

## New Webinars - Farm Fraud and Maple Syrup

Don't miss these two new webinars!

### Farm Fraud Concepts and Tools, September 11, 1-3 PM

Pacific with Gwendolyn Wyard and Johanna Phillips, Strengthening Organic Systems (SOS).

Want to sharpen your investigative instincts? This 1.5-hour webinar will equip organic inspectors with critical knowledge in on-farm fraud prevention and best audit practices. Learn about the highest risk activities, what a well-designed Fraud Prevention Plan should contain, and how you can use the operation's fraud prevention plan as a tool during onsite audits. Learn about risk areas at the farm level, tools that are developed to support investigations, and how to recognize the signs of potential fraud, understand internal control weaknesses, and utilize basic auditing principles to enhance your inspection process. This session will empower you to go beyond surface-level checks, adding a valuable layer of oversight to your important work and helping to safeguard the organic sector from financial malfeasance.

**Membership Benefit Webinar! \$200 for non-IOIA members. \$175 for IOIA Supporting Members: 100 for IOIA Inspector Members.**

To Register and Pay: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1613491980365039452>

For more about the Trainers – see page 4



### 250-Level Maple Syrup Inspection, December 3, 9-12

Pacific AM with John Welton and Claire Ackroyd.

This webinar will prepare inspectors and certifiers to understand the requirements of the standards being used in the United States and Canada for organic maple syrup production. It will provide tools for use by inspectors in the woods and sugar camps, and more industrial maple syrup processing situations.

The presenters are experienced organic inspectors John Welton and Claire Ackroyd, both of Maine.

The course will give an historical perspective and industry context for maple syrup inspection. The course information will differentiate the organic maple production methods at the producer level from those used by their conventional counterparts.

Organic control points related to site selection, forestry practices, sap gathering methods, equipment, sap storage, reverse osmosis, evaporation, filtration and maple syrup packing will be covered. The permitted substances used during processing and for cleaning will be presented and discussed. Recordkeeping as well as traceability examples and in/out balancing will be covered. Further considerations for on-farm processing (taffy, butter, candies) and industrial blending/bottling will also be discussed.

The course is designed for persons with organic inspection or certification review experience. See Webinars, page 4

## Notes from the Chair by Joseph Ward

The IOIA continues to navigate the evolving landscape of the National Organic Program while remaining steadfast in our mission: to strengthen IOIA's role as the professional platform for inspectors and the trusted source for inspector training and education. As the professional organization for organic inspectors, we are deeply committed to promoting collaboration, sharing information, and advancing the essential role that inspectors play in ensuring integrity within the organic marketplace.

It is both an honor and a privilege to serve as your new Chair. I take this responsibility seriously. IOIA has long been the cornerstone for professional inspectors and the educational backbone for training aligned with organic rules and regulations.

See Notes, page 4

## Welcome New Members!

### New Inspectors

Patrick Madden, Clayton, Michigan  
 Brian Lepore, Bend, Oregon  
 Yogesh Bachkar, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India

### Upgraded to Inspector

Ashleigh Knecht, Rochester, New York

### Supporting Individual

Adam Trujillo, Kamuela, Hawaii  
 Gavin Wright, Enderby, British Columbia  
 Alma Alvarez, Pleasanton, CA  
 Jake Hare, Livonia, Michigan  
 John Kihia, Puyallup, Washington  
 Sophia Kislik, Asheville, North Carolina  
 John Koman, Oxnard, California  
 Emily Raab, Santa Rosa, California  
 Joseph Ramagli, Eugene, Oregon  
 Suzanne Stover, Eugene, Oregon

**IOIA Inspector Accreditation  
Deadline is October 1**

### Webinar Discount Reminder

All inspector members are entitled to take 50% off any one webinar during 2025

### IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR: JOSEPH WARD	SECRETARY: KATHE PURVIS
VICE CHAIR: JUSTIN HURLEY	DIRECTOR: RHEA EPP
TREASURER: ALLAN BENJAMIN	DIRECTOR: WENDY PAULSEN

— EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT LARGE —  
 MARGARITO CAL  
 - SPECIAL PAST CHAIR -  
 JANINE GIBSON

The Inspectors' Report is the newsletter of 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](#)

## 2025 Webinar Training Schedule

for details & to register go to our [website](#)

### **NEW!** September 11 Farm Fraud Concepts and Tools

This 1.5-hour webinar will equip organic inspectors with critical knowledge in on-farm fraud prevention and best audit practices. 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Pacific. One 1.5 hour session + ½ hour q&a. Presenters: Gwendolyn Wyard and Johanna Phillips.

[Register and Pay Here](#)

### September 16 & 18 100 Level IOIA COR Processing Standards

The webinar is a 100-level course that will prepare participants to verify compliance with the COR Processing Standards. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific. Two 3-hour sessions. IOIA Trainer: Kelly A. Monaghan

[Register and Pay Here](#)

### September 24 100 Level IOIA/OMRI NOP Crop Input Materials

This webinar is a 100-level course designed as a way for new organic professionals to gain an understanding of the compliance requirements of inputs used within the crop production scope through a discussion and learning session with staff from Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI). 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific. One 3 hour session. OMRI Trainers: Peter Bungum and Aura del Angel Larson.

[Register and Pay Here](#)

### October 21 & 24 100 Level NOP Processing Standards

The webinar is a 100-level course that will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Processing Standards. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific. Two 3-hour sessions. IOIA Trainer: Garry Lean

[Register and Pay Here](#)

### October 28 & 31 100 Level NOP Crop Standards

The webinar is a 100-level course will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Crop Standards. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific. Two 3-hour sessions. IOIA Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm

[Register and Pay Here](#)

### October 29 200 Level IOIA/OMRI NOP Processing Input Materials

This webinar is an intermediate 200 level course. The course is geared for people with a prior understanding of NOP Processing Standards and processing inspection or certification experience. Course participants preferably will have completed the IOIA Basic Processing course or the IOIA 100 Level NOP Processing Standards webinar.

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Pacific. One 3-hour session.

OMRI Trainers: Tina Jensen Augustine and Jacky Castañeda.

[Register and Pay Here](#)

### **NEW!** December 3, 2025 250 Level Maple Syrup Inspection

This webinar will prepare inspectors and certifiers to understand the requirements of the standards being used in the United States and Canada for organic maple syrup production. 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. Pacific. One 3-hour session. IOIA Presenters: John Welton and Claire Ackroyd.

[Register and Pay Here](#)

## Online and Onsite Basic Courses 2025 - [see the IOIA website for full details](#)

### Farm and Processing Courses, Tokyo, Japan September 12 & 19 AND 24 - 26, 2025

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor two courses: a 5-day Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training, and a 5-day Basic Organic Processing Inspection Training using JAS Standards as a reference. Courses will run concurrently online September 12 & 19 and in-person September 24-26, 2025, at Utsumi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan. The training language will be Japanese.

#### Online COR - Basic Processing Inspection Training - September 29 - October 3



The 4 ½ -day Basic COR Organic Processing Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements.

[Click here for course and registration info](#)

Instruction on the organic standards (focus on the COR Standards); working with organic system plans; How to inspect organic processing operations; Risk assessment; Investigative skills; Report writing; Input materials and ingredients; Evaluating product labels; Organic quality management; Organic control points; Audit control and auditing; Assessing structural pest management, and facility sanitation; Inspector conduct, confidentiality, and ethics; Understanding the difference between inspecting and consulting; and Effective communication.

**Deadline to Register and Apply is Friday, August 15, 2025**

#### Chungju, Korea, Mass Balance Advanced Trainings – 1 day each October 23 & November 20

Isidor Sustainability Research Institute and IOIA will cosponsor Mass Balance Advanced Trainings, in Korean language.

#### Online - NOP - Basic Processing Inspection Training, November 3 - 7

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements.

[Click here for course and registration info](#)

**Deadline to Register and Apply is Friday, September 26, 2025**

#### Online - NOP Basic Crop Inspection Training, November 17 - 21

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements.

[Click here for course and registration info](#)

**Deadline to Register and Apply is Friday, October 3, 2025**

#### Online COR - Basic Crop Inspection Training - December 8 - 12

The course provides basic level training to develop skills required for inspecting and report-



ing on the management of an organic crop operations according to a specified set of standards (focus on the Canadian Standards). For courses conducted in Canada, the standard is CAN/CGSB-32.310-2020 and Permitted Substance Lists CAN/CGSB-32.311-2020.

[Click here for course and registration info](#)

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements.

**Deadline to Register is October 27, 2025.**

**Required Self-Directed Training for COR Crop course** - If you have already completed these courses, you are not required to retake them.

100 Level COR 1 - Our Organic Certification System - [Register HERE](#)

100 Level COR 2 - COR Crop Production Standards - [Register HERE](#)

For all online courses, please Email [ioiassistant@rangeweb.net](mailto:ioiassistant@rangeweb.net) to be put on a waiting list or for further questions.

Not finding a training you are looking for or all trainings full?  
[Please register here](#) to be contacted by IOIA when that training is available.

## Notes from the Chair, from page 1

As we look ahead to the coming year, I ask for your continued support—through your membership and your presence in the field—as ambassadors of the professionalism and integrity that IOIA stands for. IOIA will remain the leader in fostering dialogue and knowledge exchange, equipping inspectors to understand and implement organic standard's rules and regulations.

The IOIA Board has set forth a number of initiatives for the year ahead. We are prioritizing efficient and cost-effective methods to train new inspectors and to offer continuing education for all inspectors—whether independent or working with certification agencies. We are also exploring new ways to expand services for our members. As always, IOIA is dedicated to delivering unbiased, high-quality educational opportunities that help uphold organic integrity across the industry.

Please stay engaged. Your involvement and connection with IOIA are vital as we proactively address emerging challenges and continue to drive progress as the professional voice for organic inspectors.

Respectfully, *Joe Ward*

## Enterprise/National Car Rental Agreement - A new member benefit?

Thanks to the good work of **Justin Hurley**, Board Vice-Chair, we **were** well on our way to announcing a new membership benefit partnering with Enterprise/National car rentals. It was a great deal, but the devil was in the details. It finally came down to their unwillingness to modify the contract in some key places and our unwillingness to sign as it was, thereby taking on a considerable liability for IOIA. We will continue the discussions, and maybe we'll shop other rental companies to see if they will be more flexible.

## New Webinars - from page 1

**About the Trainers:** John has been an inspector for 7 years and training inspectors at MOFGA since 2021. He is currently working full-time at MOFGA Certification Services as certification and quality specialist. As part of his inspection history, he has inspected sugar camps throughout Maine, including the large-scale sugarbushes in northern Somerset County on the border with Quebec.

Claire Ackroyd has been inspecting maple sugaring operations for decades and is a fluent French speaker. She is also a self-published author of regional crime fiction, most notably *Murder in the Maple Woods*, which features organic fraud in the sugaring culture and landscape of northern Maine. For more about her, see <https://www.claireackroyd.com/books>



Claire Ackroyd

**More about SOS:** Strengthening Organic Systems (SOS) was founded in 2023 to improve the resilience and overall integrity of global organic supply chains. Their goal is to assure authenticity of organic products, protect organic businesses from organic fraud, and maintain consumer confidence in the USDA organic seal.

Gwendolyn Wyard has worked in organic certification and policy for over 28 years. Prior to SOS, Wyard served for more than a dozen years as the Vice President of Regulatory and Technical Affairs for the Organic Trade Association (OTA) where she worked on the development of policy strategy through regulatory engagement in the interest of OTA's mission and its members. While at the trade association, Wyard was the lead developer and author of the association's Organic Fraud Prevention Guide, now the industry standard reference for excellence in achieving integrity across complex organic global supply chains.

Johanna Phillips' roots are firmly planted in the fertile ground of agriculture, thanks to a youth spent on her family's third-generation Idaho farm. An active participant in 4-H and farm operations, she's built a lifelong quest to merge food production with sustainability and health. Johanna continues her agricultural endeavors at her farm in Eagle, ID, and through a beef production venture with her family. As Idaho's Organic Program Manager, Johanna adeptly navigated certification and regulatory needs, playing a key role in an interagency fraud investigation that led to a significant conviction. Before her current role at SOS, she spearheaded Ecocert USA's certification division and provided invaluable technical assistance across Ecocert's global network. Johanna is a recognized voice in the ever-evolving sphere of organic certification.

## Notes from the Executive Director

by Margaret Scoles

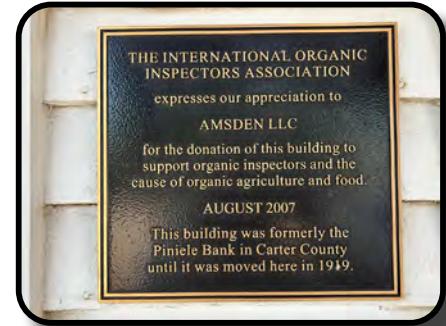
**TOPP Workforce Development RFP:** Much of July was devoted to preparing a dynamite proposal for the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) Request for Proposals from the Regional Leads Workforce Development Committee. The RFP came out on July 3 and proposals were due August 4. We spent two weeks figuring out whether we could apply and whether it applied to us. But we did it! We should know the outcome by early September. With funding so much tighter with the new administration, we find ourselves in the midst of "The Hunger Games". Everyone is going after a smaller pot of money. Fortunately, IOIA has always supported ourselves primarily through training revenue and membership and will continue to do so. We have never been overly reliant on federal support.

The RFP was based on the [Workforce Development Needs Assessment for the Organic Industry](#) conducted for TOPP by the Nexight Group. Drew and I were interviewed late in 2024 as part of their information gathering. The 100+ page report includes some good information (mostly that we already knew), some great ideas, and a few unnecessarily sharp pokes at IOIA.



The goal of the RFP is to find the best applicant for about \$100,000 to develop training curricula and certificate modules for inspectors and reviewers. It encouraged working with institutions of higher learning. I did question some of their math. IOIA trains 100-150 people to NOP basic training each year. The study reports that 82% of certifiers surveyed said they needed more inspectors to fulfill their certification requests. But almost all of those only needed 1-5 more staff. The study also says that 58% of the current workforce will transition in the next 5 years. A high estimate of current numbers of inspectors in the US is 1000. So, 58% would be about 600 new inspectors on the high side. IOIA will train between 500-650 new inspectors in that 5-year period. And if 40-50 certifiers each need from 1-5 new inspectors, that's also lots less than 1000. If we are already training enough people, why is there a compelling need for more and different inspector training? IOIA does agree with the need to get broader awareness of the careers in organic, which was a key recommendation in the study. ***We do not agree with the current IOIA courses being "expensive," as appeared more than once.*** The only other career I can think of that costs only \$5000 is a CDL to drive truck. We are glad to see the focus on recruiting more widely. A bonus was getting stellar letters of support from our university partners and from **Mike Dill of Organically Grown Company**. This work will be a big focus for the next year if we are successful.

**IOIA is getting a facelift (!) courtesy of a Powder River Community Endowment Fund grant:** The PRCEF grants are \$5000 maximum. We were delighted to receive the full \$5000, which will go to refinish the hardwood floors throughout our building, tentatively in September. Our office will be closed for about a week but we will continue to work remotely. Once the decision was made to refinish the floors, and as everything in the office had to be moved, it just made good sense to paint, too. Almost the entire interior has now been painted with a fresh coat of white paint. The vintage wood trim and doors are being lightly refurbished. When we were gifted the building in 2007, it was with the agreement to maintain the historic features of the building, and we've done that, right down to the glass doorknobs on the many wooden doors. The building was a bank in the neighboring county and moved to Broadus in 1919, the year that Powder River County became a county. IOIA moved from Minnesota to Montana in January 1999. So, the paint and much of the floor finish were at least 25 years old. I found it unsettling to see my spacious, sunlit office stripped down to just 2 items – as agreed with our painter – my desk and the file cabinet.



**Farewells:** Anne Amsden in June and Sam Welsch in July. Big losses. Anne was a wonderful friend and the driving force behind the Amsden family's gift of our building – the largest single donation to date.

**Read more about Sam on page 19. Read more about Anne on our FaceBook Page.**



**Finally:** Don't forget to sign up for **Farm Fraud webinar** with Johanna Phillips and Gwendolyn Wyard! Only \$100 for inspector members. See you there! **(Like everybody else, I need SOE continuing ed hours, too).**

*Margaret Scoles*

## Sector News

### USDA Reorganization

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is undergoing a reorganization announced on July 24, 2025, by Secretary Brooke L. Rollins. The reorganization aims to refocus core operations to better support American farming, ranching, and forestry. Key changes include relocating 2,600 jobs from Washington, D.C. to five regional hubs across the country, with the expectation that most employees will accept the relocations and large-scale layoffs will not be necessary. Additionally, a 30-day comment period has been opened for the public to provide feedback on the reorganization plan. This initiative reflects a broader commitment to reduce bureaucracy and strengthen the USDA's presence in key agricultural regions.

*Source: [USDA Press Release 7/24/2025](#)*

### NOSB Nominations Open

The USDA is accepting nominations for the National Organic Standards Board. Five seats are opening up in January of 2026. Application Deadline – September 9, 2025.

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is requesting nominations to fill the following vacancies:

- Two individuals who own or operate an organic farming operation or employees of such individuals;
- Two individuals who represent public interest or consumer interest groups; and
- One individual who is a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

Appointees will serve a five-year term beginning Jan. 2026 and ending Jan. 2031. Additionally, AMS seeks applications for a pool of candidates that the Secretary of Agriculture can draw upon as replacement appointees if unexpected vacancies occur.

For more info about the NOSB, time commitments, workload, and how to apply, please visit the [NOSB Nominations page](#).

### Organic Agronomy Training Service Offers FREE Field Crops Course

The Organic Agronomy Training Service (OATS) Organic Field Crop Course prepares agriculture professionals to work one-on-one with transitional and certified organic field crop farmers, providing the high-quality information needed to advise farmer clients. This program was designed to help you understand and navigate the breadth of factors organic farmers must balance in decision-making—not just agronomic considerations, but also marketing, management capability, and profitability—so that you can provide the best advice to your clients.



View the OATS courses on their website - <https://courses.organicagronomy.org/>

*Source: [MW TOPP Q2 2025 Newsletter.pdf](#)*

### OEFFA is Focused on Training Organic Inspectors

As the lead Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) partner in Ohio, the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) has been collecting materials and working with organic stakeholders to develop an online inspector course to encourage more inspectors to enter the field – figuratively and literally. Staff have identified and reviewed existing materials already developed by OEFFA's certification branch and collaborated with other Midwest certification organizations to make sure the course is complete and clearly organized to effectively prepare prospective students with the information and confidence to conduct on-farm organic inspections. With the course now developed, staff are running a test phase to help identify and resolve any potential issues before the program is officially launched later in the year. "As TOPP continues to encourage greater organic production, OEFFA is excited to offer this program to help train more organic inspectors, serve more organic operations, and strengthen the organic industry across Ohio and the U.S."

*Excerpted from the [MW TOPP Q2 2025 Newsletter OEFFA.pdf](#) June 13, 2025*

## Sector News



The **Organic Summit 2025 - Canada Organic Trade Association's (COTA)** annual flagship organic conference will soon be upon us! Attend in Ottawa or online.

- **Monday, November 3, 2025:** Organic Summit conference sessions followed by the in-person Organic Parliamentary Reception with Members of Parliament and Senators
- **Tuesday, November 4, 2025:** Members-only Organic Parliament Day (in-person only)

Trailblazing organic industry leaders guide the conversation, plus there are plenty of networking opportunities. From trade to consumer insights, it's a packed agenda.

COTA members enjoy **an exclusive 15% discount** for the Organic Summit 2025! As a valued COTA member, you can save big on your registration. Get your early bird tickets + 15% off now!

Early Bird tickets are available until **Friday, August 29**.

Regular registration ends **Tuesday, October 28**. Space is limited, so reserve your seat today.

**Online Tickets** offering online access to the conference will be available.

[Check the COTA website for details and to register.](#)



### Calling all available professional organic inspectors!

If you have availability and are interested in picking up work this year or next, reach out! Organic Certifiers would love to have a conversation and create a mutually beneficial relationship.

New and improved systems forthcoming making it easier for contract inspectors to work for OC!

<https://www.organiccertifiers.com/careers>

*Source: Aaron Turner, Director of Operations, OC, via LinkedIn*

**IFOAM NORTH AMERICA ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

Wednesday October 15, 2025 9 am PST

Join the Board, special guests, and other members for our annual meeting. We will focus on lessons of the season with an intergenerational lens.

[Click image to Register!](#)

### Thank you Drew!

After 2 years as IOIA's first Business Development Director, we bid best wishes and appreciation but hopefully not farewell to Drew Gourdie. He remains an inspector member and a strong supporter of our work. It was especially valuable to have someone on the ground in Canada. He represented IOIA at COTA and CHFA events including an Organic Summit and also the Guelph Conference. He was amazing at events. I will be missing his support for a good long while. Drew came at a challenging and pivotal time. He came in on the heels of the pandemic and into a brand new strategic plan. *Margaret Scoles*



Drew with Margaret at Organic Week 2024 in DC.

## Committee News

**Ethics Committee:** The Ethics Committee (Chair Brian Baker, Ph.D.) has been very busy in 2024 and 2025 revisiting and revising our Codes of Ethics and Conduct; we're pleased that the changes were accepted at the AGM in March in Chico Hot Springs, Montana. Further discussion can be found in Board Minutes on page 16 of this issue. We put out a call in June for additional members to replace those rotating off. We sent out invitations to 29 members that were eligible and we received 10 replies in the affirmative and of those 10, four people were appointed by the board of directors. They are Harriet Behar, Jennifer Clifford, Pam Sullivan and Mutsumi Sakuyoshi. Each member will serve a 2 year term. We will be putting out another call for committee member in the future, probably at the AGM, so that we can have these two year terms staggered. You can check out the revised Codes on our website in the ethics section under the Membership tab. **Thank you to outgoing members Dag Falck and Brian Magaro and Silke Fuchshofen for their time and contributions to the discussion.**

**Bylaws Committee:** Huge thank you to Committee Chair, Al Johnson; BOD liaison Justin Hurley; and committee member Leonard Pollara for doing the work to bring to fruition a significant modernization of our bylaws. The Committee met early in the year, and proposed a Bylaws Amendment to remove archaic language and voting procedures to include online platforms. The amendment was discussed at the Annual Meeting, sent out for a few weeks to members for comment, and finally sent to a vote, which closed July 17. IOIA had excellent online turnout for the ballot. About one-third of our voting members who were eligible (55 members) voted. IOIA bylaws require a quorum of 25% to change the bylaws. The vote was overwhelmingly "yes". Bylaws have been updated and posted to our [webpage](#) under the Membership tab.

**Policy Committee:** Under Rachel Myers' able facilitation, this highly engaged committee has been working hard to develop input into an ACA working group on Risk Based Certification. Two other IOIA members are also individual members of the working group. Rachel is IOIA's "delegate". The IOIA Policy Committee, chaired by Kate Newkirk, has been meeting every two weeks. Their work has focused on a risk matrix of different types of risks and identifying areas where there is unnecessary administrative burden and low risk to organic integrity. One committee member pointed out that we talk a lot about low-risk and high-risk, but actually most operations fall in the medium risk category. BOD liaison is Wendy Paulsen.

**Asia Pacific Committee:** The APC has been busy developing a proposal to expand IOIA training in Asia and to incorporate other aligned trainings under the umbrella of IOIA. They typically meet every 2 months. Chair is Mutsumi Sakuyoshi of Japan, and Margarito Cal serves as Board Liaison.

**Scholarship Committee:** IOIA's Scholarship Committee has completed a facelift of the former Scholarship page on the website, as well as an update to all application forms. The new look is now IOIA's Career Development page, with "scholarship" being re-titled to [Career Development Awards](#) to better reflect the true nature of the intent of the awards. Applications are due annually. One challenge is making Spanish language trainings available to accommodate the [Reynaldo De la Rosa](#) award recipients. We are in transition to a new chair; Verónica Marquez Ledesma of Mexico has volunteered. A big thank-you to Arthur Bassett for his years of service as Chair. Rhea Epp is the BOD liaison. The latest Career Development press release can be found on page 18 of this issue.

**Peer Field Evaluation:** IOIA has experienced modest interest in the Peer Field Evaluation Program this year. We received requests from 4 certification agencies for field evaluation of 7 inspectors (2 of which were requested by 2 certifiers). Two of IOIA's 7 evaluators took on the assignments. One assignment could not be completed in Canada because an NOP inspection that worked for the inspector and evaluator was lacking.

### IOIA Asia Pacific Mission Statement

*IOIA APC believes organic practitioners should take a wider world view and thus must take into consideration associated concepts such as climate change, carbon sequestration and social justice.*

*IOIA APC commits to provide services to organic inspectors and other interested persons by delivery of practical and relevant information through seminars and formal trainings, both online and in person, in order to promote*

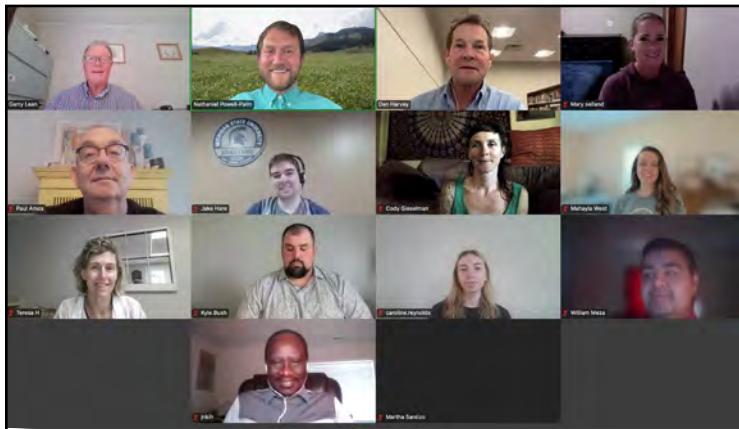
- Harmony among the various organic standards*
- Contextual interpretation of applicable organic standards*
- Understanding of associated concepts for environment and farmer communities*



### Online Basic NOP Crop Inspection Training

May 12 - 16

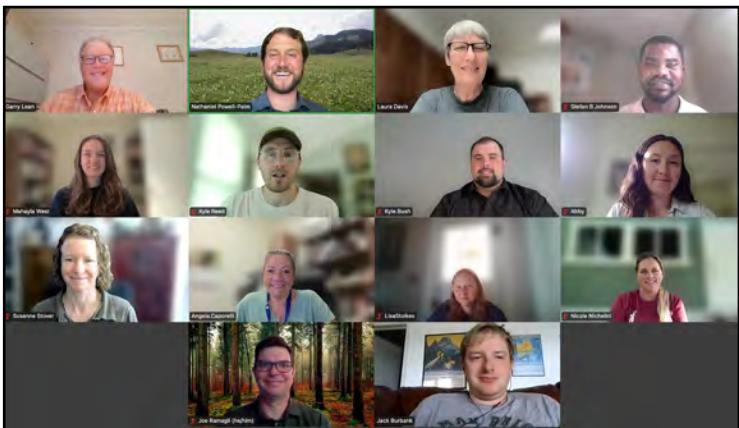
Trainers: Garry Lean | Nate Powell-Palm



### Online Basic NOP Processing Inspection Course

June 23 - 27

Trainers: Garry Lean | Nate Powell-Palm



### Online Basic NOP Livestock Inspection Course

July 14 - 18

Trainers: Garry Lean | Nate Powell-Palm

## It's been a busy summer, with our Online Basic Training courses and Webinars full!

Two of the three Live Online courses ran with 12 participants, although 10 is our normal maximum. Special thanks to veteran trainers Garry Lean and Nate Powell-Palm for making that work!

We almost always have a waiting list standing by, [contact us](#) to get on the list.

### IOIA Career Development Awards

IOIA offers 3 awards:

Andrew Rutherford Award

Organic Community Initiative Award

Reynaldo De la Rosa Memorial Award -

For inspectors in Mexico, Spanish language course.

All three awards provide full tuition for an IOIA-sponsored organic inspector training course during the following year.

For full details and to apply:

[www.ioia.net/scholarship/](http://www.ioia.net/scholarship/)

Deadline to apply is October 1, 2025



# NEW IOIA Training Videos

NEW IOIA

IOIA made 2 videos on the same day in 2 countries. Why? When IOIA trainers and staff responded with a herculean effort in 2020 to convert IOIA's long respected in-person format to online learning, we never expected it to be a forever switch.



Videographer Nathan Slabaugh of SLAB visuals flew to Iowa to join IOIA inspector member Terrance Layhew at the farm of former IOIA board member Matt Miller. Matt's farm is an ideal teaching farm, as it is in both split production and parallel production. Shared equipment, both organic and nonorganic seed, buffers against conventional neighbors, several bin sites – all examples of real-life situations that add complexity to the job of inspecting. The video includes outstanding drone footage of fields and bins. Matt, a former vo-ag teacher, was a natural in an Iowa State University T-shirt and a Practical Farmers of Iowa cap.



But clearly, with prospective inspectors lining up to fill all live online trainings with waiting lists, we are 5 years out from that switch and it is time to upgrade this popular training format with new content. We will continue to offer in-person training. But live online training is in higher demand. Our 4.5 day basic courses all include a field trip (for onsite trainings) or video inspections (for live online trainings). We needed new crop inspection training videos to both NOP and COR for live online training. This summer, that goal rose to the top of our list.



Each video is accompanied with an Organic System Plan and a set of audit trail exercises (Traceback and Mass Balance). That's a lot of work for IOIA's training team. Thank you, Garry Lean, IOIA veteran trainer, for leading the update to both COR and NOP and preparing the exercises. IOIA acknowledges all the members of both teams, on both sides of the border with our deep appreciation.



## Videos

It was coincidence that both filming days happened on the same day.  
And amazing that June 17 turned out brilliant, blue-sky weather both in Ontario and Iowa.

IOIA accredited inspector member Kym Snarr organized the COR field trip/inspection video in Ontario. Jessica Foote of Lunar Rhythm Gardens hosted. Farming with horses adds charm and interest to the farm and the video. Graduate film student Shinowa Okumura, our videographer, worked with Kym and Jessica to gather 3 hours of video. Shinowa is an award winning, emerging freelance videographer originally from Japan. Quite a project to edit that 3 hours down to a 1-hour video for training purposes! This video completes the COR set (crop, livestock, processing). Kelly Monaghan, IOIA trainer, coordinated the making of the COR Processing video. Janine Gibson, IOIA trainer in Manitoba, organized the Livestock video. And now, finally, an updated new video for Crop.

**The next COR Crop course is scheduled in December.**



January 21-23, 2026, [Hotel Albuquerque](#) in New Mexico



ACA is hosting their first acaDEMUY LIVE events in Atlanta, Georgia and Albany, New York. These day-and-a-half educational events are hyper-local to the regions and are intense learning opportunities that are convenient to attend.

IOIA inspector members who are actively inspecting are welcome to register.  
Space is limited, early registration is encouraged.

September 25–26, 2025  
[Hyatt House Downtown, Atlanta, GA](#)  
Cost to attend: \$400, includes daily breakfast, snacks, lunch on Day 1, and a Welcome Reception provided by the hotel

September 29–30, 2025  
[Fairfield Inns and Suites, Albany, NY](#)  
Cost to attend: \$400, includes daily breakfast, snacks, and lunch on Day 1  
[Click here to register.](#)

[Click here to register.](#)

New York Agenda – subject to change

Using Risk Assessment to Improve Inspection and Certification Review Part I – Marni Karlin and Rachel Myers

Wading Through Organic Sea Vegetable Certification – John Welton, MOFGA

Organic Maple Guidelines – Ensuring Forest Management Meets Organic Principles – Steve Hagenbuch (Conservation Biologist, Audubon VT), Nicole Dehne (VOF Director), from Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC

Livestock Traceability – How do we ensure integrity in the supply chain and how do we work together efficiently and effectively to verify slaughter status – Kyla Parmelee (Certification Specialist & Livestock Lead), Nicole Dehne (VOF Director), from Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC

Using Risk Assessment to Improve Inspection and Certification Review: Part II – Marni Karlin and Rachel Myers

Day 2

Farm visit with Black Farmers Index to Your Faith Farm

Mass Balance and Tracebacks – Rachel Myers

Black Farmers Index and Triple J Farms TOPP Project

ORGANIC CAREER NETWORK (OCN)

# GROWING FUTURES IN ORGANIC

NEW RESOURCE!

LEARN MORE

**Organic Career Network (OCN)** - A new hub for discovering meaningful careers in organic agriculture

The Organic Farmers Association, with the help of partners including IOIA, IFOAM North America, and many others, has launched an excellent resource - **The Organic Career Network**. IOIA contributed the content for the Organic Inspection page, which includes the link to the short "Become an Organic Inspector" video that IOIA produced in 2022 through an NOP-funded Human Capital project. Photos from IOIA projects including the Crop and Livestock Apprenticeship Intensives in Kentucky (NOP funded Human Capital project) and basic crop inspection training (funded by a Specialty Crop Block Grant Project in Kentucky in 2024) are sprinkled throughout the site. Check it out! <https://organiccareernetwork.org/>

YOUR PATHWAY INTO ORGANIC STARTS HERE

## JOIN THE NETWORK

We believe in a future where organic careers are accessible, inclusive, and rooted in community. Join us to explore, connect, and grow.

- For Students & Emerging Professionals
- For Mentors, Hosts & Employers
- For Educators & Institutions

LEARN MORE

HUB FOR DISCOVERING MEANINGFUL

## CAREERS IN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

LEARN MORE

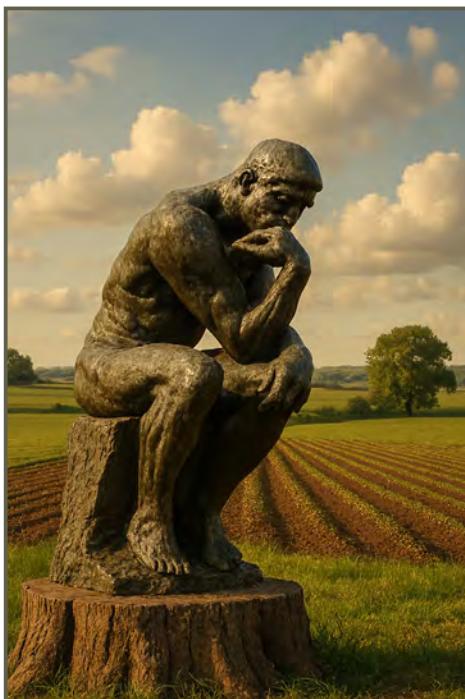
## AGM 2026 and Advanced Training Will be Online

**Our 2026 Annual Meeting** is tentatively planned for February, at 6 p.m. Eastern time. Exact date is yet to be selected. Late afternoon Pacific/Mountain, evening for Central/Eastern zones generally works for both the Western and Eastern hemispheres. The Annual meeting, including keynote, will be free to members.

The advanced training will also be online with a new format – **“Stump the Experts”**. These sessions will not be in presentation style. Instead, they are set up for you to bring your gnarly questions. There will also be opportunity to present questions in advance. Not everyone is comfortable asking their questions in public, plus it helps the experts have a little lead time for thinking. Members can register for a nominal fee and attend any or all online sessions. Each session will be 2 hours long and will have a different topic and expert or panel of experts. These sessions will be offered over several days to allow people to choose what fits their schedule. For example, IOIA's Chair of the Board Joe Ward has agreed to take a slot on Livestock Topics. With his inspection experience and a string of degrees, (BS in Animal Science, MS in Animal Nutrition from Purdue University and a Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University in Ruminant Nutrition), he is a great expert. OMRI trainers who present the IOIA/OMRI webinars have been invited to lead a session. Sessions will only be available to those who register and will not be recorded.

As usual, our members will be welcome to register on their own for the ACA event in Albuquerque. IOIA will host a Social event for inspector members there, on January 20, late afternoon/evening before the NOP/ACA events. If you plan to be in New Mexico for those events, please plan to arrive by mid-afternoon to join the IOIA Meet & Greet. For more about the Albuquerque events, [see page 12](#).

**Are you an expert in a topic related to inspection? Perhaps you have relevant degrees, or just lots of experience or self-education. Please contact Margaret Scoles at [mscoles@rangeweb.net](mailto:mscoles@rangeweb.net) to suggest a topic or an expert.**



**“Stump the Experts”**

**And what will IOIA do in 2027?** We will likely return to an in-person AGM. At the 2025 AGM in Chico Hot Springs, Montana, there was a strong consensus among members that they would like to see an in-person AGM every two years. Locations discussed ranged from Tennessee to Australia and Thailand.

Since IOIA joined up with ACA in 2020 on a joint in-person conference with annual meetings and board retreats in conjunction, the IOIA's AGM has shifted to a variety of formats. In 2021, the pre-vaccine global Covid pandemic made planning in-person events uncertain. Everything went online for both ACA and IOIA; we collaborated on an extraordinary online conference. The next year, we had an on-line Annual Meeting separate from ACA. ACA continued their conference and annual meeting online. IOIA capitalized on the good side of meeting online for those two years with keynote speakers from Germany (Bernward Geier) and Austria (Jochen Kleboth, Head of Data Analytics at Intact). Going online makes it more feasible to get a high-profile keynote speaker. In 2023, we rejoined the ACA Conference, glad to be back in-person in New Orleans. Partnering with ACA does add the challenge of how to organize around the NOP and ACA events. In 2024 and 2025, the Annual Meeting was expensive for IOIA, because we were part of ACA's package. It is costly to offer the hybrid format meeting with quality A/V in a large conference center. The A/V was excellent, but we were quite over-budget on the AGM in both 2023 and 2024. Our AGM typically draws a maximum of 30 IOIA inspector members and as a nonprofit, it is hard to justify the cost.

An IOIA membership survey in 2023 gave us great information about our member preferences for annual meetings. Members favored an in-person meeting, but they also wanted a hybrid format to allow online participation. And if we joined with ACA, they asked for the Advanced Training and AGM to be placed together, next to the NOP training. The NOP training is a draw for most IOIA members, and it is free. However, the incentive to attend now may be less since NOP started streaming their trainings. You could register online and view the entire NOP training for free. We don't have a guarantee yet that the 2026 NOP Training in Albuquerque will be streamed.

Stay tuned – and watch the IOIA website and upcoming newsletters!

## IOIA and OMRI Continue Training Partnership

When IOIA first envisioned IOIA's Training Institute, it was with the expectation that inspectors would take 100-level training (basic training plus standards training). Later, after they had apprenticed and had some experience as inspectors or reviewers, they would take additional 200-level training in key topics identified as those relevant for all working inspectors:

- Crop Inspectors would take 200-level training in In/Out Balance & Traceability; Crop Input Materials; and Assessing Biodiversity & Natural Resources.
- Livestock Inspectors would also take 200-level training in Feed Audit; and Livestock Input Materials.
- Processing Inspectors would take 200-level training in In/Out Balance, Traceability, & Recipe Verification; and Processing Input Materials.



IOIA sought partners to provide the most cutting edge and current information. The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) joined IOIA in a partnership to deliver Inputs webinars in three scopes. However, one outcome of the 200 level IOIA/OMRI webinars was surprisingly different than expected. Participants tended to be those who were specializing in materials reviews – not everyday working inspectors and reviewers.

Responding to this gap, IOIA and OMRI expanded the series of 200-level Materials Inputs webinars by adding the 100-level series to reach a broader audience. Now OMRI works with IOIA to deliver both 100-level and 200-level (3 hours each). The 100-level content is more relevant for all newly trained and working inspectors. Many inspectors identify materials as an area where they lack confidence after basic training. The courses focus on what the inspector needs to know but are also ideal for consultants, reviewers, and all organic professionals. Certifiers, not inspectors, are responsible for reviewing and approving input materials, but the inspector must carry a certain amount of material review knowledge to support the certifier.

These affordable courses are delivered by OMRI materials experts in a webinar format making the practical information accessible and immediately useful. Each OMRI/IOIA webinar is peppered with "Inspector Take Away!" and "Red Flags". Content includes how to get the most from the OMRI printed publications and online resources, with lots of opportunity for live Q&A. These training opportunities help inspectors meet requirements for continuing education in the Strengthening Organic Enforcement final rule. The webinars are rigorous and with preparatory assignments and post-exams.



OMRI Presenter  
Tina Jensen Augustine, working with Jacky Castañeda.

IOIA and OMRI have partnered since 2012 in webinar training, offering the complete series in 3 scopes by 2013.

See page 3 for info and Registration for the September and October webinars, or go to <https://www.ioia.net/webinars/>  
Enrollment is limited to 20 for each webinar.

### NEWS YOU CAN USE – DID YOU KNOW?

Generic and Brand Name Lists are available to search or download:  
OMRI Lists | Organic Materials Review Institute  
<https://www.omri.org/omri-lists>

OMRI publishes an excellent, informative newsletter. A sampling of recent articles and info-bytes include pH adjusters, ion exchange, stabilizers in peracetic acid, heavy metals testing required by the Canadian standards, mushroom compost, and nonorganic celery powder. Twice a year there is an excellent report on the materials

being considered by the National Organic Standards Board, provided as a membership service. An individual membership is a bargain at \$59/year. To subscribe, go to <https://www.omri.org/subscribe>



OMRI Presenter  
Peter Bungum, working with Aura del Angel Larson

## Board of Directors Minutes Highlights - (full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website)

**Joe Ward, Chair (JW); Justin Hurley, Vice Chair (JH); Alan Benjamin, Treasurer; (AB); Janine Gibson, Special Past Chair (JG); Kathe Purvis, Secretary (KP); Margarito Cal (MC); Rhea Epp (RE); Wendy Paulsen (WP)**

**April 17, 2025 - 6-8 PM EDT by Zoom**

**Attendance:** All board members were present. Others: Margaret Scoles, Executive Director (MS).

**Ethics Committee Report:** KP, as Ethics Committee (EC) BoD Liaison presented 1. Inspector Misconduct Complaints Policy; 2. Draft complaints policy with definition levels of complaint; 3. Ethics Committee Policy; and 4. EC member terms. The EC requests BoD direction on elements of the Inspector Misconduct Complaints Policy. The EC could not reach consensus in 2024 to finalize an update of this policy. Discussion regarding whether a broader Complaint policy is needed for IOIA. BoD members asked - Do we have an avenue for our members to voice concern about certification agencies/employers and other inappropriate behavior directed towards inspectors? IOIA does not. Tabled Complaints Management policy. **ACTIONS: BoD to review EC Items for consideration; Draft Complaints Policy; Complaints management procedure and consider whether IOIA should expand the complaints service to members to include complaints made by inspectors about certifiers or other stakeholders' inappropriate behavior. MS to work with EC Chair to confirm 50% of the committee remaining for two-year term and 50% to be newly or reappointed for a two-year term starting 2025.**

**1st Quarter Financials Presented by AB:** Revenue and income both down on budgeted amounts for first quarter 2025. Motion to accept Treasurer's Report. All in favor.

**Bylaws Review and Ballot:** Bylaws open for comment. Any input collected to be directed to IOIA BoD, after two weeks ballot will go out by Election Runner to provide an anonymous vote. The Bylaws vote is due in May requiring 25% of members to vote.

**BOD Liaisons:** Assigned. **MS & MC to work together to find a Latin America Committee Chairperson.**

**Top Priorities Moving Forward - List:** Top 3 Priorities, not necessarily in order: Training Advisory Council; Media Presence; Fundraising

**May 15, 2025 - 6-8 PM EDT by Zoom**

**Attendance:** All board members were present. Others: Margaret Scoles, Executive Director (MS).

**Funding with Nate Powell-Palm:** The BoD met with NPP to discuss potential avenues to pursue for funding IOIA activities. MS to progress discussions with NPP.

**ED Report:** MS to pursue negotiations regarding reciprocal promotion opportunities with ACA. BOD consensus - we need direct communication between IOIA and the NOP.

**June 12, 9 - 9:45 AM Special BOD meeting with Nate Powell-Palm by Zoom to discuss Fund Development Proposal**

**Attendance** – Joe Ward, Justin Hurley, Janine Gibson, Rhea Epp, Allan Benjamin. Others: Margaret Scoles, ED, and Nate Powell-Palm.

Nate – asks us to focus on 2 buckets – Fundraising and Business Development. The proposal submitted on May 13 lists 3 areas for business development: (1) IOIA Training Subscription Service for Certifiers; (2) Fundraising; (3) Student Recruitment and Custom Training Development. Discussion. Note of appreciation – to all board and to Nate.

## Board of Directors Minutes Highlights - (full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website)

**June 19, 2025 - 6:00 to 8:00 PM EDT by Zoom**

**Attendance:** All board members were present. Others: Margaret Scoles, Executive Director (MS).

**Ethics Committee Follow-up:** The IOIA Complaints Management Policy was presented for discussion. Motion that the policy be accepted as presented. All in favor. The Inspector Complaints Policy/Procedure was discussed. **ACTION:** KP, JH, JG with support from MS to work as a subcommittee to form responses to the Ethics Committee questions. MS notes that 6 people are serving the second term of a two-year term for the Ethics Committee. BB notes that new members need to be appointed for a two-year term from AGM 2025. Motion made and passed to affirm the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of service for continuing EC members.

**Social Media Presence:** RE, MS and Diane met to work on a social media strategy. RE noted a reinvigoration of IOIA presence, however possibly IOIA will need to invest in expert support. WP asks; could this work be part of an Operations Manager position? **ACTION:** RE to pursue with her contacts; MS to investigate accessing an intern.

**Enterprise Car Rental Proposal - Member Benefit:** JH presented a proposal for IOIA to take up a car rental agreement with Enterprise and National Car rentals to offer as a service to members – no cost to IOIA and benefit to members. JH moves; MC seconded that IOIA pursue an agreement with Enterprise and National Car Rental. Amended to include negotiation including LDW. All in favor. **ACTION:** MS to pursue the proposal with National including negotiation on LDW.

**2026 AGM & ACA events in New Mexico:** MS met with Ellie Hudson and explained that we wanted a more reciprocal arrangement than just one-way. The subsequent agreement is that twice a year, ACA will forward IOIA training schedule and IOIA will forward acaDEMAY to our members. WP asks a question about the joint meeting - Now that BPs are behind a membership firewall, will inspectors have access to the outcomes? **ACTION:** MS to ask Ellie (1) will inspectors have access to the outcomes? And (2) about the availability of the outcomes including BPs.

**2026 AGM & ACA Events in New Mexico:** A large room block is available. IOIA members who want to go can probably get a room. NOP training on Wednesday. Meet & Greet is easy, a restaurant or a suite at the hotel.

Advanced training on Tuesday makes members travel on MLK day. Pueblo Indian Center is attractive (5 minutes from ACA venue). The holiday week makes it challenging. The uncertainty about the NOP training makes it even riskier. On the other hand, certifiers will usually add about 5 people to the advanced training; certifiers send people to the training. IOIA policy (created prior to online meetings) says we always do advanced training in conjunction with AGM. MS suggests online training in conjunction with online AGM. Meet & Greet in Richmond was a great success. JW reminds us that there were a lot more members closer to Richmond than Albuquerque. MS notes few IOIA members in any western states away from the Coast. Consensus – focus more on advanced training on-line in conjunction with AGM. Strong consensus – yes to social event in Albuquerque at ACA, but no to training event.

**Funding with Nate Powell-Palm:** He proposed focusing on increased training events and participants, at current cost, bringing in new trainers. New trainers will need to be mentored. Returns IOIA to a past model of co-sponsored training, sharing workload with certifiers (for venue, location, scope, date) Aiming to complete contract and sign by July 1. General support by BoD. **ACTION:** MS to progress the contract.

**Risk Based Management WG with ACA:** Rachel made a proposal to IOIA as requested. JW and MS met on the proposal, noting that Rachel is doing very good job (WP agrees). Two IOIA members also on WG participating as individuals (Terrance and Leonard P). Rachel is IOIA's delegate, gathering input from the IOIA Policy Comment Committee. Ellie Hudson of ACA has clarified that whenever the topic is inspector related, they always want inspector input. The committee is meeting every 2 weeks. MS asks if everyone is OK with paying Rachel to facilitate the Policy Committee to gather and give input to the ACA WG. There is a finite time – 6 meetings scheduled – about 3 months. Motion: JH moves/AB seconds. Approved - payment of up to \$2500 cap for Rachel's work. Any higher, BOD should be alerted and the topic revisited. All in favor.

## Announcing the First Recipient for Durst Award

IOIA is pleased to announce that **Cody Gieselman** is the recipient of the first career development award for **IOIA Organic Processing Inspector Apprenticeship – Durst Award**. Cody completed the Basic crop and processing inspection trainings in May and June. For the past 7 years, she has worked as the quality assurance manager at East Wind Nut Butters. Her duties include maintaining all elements of the food safety system, developing and revising food safety policies and procedures, conducting internal audits, and directing corrective actions. She is trained in HACCP and certified as a PCQI by the FSPCA. She serves as the primary coordinator for inspections and third-party audits, including organic. Established in 1981, [East Wind Nut Butters](#) is located in the Missouri Ozarks and is 100% owned and operated by the East Wind Community. Cody says, "As the quality assurance manager, I have been the operator being inspected for organic integrity. It has served as valuable training, and I am excited to bring those skills into my role as an organic inspector."



Cody values the importance placed on clean food and environmental stewardship within the organic sector, and she sees inspectors as playing a frontline role in maintaining the integrity of organics.

Her varied life work has included working as an organic farm worker, and she is the caretaker of a medicinal herb garden situated in several acres of noncommercial produce gardens that serve her local community. She was co-owner of a bicycle business for 4 years. Those who know benefactor Bob Durst as the avid bicyclist will not be surprised to know that he was pleased to hear that a fellow bicyclist has received the award.

She holds a BA in Studio Art with Art Education Certification and an MFA in Book Arts, both from the University of Iowa.

IOIA will be working with Cody this year to facilitate her apprenticeship in both Crop and Processing.

IOIA gratefully acknowledges this generous award by former IOIA board chair and organic inspector Bob Durst. Durst is a food chemist, now retired from the Linus Pauling Institute of Oregon State University and Director of their Food Composition Lab. He founded and served as Processing and Materials Director of Simple Organic Solutions - a consulting company to assist industry with meeting the USDA organic regulations. His educational background is in the field of analytical chemistry with extensive experience in the application of this knowledge to the problems of the fruit and juice industry. He holds an MS degree in Biochemistry and held a research position at OSU for over 30 years.

## New Self-Directed Learning Platform for IOIA

After 6 years of using the Litmos Learning Management System (LMS), IOIA has found a better way to deliver our Self-Directed Learning program. It's called LearnWorlds, and it is much more flexible and easier to use for both participants and trainers – plus it will cost the organization about half of what we're spending now. At the time we went with Litmos it was the best deal in town, but thankfully the times have changed. While our self-directed courses are mostly automated (a human reviews all quizzes, exams), a few still have a human reviewing them completely and awarding partial credit for answers – something that Litmos was never set up to do which caused both admin and trainer a lot of stress! Happily, the new system has a lot more flexibility to handle those partial points, and we are looking forward to adding more courses in the future. We plan to launch the new system in September.



## Self-Directed Learning Courses

**Canadian Organic Regime - COR Series** Courses 1 & 2 each take approximately 3 hours to complete. Inspector members price: US\$150 each.

**#1 Our Organic Certification System - The Regulation**

**#2 COR Crop Production Standards**

**#3 COR Livestock Production Standards** **Note:** This is a 10-12 hour course, Member Price US\$275

**200 level IOIA/American Grassfed Association Grassfed Dairy**

Member cost \$325 - \$375 all others.

## Sam Welsch | 1953-2025 *Sam wrote his obit prior to his death*

Samuel Kirby 'Sam' Welsch of Lincoln, NE, was born on May 21, 1953, in Pawnee City, Nebraska. Despite his best efforts to procrastinate the inevitable, Sam passed away just after taking his last breath on July 17, 2025, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Though his time on earth was brief in years, the legacy attributed to his name spans generations and continents. Sam had a life-long connection with soil. Walking barefoot whenever possible kept him grounded. To continue his connection to the soil, Sam requested a private, natural burial. A celebration of life is being hosted by his family this fall, a date to be determined. He could not resist asking that The Hearse Song be included.

Sam loved learning new things his entire life. He paused his education long enough to earn a Bachelor of Science degree from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, and went on to complete a Master of Science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His academic pursuits laid the foundation for a career that would leave an indelible mark on the global organic agriculture movement.

A visionary and pioneer in his field, Sam founded OneCert in the United States and OneCert International in India – organic certification agencies that have helped shape standards and practices across borders. He was an outspoken advocate for maintaining soil integrity within organic farming, championing the belief that true organic begins with healthy soil. His work influenced countless farmers, regulators, and consumers who shared his commitment to sustainable agriculture.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Sam lived life with passion and humor. He delighted in organic farming and gardening – not just as a vocation but as a way of life. He found joy and renewal in natural hot springs and saunas, often combining these with long bike rides or hikes through nature's quiet corners. Those who knew him well will remember not only his dedication to the land but also his fondness for telling bad Dad jokes – though whether they were about bad dads or simply bad jokes remains up for debate. Sam is lovingly remembered by his spouse, Patricia Spitzer, Lincoln – his third marriage proving that sometimes, indeed, the third time is a charm. He leaves behind four children: Daniel (Kristy), Ankeny, IA; Ember, Lincoln, NE; Peter, Lincoln, NE; and Theresa, Chantilly, VA; as well as grandchildren: Naomi, Ada, Matthew, Burton, and Charley. His siblings Mark (Bonnie), David (Deb), and Mary (Mike) survive him as well, along with many cousins, nieces, and nephews who will carry forward memories of shared laughter and enduring connection. He was preceded in death by his parents, Eugene and Louise, and his son-in-law Jeremy Patterson.

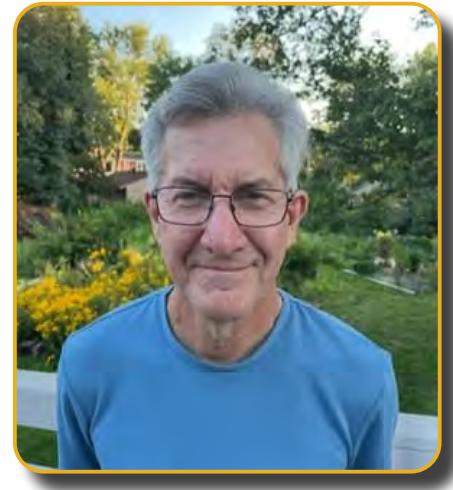
Sam once said that living a long life is not enough - living a good life is enough. By that measure-and by every seed he planted both literally and figuratively - his life was more than enough. May his memory bring comfort to those who knew and loved him. Memorials are suggested to: Food Bank of Lincoln, Spring Creek Prairie Audubon in Denton, NE.

There was a private family burial with a Celebration of Life Service.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](#).

**Note from the ED, from page 5:** Sam and I had three long conversations in the past year. One was at the Portland NOSB meeting. I had something to discuss regarding an inspection I'd done for OneCert. He was same as ever - measured, thoughtful, careful, and intelligent. Long on listening and shorter on speaking. I had no idea that he was ill, and he didn't mention it. We visited next a few months later. He was a major contributor to the IOIA Forum discussions and was considering dropping IOIA membership. His knowledge of the NOP regulations was deep and solid, and he often brought unique perspective. He was inclined to renew just so he could continue to be on the Forum. His next call to me was to tell me of his diagnosis and prognosis. I was stunned and sad but also grateful for that call. As the sad news of his untimely passing spread, I was struck by the common thread – "a man of great convictions", "an earnest, thoughtful, warm, kind, force for good who readily spoke truth to power..." Some people found his dry black and white matter off-putting. I think his mind worked like a computer – no gray. Black or white. A thing is or it isn't. When Sam was founding OneCert, he helped IOIA in a big way. He took all 3 scopes of IOIA training in 2003 and in lieu of registration fees, we bartered a great deal with mutual benefit. Sam designed IOIA's beginning information management system for membership, training, and credentialing. The contract stipulated that additional work would be paid by the hour. That system lasted for almost 2 decades and except for minor maintenance (which he never actually charged us for), it worked really well. Out of his weeklong training, he built OneCert. It was a good trade. Thank you, Sam!

Sam's family published an article on Sam's LinkedIn shortly after his passing. It is something he had drafted earlier this year about hydroponics, and he asked them to see it across the finish line for him. [Please read and share as you wish.](#)





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

KEEP IOIA STRONG – LEND YOUR STRENGTH AND GET INVOLVED!

## 2025 Calendar

**August 22 - 25** [Newtopia Now](#), Denver, CO

**August 26** University of Wisconsin Field Days: [Organic Agriculture Research Field Day](#).

**August 27** Agronomy and Soils Field Day.

**September 2 - 5** [Sobremesa Farm Workshop, “Creating a Biofactoría and Chromatography of biofertilizers](#)  
Bloomington Indiana.

**September 1 - 30** [Canada Organic Month - events nationwide!](#)

**September 15 - 17** [OTA Organic Week 2025](#)

**September 23** 8 am-4pm [Kentucky Mechanical Weed Control Field Day](#),  
UK Horticulture Research Farm, Lexington.

**October 15** IFOAM North America Annual Meeting  
09:00 PM Pacific Time - Online - [Register](#)

**November 4 - 6** [Fall NOSB meeting](#), Omaha, NB

PLEASE SEE PAGES 2, 3 & 18 FOR THE CURRENT LIST OF  
IOIA LIVE ONLINE, ONSITE, WEBINAR AND SELF-PACED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES