



# The Inspectors' Report

## IOIA Has A New Logo!

IOIA's bold new logo is the result of a comprehensive process that included a logo design contest; critical input from the membership, staff, and board; and finally a Montana designer who put it all together.

The IOIA Board of Directors initiated the development of a new logo more than two years ago. IOIA is an acronym recognized around the world, so the acronym itself was selected as the focal point of the logo. Because IOIA is an international organization, members suggested a globe be included and the final product portrays the globe with a unique perspective. The earth is represented as a view of the Atlantic Ocean, flanked by the eastern and western hemispheres. The yin-yang image created by South America and Africa, as well as the leaf, ties it all together and keeps it lively and dynamic. The leaf represents our organic nature and roots to the living earth.

The Board approved the final version of the new logo design on February 27, and it was presented to the membership on March 1 at the annual meeting in Chilliwack, British Columbia, CANADA. A visual update of the IOIA website featuring the new logo is in progress. Check it out during the month of June at [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net).

New caps highlighting our new logo will be available for purchase soon.

### What have IOIA members had to say?

"Cool!" Doug Crabtree, Montana

"Congratulations!! It is a beautiful one!!"  
Gabi Soto, Costa Rica

"Very nice. I like it."  
Sam Welsch, Nebraska

"Beautiful and entirely appropriate."  
Christopher Warren-Smith, California

"Congrats to IOIA for its new logo and the ideas it conveys."  
Alex Moreno, Nebraska

"I like it!  
Stanley Edwards, Utah

"Really nice logo. I like it very much."  
Rick Martinez, Florida

"I love it - wow!!!" - Lori Wyman, Massachusetts

## Notes from the Chair - by Ib Hagsten

Thank you to the old BOD & welcome to the new one. It was a pleasure to serve you last year on a board consisting of Jennie Clifford, acting chair; Eric Feutz, Hélène Bouvier, Debra Bunn, Silke Fuchshofen, & me. As I commented to someone at Janine Gibson's Canadian reception following a day of advanced training, "You don't need to thank me for being on the board, as we work together like a caring family." I'm confident that the great BOD retreat in NY was very instrumental, too. Thank you, too, to the very large percentage of

the members who recently participated in the selection process for next year's AGM & advanced training location: California won out. See y'all there in March of 2013!

It is very exciting to serve together with the current very international board of the International IOIA, as there are US members, both without or with accents (Danish & German); a Korean, & two Canadians. Welcome to the new board of director members, Stuart McMillan from Canada & Isidor Yu from Korea & welcome

to returning members who form the executive board: Hélène Bouvier, vice chair; Eric Feutz, treasurer; Silke Fuchshofen, secretary; Deb Bunn, director at large, & Jennie Clifford, who as past acting-chair, was elected to serve

[see Notes, p4]

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2013 IOIA Annual Meeting headed for California, first weekend in March! See page 2 for more details.

## 2012 Membership Directory Updates

Please note the following changes:

WELCOME RETURNING FORMER MEMBERS (NOT PRINTED IN THE 2012 DIRECTORY)

*Ernesto de la Rosa*  
([inspectororganico@yahoo.com](mailto:inspectororganico@yahoo.com))

*David Konrad, Ontario*

ADDRESS CHANGES:

INSPECTORS:  
*Elizabeth Nelson*  
([sixdegreesorless@gmail.com](mailto:sixdegreesorless@gmail.com))  
*Michael Monahan*  
([bdmike23@gmail.com](mailto:bdmike23@gmail.com))

SUPPORTING MEMBERS:

*Ted Craig*  
*Wyoming Department of Ag*  
*Agricultural Grants Manager*  
*307.777.6651*  
[ted.craig@wyo.gov](mailto:ted.craig@wyo.gov)

WELCOME NEW 2012 SUPPORTING BUSINESS MEMBERS:

*Maple Overseas Cultural Foundation*  
(BC CANADA)  
*Organic Market (Moscow, RUSSIA)*

WELCOME NEW 2012 MEMBERS:

INSPECTORS:  
*Judith Eileen Brown (California, USA)*  
*Wendy Sue Harper (Vermont, USA)*  
*Darren Maum (New York, USA)*  
*Dr. Jean Richardson (Vermont, USA)*  
*F. Martin Sanchez (New Mexico, USA)*

WELCOME NEW 2012 SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS:

*Sean Huie (Pennsylvania, USA)*  
*William Ladwig (Wisconsin, USA)*  
*Gary Lambert (Pennsylvania, USA)*  
*Jean Myszka (Wisconsin, USA)*  
*Amy Nystrom (Minnesota, USA)*  
*Daniel Park (Oregon USA)*  
*Andrew Park (Pennsylvania, USA)*  
*Susan Ranck (Pennsylvania, USA)*  
*Mac Stone (Kentucky, USA)*  
*Gavin Wright (British Columbia, CANADA)*  
*George "Jesse" Starkey (Florida, USA)*  
*Gunta Vitins (BC CANADA)*

**Note from the ED:** *With space at a premium, I'm giving up my "Notes" space to the next Annual Meeting.... Margaret*

## 2013 AGM will be in California, tentatively set for Saturday, March 2!

A resounding 25% of the inspector membership replied to a query from our office about the location for the next AGM. The members' response set a new record, and most of those responding said they would likely come. So mark your calendars now!

Members were asked to choose between California, New Orleans, and Costa Rica, or to suggest an alternate location. IOIA strives to be in Canada for about one-third of our AGMs, in the USA for about two-thirds, and in Latin America every fourth or fifth year. This roughly corresponds to the location of most of the IOIA membership. As an illustration of the geographic diversity within IOIA, members from Iran, Peru, and Russia joined within the past year.

At the 2012 AGM, members considered a number of other potential locations, including Texas, USA; Georgia, USA; and Mexico. All members appreciate an AGM in a sunny, mild climate although temperate or cold climate locations are not ruled out. The 2012 AGM group narrowed it down to the top three choices.

Thirty members selected California. New Orleans and Costa Rica tied exactly, with 18 members selecting each one. A logical assumption might be that California won out by majority, because 14% of all inspector members reside in California (the highest % of members of any state or province). However, an analysis shows something different. Of the 30 members who selected California first or equal to others, only 8 were from CA. Another 15 were from the US but outside CA, 4 were from Canada, and 3 were from outside Canada or the US.

The members have spoken. The BOD listened. The next AGM will be in California, and the BOD plans to recommend Costa Rica for 2014. That decision will be finalized next year.

The Latin American country with the largest membership is Costa Rica. Host countries in Latin America have included Mexico, Guatemala, and Costa Rica. On IOIA's rotation schedule, 2013 was destined for Latin America. Members need time to plan and prepare for a trip to another country, so we hope to have higher participation than usual in 2014 by announcing our intent earlier. Members now have 2 years to think about, schedule, and prepare for a tropical AGM. Several California locations are being considered. Ideas? Please send them in!



*Ib Hagsten, IOIA BOD chair for exactly one week, joined me to represent IOIA at Expo West in Anaheim, California with the new IOIA display and logo.*

### IOIA Board of Directors

Ib Hagsten, PhD.....	Chair
Hélène Bouvier.....	Vice Chair
Eric Feutz.....	Treasurer
Silke Fuchshofen.....	Secretary
Debra Bunn.....	Director at Large
Stuart McMillan.....	Director
Isidor Yu.....	Director
Jennifer Clifford.....	Special Past Chair
<i>The Inspectors' Report</i> is the newsletter of the International Organic Inspectors Association. IOIA is a 501 (c)(3) educational organization. Our 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.	
Editor: Diane Cooner, Box 1259, Guerneville, CA 95446 USA. 707-394-5510 <a href="mailto:webgal@ioia.net">webgal@ioia.net</a>	
Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1. Published quarterly on recycled paper.	



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## IOIA Training Schedule

### **Awajishima, Hyogo, Japan, Farm Course, June 5 - 8, 2012**

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor a 4-day Japanese language Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training using JAS Standards as a reference. Contact Mutsumi Sakuyoshi at JOIA for more information. E-Mail: [mu-saku@cap.ocn.ne.jp](mailto:mu-saku@cap.ocn.ne.jp)  
website: [www.ioia.jp](http://www.ioia.jp)

### **Leavenworth, Washington - Crop and Processing, June 11 -15, 2012**

IOIA and Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) will cosponsor Crop and Processing Inspection Training, running concurrently in central Washington. Training cosponsor WSDA Organic Food Program is a USDA-accredited certification agency for organic crop and livestock producers, processors, handlers and retailers. The largest state certification program in the nation, WSDA's program and staff of 22 is entirely fee-funded and currently certifies over 1,150 organic clients. In addition to organic certification services, WSDA offers the review of material inputs for organic production through its Brand Name Material List, a list that currently registers 750 material inputs and is available to all on WSDA's website. <http://www.agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/>

### **Webinar: IOIA/OMRI Crop Inputs Webinar - June 20, 2012 (last one for 2012!)**

This webinar will cover what farm inspectors should look for during inspections, and how OMRI reviews materials. Inspectors and certifiers who attend will gain skill in understanding input assessment, and in navigating the resources available on the OMRI website ([www.omri.org](http://www.omri.org)). OMRI will provide the technical expertise of Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador, OMRI Program Director, as lead presenter. The course includes pre-course reading as well as in-class discussion and exercises, with opportunity for Q & A. Attendees will also receive an individual subscription to OMRI and a graded post-assessment. Joint IOIA and OMRI Certificates of Completion will be awarded to successful participants, and discounts are available for current OMRI subscribers and IOIA members. To register, see <http://ioia.ganconference.com/?page=REGISTER&meeting=2393098>.

### **Guayaquil, Ecuador August 20-24, 2012**

IOIA and BCS ÖKO Garantie will cosponsor a 4.5 day Spanish language Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training using the NOP Standard with comparison to EU organic legislation. For additional information and application please contact Patricio Ajitimbay at Ph.: 00593 3 2 910 253 or Fax: 00593 3 2 910 333 e-mail: [admin@bcsecuador.com](mailto:admin@bcsecuador.com)

### **Farmington, Minnesota - Crop and Processing**

#### **Crop October 15 -19 // Processing October 21 -25, 2012**

IOIA and the Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) will cosponsor two organic inspection training opportunities. The two courses will run sequentially and will be held at Mount Olivet Conference and Retreat Center near Farmington. Each basic course includes 4 days of instruction, focuses on the USDA NOP, and includes a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. Crop and Processing Inspection Training courses follow IOIA's curriculum requirements, with classroom instruction on the organic standards; working with organic system plans; how to inspect; audit trail requirements; risk assessment; investigative skills; report writing; approved materials and ingredients; inspector conduct, confidentiality, and ethics; understanding the difference between inspecting and consulting; and effective communication. IOIA Organic Inspector Training courses are recommended for inspector trainees, certification agency staff, and regulatory agency staff who want to better understand the organic inspection and certification process. Cosponsor OCIA is one of the world's largest organic certification entities. OCIA International is a group of growers, processors, manufacturers, and sellers of organic food who strive to build environmental stewardship through ethical partnerships with nature. OCIA has internationally recognized and accredited certification programs, unique for its membership-driven programs, education, and support of organic producers. OCIA has developed detailed standards for organic production and processing, including specialty standards for honey, maple syrup, coffee, wild rice, wild sea vegetables, mushrooms, and personal body care products. To register for the trainings, see the IOIA website for application forms and more details. For more information about OCIA go to: <http://www.ocia.org>

### **Fall 2012, Ontario**

Canadian Organic Growers and IOIA are developing entry-level, basic crop and processing inspection training courses. Each course will include comprehensive training on the Canadian Organic Standards and four days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus one-half day for testing. Additionally, this partnership will offer concurrent 3-day trainings for audiences other than inspectors. Those trainings are geared for certification agency staff, regulators, industry consultants, and educators. For more information about these trainings as they are developed, see [www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca) or [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net).

*Watch upcoming IOIA newsletters and the website training page for details as these and other trainings develop.*

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## Notes from page 1

as Ex Officio Special Past Chair. We are all here to serve you, the members, together with our very capable staff in Montana, Jonda Crosby, the new Training Services Director; Sacha Draine, Int'l Training Manager; Kathy Bowers, US Training Services coordinator; Lynell Denson, office assistant; together with Margaret Scoles, ED, who ably provides the "glue" that binds us all together.

The AGM in Chilliwack, BC, (in the "Canadian Riviera") went very well & was attended by a preponderance of Canadian members. The team who presented our keynote address (see AGM article) was very informative & Jennifer's official representation of the BOD to the membership was impeccable. Plus, if you stayed home, you missed the most scrumptious organic meals.

IOIA has been & continues to provide tremendous quality training – crops, livestock, processing, &, now thru webinars, OMRI materials, etc. Last year as a new board member I gained more insight into the Training Institute (for which we need to thank the foresight & perseverance of prior boards). Having the 100, 200 & 300-level categories at first did not make much sense, however, now they do. For example, when a potential registree for an IOIA Basic ("100-level") course, in attempting to "master" the pre-requisite "100-level" assignment, takes him/herself off the list, we save a class seat for a more worthy candidate.

The 100-level "basic" course in, for example livestock, instructs one enough to inspect an average layer or beef cattle operation, yet it does not necessarily qualify you to do dairy farms, & that is where the 200 or 300-level courses, like

Pasture Rule/DMI calculations, comes in. Having mentored several basic-level IOIA-graduates, I have learned two things, (1) "don't think you are now ready for the complicated stuff, just because you graduated with a passing grade"; & (2) ask for a copy of the mentee's IOIA graduation certificate before offering to mentor, as some folks believe having attended a class is equal to having been able to capture enough of the essence of the materials to handle inspections on your own.

In "my world" there is an interesting mix of organic & conventional, as I am one of only a handful of folks who are registered as a TSP (Technical Service Provider) for USDA/NRCS to conduct "Transition to Organic Conservation Plans." It is amazing to review soil tests from conventional farms, where the %OM (organic matter) is less than two (a level where the nutrients leach out) and from organic farms, where thru organic management (crop rotation, multiplicity of crops, & cover crops/manure) practiced over many years, 4-5% OM is more of the rule than the exception.

We, as organic inspectors, have a most amazingly rich set of experiences ahead of us if we but capture them, such as (1) sitting at the kitchen table & getting to know the entire family, while collecting sufficient information to present an 'objective, impartial, & well-formulated report' on their operational reality & audit trail, or (2) observing every 'nook & cranny' in processing/handling operations from 'the start-up kitchen' in the garage to the 1,000,000 ft<sup>2</sup> processing plant, where only one out of 18 lines is dedicated to organics, yet all the while, being able to (3) observe multi-generation families become

profitable with their organic enterprises on the family farm.

To the new members listed in the last IOIA newsletter, as well as to the longest-standing founding members (of twenty years ago), we welcome your input, your participation, & your supportive membership. May each of you have a productive, fulfilling inspection year!

## Organic groups file appeal in seed case against Monsanto

A coalition of farm interests led by the Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association on March 28 filed a Notice of Appeal challenging Judge Naomi Buchwald's Feb. 24 ruling dismissing its lawsuit challenging Monsanto's patents on genetically engineered seed technologies. The plaintiffs, who are organic or committed to farming without genetically engineered seeds, fear that trespass from Monsanto's GE seed or crops will contaminate their crops, and will be viewed by Monsanto as illegal possession resulting in patent infringement allegations. The original lawsuit was filed on March 29, 2011. The judge's decision is posted at: <http://farmandranchfreedom.org/sff/OSGATA-v-Monsanto-MTD-Decision.pdf> More info at [Pubpat.org](http://Pubpat.org)

## CCOF and Oregon Tilth to merge

CCOF and Oregon Tilth have announced plans to merge. Membership of both organizations, to be known as CCOF Tilth, will be asked to ratify the merger before Oct. 31, 2012. Go to [www.ccof.org](http://www.ccof.org) to read to official press release.

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## First-Ever Farmer v. Independent Organic Inspector Suit Filed

Press Release - May 9, 2012, Raymond, NE.

On February 13, 2012, Paul Rosberg of Randolph, Nebraska filed a suit in the Lancaster County (Nebraska) District Court against Evrett Lunquist, an independent organic inspector of Raymond, Nebraska. In the suit, Rosberg claims that information Lunquist provided to the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) caused the NOP to revoke Rosberg's organic certification. Rosberg seeks damages of more than \$3 million dollars.

This case is notable because it is the first known case of an (organic) farmer bringing suit against an organic inspector. [Ed. note: as far as IOIA is aware, this is the first time a case like this has arisen.] Lunquist had inspected Rosberg as an independent organic inspector several years previously for two different organic certifying agencies. Certified organic farms and processors, under regulation of the NOP, must have an on-site inspection annually. Many certifying agencies use independently contracted inspectors to perform this service after they have had intensive training focused on anything ranging from inspection of farms, livestock, processors and a variety of more specific situations. IOIA, the Montana-based International Organic Inspectors Association, works throughout the world to lead training sessions independently and in collaboration with a wide range of organic certifying agencies.

Upon receipt of the information provided by Lunquist, the NOP began an investigation of Rosberg. Based upon their independent investigation, the NOP found that Rosberg "did not disclose his prior certification history, notices of non-compliances, or notices of denial when applying for organic

certification with four consecutive (organic) certifying agents."<sup>1</sup> Although Lunquist's report to the NOP should have been kept confidential under NOP policy, Lunquist's identity was inadvertently released when Rosberg requested copies of documents from the NOP as part of Rosberg's appeal of his organic certificate revocation. While Lunquist was not acting in the role of an inspector at that time of his complaint to the NOP, Lunquist is a member of IOIA and required by their Inspector Code of Ethics to report suspected fraud to the appropriate authorities.

The case has not been scheduled for hearing at this time; additional information regarding pending court dates as scheduled may be found through the District Court of Lancaster County, Nebraska website at <http://lancaster.ne.gov/districtcourt/index.html>

Lunquist and his wife's own farm is certified organic and Biodynamic®. Lunquist and family have created a website to accept contributions for the mounting costs of the legal defense in this case. Additional updates may also be found at [www.LunquistLegalFund.org](http://www.LunquistLegalFund.org) as well as the contribution link. A congregational sharing fund is also accepting general contributions through First Mennonite Church, (attn.: Sharing Fund), Lincoln, Nebraska: 7300 Holdrege St, Lincoln, NE 68505.

*For more information on this matter, contact Evrett Lunquist or Ruth Chantry, tel: 402.783.9005 [inspector@commongoodfarm.com](mailto:inspector@commongoodfarm.com)*

<sup>1</sup> *In re: Paul A. Rosberg, Administrator's Decision, APL-012-10 (USDA Agricultural Marketing Service).*

## Man gets Two Years in Organic Food Scam

On April 4, U.S. District Judge Ann Aiken cited the long-running Lane County (Oregon) Farmers Market and strong local interest in pesticide-free

foods as she imposed a 27-month federal prison sentence on 55-year-old Harold Chase for selling a local grain broker 4.2 million pounds of conventional corn he misrepresented as organic.

In a plea deal with the government, Chase pleaded guilty in December to a single count of wire fraud in connection with the case. He admitted wrongfully pocketing an extra \$190,000 by passing off the conventional grain as USDA-certified organic corn.

The wire fraud conviction reflected Chase's use of a fax line to send Grain Millers faked documentation that he bought the corn from a USDA-certified organic farm in Milton-Freewater. Grain Millers contacted authorities after finding "inconsistencies" while auditing the transaction to ensure USDA organic program compliance, according to Keith Horton, vice president of milling at the company's Eugene plant.

The bogus fax was part of an elaborate ruse Chase conducted between November 2009 and May 2010 to pass off the corn as organic, nearly doubling his profits, according to the government. He used several aliases to buy approximately 2,253 tons of conventional corn from four grain suppliers in Idaho and Eastern Washington, Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott Bradford wrote in court documents. Bradford pressed for 27 months in prison, citing the "seriousness" of Chase undermining the integrity of the USDA's National Organic Program.

Chase defrauded "countless consumers of the end-products" - such as milk - who paid higher prices to get what they believed was pesticide-free foods, Bradford wrote. Chase also jeopardized the organic certification of the Milton-Freewater farm and of the businesses that unwittingly used the falsely labeled corn in their own organic products, the prosecutor said.

<http://www.registerguard.com/web/newslocalnews/27859135-41/chase-organic-corn-grain-conventional.html.csp>

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## New EU-US Organic Equivalency Agreement, effective June 1

The agreement, signed in February in Germany at BioFach is the result of at least 10 years of negotiations. This landmark agreement becomes effective June 1. Any inspection done between Feb 16 and June 1 must still follow previous requirements.

The equivalence arrangement only covers products produced and/or handled and exported from the United States or the European Union. It doesn't cover NOP certified bananas from Costa Rica or NOP certified rice from China; and the agreement is only between the US and the EU. It does not apply to product from non-EU countries such as Switzerland. **Inspector take away** – be able to identify the 23 countries that make up the EU.

A USDA-accredited certifying agent must complete an EU export certificate for all USDA organic products traded under the arrangement. The reverse is true for product imported from the EU. Inspectors of handling operations will note these import certificates if EU certified organic ingredients are used, same as in the past.

What does this mean for inspectors verifying the NOP standards in the US? It means inspectors no longer need to worry about doing assessment to the previous list of critical variances such as parallel production, manure from landless systems (caged layer hen manure), sodium nitrate, potassium chloride, etc. There is only one critical variance on both sides:

1. Organic agricultural products derived from animals treated with antibiotics cannot be exported to the US as organic. Imagine the verification process for organic milk chocolate from Germany?

2. Crops produced using antibiotics cannot be exported to the EU as organic. The only allowance in the NOP for antibiotics in crops is streptomycin for fire blight control in apples and pears, so only those crops are affected.

**Inspector take-away** – if streptomycin is used for fire blight, make sure it is specifically mentioned in the report.

Also, aquaculture is excluded from the agreement. And the agreement does not mention sodium nitrate. There is a general feeling in the US that the annotation that allows it up to 20% of the nitrogen needs of the crop will be removed at the end of this year. This probably a key reason it was not addressed in the agreement. However, the re-evaluation of this prohibited natural is not a done deal. Sodium nitrate (aka Chilean nitrate) is currently on the list of prohibited naturals, which effectively means it is allowed with annotation. NOP has promised to come out with a proposed rule on whether it might be continued on the list 205.602(g). That Federal Register notice is yet to be published. **Inspector Take-Away** – forget about all of the previous critical variances except for antibiotics. Forget about parallel production, poultry manure, etc. Be aware that inspection checklists and certifier procedures will likely be undergoing radical changes, but this might not be implemented entirely by June 1.

Labeling must comply with the requirements of the importing destination. EU product must comply with NOP labeling for product coming to the US. NOP product exported to the EU must meet with EU labeling requirements. For retail products, labels or stickers must state the name of the U.S. or EU certifying agent and may use the USDA Organic seal or the EU organic logo. EU has no “100% organic” and no “MWO” label categories. The only

EU label claim is “organic”. Wine is a special case, because Europe allows sulfites in organic wine, the US does not. Therefore organic wine from EU might not meet NOP label requirements. **Inspector Take-Away:** make sure all labels have been reviewed by the certifier if product is being exported to Europe. Inspectors should generally not make statements about adequacy of labels.

What does this agreement mean for the US-based certifier certifying US product? Huge cost savings. No longer does the NOP accredited certifier need ISO 65 accreditation. No longer do certifiers need to maintain two different accreditations. All NOP-accredited certifiers can now send product to European markets.

What does this agreement mean to US producers? Much easier access to European markets. The certified operator will no longer need to base certifier selection on whether the certifier made the commitment to the costly second accreditation. Whether the certifier has one or two accreditations will no longer be a basis for certifier differentiation, marketing advantage, or selection of the certifier.

What does this agreement mean for the US-based certifier certifying non-US product or the non-US-based NOP certifier? What does it mean for the product to have been produced or handled in the US? How much handling must be done on US soil or in US ports for the Costa Rican bananas or Chinese rice to meet the terms of the agreement? Inspectors, certifiers, and regulators will be grappling to determine and define the answer. The old saying, “The devil is in the details” is apropos.

Further resources - the [International Organic Trade page](http://www.ota.com/GlobalMarkets/Trade-and-Equivalency-Agreements.html) of the NOP website and the Organic Trade Association website [www.ota.com/GlobalMarkets/Trade-and-Equivalency-Agreements.html](http://www.ota.com/GlobalMarkets/Trade-and-Equivalency-Agreements.html). And [http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm)

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## New Organic Standards Released for Canadian Farmed Seafood

With the release of the Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standard on May 10, Canadian consumers will now have the opportunity to choose certified organic farmed seafood including finfish, shellfish and aquatic plants.

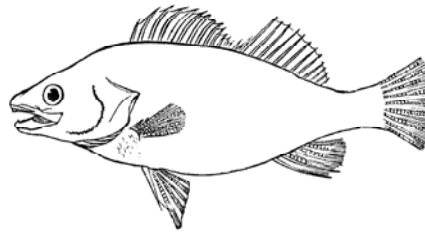
Aquaculture, the farming of aquatic plants and animals, is the fastest growing food production system in the world, producing about 50 percent of the seafood consumed today. Because aquatic farming relies on plant and animal husbandry, it is possible to apply organic growing and rearing principles to this system of food production. Like its organic terrestrial counterpart, the organic aquatic sector uses specific farming protocols which minimize the input of synthetic substances and maximize local environmental quality.

Specifically, the organic aquaculture standard prohibits the use of antibiotics, herbicides and genetically modified organisms, and severely restricts the use of parasiticides, allowed only under veterinary supervision as a last course of treatment. The standard sets measurable requirements for practices that minimize the impact of waste. These include defining stocking rates, cleaning procedures and the cleaning and feed materials that must be used.

The new standard was developed with the Canadian General Standards Board and a stakeholder committee of industry members, consumer advocates, regulators and environmental organizations. The draft standard went through two extensive public reviews and

countless changes before being published.

To qualify for organic certification, Canadian aquaculture products must have been grown on farms operating in accordance with organic aquatic farming methods established by the new standards. Farms are inspected by third-party certifying bodies to ensure that the standard has been followed. The new national standard does not currently fall under the scope of Canada's Organic Products Regulations or Canada's trade equivalencies for organic products with the US or EU.



“Until now, organic claims could show up on aquaculture products from outside the country and consumers wouldn't know whether the claims were trustworthy or what standards they met,” said Matthew Holmes, Executive Director of the Canada Organic Trade Association. “Now we have a made-in-Canada standard that clearly and verifiably defines the environmental and husbandry requirements, and meets consumers' expectations for a high-water mark for this quickly-growing Canadian sector.”

To learn more about the Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standard visit [www.aquaculture.ca/organic](http://www.aquaculture.ca/organic).

[Organic Aquaculture FAQ \(pdf\)](#)

[New Organic Standards Released for Canadian Farmed Seafood \(French version\)](#).

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## IOIA Monitor Training - Not Just for Pipelines Anymore

An Organic Training for 11 environmental inspectors and agricultural monitors was held in Minneapolis, MN on May 3, 2012. The training was cosponsored with Barr Engineering Co. The 4 hour training covers the NOP regulation, organic system plans, and the Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan – Appendix – Mitigative Actions for Organic Agricultural Land.

Participants enjoyed learning about what organic farmers need to do in order to be certified organic, as many of them eat organic food. Organic snacks, such as grapes, soft drinks, cookies and cheese sticks, were provided. Participants are required to take a short test in order to receive a Certificate of Completion and hard hat sticker.

The training prepares environmental inspectors and agricultural monitors to implement the Organic Appendix as “permit condition”. Minnesota is now implementing the Organic Appendix, which was originally written for pipeline construction, to utility transmission line construction and maintenance. Excel Energy will begin construction of their Cap-X Project in 2012.

Joyce E. Ford, IOIA trainer, has several years experience working as an Agricultural Monitor on several pipeline construction sites in MN and as an expert witness on a court case regarding accidental herbicide application on organic farm from utility company during regularly scheduled maintenance.

## Organic Livestock Producers Have New Options for Animal Health Emergencies

The NOP published a final rule on May 15 providing new options for organic livestock producers to restore animal health in emergency medical situations. The rule is effective one day after publication. The rule now allows the use of two parasiticides—fenbendazole and moxidectin—in organic livestock production as emergency treatment for dairy and breeder stock when approved preventive management fails to prevent parasite infestation. Ivermectin was previously the only listed synthetic parasiticide. The synthetic substances will not be allowed for organic slaughter stock. Milk and milk products from a treated organic animal may not be labeled as organic for 90 days following treatment. The USDA organic regulations prohibit the routine use of synthetic parasiticides. Organic livestock producers are first and foremost responsible for managing parasites through practices specified in their organic system plans, including selection of disease resistant breeds, rotational grazing and culling of susceptible animals.

## ATTRA Open Again

For over 20 years, the ATTRA program (Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas) served as a reliable source of research-based information about sustainable agriculture, offering an expansive selection of publications, webinars, and listings of farming internships. In 2010, its staff answered over 60,000 requests on its 1-800 call line and brought over 5.8 million unique visitors to its website, from which users downloaded over 4.3 million publications. ATTRA's workshops and other in-person presentations

reached 177,000 attendees from 45 states.

Last year, ATTRA fans nationwide were shocked when the program had its Fiscal Year 2011 funding completely eliminated.

Thankfully, and in part due to the vocal objections of so many users of its services, Congress reinstated the program's funding in FY 2012, though at the lower level of \$2.25 million as opposed to \$2.8 million in 2010.

Even though Congress committed the funds, it took months for the funds to actually be released. In early March the check finally arrived so the program can return to full functioning.

You can find ATTRA and their myriad resources at [www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org).

## NOP Final Rule amends National List

NOP published a final rule in the *Federal Register* on Feb. 14 to amend the use of various materials in organic crop production and processing. These changes became effective March 15. The rule allows the use of four new substances in the production or processing of USDA organic products:

**microcrystalline cheesewax** used to hold moisture in logs growing organic mushrooms; **acidified sodium chlorite** used to sanitize food and food contact surfaces, and **non-organic dried orange pulp** and **non-organic Pacific kombu seaweed** (both in multi-ingredient organic products) if organic versions are unavailable in sufficient quantities. Meanwhile, the rule prohibits the use of bleached non-organic lecithin by removing it from the National List, and clarifies an allowance for de-oiled non-organic unbleached lecithin in organic food processing if the organic form is not commercially available.

## ICS Now Subsidiary Company of IMI Global

International Certification Services, Inc. (ICS) announced on February 29 that it has sold controlling interest to Integrated Management Information, Inc. (IMI Global), a leading provider of verification and Internet solutions for the agricultural/livestock industry under the Where Food Comes From® brand. ICS's flagship certification program is Farm Verified Organic® – an ISO 65 and IFOAM accredited program that is designed for organic producers selling to U.S. and international markets. ICS also offers USDA NOP, Canadian Organic Regime (COR) and Food Alliance sustainability certification as well as facilitation and compliancy of European Union, Japan and Bio Suisse standards.

ICS' programs will be incorporated into IMI Global's Where Food Comes From® labeling program, which uses USDA Process Verified Programs (PVP) to connect consumers with the food supply chain at the point of purchase. Specifically, consumers using a smart phone can scan the quick response code on product labels to access information about the product's origins and verify a range of product claims – soon to include organic – and provide consumers with an added level of confidence in a product's attributes.

## Guilty Plea Entered in Fraudulent Fertilizer case: CA AB856 Now in Effect

A guilty plea in federal court in San Francisco on Feb. 22 brings closure to a case which first became public in late 2008 regarding a California company that allegedly sold a liquid fertilizer fraudulently labeled for use on organic farms. A positive side note to the case is that



**California's** Assembly Bill 856 (AB856) governing oversight over organic input materials sold in the state and signed into law Jan. 1, 2010, went into effect on March 29. As a result, all fertilizers sold in California and claiming compliance for use by organic producers must now be registered, approved and inspected annually by the California Dept of Food and Agriculture.

### **NOP issues memo on organic inspector qualifications**

NOP has issued a memo to Accredited Certifying Agents (shown at right) reminding them of the importance of a rigorous hiring and selection process when recruiting inspectors for their teams. Inspectors must have sufficient expertise in organic production or handling techniques to fully comply with and implement the terms and conditions of the organic certification program under the Act and regulations. NOP plans to release draft guidance later this year describing the qualifications needed by inspectors and reviewers to comply with certification requirements.


### **Clarification on lecithin**

On Feb. 14, NOP published a final rule affecting two listings for lecithin on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. In response to questions received shortly after releasing the final rule, NOP released a Q & A document to clarify the types of lecithin now allowed in organic processed products. The National List formerly allowed bleached lecithin on 205.605(b) (allowed non-organic non-agricultural synthetics) and unbleached lecithin on 205.606 (allowed non-organic agricultural ingredients



1400 Independence Avenue, SW.  
Room 2646-S, STOP 0268  
Washington, DC 20250-0201

APR 27 2012

To: National Organic Program Accredited Certifying Agents  
From: Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator   
Re: Criteria and Qualifications for Organic Inspectors

Organic inspectors play a vital role in ensuring organic integrity. Their visits to organic farms and processing facilities are often the most direct contact that certifying agents have with their clients, and they bring back the on-the-ground observations that form the foundation for certification.

Given the importance of these inspectors, the National Organic Program (NOP) is issuing this memo to remind certifying agents of the importance of a rigorous hiring and selection process when recruiting these specialists as members of your team. Regardless of whether the inspector is a full-time employee, or an independent contractor, Section 205.501(a)(1) of the NOP regulations states that certifying agents and their staff must, "have sufficient expertise in organic production or handling techniques to fully comply with and implement the terms and conditions of the organic certification program under the Act and the regulations . . ."

Assessing a candidate for the appropriate level of expertise takes time and care. We encourage certifiers to request and then contact the candidate inspector's previous employers and clients, professional references, and other sources that can provide honest feedback about the candidate's credentials and past experience. Remember, your inspectors are often the face of your organization, and by extension, the NOP. As such, the thorough vetting of any candidate inspector is a vital step in ensuring the integrity of the program overall.

Later this year, the NOP plans to release draft guidance describing the qualifications needed by inspectors and reviewers to fully comply with and implement the terms and conditions of the organic certification program to the organic standards. Once the guidance is finalized, these qualification criteria will assist certifiers in affirming that inspectors and reviewers have sufficient expertise to effectively certify operations to the NOP regulations. Careful assessment during the hiring and recruiting process are vital first steps that all certifiers should have in place as standard practice.

subject to commercial availability). **Effective March 15**, the listing for bleached lecithin at § 205.605(b) above was removed and the listing on 205.606 was revised. The change to the listing means that organic forms of lecithin must be used in organic processed products, with one exception: non-organic, de-oiled lecithin may be used **only** when an organic form of de-oiled lecithin is not commercially available. <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5097636>

**Washington State to expand university's organic farm**  
Washington State University has received a \$5 million donor investment from alumni and natural foods pioneers Chuck and

Louanna Eggert and their family to expand the WSU Organic Farm from four acres to nearly 30 acres. This expansion will make the operation the largest organic teaching farm on a university campus in the US. The Eggerts, who met while attending WSU, founded Pacific Natural Foods in 1987.

**CORP available online**  
Canada OTA's recently launched *Canadian Organic Retailing Practices (CORP)*, a comprehensive handling manual and training tool to help retail staff educate customers with information on organic production. The CORP manual can be downloaded free of charge from [COTA's website](#).

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## Being an Organic Technical Service Provider for NRCS

### *National Project Webinar Trainings Coming Soon*

By Jeff Schahczenski, NCAT

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), known by many for its ATTRA National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service project, has been working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and 11 sustainable and organic organizations from around the country to assist farmers and ranchers to better integrate organic and sustainable production into NRCS programs and procedures. One part of this three year project, is to assist NRCS by expanding the availability of technical service providers (Known as TSPs in NRCS lingo) to organic farmers and ranchers. To that end, partners to this project will be offering a series of four national webinars later this year and into 2013 for those interested in becoming TSPs particularly for organic and transitioning to organic farmers and ranchers. In an earlier edition of this newsletter (Inspectors Report, Fall 2011), Tony Fleming and Ib Hagsten did an excellent job at explaining the history and process of becoming a TSP. These webinars are intended to provide greater insight into the opportunities and challenges of being an NRCS TSP. We are planning to provide the opportunity to webinar participants to hear from current TSPs who work with organic growers and other national leaders. Our goal is to expand support for the conservation efforts of organic and sustainable farmers and ranchers. Contact me at [Jeffs@ncat.org](mailto:Jeffs@ncat.org) or toll free at our ATTRA hotline number, 1-800-346-9140 if you are interested in

the training webinars. IOIA will be posting the dates and times of the webinars on their website when they are announced.

TSPs can be private individuals, private businesses, non-profit organizations that are certified to assist NRCS field staff to help farmers and ranchers apply and improve conservation practices on their land. TSPs are contracted by NRCS at fixed rates to develop conservation plans, install conservation practices and inspect completed conservation efforts. For example, certified TSPs can assist farmers who wish to transition to organic production by helping them develop what is called a conservation activity plan. In NRCS lingo this is specifically called a CAP 138, or a Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition. Currently, a certified TSP can earn between \$1,560 to \$2,772 dollars to provide farmers and ranchers with a CAP 138. The demand for TSPs that can assist organic and transitioning producers appears to be significant with close to 400 requests from producers for doing organic conservation activity planning nationwide this year. In addition TSPs do not only have to serve organic producers by only providing CAP 138s. TSPs can also provide other types of technical service to organic producers including, nutrient management, grazing management, integrated pest management, irrigation water management, agricultural energy management, comprehensive air quality management, drainage water management, fish and wildlife habitat management, and pollinator management. Unfortunately, there are very few certified TSPs nationwide that are specifically certified to provide technical services to organic and transitioning organic producers and this has often made it difficult for transitioning and current producers to access NRCS

programs. For instance, NRCS has had a national special Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) organic initiative with up to \$50 million dollars particularly available to transitioning and certified organic farmers and ranchers which often include conservation planning activities. There is also expanding interest by organic producers in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and this too may require the technical assistance to implement the conservation enhancements that are part of that program.

Organizations partnering with NCAT include the Center for Rural Affairs, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service, Organic Farming Research Foundation, Virginia Association for Biological Farming, Florida Organic Growers, Kansas Rural Center, Wild Farm Alliance, Land Stewardship Project and Practical Farmers of Iowa.

## U.S. organic market surpasses \$31 billion in 2011

Driven by consumer choice, the U.S. organic industry grew by 9.5 percent overall in 2011 to reach \$31.5 billion in sales. Of this, the organic food and beverage sector was valued at \$29.22 billion, while the organic non-food sector reached \$2.2 billion, an 11 percent growth, while total comparable non-organic items grew only 5 percent, according to findings from the *Organic Trade Association's (OTA's) 2012 Organic Industry Survey*.

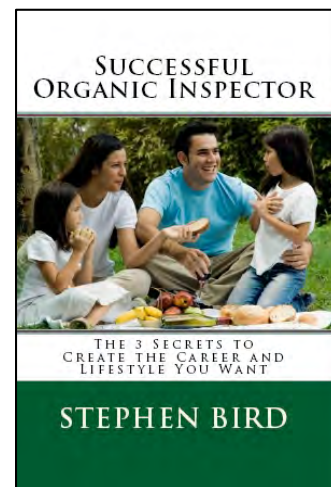
Overall organic product sales growth continued to outpace total sales of comparable conventionally produced food and non-food items, which experienced 4.7 percent growth. Organic food sales now represent 4.2 percent of all U.S. food sales, up from 4 percent in 2010.

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## Steve Bird on his new book, *Successful Organic Inspector*

I believe one of the greatest challenges organic inspectors face is communication. As inspectors, especially independent inspectors, we have limited opportunity to share information with other inspectors. We may get technical information from certifiers, IOIA, or the USDA, but not about how to make our inspecting business successful. I wrote *Successful Organic Inspector* to share some of the lessons I learned in ten years of organic inspecting with five different certified bodies (CB's). I gave a lot of thought to what kinds of information would be most valuable to inspectors. In reviewing inspector's needs I saw three key areas:

1. Establishing a business – Many people start out with good intentions and take a training but are unable to transition from training to career.
2. Building a Business – Many inspectors who establish a business reach a plateau and need assistance to know how to grow their business.
3. Customizing a Business – How do you shape your business to meet your needs.



In writing the book I tried to cover information that would be valuable for inspectors from the end of the IOIA training program to ones with established businesses. In the time since I took the Basic Farm Training in 2001 until now I have grown my inspection business from seventeen small farm inspections the first year to a full time year-round business in which I am selecting which certifiers I am willing to accept work from and rejecting those I prefer not to work for. The



goal of this book is to help those who wish to improve their business, and to be able to accomplish a thriving business without the ten years of trial-and-error it took me to make my inspection business “successful”.

The book is available at Amazon.com or you can go to [www.successfulorganicinspector.com](http://www.successfulorganicinspector.com). I hope the information I am sharing is this book helps you in your organic inspecting business. I also encourage you to contact me to get on the waiting list for my next book; *Organic Food & Labels, What every mom should know!* This book is designed to help shoppers discern the difference between marketing claims and “Organic” and explains the importance of looking for the “organic” label. You may email me at [OrganicFoodandLabels@gmail.com](mailto:OrganicFoodandLabels@gmail.com) to be placed on the waiting list and be notified of the release date.

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## Resources

***Sustainability metrics for the organic food industry*** The Sustainable Food Trade Association (SFTA) and its members have announced its collaboratively developed set of sustainability metrics designed for the organic food and agriculture industry. Co-developed through extensive research, industry and expert stakeholder review and use over the past three years, the sustainability metrics are available at <http://www.sustainablefoodtrade.org/metrics-report/>

***USDA Releases Food Hub Guide*** This new online resource can concentrate multiple producers' processing, distribution, and marketing efforts at a single site, attract local consumers

and allow smaller-sized farms to compete in larger markets. The new guide acts a resource for small and mid-sized farm operators seeking to expand their market opportunities through a variety of means.

Food hubs play a critical role in developing stronger supply chains and addressing the infrastructure challenges while supporting food access, regional economic development, and job creation.

The guide explains how producers can develop and participate in food hubs, as well as acquire funding. Interested parties can use the tool to determine how this funding can expand regional economies and to locate food hubs in their area. It is the most comprehensive handbook on food hubs ever available. Now farmers, buyers, researchers, consumers, or anyone interested in creating a food hub in

their community can tap into a single resource to find the information that they need.

USDA's Food Hub guide and info are available at:  
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5097957>

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), in conjunction with the [Wallace Center](#) at Winrock International, the [National Good Food Network](#), the [National Association of Produce Market Managers](#), and the [Project for Public Spaces](#), developed the resource as part of the [National Food Hub Collaboration](#). The resource is part of USDA's larger Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF) initiative and can be found on the [KYF Compass](#), a digital guide to USDA resources related to local and regional food systems.

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## Advanced Training in BC Stands Out Among Multiple Organic Events

By Lisa Pierce

This year the IOIA AGM was held in the midst of a marathon of organic events inspired by themes of innovation, cross training and collaboration. The venue was a Best Western truck stop oasis located in the heart of the Fraser Valley in Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada. For locals, the week of events opened with producer orientated conference sponsored by Certified Organic Associations of BC (umbrella organization approved by Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to accredit certifiers in BC) COABC has the distinction of being the only organization that has mandatory requirement for all verification officers to be members of IOIA.



The bridge between the COABC conference and IOIA Advanced Training held Feb 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 was Aquaculture workshop that was held for organic inspectors in anticipation of the May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012 release of the Canadian Organic Aquaculture standards. The relaxed and informative sessions were hosted on site by Brad Hicks of Taplow Feeds / First Mate Pet Foods . Taplow Feeds was initially founded in 1989 to produce fish food for the burgeoning aquaculture industry and later expanded to produce high quality pet food. ([www.taplow.com](http://www.taplow.com)) Brad Hicks (Taplow Feeds) and Tim Rundle (Creative Salmon), as both members of Canadian General Standards Board Aquaculture committee and producers with extensive experience in the aquaculture industry, provided insight into the development of aquaculture standards in Canada. Brad was a great host and started the day with a succinct and interesting presentation of the history of aquaculture. Tim followed up with a forthright portrayal of raising organic salmon in open net cages. Farmed salmon in open net pens is a contentious issue on the West Coast but many of us left the session impressed by Tim's honest description of his of his company's efforts to grapple with production challenges and the efforts made by Creative Salmon to hire local persons and seasonally reduce production when wild salmon is locally available. ([www.creativesalmon.com](http://www.creativesalmon.com))

Taplow Feeds sponsored our lunch at the Callicarpa Café next to Minter Gardens Nursery. At the table we were greeted by Brian Minter, the acclaimed garden guru and owner of Minter Gardens. Lunch was invigorated by an armload of garden inputs, a spontaneous Q&A session on acceptable garden practices, and complimentary plants and dessert all around.

The full day concluded with separate animal welfare workshop on poultry euthanasia techniques organized by the BC SPCA. The workshop, instructed by provincial veterinarian and avian pathology specialist at the Ministry of Agriculture diagnostic lab, included a discussion of acceptable poultry euthanasia practices on farm and demonstrations of cervical dislocation technique on culled birds.

And this all happened *before* the two-day Advanced training had even begun....

The IOIA Advanced Training event itself consisted of two independent days that could be attended in full or as single day options. On Feb 28<sup>th</sup>, participants got on a bus and were transported out to the complex in Agassiz comprised of



both the Agri-Pacific Research station and the University of BC (UBC) Dairy Research Farm. Presentations by federal researchers in the morning included sessions on phosphorus management (Dr Grant Kowalenko), soil quality (Dr Liz Kenny), improving manure efficacy (Dr Derek Hunt) and antimicrobial resistance, pathogens and alternatives to antibiotics in poultry production (Dr Moussa Diarra).

In the afternoon, participants donned plastic booties and were given a tour and opportunity to discuss various projects with Nelson Dinn, manager of UBC Dairy Education and Research Centre. The key highlight was gait scoring workshop presented by Alyssa Bell-Stoneman of BC SPCA with special guest Alejandra Barrientos of UBC Animal Welfare Program. Lameness has been identified as one of the primary animal welfare issues on dairy farms and Alejandra Barrientos has

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extensive on farm experience assessing lameness of dairy cows using gait scores. Alejandra had recently completed benchmarking study evaluating cows on farms across the United States and participants were given the opportunity to practice gait scoring of cows at UBC Farm under her tutelage. The final stop of the day was a visit to a local hazelnut orchard and on farm retail outlet. Day 2 of the Advanced Training opened with an update of the Canada Organic Standards presented by Rochelle Eisen and Anne Macey. It is impossible to have a training in BC and not invite this tireless duo to march us through the quagmire of standard changes and interpretation. And, in the spirit of the Canada US Equivalency Agreement, Margaret Scoles regaled us with highlights of NOP and organic events in the United States during the past year.

One of the keynote speakers was Pat McParland, an accountant from a prestigious office in downtown Vancouver who has consulted in many countries with various organizations in different sectors about fraud and forensic accounting. Different sectors, that is, except for organics. But then Pat received a curious call from an organic inspector from Denman Island who was coordinating an Advanced Training.....and the risk paid off. Pat provided us with a humorous and engaging account of the world of fraud and forensics and a genuine interest in helping IOIA grapple with how to incorporate investigative techniques into our training curriculum. IOIA plans to build on this presentation and similar sessions from other presenters over the past couple of years and develop an intermediate training on this topic.

The other keynote speaker was Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador, OMRI Program Director who reviewed the role of OMRI and proposal to include assessment of inputs to Canada Standard as additional OMRI service. Canadians are hoping for a Canadian content version of the Crop and Livestock Webinars that Lindsay has been instructing for IOIA with such great success.



Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador, OMRI Program Director, gave a highly rated presentation on of Assessing Food Additives. She is the presenter for the IOIA/OMRI webinar series.

The Advanced Training and IOIA AGM was followed by yet another day of activities. The field trip began with a tour of Origins Organics greenhouse in Langley with manager of operations, Keith Hammond. The tour provided a practical look at use of biologicals to control pests and how a commercial greenhouse has adapted to the use of organic production techniques in an industry dominated by large, conventional hydroponic operations. Special thanks to IOIA member Antonin van der Lely for organizing this great addition to the day!

The featured event of the day was a fascinating visit to the lab and research activities at the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. The morning was hosted by the Institute's director, Dr Deborah Henderson. Dr. Henderson has been actively involved in the pest management field for over 20 years; she has mentored many young scientists, worked with local producers to conduct research, and is one of the key persons responsible for the widespread adoption of integrated pest management (IPM) services in the Lower Mainland. In an effort to make agriculture more sustainable, the Institute is pursuing the development of microbial products such as bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides. Funding for a new project has just been obtained from Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) to develop locally derived, fungal entomopathogens, fungi that attack and kill insects.

After lunch, the remaining intrepid participants circled around the perimeter of Vancouver, and crossed the city of Richmond to reach Richmond Farm School., a unique teaching site operated in partnership with Kwantlen University. The farm uses organic methods and the project actively engages the local community and promotes food security. After a tour with our host, Anna Rallings, Research Associate and Farm School Coordinator for the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture, we were invited to join the school's class for a special presentation on urban agriculture presented by Chris Thoreau. In addition to being a past participant of an IOIA crop inspector course and current instructor for Richmond Farm School, Chris operates his own urban farm in Vancouver that is known for his bicycle powered deliveries. The School was a practical demonstration of how the organic community is being rejuvenated by collaboration between educational institutions, producers and the energy of youth and new ideas.

Congratulations to those who managed to take in the whole week and sorry for those who missed out. The variety pack week was about cross training; a deliberate attempt to reach out and learn from resources and persons outside the organic box. The response was gratifying and encouraging. Hopefully the series of trainings was the spark for future intermediate courses and new collaborations in the future.

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## Chilliwack AGM Highlights

The 2012 IOIA Annual Meeting was held March 1 in Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada. A quorum was attained with 38 members including proxies. The 2011 AGM Minutes were approved without changes. Jennie Clifford, Acting Chair, gave the 2011 Annual Report overview including the 'unveiling' of the new IOIA logo. BOD members held their breaths (but not for long) as the new logo and IOIA display were presented and greeted with resounding applause.

Newly elected BOD members were Stuart McMillan (Manitoba) and Isidor Byeongdeok Yu (Republic of Korea). The 2012 slate was the most international ever for IOIA with 6 candidates from 6 countries. Only two candidates were able to attend the meeting, Stuart and Isidor. Isidor, seen at left front in this group photo, is the first Asian elected to the IOIA BOD.



Eric Feutz, Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee, explained the financial reports, addressed issues around selecting an auditor and defining the scope of the audit, and presented the 2012 budget.

Kelly Monaghan presented the Membership Committee report for Chair Chris Kidwell, who could not attend. Kelly chaired the committee for the past 4 years. Chris spearheaded an inspector membership drive in early 2012.



February 29 highlight: an elegant IOIA party with music by the Jazz Bandits. L to R – Heather McLean (guest), Lisa Pierce (trainer), Claire Desmarais (Yukon Territory), and Bill Barkley, Ontario and IOIA Canadian Committee Chair.

Bill Barkley, Chair of the IOIA Canadian Committee, reported on the last two years of successful one-day inspector trainings at Guelph and efforts made to enhance better communication between Canadian members, including the IOIA Canada Forum. All 48 Canadian inspector members are considered members of this committee.

Margaret Weigelt could not attend but sent a Scholarship Committee report.

Margaret Scoles, ED, in brief notes commented on the significant change on the BOD that IOIA experienced with four out of seven BOD members elected at the last AGM. She acknowledged the hard work of outgoing BOD Chair Bob Durst, who spearheaded the search for IOIA's Training Services Director after leaving the BOD.

The Board had committed a chunk of time to membership discussion and managed to keep on schedule to allow brainstorming sessions. BOD members facilitated. Ib Hagsten and Silke Fuchshofen gathered membership comments on the Training Institute – Whom should IOIA train? Jennie Clifford facilitated the discussion on Inspector Accreditation – What should accreditation look like and how can it become more meaningful? Should government be involved? If it is not, can the program succeed? Hélène Bouvier, assisted by Janine Gibson, presented the concept of a Canadian arm of IOIA to better serve Canadian members and position IOIA to access funds in Canada. This concept proved controversial. Papers on these three topics remain posted on the IOIA home page, and the BOD seeks further input and discussion from members.

## AGM

Guests included Stephanie Wells, COTA; Dave Schmidt of Country Life Magazine; and supporting members Eric Walz (Utah), William Tsai (Vancouver), and Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador (OMRI, Oregon). Mary Forstbauer, president of COABC, stopped in to visit. She made it possible for the AGM group to enjoy delicious snacks of organic frozen blueberries from her farm. She also made sure donations of organic yogurts and granola bars left over from the COABC conference which preceded the IOIA event made their way to IOIA. Past BOD members present included Jack Reams of Chilliwack. He and his wife Marlene helped out as an impromptu welcoming committee.



Our new logo debuts in black & white!

The joint keynote address was delivered by Beth McMahon, Executive Director of COG, and Gunta Vitins, Resilient Solutions Consulting and Industry Chair of Agri-Food Canada's Organic Value Chain Roundtable. Entitled, "Canada Organic – a state of evolution and cooperation" it gave a comprehensive and current report on the state of the organic sector.

Full minutes of the meeting are posted on the IOIA website (Inspectors Only section).

Following the AGM, the BOD met to reorganize and elect new officers. A new definition for 'International'? As the newly elected BOD considered how to fill the executive positions and grapple with time zone differences between Korea and New York for conference calls, fellow BOD members Isidor Yu (Korea) and Silke Fuchshofen (originally from Germany) sipped tea in a Chinese restaurant in British Columbia, Canada.

Newly elected officers are:

Ib Hagsten, Chair  
Hélène Bouvier, Vice-Chair  
Eric Feutz, Treasurer  
Silke Fuchshofen, Secretary  
Debra Bunn, Executive Committee-At-Large  
Isidor Yu, Director  
Stuart McMillan, Director  
Jennie Clifford, Special Past Chair



Jennie Clifford, Vice-Chair of the BOD and Acting Chair for the AGM, receives a token of appreciation from her colleagues on the BOD as she leaves the BOD. Later that day, she accepted an invitation from the newly organized BOD to serve as IOIA's first Special Past Chair.



Gunta Vitins, left, president of COTA and Industry Chair of Agri-Food Canada's Organic Value Chain Roundtable speaks with William Tsai of the Maple Overseas Cultural Foundation in Vancouver, a new supporting IOIA business member. William was a guest at the AGM and spoke passionately about organic from a China perspective.



Kelly Monaghan, IOIA Inspector Member and Chair of Canada's Organic Technical Committee, with Stephanie Wells of Canada Organic Trade Association at the IOIA party. Due to the efforts of Stephanie and Lisa Pierce, IOIA sponsored an organic aquaculture workshop on Feb 27. The event was timely, coming on the brink of the release of Canada's new Organic Aquaculture Standard.



Lisa Pierce, IOIA Trainer from BC, developed and facilitated the training. Margaret Scoles, ED, acknowledged her hard work in BC with the gift of a memento tea cup from the Organic World Fair/IFOAM Congress. Lisa was responsible for developing IOIA training in Korea, starting in 2005.

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## Curso Básico Internacional de Inspección de Fincas Orgánicas

ICAES, San José, Costa Rica – 28 Nov al 2 Dic, 2011

### Reseña Curso Eco-LOGICA

Del 28 de noviembre al 2 de diciembre del 2011, realizamos el Curso Básico de Internacional de Inspección de Finca Orgánicas en Coronado de San José, Costa Rica.

Contamos con la participación de 18 personas de diferentes países de Latinoamérica, desde México, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá, República Dominicana, Colombia y por supuesto de Costa Rica.

Esta diversidad de países, así como con relación a las áreas de trabajo de cada uno de los participantes, permitió que el curso se enriqueciera de muchas diversas experiencias.



In case your Spanish isn't so great, IOIA cosponsored a Basic Farm Course with Eco-LOGICA from November 28 to December 2, 2011 in San Jose, Costa Rica.

There were 18 people from various Latin American countries including Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Dominican Republic, Columbia, and of course Costa Rica.

The diversity of the nations, alike in relation to the work experience of each participant, permitted the course to be enriched by the diverse experiences.

### IOIA at Clemson



IOIA was invited to work with Clemson University's Department of Plant Industry in providing an advanced inspectors training for 5 staff inspectors and 2 administrative staff members. Garry Lean conducted the three day training from Feb 21st to Feb 23rd. The advanced training was focused on the livestock and handling standards with an in-depth look at the pasture rule and other updates to the regulations. The group had the opportunity to visit a research meat processing facility on the South Carolina campus of Clemson University and a conventional research dairy farm, also operated by Clemson University. The three-day training was intended to be a refresher course for the experienced inspectors and an introduction course for the newbies.



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## IOIA Promotes Organic with Basic Crop Inspection Training in Honduras

April 2012

By Luis Brenes

Honduras, land of hard working farmers, land of dry tropics and very humid rainforest La Mosquitia. Land of beautiful Roatan and magic Copan.

The huge, majestic and old Guanacaste tree (*Enterolobium cyclocarpum*) sitting in the center of the garden, witnessed and literally shadowed 13 students from Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica as they shared and learned through the week of this basic inspector training in Honduras.



Honduras is home of the El Zamorano University, established in 1941 and one of the best known agricultural universities of Latin America ([www.zamorano.edu/english/](http://www.zamorano.edu/english/))

Kellog Center, the hotel and convention center of El Zamorano, hosted us through this week of intensive work. Its rock and wood building, attentive staff and good Honduran food (always seasoned with "Salsa Verde Zamorano" hot sauce, yes!) allowed us to focus on organic inspection techniques with students that had a very strong background in agriculture, with most of them currently involved in organic projects.



Mock Inspection at ASOPROL

Field trip took place at Yerba Buena mountain area with the Asociación de Productores Orgánicos de Lepaterique - ASOPROL - where friendly growers welcomed us and allowed students to "fire at will" dozens of questions about their organic horticultural crops grown. This project started in 2005 as an effort to reduce agrochemical use through conversion to organic as this area is protected as it supplies water to Tegucigalpa city.

IOIA wants to thank FIDE Inversión y Exportaciones, a private initiative that promotes economic development and exports, for cosponsoring this training, and to EcoMercados, Helvetas and Swiss

Cooperation in Central America for its support. We look forward for future growth of the organic sector in Honduras.



Guacaste tree fruit known as 'elephant ear.'

## IOIA/PCO Advanced Training Jam Packed with Opportunities

By Margaret Scoles

As more IOIA training at the 200 and 300 levels is offered via webinar, IOIA is changing the face of in-person advanced training. Both in-person and webinar training can bring together a wide range of speakers. Webinars are generally lower in cost, involve no travel, are more carbon friendly, and are widely accessible and reproducible. Does that move in-person trainings to the realm of endangered or obsolete? The answer, based on the evaluations of the IOIA/PCO advanced training March 31-April 6 is “no”! The two types of training are complementary, not exclusionary, but only if advanced trainings rise to the challenge to offer what webinars cannot – more opportunities for interactive learning, social networking, sharing, and field trips.



After each sampling demo, a team from the class replicated the sample. Team Mac Stone (far right) and Patti Bursten Deutsch (center) collected leeks.

The training was well-attended, drawing 22 inspectors, industry, regulators, and certifiers from across the US. It was initiated at the request of PCO and developed with a high degree of cosponsor involvement. PCO organized their annual staff training on March 30 to encourage staff and contract inspectors to attend three days of training. About one-third of the participants were PCO staff reviewers or inspectors. Other inspectors, mostly independent contractors with many years of experience, made up about half of the group. White Wave staff traveled from Maryland and Idaho. One inspector traveled from Marin County Certified Agriculture, California. Some participants also stayed on for the basic livestock training. The synergy of these two training increased participation in both events.

The training team instructors represented an impressive depth of knowledge of the focus topics. The team met via conference call and during the training to ensure that sessions meshed and complemented each other with a minimum amount of overlap and duplication. Who was the team? Mac Stone, Kentucky; Kate Newkirk, Maine; Nate Lewis, Washington; Jim Pierce, OTCO Global Program Manager; Cheri Courtney, NOP office; Joseph Ward, PhD, Iowa; Leslie Zuck, PCO ED and owner Common Ground Organic Farm; and Margaret Scoles, IOIA.

The training was kicked off with an NOSB update from new IOIA member and NOSB Vice-Chair Mac Stone. Mac fills the seat of USDA Accredited Certifying Agent on the NOSB. He is the past Executive Director of Office Marketing and Product Promotion for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. Since he is no longer employed with KDA, he is no longer a certifier. He farms with his wife, Ann Bell Stone, and her family. Together, they produce certified organic poultry, beef, vegetables, small fruits, and tobacco on 375 acres. He was in PA updating his inspector credentials with the intention of staying current and involved in certification through inspections. Mac talked about the NOSB process, explained how the NOSB and NOP interact, and discussed the NOSB

recommendations for inspector qualifications and unannounced inspections. He also voiced his concerns about the need for NOP practice standards that are realistic and reasonable for producers.



The group was greeted by this confrontational sign, followed by a series of 5 dogs of increasing size (none actually vicious). This kick-off scenario precipitated a great discussion on the importance of knowing the trespassing laws of the operator's location.

Jim Pierce, OTCO Global Certification Program Manager for the past 3 years, gave a riveting presentation on international agreements. His work demands that he keep current on all equivalency agreements and import requirements for NOP certified products around the world. He has more than 20 years of experience in the organic sector. He addressed the very new EU-US equivalency agreement; updates on the COR-US agreement; developments with JAS; and other international issues. The 5-year review of the JAS standard was on the brink of public release, so he was unable to give a definitive JAS update. He

encouraged inspectors to address alkali-extracted humic acid and lignin sulfonate in every report, whether or not the product has been identified as Japan-bound. These two materials are identified as critical variances for bulk agricultural product going from the US to Japan. Lignin sulfonate is used as a floating agent in handling pears, so

for practical purposes, it is only an issue for pear inspections. It saves certifiers untold time if the inspector has addressed these materials proactively. Nate Lewis of WSDA seconded that, with “We collect info on all farms as well. We don’t want to go back and get info after the fact.” Moving on to the Canadian-US equivalency agreement, Jim noted that COR defines hydroponics and aeroponics though NOP does not. Crops produced by either method are prohibited for NOP-certified products going to Canada. Some confusion persists in what data must be collected on livestock stocking rates. In the original COR-NOP arrangement, the US agreed to collect information on livestock stocking density. On January 27, the NOP announced that Canada had recognized the USDA organic pasture regulations as equivalent to the Canadian organic stocking rates. “The critical variance no longer applies to ruminant animals or ruminant products traded under the U.S./Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement.” With this announcement, the agreement has generally been interpreted on the US side as applying to all ruminants. However,

Jim encouraged inspectors to continue to verify stocking densities for all non-bovines.

Nate Lewis followed with “New Materials & Rule Changes – what inspectors need to know”. Nate Lewis coordinates the Organic Material Registration Program for Washington State Department of Agriculture. The ISO Guide 65 accredited WSDA program approves about 750 products from 250 separate manufacturers for use in organic production. A publically available list of approved inputs is published on its website (<http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/MaterialsLists.aspx>). Nate’s responsibilities also include coordination of WSDA’s periodic residue sampling program. WSDA collects, analyzes, and responds to between 70 to 80 residue samples per year as part of a robust and ongoing periodic sampling program as well as in response to complaints and investigations. Unlike many private certifiers, all WSDA inspectors are full-time staff inspectors, fully trained and equipped at all times to take samples. With his wife, Melissa Barker, Nate, owns and operates a certified organic livestock and crop farm and processing facility in the Chehalis Valley of Washington State. He has a BS from The Evergreen State College in agricultural science and organic chemistry.

Joseph Ward of Iowa spoke on tricky livestock issues. As an animal nutritionist, Joe



Amanda Birk collects a sample of greens. The advanced inspector group learned to keep the roots on to keep the vegetation fresh longer. Nate explained that it is best to use gloved hands only, rather than tools, whenever possible. All crop samples went into large, sturdy plastic bags, tied by hand at the top. As each sample was collected, labels and a collection form were completed. In real-life, all samples would be packed on ice.

has consulted and spoken in Europe, the Far East, Oceania, and South Africa. He has been involved in feed formulations since 1990s and manages a certified organic soy processing and animal feed manufacturing plant. He started the first manufacturing facility for organic feed in Iowa. He serves on the Advisory Council for the State of Iowa’s Organic Certification Program and has served as President of the Iowa Organic Association. He holds BS in Animal Science and MS and PhD degrees in Ruminant Nutrition. Joe echoed Mac’s concerns about sensible standards and added that they “must

be scientific”. For example, he questioned whether doubling the space for a chicken enhances the chicken’s quality of life so much that it is needed for animal welfare. He also addressed the importance of livestock inspectors knowing what healthy animals look like. To emphasize that point, he showed videos of some obviously healthy, happy, and energetic organic dairy calves in group pens on deep bedding. He reviewed how to better understand feed labels. As one example, methionine and lysine minimums must be listed on feed labels, even if they are all from the organic feed ingredients. Inspectors often mistakenly interpret these amino acids on feed labels as only coming from synthetic sources. The listing on the feed label will not show whether it is from synthetic or natural sources. Synthetic DL-methionine is regulated with an annotation. If the methionine is all from the feed ingredients, the amounts are not regulated. What is required on a feed label? – [see **PA Adv**, p 24]



Leslie Zuck, Executive Director of PCO, hosted the Day 2 afternoon on her farm, and played the part of a disgruntled recipient of a surprise inspection. Appropriate for April 1 (April Fools’ Day), in this quirky but very effective exercise, only the operator knew what was coming next. The inspectors were the ones who were surprised. Eleven inspection teams of two participants each were presented with cue cards and sometimes additional resources for their segment of the progressive unannounced visit. Here, Leslie demands proof from the certifier that the inspection team was actually sent by the certifier. Fortunately, this team had been provided a letter of authorization. The three-hour inspection proceeded with a combination of unannounced inspection scenarios including residue testing. It culminated with an exasperated operator simply walking off, leaving that team speechless and startled. The final team had the challenge of Leslie deciding to surrender her certification and switch certifiers.

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## Pennsylvania Amish Farms Provide Unique on farm Certified Organic Livestock Training

By Susan Ranck and Nate Powell-Palm

Warmer than usual weather greeted the 18 participants of the 2012 Livestock Inspection Training session held April 2 – 6 in State College, PA. Co-sponsored by Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) the training hosted a group from many walks of life. From experienced inspectors and industry representatives to policymakers, and a college student, participants hailed from every region of the country and as far away as Russia.

Pennsylvania was the host state and boasts a long history of organic agriculture. Eastern Pennsylvania is the home to one of the largest organic research farms in the United States, the Rodale Institute. With 60 years of sustainable and organic farming practice, Rodale has been the inspiration for much of the movement toward organic and sustainable farming today. This 333 acre certified organic farm is devoted to educating the public and ongoing research about organic farming. Penn State, long known for it's strong agricultural programs as the state's land grant institution, has recently become very active in organic agriculture, most recently receiving a USDA sponsored grant for research into mixed cover crops to enhance the soil ecosystem.

The state lies in hardiness zones 5 and 6 with the typical last frost occurring in early May and a growing season of May – October. Long known for its dairy farms, mushroom production and apple orchards, Pennsylvania also is a growing force in beef and poultry production and winter hardy crops. The state ranks second in the number of Christmas tree farms with annual sales of over \$35,000,000.

The challenges faced by PA organic farmers are not unlike the challenges faced by their conventional neighbors. Most crop farmers find themselves wondering if its ever going to start raining, except of course when they wonder when its going to stop raining. Pest control is a topic on everyone's mind with control measures needed for corn borer, aphids and caterpillars. 2010 saw the increasing presence of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug and growing concern of it's impact on agricultural crops.



This Amish Farm in Central Pennsylvania was host to the IOIA/PCO Livestock Inspection Course



Amish Farmer Eli Peachey, leads Field Tour for Livestock Inspection Class in Pennsylvania in early April.

Pennsylvania is home to a very diverse and established Amish and Old Order Mennonite community with over 40,000 citizens. The Inspection Training Field Tours were hosted by two certified organic Amish dairymen, from Rabersburg (Brush Valley), PA. The state is second only to Ohio in Amish population with many of these families electing to have farming as their primary occupation. Amish farms have long been known for producing quality eggs, produce and milk to be offered at local farmers markets. With the development of the NOP and the growth of the industry many of these farmers have begun to work with certifiers to become certified. This certification, as well as the increasing popularity of Community Supported Agriculture, Amish farmers are becoming an important part of the organic landscape in the state.

The IOIA/PCO Livestock Inspection Training week was packed full of new and varied educational experiences and methods of learning. Veteran educator Garry Lean as IOIA's trainer led the instruction with assistance from Jonda Crosby, IOIA's new Director of Training Services. Garry and Jonda seamlessly made the, at times, daunting organic standards accessible, and easily understood. With seemingly endless citations to be

memorized and applied, Lean and Crosby never once missed a chance to facilitate conversation and reference their vast educational and practical organic farming experiences to contextualize the material.

The week kicked off with a headfirst dive into the - "Pasture Practice Standard" (\$205.240 for those who are still getting used to it). With discussion swirling around the impact the rule will and has had on producers and inspectors, it was the most talked about citation in the standards. Also as those in the organic world have heard, the United States and the European Union recently reached a new organic standards equivalency agreement. This development led to much discussion about the inspectors' roles for gathering information on US products bound for foreign markets. Recently revised interpretations of biodiversity on the certified organic farm were also discussed in detail.



*"This field trip was really helpful because it did feel like an inspection, not a contrived exercise."*

As one might imagine, the organic inspector job market is ever changing with opportunities developing as the profession becomes more established. On Monday night IOIA Executive Director, Margaret Scoles, led an evening workshop on the ins and outs of creating an organic inspection business. The workshop was packed with everything from drawing up contracts to understanding the effects that driving a multi colored car might have on your business prospects.

As the days passed, the pace of the course quickly picked up. Tuesday provided the necessary opportunity for each participant to bond with their NOP standards booklet. With many restaurants and shops in nearby State College, participants took advantage of the lighter homework load for the night to explore the town that is duly famous for its college orientation: 50,000 students and 40,000 residents. It made for a really fun downtown experience and dinner. As Wednesday hit, the course began to rev up speed like a freight train with final inputs memorization, standards quizzes and dry matter calculations. This last part likely made most everyone nod their heads a little bit to a universal truth: high school algebra will find you...no matter what.

The accommodations at the Penn Stater Conference Center, for the livestock inspectors training were beautiful, with nutritious snacks available throughout the day and expansive windows filling the room with light, and the reminder - that with time, the chance to enjoy the weather would come. Thursday provided the highlight of the week with the group breaking into two for the on-site practice inspections. Hosts at the farms, both certified through PCO, were very gracious and knowledgeable. And all the trainees enjoyed the fresh air after so much time in the classroom. Garry's group got a little more excitement than usual when one of the cows began calving at the beginning of the inspection. By the end of the visit, a new certified organic calf was just finding its legs. The farm visit provided class participants with the chance to put the material learned in the classroom into action and to receive valuable feedback from the trainers as well.

The long week wrapped up on Friday with a group photo (see right) and the much anticipated TEST. Everyone appreciated the opportunity to solidify their knowledge on paper. All were equally happy to exchange goodbye's, emails for further networking and head for home. Thanks to the many talented people who made this event possible, especially PCO, IOIA and our fellow trainees.

## PA Basic Crop Course Enjoys Early Warm Weather



Jonathan Melvin (Washington, DC) and Jeane Myszka, (Wisconsin) practice inspection skills with field trip host Debra Brubaker of Village Acres.

Twenty-five participants took the IOIA/PCO Basic Organic Crop Inspection course on April 2-6, guided through the intense 4.5 days by trainers Sarah Costin and Margaret Scoles.

There were six participants from the NOP office, several from different certification agencies both private and state, and some potential new inspectors, several of whom were also certified growers. Sabine Carey and Kyla Smith joined the trainers as field trip group leaders for a warm, blue sky day on April 5. The early April date promised unpredictable weather, but the unseasonably warm temperatures pushed crops about 3 weeks ahead of schedule.

Beautiful crops enhanced the field trip experience, which is always ranked as one of the most valuable learning experiences.

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## Fumbling Towards Complexity, Part III: Postcards from the Edge (of the Farm)

by Tony Fleming

*(Ed. note—this is the third in 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. Part I: A Brief Review of Biodiversity in the Certification Process—History, Assessment, and Institutional Imperatives appeared in the Winter 2011 newsletter, and Part II: The NOP Rule Requires Producers To Maintain or Improve the Natural Resources of the Operation—So What Measuring Stick Do Inspectors Use to Evaluate This Requirement?) appeared in the Spring, 2011 issue.*

**Imagine this:** As you arrive for a farm inspection, your eye is drawn to the colorful border of a nearby field. You've been anticipating this visit since you first saw the unusually detailed farm map, which depicts features with intriguing names like "Heron's Roost" and "Seven Mile Swamp". Besides, any day spent along the third coast is a good day and a welcome reprieve from the monotony of square farms inland that occupy the vast, nature-challenged region of middle America known as the corn belt. Approaching the farmhouse, you pass a series of small raised beds—a child's garden—herbs in one; a cutting garden in another; giant sunflowers enveloped in a cloud of goldfinches in a third; and more.

The farm is a medium-sized mixed grain and produce operation patrolled by a flock of Delawares—a rugged, heritage layer breed that thrives on being outdoors year around. Crops are assiduously rotated over a 7-year cycle that includes alfalfa and other cover

crops—and it also incorporates the expansive vegetable plot, which moves from field to field each year. At least a quarter of the vegetables are cucurbits, while a nearby knoll is planted in raspberries and blueberries. You can't help but notice that these pollinator-dependent crops are heavily laden. When quizzed, the operator insists that they don't utilize beehives, but she also pointedly remarks that "we don't use any pesticides, not even the 'organic' ones". The soil is rich black loam and muck, the telltale sign of a former wetland. Like other farms in the area, the fields here are tiled, but instead of draining into a ditch, the tiles have been reconfigured to discharge into a natural depression several acres in size that has been restored to a wetland. A noisy flock of red-wing blackbirds surveys the wetland, while purple martins swoop overhead and a great blue heron stands stoically along the edge.

A bit later, your host is pointing out the different native wildflowers along the field border you first spotted: woodland sunflowers, monarda, lupines, purple and gray coneflowers, swamp milkweed, and many others, all filling various roles in the local ecosystem as host plants for pollinators, predatory insects, and insects that feed birds. She notes that most of these plants were already here when her parents took over the farm decades ago, and that "they just needed a little encouragement", including removing a number of invasive, non-native plants that had gotten a foothold, a process that, as she says, "never ends". Still other types of wildflowers populate the adjacent woods, which occupies about 30 acres and has been around as long as the land has been farmed, serving variously as a woodlot, wildlife habitat, sugarbush, and private nature preserve. As is typical of the

region, it is a wet woods, populated by towering specimens of swamp and pin oaks, green and black ash, and hackberries around the wet swales, and a rich forest of maples, basswoods, spicebush, and many other species occupying low, moist dunes. You are careful not to step on frogs and salamanders as you pick your way through, and you hear the songs of many warblers and other migratory songbirds that have taken up residence in the cavities in the giant old trees. On the far side of the woods, tree swallows and dragonflies are having a field day above a small marsh nestled between the next field and a clear, slow moving stream that emerges from the woods. The operator explains that, before settlement, most of the land in this valley was a complex of wetlands shown on historical maps as "Seven Mile Swamp", and how she and her husband restored this one little marsh using grants from EQIP and WHIP, competitive programs administered by the NRCS and designed to improve the natural resources of farm- and rangeland. "This area used to be farmed", she said, pointing to the marsh, "but it constantly flooded. It seemed pointless to keep fighting nature".

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**Now imagine this:** Arriving at another farm, located squarely in middle America, you see several acres where the soil has recently been pushed into various mounds, embankments, and other obstacles to create a dirt-bike course. Stumps and a tangle of tree trunks and brush indicate that part of the area now occupied by the course was woods not long ago. About three acres of woods remain and consist of an up-and-coming successional forest, the interior of which has an attractive but excessively deer-browsed understory containing a variety of native plants, while the edges have

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a weedy understory filled with multiflora rose and garlic mustard. The operator's plans for the remaining woods are uncertain. He's thought about getting some hogs and using it as a summer pasture, or maybe even raising mushrooms, but he hasn't had time to do anything because he's been so busy taking his teenage son to competitive Motocross events. A muddy creek that looks like it was recently dredged runs through the farm. There isn't a single woody plant growing on the eroded banks, though it does look like someone made a half-hearted effort to sow some grass and wildflowers.

None of these features appear on the farm map, which indicates the layout of the fields and notes two "buffer zones", but otherwise is unremarkable. The operator explains that the county drainage board recently came through and cleaned out most of this watershed in response to complaints about flooding from several landowners. He shows you a letter from the drainage board, which explains the project and contains a rather hefty drainage assessment imposed on all the property owners along the creek.

Records indicate the farm follows a two-year corn-soybean rotation. Cereal rye is occasionally planted as a winter cover crop after corn harvest, while regular but judicious applications of organic poultry litter from a local layer operation are the primary source of fertility. In most years, the litter is spread and incorporated in Spring, ahead of corn planting, but this time, the litter was spread late last Fall because the supplier needed to "get rid of" excess litter, and it wasn't incorporated until Spring. The operator points out several depressional areas that get flooded out every couple of years and talks about his plans to install

more drainage tile. Wide brushy buffers are maintained on the two sides of the farm that abut conventional fields, and—as is so common on farmland in this region—they are infested with autumn olive and glossy buckthorn, pernicious alien shrubs that were once promoted by the USDA as wildlife cover, but are now considered notorious by land managers for altering the soil chemistry to their advantage and out-competing native vegetation. The area around the farmhouse is all lawn, mowed to golf-course perfection. There is no sign of a garden, although his wife does maintain a bird feeder. A few cowbirds and English house sparrows are in evidence, but otherwise it is remarkably quiet. During the inspection, it becomes evident that the operator is barely aware of the natural resources of the farm. But from the standpoint of crop production standards, everything is in order: the farmer uses organic seed corn and soybean seed; the soil exhibits good structure with abundant evidence of worms and other organisms, and no signs of erosion—in fact, the soil here is of much better quality than the hard, lifeless clay in the neighboring conventional fields—all of which is commensurate with the respectable crop yields reported by the operator; the fields have a diverse but small number of common farm weeds; the audit trail is easily understood and accounts for all crops; and there is not the slightest evidence that prohibited substances are being used.

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Both of the above are factual accounts of farms I inspected many years ago, shortly before the NOP came on the scene, and modified slightly to emphasize the natural resources aspects of the

inspections. For purposes of this discussion, we'll call the first one "Lake Michigan Farm" and the second one "Barren County Farm". Clearly they weren't equal—not in physiographic setting, not in practice, not in mindset, and certainly not in terms of biodiversity conservation. Yet both farms had been certified for years. They provide a stark illustration of the dichotomy that has existed for years—and continues to exist—between the idealized perception of a sustainable organic farm in harmony with its surroundings, and one that, beyond the substitution of organic-compliant inputs, looks very similar to its conventional neighbors.

The contrast between the two farms also exemplifies the very real difficulties inspectors encounter today when attempting to assess compliance with natural resources standards under the NOP. Some of these challenges are practical—as someone who performs biodiversity assessments for conservation organizations, I can attest that this is not a casual undertaking, and it demands a fairly specialized, experiential knowledge of the local ecosystem that is not readily obtained from textbooks or seminars—while others are conceptual and involve applying the sometimes ambiguous wording of the NOP rule to a complex field situation, not unlike interpreting the "access to pasture" requirement. Let's see what we can learn from applying the NOP rule to the observations made during those long-ago inspections, beginning with "Lake Michigan Farm", which is a case study of the "positive compliance approaches" described in the WFA guide entitled "Biodiversity Compliance Assessment in Organic Agricultural Systems" ([www.wildfarmalliance.org](http://www.wildfarmalliance.org)).

[see **Biodiversity**, p 26]

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the name of the product; the purpose or intended use; if medicated, it must say so, list the medication, and state what it is for; and manufacturer or “distributed by” or “for specific farm” by name in the case of custom mixes. He suggested caution when using the NOP Dairy Goat DMI tables. Inspectors using them will generally find that the goats actually eat more than what the tables indicate.

Margaret Scoles presented on Unannounced Inspections. In response to a query of certifiers for assistance, several certifiers had shared inspection checklists, work orders, report forms, and/or authorization letters. A few were shared with participants. Findings and information from the others were consolidated. Certifiers vary widely in how they handle this type of inspection and how much experience they have with them. Those accredited by IFOAM have maintained a 5% minimum unannounced inspection policy for years. Many others have done very few surprise inspections. At this time, the NOP has no language of specific numeric percentage required. Depending on how/if the NOSB recommendation is implemented, many inspectors could find themselves assigned more unannounced inspections. A few key points:

- Unannounced inspections can be random/routine, risk-based, or complaint based.
- Know the trespassing laws of the region and do not trespass.
- Have written authorization from the certifier before attempting an unannounced inspection. The length of advance notice time varies widely among certifiers; know the certifier’s policy.
- Review previous non-compliance history and system plan thoroughly.
- Keep the inspection as brief as possible while completing the task. In most cases, the inspection will not serve as the annual inspection, but always keep in

mind the policy and expectation of the certifier. A visit only for the purpose of taking a sample does not constitute an unannounced inspection.

- If an authorized representative of the operation is present, an exit interview must be attempted. If an authorized representative is not present, the inspection can proceed with other personnel and the requirement for an exit interview doesn’t apply.

Kate Newkirk and Nate Lewis followed, facilitating small group work on inspection scenarios. Kate works for MOFGA as Associate Director for processing/handling and is their ‘go-to’ person for residue sampling. Although she doesn’t always do the sampling, she comes up with the sampling plans, especially for investigative sampling. She has an M.S in Agronomy, a certified organic farm, and many years of experience at an environmental lab. She is also an independent inspector and does consulting.

Day 2 Residue Sampling lecture with Nate Lewis started the morning. Nate did a superb job of demystifying residue sampling with an engaging and clear presentation on a difficult topic. This was reflected later in the course evaluations, where he received possibly the record high score for a speaker at any IOIA training. Eighteen participants rated him as 5 out of 5 on the presentation, and 14 gave the afternoon hands-on sampling session a 5 out of 5. These were the highest rated sessions for the event. Brunch itself was a surprise highlight for participants, who were already impressed with a scrumptious organic lunch on Day 1. The Penn Stater is locally famous for their extravagant Sunday buffet. Sarah Flack was overheard, “This will go down as the training where we had caviar!”

Cheri Courtney, the Acting Director of the USDA NOP Accreditation and International Activities Division, gave the NOP update while allotting generous time for Q&A. She has worked for the USDA for 20+ years. Prior to joining the NOP, she was the Deputy Director of the USDA, Fruit and Vegetable Programs’, Fresh

Products Division with responsibility for managing the divisions’ Auditing, Inspection, Standardization and Training programs.

IOIA staff Margaret Scoles and Jonda Crosby shared the trainer role. IOIA webinars on Residue Sampling and Unannounced Inspections are in the works, although they will not be announced until after long-awaited NOP Rules and/or Guidance are posted.

## New Organic Ag Text in English and Russian

“*Organic Farming*” provides a basic summary of work covering all relevant themes in which the most competent authors, coordinated by the Czech experts Bořivoj Šarapatka and Jiří Urban, provide definitive contributions valid not only within the Czech Republic. The real value of this book lies in the fact that it has been compiled by a number of specialists and institutions focusing on organic farming to fill a gap in the demand for a comprehensive publication.

In addition to the history and present status of organic farming in Europe, the book provides legal status of **organic agriculture methods** (in accordance with European Council Regulation (EC) No. 834/2007 and Commission Regulation No. 889/2008), environmental effects of organic agriculture, plant production, soil, plant nutrition and fertilization, cultivation of the crop, weed control, permanent grassland, organic fruit and vegetable-growing, organic viticulture and wine-making, animal husbandry and animal breeding.

The book “Organic Agriculture” (in English) was published by the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (IAEI) Prague and the Russian version “Органическое сельское хозяйство” was published by Bioinstitut Olomouc. **Orders can be placed:** [mcentrum@sci.muni.cz](mailto:mcentrum@sci.muni.cz). The English version is available for 10 euros plus postage, and the Russian version costs 15 euros plus postage. More info is at [www.bioinstitut.cz](http://www.bioinstitut.cz)

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## IOIA BOD Meeting February 27, 2012, Chilliwack, BC

**Attendance:** Jennie Clifford, Silke Fuchshofen, Ib Hagsten, H el ene Bouvier, Eric Feutz, Debra Bunn, Margaret Scoles – Executive Director. Acting Chair/Vice-Chair & Timekeeper: Jennie Clifford, Note taking: Margaret Scoles, H el ene Bouvier minutes, Eric Feutz financials.

**Financial Audit Update:** Eric Feutz presented and discussed the IOIA Financial audit.

**ED Evaluation:** Eric Feutz moved to approve H el ene Bouvier and Jennie Clifford complete ED evaluation for end March or beginning of April. Debra Bunn moved to invite Jennie Clifford as Ex Officio Special Past Chair. Ib Hagsten seconded. All in favour. Motion carried.

**Logo Update:** Jennie Clifford and Margaret Scoles presented the new logo. Debra Bunn moved to approve new logo. Ib Hagsten seconded. All in favour. Motion carried. **Action Point:** Margaret Scoles will register trademark in both black and white, and colour.

**Prepare for AGM:** Jennie Clifford and Margaret Scoles presented. Potential AGM Discussion Topics were identified: Inspection Fee Guidelines; IOIA's inherent conflict of interest – training more people, protecting interests of members; and Liability Insurance.

**Financial Reports:** BOD discussed BOD policy and recommendation of audit focused on the types of accounting reports that can be issued by a Certified Public Accountant and the differences in the reports - Audited Opinion (most expensive and most complete); Complied Opinion (less expensive and less complete); Reviewed Opinion (least expensive and least complete); and Review of "Agreed upon procedures". **Action Point:** Eric Feutz will ask Finance Committee to review and define agreed upon procedures to look at our policy and bring recommendation to next BOD meeting.

Margaret Scoles and BOD will review what other non-profits are currently doing. Tabled change of policy on formal financial audit to next meeting. **BOD Discussion:** Review of accounting practices and risks, reasons to do or not do a full audit. Eric Feutz moved to defer the current policy of a formal audit until further recommendation from Financial Committee and after we have a review of books and "Agreed upon procedures". Ib Hagsten seconded. All in favour. Motion carried.

Membership Focus Group Discussions – Prepare for AGM.

**BOD Orientation Packets:** Margaret Scoles and H el ene Bouvier have created a virtual documentation site for BOD members. Ib Hagsten, Silke Fuchshofen and H el ene Bouvier will orient new BOD.

**Correct and recover staggered terms for BOD members:** Silke Fuchshofen moved the Nominating Committee elect 3 board members with 1 member with the most votes to be elected to a 3 year term. Ib Hagsten seconded. All in favour. Motion carried. **Action Point:** Silke Fuchshofen will confer with Bylaws and Jennie Clifford with Nomination Committee regarding 2013 election for the 3 elected board members, the member with the most votes will be elected to a 3-year term.

## IOIA BOD Meeting March 1, 2012, Chilliwack, BC

In person meeting with dinner. **Attendance:** H el ene Bouvier, Debra Bunn, Jennie Clifford, Eric Feutz, Silke Fuchshofen, Isidor Yu, Margaret Scoles (ED). Absent: Stuart McMillan. Chair: Jennie Clifford. Note Taking: Margaret Scoles  
Deb Bunn moved to make Jennie Clifford chair for a day. Ib seconded. 5 yes, 1 abstain. Jennie accepts. H el ene Bouvier moved to invite Jennie to participate in the BOD as Special Past Chair. Jennie responds that she would be willing to take that position. All in favor.

BOD discussed executive positions. Deb Bunn moved to elect Ib Hagsten as Chair. All in favor. Eric nominated H el ene as Vice-Chair. 2nd by Deb. All in favor. H el ene moved and Ib seconded to re-elect Eric as Treasurer. All in favor. H el ene moved and Ib seconded to elect Silke as Secretary. All in favor. Eric moved and H el ene seconded to elect Deb as Director at Large.

BOD discussed best potential meeting dates, given the challenge of Asian and North American time zone difference. The best option was Wednesday at 5 pm. MT. The general consensus was that fewer meetings would be better for the ED who spends a lot of time preparing for the meetings. The bylaws require only 4 Executive Committee meetings per year. How to manage the association with less meetings will be discussed.

## IOIA BOD Meeting March 2, 2012, Chilliwack, BC

**Attendance:** Ib Hagsten, H el ene Bouvier, Silke Fuchshofen, Eric Feutz, Debra Bunn, Isidor Yu, Margaret Scoles – Executive Director. Stuart McMillan called in for 1 hour. Chair: Ib Hagsten, Vice-Chair: H el ene Bouvier, Note taking: Silke Fuchshofen.

**Determine Agenda:** Topics selected were Operating Procedures, Conflict of Interest; 6 full BOD meetings/ year versus 10+ in the past year; Meeting dates; BOD Job Descriptions; Accreditation; Debriefing AGM; BOD liaisons.

The operating procedures proposed and agreed upon were as follows: BOD members are encouraged to check in with one another for action points. The secretary will maintain the action point (Google) document and send out reminders. The month in between meetings shall be reserved by the BOD in case a special meeting is needed to discuss specific topics. Decision making is by majority vote. Decisions will be called only after sufficient discussion.

[see Minutes, page 27]

The single most important observation is the *operator's intimate familiarity* with the natural history of the land upon which the farm is situated. She not only has an encyclopedic knowledge of the specific plants and animals present, but clearly understands the farm's setting within the larger regional ecosystem. A closely related observation is that the operator has attempted to communicate that knowledge via the farm map. Had the OSP contained questions similar to the NOSB's biodiversity criteria (you can find these on the IOIA and NOSB websites, and in the WFA guides), it is probably safe to assume they would have been answered in considerable detail. But as my account noted, the information on the farm map called attention to important natural features, and thus *effectively communicated the operator's proactive attitude towards the role of nature on the farm.*

Second, the operator has *initiated* practices to conserve biodiversity and improve every one of the natural resources of the operation. At least two practices contribute to improving soil quality: a long crop rotation that includes deep-rooted, leguminous cover crops, and allowing the poultry to freely range over the farm, consuming insects, stirring up the soil surface, and leaving behind fuel for soil microbes. The latter is, of course, enabled by the selection of a rugged poultry breed "with regard to suitability for site specific conditions..." (205.238.a.1). It might also be noted that, although the term "soil quality" is often interpreted to apply only to cultivated areas, the practices occurring in the uncultivated areas of the farm are maintaining or

improving soil quality there as well.

Several other practices initiated by the operator are each actively benefiting multiple resources. The restored wetlands improve water quality, recharge the water table, create wildlife habitat, and provide a permanent food source for organisms (dragonflies, swallows) known to prey on farm pests. Maintenance of high-quality woodland with ancient trees provides an advantageous roosting area for raptors that consume rodents, conserves habitat for cavity-nesting birds and bats that consume pest insects, and maintains water quality both by filtering the stream that flows through it and providing a deep, humus-rich forest soil that enhances ground-water recharge—yet it also allows the operator to derive direct economic value through sustainable practices such as sugaring and small-scale firewood production. Natural field borders conserve native plants while serving as nectaries for beneficial insects, wildlife corridors, and filter strips for any ancillary runoff from the fields during heavy rains. In short, all of these practices work synergistically to maintain and restore a complex web of relationships that benefits both regional biodiversity and the bottom line of the farm.

And this is just the short list, based on a few of the direct observations made during the inspection, and selected primarily to highlight what an ecologist would call whole-farm biodiversity. We don't have space to mention all of the beneficial practices—for example, this operator gets extra credit in my book for actively monitoring and removing invasive alien plants that might disrupt the ecological balance. There also are a number of key indirect indicators:

amphibians, for example, are the proverbial canary-in-the-coal-mine; their presence indicates both good water quality (and notably, an absence of pesticides) and a high-quality natural community. Similarly, the location of the farm within the Great Lakes flyway and proximal to Lake Michigan suggests that the restored wetlands may serve as a stopover for migratory waterfowl. In any event, one could fill several pages of an inspection report describing all of the various practices and their impacts on different natural resources, but it probably isn't necessary, except as a stellar case study. In NOP lingo, virtually all of the practices are readily understood to be "improving" the natural resources, not just "maintaining" them. In an ideal world, most of the information gleaned from this inspection will eventually be listed on the OSP. In the meantime, I encourage inspectors to spend some time becoming familiar with the biodiversity criteria in the NOSB's model OSP, and the WFA biodiversity compliance guide, because they are likely to become the basis for increased scrutiny of biodiversity practices during the certification process.

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***Next: Bringing Nature Home—Inspecting Farms with Signs of Nature Deficit Disorder***

## **Autism linked to food**

The epidemic of autism in children in the US may be linked to the typical American diet according to a new study published online at <http://www.clinicalepigeneticsjournal.com/content/4/1/6/abstract> The study explores how mineral deficiencies—affected by dietary factors like high fructose corn syrup (HFCS)—could impact how the human body rids itself of common toxic chemicals like mercury and pesticides.

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## Minutes, from page 25

**BOD Conflict of Interest Document:** Motion by Hélène to approve the COI statement; insert a footnote with a date and to direct Margaret to update the policy for approval at the next meeting. Seconded by Eric, 6 approvals, 1 abstention.

**Accreditation Committee:** according to the bylaws an accreditation committee is elected by the BOD every 2 years. The policy manual says every year. Deb moved to adjust the policy to align with the bylaws. Hélène seconded. Motion carried.

The BOD Job Descriptions have to be finalized. It was agreed that the BOD will read the draft, note suggestions, state that they understand it, and send to Deb. BOD liaisons deferred, except that Deb will be the liaison to the accreditation committee.

**Date of the next BOD meeting:** The meeting time will be 7pm Eastern Time on Wednesdays. The week of the first meeting has to be determined via Doodle. That first meeting will determine the meeting days for the following meetings.

**AGM Discussion Topics:** Forum discussion groups ongoing: Evaluation of the membership comments regarding the Canadian Office proposal will be handed over to the Canadian Committee. The evaluation of comments regarding the accreditation program will be transferred to the Accreditation Committee. Deb wishes to champion this topic and be the liaison for this committee. The evaluation of the comments regarding the Training Institute will be done by Silke.

### IOIA BOD Meeting April 20, 2012

An irregular BOD meeting via conference call for the purpose of an online demonstration presentation of Ecert by Robert Simmons of Organic Services. Attendance: Ib Hagsten (Chair), Hélène Bouvier (Vice-Chair), Jennie Clifford (Special Past Chair), Eric Feutz (Treasurer), Silke Fuchshofen (Secretary), Debra Bunn, Stuart McMillan, Isidor Yu, Kathy Bowers (staff), Jonda Crosby (staff), Margaret Scoles – ED.

One hour online presentation by Rob Simmons. Short discussion by the BOD followed regarding potential relevance for IOIA. It was agreed that discussion would be continued at upcoming BOD meetings.

Following this meeting, a brief executive session was held to discuss a BOD member's updated COI statement. Attendance: Hélène Bouvier (Acting Chair), Jennie Clifford (Special Past Chair), Eric Feutz (Treasurer), Silke Fuchshofen (Secretary), Debra Bunn, Stuart McMillan, Isidor Yu, Margaret Scoles – ED.

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### GMO News

#### GE Labeling: more than 1 million signatures submitted

The Just Label It campaign on March 27 announced that more than one million comments—a record-setting achievement—had been submitted to the U.S. FDA seeking mandatory labeling for all genetically engineered (GE) products in the marketplace. Information shared by the campaign in a webinar is available on the campaign's website, [www.justlabelit.org](http://www.justlabelit.org). Results from a new survey conducted by The Mellman Group show that consumer support for GE labeling of foods is nearly unanimous.

#### GMO labeling initiative to be on California ballot

A major milestone on the GMO

labeling front was achieved in late March when the California Right to Know campaign filed 971,126 signatures to place an initiative on the state's November ballot. The initiative, if approved by voters, will require labeling of GE foods. The signatures, gathered in a ten-week period, are nearly double the 555,236 signatures required to qualify for the ballot. As a result, California is the first state to gather enough signatures to put the issue on its statewide ballot this fall. If the ballot passes in November, Californians will join citizens in over 40 countries in the world, including all of Europe, Japan, and even China who have the right to know whether they are buying and eating GE food.

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/324345>

#### GMO 'Right to Know' campaign in CT fails - Lawsuit threatened

The G.E. foods bill in Connecticut has been stripped of its labeling requirement due to industry pressure and threats of a lawsuit. The bill had been overwhelmingly backed by the Legislative committee in March this year. Both political sides were in agreement over measures giving consumers more information about what they are eating. The petition turned in on May 4 had just under 10,000 signatures. However, the legislature subsequently stated that the labeling requirement for the G.E. foods bill had been removed, apparently due to "industry pressure" and threats of a lawsuit. Last month Digital Journal reported that Vermont had to drop the idea of labeling GMOs, or be sued by the agricultural giant Monsanto.

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/print/article/324345#ixzz1u9Nuq32b>



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**Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!**

## Calendar

**May 21 – 24** NOSB Spring 2012 meeting, Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

**June 11–15** Leavenworth, Washington - IOIA Crop and Processing training.

**June 18 – 21** [2nd International Organic Fruit Research Symposium: Organic Fruit 2012](#), Leavenworth, Washington. <http://www.tfrec.wsu.edu/pages/organicfruit2012/Home>

**June 20** Webinar: IOIA/OMRI Crop Inputs Webinar (last one for 2012!)

**July 22 – 25** Fort Worth, TX. 67th Annual Soil, Water & Conservation Society International Conference *Choosing Conservation: Considering Ecology, Economics, and Ethics* [www.swcs.org](http://www.swcs.org)

**July 27 – 29** Kissimee, Florida. Small Farms Conference. Conference provides farmers with up-to-date, research-based, in-depth educational information. <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms/>

**August 20–24** Basic Organic Farm, Guayaquil, Ecuador

**Mid-September** NOSB meeting and Expo East, Baltimore.

**September 24-26** Minneapolis, MN. *Food + Justice = Democracy - Organizing to change the food system*. The conference will highlight the narratives tribal nations and communities of color as a foundation to understand the impact of the food system on people of color. These narrative will provide the

framework to create solidarity and mobilize for changes in public policies that impact food, labor and land issues that have been the source of historic displacement and exploitation. [www.iatp.org](http://www.iatp.org)

**Fall of 2012**, Ontario IOIA and COG

**October 15–19** IOIA Crop training, Farmington, Minnesota

**October 21-25** IOIA Processing training, Farmington, Minnesota

**Nov 27– 29** 10th Middle East Natural & Organic Product Expo - MENOPE 2012, Dubai World Trade Centre, Dubai, UAE. The event is organized with the support and patronage of Dubai Municipality, Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority, IFOAM Germany. [www.naturalproductme.com](http://www.naturalproductme.com)

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