

The

Inspectors' Report

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Notes from The Chair

By Brian Magaro

Prior to the Board of Directors (BOD) retreat in October many members had suggested topics for discussion and issues of concern that they wished the Board to address. The BOD took these offerings very seriously and gave them hours of attention. The results of our discussions can be found in the minutes from the retreat. Please visit your website (www.ioia.net). One topic of discussion brought to the table was that many inspectors feel that IOIA is "creating" too many new inspectors and in so doing creating an imbalance between inspectors and inspections. The perception that follows then is that the certifiers can dangle the proverbial carrot and then choose from the lowest bidders for inspections. I do know that there are certainly more inspectors in my neck of the woods than there were 5, 4 or even 3 years ago. This has not caused me such a hardship as it has made me a more focused inspector. It has caused me to ask more questions of the certifiers; form stronger relationships with fellow inspectors whom I can turn to for support and technical advice; be more conscious of my performance; seek out continuing education; and most of all to appreciate the benefit of IOIA as an inspector association. So, how do you and I dispel this area of concern? Let us first look at how IOIA survives. IOIA is a membership-based organization. In most cases, a membership-based organization is supported by the membership. That is not so at the moment for IOIA. IOIA is supported by membership dues and by revenue received from trainings. The revenue from trainings now offsets the imbalance between dues received and actual membership costs. If you want there to be a [see Notes, page 4]

¡PURA VIDA! AGM Set for March 13 in Costa Rica

Don't spend all your money and savings on this coming Christmas! Give your family a gift certificate for your March 2004 vacations, because IOIA is returning to Costa Rica for our 2004 Annual General Membership Meeting on March 13.

AGM issues will include election of 3 Board members and 2 alternates, discussion of the role of alternate Board members, exploring how IOIA can best interface with certification agencies, membership dues, membership services, and much more. If you are interested in standing as a candidate for the Board, please contact Chris Kidwell, Chair of the Nominations Committee (contact info on page 6).

Trainings that are scheduled around the 2004 AGM will include an Advanced Organic Inspector Training on March 11-12; Spanish language Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training on March 15-18; and a still tentative opportunity for experienced inspectors will be offered on the morning of March 14 in Spanish language.

Advanced training topics will include Organic Fiber Processing with **Fred Ehlert** and Food Processing inspection issues (sanitation, chlorine, boiler additives, food contact surfaces) with **David Gould**. Training will be in English language, with accommodation for Spanish speakers. Fred Ehlert is an IOIA member with experience inspecting for a variety of certification agencies and a particular interest in the developing fiber processing industry, including extensive self-education on the topic. David Gould received his formal education in life sciences from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, with concentrations in biochemistry, microbiology, nutrition and food science. Prior to his engrossment with the world of organic certification he worked on an organic farm, was an educator, and owned a small organic processing operation. His work in the organic sector has and continues to include inspection, certification, policy and standards formation, technical reviews, and inspector training. Two concurrent sessions are being arranged during the course to accommodate Spanish speakers with further classroom training in advanced coffee audit and English speakers with a tour of local organic coffee processing. Inspectors visiting Costa Rica for the first time are encouraged to plan a few days for sightseeing before or after the event. Passports are recommended.

All events are scheduled at the Hotel Villas Zurqui near San Jose. IOIA plans to continue the 2-year old tradition of providing lunch and dinner on the day of the AGM to all participating IOIA members. "Salsa" music and dancing are planned after the AGM. Lodging is available at a nominal fee to encourage participation by all IOIA members, whether or not attending the IOIA training (this is the first time IOIA has returned to Costa Rica since 1995). Families and spouses are welcome, but please contact the IOIA office well in advance to reserve a family room. Other hotel accommodations ranging from luxury to modest are available 10 minutes from the Hotel.

Hotel Villas Zurqui is a small and modest hotel with accommodations for about 60 people. IOIA will likely have exclusive use. It is located in the Central Valley in the rural outskirts of San Jose, about 45 minutes from the San Jose airport (\$10- \$20 by cab or shared shuttle) and 15 [see AGM, page 5]

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And More!

In Brief...

Special Offers

IOIA offers again for 2004 special Email subscriptions for the *Non-GMO Source* (\$25 emailed directly from the publisher) and *The Organic Standard* (\$5/year, emailed directly from IOIA office). These offers are through special arrangements with the publishers. Please contact the IOIA office for more details. If you are a current subscriber to either publication, you will receive an Email invoice. This offer is provided only to Inspector Members or Supporting Individual Members who plan to become Inspectors. Not available to supporting businesses, organizations, or certification agencies.

Meatrix Says It All

Heard of the Meatrix yet? The Meatrix is a two-minute Flash animation that spoofs the popular *Matrix* movies. But instead of Keanu Reeves, the Meatrix stars a young pig, Leo, who lives on a pleasant family farm...he thinks. Leo is approached by a wise and mysterious cow, Moopheus, who shows Leo the truth about modern farming -- the truth about the Meatrix!

The film describes the problems with factory farming. See it at: <http://www.themeatrix.com>

It also offers viewers a solution – the final page directs viewers to the *Eat Well Guide*, a national online directory of sustainably-raised meat, which is available at www.eatwellguide.org

From The Forum

Those little stickers on loose fruits and vegetables have valuable information on them.

Besides providing the store's cash registers and computers with product ID and price information, these stickers can tell you:

- Labels with four digits indicate conventionally grown food.
- Labels with five digits, starting with an 8, indicate that the food is genetically modified.
- Labels with 5 digits, starting with a 9, indicate that the food is organically grown.

Membership Updates

Membership Directory corrections are too numerous to print in this issue. The 2004 Membership Directory will be mailed to all paid up members in January, unless you opted not to receive it. The cost of the Directory is included as a membership service for all supporting members as part of IOIA dues. Inspector members must pay \$12.50 to receive a hard copy.

Database News

We are hard at work on the new IOIA Master Database, which will be used to create the on-line Member Directory, also by mid-January. All IOIA inspector or apprentice inspector members have been emailed passwords to access the database. Thank you to everyone who has helped update your information!

If you have questions or have not received a password or if you've encountered difficulties, please contact Phoebe at the IOIA office (phoebe@rangeweb.net).

Welcome New Members:

Gordon Bardarson (Manitoba, CANADA)
Ramona Belden (Laramie, WY)
Sona Desai (Burlington, VT)
Slade Franklin (Cheyenne, WY)
Jerry Fry (Willow Springs, MO)
Jacqueline Fulcomer (Fredonia, WI)
Rueven Grossman (Tualatin, OR)
Kevin Haas (Cheyenne, WY)
Jennifer Hall (Seattle, WA)
Anna Hauser (Athens, GA)
Kelly Havely (Wheatland, WY)
Gregory Hunt (Hunting Beach, CA)
Don Lareau (Paonia, CO)
Cheryl Laxton (British Columbia, CANADA)
Gregory Michaud (Fort Collins, CO)
Gregory Paul Parks (Salem, OR)
Rowdy Petsch (Meriden, WY)
P. Mike Quinn (Cheyenne, WY)
Oscar Somasco (British Columbia, CANADA)
Mathew Sebastian (Kerala, INDIA)
Cory Scott-Kubiak (Bend, OR)
Sandra K. Snider (Powell, WY)
Ken Stoner (Saskatchewan, CANADA)
Linda D. Stratton (Cheyenne, WY)
Dan Van Steenhuyse (Vinton, IA)
Karen Werner (Douglas, WY)

INSPECTORS:

Duncan Cox (West Roxbury, MA)

Dan Campbell

We are sad to announce the passing of Dan Campbell, 49, on August 23, 2003, following an auto accident. Dan worked in Lewiston, Idaho for the Idaho State Department of Agriculture as a Senior Agriculture Investigator and became a member of IOIA in 2002. For those who worked with Dan, and for those who knew him, his good humor and true friendship will be missed immensely.

Mr. Hideo Yoshihara

Hideo Yoshihara, 63, died on Sept. 9, 2003 during an inspection trip. The cause of his death was a heart attack. He received IOIA/JOIA training in 1999 and 2000. Yoshihara was a graduate of Tokyo Agricultural University and he'd worked in a farm chemical company after graduating. Yoko Mizuno, of IOIA's sister organization JOIA, remembers him saying that he became an organic inspector to compensate for what he'd done in the past (selling farm chemicals) and dedicated himself to promoting organic farming. "He was liked by all generations and he was really a sweet and knowledgeable person," said Mizuno. "The great thing was he did not act as if he knew so much! He was a real modest person." He is survived by his wife, a son and daughter.

IOIA Board of Directors

Brian Magaro.....Chair
John Foster.....Vice Chair
Jack Reams.....Treasurer
Ann Baier.....Secretary
Dag Falck.....Member-At-Large
Luis Brenes.....Board Member
Garry Lean.....Board Member
Chris Kidwell.....Alternate
Doug Crabtree.....Alternate
Garth Kahl.....Alternate

THE INSPECTORS' REPORT is the newsletter of the Independent Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA). IOIA is a 501 (c)(3) educational organization, whose 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. Editorial Staff: Diane Cooner, Box 1259, Guerneville, CA 95446 USA. Phone/fax 707-869-3017, amani@sonic.net

Deadlines are Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1. Relevant articles are welcomed. We strive for accuracy, but the Editor and IOIA cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions.

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Upcoming Trainings

Gainesville Florida IOIA and the Florida Organic Growers (FOG) will co-sponsor Basic Organic Process Inspector training from January 15-18, and Basic Organic Farm Inspector training from January 19-22. The IOIA/FOG trainings will be followed by the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSWAG) conference that includes farm tours and technical sessions. (www.ssawg.org) Both inspector trainings and the SSAWG conference will be held at the Paramount Resort and Conference Center located in Gainesville, Florida. The Basic Farm training will include a mock inspection at a local organic mixed vegetable operation. Process training will include a field trip and discussion of organic control points and risk assessment in simple and complex operations with reference to the USDA organic standards. For more information and registration details please contact Carolyn at the Florida Organic Growers office at 352-377-0133 or 352-377-6345 or fogoffice@aol.com

Tokyo, JAPAN IOIA will co-sponsor Japanese language Basic Farm Inspector Training with the Japan Organic Inspectors Association (JOIA) to be held in Tokyo, JAPAN, **Jan 09-11** and Basic Process Inspector Training **Feb 28-March 01**. These commuting courses will use JAS as standard reference and be instructed in Japanese. JOIA will handle registration. For more information, contact JOIA at mutsumi.sakuyoshi@nifty.com or +81-422-56-6651 or +81-422-56-6651 (fax).

Naramata, BC, CANADA Certified Organic Association of British Columbia (COABC) and IOIA will co-sponsor Basic Farm Inspector Training (**February 24-27**) and Advanced Training (**March 1-2**). Trainings will be held in conjunction with the COABC conference held **February 28 and 29**, and training participants are encouraged to attend sessions at the conference. The Farm Inspector training will have a unique regional focus and use provincial COABC standards as primary reference while still covering the basic IOIA curriculum including organic farm inspection protocols, investigative skills, risk assessment, auditing farm yields, use of approved materials, report writing and on-farm processing. The Basic training will include a mock inspection to a local orchard, vineyard or greenhouse. Advanced Training will be responsive to needs of provincial inspectors and certifiers. Potential topics include inspector ISO compliance requirements, food safety, conducting label reviews, advanced auditing and understanding NOP requirements for Canadian exporters. Interested applicants please contact Kristen Kane at the COABC office (250) 260-4429 or office@certifiedorganic.bc.ca.

COSTA RICA Make plans now! Airfare is still reasonable (hovering around \$500 US roundtrip from most major US cities), training costs are lower to entice members to make the trip. See lead article on page 1 for details. This promises to be a memorable AGM.

Fayetteville, Arkansas IOIA and the National Center for Appropriate Technology, managers of the ATTRA project, will sponsor Basic Farm and Livestock Inspector trainings on April 1-7, 2004 at the Mount Sequoyah Conference Center, in Fayetteville, Arkansas. For information or application forms, contact the IOIA office or the IOIA website at www.ioia.net. For more information about the location, visit www.mountsequoyah.org, but please do not contact Mount Sequoyah directly for reservations.



Future Trainings: Watch upcoming IOIA newsletters and the website for details as other trainings develop.

IOIA Scholarships Available for Organic Inspector Training

IOIA accepts applications for the annual **Andrew Rutherford Scholarship Award**, which provides full tuition for an IOIA-sponsored organic inspector training course during the following year.

Both prospective and experienced inspectors are eligible to apply for the Rutherford Scholarship. It is awarded to an individual on the basis of need and potential as judged by the IOIA Scholarship Committee. Applicants can choose to attend any IOIA-sponsored training. The Scholarship pays for tuition, room and board but does not cover transportation or other expenses.

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

IOIA also offers the annual **Organic Community Initiative Scholarship**, which provides full tuition for an IOIA-sponsored basic organic inspector training during the following year. It is awarded to an individual on the basis of need and their potential to have a positive impact on their regional organic community. The Organic Community Initiative Scholarship is only open to applicants from **outside of the US or Canada**. Applicants can choose to attend any basic IOIA-sponsored training. The Scholarship pays for tuition, room and board but does not cover transportation or other expenses.

For application materials and information on IOIA training programs, contact Margaret Scoles, IOIA Executive Director/Training Manager, IOIA, P.O. Box 6, Broadus, MT 59317-0006, Email ioia@ioia.net, or visit www.ioia.net to download application forms. The deadline for returning Scholarship applications is November 1. Scholarship recipients are notified by December 15.

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balance between inspectors and inspections, then you need to begin with yourself. Through **your** support, IOIA membership can begin carrying the actual cost of the membership services. Then the revenue from trainings can be reinvested into new curriculum development and improving the quality of IOIA's continuing education. That process is in its development stages as you read.

By now all members have received the mailing for membership renewal and many have paid their dues. I wish to speak about the way dues and your support to IOIA has changed. In the information you received with your renewal packet, you have seen that the dues were raised this year to begin to reflect that actual cost of your membership. The baseline dues are listed as \$100.00 with several options to bring the total support to IOIA close to or better than the actual cost of membership, which is \$177.00. Please review the options that the BOD presented to you. If you cannot afford to offer the \$2.00 per inspection in 2003 self-assessment, consider an additional donation, and be creative. Look at the other options - enlist another inspector who is not currently a member, or seek out a new supporting member. There are many ways to close the gap and assist in the shift that needs to happen to make IOIA stronger. If you have already paid your dues, please reread the letter that was included in the mailing and think about continued support in any way that maintains your comfort level. This organization is based on one key factor, **you**.

As I hope you will agree, the BOD, in whom you have placed your trust has chosen a path to return the opportunity of this trust to all members in support of your organization, IOIA. We feel that, if taken to heart, the "dues" proposal will not only sustain IOIA but will expand and strengthen the membership base and the organization.

As chair, I look forward to your continued dialog with the BOD in regard to any issue that you have need to voice or ideas that you have that you feel will help in strengthening the direction of IOIA.

I hope your winter is one of inspiration and personal enrichment. 🌴

Montana Conference a Hit!

Over 120 people attended the first ever, state-wide Montana Organic Conference, in Great Falls on Dec. 5. IOIA and AERO (Alternative Energy Resources Organization) collaborated to organize the event, with the assistance of Event Coordinator Jill Davies. The event was declared a resounding success.

Dr. Sergei Smirenski, renowned ornithologist and conservationist and Director of the Muriaviovka Park for Sustainable Land Use, kicked off the event with a keynote on Dec. 4. His appearance was cosponsored by the Conference and Montana Audubon Society.

The conference included plenary sessions with **Dr. Stephen Jones** and **Dr. Jill Clapperton**. Dr. Jones, from Washington State University, is recognized for his expertise as a wheat breeder, as well as his outspoken views on intellectual property rights concerns and defending the public interest at land grant universities. His presentation included updates on his perennial wheat breeding project. Dr. Clapperton, an ag researcher from Lethbridge, Alberta, spoke on soil health, soil life, and the impact of rotations and tillage. Attendees selected from a wide variety of workshops, including Green Manures (panel of researchers and farmers), Organic Vegetable Production, and Organic Livestock Health Issues (**Dr. Joe Snyder, Oregon**). Also of note was an all-Montana organic lunch, a trade show, and a "Buyers' Forum" with opportunities promoting the abundance and diversity of Montana's organic products.

Doug Crabtree, IOIA member and current Program Manager of the MDA Organic Certification Program, assisted Margaret Scoles of IOIA in presenting a 2-hr session on "Transitioning to Organic Agriculture". During that workshop, an organizational meeting was held for the embryonic and as-yet-unnamed Montana organic organization. Future events are uncertain, but the positive evaluation of attendees indicates that there will likely be more conferences.

Scoles and Crabtree were also co-presenters at the NRCS/Extension/Producer training on Dec. 3-4 preceding the conference. AERO sponsored this conference, funded partially by OFRF grant funds. IOIA's

promotional display and resource sale were featured at both events. IOIA benefited financially from speaker honorariums and resource sales at the events. All four of the IOIA members from Montana were active volunteers for this event (Rob Knotts and Bob Herdegen, in addition to Crabtree and Scoles). Dag Falck, IOIA member, attended on behalf of Nature's Path as an exhibitor at the trade show.

AGM from page 1 🌴🌴🌴

minutes from downtown San Jose. It is on the road to Braulio Carrillo National Park, approximately 1,400 meters above sea level. Weather should be pleasant in March, spring-like warm with sunny days, no rain, and cool evenings. The entire property is about 2 acres with a restaurant and bar. Lunches will be served outdoors on the "rancho" (like a roofed terrace or patio). Other meals will be served indoors in the restaurant. Lodging will be in small chalets, with room for 1 to 3 persons each, separated by gardens. Lodging options will vary in price. Each room has a phone but phone lines for the entire facility are limited (3). Internet access will be provided for 2 hours each evening.

Costa Rica is known for its warm hospitality for both Spanish and non-Spanish speakers. From San Jose, the capital city of Costa Rica, there are many tour choices operated as one-day-excursions. Enjoy an array of activities, from mountain biking, golfing, and deep-sea fishing to snorkeling, rafting, and diving. The Yellowstones and Yosemites of Costa Rica--the lure for 90% of all visitors to the national park system--are Manuel Antonio, with its beautiful beaches; Braulio Carrillo, with its rainforest beside a highway; Tortuguero, a watery, forested world teeming with wildlife; Irazú, where on a clear day you can see both the Caribbean and the Pacific; and Poás, where you can peer into a steaming crater and see the earth's crust being rearranged.

Cost of the advanced training will be around \$500 per person, including meals and lodging, depending on lodging option selected. Training fees are reduced to encourage attendance and help balance the higher cost of airfare for most IOIA members. **Deadline to apply is February 13.** Further details, including information on tourist options while in Costa Rica, and training applications are available from the IOIA website. We hope to see you there!



Notes from the ED

By Margaret Scoles

IOIA Staff News: Good News...No changes expected! Lisa Pierce will continue as Regional Training Manager for 2004, on a part-time contract. She participated in the BOD retreat in Broadus and assisted at the Oregon training to complete her training. Since June, she has been fully responsible for regional trainings, which has greatly reduced the training-related workload in the IOIA office. Phoebe Amsden will continue as Office Assistant, likely increasing her hours slightly in 2004. She assists both the main IOIA and Canadian Regional Training offices. Diane Cooner will continue as Newsletter Editor and Website Manager. I plan to enjoy no substantial staffing changes for a bit.

Autumn Activities: Your ED has been on the road a lot, starting with the trip to Expo East in early September, followed by the Wyoming training later that month, then the Oregon training (our largest training this year) in November. I'm thankful the BOD came to Broadus for the retreat in October. The Curriculum and Program Subcommittee (CAPS) work on Training was a major focus of the Oregon training. The Oregon Tilth Annual Meeting occurred at the same location.

Dues Deadline Dec. 1: Moving the payment deadline from Jan. 1 to Dec. 1 helped reduce stress somewhat for the IOIA office. Most of our members have paid up. We hoped to avoid the chronic end-of-the-year crunch.

Database Update: The updated 2004 IOIA Membership Directory is well underway. Phoebe has been working diligently to update member data, send out passwords, and encourage members to update their own directory entries electronically. Thank you to everyone who gave it a try! Please contact us if you have tried but been unsuccessful. We hope to have the hard copy directories published by mid-January and mailed out to the members with the pre-AGM packet, as usual. The 'in-progress' On-Line Directory will be available from our website as soon as it is finalized (probably 2 weeks earlier than the hard copies). With so many other changes underway, we kept the appearance and format of the on-line directory much the same. The new master database work is progressing in tandem with this Directory work so that we hope to switch over in early 2004. Phoebe is in charge of both projects.

Bylaws Amendment: Deadline to vote was Dec. 20. We need 68 votes to reach the needed quorum for bylaws change; as of Dec. 10, we have about half that many. As soon as we have the results of this ballot, we will be able to decide the appropriate category for some of our members who are currently waiting anxiously in 'supporting-individual-member' limbo but who would like to be listed as inspector members in the next Directory. If we fail to reach a quorum, the bylaws will remain unchanged.

Accreditation Deadline: Next deadline is March 1. Please check your renewal dates! Accreditation requires, among other criteria, a minimum of 2 years of inspection experience. The IOIA Accreditation Program is posted on the website.

Guelph Conference, Jan 24-25: IOIA is a cosponsor again this year for the Guelph Conference. Members of the Canadian Committee will staff an IOIA educational table display. We have also been asked to outline the organic inspector's perspective and to describe the training that IOIA provides at a workshop on informal/non-accredited educational opportunities. Individuals from various sectors of the organic industry will speak briefly about what their company/organization does, and what employment opportunities exist within their sector - current & projected.

BOD in Broadus, October 18-21: We enjoyed balmy fall weather during the Board's stay. As ED, I was impressed to see the ongoing maturation of the relatively new Board of Directors in just 3 days of meetings (no, I do not mean that their hair all turned gray over the meeting!). This meeting was indispensable to IOIA. Brian Magaro as Chair used every Board member as a resource person to maximize the effectiveness of the group. IOIA rented a house for the event to provide inexpensive lodging and added one motel room for the overflow. We all walked daily to the local Judges Chambers' restaurant for meals. The Board prepared their own breakfasts together so they had lots of opportunity to become better acquainted. Highlights outside of the meeting were a quick trip out of town to watch a prairie sunset, one evening of cowboy poetry with local rancher/poet Marie Gotfredson Scoville, failing miserably in our attempt to untie 'the Human Knot', and watching Phoebe's children/friends break a birthday piñata. The selection of Broadus as a location kept the Retreat less expensive than urban locations, helped reduce my travel, and allowed Board members to see the IOIA office. Some of the Board members ended their stay in Broadus with a trip to our ranch. See page 16 for highlights of the Retreat.

What are our Members Saying and Doing about the Dues Increase?

It is too early to draw hard conclusions on the final impact. Dues were due Dec. 1 (**Reminder: If you haven't paid yet, please do!**)

Why the Dues Increase: This was explained in the letter to the members and again in the 'Notes from the Chair'. Last year's internal audit of IOIA revealed to the members the wide disparity between membership income and membership expenses. This year's projected shortfall made a dues increase more urgent. It was due mostly to unexpected shortfall on the Revenue side (poor enrollment in several of our inspector trainings and no increase in our international Regional Trainings). Neither of these situations were expected, based on our recent history.

How Have Our Members Opted to Pay Dues this Year? About 30% are paying the additional \$12.50 for the Newsletter and nearly that many the additional \$12.50 for the Membership Directory. To date, 20 members paid the per-inspection assessment, and others have pledged to send it in separately, after their initial dues were paid. Total income from these assessment fees to date is about \$1500 and dues donations with renewals another \$1500. Over half of the invoiced 2004 dues have been collected. Revenue from assessment fees, hard copy newsletter and/or directory, and dues donations, plus the \$25 dues increase for those paying to date, have brought in a net increase of about \$7000. This indicates a strong trend. The remainder of the dues yet to be paid will tell the final story. We anticipate a positive bottom line for the year. IOIA members are to be congratulated on responding! This 'cafeteria' method is also helping us gather data on the number of inspections (all efforts to do so in the past were woefully unsuccessful) and to get an idea of how members prefer to pay dues and what services they value.

Comments and Questions? Please plan to be at the AGM in Costa Rica. The dues amount for next year will surely be based partly on the information and comments we gather this year. If you have a thought, please send your comments to a Board member or to me!

Committee Reports

Accreditation: Chair Jake Lewin, jake@sasquatch.com 831-469-3964, Liaison John Foster 503-474-2824, john@onlinemac.com Members: Linda Kaner, John Foster, Alex Hanley, Margaret Scoles. **Jake**

Lewin has recently taken the helm as chair of the accreditation committee. We also wish to welcome John McKeon of CCOF as our certifier representative on the Accreditation Review Panel (ARP) and Mike Wise as the ARP Chair. Jim Fullmer has stepped down to alternate on the ARP while, Linda Kaner has stepped sideways from the accreditation committee to the ARP. Jake is familiarizing himself with the members and nuts and bolts of the accreditation process. Our two main goals are looking at ways to increase the value to certifiers and inspectors of the accredited inspector status and ensuring that the accreditation process is on track. The committee would like your input and participation. If you have any thoughts on inspector accreditation or would like to be drafted into service please contact Jake Lewin.

Business Plan: Ad Hoc, Chair: Jack Reams, marlene_reams@telus.net 604-858-9815. Liaison Brian Magaro, 717-732-7940, magarob@aol.com The business plan is currently being developed as an internal document for presentation to the annual meeting. It contains proposals to enhance the marketing of IOIA and its potential to new and old members alike. The plan also includes working with the Communications Committee to enhance IOIA's role in becoming an expanded educational facilitator to meet the needs of varied, distinct audiences in the organic industry.

Bylaws: Chair, Arthur Harvey, 207-388-2860, arthurharvey@yahoo.com Liaison Garry Lean, 705-887-5230 garrylean@sympatico.ca Only one formal proposal has come before the bylaws committee during the past year: We approved the amendment proposed by the Membership Committee that is now being voted upon. It should be noted, however, that if the board approves the proposed committee policies (which came from Joe Montecalvo and

myself), then I will be term-limited out of this job pretty soon.

Canadian Committee: Co-chairs Jim Hudson, judson@sk.sympatico.ca 306-543-0662, Rochelle Eisen, 250-494-7980, rare@vip.net Liaison Dag Falck dfalck@junction.net, 250-379-2614.

Message from Janine Gibson, past Canadian Committee Chair: On behalf of the more than 50 IOIA Canadian members I wish to **thank Rochelle** both for her tireless work on the Canadian Standard but also for her efforts co-chairing the Canadian Committee of IOIA. **Thanks also to Jim Hudson**, who has been co-chair, for they are both stepping down. Canadian Inspectors, if any of you would like the opportunity to aid communication between Canadian inspector members, and to help represent IOIA in the Canadian Organic sector as Chair of the IOIA Canadian Committee, please contact Janine at 204-434-6018 or janine@mts.net. For further Canadian news, please see page 10.

Communications: Chair Bob Howe, earthorganic@aol.com 845-657-9592. Liaison Brian Magaro (see Business Plan). Nothing to report.

Compensation/Working Conditions: Chair: Eric Feutz, 573-256-7643, brandt_01@email.msn.com Liaison Doug Crabtree dcrabtree@state.mt.us 406-444-9421 No report submitted.

Editorial Review: Chair Joe Montecalvo, montecalvo@aol.com 805-772-3574, Liaison Dag Falck (see Canadian Committee). Ongoing. Joe reports he has been very busy updating his sanitation book and Introduction to Food Science course books. The second edition will replace the books that Joe presently has allowed IOIA to use and sell during processing trainings.

Joe also provided IOIA a curriculum template for possible IOIA inspector course trainings in order to enhance the trainings where inspectors may earn continuing education credits. However, his proposals are being reviewed by the Training committee which may report on this at a later date.

Ethics: Chair Joyce Ford, jford@hbc.com Liaison: Brian Magaro (see Business Plan). Chair Joyce reports no changes and no complaints.

Finance: Chair/Liaison: Jack Reams, see Business Plan. No report submitted.

Fundraising: Chair Diane Cooner, 707-869-3017, amani@sonic.net Liaison Jack Reams, see Finance. A fundraising

packet has been developed using a cover letter, our revamped brochure and business card, to target businesses and organizations as supporting members. Diane attended a fundraising seminar and many good ideas that she will start to implement after the first of the year.

Latin American: Chair Lidia Gaivironsky, 54114 503-3106, gaivi@sion.com Liaison Luis Brenes, lbrenes@racsa.co.cr +506-226-1681. Lidia continues to answer messages from Latinamerican people, to translate press releases, to send resources for the website. No specific activity during this quarter.

Membership: Chair Chris Kidwell 530-628-4560, ckidwell@tcoek12.org, Liaison John Foster (see Accreditation). The Nominations Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Membership Committee, has begun working on assembling a slate of candidates for the board of directors and the alternate board member positions open for the 2004 election. There are three BOD seats and two alternate seats up for election. A minimum of two candidates for each board and alternate seat is required. **If you are interested in serving on the board, or would like to nominate someone, contact Chris.**

Regional Training Oversight: Chair Harriet Behar, harrieta@mwt.net Liaison Ann Baier, ahbaier@aol.com 831-426-2052. Ongoing, approving trainings and TC's. The RTOC has been busy reviewing regional training proposals, making suggestions and approving trainings as put forth by Lisa after our input. Training Coordinators for these trainings have also been discussed and approved. All of our work is done via email. See listing of upcoming IOIA regional trainings on page 3.

Scholarship: Chair Rochelle Eisen, 250-494-7980, rare@vip.net Liaison Ann Baier, see RTOC. Rochelle plans to step down from this committee following the 2003 selection process.

Training: Chair Janine Gibson, 204-434-6018, Janine@mb.sympatico.ca Liaison Ann Baier, see RTOC. The Training Committee was consulted via email about the formation of the CAPS Committee and no objections or concerns were raised. No additional names have been put forward however if anyone feeling they have training curriculum and programing experience would like to join the CAPS sub-committee, they are welcome to join the effort to keep IOIA training materials and program current and relevant to today's inspection realities. It's time for a new Training Committee Chair. Anyone with facilitation and communication skills to donate toward helping with this team effort is welcome to put their name forward.♣

Has NOP Laid An Egg?

Edited by Diane Cooner

The biggest controversy to yet confront the US National Organic Program is the recent dismissal of an appeal by Massachusetts Independent Certification Inc, (MICI) the certification branch of NOFA-Massachusetts, by a USDA administrative judge over the denial of certification of their client, The Country Hen.

A number of people were contacted for this article, including MICI certification administrator Don Franczyk. Most did not want to be quoted for the record. However, in discussions regarding this case, it appears that proper internal procedures were not followed by the USDA concerning how the appeal was handled. MICI's denial of certification was overturned by the NOP the day after it was issued, before it had been formally received by The Country Hen. The denial was overturned with no consultation by the NOP of MICI, the certifier of record. The NOP, in a written statement, agreed that the applicant's organic system plan for outdoor access was inadequate, yet certification of the operation was ordered by the NOP anyway.

According to MICI, the client came to them seeking certification. There were some issues, not limited to the "access to outdoors" issue. MICI gave the client 3 months to come into compliance. As The Country Hen had already withdrawn from their previous certifier (QAI), they needed "instant" certification, and due to economic circumstance could not wait the 3 months. So they appealed to the NOP. (The national organic rule § 205.680 General covers the Adverse Action Appeal Process, whereby *(c) Persons subject to the Act who believe that they are adversely affected by a noncompliance decision of a certifying agent may appeal such decision to the Administrator, Except, That, when the person is subject to an approved State organic program, the appeal must be made to the State organic program.*) NOP told them to go back to certifier and ask to be denied certification. They did so, and MICI did deny certification, believing that, according to Franczyk, they were 'doing a favor' for their client.

NOP then overrode the denial without any discussion of the matter with the certifier. The certifier appealed to the USDA administrative judge, who ruled that she had no jurisdiction. The appeal to the "Administrator" is considered to be outside of the NOP. The USDA Administrator is above/beyond the NOP program. (Subpart A – Definitions § 205.2 Terms defined. *Administrator. The Administrator for the Agricultural Marketing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, or the representative to whom authority has been delegated to act in the stead of the Administrator.*)

The outcome was that MICI found that they were certifying an operation with approximately 6,000 chickens/house, with 'access to outdoors' being provided via small 'porches' being built on each building. Doug Crabtree, manager of Montana's Organic Program, says "The problem in the 'chicken porches' case may not lie with the process, but with the decision made by the administrator. The USDA may have been convinced by industry that access to outdoors is not 'healthy' for chickens. This may even be true - if the 'organic' producers use the same genetics as their conventional counterparts. An animal bred to be raised in confinement and kept alive with antibiotics is not ideally suited to the free-range lifestyle of a truly organic flock."

However, there should be a very clear process of how that review is conducted (who is involved, panel of independent judges, etc) and a written statement as to why the accredited certifier was overruled. If it becomes the norm that powerful commercial interests can simply run around and either shop for "easier" certifiers or put pressure on the NOP to "make allowances" for them, then the whole system could quickly break-down and integrity lost.

It is important to note that the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) ruled that under the National Organic Program regulation, certifying agents have no right to appeal rulings of the USDA. "That is true, and it is a major shortcoming of the regulation," according to NOSB Certifier rep Jim Riddle. "Certifying agents should have the same rights as all other parties to appeal adverse rulings. If the case goes to civil court, then the larger issue of certifying agent rights under the Organic

Food Production Act and the U.S. Constitution can be addressed."

In any event, MICI found they were forced to certify The Country Hen, who has since quit MICI and is now on their third certifier in as many years. This situation gives the appearance that certifiers are being forced to certify. However, Brian Leahy, Executive Director of CCOF, compared the situation to HUD housing, e.g., if you're in the program you have to accept people. The Country Hen is currently certified by Natural Food Certifiers, who had other compliance issues but cannot fight USDA due to financial constraints. Still, this situation raises serious questions about the rights of certifying agents to uphold the organic standards, especially on issues such as outdoor access, access to pasture, and commercial availability; issues which necessitate a degree of certifier interpretation.

It also raises concerns about the NOP acting as both an accreditor and a certifier. "This is another systemic problem of the regulation," according to Riddle. The regulation establishes the NOP as the ultimate certifier. Under the regulation, a certifying agent has no power to suspend or revoke certification. They can only issue *proposed* suspensions and revocations. The final determination is made solely by the NOP. The regulation is less clear on the power of the certifying agent to deny certification. Until the Country Hen case, most certifying agents understood that they retained the power to deny certification. That will not be the case if the NOP's position withstands appeal in civil court.

The NOP plays the dual role of mandatory accreditation body and certifier under the regulation. A certifying agent cannot conduct business unless accredited by the NOP. Yet the certifying agent cannot deny, suspend, or revoke certification, and cannot appeal certification rulings made by the NOP. (For the record, certifying agents can appeal adverse accreditation decisions to the AMS Administrator.) Under ISO Guide 61, an accreditation body cannot also act as a certification body in the same sector where it performs accreditations. Clearly, the NOP serves both functions under the regulation.

As noted earlier, many certifiers feel inhibited to criticize the NOP on these and other issues, given that the NOP has such extensive power over their abilities to operate their certification programs.

What happens if the NOP actually violates the OFPA? Is there a "third party" appeal process outside the NOP? It seems that the NOP did make a poor decision in this case. So who ultimately has authority over the NOP? The USDA, in terms of final [see NOP, page 22]

CERTIFICATION NEWS

USDA Publishes Marketing Exemptions for Organic

As a result of a 2002 Farm Bill directive, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service Dec. 2 published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* to exempt producers and marketers of solely 100 percent organic products from paying commodity promotion assessments for 28 fruit and vegetable marketing order programs. Comments, now due by Jan. 2, should be mailed to the Docket Clerk, Marketing Order Admin. Branch, Fruit & Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., STOP 0237, Washington, D.C. 20250. Fax (202) 720 8938; or email moab.docketclerk@usda.gov.

Cite Docket #FV03-900-1-PR.

USDA will issue a separate proposed rule to address an organic exemption for 16 national research and promotion programs. For links on this issue, go to: www.ota.com/pp/usregulatory/fnotices.html

NOP Publishes Rules on Additional Materials Allowed in Organic Production

The NOP published rules Oct. 31 and Nov. 3 to allow the use of new synthetic crop, livestock, and handling materials. These are the first NOP rule revisions since its initial publication, with all of the materials recommended by the National Organic Standards Board. For more info, go to: www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a031031c.html and http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a031103c.html under Agricultural Mkt. Service. These materials may be used in organic production as of the date of publication.

Farm Locator™ on the Web

Organic farmers are encouraged to sign up for a free Farm Locator™ web listing operated by The Rodale Institute. The Farm Locator™ feature is part of a collaborative effort between Rodale Institute and New Farm magazine that features a web-based content share program to work with organic and sustainable organizations across the US. To sign up your farm, go to www.newfarm.org/farmlocator/index.php.

USDA Accredits COABC

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has recognized the organic assessment program of British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries-- Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia. As a result, this agency can certify products to be sold as organic in the United States if produced according to U.S. national standards.

OMRI Seeks Product Review Coordinator

The Organic Material Review Institute (OMRI) is seeking to fill a key post managing the Brand Name review program for organic inputs. OMRI's work focuses on input standards for organic production to facilitate compliance and ease transition to organic agriculture. Through public education and online and printed reference manuals, the organization distributes lists of products and materials suitable for use in organic production under the USDA NOP standards.

The primary responsibility of this position is to manage the OMRI Brand Name Product Review Program. This mid-level position will have an agricultural science background with experience in regulatory enforcement, project management, and knowledge of the industry.

Visit their website for more info: <http://www.omri.org/jobswww.omri.org/jobs>

Nat'l Standards for New Zealand

The Green Party is hailing a victory for New Zealand's organic produce industry, with the launch on November 4th of national standards for organic certification.

California Holds Certifier Training

The California Organic Program recently held certifier training. Supervisor Ray Green is hoping that the training impressed upon attendees that they are now agents of the federal government, charged with inspecting, investigating and prosecuting as needed. He emphasized that certifiers need to fully document everything to support their actions, and that all parties involved need to follow procedure. Attendees commented that the best part of the training was the administrative law judge that was present, who explained the brave new organic world we're in.

Lewin Moves to CCOF

IOIA member Jake Lewin has shifted gears and will be starting off the new year as Director of Marketing and International Programs for California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF).

Lewin will be responsible for all aspects of client recruitment and retention, in addition to oversight of CCOF's international efforts including international programs, trades issues, international marketing, and CCOF's landmark export assistance program, Certified Organic Products Export Strategy (COPES).

After Jan 1, Lewin can be reached at CCOF's main office: 831-423-2263 and jake@ccof.org.

IFOAM seek Executive Director

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements has 747 members in 97 countries, including producers, certification bodies, trade development NGOs, consultancy and research. The Head Office, with 13 staff members, is located in Bonn, Germany. IFOAM is now recruiting an Executive Director who will lead the organisation from the Head Office. Skills in communication, managing people, strategic thinking and planning is essential. Experience in policy, lobbying and promotional work in the field of agriculture, environment or sustainable development will be highly regarded. A commitment to the IFOAM mission is a precondition. The job description and more details are available on www.ifoam.org/ed

First Regulator/Certifier Emerges from Down Under

SAFE Food Queensland (SFQ), Australia, the State Government's food safety regulator, has received approval to broaden its activities, which include acting as an accredited certifying organisation. The organisation reportedly sees the move as a 'logical extension' of their current activities. Up to now all organic certifying bodies operating in Queensland have been private, but recently there has been a significant commercial push for a suitable Government agency to adopt the role.

SFQ adopted the move because certification by a Government agency is regarded more highly by some overseas market compared to the private sector. SFQ is approved by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service for two organic certifications, i.e. for livestock processing and production. According to SFQ's Manager of development and regulatory policy, Mr Phil Pond, the organisation has developed a food safety

scheme for dairy products and was completing similar food safety standards for seafood and eggs. He said 'If we receive enough interest, we may well put an organic standard together for those other commodity groups.' *Source: Organic Newline*

U.N. Report Highlights Organic

A recent U.N. report on restructuring economic activity to make it more sustainable included lengthy discussion that lead to the remarkable conclusion that:

"Based on the above evidence, it can be said that pragmatic* organic agriculture is a realistic pathway to feed the growing world population and to secure the natural resource base needed for a long term sustainable future. But it has to be complemented by other measures, especially efficiency of food distribution...[and population stabilization]."

It will be interesting to track the discussion set off by this report. It is notable, as well, that FAO head Jacques Diouff recently gave a major speech re needs in Africa to meet regional food security challenges -- number 1, water development; 2, better roads and infrastructure -- and NOT biotech. The U.N. system seems to be more attune to (and willing to admit) the basic changes needed in agriculture than any U.S. based government institutions. To view the report, go to <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu24ee/uu24ee00.htm#Contents>

** The text makes clear that pragmatic organic farmers allow use of some inputs and technology from off the farm, consistent with organic principles, whereas some purists reject almost all inputs.*

Emerging Power Bloc in Developing World Is Key Outcome of Collapsed Trade Talks

Trade talks at the WTO's 5th ministerial summit in Cancun last September, intended to address a development agenda in further liberalizing global trade, broke down when developing nations closed ranks and refused to tackle new issues until farm subsidies of wealthy nations and market access were dealt with. The 4-day meeting came to an abrupt halt when several groups (including one led by delegates from China, Brazil,

and India) refused to continue talks that had sidelined the dialogue on agricultural reform and moved instead to cross-border investment, antitrust, and related issues, which were seen as intrusive and potentially damaging to their domestic economies. The impasse underscores the deep ideological rifts between rich and poor nations over the effects of free trade, while the emergence of a united front in the developing world is viewed as a potential counterbalance to U.S. and European Union interests, and seen as a critical juncture for the global trading system. News and information from major media and other sources is compiled online by Eldis Gateway (<http://www.eldis.org/trade/wtocancun.htm>); ICTSD (<http://www.ictsd.org>), and Evian Group, a free-trade think tank (<http://www.eviangroup.org>).

Abundant Life Burned Out

Abundant Life Seed Foundation of Port Townsend, WA was destroyed in a fire this past summer.

The 29-year-old nonprofit group works to protect the genetic diversity of seeds through education and research. The organization had amassed 2,000 rare varieties of seed, some of which were 1,500 years old and many of which were the only known examples in the world.

ALSF lost their collection of native, heirloom, and rare seeds--both their catalog inventory and their World Seed Fund collection. They estimate about 200 varieties are being grown out by farmers in their network. However, upwards of 1,800 carefully tended varieties were destroyed. ALSF also lost their membership and financial records and computer equipment, Executive Director Matthew Dillon said. Fortunately, 200 varieties of seed were being grown when the fire hit, allowing them to rebuild a fraction of their inventory.

The fire appears to have been arson.

This catastrophe demonstrates the wisdom of not concentrating seedstocks in any one place (as, for instance, the national germplasm repositories do or the Monsanto of the world would like to) and of networking, rather than centralization, as the wisest strategy for such treasures of the commons.

For info on how you can help, go to: <http://www.abundantlifeseed.org>



IT'S A GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS THING

Decline in Atmospheric Methyl Bromide Is Attributed to Int'l Treaty

A "surprisingly large drop" in atmospheric levels of methyl bromide, a soil fumigant and pesticide that contributes significantly to the destruction of the earth's stratospheric ozone layer, has been recorded by scientists at the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. They attributed the decline, a 13% drop since 1998, to mandatory curbs on the chemical under the Montreal Protocol, a United Nations treaty that has overseen a 6-year phaseout due to be completed by January 1, 2005. The study predicts a continued drop in methyl bromide in the air as long as its use on the ground continues to decline. According to the NOAA chemist who led the study, the projected declines do not take into account the possibility of continued substantial use of methyl bromide under exemptions to the treaty, which have been sought by the U.S. and 14 other nations (New York Times, Aug. 16; Greenwire, Aug. 18). Earlier this year, the U.S. EPA granted exemptions allowing continued use of methyl bromide by produce and tobacco farmers and other users, who say no cheap alternatives exist. More info at: (www.noaanews.noaa.gov).

New Forecast Suggests Decline in Oil and Gas Reserves Will Have Greater Global Impact than Climate Change

World oil and gas supplies will peak soon after 2010 because global reserves are 80% smaller than earlier estimates, according to new research by the Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas (<http://www.peakoil.net>). Other studies have shown that oil and gas production will decline around 2050, allowing more time for societies to adjust. Those arguing for more imminent decline say that the resulting "production crunch"--where demand exceeds supply--will lead to explosive prices for fossil fuels, with potentially disastrous results unless people move to alternative energy sources. Kjell Aleklett of Sweden's Uppsala University, a geophysicist who helped prepare the new estimate, said the decline would affect world population more than climate change, since existing reserves are too small to create enough carbon dioxide to bring about the more extreme predictions of melting ice caps and searing temperatures. The group's conclusions were reported by CNN (Oct. 2, <http://www.cnn.com/world>) and London's Independent (<http://www.independent.co.uk>), and the scientific debate has been covered in New Scientist magazine (Aug. 2, Oct. 4).

News from The North

By Janine Gibson

ad Hoc Organic Regulatory Committee (ORC) Consults with Organic Sector In Canada

In conjunction with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the ORC with members from across the organic sector in Canada are developing a labeling regulation. This proposed new "law" will be a regulation under the Canadian Agricultural Products Act which is overseen by CFIA. Canada is in the challenging position of transforming its current voluntary national standard (CGSB 32.310-99) into a mandatory regulation. The timeline is tight with efforts to meet the EU deadline for Admission to the "Third Country" list, a requirement for access to the thirsty EU market. See the Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC) or Canadian Organic Growers (COG) websites for more info and meeting dates & places.

Two inspector members of IOIA, **Rochelle Eisen** and myself, have been serving on the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) Organic Committee. Rochelle has been very active on the Permitted Substance List working Group, and I have very much appreciated her input there as well as serving with me on the Editorial Working Group, which I chair as IOIA rep.

Jack Reams, current IOIA board member and Canadian Committee liaison, is a third inspector with voting privilege on the CGSB Organic Committee, which will shortly be considering what will hopefully be the final draft of the revised standard.

Be sure to read the Canadian Committee report on page 6.

Cabinet papers warn Canada off GM crops Farmers fear long-term threat to food exports

A secret briefing to the Canadian government has warned that the country's massive food exports are at risk from its continued use of GM crops.

The paper, which has been obtained under the Access of Information Act, warns the cabinet of the "pressing need to immediately address these concerns". Such fears contrast with

the government's repeated endorsement of GM crops and technology as a great opportunity for Canada.

The paper, which was drafted by a senior civil servant, says that "producers are becoming worried about losing markets and losing choice over what they produce", while consumers are becoming more worried that they cannot distinguish between GM and non-GM products.

"These concerns could precipitate a loss of confidence in the integrity of the Canadian food system, which could be very disruptive to the domestic system as well as Canada's ability to export to demanding markets."

Some pages of the secret document, which have been blanked out, concern advice on how to deal with the growing public fears and the potential loss of further export markets for Canadian goods.

Canada is the third-largest producer of GM crops after the US and Argentina. But the paper says that the production of GM canola is affecting the value of non-GM canola in some markets. It says: "The EU was effectively closed to all Canadian commodity canola." The Canadian farmers' greatest fear, however, is the introduction of GM wheat, of which trials are imminent.

The Canadian Wheat Board has just surveyed its overseas customers in Europe, Japan and the US, with 82% saying that they would not take GM wheat. The export market for milling wheat into bread is worth £2bn a year to Canada.

The paper says that large Canadian producers in other fields have already taken defensive action. Flax producers, for instance, will not produce a GM version, while the largest potato processor, McCains, has declared it will not purchase GM potatoes. Jim Robbins, a farmer and business consultant for the Canadian National Farmers Union, said that large exports of oilseed rape had been lost to Europe as it was impossible to separate GM and conventional crops. In Canada, they had all been mixed together.

Cross contamination, it said, was now "irreversible". Canadian farmers feared the same would happen with wheat, prompting a loss of exports and a crash in prices.

"I cannot see how it would be possible to separate GM wheat and non-GM wheat,"

Mr Robbins said. "It is also very difficult, not to say impossible, as we have discovered with canola, to prevent the spread of GM canola plants into conventional crops."

He said the Canadian government's problem involves the lack of legal regulation to thwart the introduction of GM wheat, prompting the potential for contamination of conventional crops. Mr Robbins believes fears for the environment could be a useful defence, pointing out that if GM wheat - basically a grass - escaped into the Canadian countryside it might become an extremely difficult weed to eradicate because it would be herbicide resistant.

November 13, 2003 The Guardian

Natural Health Bites

A new series of free articles aimed at helping Canadians attain good health and improving their quality of life is now being offered to all Canadian community newspapers.

Titled "Natural Health Bites," this series of articles will offer readers ideas and solutions on how to reach optimum health. Some of the most common health concerns will be addressed, and solutions to overcome these challenges will be offered. The common thread through all of the articles will be natural health, which is based on following a healthy diet, getting regular exercise and rest, along with supplementing the diet as required.

The goal of this series of articles is to inspire Canadians to:

- take charge of their own health
- make the best food choices for themselves and families
- get off health programs that only treat the symptoms and not the illness
- lose unhealthy fat and keep it off
- take the necessary steps to lead a healthy active lifestyle

The target audience of these articles is all Canadians: young, old, male, female, young mothers, seniors, labourers, professionals, recreational athletes, students - anyone who would like to be healthier and have more energy would be interested in this series.

These articles are produced through the sponsorship of members of the Canadian natural health community. They will not be written with any type of commercial focus. The goal is to make Canadians aware of the healthy choices available to them, and to get them into a healthier frame of mind.

The information in the articles comes from the latest clinical studies and from leading natural health experts. They are produced through Canadian Natural News Service.

For more info on Natural Health Bites, contact Bruce W. Cole at 705/526-8444

Email: cnhr@idirect.co Fax: 705/527-1118.

IOIA/WBC 2003 Farm and Livestock Trainings

By Renée King

Wyoming was host to its first organic inspector training September 15-20, 2003, which was co-sponsored by the Wyoming Business Council (WBC). The trainings were held at the beautiful and historic Vee Bar Guest Ranch west of Laramie, WY. There were 17 students in the Farm course and 14 in the Livestock course. The classes consisted of many Wyomingites; 1 Coloradoan; officials from the Montana, Utah, and Wyoming departments of agriculture; University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension personnel; Wyoming Business Council personnel; and individuals from as far away as Vermont and even India! Our cowboy hats go off to Vermont resident Pete Zuck, who used the Wyoming IOIA training as an excuse for a road trip of monumental proportions!

R. P. Kelli Belden, soil scientist with the University of Wyoming (UW), gave an enlightening talk on “the living soil.” **Dr. Steve Paisley**, also from UW, spoke on body condition scoring of beef cattle and had the best pictorial to date of the cow’s reproductive cycle—a cow on a bicycle!

Our intrepid instructors, **John O’Malley Burns** (Farm) and **Margaret Soles** (Livestock), kept the classes on task with lots of educational activities and laughs. **Seth Winterton**, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, also provided excellent assistance during the courses. The entire Vee Bar was at our disposal including the private fishing pond and saloon—the saloon was a favorite site for group activities



Getting ready to duck - Farm OSA winner Greg Michaud

and even a little relaxation. The Vee Bar chef prepared excellent meals and students enjoyed organic beef, vegetables, coffee and natural wheat bread mixes from various Wyoming companies.

This training was unique in that it was an experiment in progress. John and Margaret both used a comprehensive approach to teaching the Farm and Livestock courses in the hopes of creating standardized training curriculum for future IOIA courses. John, Margaret, Seth, and I held a

post-training meeting to discuss the course, review positive and negative aspects, and suggest improvements. Good things are in the works for future IOIA trainings!

Our Farm field trips took place on a sunny (and, of course, windy) Wyoming afternoon at OCIA certified vegetable and alfalfa operations. The Farm test was administered the next day during a typical Wyoming fall snow. However, by the time we took our Livestock field trips at a beefalo ranch, it was warm again and students enjoyed lunch in the Rocky Mountains with a herd of very friendly beefalo. Our Livestock field trip groups were also able to take a quick tour of the University of Wyoming’s state-of-the-art slaughter facility. The level of livestock knowledge in this class was very impressive.

The Outrageous Statement box was practically empty until the last day of the Farm training. This was a serious group of students that took some time to loosen up, but once they did, the results were hilarious.

Greg Michaud of Ft. Collins, CO received the Outrageous Statement Award for the Farm course. John O’Malley Burns, in an apparent attempt to prevent the stereotyping of farmer gender, asked the class

“What can a grower do to reduce the size of her buffer?” Without hesitation, or shame, Greg blurted out “Diet!” **Kelly Havely** of Wheatland, WY received the Livestock course Outrageous Statement Award for his explanation of why the beefalo ranch’s wandering bull was named Clinton. Kelly explained that it was after a particular US president “Because he won’t stay home!” Both students received a canvas tote bag emblazoned with “Naturally Wyoming” on it, and inside the bag were two confectionary delights made in Wyoming—“Bison Balls” and “Moose Doodles!”



Wyoming Farm Group



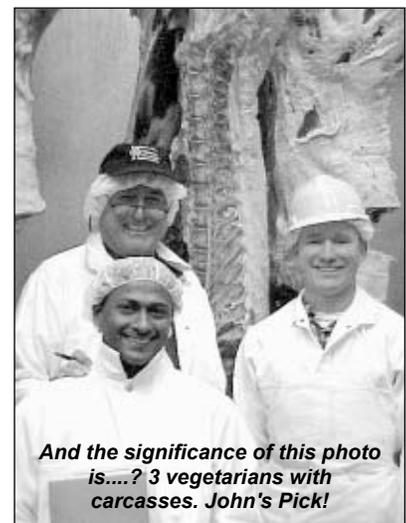
Livestock Group at the Cat Nap Corral



No pets allowed in the Vee Bar saloon, but they forgot cats don't read - or care!



Livestock OSA winner Kelly Havely gets his Moose Doodles



And the significance of this photo is....? 3 vegetarians with carcasses. John's Pick!

When Will You Stop Torturing Us? A Taiwan Training Report

By Jim Riddle

Bin-Hhy Yang won one of the outrageous statement awards during the Taiwan inspector training, held November 17 - 21, 2003, at the Transworld Institute of Technology, Yunlin Province, Taiwan. Bin-Hhy, who was concerned about keeping up with the pace of the course, made several notable statements, including, "I am not dumb, but I only have Chinese frequency to catch up during the class." and "How long do you guys like to torture me before I can become an independent inspector?"

Li-Ling Lin won the IOIA t-shirt when she said, "Receiving my certificate of organic farm inspector is the beginning of my career in organic industry."

The Taiwan training was co-sponsored by Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc (FOG)/Quality Certification Services, Transworld Institute of Technology (TIT), and the Integrated Agricultural Development Foundation (IADF). I served as TC, and was ably assisted by **Marty Mesh & Angela Caudle** of QCS. The primary organizer and translator was **Dr. Nan-Jing Ko** of IADF.



Jim Riddle with Bin-Hhy Yang, who is just starting his career as a tortured organic inspector

Attendees were very interested in Marty's beard, asking questions such as, "Does Marty's beard affect his inspection, especially for processing?" "Marty's beard is very attractive. I wonder he will look like Bin Laden if he wears his flat hat." "Do you have trouble to go to bed? Does beard need to cover under blanket or leave out?"

Attendees also asked practical, science-based questions, including, "Can we use to prevent mosquitoes and spiders in storage shed by smoking natural plant materials such as tobacco leaves, lemon grass, etc.?" "Could pathogens and insects easily build up at my organic farm when neighbor's field is spraying pesticides?" "There are big acreages in the States. I think there are lots of animals in the fields in your country. I wonder you have organic animal products to export to Asian countries? Such as: organic worm, organic bird egg, organic rat."

Of the 20 students who attended the course, 15 passed all grading requirements to receive IOIA Certificates of Completion. 5 attendees did not receive 75% on the exam, and received letters of attendance.

Many new exercises, an inspection report template, and power point presentations were developed for the course. The new materials were all saved on a CD which was submitted to the IOIA office.



Jim with OSA winner Li-Ling Lin. We are still trying to figure out why attendees at our Asian trainings smile so much. Is it the materials? Or the instructors?

"issues of concern" for excellent follow up discussions. I took digital photos during the field trip, and we viewed and discussed them the next day in class. This was probably the most valuable post field trip discussion that I have been a part of as a TC.

Just as I was setting up for class on the final day of class, (with 2 power points yet to give, plus the final exam), the electricity in the building went out. As I had throughout the week, I had to quickly adapt to changing circumstances. We worked from the manual for the presentations, gave the test in the college cafeteria (which still had power), and held the "outrageous statement" award ceremony at a local restaurant during an evening party organized by the students. Holding the ceremony off site provided a nice ending to an exhausting, challenging, and highly rewarding week.

The course was preceded by a public seminar on the NOP, IFOAM, JAS, the situation in Taiwan, and the fundamentals of plant health management. All course attendees, along with about 40 other people, took part in the seminar.

We began the course with an in depth discussion of the pre-course assignment. This is proving to be a valuable way to get students involved and motivated, right from the beginning.

The course was not without challenges. For example, the evening before the farm inspection field trip, we learned that the sight we had selected was no longer available. Luckily, one of the farmers in the class agreed to host the field trip. This meant that an organic farm plan, field history sheet, and farm map all had to be created after dinner.

The field trip turned out to be a smashing success. There were sufficient



Marty Mesh sure had a long row to hoe at this training. He also got some tips on possible future employment impersonating Osama.