
Basic Processing – Pennsylvania, Nov. 15-19

By Stanley Edwards

My voice is gone, we are only ½ way through day 2 and I'm half whispering, half talking with the husky voice of a heavy smoker or my teenage son! By day 3, I can barely talk and after I manage to get through yet another lecture, getting a sound out requires huge effort. Have I joined the ranks of the great IOIA trainers? (Margaret, Harriet, Luis, who almost predictively lost their voices at many of the trainings I've had the honor to assist at). Margaret took over at critical times especially for the virtual inspection, with her partner, Lucy Murton from England. For the first time, students got to hear this masterpiece in a British accent.

For the first time also, everything on the agenda, presentations, exercises, grading – DONE! This couldn't have happened without this group of star pupils, again a mish-mash from all over the continent and diverse backgrounds. The group included two new NOP staffers, from whom I begged for more guidance documents, my primary request, to clarify pest control materials allowed in handling facilities. It is clear that this fine group can now comfortably enter the organic industry in its Age of Enforcement. For my part, I'm brainstorming ideas on how to manage my voice better.



Livestock Training – State College, Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Certified Organic and IOIA cosponsored basic crop and livestock trainings, running concurrently, November 15-19 in State College. Garry Lean was assisted through the first two days by Margaret Scoles. Local inspectors Bob Vernon (PA) and Al Johnson (NJ) helped as group leaders for the dairy field trips on Day 3 and 4. The training broke a new record for IOIA livestock training. Not only did it fill up to the maximum of 25 (the first livestock training of this size), it left a waiting list of almost 10 others. Much of the demand was attributed to the new NOP pasture rule. The group included NOP staff, certification agency staff, farmers, and experienced inspectors. The usual 4.5 day training was extended with an additional optional poultry field trip to a layer operation.

Stan Edwards didn't have a voice by Day 3, but he could still join in music-making with Jim Pierce (R) and Les Dale (L) after a viewing of 'What's Organic?', compliments of PCO. For more info about the movie, see <http://whatsorganicmovie.com>

m



Costa Rica Basic Farm Inspection Training

November 15 – 19, 2011

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. And since we only have 45 words and not a thousand to share about the training in Costa Rica, we ask that you please enjoy these pictures!

Comments from participant Pablo E. Guzmán López, Puerto Rico:

“La certificación orgánica es una estrategia de competitividad que contraresta efectivamente la desigualdad ante la comercialización de productos convencionales. El tomar el Curso Básico de Certificación Orgánica Internacional me ha provisto de las herramientas necesarias para impulsar y desarrollar la agricultura orgánica en mi país”.



UDAF Processor Inspector Training January 24-28, 2011

By Stan Edwards

One side of the room faced the other in a typical classroom U; UDAF regulatory inspectors vs staff from Central Milling Company and two independent attendees from California. Within hours though, inspection scenarios forced the factions to commingle and pretty soon, the full immersion was underway, with lively conversations of regulations, inspection protocols and report requirements. Our field trip to a flour milling operation brought all of this information together and each group was able to find the staged contamination and commingling situations set up by our host. The course would not have been the same had it not been for Pam McKinstry's teaching expertise and her invaluable perspective as a full time independent inspector.



IOIA and Korea Organic Inspectors Association (KOIA) cosponsored Basic Crop Inspection Training in Chungbuk, Korea Sept 29-Oct 3 2010 and Basic Processing Training in Gyeonggi, Korea Nov 24-28. Watch for full article next issue.

Guam Basic Crop Inspection Training

Mangilao, Guam Nov 28 to Dec 2nd, 2010

By Luis Brenes

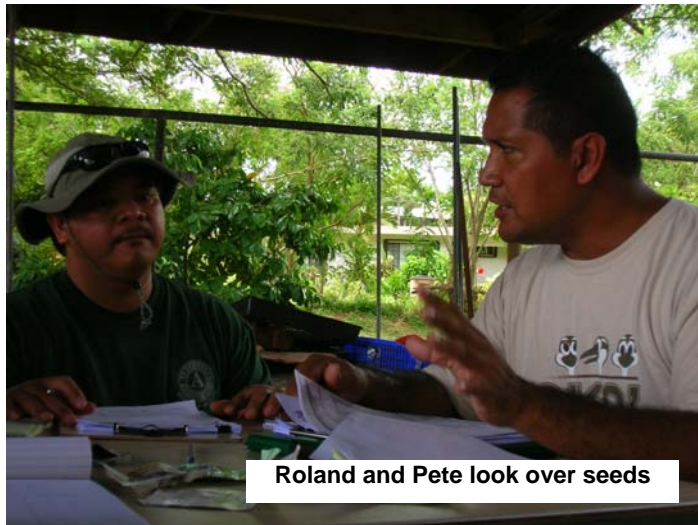
Hafa adai!

In the beautiful island of Guam, cosponsored by the University of Guam through the cooperation of Dr. Bob Barber and all his team that works in sustainable agriculture, we had this 4.5 intensive training with 18 students coming not only from Guam but also from the Marshall Islands and Fiji.

From standards review to inputs evaluation (do we need to be a chemist?), from ethics and conduct to math exercises (math? help!) the 18 participants contributed with a continued effort and enthusiasm in all the sessions that Luis Brenes and Garry Lean managed in the little time allocated. On Day 4 we had the field trip to the Guam's Department of Agriculture organic demonstration plot - The Wellness Farm, just a few minutes away from the university campus.

This is an interesting place with lots of potential where a very diversified agriculture is practiced, including contour terraces with vetiver grass and lemon grass, and a large variety of tropical fruit trees and vegetables.

IOIA wants to thank Dr. Bob Barber for trusting on our capability of contributing with the development of the organic agriculture in the Pacific islands. We look forward to a strong and continued increase in the number of farmers and acreage turning to organic production. Thanks Guam!



Roland and Pete look over seeds

Agriculture officers, university and regional agriculture professionals, and organic agriculture enthusiasts from Guam, Palau, Pohnpei, Chuuck, Kosrae, Marshall island, and Fiji.

The training was held at the University of Guam to introduce the concept of organic agriculture inspection certification system in US and in the world, and to offer the inspection certification test at the end of the program. Having a group of participants with the wide range of background was a challenge with trainers, Mr.



Mari checks records

Luis Brenes from Costa Rica and Mr. Garry Lean of Canada. The students enjoyed lectures and on-site visits, receiving practical trainings and an idea of what would be like as an inspector. We were impressed with trainers' knowledge and excellent teaching skill, and we appreciate their patience teaching to those who had no ideas of OA inspection standards.

Participant Comments:

Pete Terlaje

Before taking the course there was a certain level of anxiety due to other Organic courses that I have taken. I can say the presentation, knowledge and techniques in which Luis and Garry brought to the course made all the difference in the world in absorbing critical information needed to be a better Organic everything. If you are looking to increase your knowledge with regard to the inspection processes and all the tools you will need, "Take The Class".

Mari Marutani

During November 29 – December 3, 2010, more than 20 Pacific Islanders from Micronesia participated in the IOIA Basic Crop training in Guam. The students were comprised of farmers, extension agents,

Department of



Larry checking inputs

Fumbling Towards Complexity, Part I

A Brief Review of Biodiversity in the Certification Process — History, Assessment, and Institutional Imperatives

By Tony Fleming

[ed. note-this is the first of an occasional series examining the role of natural resources in the certification process, and exploring some of the practical and institutional challenges that hinder inspectors' ability to assess and interpret biodiversity management on NOP-certified farms]

Natural resources of the operation.

The physical, hydrological, and biological features of a production operation, including soil, water, wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife.

—NOP Definitions

Ask anyone connected with the organic community about whether organic methods of production are better for the environment, easier on natural resources, and more supportive of biodiversity than their conventional counterparts, and you're virtually certain to get an affirmative answer. Next to the absence of synthetic inputs, ecological benefits are probably the most widely evoked image of organic farming. And with good reason. Fostering biodiversity and sustainably utilizing indigenous natural resources have been cornerstones of "sustainable" agriculture from the appearance of the earliest agricultural civilizations to the advent of the modern organic movement, when the term "organic" was coined. Indeed, the original definitions of the organic method given by the fathers of the modern movement, Sir John Howard and J.I. Rodale, are based on emulating nature and emphasize the importance of biological complexity in promoting the productivity, quality, and resilience of crops. There is widespread agreement on this point among today's proponents of organic agriculture; even for many consumers, who may not be familiar with the details of the method or the NOP standards, *it is a matter of faith that organic foods are produced in harmony with nature.*

But is this really the case? How come some organic farms are showplaces of biodiversity, while a significant number of others seem like they are suffering from a case of nature deficit disorder? Surely, inspectors are routinely verifying that organic farms are, in fact, operating in accordance with these long-held tenets, right? Following clear and consistent guidelines provided by certifiers, the NOP, and the rule itself, which spell out major noncompliances for violations that undermine the very natural resources that are supposed to sustain and be sustained by the organic method? An honest examination of these questions suggests that the widespread perceptions and expectations regarding the relationship between nature and modern organic agriculture may not be entirely justified. The reality is that the answers to these and other questions concerning how, and how much, natural resources should figure into the certification process are shrouded in ambiguity, resulting in wide disparities in the quality and management of natural resources observed at certified farms, inconsistencies in the way they are handled in the inspection and certification process, and, most of all, an atmosphere of uncertainty and ambivalence. It seems that we, as a community, have become distracted by a host of other ancillary questions during the early years of the NOP—organic seed, access to pasture, soil-less methods of "organic" production, and a veritable tsunami of "substances", among others—and as a result, have largely overlooked more fundamental issues, questions, and opportunities at the core of organic agriculture.

This article is the first in an occasional series intended to give a brief overview of natural resources in modern organic agriculture from an inspector's point of view, focusing on the interplay between three different but closely related issues: assessing the quality and significance of natural resources in an agricultural landscape; applying the NOP rule to the interpretation of frequently complex field situations; and the institutional and cultural frameworks within which the first two necessarily take place.

"Natural resources" is a wide-ranging, technical topic, and it is impossible to adequately cover all the important aspects in the confines of this series. Instead, I will enumerate a few key points I have learned from observing the natural resources and related practices at hundreds of unique farms, mostly in the Great Lakes bioregion. This initial article introduces these themes. In doing so, my goals are to set the stage for future articles that will highlight specific topics within this vast field, and to invite constructive dialogue among all involved in the certification process. Note that, for purposes of this discussion, I use "natural resources" and "biodiversity" interchangeably, even though they mean somewhat different things.

Assessing the quality and management of natural resources during an inspection should, in theory, be simple: you run down the inspection checklist to verify the operator's OSP and farm map, on which are detailed (hopefully) many natural features and conservation-related practices intended to "maintain or improve the natural resources of the operation", supplemented by an equally well-informed operator who takes the lead in explaining how these different elements of biodiversity function within the context of the whole farm and beyond. In practice, however, observations regarding natural resources are often qualitative in nature, and assessing their management is typically more subjective than many other aspects of the NOP rule, and often subject to a variety of complicating factors over which the inspector has little control.

Natural resources are fluid. Resources like wetlands, plant communities, and bird populations are inherently dynamic, transient, and almost always defined by environmental gradients. There is seldom a sharp boundary around a particular natural community, soil type, or wildlife corridor; instead, they exist within complex mosaics of many communities, soil associations, and wildlife habitats that grade into one another, often subtly and on a very local scale. Such diffuse, transitional

boundaries are called “ecotones”, and they often comprise biodiversity hotspots within a particular landscape. *Properly and efficiently assessing the “natural resources of the operation” depends on the inspector having sufficient knowledge of the local ecosystem to be able to interpret both their own on-site observations as well as what the operator is saying.*

The operator has to be an active participant in this process, not a passive bystander. Due to inopportune inspection timing, the dynamic nature of natural resources, and other factors, inspectors may not be able to directly observe important natural resources at a given farm; a typical assessment relies on various combinations of direct observation, indirect indicators, and, especially, the operator’s knowledge and records. Migration occurs in the spring and fall, for example, so when you visit the farm in July, you won’t see the thousands of waterfowl that stopover in the wetlands the operator’s property hosts. And in late summer, those same wetlands may appear mostly dry because they are ephemeral. The seasonally fluctuating margins of such ephemeral wetlands are a prime example of a biologically diverse and productive ecotone, and how the farmer cares for them—or whether he even recognizes them—is crucial. More fundamentally, if the operator does not offer any information in the OSP or during the inspection, it puts the inspector in the awkward position of having to assume or guess the operator’s attitude or motivations, and removes the most important benchmark for assessing the quality and management of the farm’s resources—the operator’s knowledge.

It is problematic for inspectors to address questions and issues that are not framed within the context of an organic system plan. While there is broad agreement in the organic community about the importance of biodiversity and the need to make natural resources a more prominent element in the certification process, important questions remain as to how this is best implemented and at what

level(s) in the certification process the initiative should come from. Until relatively recently, OSP’s largely were limited to one or two very general questions focused almost exclusively on soil management. This is beginning to change following the addition of biodiversity criteria to the NOSB’s model OSP, and with the publication by the Wild Farm Alliance of detailed and practical biodiversity guides aimed at all levels in the certification process. Still, based on my own recent survey, there is much inconsistency among OSP’s regarding natural resources: a few certifiers include detailed questions about biodiversity based on the NOSB’s criteria, while others provide a very limited number of ambiguous and uninformative questions, such as “do your practices maintain or improve the natural resources of the operation”?

Except in extreme cases, it is much easier to recognize and acknowledge compliance with the rule than it is to identify specific noncompliances. This is partly a function of the peculiar way the rule is written with regard to natural resources and biodiversity, and partly a function of the resources themselves and the challenge of conclusively establishing a clear cause-and-effect relationship between an operation’s practices and the apparent degradation (or improvement) of one or more resources. Some issues, particularly those that might be considered to involve an element of benign neglect, such as the infestation of uncultivated areas by invasive alien plants, do not necessarily rise to the level of a noncompliance under the wording of the rule, but nevertheless seem to require some type of response. Exactly what response remains wide open to interpretation. An important corollary is that there are many opportunities for education at all levels in the certification process, including significant technical and financial resources available to assist producers to implement farm-appropriate conservation practices—if the operator is made aware of them.

The quality and management of natural resources vary widely between existing certified organic farms. This dichotomy reflects a variety of causes related to cultural perception, institutional history, and management differences, as well as basic differences in the resources from farm to farm. Not all organic farms are created equal: some are simply better endowed from the start with diverse natural resources, or better situated with respect to natural features. Others may be starting from scratch on land degraded by decades of abuse. History and geography are important.

Finally, **organic farms aren’t nature preserves (corollary: most organic farmers aren’t naturalists).** While most farmers want to do the right thing when it comes to managing natural resources (and many already are, in at least one or two important respects), it is important to keep in mind that farms are businesses with only so many human and financial resources. It does no one any good if the farm fails, least of all the natural resources that end up being turned into a housing development. Patience and reasonableness are virtues.

Next: a look at the NOP rule and what it says—and doesn’t say—about natural resources.



Tony Fleming is a professional hydrogeologist, naturalist, and self-described “plant geek” who has worked in the fields of water resources management and geo-ecology for more than two decades. He frequently consults with conservation organizations on the interpretation, management, and preservation of natural areas. He worked as an organic inspector for more than a dozen years, during which he visited several hundred unique farms, mainly in the Great Lakes bioregion. The shrubbery shown is the genuine Indiana banana (paw paw).

IOIA BOD Conference Call Minutes - October 19, 2010

Attendance: Bob Durst, Michelle Sandy, Eric Feutz, Jennie Clifford, Julio Perez (Alternate, Voting) and Margaret Scoles, ED.

Absent: David Konrad, Bob Howe (Alternate). **Minute Taking:** Jennie Clifford

Certifier Survey: The Certifier Survey was sent to inspector and certifier members, NASOP and NOP Accredited Certifiers. Of the nearly 100 surveys sent, twenty-nine responses were returned. In November the BOD will discuss how this information will be used and what clarifications we might request. Thanks to Diane Cooner for tirelessly pursuing survey responses.

IOIA BOD Conference Call November 16, 2010

Attendance: Bob Durst, Eric Feutz, Jennie Clifford, Julio Perez (Alternate, Voting) and Margaret Scoles, ED. **Absent:** David Konrad, Michelle Sandy, Bob Howe (Alternate). **Minute Taking:** Jennie Clifford **Treasurer's Report:** The report was accepted.

We discussed the possibility of hiring committee members, for future committee projects, or otherwise supporting the committees by using some of their budget for paid help. Getting Committee Chairs trained to use the GANC website could improve capacity of the committees with a modest increase in committee expense.

The organization hasn't earned or spent as much money in 2010 as in 2009. The budget remains balanced. Operating reserves (three months operating expenses) of \$42,500 are set aside. IOIA's Form 990 Draft 2 was submitted on time after two extensions were requested to accommodate our accountant and office changes. **The Treasurer Guideline Draft** explains current practices.

Certifier Survey: Bob proposed a smaller group of BOD members meet, discuss and decide how to use the information and what to share with the ACA's.

Training Institute (TI): How do certifiers imagine themselves involved in the Institute? We have made progress for Institute templates and procedures but want to expand this effort dramatically. Margaret is on the right track w/the key tasks. We agree the program should be formalized, made widely available and advance in short order. We discussed decreasing the number of Advanced Trainings occurring annually as they are not reproducible, serve a small number of people and are very time consuming for IOIA's office staff. We also discussed including live webinar for remote access to Advanced and other special topic trainings. IOIA staff needs to focus a substantial amount of time on the TI for its success. We had a short discussion on price structure philosophy. This will be revisited. The BOD may have a focused call about programs, direction and finances of the TI. Topic for Dec. meeting is identifying and prioritizing the 200 level courses. We need these courses named in the Work Plan.

Inspector Liability Insurance: It was discovered, individuals can acquire professional owners (Errors & Omissions) insurance without Business Owners (Liability) insurance but not Business Owners without Professional in most cases. Michelle is looking into this issue and will report. People have expressed appreciation for the tremendous efforts made by IOIA for all the research.

IOIA BOD Conference Call December 21, 2010

Attendance: Bob Durst, Eric Feutz, David Konrad, Michelle Sandy, Jennie Clifford, and Margaret Scoles, ED. Alternates Julio Perez and Bob Howe were not present. **Minute Taking:** Jennie Clifford

Budget: A hearty thank you to the Finance Committee for all their additional work and consideration on the 2011 budget. Time was spent discussing additional resources IOIA needs to manage and expand current workloads, Training Institute implementation and NOP work. Other possible changes; increasing training charges, fleshing out new position salaries. The preliminary budget was not approved. The BOD approved a search committee geared to examine IOIA's need for the additional staff position and the finances around that. Bob Durst Michelle Sandy, and Eric Feutz volunteered for the committee.

Training Institute: We discussed 200 level courses and reviewed the polled ACA's opinions of highest value trainings, resource materials and class offerings. The Training Institute is on track as proposed. The BOD supported the ranking of 200 level courses in the same order as the Certifier Survey results. One topic was added at the request of certifiers: Natural Resources Conservation/Crop Rotation.

Audit – more detailed than basic training, still basic skill level

Livestock DMI and Feed Audits

Materials – Crop, Livestock, Processing

Multi-ingredient

Materials – Sanitation, Pest Control

Professionalism

The BOD was in agreement that most training materials should be owned by IOIA. However, in order to increase the speed of putting forth more offerings, we may seek courses that are already developed and available. Bob mentioned that not all resources need to be webinars. For example, he is developing for IOIA a resource list on processing materials allowed on 205.605. IOIA could seek contractors willing to create similar lists for Crops and Livestock.

Certifier-Inspector Dialogue: Certifier-Inspector Dialogue list serve has been set up. A significant outcome of the Dec 6 call was that certifiers requested that IOIA keep reviewers in mind for training. All of the 200 level courses are relevant to both inspectors and reviewers and other certification staff. Each topic is of about equal interest to both groups, actual course content would likely differ.

IOIA Applications/Signatures: IOIA will eliminate the signature step from the pre-training applications, replacing them with checkboxes. This will allow the conversion of all IOIA application forms (membership, training, accreditation, scholarship) for electronic submission. Signatures will be collected at training wherever possible when essential (i.e. confidentiality/liability waivers).

ED Report: ED requested assistance from the BOD to create a proposal to submit to IFOAM World Congress Organizing Committee for an international inspector forum session. ED will brainstorm and send ideas to BOD members for comment.

IOIA BOD Conference Call January 18, 2011

Minutes pending approval. 2011 Budget was approved during the meeting.

Advanced Soil Workshop: Field Evaluation of Soil Quality

By Lisa Pierce

A couple of years ago I attended an IOIA Biodynamic workshop. What has stayed with me about the workshop was the field trip where Jim Fullmer of the Demeter Association brought a shovel to the farm and the first thing we did was dig a hole in the field and look at, feel, and smell the soil. This seems like it should be an obvious part of an organic farm visit but it is not – like so many things these days, the obvious has become the radical.

Last summer I completed some organic inspections for a biodynamic organic certification agency in Canada. One biodynamic farm inspection I went on I starting asking my usual questions about soil management and fertility and the farmer responded by simply walking over to his rows of vegetables, digging up one of his plants and handing it to me. I looked at the root system and the soil in my hand and I knew that that handful of soil contained not only organic matter and billions of living organisms but it also contained that farmer's commitment to biodynamic agriculture. And repeatedly I found that farmers had chosen to belong to this biodynamic organization, not because they believed in the power of a particular biodynamic preparation but because they believed that the system surrounding the organic certification of biodynamic farmers had not forgotten the reverence, the beauty and the mystery... of soil. This experience prompted me to think again about soil, how I assess soil as part of my work as an organic inspector and how the organic certification industry can learn from the biodynamic sector by once again positioning soil as the foundation of our organic crop farm plans, as the foundation of our crop monitoring system and as the foundation of our crop assessment system.

Inspectors will have an opportunity to hone their field skills by both observing and measuring soil and site properties at the **Advanced Soils Workshop to be held March 23 and March 24, 2011** in conjunction with the IOIA AGM and Advanced trainings. Observations and measurements will be evaluated as they relate to soil health/quality and compliance with 205.203.

The soils workshop will be lead by Kate Newkirk. Kate has a unique insight on soil as the culmination of a multi-perspective that has included working with soil as a research scientist, an organic inspector, a farmer and a certifier. She worked on the Virginia Cooperative Soil Survey Program followed by 20 years of experience as a soil scientist and research associate at the Ecosystems Center of the Marine Biological Laboratory (Woods Hole, MA). Currently, Kate is the co-owner of Wintergreen Herbs and Vegetables and an associate director of MOFGA (Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association).

IOIA Cooks Up Anniversary Cookbook Fundraiser

IOIA members are **encouraged** to participate in this FUNdraising membership project.

Our goal is at least one recipe from every IOIA member.

We aren't just collecting great recipes, including your simple, 'on the road' favorites. We also want other tidbits and useful information (read, memorable experiences) that will make this a very collectible book honoring 20 years of IOIA and representing the wide demographic that makes up the IOIA membership.

To submit a recipe for inclusion in the IOIA Cookbook, email lynell@rangeweb.net with the following information:

1. Your full name as it should be printed
2. Inspection experience (types/years) (optional)
3. Your website, blog, twitter handle and/or facebook url. (optional)
4. Category of dish (breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert, drink, snack, etc)
5. A few sentences explaining why this recipe should be included in the cookbook: Why did you choose to submit this one? Is this something that you are known for? Where did the original recipe come from? What makes it so special/delicious? Have you served it at any memorable occasions?
6. The recipe, broken down into ingredients and steps. **In WORD DOC only Please.** Times New Roman, size 12 font is preferable, single spaced. No PDF, or other formatting, no tables.
7. A photo of you, your farm or home. **JPG only Please.** Please send the recipe and photo as separate attachments. Please do NOT embed photos into the recipe document. You may also want to submit a photo of the finished dish.
8. Other tidbits, IOIA history bytes, humorous anecdotes, quotable quotes, or historical photos are very welcome.
9. Please send recipes and photos by the 28th of February 2011.



Please be aware that we cannot guarantee that every recipe will be printed. Duplicate recipes will be printed with the names of all of the members who submitted them.

Ammonia In Poultry Houses

By Terrell "Spence" Spencer

A large scale, confinement style poultry operation can often present challenges for an inspector inspecting for NOP compliance. The inspector may be unfamiliar with poultry in general, or with indoor poultry operations in particular; in addition, some large laying houses, with multiple tens-of-thousands of layers living in double-story houses, can be overwhelming to any person who sees an operation of this scale for the first time.

NOP Section §205.239(a)(1) mandates fresh air as a component of poultry health. In this article, we're going to look at a health challenge common to poultry houses – management of gaseous ammonia. We'll examine what the gas is, where it comes from, how it's controlled, its impact on the health of both the birds and humans that tend the poultry, and simple solutions for the organic inspector to measure ammonia levels in the field.

Ammonia, found naturally as a gas that's lighter than air, is a simple molecule in its nature. Composed of three hydrogen atoms attached to a central nitrogen atom, ammonia is produced when excess nitrogen is exposed to a high pH, or alkaline environment. Chicken manure is high in both nitrogen (from ingested protein) and pH (from ingested calcium for strong bones and eggshells). Therefore, it's not surprising that ammonia can be a problem when poultry are raised indoors. Factors that fuel ammonia production are high flock density (more manure/ft²), heat, litter moisture (from leaky poultry waterers & humidity), age (number of flocks raised on the litter), and pH. In the industry, ammonia volatilization is typically controlled by

- dry, high carbon, bedding (typically wood shavings, rice, peanut, and/or oat hulls),
- ventilation of the house
- moisture control (fixing leaky waterers!)
- chemical additives to acidify the litter

Adequate ventilation is a powerful tool in providing fresh air during periods of elevated ammonia levels. The inspector should keep in mind that ventilation is usually controlled by temperature through use of a thermostat. This is important for two reasons

1. The inspector must try to establish what the average living conditions are like in terms of ammonia concentration

2. Ventilation may be greatly reduced in times of extreme weather to save heating or cooling costs which can lead to high ammonia concentrations.

Now that we know a little bit about ammonia, we need to look at how it affects both human and animal health. Ammonia is primarily a respiratory and eye irritant and hazard. Chronic low-level exposure or acute high-level exposure to ammonia causes irritation or damage to the lungs, sinuses, and eyes, with chronic bronchitis and mucous build up being a problem.

The human body is able to detect, by smell, very low levels of ammonia - as low as 1-2 ppm, in some people. As an inspector, you can use your own body's reaction to ammonia concentrations to very roughly measure the concentration of ammonia in the air. The irritating effects of ammonia begin around 25-30 ppm. The mildly irritating effects typically consist of slight irritation of the eyes and nose. Around 130 ppm of ammonia, the gas causes a burning sensation to the eyes, lungs, and nose creating heavy tearing of the eyes. Breathing may be difficult for some people as the higher ammonia levels can create a gasping effect, sometimes described as suffocating. Over time, the body becomes accustomed to the effects of ammonia, as the body's receptors are dulled. In fact, it is very common that experienced poultry workers are actually unable to smell ammonia anymore, a result of years in high ammonia conditions, so don't be alarmed or surprised if the farmer or poultryman says he can't smell the ammonia that you smell.

Studies have shown that levels above 25 ppm are stressful to the birds, affecting the feed consumption and production rates. Of more concern to the inspector, the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA) is currently attempting to define the Short Term Exposure Limit (STEL) as 35 ppm (The previous level is 50 ppm). This means that exposure to 35 ppm of ammonia for long amounts of time is considered harmful to human health. Now, if the air quality is a threat to human health, it's a logical assumption that the air does not meet the fresh air requirement of §205.239(a)(1).

A more accurate method of estimating the concentration of ammonia in the air is by using ammonia test strips. Much like the test strips commonly used to detect pH, the ammonia strips are user friendly and affordable – around 10¢ a test, and give accurate results within a few seconds. The inspector can provide the strip to the certifier if needed, or take a picture of the strip in the environment to include with the report. Since ammonia gas rises, the inspector should be mindful that the concentration of gas will vary with height. Depending on the wishes of the certifier, this may be taken in consideration with the Organic Service Plan (OSP). For instance, if a producer provides perches to increase the flock's living area, but those higher perches are at an unsafe ammonia level, this may compromise the OSP.

QA Supplies in Virginia sells an approximately 100 test kit for \$10. Their website is www.qasupplies.com and they can be reached at 1.800.472.7205. Be sure when purchasing the test strips that you are not purchasing ammonia test strips for use in aquariums, as these are designed to test ammonia levels in water, not air. A quick picture of the ammonia monitoring strips can document the levels for the certifier. Be sure to include the colored concentration chart that comes with the strips in the picture.

Most importantly is the protection of you, the inspector's health. If the ammonia levels are excessive, consider asking the farmer to ventilate the house (after testing to document ammonia concentration levels). Clarify with the certifier beforehand what their expectations are of you as an inspector if high ammonia levels are encountered; this can give you an alibi if the farmer can't see your point of view and concern for safety.

Hopefully, this information will make your inspection of large-scale confinement poultry production systems that have organic certification easier and safer. If you have any questions on ammonia or other poultry issues, call the ATTRA hotline at 1.800.346.9140 and ask for Spence.

Terrell "Spence" Spencer is the Poultry Specialist for the National Center for Appropriate Technology ATTRA Project and raises pasture poultry in Arkansas. He completed the IOIA Basic Livestock training in 2010. The article will be posted on the "Inspectors Only" section of the IOIA website as a technical resource.

Carrefour Now Labeling Meat from Animals NOT Fed GM Livestock Feed

The French supermarket Carrefour, the second largest supermarket chain in the world, is now requiring suppliers to label meat and animal products NOT fed GE corn and/or soybeans with a "Nourri sans OGM" ("Reared without GM") label.

Carrefour adopted the new label after 96% of its consumers supporting the need for such labeling and 63% said they would stop purchasing animal products not bearing the label.



Sales of Non-GMO Verified Products Growing at 21% Rate

The California-based Non-GMO Project reported that sales of products verified as meeting its standards grew 21% in 2009. The Non-GMO standard allows a threshold of 0.5% GM content (one-half of one percent) for human food, and 0.9% for GMOs in animal feeds. The standard applicable to seeds, including alfalfa is 0.1% GM contamination, or one seed in 1,000 seeds.

Food products or ingredients found to contain levels of GM proteins above these standards may not be sold as Non-GMO Project verified. Around 900 products have been verified to date, with thousands more in the process of becoming verified.

US Pressured Vatican Over GMO's

US diplomats pushed the Roman Catholic Church to support biotech food in developing nations, according to secret U.S. diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks. Efforts to push GE crops globally extended even into the halls of the Vatican.

Embassy cables in Spain, Austria and even Pakistan indicate that US diplomats stand with the biotech industry, although issues are still disputed in court and the public at large eyes the biotechnology dubiously, states a Truthout report.

The leaked cable documents a meeting that took place with a U.S. diplomat, a USAID official and Catholic leaders in Rome to discuss biotech foods in 2005. The U.S. representatives reported afterward that the Vatican seemed more concerned about the potential of the biotechnology to entrap farmers into

economic subjugation and rather accepted the biologically altered products themselves.

US diplomats used the vocabulary of a "moral imperative," citing the need to feed growing populations as an argument useful to respond to opposition to the biotech food industry among Catholic activists and clergy.

FWS pulls GMO crops from wildlife refuges in the NE U.S.

As part of a lawsuit settlement, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service announced in early January that it would stop planting GE crops on all its refuges in 12 states in the US northeast, according to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER).

According to PEER, the lawsuit had charged that FWS "had illegally entered into Cooperative Farming Agreements with private parties, allowing hundreds of acres on its Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Delaware to be plowed over without the environmental review required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)."

It's not the first time that GMO crops in national refuges have sparked controversy, and although this latest lawsuit is a success for the conservation and food safety groups who filed it, additional litigation is being prepared elsewhere to address the 75 other wildlife refuges nationwide that could be growing GMO crops illegally.

In settling the suit, FWS promised to revoke any authorization for further GE agriculture at Bombay Hook and the four other refuges with GE crops: the Rappahannock River Valley Refuge and the Eastern Shore of Virginia Refuge, Montezuma Refuge in New York and Blackwater Refuge of Maryland, unless and until an appropriate NEPA analysis is completed - a condition that has yet to be met for GE agriculture on a National Wildlife Refuge.

FWS policy forbids "genetically modified agricultural crops in refuge management unless [they] determine their use is essential to accomplishing refuge purpose(s)."

National wildlife refuges have allowed farming for decades but in recent years refuge farming has been converted to GE crops because that is the only seed farmers can obtain. Today, the vast majority of crops grown on refuges are genetically engineered. Scientists warn

that GE crops can lead to increased pesticide use on refuges and can harm birds, aquatic animals, and other wildlife.

From TreeHugger.com 2010

GE Chickens Developed to Avoid Bird Flu

Chickens genetically modified to prevent them spreading bird flu have been produced by researchers at the Universities of Cambridge and Edinburgh. The scientists have successfully developed transgenic chickens that do not transmit avian influenza virus to other chickens with which they are in contact. This genetic modification has the potential to stop bird flu outbreaks spreading within poultry flocks. This would not only protect the health of domestic poultry but could also reduce the risk of bird flu epidemics leading to new flu virus epidemics in the human population.

The study, funded by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), is published in the journal *Science*.

Taiwan, from page 11

funded by the government and managed on a farm; beneficial insects are released to problem locations for biological control. Another certified organic farm, "Chia-Fong" consisting of 3.6 ha with greenhouse set up and storage facilities was visited. This farm has over 10 years of operation. Lisa experienced several different farming systems in Taiwan. She found that the east coast could be an ideal organic farming area. The small size of farms in central Taiwan is a challenge for organic farming. It is possible, however, for farmers to get together for organic cultivation to reduce the set up of buffer zones required to separate organic farms from sources of contamination.

Lisa observed that most farmers in Taiwan have discovered very creative ways to deal with their farm work. Therefore there should be a bright future for organic farming. She said she had learned a lot from volunteer Chen about friendship, communication, observation and listening. MingDao University is very grateful to host the IOIA Training Courses. The Organizer would like to express its gratitude for the support of IOIA and IFOAM as well as the participating trainees from various countries. It is looking forward for future collaboration.

IOIA Annual Report -2010 – Executive Summary

Prepared by Bob Durst, IOIA Board Chair, and Margaret Scoles, IOIA Executive Director

Note: The complete Annual Report is posted on the IOIA website (www.ioia.net) and copies will be available at the Annual Meeting on March 27.

Key Activities and Alliances:

- Successfully launched the IOIA web-based training format. The training schedule included four webinars on the new NOP pasture rule and one webinar produced in collaboration with the Non-GMO Project and FoodChain Global Advisors. Preparatory pre-course webinars on food processing were developed by Joe Montecalvo, PhD and provided to participants of the Basic Processing courses. A webinar on Input Materials was developed and delivered to two Basic Crop courses. The preparatory webinars are now a part of the standard curriculum.
- Initiated regular Certifier-Inspector Dialogue conference calls and a Certifier Survey in response to member concerns. IOIA had a positive impact on certifier requirements such as insurance. The ongoing dialogue is invaluable.
- Outlined and presented the IOIA Training Institute to certifiers and government. The BOD, with certifier input, prioritized intermediate level (“200 level”) training topics for development and web-based delivery. These were identified as topics not covered comprehensively in the basic courses but essential skills for all inspectors. Courses will all be delivered or in development during 2011. Farm inspector topics are Audit Trail, Natural Resource Conservation, and Crop Input Materials. Livestock inspector topics are Audit Trail, DMI and Feed Audits, and Livestock Input Materials. Processing inspector topics are Audit Trail, Multi-ingredient, Sanitation/Pest Control, and Processing Input Materials. Inspector Professionalism is relevant to all three inspection categories.
- Researched inspector liability insurance options on behalf of the members. Posted an insurance document and short list of providers on IOIA’s website.
- The ED and Board Chair traveled to Korea and Japan, engaged in training with inspectors’ associations in both countries (JOIA and KOIA), and met with government officials. With IOIA’s support, KOIA was recognized as a training body for processing inspection.
- IOIA’s first training on the continent of Africa, bringing IOIA’s training program to a record total of five continents in one year.
- IOIA’s first in-house training for the USDA, conducted via webinar over three days, trained USDA auditors on the Canadian standards.
- Continued to participate on the Canadian General Standards Board’s Organic Technical Committee. Kelly Monaghan, the IOIA representative, serves as Chair of the Committee.
- Participated in All Things Organic™, Natural Products Expo East and Expo West in the U.S., and Guelph Organic Conference in Canada.
- Continued support of OTA, IFOAM, OMRI, COG, Green America, and MT Nonprofit Association through memberships and subscriptions.
- Quarterly newsletter, annual Membership Directory, IOIA Forums (English language, Spanish language, and Canadian members), member discounts.
- In recognition of the move to more web-based continuing education and fewer advanced trainings, IOIA increased social networking for inspectors. Events included a member gathering in Boston in conjunction with Expo East and a dinner reception at the home of the Board Chair in Oregon.

Trainings:

IOIA training continues to increase in value and global recognition. IOIA again expanded both global reach and the diversity of types of training and languages. French language training was provided in Québec. A downturn in trainings in 2009 had resulted from the global economic slump, but cosponsor-managed trainings rebounded in 2010. And the webinar format greatly increased access to IOIA training. Compared to last year (499 people trained in 30 events), IOIA trained more people on more continents and in more languages than ever before (607 in 35 events). The increase was largely due to webinars, more live advanced trainings, and a major increase in Crop/Farm Inspection Trainings. Crop/Farm training, the course in greatest demand globally, was up from six events to 16! IOIA trained inspectors in Manitoba, Québec, Arizona, Kentucky, Montana, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Guam, Peru, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, and South Africa.

Finances:

IOIA ended the year with a positive financial position. This was accomplished while reducing the number of basic crop trainings in the US, typically the most profitable training course, by one. See 2010 Balance Sheet for details. Treasurer Guidelines were developed and adopted. A full audit of the IOIA finances is scheduled for 2011.

Committees: Full Committee Reports will be available at the Annual Meeting.

Board of Directors in 2010:

Retiring Board members: Gene Prochaska (4 years) and Stephen Bird (2 years).

New Board members: Michelle Sandy, Jennifer Clifford, and Bob Howe (alternate). Special thanks are due Gene, who served as Treasurer for most of his tenure.

The BOD met in person at the AGM and 10 times via conference calls. The key topic for the meetings in Arizona was visioning the Training Institute concept. BOD minutes highlights are published in each newsletter. Full minutes are available on the Inspectors Only section of the website.

Last year's AGM proposed to eliminate Alternates on the Board of Directors. The membership favored increasing the size of the Board to seven and changing bylaws to remove the alternates. The number of directors specified in the Bylaws was no less than five (5) and no more than twelve (12). The exact number of Directors is set for the following year by the AGM. A ballot was submitted by the Bylaws Committee to eliminate alternates. The ballot passed; the 2011 AGM will determine the size of the Board.

International Organic Inspectors Association Balance Sheet (Cash Basis) As of December 31, 2010 Current and Previous Year

ASSETS		Dec 31, 2010	Dec 31, 2009
Current Assets			
	Total Checking/Savings	191,204.42	183,020.92
	Total Accounts Receivable	254.55	1,050.92
	Total Other Current Assets	4,740.30	5,078.34
	Total Current Assets	196,199.27	189,150.18
Fixed Assets			
	Building	35,000.00	35,000.00
	Total Fixed Assets	35,000.00	35,000.00
	Accumulated Depreciation	-511.94	-511.94
	Total Other Assets	-511.94	-511.94
	TOTAL ASSETS	230,687.33	223,638.24
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Equity			
	Contributed Property-FM Value	29,031.80	29,031.80
	Restricted	1,156.00	1,036.00
	Retained Funds	193,570.44	146,913.90
	Net Income	6,929.09	46,656.54
	Total Equity	230,687.33	223,638.24
	TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$230,687.33	\$223,638.24

Statement is Subject to review and approval by IOIA Board of Directors
Final Copies will be available to members at the IOIA AGM and on the website.

IOIA Trainings in 2010		
Type of Course	Number of Events	Number of participants
Basic Crop	16	262
Livestock	2	33
Basic Processing	4	55
Advanced	6	124
Pasture Webinars	4	80
Other	3	53
Total	35	607

Staff:

Margaret Scoles continues as Executive Director.

IOIA benefits from a staff of dedicated, part-time individuals. IOIA took a positive step toward providing staff a health benefit in 2010, with a Health Reimbursement Arrangement benefit.

Kathy Bowers, Office Manager
(thank you to Rita Wenzel, who left in 2010)

Diane Cooner, Newsletter Editor, Website Manager, and moderator of the IOIA Forums

Sacha Draine, International Training Services

Teri Lindberg, U.S. Training Services (thanks and farewell)

Renee Higgins, Financial Officer

Lynell Denson, Administrative Assistant

Gordon Mulkey, Office Assistant

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



PO Box 6
BROADUS, MT 59317 USA
(406) 436-2031
IOIA@IOIA.NET
WWW.IOIA.NET

Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!

2011 Calendar

Feb 24-26 22nd Annual Organic Farming Conference, an educational weekend packed with 70+ workshops, 150+ exhibitors, terrific food, foot stompin' entertainment, acres of food and farming books, and plenty of time and space to network and mingle.
www.mosesorganic.org

Feb 26 11th Annual Oregon Small Farms Conference. Corvallis, OR
<http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/2011SF>
C

March 2 - 4 National Ag Ed Summit. Sponsored by The National Council for Agricultural Education and the National FFA Organization. Orlando, FL.
www.naae.org/links/newsitems/

March 3 17th Annual ELA Conference & Eco-Marketplace Springfield, MA
<http://www.ecolandscaping.org>

March 4 - 6 COABC annual conference, Sidney, British Columbia, Canada
www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca

March 10-13 Expo West, Anaheim Convention Center Anaheim, CA. Education & Events: March 10-13, Trade Show: March 11-13. www.expowest.com

March 16-18 USDA Organic Farming Systems Research Conference Washington, D.C. Info at:
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/ConferenceCenter/OrganicFarmingSystems/>

March 17 - 19 Chicago FamilyFarmed EXPO Chicago, IL
<http://www.familyfarmedexpo.com/>

March 20 - 23 The Farmworker Conference 2011 San Antonio, TX
<http://www.mafofarmworker.com>

March 24-25 Northwest Regional Food Summit: Building Community Food Connections. Rice Lake, Wisconsin.
email Tracey Mofle for info.

March 27 20th IOIA AGM, see page 1 for details
COABC

March 30 2011 Ohio Farm to School Conference Cleveland, OH
<http://www.ccbh.net/ccbh/opencms/CCBH/modules/campaigns/0034.html>

April 1 - 2 Growing Communities - One Garden at a Time. Southwest ACGA Conference. Tempe, AZ
<http://www.communitygarden.org/>

April 6 - 7 OTA Spring Policy Conference and Hill Visit Days, Washington, D.C. www.ota.com

April 26 - 29 NOSB Meeting, Seattle, WA.
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateJ&page=NOSBMeetings>

May 19 - 21 Food Policy from Neighborhood to Nation Portland, OR
http://foodpolicyconference.org/Food_Policy_from_Neighborhood_to_Nation/About_the_Conference.html

June 9 - 12 Food and Agriculture Under the Big Sky Missoula, MT
<http://www.blackfarmersconf.org/about-us>

June 16 - 17 Food for Thought: Food System Literacy in Classrooms, Cafeterias and Communities, Simsbury, CT
<https://www.nais.org/environmental/index.cfm?ItemNumber=153585&sn.ItemNumber=153587>

July 17 - 20 Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) Annual Conference Washington, DC, DC.
http://www.swcs.org/en/conferences/2011_annual_conference/

For a complete listing of upcoming IOIA trainings, please see page 3 of this issue