and Dean had since worked closely with the shareholders to address those issues.

“We had actually been talking to them. ... We've had a real open relationship with the shareholders. ... We talked through it with them and really tried to educate them that the [NOP] standards are the toughest in the world, whether it's a 100-cow farm or a 1,000-cow farm. And they didn't know a lot of that, and we said, 'Let's continue this discussion.'”

Shea added, “I quite frankly don't know why they chose to do their press release because when we left [after a Feb. 17 meeting] it was quite cordial.”

But Heim said Dean's response has been less than transparent. “They're objecting to putting [the shareholder proposal] in the proxy statement. We believe the information is important for shareholders to assess how Dean is responding to the situation and the potential harm to the Horizon Organic brand.”

“I think that what [Dean] didn't want to put in was the call to have an outside independent group oversee all the procurement decisions,” Shea said. “If you're not doing anything wrong and you're functioning with honor, why do you need to involve a group from the outside to oversee what you're doing? We're bound by the strictest rules in the world.”

More Info on Special EQIP Funds

On December 12, 2005, NRCS announced that more than $10 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds will be used to assist limited resource and beginning farmers and ranchers nationwide to implement conservation practices on their land. This funding has since been allocated among individual states. NRCS will offer cost-share rates of up to 90 percent for all conservation practices and a $10,000 limit on each contract for eligible farmers and ranchers. A beginning farmer or rancher is defined as an individual or entity who: (a) Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. (This requirement applies to all members of an entity.); and (b) Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. A limited resource farmer or rancher is defined as (a) A person with direct or indirect gross farm sales of not more than $100,000 in each of the previous two years (to be increased beginning in fiscal year 2004 to adjust for inflation using Prices Paid by Farmer Index as compiled by NASS), and (b) Has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, OR less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years (to be determined annually using Commerce Dept. data).

USDA offers an online Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher Self-Determination Tool that you can use to see if you meet the definition. Farmers or ranchers interested in applying for these special EQIP funds should contact their state or local NRCS office. For more info contact Robert Molleur, the National Small, Limited Resource, and Beginning Farmers Program Manager for USDA-NRCS, at 202-720-6521.

Defining Organic Agriculture for the World - A Call for Submissions

Now is the time for your input!

At the IFOAM General Assembly in September 2005, the GA passed a motion to establish a succinct Definition of Organic Agriculture. This definition must explain what Organic Agriculture is, reflecting its true nature and the Principles in a concise way.

Therefore, IFOAM is now collecting definitions of Organic Agriculture to give us the full diversity of thoughts on how to define Organic Agriculture. We will combine these definitions, identify keywords, and give them to the Task Force, appointed by the IFOAM World Board, who will then submit a first draft. We envision two rounds of comments. The World Board will approve the definition and submit the Definition of Organic Agriculture to the General Assembly 2008 for ratification. For more details on this process please see http://www.ico.org/organic_facts/definition_organic_agriculture.html.

UNCTAD, UNEP and IFOAM Join Forces for Regional Organic Standards in East Africa

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) have announced a joint project to facilitate the development of an East African Organic Standard, which will help to make organic products from East Africa more recognizable on supermarkets shelves throughout the world.

The UNEP/UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTF) project Promoting Production and Trading Opportunities for Organic Agricultural Products in East Africa, launched in Kampala on October 19, 2004, established a Regional Standard Technical Working Group (RSTWG). Comprising representatives from standards bodies, certification bodies and the organic sector from the three countries, the RSTWG held its first meeting in Kampala on October 24, 2004. It met again in Arusha on March 6, 2006 to discuss the contents of the standard. The RSTWG will now be strengthened by IFOAM’s full-fledged support.

IFOAM has also launched the East African Organic Standards (OSEA) project. OSEA will provide resources to conduct national consultations and field-testing of the standard. Once the standard has been approved, IFOAM will also support the development of a joint inspection protocol and consumer education campaign through the OSEA.

This new partnership was announced on the occasion of the CBTF Regional Workshop for Organic Agriculture, March 7-10, 2006, in Arusha, Tanzania.

Participants in the workshop included representatives from Ministries of trade, environment and agriculture as well as standards bodies; the East African Community; national organic agriculture networks, including farmers and certifying bodies; research institutions and universities; national and international organizations involved in organic agriculture; and international experts.

All draft papers are available on the CBTF website at http://www.unepunctad.org/ctf/openArusha.htm.
Snow and Cold Temperatures for Farm Field Trips in Indiana!
By Jim Riddle
Twenty four people attended the IOIA/ICO Organic Farm Inspector Training in Indianapolis, IN December 4-7, 2006. Joyce Ford was the trainer, with able assistance from Margaret Scoles. Garry Lean, new IOIA trainer, gave a terrific presentation on Assessing Soil Fertility Management Programs including a handout on weeds as indicators of soil conditions. The course was held at the Adam’s Mark Hotel in conjunction with the Acres USA Conference, which was held later in the week. A big thanks to Cissy Bowman and Aaron Zeis at ICO for their sponsorship and assistance for this training. Also many thanks to Val Carr and our chef who made organic meals in our hospitality suite.

Two small groups went to One Sky Farm, owned and operated by Jeff and Melissa Evard. Although it was hard to assess soil fertility at 10°F and with a light snow covering the soil, we did a great job with a sample balance of red beets, verifying organic seeds and inspecting several on-farm greenhouses. A third group toured the Roger Sharrit farm. The area received 7 inches of snow later in the week.

Notable at this training were more interactive exercises for almost all presentations. New exercises were designed by Joyce Ford specifically for this training. They include exercises for understanding an organic farm plan, audit trail exercises for designing lot numbers, determining whether the product can be tracked from sale back to fields of production and comparing crop yields with sales/expected yields, risk assessment, and determining issues of concern for the exit interview. Her favorite was a scenario for the inspector professionalism and ethics presentation: You live in the Midwest and it’s snowing outside. You are asked by the certifying agent to go to Hawaii and do the inspection of a pineapple operation. What Should You Do and Why?

Roger Sharrit, one of the farmers who we toured as our field trip won the Outrageous Statement Award, with this entry: When asked how he determined whether the fish emulsion he was using was allowed, he said: “It comes from Fertrell. My certifier just loves Fertrell. I think if Fertrell had 2,4-D with their name on it, they’d allow it!” Roger was sent an IOIA t-shirt, an organic chocolate bar and a jar of Joyce’s raspberry jam.

Second place went to inspector trainee, Cory Zurcher. During the Approved Materials presentation, he said, “If it says “oid” use goggles and a mask!” Cory received a jar of jam (Joyce and Jim’s homegrown berries and organic sugar). Congratulations to both Roger and Cory!

Although it was hard to get those inspection reports completely written, people worked diligently and learned a lot!
IOIA Returns to Hong Kong

By Luis Brenes

After conducting successful basic farm and process inspection trainings in 2004, Hong Kong’s Organic Resource Center requested IOIA to deliver them again. To encourage participation of students, and as petitioned by the co-sponsor, trainings were scheduled on New Year’s holiday week. Basic Farm Inspection training was held on Dec 28-29 and processing on Jan 2-3. Thirty two students filled out the class with comments, questions and excellent participation. Field trips to two certified organic vegetable farms allowed students to interact with farmers and practice their inspection skills. A wrap up session with group leaders allowed feedback and information sharing.

The organic food market is growing in Hong Kong, as trainers were able to witness by simply shopping at nearby supermarkets. Consumers can get locally grown organic vegetables, fresh produce from the US, chocolates from the UK, or biscuits from Italy. The variety of organic food choices available in the supermarkets put in evidence the growing interest of local consumers. The Organic Resource Center, part of the Hong Kong Baptist University, is the first local certifier and the first organization in Hong Kong in creating organic standards.

IOIA thanks the Organic Resource Center and looks forward to continuing support of the development of a strong organic sector through training of qualified and skillful inspectors.

OSA: This is the first time ever that the winner was nominated almost unanimously by participants. His phrase was in more than 5 papers although with slight differences. Congratulations to Chris Leung Kam Fai for making such an impact!

I will become a farmer one day, when I have enough money.
I would like to be a farmer when I am rich.
I will go farming if I am rich.
I will be a farmer if only I become rich.
Chris said he will be a farmer if he is as rich as possible.
You need to be rich before trying to be a farmer.
I will be an organic farmer if I am rich (in the future).

Honorable mention goes to Kenny Law - What I eat is decided by my mother

The processing field trip visited a packing house to inspect the operation. Mr. Kenneth Law of VMO (left) hosted the field trip.
Seven Countries Together in Costa Rica!
By Luis Brenes
During Jan 23 to Jan 27th, IOIA hosted a Basic Farm Inspection Training in Costa Rica cosponsored by BCS Oko Garantie office for Central America and the Caribbean. Thirty five enthusiastic participants from El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bolivia, México and the Dominican Republic attended the first-ever 5 days training (IOIA basic farm trainings are usually 3.5 days long). More time allowed for more exercises and no evening sessions.
With excellent hosting from BCS, this training allowed a field trip in small groups (7 students) to 5 different vegetable farms in the Alfaro Ruiz area, thanks to the kind cooperation of APODAR (Asociación de Productores Orgánicos de Alfaro Ruiz). Thanks APODAR!
The Basic Farm training was followed by an Advanced training focused on standards “gray areas” discussion (NOP and EU). EUREPGAP fresh fruit protocol was also presented and compared with NOP standards.
BCS is looking to promote more inspection training in Latin America through IOIA, as it is urgently needed to upgrade inspectors’ qualifications in the area. IOIA looks forward to help in this effort and to welcome more Latinamerican members to join our organization.

Curso básico de formación de inspectores de fincas orgánicas
Curso avanzado para inspectores
San José, Costa Rica del 23 al 29 de enero del 2006
Gracias al esfuerzo conjunto del IOIA y BCS Óko Garantie, fue posible la realización del sexto curso básico de finca para formación de inspectores en Costa Rica y el curso avanzado de Inspectores con énfasis en el análisis en aspectos no detallados en las normas así como la relación con la normativa EurepGap. Los cursos fueron impartidos por el Ing., Luis Brenes y el Ing. Humberto González.
En el curso básico se contó con la presencia de 35 participantes de diferentes países de Latinoamérica, entre ellos México, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Bolivia y Perú, además de República Dominicana. El curso avanzado contó con la presencia de 25 inspectores y en ambas actividades se contó con profesionales con amplia experiencia en el campo de la producción orgánica así como inspectores internacionales en el curso avanzado. Este curso tuvo la particularidad de aumentar la cantidad de días de trabajo en el curso básico (1.5 días adicionales) lo que permitió un mayor espacio de discusión y análisis de los procesos lo cual fue muy bien aceptado por los participantes. Adicionalmente se aumentó la cantidad de guías y fincas para realizar las prácticas de inspección, esto para facilitar las entrevistas e intercambio de información.

Para BCS ÓKO Garantie fue de gran satisfacción el haber realizado esta actividad en conjunto con el IOIA. BCS ÓKO Garantie logró una vez más cumplir con los objetivos planteados y promover el profesionalismo en el conocimiento y aplicación de las normas de certificación en agricultura orgánica. Esperamos realizar próximamente otros cursos en los diferentes países dentro del área de trabajo de nuestra representada.

Algo comenta de asistentes:
"Creo que el curso de inspectores orgánicos tuvo una fuerte influencia en 3 aspectos de mi vida personal y profesional: Reforzó mis conocimientos sobre agricultura orgánica, Reafirmó mi postura de trabajo en pro de cultivos más sanos y libres de pesticidas sintéticos y finalmente me hizo querer más mi profesión, pero por supuesto, fundamentada en principios de equidad y beneficio social, totalmente respetuosos de nuestro entorno natural."
Raúl Pineda Clará
Más comenta:

"Por este medio deseo agradecerles la excelencia con la que fue impartido el curso de inspectores de finca IOIA/BCS. La cantidad de materia fue mucha, pero fue dada en una forma tan agradable que logramos absorber mucha información a la vez que disfrutamos de los 5 días que compartimos juntos. En los cafés de media mañana y en los almuerzos, el comentario siempre constante fue la satisfacción que nos causó el estar recibiendo un curso de tan alta calidad."

Ingrid Ayub

"Me pareció una excelente experiencia, por lo estructurado del programa y la calidad de los instructores. Además que obtuve una visión diferente de lo que es la agricultura orgánica certificada, pues las normas son las que de una forma u otra le dan las pautas de manejo al agricultor."

Ing. Leonardo Sáenz

La Voz de América Latina
Por Carlos Escobar

Gracias a las actuales directivas, Latinoamérica se abre un espacio en la Asociación Independiente de Inspectores Orgánicos (IOIA por sus siglas en inglés). Es la hora de comenzar a comunicarnos en nuestro idioma. Hay mucho por hacer por la asociación, por la profesión, por el movimiento orgánico latinoamericano.

En primer lugar, debemos reactivar nuestro Comité de Latinoamérica. Aquel espacio que, admirablemente, fue liderado por Lidia Gaivironsky de Argentina. A ella, gracias. Pero es la hora de nuevas caras, nuevos objetivos, nuevas metas, nuevas estrategias, nuevas acciones. Nuevos compromisos de todos aquellos que queremos, no solo ganar un dinero extra, velar por el cumplimiento de un sinnúmero de estándares orgánicos, sino contribuir con el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de un movimiento orgánico sólido, viable y responsable social, económica y técnicamente. Esto es el más allá de las normas.

Así pues, todos estamos invitados a ser parte de este comité como una de las oportunidades más valiosas para construir una Asociación Independiente de Inspectores Orgánicos con un poco de sabor latino!

En segundo lugar, escribamos juntos. En este nuevo espacio podremos ampliar temas de nuestro interés con perspectiva regional. Comentarios, ideas y opiniones pueden ser dirigidas a conexionecologica@yahoo.com

Bienvenidos a IOIA, al Comité de Latinoamérica, a su espacio en español. Esperamos hagan parte del Comité de Latinoamérica escribiendo a connexionecologica@yahoo.com o ioia@rangeweb.net
IOIA Board Meeting Minutes Highlights  December 15 and 20, 2005 - January 24, 2006 - February 9, 2006
Full Board of Directors Meeting, December 15, 2005 Conference Call

Current Financial Status Report
Treasurer Jack Reams reported that he expected approximately a $20,000 dollar surplus at year-end. Margaret advised that $10,000.00 should be put back into IOIA reserves and the remaining for curriculum development. She said that there is about $15,000.00 left in “real” reserves. Based on the workings of IOIA a minimum of $25,000.00 should be in reserve for the organization to be healthy. The average annual operating budget of IOIA is approximately $100,000.00. Margaret was directed to purchase the new computer system by the end of the 2005 calendar year.

2006 Draft Budget
Jack said that the proposed 2006 budget is a balanced one. The International Training Manager’s (ITM) salary is to be listed separately in future budgets as a Training Expense. Jack and Margaret will present an updated budget during the next BOD meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 24, 2006.

Request from some Latin American Members – Dues
It was suggested IOIA consider a fee structure based on costs and benefits to Latin American members. Other ideas discussed included ‘Sponsor an IOIA member’, develop regional groups based on the idea of grower group certification as this would be consistent with the current Latin American farmer / inspection scenario, develop more ‘sister’ groups similar to JOIA (in Japan). It was noted that this is a fee structure issue not a membership issue. The BOD’s intention is for Latin American members to have more access to IOIA benefits. Luis will contact Latin American inspectors to discuss IOIA membership, and will come back to the BOD with a proposal for equitable membership and fees.

BOD Retreat – Follow up
There was discussion regarding the importance of carrying the BOD Retreat Action Items forward and how this should be accomplished. All BOD members should give Luis feedback on his 2-page ‘Statement of the Problem’. During the next conference call the BOD will do a four-page summary and each BOD member will know which Action Items s/he is responsible for.

2006 AGM
Margaret said that there were at least six nominees for IOIA Board to date. The deadline to mail out the ballot is January 9th. Margaret will contact the nominees regarding the voting system that will be used. There are no proposed bylaw amendments this year.

Response from OTA
Brian said he spoke with Phil Margolis, the President of the OTA Board of Directors. Brian plans to summarize his phone conversation with the OTA President, send it to the President of OTA for any ‘corrections’ and then to Margaret for editing then to the BOD and finally to the IOIA members.

ED Report, including Training update
• Legal counsel was sought before Brian could sign off on the IOIA application to BC as an extra-provincial society. Margaret clarified that the Canadian entity (Canadian IOIA office) the designated attorney IS simply your designated contact; which is currently Lisa Pierce. There is a one-time fee of $100.00, plus $30 name search, and an annual fee of $15.00.
• Final Report on RMA/NCAT/IOIA Deep South Workshops
• Manitoba’s "Organic Matters" conference is scheduled for Nov. 12.
• Montana Organic Association conference is scheduled for Nov. 11-13 in Billings. This conference, the 3rd annual, was very successful with over 200 attendees. Brian Magaro stepped in to help out with the benefit auction.
• IOIA will have a table at the Guelph Organic Conference, January 28-29, 2006. Janine reported to Leanne McCormick, Lisa, Margaret, and Garry that she had been asked by the Organic Regulatory Committee (ORC) to chair an Inspection Subcommittee meeting that took place on Oct. 14 in Toronto.
• Accreditation Committee: ARP Chair Stephen Grealy succeeded in reaching determinations on all fall accreditation applications within 2 months of the application deadline. This is virtually a record and is a great change from the past years. Well done Stephen!

Joe Montecalvo Request
The Board agreed to support Joe Montecalvo in his request for $500 to update his food service and sanitation manuals. IOIA will have rights to reproduce and sell them. These can also be used in the IOIA curriculum and available for sale by IOIA.

Curriculum Proposal
Margaret circulated information for discussion prior to the BOD meeting. Garry offered to oversee the project as he has experience with curriculum development. It was noted the need for detailed specifications in the contract(s) and terms of reference, deliverables, and due dates. The BOD will reconvene on Tuesday December 20th to discuss curriculum development further.

Full Board Conference Call, December 20, 2005
Meeting called by Jack Reams – Treasurer and Chair of this meeting

Year-end Cash Position
Jack said that he anticipates a year-end cash Balance of $20-$24,000.00. There was a brief discussion on how much should be placed in reserve to ensure adequate cash flow for the typical calendar year expenses. Jack recommended that the BOD consider placing $10,000.00 in reserves. The BOD agreed in principal and will make a final decision at the next BOD meeting.
Staff Salaries
Jack noted that the ED is responsible for decisions on staff salary, with the approval of the BOD, so long as it included in the annual budget. A line item for staff salaries should be included in the annual budget. The Board discussed staff salaries. The Board agreed to increase the ED salary to $28,000.00 as a basic cost of living increase.

Curriculum contract
The BOD discussed moving ahead on the Development of a new Inspector Training Curriculum that the BOD agreed upon during the November 2005 BOD strategic Planning Retreat. The BOD committed to move forward with the first stage of the Curriculum development with a ceiling of $12,000.00 pending the outcome of Jack and Garry’s meeting with the ED and the ITM. Jack and Garry will negotiate a contract for the Development of a New Curriculum for the Farm / Crop trainings.

Budget for 2006
There was discussion regarding the usual protocol for the presentation of the past years financial report and the budget for the upcoming year. The Treasurer will present the 2005 financial statement at the AGM. The membership will vote on this report. As well, the Treasurer will present the 2006 Budget to the membership at the AGM for information and discussion.

January 24, 2006 Full Board Conference Call
2006 Budget
The Board endorsed the Jack’s proposal for the presentation of a balanced budget at the 2006 AGM in LaCrosse. The final review of the proposed 2006 budget is to take place during the Feb. 20 pre-AGM meeting.

IOIA Office
Margaret reported that due to circumstances beyond IOIA’s control the IOIA office rent and utilities could increase by $3,700.00 per year. She noted that IOIA has been fortunate in the past to have the office space in Broadus at such a reasonable rate. The BOD discussed whether IOIA should rent part or all of the office space offered. Margaret will continue to explore office space options in Broadus.

2005 Financial Statement
Jack circulated the 2005 Financial Statement prior to the BOD meeting. He noted that the RMA project was profitable for IOIA and complimented Margaret on a job well done.

BOD Retreat – Follow up
Prior to the meeting Brian circulated by e-mail his findings about the possibility of inspector bonding. He said that we need to know if there is a statute in place in the NOP wherein inspectors could be held responsible for misdeeds. The BOD brainstormed how best to summarize the four major items agreed upon at the BOD Strategic Planning retreat in Santa Cruz. It was suggested that a ten power point slide presentation along with a one-page handout at the AGM would be the best way. The BOD agreed that the AGM membership discussions should include the major topics from the BOD retreat.

2006 Pre-AGM BOD meeting
The Pre-AGM meeting will take place on Feb 20 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel. The BOD acknowledges that the meeting will be a time to work on the retreat summary and presentation, as well as the financial and annual reports.

Post AGM Meeting
The Post AGM meeting is to take place on Feb 24.

Curriculum Contract
Prior to the meeting Margaret sent the BOD information comparing ‘in house versus outsourcing’ a contract(s) for the redesign of the IOIA Inspector Training Curriculum. The BOD discussed the advantages and disadvantages the scenarios. Jack, Garry and Margaret plan to write a $12,000 contract for redesigning the Basic Crop Curriculum.

Executive Director Evaluation
Garry and Jack completed the Executive Director evaluation. Jack and Garry noted that there were no major discrepancies between their evaluation and the ED’s self-evaluation. The BOD thanked Jack and Garry for the work and applauded Margaret for her high scores in every area of her evaluation.

Canadian entity-extra-provincial office
Margaret said that the extra provincial society application is being revised and will be resubmitted.

ED Report
• The Scholarship Committee recommended that only one (OCA) Organic Community Initiative Scholarship be awarded, which would be increased to $1000 to include some travel expenses in addition to tuition.
• Margaret purchased a Dell 80 GB with a wide flat screen monitor and CD burner for the IOIA office.
• Leanne McCormick is spearheading the IOIA presence at the Guelph Organic Conference on behalf of the Canadian Committee. Checks were sent to the Canadian Committee Co-Chair, Janine Gibson ($200) for her to attend the Guelph meeting and Paddy Doherty ($300) of the Organic Regulatory Committee, a cross sector organic industry committee.

February 9, 2006, Full Board Conference Call
Prior to this BOD meeting there was a BOD phone conference call for the purpose of gaining clarity on ITM and Curriculum Development. The BOD realized that it needed more clarity on what outcomes are expected and what would be a realistic timeframe for redesigning the various components of the inspector training curriculum. Garry and Margaret plan to work on creating the contract for the curriculum development project. ë
**Resources**


**Papers are being sought** for the 1st IFOAM International Conference on Animals in Organic Production, to be held Aug. 23-25 at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, MN. Submit abstracts by March 28 to jriddle@hbci.com. For more information, contact Neil Sorensen at IFOAM (n.sorensen@ifoam.org).

**Comparison published on European Union and U.S. organic markets**

Although the organic markets in EU member states and the US are nearly the same size in terms of retail sales, the U.S. and EU governments have adopted markedly different policy approaches to the organic sector. The EU, for instance, actively promotes the growth of the organic sector with a wide variety of policies designed to increase the amount of land farmed organically, whereas the United States largely takes a free-market approach. To read a comparison, go to www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/February06/Features/feature1.htm.

**New Guide to Ranchland Conservation**

A partnership between American Farmland Trust and Coleman Natural Foods has resulted in the publication of a new guide to tools and resources that can help farmers and ranchers conserve their land, augment productivity, and implement holistic land stewardship practices. The guide is aimed at agricultural landowners of the Rocky Mountain region - Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Titled *Rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowners: Guide to Conservation and Sustainability* (http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/30427/FINAL_Rocky_Mountain_Guide.pdf, PDF / 936 kb), the guide includes sections on farm and ranch land protection, conservation and stewardship programs, sustainable ranchland management practices, and other resources. http://www.farmlandinfo.org/farmland_preservation_literature/index.cfm?function=article_view&articleID=30427

**Pesticide Calculator and Food Additive Fact sheets on Web** Two websites provide useful tools to help evaluate how many synthetic toxins are in the food we consume on a daily basis. http://www.foodnews.org/ provides a tool that works out how many pesticides are in some conventionally grown fruits and vegetables, and compares them with organically grown equivalents. Go to the above website and click on the *Produce Scanner* link.

http://www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info/ provides a list of fact sheets to help find out which food additives to avoid most, and the symptoms that can result from consuming them. Go to the website and click on the *Fact sheets* button.

**Quick Environmental Footprint Calculator** Two environmental organizations have together developed a website that quickly and easily calculates your ecological footprint. It tells you if you are consuming more than your 1.8 hectares of productive land and water, which is how much each person has when the world total is divided among the world's population.

Everyone should try this, and pass it on to friends. This is the question you will find the answer to - how many planets would it take to support the world's population if we all lived like you? www.myfootprint.org/

**Prices for organic chickens as well as shell eggs will be reported** USDA's Ag Marketing Service plans to list organic chicken in its weekly price report (www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/mncs/RetailReports/RTIChick.htm) for retail promotion of chickens. The weekly price report for shell eggs already includes USDA certified organic eggs (www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/mncs/RetailReports/RTIEgg.htm). The information is collected from weekly supermarket ads representing 17,000 stores in the lower 48 states. Promotional activity provides users with a means to analyze and anticipate marketing and consumer trends.

**Fast Facts from Rodale** The Institutes long-running comparison of organic and conventional cropping systems reports:

- If only 10,000 medium sized farms in the U.S. converted to organic production, they would store so much carbon in the soil that it would be equivalent to taking 1,174,400 cars off the road, or reducing car miles driven by 14.62 billion miles.
- Converting the US’s 160 million corn and soybean acres to organic production would sequester enough carbon to satisfy 73 percent of the Kyoto targets for CO2 reduction in the U.S.
- U.S. agriculture as currently practiced emits a total of 1.5 trillion pounds of CO2 annually into the atmosphere. Converting all U.S. cropland to organic would not only wipe out agriculture's massive emission problem. By eliminating energy-costly chemical fertilizers, it would actually give us a net increase in soil carbon of 734 billion pounds.

http://www.newfarm.org/depts/NFfield_trials/1003/carbonsequest.shtml
The Non-GMO Report focuses on solutions to the biggest threat to natural and organic foods—genetic engineering. Genetically modified foods have created many challenges for the food industry. Consumers are concerned about the safety of GM foods, which contain genes from bacterium and other species, raising risks of new toxins or allergens. Windborne pollen from GM corn can cross-pollinate with non-GM and organic corn, causing economic losses for farmers of those crops. Food manufacturers face challenges finding non-GM ingredients for their products due to the widespread use of processed GM corn and soy ingredients. Retailers are in the dark about the GM foods because, unlike many other nations, the United States and Canada do not require labeling of GM foods.

**Useful information**

Fortunately, there is a resource to help food producers respond to the challenges of GM foods. The Non-GMO Report is the only monthly publication that helps food producers meet the challenges and capitalize on the growing market for non-GM foods. The Non-GMO Report aims to provide more than just news, says editor and publisher, Ken Roseboro. “We aim to help food producers prevent GMO contamination, connect with buyers of their products, locate sources for non-GM grains and ingredients, and keep them up-to-date on all the issues surrounding GM foods,” he says.

Each issue features articles about non-GMO market opportunities, global GMO news, consumer attitudes, GM food labeling news, and profiles of companies successfully producing non-GM products.

Natural and organic food manufacturers and retailers find The Non-GMO Report especially helpful. “An Organic Trade Association survey of its members found that GM foods are the biggest threat to organic,” says Roseboro. As a result, The Report features many articles on the impact of GMOs on organic and ways to prevent the impacts.

**World’s only “farm to fork” directory of non-GM products**

Another resource that food producers find useful is The Non-GMO Sourcebook, the world’s only “farm to fork” directory of suppliers of non-GM products. Published annually, The Non-GMO Sourcebook features more than 550 worldwide suppliers of non-GM products, including seed, processed corn and soy ingredients, specialty grains and oilseeds, minor ingredients and processing aids, and food products. The Sourcebook also lists suppliers of related products and services, such as GMO testing, identity preservation, organic certification, and other services that support non-GMO production.

For more info on these resources, call 1-800-854-0586, email ken@non-gmoreport.com or visit www.non-gmoreport.com.

This article originally appeared in a recent Issue of The Non-GMO Report. You are invited to stay informed by subscribing. There is a reduced rate for IOIA members of $59/year.

**Farmers and Others Sue US Government over GMO Alfalfa**

A coalition of farmers, consumers and environmental activists filed suit against the U.S. government in February over its approval of a biotech alfalfa that critics say will spell havoc for farmers and the environment. The lawsuit contends that the U.S. Department of Agriculture improperly is allowing Monsanto Co. to sell an herbicide-resistant alfalfa seed while failing to analyze the public health, environmental, and economic consequences of that action.

The suit asserts that the GM alfalfa will probably contaminate conventionally grown alfalfa at a fast pace, ultimately forcing farmers to pay for Monsanto’s patented gene technology whether they want the technology or not.

The group says biotech alfalfa would also hurt production of organic dairy and beef products as alfalfa is a key ingredient in cattle feed. And the suit claims farmers could lose export business, valued at an estimated $480 million per year, because buyers in Japan and South Korea, major importers of U.S. alfalfa, have indicated they would avoid buying U.S. alfalfa once the GMO variety is released.

Alfalfa is very easily cross-pollinated by bees and by wind. The plant is also perennial, meaning GMO plants could live on for years. By Carey Gillam, Reuters, February 17, 2006

**WTO Prelim Ruling Favors U.S. Biotech Companies Over Precautionary Regulation**

A preliminary ruling issued by a World Trade Organization’s (WTO) dispute resolution panel would be a major step back for the democratic rights of national and local governments to set their own environmental and human health regulations when there is scientific uncertainty, reports the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

The ruling, which has not yet been made public, concerns a U.S., Canadian and Argentine government challenge of a European Commission (EC) regulatory system that delayed the commercialization of genetically-engineered (GE) crops until further scientific evidence of their environmental and health safety was available. The EC system has approved GE crops for commercialization since the dispute was filed in 2003. “Beyond GE crops, the WTO ruling as reported sets a broad precedent to inhibit the ability of WTO member states to set food safety, public health and environmental health measures where there is scientific uncertainty about the adequacy or quality of data submitted for commercialization approvals,” said Steve Suppan, IATP Research Director and author of a backgrounder on the case.

If the lengthy ruling remains unchanged before its final publication, it will likely be used as a legal tool against GE bans passed in European Union member states, in several Asian and African WTO member countries, and even in a few U.S. counties.

The reported WTO ruling at least indirectly challenges the authority of the United Nations Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which authorizes its member countries to take a precautionary approach to regulating GE crops when there is scientific uncertainty. While the dispute plaintiffs are not among the Protocol’s 131 member states, dozens of WTO members are, so the ruling could conflict with their Protocol commitments, including those implemented at a national and local level.

The WTO ruling comes on the heels of a scathing USDA Inspector General report which found that the USDA did not require inspections of field tests of experimental GE crops, didn’t assure that crops were destroyed after the tests were finished, and often didn’t even know where the tests were being conducted. Several independent reviews of the U.S. regulatory system regarding GE crops have found significant deficiencies. The National Research Council published critical reviews of the U.S. regulatory process in 2000, 2002 and 2004. The flaws of the U.S. regulatory system and the unknown risks of GE crops are outlined in an amicus brief filed in the WTO case by the Center for International Environmental Law, IATP, Friends of the Earth - U.S., Defenders of Wildlife, and the Organic Consumers Association. It is available at: tradeobservatory.org.

“The WTO dispute panel is set up to view regulations strictly in a framework designed to facilitate trade, not to realize public or environmental health objectives,” said Suppan. “The U.S. government and the biotech companies may claim that the ruling proves that GE crops are safe for human consumption and the use of GE seeds is an environmentally beneficial agricultural practice. But the case covers no such thing: much less does it support the profoundly flawed U.S. regulation of GE crops.”

It is unlikely the case will increase U.S. food sales to Europe. Europe still requires labeling of GE crops, and there is overwhelming consumer sentiment for GE-free foods there. U.S. wheat growers, recognizing that European and Asian consumers do not want GE crops, successfully blocked the approval of GE wheat in the U.S. in 2004. However, there is a real danger that the ruling could be used to force sales of GE products in developing countries, who have less leverage to stand up to political pressure from the United States government. By Carey Gillam, Reuters, February 17, 2006, www.iatp.org
AGM, from page 3

Jack Reams served as Treasurer for his entire 6 years on the Board. He was pleased to receive a framed calligraphy and dried flower “Thank You” certificate that acknowledged both him and his wife, Marlene, who partners with him in all of his many roles, including organic inspection work. Jack and Marlene also received a joint farewell gift from the other BOD members and IOIA to ‘dine and dance’ on a cruise ship in Vancouver.

Why is Outgoing Chair Brian Magaro laughing? Perhaps because he is relieved to not be chairing IOIA after 3 years as Chair and 6 years on the BOD? No…not at all. Vice-Chair Garry Lean has just presented him with a framed calligraphy and dried flower “Thank You” certificate, and the BOD has sprung their surprise gift on him. Brian complied with their request to tell the members the story about when he first came to Montana to visit the IOIA office in 2002 for an internal audit. The clerk at the rental car desk in Rapid City, SD asked him why he was going to MT. He replied, “I’m gonna be a cowboy”. She looked him up and down and said “I don’t think so…”. Here’s how the Board presented his gift from IOIA and the BOD for a pair of handmade boots, by projecting faked photos of him riding a horse and a bucking bull.

Luis Brenes, very-soon-to-be-new-Chair of-IOIA, presents a synopsis of the 2005 Santa Cruz BOD retreat. In summary, the strategy can be summarized as “Set the bar, write the set of qualifications, create a requirement for it, then provide the means to achieve it through basic and continuing education”. The idea is to offer the world better inspectors so industry will look for IOIA inspectors, thereby adding value to IOIA membership.

Brian’s Fundraiser for IOIA – He is offering a hand-crafted, original design solid walnut file holder for your desk. It is designed not to tip backward, spilling files. 15” base with a 10” back. Yours for the low price of US$30.00(+ 4.00 shipping) with $20.00 going to support you….by supporting IOIA. You can order direct from Brian at magaroforum@aol.com

Margaret is laughing because now it's Mark Bradley's turn to receive the Outrageous Statement Award. She’s been smarting ever since she won the OSA for exclaiming to him that ‘it’s not like you’re God’ at an advanced training. Bradley says he's told the story dozens of times across the country.

Joyce Ford is all smiles when she received her Lifetime Achievement, Inspector Asset of the Year award.
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IOIA has several publications for sale. Order here or through our website. Please add 10% for Shipping and Handling.

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- New! Organic Dairy Farming, Edited by Jody Padham, Community Conservation, Project coordinated by MOSES, 156 p.; 2006; $15.00
- Building Soils for Better Crops (2nd Edition), by Fred Magdoff and Harold Van Es. 240 pp. $20
- COG Organic Field Crop Handbook, 2nd Edition, Expanded and Rewritten. Published by Canadian Organic Growers. An invaluable resource. While preserving the best of the now out-of-print and no longer available first edition, this edition is updated to include info on GMO’s, E. coli issues in manure, and many additions to the crop section. 222 pages, spiral bound, $30.00.
- Food Plant Sanitation and Safety, by Dr. Joe Montecalvo, 184 pp, $50.00
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We’re Soliciting input for improvements to our website; please email to ioiaweb@ioia.net with your suggestions. Thank you!
2006 Calendar

March 23 – 26  Natural Products Expo West, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA. Info  www.expowest.com

March 28 – deadline - A "call for papers"  For the Int’l Conf. on Organic Livestock, see Aug 23 entry. Please submit your one to two page abstracts, describing your ideas for presentations and/or posters, accompanied by a brief CV, not to exceed two pages. Please be aware that papers are welcome on production and marketing issues, in addition to research studies. Successful applicants will be notified by May 1.

April 4  Utah Department of Ag. and Food organic program will be hosting a series of trainings for organic producers, processors and handlers. The training involves the writing of an organic system plan that is descriptive to meet the organic regulation.  Contact: Camille Anderson, camilleanderson@utah.gov, 801-538-7106. Southern Utah University, 351 W. University Blvd., Cedar City, Utah

April 4 – 6  St. Louis, Missouri. The Fifth National IPM Symposium. Symposium sessions will address state of the art strategies and technologies to successfully solve pest problems. www.ipmcenters.org/ipmsymposiumv/

April 15 – October 15  Santa Cruz, California. 2006 Farm & Garden Apprenticeship. The Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food System offers training in the concepts and practices of organic gardening and small-scale farming. www.ucsc.edu/casfs

April 24 - 27  Lima, Peru. Organic Exchange - 2006 Latin America Regional Supply Meeting. Contact Terry Young at terry@organicexchange.org or 510.597.9949.


May 3 – 4  Bosnia and Herzegovina. The 1st IFOAM Conference On Organic Wild Production. This conference will focus on the harvesting of wild vegetable products from forest, 'natural' lands, pastures and uncultivated land in the agriculture landscape. It will concentrate on current production that enters the organic market stream, but will also extend to other concepts, such as Fair Trade, sustainable forest management certification and Good Manufacturing Practices. Organized in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). www.organicwildconference.org


May 6 – 9  Chicago, IL. North American Summit on Organic Production and Marketing. The Organic Trade Association (OTA) in partnership with the National Association of State Organic Programs (NASOP) will host the North American Summit on Organic Production and Marketing at All Things Organic! The first of its kind, the Summit will provide a collaborative forum. http://www.organicexpo.com/summit.shtml

July 9 – 15  Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 18th World Congress of Soil Science. Theme, "Frontiers of Soil Science: Technology and the Information Age", the technical program will focus on soil science advances with an emphasis on remote sensing, geographic information systems, landscape analysis, and more. http://www.18wcss.org


August 23-25  St. Paul, MN. First ever Int’l Conference on Organic Livestock, organized by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and hosted by the University of Minnesota. www.ifoam.org

September 20 – 27  Binghamton, NY. IOIA Basic Farm and Livestock inspector trainings. See page 3 for info.

November 6 – 9  San Diego area. IOIA Basic Farm and Processing Inspector trainings. Co-sponsored with QAI. See page 3 for info.

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