certifiers and inspectors agreed that it made no sense for every certifier to evaluate every inspector in the field, the NOP did not change their position. Clearly, a new approach was called for.

And next? Al Johnson and Lois Christie, Inspector Members, proposed the idea at the 2014 AGM of an IOIA Peer Evaluation Program. Most of IOIA's members are contract inspectors, so the negative impact of the instruction

was a concern for all IOIA members. Al and Lois proposed that we put together a program whereby experienced inspectors (peers) would do the evaluations. This would work only if NOP would recognize the program as adequate to meet the instruction. NOP 2027 says "Inspectors should be evaluated during an onsite inspection by a supervisor or peer (another inspector)". An all-volunteer committee of IOIA inspector members worked diligently to come up with a rigorous program. The NOP allowed Lars Crail, now NOP Lead Auditor but also former organic inspector, to participate in the committee. Crail's participation was invaluable to ensure that we didn't lose sight of the NOP's intent. A pilot program was presented at the 2015 AGM and endorsed by the membership. NOP directed certifiers to communicate with their Accreditation Managers if they planned to participate in IOIA's program as part of their personnel evaluation process.

IOIA's long-term plan is that this program will fold into the new inspector "certification" program that will replace the current inspector "accreditation" program.

What this means for you -- Rather than every certifier going along on an inspection with you; just one evaluation can suffice for several certifiers. One inspector member was on 7 different certifier's lists. That means this member would have been evaluated 7 times in one year! We think that inspector being evaluated once through the IOIA program makes more sense.

Not only is it more efficient, we think experienced inspectors make good evaluators, certainly better evaluators than a supervisor who has never done inspections. The IOIA peer evaluators are all very experienced inspectors. The first tier of evaluators is the hard working inspectors who developed

the program, and the next tier are accredited inspector members. All evaluators must complete an application. Inspectors who are already accredited will find the approval process more streamlined. All non-accredited evaluators have until the end of 2016 to become accredited.

What does it mean for IOIA? First, it is fulfilling our mission. Leg #1 of our 3-legged Mission Statement is "to address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors". An expected side-benefit could be more membership. About 30% of these inspectors being evaluated through the program this year are not IOIA members. When IOIA put the program together, we knew we were helping IOIA members. But we did not anticipate a potential positive impact of adding perceived value to IOIA membership to non-members. There is no advantage or disadvantage for the individual inspector being evaluated to be an IOIA member. However, there is clear benefit in closer engagement between IOIA's evaluators and inspectors – both those who are and aren't currently members.

Financially, it is too early to say whether this program will generate revenue or not for IOIA. The goal has never been to make it a revenue stream, but to cover our true costs while we keep inspectors working. There can be significant cost savings to the sector if inspectors are evaluated for multiple certifiers with one evaluation. The preliminary assessment of the pilot program will be done with certifiers in early 2016, with a complete analysis by end of February 2015.

Because of the wide interest and participation among certifiers, there is a good chance that you might be

See **Peer Review**, page 12

Canada Organic News

New regulations on food labeling in Canada

Health Canada is consulting companies on [the new regulations](#) on nutrition information on food labels in Canada. The new regulations propose changing the format of the nutrition fact table, serving size declaration, ordering/grouping of nutrients information on the label, reference amount and Daily values (DV), and the list of ingredients. Companies have **until August 26** to send their comments to Health Canada. Because of a federal election this fall, there will most certainly be a delay in the implementation of the new Safe Food for Canadians Act. However, when asked about the situation, Mark Schuessler, Secretary of the Technical Committee, reported to Kelly Monaghan, IOIA's representative on the Organic Technical Committee, that he is confident that it will be out this year and will keep her posted regarding the actual publication date.

Vote result – Review of the Canadian Organic Standards

Yes to the balloted draft, with very few modifications

The members of the Technical Committee (TC) on Organic Agriculture have issued a strong majority vote and adopted the draft standard submitted to ballot in July. 84% of the TC members voted Yes to the balloted 2015 draft Principles and management standards – CAN/CGSB-32.310, and 94% to Permitted substances lists –CAN/CGSB-32.311. Some votes included negative comments, however. As per CGSB procedures, Working Group Conveners and the Chair of the TC had to resolve these negative comments. The OFC posted the balloted draft on its website. There was no official public consultation.

In an effort to consider the opinions of the whole sector, the Conveners and the Chair have accepted to analyze comments put forward by stakeholders that are not voting members of the TC.

As per CGSB policy, the Conveners and the Chair do not have to consult the TC when solutions proposed to resolve negative comments do not change the intent of the standard.

Copies of the final versions can be downloaded from OFC– please note that these copies are will be subject to a full format editorial review by CGSB (content will not be affected).

Final draft - CAN/CGSB-32.310 - Principles and management standards

Final draft - CAN/CGSB-32.311 - Permitted substances lists

from *Organic Federation of Canada*, <http://organicfederation.ca/>

Advanced Inspector Training, Guelph, Ontario

January 29, 2016

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training on Friday, January 29, in conjunction with the Guelph Organic Conference. In anticipation of the revision of the Canadian Organic Standards, this training will focus on standards updates and equivalency issues. Bill Barkley, IOIA Canadian Committee Chair, will serve as moderator for the training.

Presented in an engaging and fully participatory style, the 2016 training will explain changes to 32.310 and 32.311 that are expected to significantly impact producers, processors and inspectors.

If you would like more information or would like to participate in this training, please email Bill Barkley, at billb.otr@gmail.com. Registration will be on-line via the IOIA office.

This inspector event was initiated in 2009 and has grown into a popular biennial gathering. All inspectors attending the Guelph Conference are invited to attend an informal IOIA reception following this training which is expected to wrap up in time for all to attend the Organic Food and Wine Dinner.

Organic Week

is September 19-27!

Follow the link to find out about all the great events that are scheduled across Canada!



*January 28 to 31, 2016
Guelph University Centre*

Nimmo Honoured

We would like to congratulate **Tomás Nimmo**, one of the original founders of the Guelph Organic Conference, who was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Organic Council of Ontario's Annual General Meeting in April this year.



Nimmo was in the room when the continent's organic industry was born at the first Organic Foods Production Association of North America /

OFPANA meeting, later to become the Organic Trade Association /OTA.North America.

Mark Your Calendar for the 2016 AGM - April 9 - Jeju Island, Korea

By Margaret Scoles and Raymond Yang

IOIA is preparing for its first-ever annual meeting in Asia. Isidor Yu, Board member, traveled in July to Jeju Island to visit with the provincial governing body to foster local support for the IOIA events. Also in July, the Asia Pacific Committee organized a recommendation for the advanced training. The AGM Organizing Committee, chaired by Raymond Yang, prepared and distributed a survey about interests (mostly to Asia contacts including Australians) to inform their recommendation.

So it's time to start practicing with chopsticks, if you aren't already adept! And be prepared to eat some of the healthiest and best cuisine in the world. Add a few days to see the island, hike the lava tubes, or see the caves. For more details about Jeju Island, a popular Asian destination, please see our May newsletter issue.



The famous Mount Hallasan

About the Trainings

Basic training, April 4-8: Half of the survey respondents said they would be interested in English language Processing training, while fewer preferred Crop or Livestock. Based on this response, basic Processing Inspection Training will be offered. It is yet to be decided what standards will be used for the course. IOIA will manage the English language course and registration will be through IOIA. The Korean language basic training will be managed by the cosponsor and the course will be based on the Korean standards. Basic trainings will be held at the Jeju Grand Hotel.

Advanced Training, April 6-7-8: (tentative plan)

- Day 1, April 6 – Gluten Free training option paired with choice of Organic Aquaculture as additional learning opportunities. These were both special topics of interest to respondents. An aquaculture field trip will be arranged for April 10 to increase the opportunity for learning.
- Day 2, April 7 – International Equivalency. This English language training will be translated into Korean.
- Day 3, April 8 – Organic Processing Topics, including HACCP. This English language training will be translated into Korean.
- Asian Train the Trainer and BOD Retreat are tentatively scheduled on April 11-12.

Venue: The AGM and Advanced Trainings will be held at the newly renovated Jeju Grand Hotel (<https://ora.oraresort.com/eng/GRD/>). The room rate is about \$140USD and the breakfast buffet (optional) about \$15USD (prices change with the exchange rate). Shared room options will be available. The majority of the survey respondents preferred a cheaper mid-range hotel to the Jeju Grand Hotel. However, the Grand gives us the best choice in terms of number of conference/meeting rooms, proximity to airport (with free shuttle), restaurants, and accommodation options. This hotel is known to have some of the largest rooms as well as one of the best breakfast buffets anywhere on Jeju. And its downtown location makes it easy for people to choose another hotel. The organizing committee is compiling a list of other accommodation options.



Meet the 2016 AGM Keynote Speaker! Andre Leu, of Australia

Andre Leu is the author of *The Myths of Safe Pesticides* and the President of IFOAM – Organics International. Andre has over 40 years of experience in all areas of Organic Agriculture, from growing, pest-control, weed management, marketing and post-harvest transport to grower organizations, developing new crops and education - not only in his home country of Australia, but also across Asia, Europe, the Americas and Africa. He has written and published extensively in magazines, newspapers, journals, conference proceedings and newsletters in print and online on many areas of Organic Agriculture including climate change, the environment and the health benefits of organic agronomy. He was recently invited by the UNEP to present research findings from the organic movement at a "[Science Fair for a Safer Tomorrow](#)." *bio from the IFOAM website*



Andre Leu at right, with Bob Quinn of Kamut International, at Expo East 2012.

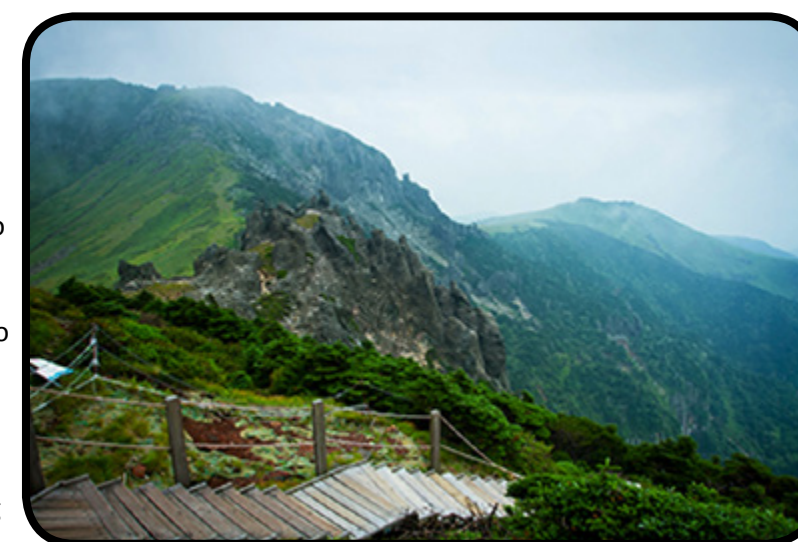
AGM, continued

Travel Details: Travel savvy members are finding tickets to Jeju for under \$1000. However, this price is generally only associated with travel sites such as Orbitz or Expedia. Shopping tickets well in advance is strongly recommended. Most international members will travel to the major Seoul/Incheon airport outside of Seoul. Less expensive domestic flights are available from the Korean mainland from the smaller Seoul/Gimpo airport. Most foreigners may come to Incheon first, then go the Gimpo Domestic Line Terminal by Bus or Train. Incheon-Jeju line would be the most convenient, but most flights to Jeju are from Gimpo Domestic. Arriving directly into Jeju Island would be ideal and it is possible from select airports in Asia. Seoul (or perhaps Japan) would be the most likely choice for people coming from the Americas. Flight options from Seoul to Jeju range from \$40 (low cost carrier, special promo price) to \$100 for full pricing (Korean Air, Asiana) one way. There are many flights every hour, some which actually leave from Incheon International (ICN), while most leave from Gimpo International (GMP). From Japan, there are several flights direct to Jeju (Fukuoka, Osaka, Nagasaki, Tokyo).

Note when planning flight transfers in Korea: Incheon Airport has flights to Jeju, but most flights are from Gimpo **Domestic** Line Terminal, NOT Gimpo International Line Terminal. Be careful -- the two terminals are not the same. Going to the International Terminal may cost travelers over 30 minutes to correct the direction.

Note from Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, IOIA Asia Pacific Committee Chair: If you have plans to stop in Tokyo, JOIA members would welcome to arrange a meeting and/or dinner together. Please notify your plan in advance (Email: info@joia-organic.com). Isidor and Raymond can advise and assist those coming through Seoul (both ICN or GMP), although they both prefer to travel from GMP, as it is closer to Seoul.

Travel Questions and Hints? Ask the experts: Raymond Yang (funs8@gmail.com); Isidor Yu (Isidor.yu@gmail.com), or Mutsumi Sakuyoshi (mu-saku@cap.ocn.ne.jp).



Peer Review, from page 8

receiving a message from a certifier saying, “You will be hearing from IOIA”, or from an evaluator saying, “I’d like to schedule an evaluation, could we discuss schedules?” Or you might get a message or call from me, or from Maria DeVincenzo, the contractor who been coordinating the program for us for the past two months.

This program can keep our members on multiple certifier lists, save time and money for everyone, and improve inspections, which is truly the ultimate goal of NOP 2027. There is no cost to the inspector and the evaluator is simply there to observe, not to be involved in the inspection. The process includes an opportunity for the inspector to read the evaluation report. If you get contacted for an evaluation through the IOIA, please welcome it as an opportunity to have the opinion of a true peer, and know that IOIA is working for you!

If you are asked to provide Maria or an evaluator your inspection schedule, we would appreciate your prompt reply. Feel free to contact Maria or me if you have any concerns or questions about the program. Maria’s email is ioiaevaluator@ioia.net.

Inspector Liability Insurance Tip

Maarten Samsom, IOIA inspector member from Vermont, recently went shopping for general liability insurance. Some certifiers (both organic certification agencies and other verification programs) require liability insurance. This type of insurance will typically cost \$500 or more through your regular insurance provider.

He shared the results of his efforts – which may be helpful to other inspectors. He found General Liability Insurance, underwritten by The Hartford at \$425.00 premium per year with no deductible through INSUREON. Application is on-line. Maarten shared contact information and a brief description of the policy. Thanks, Maarten!

INSUREON
1301 Central Expy. South, Suite 115
Allen, TX 75013
www.insureon.com
1-800-688--1984

\$1,000,000 each occurrence
\$2,000,000 General Aggregate
\$ 10,000 medical Expense (any one Person)
\$1,000,000 Personal injury
\$1,000,000 Automobile liability, combined single limit
Hired Auto and Non-owned Auto are included

**Asia Pacific Committee Report
by Mutsumi Sakuyoshi**



Mutsumi (left) and fellow JOIA member and trainer Yoko Mizuno

The discussion in Asian Pacific committee meeting is now focusing on AGM in Korea, 2016. This project leader is Raymond Yang. Raymond, and Isidor Yu (board member of IOIA) are trying to confirm the accommodation. We need to consider about various countries, especially in Asia and Pacific Area’s new attendees, and also to North/Central/South American members. The good news is we have started to communicate with some Australian people to work together. We expect high demand for IOIA inspector trainings in Asia/Pacific Area. The AGM in 2016 would be a good opportunity to have more trainings in these areas.

New Committee member Vitoon Panyakul of Thailand has joined the Asia Pacific Committee’s members from Korea, Japan, Australia, Nepal, India, and Iran.

Mutsumi Sakuyoshi of Fuji Shizuoka, Japan, is an organic inspector, IOIA trainer, and Chair of the Asia Pacific Committee.

Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training in Barbados

by Luis Brenes

The Organic Growers and Consumers Association (OGCA) of Barbados, with the cooperation of the Jamaican Organic Agriculture Movement (JOAM), co-sponsored a basic crop inspection training during the first week of June. The training was conducted in the facilities of Mc Gill University’s Bellairs Research Center in Folkstone, St, James, on the western coast of Barbados. Trainer Luis Brenes (Costa Rica) had the generous assistance of Dr. Joseph Lindsay (founding member and board member of JOAM), who offered a Caribbean perspective based on his life career in soil science to the participants.



This training is part of a broader initiative which is the project entitled “Organic Certification for Organic Farmers in Barbados”, which is being funded by the UNDP (the United Nations Development Programme) and implemented by the

Organic Growers and Consumers Association (OGCA). As John Hunte, Secretary of OGCA and President of the UNDP Project Management Committee, said, “the ability to use the term ‘organic’, without any qualifying certificate of verification, undermines the value and integrity of the true organic grower and the whole system by which that grower assists in sound environmental practices.” John acted as the main local organizer and did a tremendous amount of work key to the success of this training while taking care of his six member family and their organic farm. Thanks John! You are truly an inspiration for all of us who have chosen to make organic agriculture our way to improve the world.



After a nice welcome from Susan Mahon, Academic and Managing Director of the Bellairs Research Institute of McGill University, and opening words from Dr. Lindsay, the training was officially inaugurated with the keynote address from David Bynoe, National Coordinator of the GEF Small Grants Programme of the UNDP. An agronomist by career and organic advocate by decision, Mr Bynoe certainly urged all students to consider organic farming as a key motor for Barbados’ future sustainable development.



Training participants included organic farmers, government ag extension agents, consultants, and member of the Barbados National Standards Institute (BNSI) and three members of Grenada’s organic agriculture movement. Field trips provided to be a very useful tool but, what made participants more happy? Certainly the Role of the Inspector – Inspection Scenarios skits..... If you do not agree, just see the photos!

**New Member Spotlight:
Kathe Purvis, Western Australia**

By Kathe Purvis

I currently work as an auditor and trainer for Fairtrade ANZ and the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia. I regularly travel across the Asia Pacific region auditing grower groups, from primary production throughout the supply chain to export, then from import to retail within Australia. I also provide training and other support services for various organisations on a contract basis. For the past several years I have worked in most Australian states and across the Asia Pacific region delivering training programs and audit services. I consider myself very privileged to have had the experience and opportunities that this has presented me with.

I was raised on a sheep and wheat “broadacre” property in Victoria, Australia and travelled around when I was young, working in orchards, market gardens and other organic ventures. I eventually started my own commercial certified organic market garden, which was a great learning experience, a good food source and second income for our family while we raised our children. I began travelling further afield as my children grew up and eventually left home.

This has directed me to an interest in the support networks for the organic industry and I have participated on committees, working groups, one board and lots of networks!

I also work in the Australian Vocational Education system as an educator, mostly with remote and rural learning groups.

When not working away my husband and I work on our small property in the town of Bridgetown, Western Australia, applying the principles learnt working on commercial properties to a small scale domestic block which feeds us and gives us much pleasure for its beauty and the birds and animals it attracts.

As I begin to slow down the pace and volume of work I take on I have taken up some units in a Sociology Course with Murdoch University. I think it is time to review the wonderful experiences I have accrued and apply lessons learnt to the bigger picture of social justice and environmental improvement.



Kathe Purvis visiting with other participants at the summer 2014 inspector training in Australia.

Webinars for Australia Increase IOIA's International Reach

IOIA always stands ready to respond to certifiers and processors who seek in-house training via webinar. The trickle of interest from certifiers has steadily increased since IOIA started delivering training via webinar in 2010. In June and July, that trickle turned into a cloudburst.

In just five weeks, IOIA delivered five in-house trainings in Australia via webinar. First was *100-level NOP Standards* training in all three scopes - *Crop, Livestock, and Processing* for Australian Certified Organic (ACO). ACO extended an invitation to the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) to join in. Total number of participants was 12 each in Crop and Processing and 13 in Livestock. Participants came from as far away as China and Vanuatu. Courses were delivered by Margaret Scoles (Crop), Stanley Edwards (Processing), and Garry Lean (Crop). Training participants were located at their individual remote locations; the ACO office in Brisbane, Queensland; or the NASAA office near Adelaide, South Australia.

Next, was the *200-level In/out Balances, Traceability Tests and Recipe Verification for Processing Inspection under NOP & COR*. Monique Scholz presented via the web in two sessions over two days from Quebec, Canada into ACO's Brisbane classroom. ACO was holding in-house inspector training for 22 participants. Teri Lindberg provided tech support from the IOIA office in Montana.

And finally, Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador delivered the IOIA/OMRI Livestock Inputs Webinar through distance delivery from her home in Oregon for 9 participants. NASAA cosponsored this event and returned the invitation by opening the door to ACO participants. All presentation was Skype, using the IOIA webinar platform. IOIA has provided web-based training for Australia each year since 2011. Most often, these were NOP updates or 100-level NOP Standards training.

Report from Japan - Equivalency

by Mutsumi Sakuyoshi

Equivalency is a long term topic since we started JAS organic certification in Japan. It is not a simple “mutual agreement”, as it is in the case of other countries. MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery) is trying to negotiate to handle organic commodities smoothly to facilitate trade, but it is always difficult. To use the equivalency system, we need to be clear that in Japan, we focus only on agricultural products and plant-based processed products. Livestock products, (meat, dairy products, honey) and alcohol are out of scope when we discuss equivalency.

And, it is important to know that in the Japanese market, to attach JAS Organic mark is mandatory to plants, fungi, and plant-based processed products which are sold as organic.

From the beginning of JAS organic certification, we have accepted the organic products from EU and USA as organic. Almost 15 years have since passed. MAFF has successfully negotiated mutual agreements with EU, Swiss, USA and Canada.

One way equivalency : Australia, New Zealand, Argentina

Condition	Procedure
An importer (in Japan) needs to become a JAS certified importer.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. JAS certified importer receives a certificate (which is issued by the authorized organization by each country's government) to coincide with the invoice and Bill Of Lading. After that the importer will attach the JAS organic mark to each product and/or shipping slip. 2. JAS certified importer requests to their producer/processor in equivalent country to attach JAS mark to the products to be shipped to Japan instead of Japanese importer. In such case, the producer/processor needs to be educated to conduct “grading” to attach JAS organic mark by the Japanese importer.

* For import, the requirements and procedure to attach JAS Organic mark are the same.

Mutual equivalency: EU and Swiss

For export, in the case of processed food, its raw materials must be produced in Japan, and/or in equivalent countries. The JAS registered certifier of the operator will issue “ Import certificate” (Note: not all JAS CBs can issue the certificate. Only the listed CBs can issue certificates. See the list of Certifying Bodies - first link is in Japanese, the second is English) http://www.maff.go.jp/j/jas/jas_kikaku/pdf/eu_140617.pdf

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32008R1235>

Mutual equivalency: USA

For import, the producer/processor in USA can attach JAS labels to their products for their customers. But there are some conditions for it. Check the definition of “ Repacking” operation.

See the guidance which explains the allowed cases to attach JAS labels in USA - see link below.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/international-trade/Japan>

Note: JAS organic does not have a category of “made with organic XXX”.

Mutual equivalency: Canada

The conditions are almost the same as in the case of USA. The name of the certificate is different.

MAFF are now negotiating equivalency to Korean government and its review process has reached final step. It would be finalized after the Korean government finishes USA and EU agreements for equivalency.

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights*(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website.)***Chico Hot Springs, March 29, 2015**

All Board Members Present. Ib Hagsten, Stuart McMillan, Pam Sullivan, Margaret Weigelt, Isidor Yu, Garth Kahl, Amanda Birk. Others present: Margaret Scoles, ED

Election of Officers: Stuart feels professionally ready and has the availability to take on Chairmanship. Margaret S- talks about importance of having a chair and vice chair from opposite sides of US/Canada border. Ex. NOSB comments should come from US citizen.

Amanda moves to accept BoD slate as stated below, Isidor 2nded. Unanimously approved.

Chair- Stuart; Vice Chair-Ib; Treasurer-Pam; Secretary-Garth; Exec Committee at Large-Isidor; Director-Margaret Anne; and Director-Amanda.

Chico Hot Springs, March 30, 2015 8 A.M. – 5:30 P.M.

All Board Members Present. Ib Hagsten, Stuart McMillan, Pam Sullivan, Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), Isidor Yu, Garth Kahl, Amanda Birk. Others present: Margaret Scoles (MS), ED

Peer Advisory Committee: Al Johnson arrives, starts presentation. Inspection Evaluation tool is now in a usable form. Based on documents they received from IOIA, NOP, CCOF and PCO. Discussion of required skills and experience for the role of field evaluator. Discussion of whether 200-300 level webinar trainings would qualify as “advanced trainings.” No decision. Pam reminds us there is no money in budget to hire contractors at this stage. Amanda responds that that plan is to fund this in pilot year from certifier fees and NOT require additional money from IOIA.

10:00 MS calls OTCO to begin call with Connie Karr and Kelly O’Donnell. Al asks what their needs are. Connie wants to see urgency in this response. They are really hanging their hat on IOIA...need this by end of the year. Would rather give money to IOIA then do it themselves. Connie expects to see confidentiality agreement built into contract with IOIA, not with each evaluator.

Garth moves/Ib seconds that we approve the work of the committee and direct Margaret S to move forward with the project including seeking legal review a contract with certifiers. Unanimous approval.

11:00 Call with Jenny Cruse, from MOSA. Jenny interested in knowing how she can help going forward. Jenny has concern that if we are not up and running until fall, we might miss some that are done with their inspection season. 11:21 Call completed with Jenny.

Pam presents updated chart of board term lengths. Isidor will be off BoD in 2016 and does not plan to run again. Two year terms – Ib, Garth. Three year terms – Margaret Anne, Pam, Amanda. Stuart will run again in 2016, but only for 2-year term.

Discussion for communication from Christopher Warren Smith (CWS). Al leaves. Only BoD members present. MS presents copy of communication. Discussion that there is lack of clarity in the procedures for the ARP with respect to how and to what extent the BoD can sustain appeals. i.e. what happens when an appeal is sustained by the BoD...this needs to be better defined. Review of language from IOIA Inspector accreditation program. “Implementation.” #7). “Appeal of ARP decisions may be made to the Board of Directors.”

12:25 stop, 14:27 Resumed Meeting.

Meeting with CWS: Agrees that clarifying the appeals process for the ARP would be helpful. CWS-with ARP much of the work is subjective. Expresses let’s have a system that is as cut and dried as possible and as objective as possible. ARP should be required to only consider the application submitted and NOT be required to interact with the applicant. If the ARP has made a decision, which the Board supports, that is the end of the matter. If for any reason you find the ARP has acted in an “ultra vires,” then of course there must be an appeal. 15:02 Call with CWS ends. Discussion of the need to work with CWS to move forward in better defining ARP appeals process.

Board Minutes Highlights

Isidor opens discussion of AGM dates. Thinks that if AGM date is April 9 we will avoid Korean holiday involving visiting ancestors’ tombs. Proposes AGM for April 9. Amanda-feels we missed chance for valuable inter-personal connections at the Costa Rica event. General discussion of how we can better foster this kind of collaboration. Discussion of one or two days of BoD retreat. Garth-suggests 2 days of retreat, min one day dedicated to succession. “reflection, stepping back” “dealing with big picture issues. General discussion of when the BoD has to arrive Jeju...BoD to arrive on April 7. Isidor-Want to make clear summarization of dates. Wants to make advertisement to present at April (2015) Trade show. Isidor will take publicity info for IOIA to Korea Expo.

Isidor makes motion/Pam seconds to create 2016 AGM Committee. Approved unanimously.

Inspection Guide (NOP Sound and Sensible deliverable). MS presents what she needs from the BoD for the inspection guide. Idea behind this project to create a guide to verify what inspectors did on inspection, reduce size of report, reduce the amount of reporting that we did and focus on primary issues of concern-more information needed or NCs. NOP-based guide. Hope was we would train/inspect to that. MS-Monique took on rough draft. Certifiers saw value in document in 2 ways: (1) In training inspectors and (2) As a guide for new inspector. Helpful to get more consistent inspections. But never to replace inspection reports. Working group suggested putting it into Excel spreadsheet format with tabs for general, crops, and livestock. We are only going to do the general crop and livestock version, no handling at this point. MS-proposes how to divide up people to review each tab. Garth-might be tool for producers to confront overly excessive inspector. Stuart-Might also be useful for operators preparing for an inspection. MS shows example of Inspection Guide. Includes self-assessment on whether it is 100, 200 or 300 level inspection. Garth suggests we divide up task, talk about how we will collaborate, set deadlines. MS will share this with us in Google Docs. BOD members volunteer and divide up the task of reviewing/commenting by April 7th.

Draft minutes to be posted to Google docs until approved by BoD, then sent to the IOIA website.

Conference Call, May 3, 2015

Present - Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), Stuart McMillan (Chair), Pam Sullivan, Garth Kahl, Ib Hagsten, Amanda Birk. Not Present - Isidor Yu. Others Present: Margaret Scoles, ED.

Report from the Chair and NOSB meeting:

Garth reports from April NOSB Meeting.

Stuart - Report from the Chair. Nothing definitive to report yet about the ballot on the Canadian standards revision. Kelly Monaghan did an excellent job of gathering input for IOIA’s vote. While in Vancouver, he ran into Rochelle Eisen, long-standing IOIA inspector member and current president of Canada Organic Growers. She was in favor of more “co-branding” between IOIA and COG.

17:10 Isidor joins meeting.

Board member Orientation: MS reminds of the “board only” section of the website and certifier involvement policy. MS-we have a policy that says the Board will initiate a formal financial audit every 4 years. This is not being done. She was not proposing a formal financial audit, but felt it was her job to remind BoD that this is written BoD policy. Stuart asks when was last audit? MS-We had audit of 2006 books in 2007 and Agreed Upon Procedures review by an accountant (not a formal financial audit) in 2013 of the 2012 books. The cost of Agreed-Upon-Procedures was about \$2,000 vs \$12,000 or more for a full financial audit. In the US, nonprofits are not required by any law to have a formal financial audit unless we get a US government contract for more than \$500,000 in one year. Audit Policy will be addressed on the next BOD meeting agenda.

Appoint/confirm BoD Liaisons (only changes are listed here)

- **Accreditation Committee:** – Pam
- **Membership Committee** – Ib
- **Nominations Committee** - Ib
- **Fundraising Committee** – an ad hoc subcommittee of the Finance Committee - Amanda

See **Minutes**, page 18

Minutes Highlights, from page 17

MS-We need to appoint Accreditation Committee Chair and committee every two years.

Garth moves we re-appoint Christopher Warren-Smith as chair of ARP. 2nd by Pam. Unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report – Pam: Trends: co-sponsored managed training is looking to be below budget. Webinars looking good. MS - Big reason we are \$10K positive is because no BoD travel for the AGM was submitted in Q1, submitted in Q2. Same with newsletter; Diane invoiced in Q2 for Q1 issue. We are about where we should be. If all BoD members buy tickets for AGM in Korea this year, as they should, then the \$6K we have left for BoD travel are already spoken for. Pam-Will Isidor incur some expenses in setting up AGM? Isidor wants to include expenses for Raymond (2016 AGM Committee chair). He and Raymond will be flying to Jeju together. MS- suggests we accept Treasurer's Report and address Board Travel and Promotion line items at a future meeting.

Amanda moves we accept Q1 financial report, 2nd by Ib. Unanimously approved.

Peer Evaluation Committee – Garth: A letter has been prepared to Miles McEvoy. The committee received some input suggesting that we not ask the NOP for endorsement. However, the committee is continuing to move forward with their letter to NOP, and at the same time moving forward with launching the program. Everything in the contract about pricing is still in flux. Pam- financial concern. IOIA should not lose money on the program. Amanda-Peer Evaluation Committee needs to be more aware of need to communicate updates to certifiers.

Asia Committee Request for Name Change: Isidor explains proposal to change name of Asia Committee to Asia-Pacific Committee in line with the committee's goal of being more welcoming to inspectors from Australia, New Zealand, and other countries outside of Asia. Akiko Nicholls of Australia/New Zealand has joined the committee.

Motion by Pam to approve name change, 2nd by Garth. Unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #11: 2016 AGM in Asia

Isidor and Raymond visited Jeju last week. Went to governor's office, explained plan. Staff member from Governor's office requested they make another proposal before June with budget. Possibility that governor may come to AGM to present speech. He and Raymond will submit plan to council. Council already promised to support it. They will now re-submit to governor's office. Concerned about whether it can be approved in this budget round. They need final decision from council for promotion. Timing is his only concern. Isidor visited several hotels in Jeju. Also looked at Jeju University **Isidor moves 5 days concurrent English/Korean basic trainings April 4-8, have 2 days adv. training (April 7-8) prior to AGM, (including NOP update, Equivalency, and TBD.), AGM (April 9), field trips (April 10) with Train the Trainer course on Mon-Tue. (April 11 and 12). 2nd by Garth.** Unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #13: Accreditation - next steps?: Discussion. MS- we need to write a funding proposal. MS- doesn't want to spend a lot of time to re-write procedures if we are going to re-write the whole program. We should put together a committee to decide what needs to be done by fall. Should include Pam, Stuart, MS, Christopher Warren-Smith, and Linda Kaner if possible.

Conference Call, June 11, 2015

All members present: Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), Stuart McMillan (Chair), Pam Sullivan, Garth Kahl, Ib Hagsten, Amanda Birk, Isidor Yu. Others present: Margaret Scoles, ED

Report from the Chair-Stuart thanks BoD for help in his response to WA Post article with respect to Cornucopia piece. WA Post did not issue a correction despite his efforts. Discussion of whether we should try again or continue trying to correct the assertion in the Cornucopia article that operations hire their own inspectors.

2016 AGM: Isidor discusses options for AGM accommodation. Raymond would like IOIA to participate in Korean trade fair and have booth. Isidor-\$1,400 for booth at Sept. Trade Expo for 1 week. **Pam moves that we approve \$1,400 for promotional costs for booth at Sept. Trade Fair. 2nd by Ib.** Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of submitting letters for IOIA NOSB candidates - Jim Pierce and Scott Rice. Ib moves we ask MS to write letters of support for both certifier candidates to NOSB. 2nd by Garth. Unanimously approved.

Discussion of IFOAM North America and Sacha being utilized to facilitate communications See **Highlights**, page 23

IOIA Welcomes OMRI's New Technical Director

IOIA is pleased to welcome **Johanna Mirenda** to OMRI as the organization's new Technical Director. Johanna's responsibilities include providing training and education, overseeing OMRI's policies and standards, and managing special projects including Technical Reports for the National Organic Program (NOP). The Technical Director also plays a leadership role as a member of OMRI's five-person Management Team.

Johanna's prior work includes six years of experience in the organic industry, focusing primarily on material review. Prior to joining OMRI, she served as the Policy Director for Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO), a USDA-accredited certification agency. There, Johanna managed the material review program and authored PCO's comments to the National Organic Standards Board. She has also been a member of OMRI's Livestock Review Panel and has facilitated trainings on material review issues for certifiers and the public.

IOIA wishes fond farewell to **Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador** as she moves on from OMRI and welcomes Johanna as she moves in to fill that position. Since 2011, Fernandez-Salvador developed NOP and COR inputs materials webinars for all three scopes (crop, livestock, and processing) and delivered dozens of them collaboratively with IOIA. She also spoke in-person at the 2012 Annual Meeting advanced training. IOIA looks forward to continuing that relationship, with Johanna as the new OMRI presenter.

**Johanna Mirenda****Other OMRI/IOIA News**

IOIA's next IOIA/OMRI inputs webinar will focus on Livestock Inputs and the NOP Standard. IOIA is preparing the in-house training in collaboration with OEFFA. OEFFA received SARE funding to train livestock professionals over two years in input materials approved for organic production. IOIA and OMRI is providing the training, using the 200-level IOIA/OMRI Livestock Inputs Materials webinar content. The first of two webinars was presented in 2014. The next upcoming webinar is scheduled in October.

Drones in Agriculture – They're Not Going to Go Away

This past spring there have been some observations on the IOIA Forum about the increased presence and use of drones in agriculture in the US. Agriculture seems to be the most promising use of this technology.

For more background info (the Forbes article discusses proposed FAA regulations with some interesting take-aways) we have two links for our readers – the [Forbes article from February 2015](#) and a more recent article from [Fortune Magazine, May 2015](#).

An excellent article with links:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/drones-report-market-forecast-2015-3>

**A drone manufactured by Shenzhen-based DJI****Some Observations from the Business Insider report:**

- The global commercial drone market will take shape around applications in a handful of industries: agriculture, energy, utilities, mining, construction, real estate, news media, and film production.
- Most growth in the drone industry is on the commercial/civilian side, as the shift away from the military market gains momentum. The market for commercial/civilian drones will grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 19% between 2015 and 2020, compared with 5% growth on the military side.
- E-commerce and package delivery will not be an early focus of the drone industry.
- Legacy drone manufacturers focused mostly on military clients do not have a natural advantage in the fast-evolving civilian drone market.
- Proposed US regulation would effectively end the ban on commercial drone flights and would allow low-altitude flights of small drones within view of a ground-based pilot. The rules are unlikely to be finalized before early 2017.
- Technology barriers are at once a roadblock and a huge business opportunity.

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

By Tony Fleming

Part II

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.

For example, most financial planners recommend saving significantly more than \$6,500/yr for retirement, and today's data-intensive cell phone plans cost appreciably more than the plans available several years ago. We can quibble about whether it is legitimate to include certain costs on the list, such as the SE social security/Medicare tax (it would apply to any kind of self-employment income, though not if one was an employee), or what proportion of your technology and cell plan to include, but the above total is certainly in the right ballpark.

For purposes of establishing a rate, let's suppose I was averaging about 1,000 hours per year of actual inspection time, including prep and follow-up: realistically, that's pushing the envelope because, in my world, travel time often added up to half again as many hours, lets say 500 hours. That doesn't leave a lot of slack for, say, another career, or the inevitable contingencies that accompany inspecting. Not to mention the personal sustainability of being on the road any more than that...

Now let's do the math, assuming I would like to earn an annual salary of \$40,000 after all the costs listed above are paid, resulting in total inspection income of \$60,500 when the above costs are added in. Let's also assume that the rate for travel time is half of the full inspection rate. Solving the following equation gives the rate (x) needed to meet these goals:

$$\begin{aligned} \$60,500 &= (1000 \times x) + (500 \times x/2), \text{ or} \\ \$60,150 &= 1,250 \times x \quad \text{so } x = \$48.40 \end{aligned}$$

If you want to earn a salary of \$50K, then the rate increases to \$56.40. Or you could increase your inspection and travel hours to 1,200 and 600,

Inspector members can read the entire article by [clicking here](#). Part 1 was printed in our V24 N2 issue.

respectively—pretty hefty lifting if you expect to have a life outside of inspecting. You could also try to increase the ratio of inspection hours to travel hours through more efficient scheduling, but that may not be a viable strategy since it depends on the timing and locations of assignments, which is largely out of your control.

It's pretty clear that you won't get rich by being an inspector, at least not based on this simplistic calculation, but you can make a middle class living. To really get the rate right, though, you need to also include some sort of "aggravation factor" to account for at least some of those intangible costs mentioned earlier, particularly when they impinge on family or other work time. Those pesky intangibles turned out to be the kicker for me: based on my best estimate, they minimally added another \$10,000-15,000 to my annual costs. To properly account for those, my rate would have had to be above \$60/hour to avoid working an unreasonable number of hours away from home. But such monetary benchmarks are woefully inadequate for measuring the value of many intangibles; I ultimately decided that things like family time, a more predictable schedule, and my ability to be engaged in the science I love were priceless.

Additional Considerations

Here are some other considerations that may be helpful when thinking about setting rates.

Inspection time: I have seen some inspectors use an hourly rate, others charge by the day, and still others charge a flat rate per inspection. Both daily and hourly rates are valid ways to charge for your time, but a flat rate? Not so much. Too many things can go wrong (otherwise known as the law of unintended consequences).

Whatever your method, this is your bread and butter, so just be sure your rate accounts not only for the time you actually spend working on the inspection, but also any tangible and intangible costs that can be problematic to otherwise bill for. It is worth repeating: tabulating exactly how much time you are spending on the most common kinds of intangibles, such as uncompensated administrative and bureaucratic requirements, over a representative period, such as a year, is time well spent. Otherwise, you really don't know, and your rate may or may not accurately account for them.

Regarding charging a flat (per inspection) rate: this is a dicey practice and I can't recommend it. It helps to think about it in terms of time: you can control (for the most part) your own time, but you have no control over how the operator spends their time leading up to (or during) the inspection, or how accurately the OSP reflects the operation. Over the long haul (and even during a single problematic inspection) you stand a good chance of ending up with a lot of uncompensated time. You're already donating your time to attend certifier trainings and do all the other uncompensated administrative things, so why give away even more, particularly time during which your specialized professional skills are being utilized? How many inspections have taken twice as long as expected because of things beyond your control? 'Nuff said...

Travel time: What rate to charge for travel time raises an interesting philosophical question: How much is your raw time actually worth to you? Travelling usually precludes other productive activities, and especially those that require being somewhere else, like earning income working at your other career! An ancillary question might be: is travel time simply time "wasted" behind the wheel, or can it in some cases be used productively?

It is a common practice for travel time to be billed (or set by a certifier) at some rate that is typically well below that charged for inspection time. 50% is a common ratio. Don't be too quick to accept such a steep discount until you've thought this over carefully. Regarding productive use of that time, I may have mentioned in a previous column that on a number of multi-site inspections (farm chapters, poultry operations, some far-flung processing operations), I let the operator drive me around, thereby turning that otherwise unproductive time behind the wheel into productive review and reporting time billable at the full rate. Try to use this option whenever practical; it will not only reduce your costs, but will conserve valuable time later on during the inspection and after you've finished the site visit.

Bundling and other time-conservation strategies: Grouping multiple inspections into one trip is a no-brainer, especially when the operations are located in close proximity to one another, but not necessarily to you. Bundling inspections typically eliminates 50% or more of the travel time involved, thereby saving you time and the certifier (and/or the inspected parties) money in avoided travel fees. Farm chapters have understood this concept for decades, which is one of the main reasons a chapter will contract with an inspector to perform all of their inspections within a specified time frame (typically a few weeks during the growing season). There is no reason the same practice cannot be applied to other kinds of inspections....but it is up to the certifier (and sometimes multiple certifiers) to be sufficiently organized to make it happen. In my sometimes time-pinched existence as an inspector, few things were as satisfying as having three, four, or even five inspections lined up in a tidy, compact trip. I netted more income and the certifier(s) saved a significant amount of money. On the other hand, few things were as annoying, or escalated everyone's costs as

quickly, as making a major trip to do one large processing inspection, only to receive another inspection request from the same certifier just a few days later for another operation in the same area.

While we are on the topic of efficiency, I've noticed a long standing tendency among inspectors to "keep costs affordable for certifiers and operators", even when such a worthy aim takes precedence over good business practices (i.e., making a living). This attitude probably has its roots in the "organic movement"—a period when there were far fewer certifiers, organic operations, and inspectors—and certainly long before the recent meteoritic growth of organic products into the mainstream—and everyone involved was just trying to get the thing off the ground. We frequently spent nights and partook of meals at the farms we inspected, arranged our visits when processors would actually be running organic products, and agreed to flat rates with chapters—and then exhibited Herculean patience with the perennial underperformers who made us wait for what seemed like an eternity as they rifled through the proverbial shoebox containing the last umpteen years worth of receipts. I'm all for patience and affordability, but the practice of "keeping costs affordable" is a two-way street that cannot fall solely, or even primarily, on the inspector. Both the operator and certifier must have some skin in this game as well, the former by being prepared for the inspection and giving us their undivided attention, and the latter by providing complete, thoroughly vetted paperwork and by bundling inspections as much as is practical. Everybody wins when this happens. As I sometimes had to tell an inspected party, "I do inspections like this every day, but you only have to see me once a year for a few hours".

See Compensation, page 22

Compensation, from page 21

Aggravation Factor: “Emergency” or “rush” inspections are a leading cause of stress and disruption for a busy inspector. Certifiers don’t necessarily like them either, but since they basically are in the service business, they may not have a choice if they want to gain (or retain) the client. Unlike many other intangibles, this is one you can and should bill for directly. You are basically being asked to drop everything to deal with this one client, who may not have planned ahead very well, or has some hot new organic item they think they need to rush to market to beat the competition. These kinds of requests most often involved the addition of a new copacker for an established organic brand, or came right at the height of farm inspection season when the operator suddenly realized his 3-year transition period was up. Most people in the business world understand the adage that “time is money”, and will respect your willingness to put their needs first—and expect to pay up accordingly. I had an aggravation fee (actually called a “rush inspection charge”) that I included in my agreed-upon rates with every certifier I worked for. Another inspector calls this type of fee an “add-on penalty” (sort of like tacking on an additional 15 yards for piling on after the run). Mine was a flat \$100 for any rush inspection. I found that some certifiers encouraged this sort of thing, but others, not so much. It probably reduced the number of such requests I received, but that wasn’t always a bad thing. Of course, you can always say no.

Prep and followup time: Of course you are charging for time on site, but are you adequately billing for prep and followup? In my experience, prep and followup were often crucial to the quality and integrity of the inspection, and should be billed at the full rate. This concept should not be controversial. It is helpful to remember a famous quote from the first IOIA

inspection manual, to wit, “we may be ignorant, but we can be prepared”. Nothing leads to a more effective and efficient inspection better than becoming thoroughly acquainted with the operation via its OSP and other paperwork. You say you’ve inspected this place before? Then read those old inspection reports of yours! Something else to keep in mind is that prep and followup sometimes involve a series of opportunistic or unexpected nickel- and dime-sized chunks of time that don’t necessarily lend themselves to easy accounting. Are you playing phone or email tag trying to get the darn thing scheduled? Still waiting for the operator to “get back to you” with some additional record or other piece of paperwork the certifier asked you to pick up? Make sure the meter is running for every minute you have to spend on these sorts of tasks. Prep and followup typically utilize your professional critical thinking skills, so don’t shortchange yourself.

Office expenses: OK, the increasingly digital nature of the business means you’re probably not printing so many pages these days, but take a hard look at these expenses. It might surprise you. Be sure you account for them in your billing.

Technology upgrades: This is an increasingly important subset of office expenses. Upgrading phones, tablets, laptops, software, etc. on a regular basis is a fairly expensive proposition. Add it up and incorporate these recurring costs into your basic rates. Do you make heavy use of your cell phone on inspection trips? Of course you do. Or maybe you even upgraded your data plan to accommodate sending and receiving all those gigabytes of inspection files on the fly? Again, do the math and factor these direct costs into your basic rate.

Other supplies: coveralls, booties, gloves, hair nets, sample bags for food and soil, vials and bottles for collecting water samples, cleaning supplies (don’t forget about biosecurity!), and maybe even a spare cooler for shipping perishables off to the lab. The list goes on. The addition of periodic residue sampling has certainly ramped up your responsibility to be prepared (you are prepared, right?), and all this stuff adds up.

Wear and tear on your vehicle: I found that the IRS mileage rate somehow never quite made up for the wear and tear on my car after deducting for fuel, insurance, and the like. After carefully assessing my vehicle expenses over a period of time, I realized that I could reduce my costs significantly by renting a vehicle whenever feasible, especially when I had a long period of road travel scheduled. I never had any problem with being reimbursed for car rentals, and some certifiers even encouraged the practice. The flip side is that you have (presumably) already paid the insurance company for business use of your vehicle, but that is generally small potatoes compared to, say, premature failure of a CV joint or more frequent tire replacement. Let someone else deal with that stuff; you don’t have time.

Meals: While few contracts include a per diem, most certifiers do include some allowance for billing for meals and groceries consumed on your trip. Are you bringing food from home? If you purchased it at a store (as opposed to growing it yourself), save the receipt and submit it with your bill, with the appropriate items indicated. I never had a certifier question this practice. Some even encouraged me to put a reasonable price on food items grown in my garden. It is worth noting that “meals” are only partially deductible (50%, sometimes less)

Compensation

on Schedule C of your tax return—a consequence, I think, of overreliance on the 3-martini lunch as a tax deduction—so getting reimbursed is essential to avoid eating that cost, so to speak.

Trainings: Anymore, continuing education is required on a recurring basis by certifiers and accreditation bodies, and generally, those mandatory certifier calls and webinars do not count towards it. That means you’re probably paying to attend IOIA trainings and possibly other kinds of related trainings (e.g., offerings from ag schools, natural resources agencies, etc.), industry trade shows, regional conferences, and the like. Those kinds of costs can add up quick! Keep close tabs on your training costs and try to adequately incorporate them into your rates. Most vocations require ongoing training, but the big difference between you as an independent contractor versus an employee of a company is that you have to foot the bill for your own trainings, while a company employee usually just has to show up.

Deducting Expenses: Most of the expenses noted above are deductible on Schedules A and C of your federal tax return. However, deductible expenses are not necessarily the be all and end all, and may end up being worthless. In general, the value of deducting these types of costs on your Federal and state tax returns varies greatly according to your (family’s) particular circumstances. Don’t unquestioningly accept the argument that “Oh, you can deduct these from your taxes” as a reason for not fully reimbursing some expenses. That’s a hollow argument if, for example, you don’t or can’t itemize deductions. Of course, if you can itemize, then by all means carefully track and document every penny you spend. But the important point is to try to recoup as many of

these costs as possible, either by billing for them directly or, where that isn’t practical, making sure the rate you charge is sufficient to cover them.

It is worth mentioning two Schedule C deductions that can be particularly useful to inspectors: the home office deduction, and per diem. The IRS recently began offering a simplified version of the home office deduction: a straightforward \$5 per square foot, which avoids all those messy and time consuming calculations required by the old method to apportion utility bills and mortgage interest between the home office and the rest of your abode. You may also be able to deduct a per diem for days spent away from home while on business “*if your duties require you to be away from the general area of your tax home for a period substantially longer than an ordinary day’s work, and you need to get sleep or rest to meet the demands of your work while away*”. The value of the deduction is generally set to the standard per diem for government employees and varies by location, from \$46/day in any rural area to much more in pricey cities. This can add up to a significant chunk of change if you are spending lots of days away from home. Of course, as with all things IRS, there are limits: 300 square feet is the maximum for a home office deduction using the simplified method, while the per diem deduction is in lieu of claiming meals as a deduction. Claiming per diem comes with a few nuances, so if you aren’t already familiar with this deduction, check out the rules on the IRS website.

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,

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between IFOAM members in N. America. MS- Sacha is having less workload this year...so it would be a good year for her to be involved with IFOAM. **Pam-Moves that we approve allocation of up to 60 hours of Sacha’s time to facilitate communication between IFOAM members in N. America. MA 2nds. Unanimously approved.**

MS-André Leu, current IFOAM president can attend our AGM.

Ib moves that we invite Andre Leu to keynote AGM. 2nd by Pam. Unanimously approved.

MS-Peer Evaluation? Thinks we are totally on track. Maria DeVincenzo has agreed to accept a contract to be the coordinator. Certifiers did not like first contract. They wanted flat fee. We hammered out flat fee contract. We are bargaining...if we can get 2 evaluations for every inspector that should cover the costs. NOP has given us a good, positive response to our letter. Submitted by Garth Kahl, Secretary

Resources

[Click here to link to archives of *Organic Integrity*, the NOP newsletter.](#)

[USDA posts resources from August 4 database webinar](#)

MESA (Multinational Exchange for Sustainable Agriculture) is pursuing an exciting new project to build the first free [online curriculum in Applied Agroecology](#).

GMO NewsBite

Scotland to ban growing GE Crops

Genetically engineered crops [will not be allowed in Scotland](#), according to the Scottish National Party. The Scottish government will submit a request to the European Union that it be excluded from any EU approvals for GMO cultivation.



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Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!

2015 - 2016 Calendar

August 29 - 31 [4th Annual World Congress of Agriculture](#) in China.

September 3 - 5 Organic Week at Expo Milano, www.ifoam.org

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

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

September 18 - October 11 [ISOFAR 2015 Goesan International Organic Expo + Industry Fair](#). Goesan, Korea.

September 28 – October 2 Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings, plus Advanced Inspector training, Corvallis, Oregon. Info page 2.

October 2 - 3 [IFOAM Regional Conference on Marketing and Innovation in Organic Farming](#). Goesan, South Korea.

October 9 - 11 [IFOAM conference: Organic 3.0: The Next Phase of Organic Development – Visions, Trends and Innovations](#). Goesan, South Korea.

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

October 29 - Organic Day, Tokyo.

November 2 – 13 Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Trainings, Iowa. More info page 2.

November 5 - 7 [BioFach India](#), ADLUX Convention & Exhibition Centre, Kerala, India

January 13 - 15 2016 Accredited Certifiers Assn. Annual Meeting and training and NOP training, Savannah, Georgia

January 20 – 23 [36th Annual EcoFarm Conference](#). Regenerating Our Lands and Water.

January 28-31 [Guelph Organic Conference](#), Guelph University Center.

February 25 - 27, 2016 [27th Annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference](#), La Crosse, WI.

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