

IOIA Annual Report – 2009

*Prepared February 1, 2010 by
Bob Durst, IOIA Board Chair, and Margaret Scoles, IOIA Executive Director*

A summary of progress on key ongoing/new initiatives during 2009 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 18; No 1 – 4.
- The Mini Membership Directory included with Vol.18; No 1 of the IR
- The hard copy 2009 Membership Directory, published January 2010
- IOIA Forum – an internet list-serve providing an essential communication tool for current issues, frequently cited as a valuable member service
- Canadian Forum and continued trial Latin American Forum
- The Organic Standard – electronic international newsletter from GroLink AB for a nominal fee (based on IOIA as the primary subscriber)
- Website www.ioia.net was upgraded. **Thank you**, Diane Cooner. On-line Member Directory, Inspectors Only section, and Job Board.
- Stepped into webinar mode by signing a contract with GAN Conferencing for a training website, <http://ioia.ganconference.com/> to increase access to advanced trainings and utilize technology. The site went through a trial run in 2009 with a resounding success. A webinar schedule is being developed for 2010.
- Canadian member meeting at Guelph Organic Conference.
- Chicago 2009 Gold Coast IOIA Social.
- Developed draft plan to increase participation in IOIA by Latin American inspectors.
- Assisted members in connecting with mentors, certifiers, and on complaints issues.
- Continued to participate on the Canadian General Standards Board Organic Technical Committee in the critical implementation year for Canada's organic standards.

Promoting Consistency and Integrity:

- Participated in major organic events with our IOIA booth including:
 - ▶ Guelph Organic Conference, Ontario in January
 - ▶ Natural Products Expo West, Anaheim, California in March
 - ▶ All Things Organic™ in Chicago, Illinois in June
- Continued support of OTA, IFOAM, OMRI, COG, Green America (formerly Co-op America), Montana Non-Profit Association, through memberships and subscriptions.
- Collaborated with project partners in Canada to develop and deliver Canadian standards training.
- ED and Chair were interviewed by the Washington Post regarding controversy surrounding the National Organic Program and questions of organic integrity.
- Bob Durst, BOD Chair, led a session at the AGM Advanced Training to gather member concerns regarding the NOP Food Safety Directive. The ED and BOD Chair met in Washington, DC with NOP staff and congressmen a month later on the issues of food safety and IOIA's training program. IOIA

carried the membership's concerns to Washington. They also wrote letters to First Lady Michelle Obama regarding the White House garden and to the NOP on food safety. Following the visit to Washington, ED and BOD Chair wrote an article on "*Food Safety and the Organic Inspector*", which was widely circulated. As a result of the visit, IOIA received a formal seat at the NOP trainings for accredited certifying agents. We took that IOIA seat for the first time officially in June in Chicago.



Training

IOIA ED, Chair, and Montana Senators Baucus and Tester

IOIA training continues to increase in value and global recognition. IOIA again expanded both global reach and the diversity of types of training and languages. Training revenue was increased in 2009 in spite of a global economic slump. For the first time in a decade, IOIA held fewer training events and trained fewer people. The primary factor was the decrease in the number of cosponsor-managed trainings in countries where cosponsors pay the lowest rate. Even IOIA's subsidized fee rate can be a barrier in many regions. Many institutional cosponsors such as state organic programs and universities on fixed budgets also cancelled trainings. The temporary slowdown in scheduling largely rebounded after the first half of the year. However, if IOIA will continue to meet the global demand for quality inspection training, additional funding sources must be sought.

Languages included English, Spanish, French, Japanese, and Korean.

In the most ambitious training project in IOIA history, we provided consistent and widely accessible **Canadian Organic Standards** training in collaboration with OTA in Canada, Canadian Organic Growers (COG), and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). From the time notification of funding arrived during the first week in January to completion on March 31, IOIA developed the curriculum, trained trainers, and led eight 2-day workshops for inspectors and certifiers. Project partners led another 39 trainings for processors and farmers. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program contributed funds. Nearly 700 people total were trained in less than three months in an effort to ensure comprehensive and consistent training across the organic sector in advance of the July 1 implementation date for the new standards. IOIA training staff in Canada deserve special acknowledgement: Elizabeth Dacombe, Margaret Dickson, Janine Gibson, Garry Lean, Kelly Monaghan, Lisa Pierce, and Monique Scholz. Several other IOIA members developed materials. Also, IOIA's supporting certification agency members stepped up to support the project. Without these people and organizations, this project could not have happened. A positive and direct relationship was established with the CFIA office as a benefit of the project. Another benefit that IOIA received was the copyright on the certifier/inspector training materials.

IOIA received recognition from the Korean government as one of three approved training bodies to provide processing inspection training in Korea. **Thank you** to IOIA Trainer Isidor Yu for facilitating this process.

Sacha Draine, IOIA International Training Services, visited FiBL in Switzerland on behalf of IOIA. IOIA and FiBL are exploring ways that we can collaborate effectively.

Advanced Training included collaborations between IOIA and other institutions to provide joint training:

- ▶ With FiBL of Switzerland to provide EU training for the new European regulations, implemented Jan 1, 2009.
- ▶ With IBD Certifications of Brazil to provide the first EcoSocial Inspection Training in the U.S.

- ▶ With OTA in Canada and OTA to provide the first IOIA training ever at All Things Organic™. IOIA delivered two days of comprehensive training on the new Canadian standards, the same week that the historic Canadian-US equivalency agreement was signed in Chicago.
- ▶ With Demeter Association to provide a second IOIA/Demeter biodynamic inspector training.

IOIA continues to invest in curriculum development. **Basic Livestock and Processing Courses** were updated, following the model of the **Basic Crop** course. A project to adapt all three basic courses to the Canadian standards was initiated, with completion early in 2010. **Livestock** was completed in 2009.

The first IOIA webinar in September on the NOP Crop standards went through a trial run using the new GANC website with a resounding success. IOIA staff, BOD, and Trainers have begun training to utilize the features of the site. The site has the capacity to train up to 25 participants at a time. IOIA can choose to add the feature of video-conferencing or increase number of participants as needed at a later date.

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. Most of these occur in the U.S. **Cosponsor-Managed trainings** depend much more heavily on cosponsors, which handle most of the administrative and logistical workload. **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.

IOIA and Washington State University collaborated to provide training in Washington for a group of 11 Norman Borlaug fellowship recipients from **Africa**. This was the second step to provide training in Africa. The first step in Oregon in 2008 was the inclusion of several fellows in the basic crop training. Plans are underway for a certification/inspection workshop in Ghana in 2010 with more training developments to follow. Training to date has been funded by the USDA.

Participants in basic courses continue to come from all areas of the organic industry. IOIA provided in-house training to two certification agencies in 2009. IOIA continues to offer agricultural monitor training to pipeline companies on how to maintain organic integrity when crossing organic farms in the Midwest US (three in 2009). About 25 percent of the participants are 'non-inspectors'.

IOIA continues to collaborate with Assiniboine Community College in Manitoba to offer basic inspection courses. In 2009, ACC tried IOIA's usual 4.5 day format with their courses, a departure after many years of providing distance learning. IOIA and ACC have scheduled Crop, Livestock, and Processing courses in 2010, all to the Canadian standards.

Trainings over the past year included:

■ IOIA-Managed Trainings

- ▶ Montreal, Quebec – Advanced
- ▶ Pennsylvania – Basic Crop and Processing
- ▶ Chicago – Canadian Organic Standards
- ▶ Wisconsin – Basic Crop and Livestock
- ▶ Massachusetts – Advanced (EcoSocial)
- ▶ California - Basic Crop and Processing; Advanced (Biodynamic)

■ Co-sponsor Managed Trainings

- ▶ Crop – Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Washington
- ▶ Livestock -Korea



The field trip - an essential aspect of basic training.

- ▶ Processing–Japan, Korea
- ▶ Advanced – California

IOIA Trainings in 2009		
Type of Course	Number of Events	Number of participants
Basic Crop	6	93
Livestock	2	38
Basic Processing	4	68
Advanced	4	67
Canadian Organic Standards	9	142
Other	5	91

FINANCES

Details of the 2009 financial reports will be presented by the Treasurer at the AGM. Key aspects:

- The Board is pleased to announce that IOIA ended the year with the most positive financial position in its history. This is largely due to increased value of the IOIA training program. In spite of a global economic slump and a lower number of training events, IOIA training revenue increased. At the same time, many nonprofits struggled with cash flow. Cash reserve was increased for the third consecutive year. (See Balance Sheet for details.)
- The 2009 budget was proactive with significant line item amounts for items such as the Training Institute and Curriculum. For the first time, IOIA established a budget for BOD retreat so that the budget would be available if a retreat was deemed necessary. The BOD's decision not to meet for an in-person retreat in 2009 contributed to the positive bottom line.
- The BOD continues to implement measures of increased financial oversight. New IRS reporting requirements mandate greater BOD oversight. IOIA continues to implement new policies as required, such as the Whistleblower Policy adopted in 2009.
- No due increases this year.
- A balanced budget was presented at the AGM in Montreal.

COMMITTEES

BOD Liaisons were appointed for all committees. 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. Term Limits for Committee Chairs of no more than 6 consecutive years, originally scheduled to be complete by the 2009 AGM, is still in the implementation phase.

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).

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

The committee reviewed two requests for exceptions to the IOIA Inspector Membership criteria. The Membership Committee also serves as the Nominations Committee, a formidable task.

- **Nominations Committee** – a full slate of candidates has been prepared for this year’s election.
- **Scholarship** –Margaret Weigelt, Chair
 - Awarded the Andrew Rutherford Scholarship and the Organic Community Initiative Scholarship (OCIS) in 2009.
 - IOIA’s 2009 OCIS recipient received a special travel award of \$1000, funded by OCIS Scholarship Travel donations from IOIA members.
- **Bylaws** – Arthur Harvey, Chair
No bylaws amendments or additions were proposed in 2009.
- **Accreditation and Accreditation Review Panel (ARP)** –In 2009, the Accreditation Committee and Accreditation Review Panel were combined. Leanne McCormick resigned as Chair of both at the end of 2009 after serving for two years. The position of Chair is currently open. **Thank you**, Leanne.
 - **Three (3) Renewals in 2009**
- **Canadian Committee** – **Thank you** to outgoing Chair, Janine Gibson, who filled that position since 1995. In 2009, she stepped down and Bill Barkley took over as Chair. IOIA became a sponsor of the Guelph Organic Conference in 2008 and continues to sponsor that conference. IOIA’s ED, Monique Scholz, and Garry Lean led a workshop at the Conference on organic inspection. Several Canadian members helped staff the booth.
- **Communications and Marketing** – Bob Howe, Chair, has recommended that the committee be disbanded.
- **Ethics** – No complaints filed.
- **Ad hoc Logo Design Committee** – Priscilla Reimer (Chair), Fred Ehlert, and Diane Cooner took on the task of coordinating the effort to develop a new logo. **Thank you!**

STAFF

Margaret Scoles continues as Executive Director.

The BOD established a precedent in committing to providing a health benefit to employees, to begin in 2010. A Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) plan will allow maximum control of the budgeted amount while providing a modest but significant employee benefit for all employees.

Another precedent, 2009 was the first year for many years with no staff turn-over. IOIA benefits from a stable staff, many of whom work part-time. Part-time staff creates maximum flexibility in scheduling and allows IOIA to expand without adding staff.

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

- Rita Wenzel, IOIA’s Office Manager, manages 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. During 2009, she completed a significant upgrade to the IOIA website and assisted the Logo Committee in coordinating a new logo design for IOIA.

- Sacha Draine, International Training Services, handles the administrative duties for cosponsor-managed trainings outside the U.S.
- Teri Lindberg, US Training Services, coordinates trainings in the U.S.
- 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.



Margaret



Rita



Lynell



Sacha



Teri



Gordon



Diane

IOIA BOARD

2009 Activity summary

Newly elected members included Eric Feutz and Julio Perez (1st Alternate). Eric immediately stepped into the difficult position of Secretary and has served with great efficiency.

Outgoing members included Monique Scholz (Secretary) -2 years. **Thank you**, for your dedication, time and energy, especially in the efforts to host the 2009 AGM.

The BOD met in-person in Montreal and 11 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 2009, the BOD Policy Manual was updated on an ongoing basis. A policy on IOIA Representation on non-IOIA Committee was adopted.

2010 will be a busy year for the Board of Directors. Key areas:

- ▶ Make Training Institute a reality.

- ▶ Make IOIA Accreditation a meaningful and recognized credential in the organic sector.
- ▶ Strengthen working relationships with certifiers and encourage more dialogue between inspectors and certifiers.
- ▶ Improve budgeting process, with more budget planning and oversight.
- ▶ Develop a plan to increase organizational capacity of IOIA.
- ▶ Finalize the new IOIA brochure and launch a fundraising program.
- ▶ Adopt new IOIA Logo.
- ▶ Develop CEO Transition Plan.
- ▶ Consider best international structure. Improve outreach to international members and cosponsors, especially in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.
- ▶ Continuing the work of BOD Alternates Lidia Girón and Julio Perez on a Latin American Plan for IOIA.

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