

IOIA ANNUAL REPORT – 2008

*Prepared February 1, 2009 by
Bob Durst, IOIA Board Chair, and Margaret Scoles, IOIA Executive Director*

In 2008, we changed our name from the *Independent* Organic Inspectors Association to *International* Organic Inspectors Association to better reflect our constituency and scope. This decision was finalized and celebrated at the bilingual Annual Meeting in Guatemala.

A summary of progress on key ongoing/new initiatives during 2008 is listed below.

IOIA Mission

- *To address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors*
- *To provide quality inspector training and*
- *To promote consistency and integrity in the organic certification process*

Issues and Concerns relevant to organic inspectors:

- The Inspectors' Report (IR) – Volume 17; No 1 – 4.
- The Mini Membership Directory included with Vol.17; No 1 of the IR
- The hard copy 2008 Membership Directory, published January 2008
- IOIA Forum – an internet list-serve providing an essential communication tool for current issues, frequently cited as a valuable member service
- New in 2008 – Canadian members Forum and a trial Latin American Forum
- The Organic Standard – electronic international newsletter from GroLink AB for a nominal fee (based on IOIA as the primary subscriber)
- Published results of 2007 IOIA Inspector Membership Survey.
- Website www.ioia.net. On-line Member Directory, Inspectors Only section, and Job Board.
- Spanish language section in each quarterly newsletter.
- More social events for IOIA members. The first Cross-Border Social for IOIA members in Vermont, followed by the OTCO hosted reception in Oregon.
- IOIA assisted members in connecting with certifiers to find work and on issue of late payment.

Promoting Consistency and Integrity:

- Attendance at major organic events with our upgraded IOIA booth including:
 - È Guelph Organic Conference in January
 - È All Things Organic in Chicago, Illinois in April
- Continued support of OTA, IFOAM, OMRI, COG, Co-op America, Montana Non-Profit Association, National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture through membership, subscriptions, or partnership
- Commented to the National Organic Program on the proposed pasture rule.
- IOIA members Jim Riddle and Joyce Ford represented IOIA at the IFOAM General Assembly in Italy.

TRAINING

IOIA continued a trend to break previous records for number of trainings and number of people trained. Languages included English, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, and partial translation to Indonesian.

An IOIA **Organic Training Institute 'catalog'** of training services was drafted. Initiated in 2007 at the BOD Retreat, this repackaging of the IOIA training program creates a platform to support our increasingly diverse training activities. It creates an umbrella for collaborating with other institutions.

Advanced Training offerings in 2008 were the most diverse in history. IOIA collaborated with other institutions to provide joint training:

- ◆ With Non-GMO Project to provide four non-GMO inspector trainings.
- ◆ With Grolink AB of Sweden to provide Community Grower Group inspection training in India.
- ◆ With Demeter Association to provide the first IOIA/Demeter biodynamic inspector training.
- ◆ With OMRI to provide training for inspection of inputs for organic production.

IOIA initiated an ambitious project to provide consistent and widely accessible **Canadian Organic Standards** training in collaboration with OTA, COG, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The project partners submitted a proposal for funding to the Canadian government.

Notification that funding had been approved was received just at the start of 2009. The project includes training for inspectors, certifiers, producers, and processors to the Canadian standards which will be implemented in June 2009.



BOD members Garry Lean and Monique Scholz with Michel Saumur, National Mgr. of the Canadian Organic Office at the 2008 Guelph Conference 2008 where the project was born.

IOIA continued to invest in curriculum development.

Basic Crop curriculum revisions were largely completed in 2008. A

Curriculum Advisory Committee was struck for the Processing Course. Major strides were made in solidifying the **Basic Livestock and Processing Courses** on the same platform as Crop – including enhanced participatory and OSP exercises, as well as a grading system that includes value for pre-course assignments, homework and in class exercises. Web-based assignments and resources for these courses are the first step toward more e-learning for inspectors.

IOIA sponsors an average of two or three trainings each month, usually following one of two models. **IOIA-managed trainings** are limited in number (about 4 or 5 annually) and are managed out of the head office with limited support from regional cosponsors. **Cosponsor-Managed trainings** continue to increase each year. Cosponsors handle most of the administrative and logistical workload for this model. **IOIA-managed trainings continue to be the primary revenue source for IOIA.** Revenue from cosponsor-managed trainings is much lower, but they are an important component in IOIA's efforts to achieve our overall mission. In 2008, IOIA revised the fee structure for these courses to preserve the lowest cost possible for developing countries.

The trainees for basic courses continue to come from all areas of the organic industry. About 25 percent of the participants are 'non-inspectors'. Providing in-house training continues to be a rapid growth area in the US. IOIA provided in-house training to certification agencies and quality assurance staff (6 such trainings in 2008 in the US and Canada). Among those was a basic processing inspector training for Hain-Celestial staff (mostly quality assurance staff), IOIA's first such industry training and a significant step in the ongoing diversification of training services.

IOIA continued to offer agricultural monitor training for pipeline companies in the Midwest US (five in 2008).

IOIA continues to collaborate with Assiniboine Community College in Manitoba to offer the basic crop course in distance format with a shortened time on-site. This course provides inspection training based on the Canadian and US Standards.

IOIA welcomed 3 new Trainers: **Isidor Yu** of Korea, **Margaret Dickson** of Ontario, and **Sarah Costin** of California.



Trainings over the past year included:

È IOIA-Managed Trainings

- ◆ Guatemala – Advanced, concurrent English and Spanish sessions
- ◆ Iowa – Basic Crop, Livestock, and Processing; Advanced
- ◆ Vermont – Basic Livestock
- ◆ Oregon - Basic Crop and Processing; Advanced

È Co-sponsor Managed Trainings

- ◆ Crop – Guatemala, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Manitoba, British Columbia, Hawaii, Oregon, Maine
- ◆ Livestock – Manitoba, South Carolina
- ◆ Processing – Hong Kong, Colorado, Korea
- ◆ Advanced – California, Vermont, Manitoba

The field trip - an essential aspect of basic training.

IOIA Trainings in 2008		
Type of Course	Number of Events	Number of participants
Basic Crop	17	311
Livestock	4	48
Basic Processing	5	91
Advanced	6	86
Non-GMO	4	45
Community Grower Group	2	49
Other	4	108

FINANCES

Details of the 2008 financial reports will be presented by the Treasurer at the AGM.

Key aspects include:

- The Board is pleased to announce that IOIA ended the year on the most positive financial note in its history. Cash reserve was increased for the third consecutive year. (See Balance Sheet for details.)
- The BOD increased financial oversight and controls based on recommendations of the 2007 audit.
- The role of financial bookkeeping was separated from the role of the Executive Director.
- Susan Colwell volunteered to assist as Development Director to increase IOIA's fundraising efforts.
- No due increases this year.
- A balanced budget was presented at the AGM in Guatemala.

STAFF

Margaret Scoles continues as Executive Director.

IOIA is blessed with a support staff of dedicated and talented part-time individuals:

- Rita Wenzel, IOIA's first Office Manager, joined IOIA in May. This position is 4 days/wk and was a long awaited upgrade for the office. Rita was already familiar with IOIA's work. She had worked for the past 10 years at the office of IOIA's accountant, David Gardner. In addition to managing the financial books and the office, she provides membership support including Membership Directory updates.
- Diane Cooner continues as Newsletter Editor, Website Manager, and moderator of the IOIA Forums.
- Sacha Draine, International Training Services, handles the administrative duties for cosponsor-managed trainings outside the US.
- Teri Lindberg, US Training Services, started with IOIA in January 2008 as bookkeeper. She moved into a newly created part-time position to alleviate the stress of rapid increase in in-house, cosponsor-managed trainings in the US.
- Lynell Denson, Administrative Assistant, handles accreditation, scholarship, and much more.
- Gordon Mulkey handles the maintenance tasks associated with building ownership and helps out with office tasks.
- IOIA wishes a fond farewell and happy retirement to Judy Hessong, a key staff person in the IOIA office for 3 years.

COMMITTEES

In implementing the decision of the 2007 AGM, the size of the BOD was reduced to 5 Directors. The rationale was to reduce costs and shift more energy away from the BOD and to the IOIA Committees. Costs were indeed reduced, but the shift is still in process. IOIA is committed to investing energy into making that shift a reality 2009.

BOD Liaisons were appointed for all committees and were more active than in past years. A BOD liaison is a Board member who communicates between the Committee and the BOD, supports the committee's work, and carries concerns and initiatives both ways.

In updating the Policy Manual, the BOD reviewed all policies related to Committees. They decided to replace current language on Term Limits for Committee Chairs to no more than 6 consecutive years, to be implemented by the 2009 AGM.

The Board extends a sincere thanks to all of the IOIA members who have volunteered to be part of IOIA committee activity and for their accomplishments over the last year. A brief summary of highlights from some of the committees is listed below (full reports for all committees available at the AGM).

È **Membership** –Kelly Monaghan, Chair.

Prepared and published preliminary results of the Inspector Membership Survey (the first member survey in five years) in the IR (Vol. 17 No.1). The full report is posted in the “Inspectors Only” section of the website in Spring 2008.

È **Nominations Committee** – a full slate of candidates has been prepared for this year's election.

È **Scholarship** –Margaret Wiegelt, Chair

- ◆ Awarded the Andrew Rutherford Scholarship and the Organic Community Initiative Scholarship (OCIS) in 2008.
- ◆ IOIA continued to grow a fund to help defray travel costs for OCIS winners. These funds were awarded to the 2008 OCIS winner.

È **Bylaws** – Arthur Harvey, Chair

The bylaws were amended in 2008 to change the name of IOIA to incorporate the word “International” to replace “Independent”.

È **Accreditation and Accreditation Review Panel (ARP)** –Leanne McCormick took on the task of chairing the ARP and IOIA welcomed Dr. Daniel Smith as the non-IOIA member of the ARP. The position of Accreditation Committee Chair is currently open. The ARP has proposed that the AC and ARP be combined.

- ◆ **Seven (7) Renewals**

È **Canadian Committee** – A big thank you to outgoing Chair, Janine Gibson, who filled that position since 1995. During her tenure, she represented IOIA on the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) Organic Committee and invested many hours into the new Canadian organic standards. She is handing over the chair committee to Bill Barkley. In the face of imminent implementation of the new regulations and standards, IOIA increased support of the committee in 2008 and 2009. The Committee supported the BOD decision to become a sponsor of the Guelph Organic Conference this year. **(See Vol. 17 No 3 and Vol. 18 No. 1 for more details on the Canadian Organic Standards Update).**

IOIA BOARD

2008 Activity summary

The Board had one new member and one new alternate as the result of the AGM in Guatemala last year. Newly elected members included Stephen Bird and Lidia Girón (2nd Alternate).

Outgoing members included Garry Lean (Chair) -5 years, Maheswar Ghimire – 2 years, and Sue Baird (Alternate) – 2 years. The BOD sends their congratulations to Erin Beard (First Alternate), who will be leaving the BOD and getting married. **THANK YOU**, for your dedication, time and energy.

The BOD met in-person in Guatemala and 10 times via conference calls. BOD minutes highlights are published in each newsletter. Full minutes are available in the Inspectors Only section of the website.

In 2008, the BOD Policy Manual was updated and the Employee Handbook finalized, both based on review by an attorney and the Montana Department of Labor.

2009 will be a busy year for the Board of Directors. Key areas:

- ◆ Developing a Work/Business Plan to further the decisions, goals, and impact areas identified at the 2007 BOD retreat.
- ◆ Continue to analyze membership survey results and act on requests from the membership.
- ◆ Continue to develop the BOD's fundraising efforts. Unusual for a nonprofit, IOIA's percentage of income from donations is very small. There is great room for improvement.



IOIA's international Board of Directors: Outgoing and newly elected BOD members in Guatemala.

Your help as volunteers and committee members is necessary and greatly appreciated!