

The

Inspectors' Report

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Notes from The Chair

By Brian Magaro

An issue of importance.

IOIA will see a change in Board structure in 2005. Exactly how that change will look depends on YOU, the members.

A bit of history: A little over a year ago, the BOD decided that the position of Alternate to the BOD had become obsolete. With the new procedure of setting conference calls well in advance, Alternates are rarely asked to serve. Rather than encouraging leadership, Alternate service seemed not the wisest use of member resources. In fact, it almost seemed to discourage moving on to run for the Board. Alternates rarely became BOD members. Thus began the famous mango and coconut story. The BOD requested that the Bylaws Committee produce a mango (Bylaws amendment to eliminate Alternates) and the membership got a coconut (Bylaws amendment to eliminate one alternate and instead have a First and Second Alternate, with First Alternate participating in all BOD meetings) for a vote. In spite of animated discussion at the Annual Meeting in Costa Rica, and a resounding 'no' vote of those present, the Bylaws amendment passed when mail ballots were counted. The BOD recommended and the membership supported that we needed one year to implement the change. One concern for the BOD was fiscal. The budget did not include a 12.5% increase to cover an 8th person on conference calls and at the AGM.

Our year is about up. The Bylaws require that the number of Directors be set at the AGM. We are deciding how to elect or appoint a First and Second Alternate at the Annual Meeting. Alternates are to [see Notes, page 4]

IOIA and NCAT Land RMA Funds for Organic Education

At recent annual meetings, IOIA members urged the IOIA Board and staff to increase efforts to tap into grant funds for developing training materials. Efforts were increased this year and they paid off. IOIA and the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) collaborated to submit two funding proposals. One has been funded by the USDA Risk Management Agency. IOIA will receive over \$40,000. NCAT leads the project, to be completed by mid-2005.

NCAT, through its federally-funded ATTRA project, has responded for 17 years to the needs of organic and sustainable agriculture producers for clearly written, scientifically based, and practical information on production methods, marketing techniques, and organic compliance issues.

NCAT and IOIA will work with RMA in a cooperative agreement to develop decision-making and record-keeping tools to reduce the transition and compliance risks of organic crop producers. The greatest financial risks for organic producers occur during the initial three to five years of transition. Transitional producers have lower biological and economic resiliency and lack of organic farm management experience. Transitioning farmers also face risks associated with understanding and documenting compliance with organic regulations. Outreach will focus on the states which have special challenges, with relatively few active organic certification agencies, inspectors and certified operations. Producers lack access to organic research and extension service support. The same warm, moist southern climate that provides producers with long growing seasons and a wide variety of soil-building crop rotation options also favors high pest populations and nutrient loss through runoff and erosion. The predominately rural population in these states also limits the available organic markets.

The project will develop Organic transition decision-making tools, Organic certification record keeping tools, and Organic systems management information. These tools will address the unique regional challenges, help producers document their farm management practices, and provide values for losses incurred during a disaster. Project materials will be made available nationally through NCAT and IOIA Web pages, State Organic Program offices and organic certifying agencies working in these states, and on-going educational efforts including workshops.

Are you an inspector or a certified producer in the identified region? If so, **IOIA would appreciate your assistance!** We need your help especially in completing the Inspector Questionnaire, serving on the advisory committee, and identifying certified organic and transitioning producers and inspectors who might be willing to do phone interviews, host farm tours for workshops, or serve on the advisory committee.

If not, **IOIA still would like your input.** Please complete and return the Inspector Questionnaire that will be posted to the IOIA Inspector Listserve by January 1. If you didn't receive one by Email, please contact the IOIA office. All transitioning producers experience similar risks, so the info you provide will be useful in developing the materials whether or not they are region-specific. 🌱

What's Inside...

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Plus Resources, training, training, training!, GMO's, calendar,

....and More!

In Brief...

Nominations Sought

January 19 is the deadline for nominations for candidates for the BOD of Directors. Please submit your candidates name to Chris Kidwell, Membership Committee chair, ckidwell@tcoek12.org

Also needed are:

Membership and Latinamerican committee chairs

Committee Reports

Reminder to all committee chairs – your annual committee reports are due by January 19 for inclusion in the Board Chair's Annual Report.

2005 AGM Meeting in BC

Mark your calendars!

The 2005 IOIA Annual Meeting will be held March 19 at the Granville Island Hotel, Vancouver, British Columbia.

The AGM is set in a beautiful location: On the waterfront, next to the Public Market (theatres, artists, exceptional restaurants); Lovely and Comfortable Accommodations: Hotel features jacuzzi, sauna, meeting rooms with natural light, sleeping rooms with high speed internet.

To see more about the location, visit www.granvilleisland.com but **please do not make reservations directly with the hotel.**

Entertainment and keynote still under development.

Don't forget to contribute items for the FUNdraising **Auction** or plan to buy. If you cannot attend the AGM but would still like to donate items, please send them to:

Lisa Pierce

2055 East Road

Denman Island, BC

CANADA VOR 1T0

Phone: 250-335-9000

Fax: 250-335-9012

email: dtearth@uniserve.com

Packages can be shipped by Postal, UPS, or FedEx.

There will be an Advanced Training on March 17-18 (Livestock Focus), and a Community Grower Group Training on March 18 (1-day only) – please see page 3 for full details.

Membership Updates

Membership Directory Updates are too numerous to print in this issue. The 2005 Membership Directory will be available in January and the On-Line Member Directory updated. The 2005 Hard Copy Directory will be mailed to all Supporting Certification Agency Members (included in dues) and to all other members for a printing/ mailing cost of \$15 per hard copy. In addition, IOIA will publish the first mini-directory (address and contact info only) as an insert into the first issue of the newsletter in 2005. All IOIA members receive the newsletter.

Reminder: Directory Updates

Please get your directory update information to IOIA as soon as possible, if you haven't already. Inspector Members can use your passwords to update address, contact, academic, inspection experience, and personal statements yourself. (If Stan Hildebrand and I can manage this, anyone can do it...right, Stan?) If you've lost or forgotten your password, we can't access your old one, but we can readily send you a new one. IOIA will update training information and accreditation status for all members.

Welcome New Members

INSPECTORS:

Greg Awai (Victoria, BC, CANADA)
Claire Desmarais (Yukon, CANADA)
Maheswar Ghimire (Chitwan, NEPAL)
Philip B. Hale (Wilmington, OH)
Dennis Ray Jipson (Graceville, MN)
Shanti Leinow (Paulden, AZ), changed from Supporting
Matthew Miller (Ankeny, IA), changed from Supporting
Danielle Rizhanovsky (Victoria, BC, CANADA)
Elaine Spearing (Quesnel, BC, CANADA)
Christian Thommen (Limon, COSTA RICA)

SUPPORTING BUSINESS MEMBERS:

FJS Consulting (Davis, CA)
Priority Seed Production, LLC (Yuma, AZ)

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS:

Felipe Javier Bermudez Robles (Grayslake, IL)
Anne Dickerson (Kittery, ME)

Marg Dickson (Cameron, ON CANADA)
Joel Hoffman (Wellsville, NY)
James Harrison (Ipswich, MA)
David Konrad (Barrington, IL)
Ken Kessler (Pangman, SK CANADA)
Daniel Lawton (Providence, RI)
Dennis Martin (Providence, RI)
René Marin Castillo (Managua, NICARAGUA)
Patricia Neiner (Rebersburg, PA)
Dhun B. Patel, Ph.D (Little Egg Harbor, NJ)
Amanda Pitchford (Brewster, MA)
Ron Pither (Mayne Island, BC CANADA)
Herman A. Sanchez (Louisville, KY)
Ian Smiley (New Haven, VT)
Janet M. Thumm (Robeson, PA)
Jim Van Deren (Cloverdale, CA)
Jhon Erik Velasquez (Lima, Peru)
Inge Vogelmann (Queen Creek, AZ)
Margaret Yole (Saskatoon, SK CANADA)
Wendy Zeihl (Weyburn, SK CANADA)

SUPPORTING CERTIFICATION AGENCY MEMBERS:

Global Organic Alliance (changed from Supporting Business)

NOTE: Full Committee Reports will return in our next issue.

IOIA Board of Directors

Brian MagaroChair
Garry LeanVice Chair
Jack Reams.....Treasurer
Ann Baier.....Secretary
Dag Falck.....Ex. Comm
John Foster.....Member-At-Large
Luis Brenes.....Board Member
Doug Crabtree.....Alternate
Ann Lameka.....Alternate
Karen Troxell.....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, ioiaweb@ioia.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.

Published quarterly on recycled paper.



Upcoming Trainings

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Organic Livestock Inspector Training at the Granville Island Hotel on **March 17-18** immediately before the next IOIA Annual Meeting on March 19, 2005 (AGM news on page 2). The training will include a full-day field trip to Bradner Farms of Abbotsford, about 40 miles east of Vancouver.

Bradner Farms is recognized as a state-of-the-art organic livestock operation including Holstein dairy, egg production, and egg hatchery. The operation milks about 400 cows at three sites, keeps an average of about 750,000 poultry birds of which about 5% are certified organic, and processes all organic feed on farm. The full-time veterinarian and feed specialist on staff will each provide a presentation during the tour. In-classroom presentations will include dairy nutrition, feed audit trail exercise, and lameness issues in dairy animals. Agenda is under development. Speakers from both the humane certification program in BC and the US-based Certified Humane program have been invited. Preliminary reading material and exercise will be distributed to registrants in advance.

The Advanced training is open to all applicants who have completed farm inspector training. However, applicants must meet the minimum criteria for IOIA advanced training to receive a Certificate of Completion. These include attendance at 2 or more trainings and a minimum of 20 inspections in 2 years or 30 inspections in one year. Requests for exceptions to these criteria are considered. All other applicants are welcome to apply to audit the course. However, preference will be given to experienced inspectors who meet the criteria for acceptance before auditors are accepted. The course will be limited to 35 applicants; the group will split for the field trip day.

An additional half-day optional opportunity will be provided on **March 16** in the afternoon for those who desire basic livestock standard training. Those who have not had Livestock training previously and those who want a refresher are encouraged to attend. This session will include 2 hours of NOP Livestock Standards review, followed by about one hour focusing on the specific differences between NOP and COABC standards, plus discussion and exercises. Info and application will be posted at www.ioia.net as soon as available. Alternative, non-livestock focus training ideas will still be considered for Vancouver. So far, the only topic requested from IOIA members, other than Advanced Livestock, is Community Grower Group inspector training. A one-day CGG course is being developed in collaboration with Luis Brenes of Costa Rica, who will serve as trainer. A minimum of 10 registrants is required. This will be a one-day, special certificate course.

If you are interested in this special training, please contact IOIA.

Tokyo, JAPAN

IOIA and JOIA (Japan Organic Inspectors Association) will sponsor Basic Organic Farm Inspector Training and Basic Organic Process Inspector Training to be held **February 18-20, 2005** and **March 13-15, 2005** respectively, in Tokyo, Japan. Mutsumi Sakuyoshi will be the trainer for the Farm Inspector course and Ekuko Asano will be the trainer for the Process Inspector course. Both courses will be instructed in Japanese using JAS (Japanese Agricultural Standard) for reference. JOIA will handle registration. For more information please contact: mutsumi.sakuyoshi@nifty.com or 81-45-313-1071 phone/fax.

Las Cruces, New Mexico

IOIA will sponsor Organic Farm Inspector Training at the Marriott Spring Hill Suites in Las Cruces, New Mexico on **April 6-9** and Process Inspector Training **April 10-13, 2005**. Certification agencies are invited to present information about their programs and meet prospective inspectors on April 9 after the Farm training concludes. Each course includes a field trip to a local certified organic operation. Nearest major airport is in El Paso, Texas, about 45 minutes away and accessible by shuttle. Las Cruces is also served by the Las Cruces International Airport. Las Cruces is the 2nd largest and fastest growing city in New Mexico. It is located at the foot of the Organ Mountains and along the banks of the Rio Grande. Popular area attractions include Stahmann Farms, the worlds largest family owned pecan orchard, and the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, the largest agriculture museum in the United States. Some exhibits feature ancient tools and living quarters of the first farming tribes in the state, recognizing the regions 3,000 years of farming history. These courses are being developed in collaboration with New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission. Info and application will be posted at www.ioia.net as soon as available. Contact the IOIA office for further information.

Organic Fiber Processing Training

IOIA and the Organic Trade Association are still developing a cosponsored Advanced Organic Inspector Training (Fiber Processing focus). This training will be open both to experienced inspectors and to interested persons from the organic industry. It will include a tour of a fiber processing facility, field trips to see value-added cotton manufacturing, and an introduction to the new OTA Fiber Council standards. Originally scheduled for April 16-17 in Lubbock, TX this training was postponed until 2005. If you are interested in this course, please contact the IOIA office or review the detailed General Info about the course at www.ioia.net.

Future Trainings: The Idaho Department of Agriculture and IOIA are in discussion to develop Basic Organic Livestock Training in Boise, Idaho during 2005. Watch upcoming IOIA newsletters and the website for details as this and other trainings develop.

Notes, from page 1

have staggered terms. We still have 2 alternates completing terms, so it might not be necessary to elect any alternates. However, action will be needed this year or next to effect the staggering of the terms. Meanwhile, should we budget for 8 persons to participate on the BOD? One suggestion is to proceed with the election of 7 Board Members and no Alternates, but to request that the members support decreasing the number of BOD members to 6. This has zero fiscal impact and fully implements the Bylaws Amendment passed last year.

The Bylaws require that the membership set the number of BOD members at the annual meeting. The possible proposal to have the BOD reduced by one and have the first alternate be on all BOD activities will keep the budget regulated at the same level. To keep the BOD at the current 7 and the first Alternate be included on all activities of the BOD will increase the budget as indicated above. This is not an impossible hurdle but is it necessary? The BOD is looking to you for comments.

Please send any comments you wish to my email, magarob@aol.com :*

A Note from Phoebe....

I wish to let all the Board Members, Inspector Members and Supporting Members of IOIA know what a wonderful group of people they are.

I became an employee of IOIA in December of 2001. I was hired on because of the knowledge I carried with me of computers. I had no idea of what IOIA did. Over the past three years I have learned a lot about Organic and Sustainable Agriculture. I have enjoyed many organic foods since that time as well. I have learned about the health benefits and reasons



to choose organic. In addition to learning more about the organization I learned about people. I have visited with many of you over the telephone lines, e-mails, and

some even in person. I have enjoyed each and every one. I apologize to those of you that received phone calls from me at 3:00 AM because you were in a different time zone and I didn't think before I dialed. Mind you all I was always treated kindly and with respect no matter what time I made the call.

I was very well taken care of by Margaret and had many words of reassurance last December when my daughter was in an automobile accident. I have been through many personal trials since beginning my work at the IOIA office all of which Margaret helped me through. Margaret is a very dear person as well as a hard Working Woman. The organization is very fortunate to have her be part of it. I feel very fortunate to have had the chance to get to know her and work with her in the office.

I close with many good wishes and farewells to all as I will be discontinuing my duties as the office assistant in the IOIA office. I have been offered a position at the bank and have chosen to go back to work full-time. This is a decision that surprises even myself but I am happy about it and my time has come to move on. Thank you everyone for the past three years and best of luck in the Organic Business World.

Thanks for everything,
Phoebe Amsden

....And Introducing Judy Hessong

Phoebe Amsden, Office Assistant since late 2001, announced in September that she would be leaving IOIA.



We advertised and Judy Hessong, retired elementary school teacher from Broadus, stepped in immediately as temporary help. She has been with us since. You'll enjoy her Texas accent on the phone. She works 2 days per week or more as needed, which will include a lot of extra days in December and January as we complete the end-of-the-year tasks, update membership, and print the 2005 Membership Directory.

Notes from the ED

By Margaret Scoles

Dues and Directory: We are in the midst of the annual flood of dues and membership directory updates. **Thank you to everyone who paid dues so promptly this year.** I was concerned. We were a week late in mailing out the invoices and other info, but I believe dues are coming in more promptly than any time in memory (and as you know, my memory does go back a ways...). Most members are electing to send in more than the \$100 required dues, which will really help the bottom line for 2005. Too early to tell, but it seems members appreciated not receiving another dues increase this year. If you didn't receive your dues mailing, please let me know immediately. Members this year were offered several options, including a \$5 Membership Raffle (half of the money generated will be used to refund membership dues for the name(s) drawn on December 25). **Changes this year** - hard copy newsletter will be included in the 2005 dues for all members, but all members will need to pay extra to reserve a copy of the hard copy Membership Directory (except for Supporting Certification Agency Members). Supporting Certification Agency Members will continue to receive hard copies as part of their dues.

If you've misplaced your password to update your own on-line entry (address, contact, academic, personal statement), please let us know. It is easy to send a new one. If you update your own entry, you need not send hard copy changes.

In my annual letter to the members, I asked those who were not renewing to let us know why. So far, 2 members had contacted to let us know they're dropping. This really helps us and saves time, as we try to follow up with all members who don't pay dues. One member said they were disappointed a year ago when IOIA charged separately for the newsletter and directory. Even though that decision was reversed this year, they were still dropping as they felt those, especially the newsletter, were the major benefits of membership. Another said that they would not continue inspecting, plus they were disappointed that IOIA did not live up their original hope by expressing interest in standing up to certifiers on behalf of inspectors.

Annual Meeting and Auction: Watch for notices on the IOIA Forum and upcoming mailings with more details about the Annual Meeting. **Please plan to participate in the auction.** Our first (and only) such auction in Sonoma, CA in 2002 raised enough money to defray virtually all of the Annual Meeting costs that year. Not sure what I will take this

time (the hand-dug wild Echinacea and home-made venison jerky went well last time, but somehow I don't think they'd be easy to haul across the Canadian border). Travelers are advised to check well in advance for passport requirements: A handy link is: <http://travel.state.gov/travel/canada.html>

Certifier Mailing: Thanks to Chris Kidwell, IOIA Membership Committee, for his efforts in spearheading the project to mail all NOP Accredited Certifiers (a list of nearly 100) a letter from IOIA. This mailing included an invitation to join IOIA for those not already members, a brochure, and a supporting member application. The letter was drafted and re-drafted with BOD input. It was intended to raise the visibility of IOIA and IOIA training; encourage inspector evaluation feedback; get press out on the on-line searchable database and the new 2005 mini-directory in the works; and solicit input and participation by certifiers. This project followed up on Long Range Strategic Initiatives from 2000 and from membership input from the Annual Meeting this year.

New Office Assistant: See page 4.

Expo East, NOSB, and New Jersey trainings: I was out of the office for the middle half of October. The schedule sounds frenetic but actually worked well, especially due to BOD member support in Washington and Al Johnson's support in NJ. I flew to Philadelphia, and joined Stan Edwards and Al. Al drove us to Appel Farm. We had the classroom set up by and were ready for registrants by the time they arrived that evening and even had time to experience a NJ Diner (huge amounts of very good food for a reasonable price). During Day 1 of the Farm training, the Trainers graciously let me do the most fun talk, "Techniques in Organic Inspection" and I enjoyed time in the classroom. Al drove me to the Wilmington, DE train station EARLY the next AM and I arrived at Union Station just in time to hurry across the street to OTA's Congressional Day. I was not in time to take in the last of the NOSB meeting, which happened that morning as well. But fortunately Jim Riddle, brand new NOSB Chair, gave us a great update on Washington

happenings back in NJ, where he filled in as a speaker on Day 1 of the Processing training. Following OTA's briefing, which included a thorough review of their extensive education packets (including wonderful color coded maps that showed organic activity by state), I joined the other 3 Montanans and visited the office of Senator Max Baucus. Then we split up. They went to see our representative and I visited Senator Conrad Burns's office and met the new Ag Aide. In spite of my apprehension (the aide for the previous 2 years had been a local young woman from Broadus), I really enjoyed reviewing the materials that OTA had prepared and starting from scratch with the new aide who had almost no understanding of what 'organic'

meant. The stand-up, brown-bag luncheon with about 400 people in a room meant for about 100 simply can't be described. We all invited the aides but no one could come this year from the MT offices. After dinner, there was just time to grab a Metro ticket, check in at the hotel, and connect with Garry Lean, Vice-Chair, then stop for about 45 minutes in the very new Museum of the American Indian (opened in late Sept) as I walked back to the wrap-up for the OTA event. Garry, John Foster, and I attended the "Spirit of Organics" dinner in the Museum for Women in the Arts and hobnobbed. Originally, Brian Magaro had planned to attend, but due to flooding in PA right before the Expo, John Foster stepped in for him. Garry and John were excellent support at the Expo. We took turns staffing our tabletop booth in the non-profit section and visiting/interacting as much as possible among the hundreds of booths. IOIA members stopping in included Anne Mendenhall, Jim Fullmer, Maarten Samsom, and Jim Riddle. Gerald Hermann, still Vice-Chair but now also acting Executive Director for IFOAM, came to our booth to do a fascinating hour or more laptop introduction on



eCert (the paperless inspection / certification system) for Garry, Lynn Coody, and me. Mostafa Chtaini of Morocco and Washington DC (last 25 years) stopped by for a long visit. We picked up where we'd left off on earlier phone conversations. He invited IOIA to participate in the Middle East Natural Products Expo in Dubai on Dec 5-7. Already over-budget for both staff travel and time out of the office, I didn't seriously consider that. But he made an offer I couldn't refuse, so after the show we mailed a 'lite' version of the IOIA display to him to display for free in Dubai. He is interested in a Training for Trainers in the Middle East through the Institute of Veterinary and Agronomic Science in Morocco. English training would be OK, but the training would need to be disseminated in French (a perfect place to use the IFOAM/IOIA French Manuals). Mostafa would like to be our contact with the Moroccan government. I left Garry stranded for hours, although he did manage to attend a talk by Chuck Benbrooke. I sat at the

OTA booth and discussed the Fiber training with Sandra Marquardt (very new news, Sandra is no longer OTA's Fiber Council Coordinator). I ran into Stephanie Wells and learned all about the new Canadian OTA. I thanked many of the vendors for their support for organic food donations and packed off a bag of good stuff for the NJ training. I was interested to visit the Russia Natural Products booth, after my trip to Russia last year. However, it was strictly wildcrafted products from Siberia...very interesting, but not the ag connection that I'd hoped to find. The only presentation I attended was the US government agency update. A little more building and discussion occurred re: the training that needs to happen in Uganda but nothing definite yet. Garry and I headed back to NJ for the ISO and Basic Process trainings fairly early on the 3rd day of the Expo. John stayed to staff the booth. Garry, John, and I decided it was time for a re-vamp and they've begun work on that. At the conclusion of all 3 trainings (ISO 9001 was the last to end), Garry drove us to Harrisburg, where we stayed at Brian's home, and combined business and pleasure until the next AM, discussing Board and IOIA issues.

Not much news from the NOSB, other than the change in officers (see separate article) and a distinct change in the [see ED on page 22]

CERTIFICATION NEWS

Canadian Revised Standard Gets Positive Nod

The Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) has released the vote tally on a revised national organic standard: 61% affirmative, 17% negative, two percent abstentions, and 19% unreturned ballots. Under CGSB policy, consensus requires at least 60% of ballots to be returned, with at least 50% of votes in the affirmative. CGSB now will correct language that does not match CODEX rules and technical format errors.

Organic Fiber Processing Standards 'Review only' License Available

A "Review Only" license for OTA's Organic Fiber Processing Standards is now available at no cost for companies wishing to review a copy of the standards in their entirety. Please encourage all parties interested in standards for organic fiber processing to obtain a copy. Based on the current level of interest, it is clear that OTA's standards will soon become the standard of integrity in the industry. To complete the "Review Only" license agreement, go to www.ota.com/pics/documents/FSReviewLicenseAgreement.pdf.

India Sets Up Organic Cell

An Organic Farming Cell has been set up in the Indian Department of Agriculture and Co-operation to implement the National Programme for Organic Production, a new scheme for production, promotion, market development and certification of organic products. A number of horticultural products like fresh and processed vegetables and fruits and also tea, coffee, spices, cotton, oil-seeds and pulses, etc., will be promoted under the Programme. More information is available at www.apeda.com/organic/index.html.

NOSB NEWS

Changes With A Lighter Attitude

The persistent public attention brought by Consumers Union and others regarding the April Directives seemed to pay off, as the October meeting ran smoothly with plenty of active dialog between NOP staff and NOSB members. NOP staff also remained

present for the public comment periods, and answered many questions from the board and public. In addition, in a welcome change from the last meeting of April 2004, the USDA National Organic Program staff announced they supported a number of the NOSB's policy interpretations, and pledged to collaborate more closely with the Board.

Nominees for NOSB

Barbara Robinson reported that over 70 people applied for five openings on the NOSB that will be available as of January 24, 2005. Board members scheduled to retire include: Mark King, retailer; Kim Dietz, processor; Becky Goldberg, environmentalist; Dennis Holbrook, (resigned) farmer; Owusu Bandede, farmer. The NOP declined to make the list of applicants public, or predict when any announcements will be made.

Another major round of change will occur in January 2006, when slots for two farmers, two consumer / public interest, and a certifying agent are open.

Executive director for the NOSB

Due to industry pressure, Congress has specified in the last two appropriations bills that NOP should hire an Executive Director for the NOSB, as stated in the OFPA. Barbara Robinson reported that all agencies have limits on spending for advisory boards under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. AMS has been granted permission to increase the amount spent on the NOSB and has determined that the ED must be a federal employee, must report to a federal employee, and cannot work directly under the Board. The job announcement will be posted for 30 days with the pay scale at level GS 9-11-12 (\$40- 60,000).

NOP Audit The NOP stated they received a "draft final" report on October 5 – from ANSI (American National Standards Institute). This organization, known for its work promoting and facilitating voluntary consensus standards and conformity assessment systems, has been contracted to perform an audit of the NOP accreditation process. NOP is planning to review and respond to the findings, and then ANSI will determine whether this response meets findings, and issue a final report. NOP said they would issue the draft report and the NOP response by end of November. The NOP also announced they plan to have a regular audit, though perhaps on a biennial basis. Prior to this, NOP had not

indicated this type of audit would be ongoing. According to the OFPA and the regulation at 205.509, the NOP is required to establish a peer review program, to annually evaluate the adherence to accreditation procedures as specified in the regulation and under ISO – 61. Robinson said the report found a lack in documentation of procedures and in communication to certifiers, but it did rate the accreditation staff as exemplary. NOP has recently hired Mark Bradley, formerly of the Audit and Compliance Branch at AMS, and he will assist in the audit review.

Board Reorganization

Jim Riddle was elected as chairman, with Kevin O'Rell as vice chair. Goldie Caughlan was elected as Secretary. Riddle said planned projects for the NOSB include refining the materials review process and helping develop the NOP organic regulations for pet foods, aquatic animals, apiculture, greenhouses, and mushrooms.

Next Meeting

The Board agreed to hold the next meeting from **March 1-3, 2005** in Washington DC.

NOTE: This issues' NOSB News was excerpted solely from the excellent new publication, The Organic Observer. The first issue is 12 pages long and can be viewed in its entirety in the Members Only section of the IOIA website. Annual electronic subscription is Very Reasonable at \$35 – We encourage all members to subscribe. See page 23 for subscription info.

NOP NEWS

Update on Harvey Lawsuit Challenging National Organic Standards

The lawsuit was filed 2001 the day after the NOP was implemented and is currently in the U.S. Court of Appeals in the First Circuit, Boston, MA, that will rule on whether or not the national organic standards violate the Organic Foods Production Act. The appeal, brought by blueberry farmer and organic inspector Arthur Harvey against Ann Veneman (now former Secretary of Agriculture), includes seven separate counts alleging that USDA's organic standards are different from what Congress wrote in the Act. The court could hand down its decision at any time. The Organic Trade Association reports that it cannot assess the implications of this lawsuit until the court issues its decision. However, the decision could significantly affect NOP regulations applying to processors, wholesalers, distributors and dairy farmers. In advance of the decision, all interested parties are encouraged to read the materials posted at <http://www.ota.com/lawsuitinfo.html>.

GENERAL NEWS

OFRF Research Advocacy Bears Fruit

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's recent announcement of \$4.6 million in competitive grant awards for organic farming research culminates a decade of policy analysis and advocacy by the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF). The USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) announced September 29 that the new Integrated Organic Program funded 11 organic research projects around the country. According to the program's manager, Dr. Thomas Bewick, "This funding is only possible because of the hard work done by OFRF to promote grant programs in organic agriculture."

COOL and CAFO Amendments Stopped

The National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture sends out thanks to all US citizens who made calls and sent emails to Congress. Neither the amendment to gut Country Of Origin Labeling (COOL) by making it voluntary, nor the amendment to exempt factory farms (CAFOs) from requirements to report hazardous emissions and substances, made it into the FY Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

IFOAM Appoints New ED

Gerald A. Herrmann, Germany, has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). The appointment is for a one year period during which the search for a permanent ED will be conducted. This move came after the resignation of Zadok S. Lempert as ED at the recent meeting of the IFOAM World Board in Seattle, USA.

Organic Leaders Meet in Bonn

Eighty participants from 50 countries representing the worldwide leadership of IFOAM met in Bonn, Germany for 5 days in November for an International Summit on Furthering the Organic Market. They discussed IFOAM's future objectives and strategies for furthering organic development and growth of the market and the modernization of the IFOAM Organic Guarantee System. The Summit was the most important event on

Nebraska Governor Named to Head USDA

US President Bush has nominated Nebraska Governor **Mike Johanns** to head the US Dept of Agriculture, which duties he will assume pending Senate approval. This development follows the recent resignation of Anne Veneman from that post.

As Governor, Johanns has promoted an agenda of property tax relief, less government, building the economy, protecting families, and ensuring the health, safety, and success of Nebraska's children.

Mike Johanns was born in Iowa and raised on a dairy farm. He graduated from Osage (Iowa) Community High School, St. Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota, and earned his law degree from Creighton University in Omaha.

Some of his major enacted initiatives include:

- \$85 million in surplus state sales and income taxes dedicated for direct property tax relief over two years and an expanded homestead exemption for seniors, veterans, and the disabled;
- reductions in the size and cost of the Governor's office staff, elimination of the Washington lobbyist, restrictions on the use of state cars, an emphasis on e-government and technology applications.
- incentives for business growth and job creation in rural and urban areas of Nebraska and an emphasis on value-added agriculture;
- in the area of health care, boosted the state's investment in mental health services, extended Medicaid coverage to the treatment of breast and cervical cancer for low income women, and directed the state's share of the national tobacco settlement to health care needs including developmental disabilities, public health, mental health and biomedical research; and promoted adoption of foster children, a record number of children covered by health insurance, dramatically increased investment in early childhood education, increased state funding for K-through-12 and special education costs, and criminalized the offense of child enticement

Johanns has led five delegations of Nebraska government, business, and agriculture leaders on trade missions (mainly to promote biotechnology) to eight countries including Japan, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Australia, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Brazil, and Chile. He has also been a very strong advocate for Nebraska agriculture producers.

In 2000, Johanns was selected as the lead governor for agriculture including the re-authorization of the federal farm bill for the Western Governors' Association. In 2001, he served as chairman of the 25-state Governors' Ethanol Coalition. In 2002, he chaired the Midwest Governors Conference, and served as co-chair of the Governors' Public Power Alliance and Governors' Bio-Tech Partnership.

So why did Bush pick someone who seems to make so much sense? Besides the biotech connection, Johanns has come under criticism for promoting conservative Christian beliefs while governor.

the roadmap preparing IFOAM's next General Assembly, which will be held in September 2005 in Adelaide Australia.

OTA Opens Office in Canada

The Organic Trade Assn. has taken a step towards establishing "OTA Canada" by opening an office in Ottawa. The space, shared with Canadian Organic Growers, is located at 323 Chapel Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7Z2 and staffed by Canadian Council liaison Stephanie Wells. (phone: 613-787-2003; fax: 613-236-0743; e-mail: otacanada@ota.com). In other news, Agriculture & Agri-Foods Canada has assigned Joe Southall, director of commercial affairs for the

Canadian Food Inspection Agency, to be lead specialist on developing the Canadian organic regulation.

UK Organic Dairy Industry Initiative Launched

The Organic Milk Suppliers Cooperative (OMSCo) has launched a new initiative aimed at developing collaboration and partnership across the organic dairy industry in the UK. The initiative, which is backed by Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) funding, aims to engage with the supply chain and encourage new forms of partnering and cooperation between producers, processors and retailers. For further info visit <http://www.omscoco.uk>. ♣

Hong Kong Training Report

By Luis Brenes

Hong Kong basic farm and processing inspection trainings were held with the co-sponsorship of the Hong Kong Organic Resource Center. HKORC is devoted to the promotion of organic agriculture in Hong Kong and has developed their own organic standards based on a careful review of NOP, EU, IFOAM and other national and private standards. Training was provided by Luis Brenes and Mutsumi Sakuyoshi based on HKORC standards.

Excellent support was provided by HKORC staff, Sharon, Joyce and Toby, guided by its director Dr. Wong. Participants included not only professionals from Hong Kong related to food production, inspection and agricultural and forestry disciplines, but also people related with NGOs and even a participant from India, Sandeep Bhargava, this year's IOIA Organic Community Initiative Scholarship recipient.

Farm field trips were organized with the cooperation of the Agriculture, Forestry and Conservation Department (AFCD), that has launched a project to promote organic agriculture among farmers, provide technical assistance and internal control system. The processing field trip was supported by the Vegetables and Marketing Organization, an innovative organization that markets organic products in Hong Kong and also hosted the field trip to its fresh vegetables packing line.



Nothing Outrageous in Hong Kong (except, perhaps, for Costa Ricans and Indians learning to eat using chopsticks!)

Thanks From IOIA's 2004 OCIS Winner

Sandeep Bhargava was the winner of this year's IOIA Organic Community Initiative Scholarship. He attended the recent training in Hong Kong that was presented by Luis Brenes and Mutsumi Sakuyoshi. He sent this letter of thanks to IOIA.

Dear Ma'am,

I am thankful for the opportunity provided by IOIA to get trained at the training sponsored by them and for the scholarship permitting me to attend the training at Hong Kong.

The training at the Hong Kong was very good, well planned and exhaustive. The time of the four days of farm and four days of Process inspection training were utilised very well. The trainers, Mr. Luis Brenes and Ms. Mutsumi Sakuyoshi were well experienced, the method of their training was also very good, in fact the way Luis explained the organic standards made it very easy to understand them. The way he explained the pest control methods was unbelievable and I have not seen any of the trainers explaining the same in such a easy way. The course material prepared by them, the slides and presentations, was excellent. They have the thorough knowledge of the subject. Mutsumi, despite her problem in explaining the things in English, through her expressions and presentations



Hong Kong workgroup in the classroom

was very effective. They shared their experience with the trainees.

I enjoyed the training and learned a lot. Gaining this experience will help me in promoting organic agriculture in the Indian subcontinent.

I am thankful to Dr. Wang for allowing me to attend the training, the HKORC staff particularly Sharon, Joyce and Toby for providing the support to me before and during the training. Without their active support I would have been unable to attend the training. I am also thank full to Dr.Chen Yi-min, Vicky and all other participants of both the organic Farm and Process training.

In the last, I can say that Hong Kong is a wonderful place and people of Hong Kong are very nice and good. And last but not least I am thankful to you and the IOIA Board for providing me this scholarship opportunity.

With best regards, Sandeep Bhargava



Sandeep gets a lesson in chopstick use from Joyce with HKORC

Taiwan 2004 – Typhoons, Translations, and Tests in the Tropics

By Jim Riddle

The 2004 IOIA Taiwan training, held August 30 – September 3 in Tou-liou, Yun-lin province, was sandwiched between typhoons Aere and Songhda. Shortly before the course, Aere hit the north end of Taiwan, dumping up to 1800 cm (about 6 feet!) of rain. Luckily, Tou-liou is in west central Taiwan, so we were spared. Songhda gave us a scare after the course, but veered to the north, hitting Japan, missing Taiwan.

Nineteen students attended the 5-day farm inspector training, with 16 receiving Certificates of Completion. I was the Training Coordinator, ably assisted by Angela Caudle of Quality Certification Services (QCS) and Dr. Nan Jing Ko of the Integrated Agricultural Development Foundation (IADF).

IADF has translated the general and farm inspection sections of the IFOAM/IOIA manual into Chinese, along with the NOP rule. The course was taught to the NOP rule, and a farm inspection checklist with comments form developed for QCS was used for the field trip inspection.

Great emphasis was placed on the Exit Interview during the pre- and post-field trip discussions, and students completed Exit Interview forms that were graded as part of their field trip inspection reports.

The field trip to a pamalo (citrus) orchard provided numerous issues for lively discussion after the course. Once again, I managed to take digital photos of issues of concern, which helped focus the post-field trip discussion.

The concept of the outrageous statement award continues to be elusive, possibly due to translation challenges. Most of the entries were rather philosophical, but the award ceremony was again held at an evening dinner after the course ended, helping elevate everyone's spirits.

The winner, Chen Feng-Yuan, said, "In Chinese, "Organic means opportunity, non-organic means no opportunity. So organic is conscious wisdom to bring health to everyone. Then we should hug and make a silly face." (This was not actually a quote from the course, but it combined wisdom and humor, and the crowd loved it!)

Other entries included:

- This was an exhausting and a memorable week.
- The instructor has funny body actions.
- Jim is full of vigor and has a lot of "body language".
- Organic agriculture is real nice and beautiful, therefore in the certification process the inspector should avoid becoming a detective. If you live in harmony and follow the regulation you can be an inspector. Jim talks funny. Jim is competent.
- Jim said, "During the field trip, there were some fighters jets that flew over the farm. If they had dropped bombs, that would have endangered the farm's organic integrity."
- When discussing wild crops, Jim said, "If they cut down the wild papaya trees to harvest the fruit, that would have been destructive to the environment."

Besides being exhausted, evaluations showed that students were quite pleased with the course and they offered some valuable comments to improve the course.

Plans are underway to organize livestock and process inspector training courses in 2005, depending on available funds. The rest of the manual will need to be translated, along with new PowerPoint presentations, exercises, field trip report forms, and tests.

Hopefully future courses will not be scheduled during typhoon season!



Taiwan Class of 2004



A vigorous Jim Riddle with OSA winner Chen Feng-Yuan and Angela Caudle



Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, center, and Luis Brenes, seated, with one of the farm workgroups, Taiwan Training

Quotable Quotes

Washington — Tommy G. Thompson, the secretary of health and human services for the 2001-2004 Bush Administration, announced Friday that he was resigning, and he expressed grave concern about the threat of a global flu epidemic and the possibility of a terrorist attack on the nation's food supply.

"For the life of me," he said, "I cannot understand why the terrorists have not attacked our food supply because it is so easy to do."

Saturday, December 4, 2004

IOIA Training Aloha Style

By Rick Martinez

The Hawaiian Organic Farmers Association (HOFA) co-sponsored an IOIA farm and processor training at the beginning of October on the big Island of Hawaii. I must say that it was very difficult duty going to this drab location with terrible weather and nothing interesting to do...NOT!!!

Kelly Brange, the director of HOFA did a marvelous job of organizing this event held at the Kalopa State Park near the northeastern shore of the Island. The park facilities were very Spartan but the natural surroundings of the park were incredible, with nature trails leading through the lush mountain forests. And the food was marvelous, with Kelly as our personal chef extraordinaire.

We had both a farm and processor inspector training beginning September 30th and ending on October 7th with 25 attendees for the farm course and 17 for the processor course. The attendees were a mix primarily of Hawaiians with a sprinkling of Californians, a surprising number of Cheeseheads (from Wisconsin) and attendees from other states as well as a contingent from Guam. The instructors were myself (Rick Martinez) and Harriet Behar (adding to the representation of cheeseheads).

The farm course featured the standard farm curriculum supplemented with an excellent soils presentation by Hector Valenzuela, from the University of Hawaii. We were fortunate to have two farm tours, one of Pinner Creek Farm, a 5 acres ginger and tumeric farm as well as Hamakua Organics a CSA farm with a wide array of crops and a stunning ocean view.

The processor course did not feature any guest speakers but did have very interesting field trips. One was to Island Organics, a small facility that manufactures a variety of interesting tropical products such as fruit leathers, dehydrated bananas, and Macadamia nut butter to mention a few. The other processor field trip was to Hamakua Macadamia Nut Company, a Macadamia nut processing facility.

Following tradition, we have several very good contenders for the Most Outrageous Statement Award. The winner were: for the farm course Roy Yamakawa- When discussing the definition of crop rotation, he stated another way of looking at this is: Croptus Interruptus

And for the processor course Michael Flynn- When asked what happens if your CIP isn't documented per your SSOP Mike Flynn responded "Then you'd be SOL". The processor course had a notable runner up in Nancy Griffith when asked "What's an exit interview? That's when you kiss him goodbye".

I must again thank the HOFA staff for the tremendous job of organization, kindness and aloha spirit. I also must thank the attendees for each bringing their own special talents and experiences that combined to make this a very special event.



ISO, from page 13

2. For attendees: This training is the first step and required to become a RAB certified Auditor. Attendees of this course and future similar courses (if any) can apply for Provisional Auditor status with RAB. To attain Provisional Auditor Status, an additional application, a resumé showing experience in quality auditing (includes organic inspections), personal reference, and fee of about \$200 must be submitted to RAB. Provisional auditors must complete a minimum number of ISO audits (20 or more depending on educational background; one must be witnessed). Auditors can proceed to the status of Lead Auditor, the highest RAB accredited level, by meeting the criteria for number of audits. For more info: www.rabnet.com.

3. IOIA will contribute to the dialogue with the ISO Technical Committee that seeks to create ISO Guidelines for Organic Auditors. As this work proceeds, it is likely/possible that RAB accreditation will become available for organic inspectors.

4. A subset group of the attendees proposed that current organic inspection experience be accepted by RAB as organic audits of a quality system. Although this is probably a stretch -- if successful, this could help organic inspectors get RAB accredited without doing separate ISO audits. They spent an intense evening working on an analysis of the similarities between ISO 9001 and NOP, not aware initially that extensive work was done in 2002 by IOIA. Harriet Behar, Co-Trainer for that training, and David Burdick of Sustainable Systems, who spoke at the Advanced Training that year in Sonoma, CA completed a matrix of the two standards. Unfortunately, it was presented somewhat out of context and has sat dusty since in the IOIA computer files. Perhaps it was ahead of its time and now it is time to dust it off?

5. Further collaboration between IOIA and AQS as training organizations?...:•

Montana Hosts First Advanced Training

by Margaret Scoles

Twelve experienced inspectors, including a strong contingent from the Idaho Department of Ag, and one good-sport auditor (Meg Moynihan of the MN Department of Agriculture), completed Advanced Organic Inspector Training in Great Falls at the Ursuline Centre. Most of the time was spent on field trips outside the historic facility—a good thing. Montana had her first cold snap and the radiant steam heat wasn't quite functioning yet after summer maintenance. This was a very cool training in more than one way.

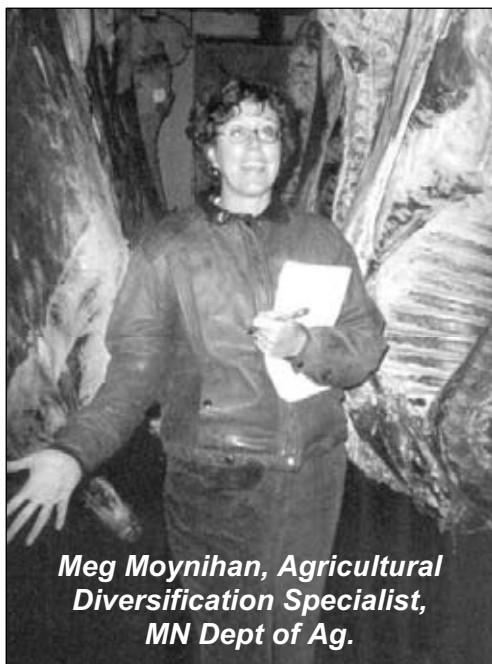


Advanced Training Group with Paul Steinlage in hard hat

The training began with a full morning a few blocks away at the General Mills flour mill (certified organic since 1993). The mill produces organic and non-organic wheat flour and durum semolina. Paul Steinlage, Milling Manager, gave an excellent step-by-step PowerPoint presentation of flour milling and then the GM process, with an 'organic spin' on everything. Paul Steinlage holds a degree in Milling Science and Management with an emphasis in Operations. A wonderful resource person, he fielded dozens of questions. He started with a history of the mill, then milling basics to follow a wheat kernel as it is broken into fractions of flour, wheat, and germ. We were fortunate and grateful (except for the sole bearded attendee among us) to get a complete impromptu tour of the entire mill from grain cleaning through packaging and warehousing. Paul demonstrated many key clean-out points. We were awed and a little deaf by lunch.

After a hearty Montana roast beef dinner, the afternoon went quickly. First afternoon speaker, Steve McDonnell of Circle S Seeds, gave us a 'virtual tour' of his facility. McDonnell has a lifetime of experience with identity preserved grain. He remained undaunted through inspector questions, focusing on organic control points and cleanout issues to preserve organic integrity. He urged attendees to look carefully at incoming and cleaned grain samples as a tip to detect fraud where non-organic grain might be substituted for organic. We grabbed our snacks (the group grumbled about the pace) and headed out for a field trip to Mickey's Pack, a certified organic meat slaughter plant a few miles away. Randy Ritter, our tour guide was helpfully candid and answered yet dozens more questions. We followed the process flow through the plant from receiving ante-mortem pens to the freezer. Subgroups were assigned different handling aspects to identify organic control points. This was a non-vegetarian group. We went straight from the packing plant to an organic Montana T-bone dinner.

Stanley Edwards was a great asset to this training. He introduced a grain audit balance exercise and showed how he uses Excel spreadsheets to report the results of his audits. After allowing attendees to grapple with the exercise for the evening, he showed his Excel tool and his conclusions the next day. This tool was further refined during the visit to the Montana Flour and Grains, in Fort Benton, which took all of Day 2, except for a nice lunch break at Bob's RiverFront and a stroll along the Missouri River riverfront. A draft IOIA audit trail form for collecting and reporting audit trail information was introduced, and attendees were given a hefty packet of audit trail documents to try it out.



Meg Moynihan, Agricultural Diversification Specialist, MN Dept of Ag.

The session at Montana Flour and Grains was voted nearly unanimously as the most valuable part of the entire course. After a tour of the grain handling and whole grain flour mill by plant manager Andre Giles, we broke into 3 groups and followed real-life audit trail investigations in 3 small groups with the plant staff members Nancy Jappe and Ronda Jensen. I'd visited the plant before the training and we'd selected the exercises and made sure that there were a few 'wrinkles' in the audit trail for the groups to find. Stanley worked with the station that used the Excel tool to audit spring wheat for a month.

The course had few wrinkles, other than surviving the chill of the unheated building. Unfortunately, Donna Rise, from the MT Dept of Ag (another auditor) discovered the first morning that she was allergic to flour milling dust and couldn't complete the course. Fortunately, she showered immediately and recovered quickly. Food was nearly 100% MT organic produced and rated high ("a little heavy on red meat...").

Outrageous Statement Award winner was Suzanne Pfeffer of Idaho. She produced about half of all entries statements and received an IOIA cap for "He asked me what I do, and I say, 'Agricultural Law Enforcement',...which is not entirely a lie" and "A little bit of power gets me excited."

New Jersey Basic Farm Training

By Stanley Edwards

A group of 19 students gathered at the rustic but beautiful Appel Farm Arts and Music Center of Elmer NJ, to be submerged in the NOP crop production standards. We were a diverse group consisting of certification agency staff, government employees, and the usual mix of enthusiastic individuals from around the globe. While the weather held during our class room days, we were greeted to the Southern NJ climate with a rainy but pleasant field trip day. Farming in the area is being squeezed out by developments, as with many places in the USA. However, the farms visited were great examples of how



some farmers manage to hold onto their way of life, by marketing their high quality goods to the new comers. Class was held in a dance studio, and we managed to block off one of two walls of mirrors. The projection screen consisted of a cloth partition (borrowed from my cousin who happens to live in Elmer!), and a bed sheet, propped up on three chairs and a painting easel. Although we stressed at the beginning of the course that there was an outrageous statement award, submissions were not made until the very last day, when I had to beg the class to uphold this IOIA tradition. This resulted in a flurry of papers, including this first statement from Dr. Duhn Patel: Do chickens really have knuckles? To get back at his co-worker, Mike Cagna for putting him in the box, Dr. Patel immediately submitted the winning statement, back dated to the first day of class: Who is Sandy Loam? When he realized that he won the statement, Mike specified that this was out of context (they all say that)...

New Jersey Process Inspector Training

By Margaret Scoles

Fifteen people from the US, Canada, and Costa Rica attended the Basic Process Inspector Training in Elmer, NJ at Appel Farm October 17-20. New Jersey Department of Agriculture cosponsored the course. Al Johnson, assisted by Margaret Scoles for part of the training, served as Trainers. Support speakers included Jim Riddle, new Chair of the NOSB, on Organic Handling Standards; Joe Montecalvo, PhD, on Sanitation; Richard Spigler of EcoLab on Structural Pest Control; Erich Bremer, formerly of NOFA-NJ and now with the NJ Department of Agriculture; and Julie Elmer of the Rutgers Food Innovation Research and Education Center. Julie and Erich also attended the course.



Following the frozen organic edamame line through the immense Seabrook Bros & Sons freezing operation provided an audit trail challenge for the group and an excellent field trip.

The caliber of this group was extraordinary. Several attendees were already very experienced as farm inspectors and others were taking this as their first training but came with a strong background in food science or processing industry. Two attendees came from the Canadian Seed Institute. Eighteen people were signed up for the course. Two cancelled at the last minute due to medical emergencies and one became exhausted after the Farm course and dropped out, a grim testament to the extreme rigor of IOIA courses. The small class size, Spartan accommodations, and excellent organic food greatly enhanced the training experience and camaraderie. Trainer Al Johnson did the most talking, so not too surprisingly in spite of his gentle ways, had 50% of the entries and won the OSA. His winner: "Pest management servicing is during production hours so crack and crevice spaying is done directly into the crack so as not to create a mist". (You sort of had to be there...). 'Cracks' and 'crevices' seemed to cause a lot of 'cracking up' during this training. David Konrad's reference to the plant visit-"The Snipper is why the Rabbi was there." was a close 2nd. Margaret was a distant runner-up with "No problem: we can do the Seabrook inspection in 3 hours easily".