

Organic Workers Unionize in Maine and Oregon

Oregon Tilth workers have formed a union called Oregon Tilth Workers United (OTWU), affiliated with OPEIU Local 11. A supermajority of employees signed union authorization cards and requested voluntary recognition from Oregon Tilth's leadership. OTWU and OPEIU Local 11 submitted signed union authorization cards for nearly 75% of eligible employees.

Key Developments

March 4, 2025: Workers petitioned for recognition.

March 12, 2025: Oregon Tilth management began discussions with the union.

April 2, 2025: Oregon Tilth voluntarily recognized OTWU, marking a major milestone in labor rights within the organic certification sector.

IOIA was one of many organizations and individuals who wrote letters in solidarity urging management to voluntarily recognize the union.

This move aligns with Oregon Tilth's broader mission of social equity and fair labor practices, as the organization certifies businesses under standards that emphasize workers' rights. Oregon Tilth is the largest certifier in the US that certifies to the Global Organic Textile Standard, one which addresses environmental safety in the textile industry, along with the industry's notoriously poor labor practices. GOTS states, "Workers, without distinction, have the right to freedom of association, union membership and collective bargaining."

Potential Effects on Organic Certification?

- Operational Adjustments: Unionization may lead to changes in workplace policies, potentially affecting certification timelines and inspection procedures.
- Industry-Wide Advocacy: The move aligns with broader efforts to democratize workplaces in mission-driven organizations, reinforcing the importance of worker representation in organic agriculture.



This development could reshape how organic certification bodies operate, potentially leading to greater transparency and worker protections across the industry. Oregon Tilth is one of the largest organic certifiers in the U.S. Its unionization could encourage employees at other certification bodies to organize. OTWU is not the first organic certification workplace to unionize — Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners

Association voluntarily recognized its employee union in October 2024.

In an April 2 Local News article, "*Oregon Tilth Certified Organic workers going union*", Tilth CEO Chris Schreiner was quoted, "At Oregon Tilth, we believe that a resilient and just food system starts with the people who bring it to life. Just as we champion integrity and fairness in agriculture, we recognize the importance of a workplace where every team member feels valued, heard, and supported. We appreciate the dedication of our staff and look forward to working collaboratively with OTWU to strengthen Oregon Tilth for the future."

See Union, 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 the organic rules and regulations.

See Notes, page 4

Welcome New Members!

New Inspectors

Carrie-Anne Palmeri, Rosendale, New York

Ari Westhaver, Aldergrove, British Columbia

Upgrading to Inspector

Jarred Darrow, Willis, Michigan

Regional Certifier

OnMark Certification, Elkhart, Indiana

Supporting Individual

Jesus Barrera Trejo, Guanajuato, Mexico

Robert Corey, Fremont, California

Cody Gieselmann, Tecumseh, Missouri

Michelle Grosek, Sturgis, South Dakota

Rick Grosek, Sturgis, South Dakota

Rory Lenehan, Olympia, Washington

Noreen Mucha, Wisconsin

Rebecca Rathjen, Tullahoma, Tennessee

Gwendolyn Rouse, Ft. Atkinson, Wisconsin

Marjorie Sabino, Hodgenville, Kentucky

Joshua Stamp, Croghan, New York

Paige Stockton, Lake Park, Georgia

Jennifer Teisl, Medford, Oregon

Norma Veliz, Salinas, California

Mark Walden, Berea, Kentucky

Carly Wyman, Hilo, Hawaii

Inspector Emeritus

Ryan Sitler, North Carolina

IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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](#)

May 7 100 Level IOIA/OMRI NOP Processing Input Materials
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (Pacific). One 2 hour session.
OMRI Trainers: Tina Jensen Augustine and Jacky Castañeda.

[Register and Pay Here](#)

June 3 & 6 100 Level NOP Processing Standards
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific). Two 3 hours sessions.
IOIA Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm.

[Register and Pay Here](#)

June 17 & 20 100 Level NOP Livestock Standards
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
IOIA Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm

[Register and Pay Here](#)

August 5 & 8 100 Level NOP Crop Standards
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
IOIA Trainer: Garry Lean

[Register and Pay Here](#)

September 24 100 Level IOIA/OMRI NOP Crop Input Materials
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
OMRI Trainers: Peter Bungum and Aura del Angel Larson.

[Register and Pay Here](#)

Webinar Discount Reminder

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

IOIA - Working for You!

Membership Benefit Webinar - NRCS Assistance for Conservation on Organic Farms, April 4

IOIA was delighted to host Lynne Haynor, an Organic Conservation Specialist housed at the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Central National Technology Support Center, for a 1-hour webinar, plus Q&A. Haynor holds a joint position with NRCS and the Organic Trade Association.

This webinar included positive signs and red flags inspectors might observe about natural resources and biodiversity at inspection. Plus - where producers can turn to address concerns on their farms and info about the financial and technical assistance available from the NRCS to address natural resource concerns.

If you are an IOIA inspector member or supporting individual who was not able to attend in person and are interested to access the training through a recording for \$25, please reach out to DrewAnne Wenzel at webinars@ioia.net.

###

COMING SOON!

Inspecting Organic Mushroom Operations webinar, with Garry Lean, under development.



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

Basic Processing Inspection Training - NOP - Online, June 23 - 27

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements which include:

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

applying the organic standards (focus on the USDA National Organic Rule); role of the inspector; working with organic system plans; how to inspect organic processing plants; audit trail requirements; risk assessment and organic control points; investigative skills; report writing; approved input materials; sanitation and pest control; inspector conduct, confidentiality, and ethics; understanding the difference between inspecting and consulting; and effective communication. Trainers - Nate Powell-Palm and Garry Lean.

Deadline to Register and Apply is Friday, May 9, 2025



Basic Livestock Inspection Training - NOP - Online, July 14 - 18

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

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

Instruction on applying and using NOP organic livestock standards; Understanding the use of input materials; risk assessment; Audit trail requirements; Report writing; Inspector conduct, confidentiality, and ethics; The difference between inspecting and consulting; Effective communication; Organic inspection procedures for meat, dairy; fiber-bearing animals; and poultry (meat and eggs). Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm.

Deadline to Register and Apply is Wednesday, May 28, 2025

Basic Crop Inspection Training - NOP - Online August 18 - 22

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

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

Deadline to Register and Apply is Friday, July 11, 2025

UNDER DEVELOPMENT FOR COR

Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings - COR - Online, September or October, dates to be announced. Each 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training will follow IOIA's curriculum requirements. Trainer - Garry Lean.

COR Processing Standards - Webinar, will be scheduled in advance. The webinar is prerequisite for the basic course. Trainer - Kelly Monaghan.

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.

Self-Paced 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.

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 the organic Standards and Rules.

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



Outgoing Chair (and Special Past Chair for the coming year) Janine, with Incoming Chair Joe

Union, from page 1

References for further reading

October 2024, MOFGA News *“New Union Recognized for Maine Farm Groups - Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners”* <https://www.mofga.org/news/new-union/>

March 4, 2025 Local News, “Organic Tilth Certified Organic workers going union”, <https://opeiu11.org/oregon-tilth-certified-organic-workers-going-union/>

April 2, Oregon Tilth News, “Oregon Tilth Celebrates Union Recognition” <https://tilth.org/oregon-tilth-celebrates-union-recognition/>

Announcing A New Career Development Opportunity!

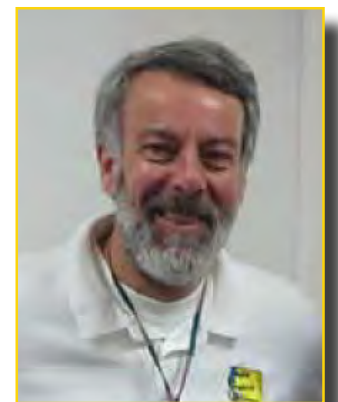
Bob Durst endows new annual processing mentorship

Bob Durst of Oregon, a past IOIA board chair and recently retired food scientist, has endowed a new annual career development award through IOIA. The award will support a mentor willing to complete a full apprenticeship with an entry-level processing inspector. The award can go to someone who is completely new to inspecting or someone who is already inspecting to another scope and adding processing.

Apprentice applicants must be an IOIA member (supporting or inspector) and must have successfully completed the IOIA Processing Inspection Training - either live online or in-person. The award is intended for independent contract inspectors, as employee inspectors have their employer’s assistance to getting mentorship and work.

Mentors must also be IOIA inspector members and have one or more letters of reference from certifier(s) they work for. Mentors must have processing inspection assignments; IOIA will not facilitate assignments. Mentors are expected to have the apprentice shadow one or more inspections, and be observed on one or more inspections, including inspection reports. The mentor provides up to one year of informal support. Based on the past few years experience working with ACA and NOP, IOIA has learned that those additional months of support are critical for apprentice success. Mentors must also complete the IOIA Peer Field Evaluation form. This step is expected to lower the barriers to the new inspector finding work, as certifiers are required to evaluate new inspectors annually.

This is a big boost to opportunities available for new processing inspectors. Finding mentors and apprenticeship opportunities tend to be more challenging for processing than doing the same for farm inspections. If you are interested in supporting this new initiative by serving as a paid mentor or in applying for the award as an apprentice, please [contact IOIA](#).



Notes from the Executive Director

by Margaret Scoles

The shifting landscape of organic in the US So much has changed since our last issue of 2024. We've had a significant change in administrative outlook in Washington DC, a change of Deputy Administrator at the NOP, and are in the midst of widespread staff reductions including the NOP. IOIA had a delightful Meet and Greet in Richmond VA with the ACA Conference, and another in Guelph at the Organic Conference there. We've had our Annual Meeting and published our 2024 Annual Report – [please check it out on our website!](#) Each year, as I stare at my blank screen to begin the Annual Report, it is hard to get started. Invariably, I'm the most astonished person at just how much we do every year. In 2024 we trained almost 700 people at 48 different events, the same numbers as we reported in 2023. Writing the annual report is an every-day job at IOIA.

Organicology – Portland, Oregon and a lunar eclipse birthday On March 11-15 I traveled to Portland for my first Organicology Conference. It all started with a conversation between David Lively of Organically Grown Company; Michael Sligh of IOIA's strategic partner, Alliance for Organic Integrity; and myself. The next thing, I had an offer of registration to the conference and found myself saying 'yes' to being in a play on stage at the kickoff reception. It was a lot of fun and well-organized, right down to the ubiquitous Portland rainy weather. Lots of old friends there – John Foster, Connie Karr, Gwendolyn Wyard, Amber Sciligo, and many others, along with some new ones. With each of us speaking for 3-5 minutes, we represented a piece in the *"Ch-Ch Chain of Tools: A Passion Play"*, to tell the story of an organic farm, and including at least one riveting factoid. My assignment was "To Certify or Not to Certify". Fortunately, I was early on in the line-up and could enjoy most of the show without nerves. This was the first post-pandemic Organicology. Registration was light, but conference content and entertainment were well-executed, the food was amazing, and the community was wonderful. I awoke on March 14, the last day of the conference, at 12:01, the dawning of my birthday. When I saw the time, I hastily threw on clothes and hurried out into the cold to look up. And there in full view – the lunar eclipse. I watched for 20 minutes and went back to bed, feeling very lucky and blessed.



Kathe Purvis, left, visiting the IOIA office after the AGM, with Margaret Scoles.

The AGM at Chico Hot Springs What can I say?! It was a fantastic gem of our inspector community. Please take a moment to enjoy the photos on pages 10 - 11. Having an in-person AGM separate from ACA for the first time since 2019 and stepping boldly outside our comfort zone to explore Social Responsibility Auditing was an unknown entity. Would members come? Would they take the training? But they did! We had more voting members at this AGM than last year in Texas in conjunction with ACA. Glenn Elzinga, in authentic Montana fashion, not only gave an inspirational and beautiful keynote, he participated in discussions and bought the birthday cake my sister Dixie made so we could enjoy a carrot cake with cream cheese frosting (my favorite) without paying the \$250 fee for bringing in our own "special event cake". Dixie joined with Joe Ward to serve the board daily hot breakfasts, and whipped out saucers and forks immediately after the benefit auction to serve the cake and destroy the evidence. The auction – totally amazing – in just under an hour, we raised \$2400+ to help meet donation goals. A highlight for me was all of the birthday acknowledgments. I would sit down at my seat, and there would be a birthday card from Margaret Anne Weigelt. Elizabeth Dominick handed me a big birthday bag and said, "look at what's in it, if you don't like it, you can put it in the auction." Thank you to everyone who helped make this a very special birthday.

Fairness in the Organic Sector In our Annual Report, we published our new Equity Statement. Just a few short months ago, we were enthusiastically sharing what we did to support increased diversity, equity, and inclusion in the organic sector. Since then, DEI has become, for some in the US, a derogatory term to be avoided and eliminated. I have on my desk a letter from a valued former inspector member who dropped membership because IOIA was supporting DEI. It sits here because I feel it deserves a response. It would be easy to just disregard it, perhaps even throw it away. I really don't think we have any members who think diversity is a bad thing – how would that be possible for an organic inspector? Or 'equity' – who would be opposed to equity? Same with inclusion. But people sometimes build up walls and words become politically charged. In our own new Equity Statement, we cite the IFOAM Principle of Organic Agriculture "FAIRNESS". IOIA will not back down on believing in fairness, diversity, or equity. However, we will continue to think about how we frame that so that we don't ourselves end up excluding members. ☺



What diversity looks like

Sector News

The State of Organic Certification in the U.S.: April 2025 Update

The organic certification landscape in the U.S. continues to evolve, with recent policy shifts affecting key government programs that support organic producers and inspectors. As demand for organic products grows, funding uncertainties and regulatory changes pose challenges for certification and enforcement.

Current Status of Organic Certification

Organic agriculture remains a vital sector, with consumer demand driving market expansion. According to the **USDA Economic Research Service**, certified organic cropland increased by **79%** between 2011 and 2021, reaching **3.6 million acres**. However, pastureland and rangeland have declined, raising concerns about long-term sustainability.

The **National Organic Program (NOP)** continues to oversee organic certification, but enforcement mechanisms face resource constraints. The **State Organic Programs**, particularly California's, play a crucial role in compliance and enforcement.

Government Programs Affected

Several government programs that support organic certification have been impacted by recent policy changes:

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP): Funding reductions have made it harder for small farms to afford certification, potentially leading to a decline in certified operations.

Organic Data Initiative (ODI): The loss of funding for organic market data collection limits inspectors' ability to assess compliance trends.

Organic Certification Trade and Tracking Program (OCTT): Defunding of this program weakens fraud prevention efforts, making verification more challenging for inspectors.

Additionally, the exclusion of organic programs from the latest **Farm Bill extension** suggests further cuts may be imminent. Inspectors may face increased workloads as enforcement resources diminish.

Implications for Organic Inspectors

With reduced funding for certification support and enforcement programs, inspectors may struggle to verify compliance effectively. The lack of reliable market data further complicates fraud detection and transparency efforts.

Conclusion

The defunding of key organic programs threatens the stability of organic certification in the U.S. Without adequate support, inspectors and producers may face significant challenges in maintaining compliance. Advocacy efforts will be crucial to ensure continued funding for organic certification and enforcement mechanisms.

Summarized using CoPilot AI: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/enforcement/organic/state-compliance>

OTA reports sales of organic more than doubling overall marketplace

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 23, 2025) -- U.S. sales of certified organic products accelerated in 2024 with an annual growth rate of 5.2%, more than double the overall marketplace which grew at 2.5% in the same period. Dollar sales for organic also reached a new high of \$71.6 billion in 2024, according to the 2025 Organic Market Report released today by the Organic Trade Association (OTA).

Organic remains a stand-out in a growing sea of labels. While the number of claims and labels continued to expand in the retail aisles in 2024, including growth of regenerative, the USDA Organic seal remained a constant source of trust and confidence with consumers.

Source: <https://ota.com/about-ota/press-releases/growth-us-organic-marketplace-accelerated-2024>

OneCert has new CEO

OneCert has announced a leadership transition, with Karlin Warner becoming CEO as of April 1, 2025. Karlin and Jeremy Warner now own OneCert, succeeding founder Sam Welsch, who will remain as a consultant. Sam expressed confidence in the new leadership to uphold OneCert's integrity and quality. Karlin, with extensive experience in organic certification, is excited to lead the company into a new era of growth and innovation. Sam Welsch was a long time IOIA inspector member and Karlin is a current inspector member.



Mushrooms and Pet Food Rules Finally Go Into Effect

The **USDA National Organic Program (NOP)** published proposed rules for mushrooms and pet food in tandem March 11, 2024, with 60 days for public comment. The final rule was published on **December 23, 2024**, clarifying organic standards for **mushroom production** and **pet food handling**. Following the January 20 change in administration in Washington, DC, the regulation was paused briefly for review in accordance with the President's memorandum of January 20, 2025. Following that review, the final rule moved forward with an effective date postponed by one month. The **new effective date is March 21, 2025. with full compliance by March 22, 2027.**

Key Changes:

- Definitions:
 - Added definitions for *mushroom*, *mushroom mycelium*, *mushroom spawn*, *mushroom spawn media*, and *mushroom substrate* to the NOP regulations.
 - Added definitions for *pet* and *pet food* and clarifies that pet food is distinct from livestock feed under these regulations.
 - Amended definition of *wild crop*.
- Clarifies that mushrooms are a type of crop and updates the definition of *crops* to include mushrooms.
- Adds a new section 205.210 titled “**Mushroom Production Practice Standard**,” to describe standards related to the production of mushrooms, mushroom spawn, and products of mushroom production.
 - Specifies allowed substances in organic mushroom spawn media and organic mushroom substrate.
 - Requires that uncomposted plant materials used in mushroom substrate be organic when commercially available; requires that operations describe in their organic system plan the procedures and criteria used to search for organic materials and the recordkeeping system used to track purchases of nonorganic plant materials.
 - Allows nonorganic wood materials in mushroom substrate and spawn media.
 - Requires that operations use organic mushroom spawn when commercially available.
 - Describes minimum requirements for compost used in mushroom substrate. (The requirements for compost used in other types of crop production (*i.e.*, plants) are unchanged.)
- Clarifies the requirements for composition and labeling of organic pet food using the existing regulatory framework for processed organic products.
 - Updates 205.270 to include pet food.
 - Allows use of **synthetic taurine** (an amino acid) in organic pet food, as well as other vitamins and minerals that are approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

NOP Insider 12/31/2024 [USDA Publishes Final Rule: Market Development for Mushrooms and Pet Food - originally published 12/23/2024](#)

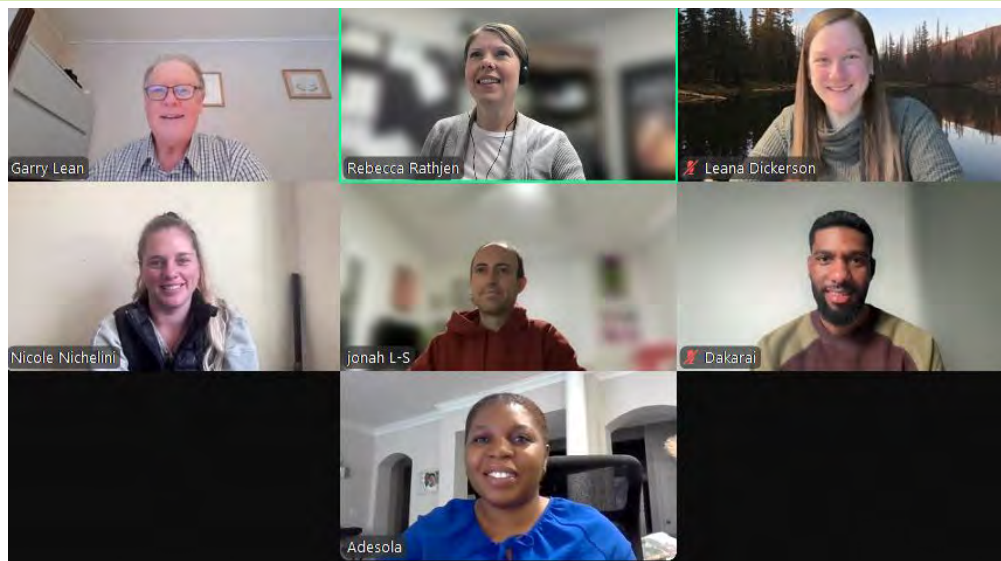
NOP Insider 2/10/2025 Notice of Delayed Implementation [National Organic Program Delays Effective Date for Market Development for Mushrooms and Pet Food Final Rule](#)

New Resource: Organic Research Hub

Organic Farming Research Foundation has announced the launch of the [Organic Research Hub](#)—a centralized collection of technical tools, guides, and research resources designed to support organic and transitioning farmers across the U.S.

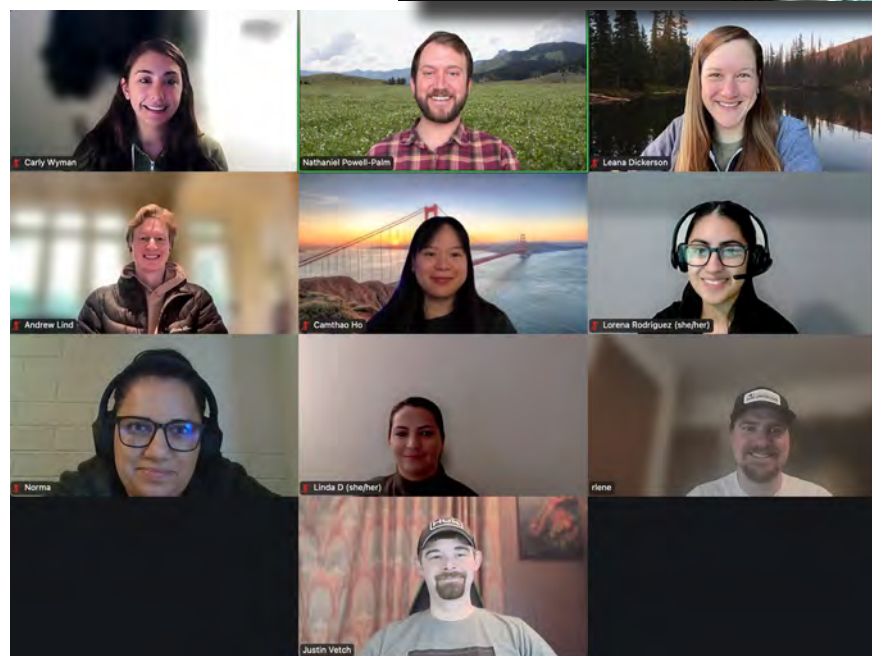
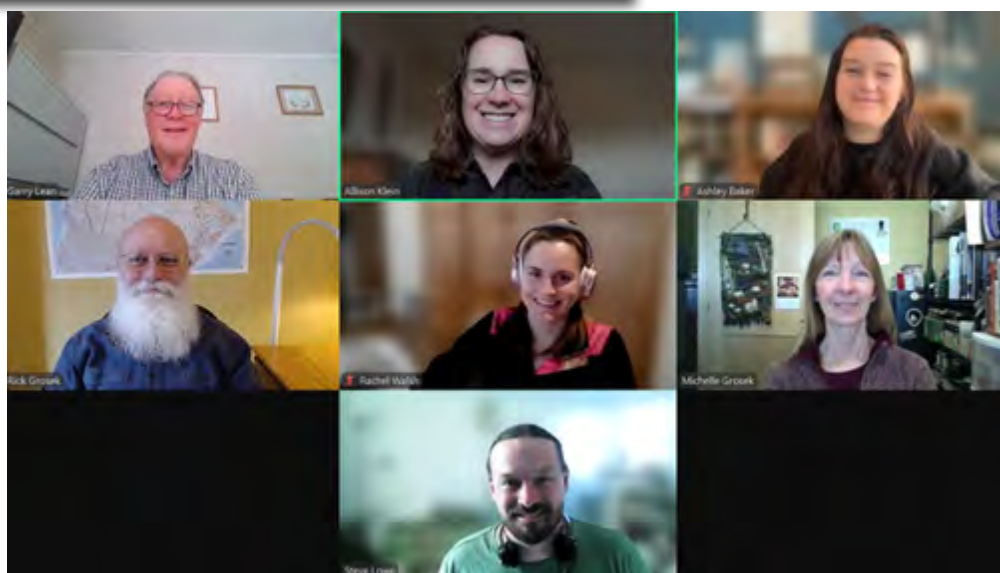
The Hub features research summaries, factsheets and guidebooks, webinars and videos, and tools curated from the nation's top organic institutions and organizations. Searchable by keyword, region, crop category, production topic, and more, making it easy to find information fast.

Online Basic Training Events



February 3 - 7
NOP Processing Course
Garry Lean, Trainer

February 24 - 28
NOP Crop Course
Group 1
Garry Lean, Trainer



February 24 - 28
NOP Crop Course
Group 2
Nate Powell-Palm, Trainer

Not shown: PJ Wiebusch,
Trainer

Canada News

Impact of U.S. Tariffs on Canadian Organic Agriculture and Certification

The recent imposition of 25% tariffs on U.S.-Canada trade has disrupted organic agriculture in Canada, particularly affecting exports to the U.S., which remains the largest market for Canadian organic products. The Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA) has been actively engaging with policymakers to mitigate risks, emphasizing the need for market diversification and domestic resilience.

In case you missed it, COTA shared an update (current as of April 14, 2025) on the impacts of tariffs with the U.S. and China on Canada's organic sector—covering trade flows, market access, and key challenges for producers and exporters. COTA members can view the recording or slideshow via the COTA site.

The April 22 Update from COTA relates that more relief has been announced for Canadian businesses needing to pivot and adapt to the changing tariff regime.

Source: April 22, 2025 Update from COTA

Notes from Guelph Organic Conference submitted by Drew Gourdie

The 2025 Guelph Organic Conference (GOC), themed “Down to Earth,” took place from January 22nd to 25th at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. The event featured a variety of workshops focusing on sustainable agriculture practices, soil health, and organic farming innovations. Key sessions included:

- **Advanced Biological Farming:** Gary Zimmer, known to some as the “father of biological agriculture,” led a full-day workshop emphasizing techniques to enhance soil fertility and food quality through regenerative agriculture methods.
- **Biostimulants for Plant Health:** Av Singh conducted sessions on the use of fermented plant teas and compost extracts, highlighting their role in improving soil health and boosting plant vitality.
- **Resilient Agriculture Practices:** Jack Algiere, Chief Agroecologist at Stone Barns Center, explored innovative practices for cultivating diverse and resilient farming systems that nurture the environment and foster stronger communities.
- **Ongoing Organic Research:** A panel discussion featuring researchers such as Dr. Andrew Hammermeister and Dr. Liette Vasseur provided insights into ongoing organic research in Ontario, covering topics such as vineyard agroecosystems and dry bean agronomy.
- **Organic Beekeeping:** Luc Peters offered insights into sustainable and organic practices in beekeeping to support healthy pollinators and thriving ecosystems.

Overall, the event emphasized the importance of soil health, innovative organic farming techniques, and the integration of research into practical applications for sustainable agriculture. The overriding message of the GOC was that Canada's organic movement must do more to align people and resources to advance the country's export position within North America as well as overseas.

Notes from Expo West submitted by Drew Gourdie

IOIA attended this year's Expo West trade show in Anaheim, a key US-based event in the natural & organic space with a focus on the manufacturing side of our industry. One highlight was the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA)'s 'Business Builder Break-fast', an annual gathering of Canadian brands and others who export organic products to the US. The event focused on current market conditions and key trends in organics both in Canada and internationally. Attendees received a consumer behaviour update from SPINS, and export marketing advice from consultant Holly Goodenow. Manitoba Harvest, a highly successful Canadian export brand, had their Director of Marketing Rebecca Morgan deliver an overview of the strategies employed to gain traction in the US market.

While the presentations were insightful and inspiring, attendees struggled to reconcile the potential impacts of (then rumoured) tariff sanctions with trade partners such as Canada, as well as the existential threat to the National Organic Program posed by the new US administration. As with many sessions during the Expo West conference, this event concluded with a renewed sense of purpose among the impassioned organic supporters.



Drew with Stephanie
Jerger of OTA

AGM 2025 - Chico Hot Springs, Montana

Strong Participation: 20 voting members were present, plus 5 supporting members and/or guests, and 2 IOIA staff. An additional 6 voting members participated online, total voting members: 26. In-person attendance was stronger than we enjoyed at the 2024 AGM held in conjunction with ACA, and demonstrates strong desire of IOIA inspector members to join in-person.

Annual Report Overview: Chair Janine Gibson spoke, supported by a PowerPoint presentation, available to members via the [IOIA website](#). She spoke to increased emphasis on Fairness as a key theme in 2024/ 2025. From her Message from the Chair in the Annual Report: *"We participated in an Equity Learning Cohort partnering with the Organic Farming Association and others with USDA funding. A team of board members and staff was charged with exploring the terms diversity, equity and inclusion over a 10 month period. That cohort and our training in Kentucky (part of another grant-funded project 'Addressing diversity, equity and inclusion' in the Kentucky organic sector) demonstrated our respect for diversity and a commitment to deepening fairness... We created IOIA's new Equity Statement to guide our choices of who, what, where, when and why in actions following the 3 paths of our IOIA mission."* Fairness is one of the four principles of Organic Agriculture (IFOAM Principles).

Ethics Committee: Presented by Kathe Purvis with Ethics Chair Brian Baker online. Updated Codes of Ethics and Conduct were presented. The Ethics Committee (EC) was charged in 2024 with review of the Ethics Committee Policy, IOIA Code of conduct and IOIA Code of Ethics. The EC reviewed the documents made proposals and sought member and stakeholder input via a survey facilitated by IOIA staff. Final drafts were supplied to/available to members. The EC was also requested to review the Complaints procedure but as yet have not reached consensus. It is anticipated that this work will continue in 2025. Ethics Chair Brian Baker was commended for his commitment, his management of committee business and for work completed to date.

Treasurer's Report: Presented by Allan Benjamin, Treasurer. The 2024 Financial reports (Budget vs Actual and Balance Sheet) were approved as presented.

Membership Discussions included: Promotion/Funding /Value Adding; More inspectors and higher quality; and TOPP (Transition to Organic Partnership Program) funding.

Election outcome: The results of the board election were announced. Wendy Paulsen was elected to the board and Justin Hurley was re-elected.



Future AGM locations: including aligning AGM with other events, online vs hybrid vs in-person AGMs. Locations proposed included Nashville; Albuquerque (with ACA in 2026); Mexico; Western Australia (2027); Sonoma, California. No decision – deferred to board. Members recognized the challenging relatively high person cost of an in-person event. Strong support was voiced to have more "Meet and Greet" or similar gatherings at industry events wherever a critical mass of inspectors will be present.

Recognition: Janine Gibson was recognized by Joe Ward, Vice-Chair, for completion of her long, active, and passionate service in service on the board including chair. She served from 1995-2003 and was elected again to the board in 2019, completing a second term with this election. She was presented with a photo book of her IOIA activities and members were invited to sign the book and add their well wishes. Thank you, Janine!

AGM - Chico Hot Springs, Montana



Members were held spellbound by stellar storyteller **Glenn Elzinga** of Alderspring Ranch, Idaho, as he shared his family's story and stunning photos showing how their regenerative grass-fed beef operation grew over years of learning to work with nature. His large family maintains a "cow-camp" where horseback cowboys and cowgirls stay with the cattle in the mountains, keeping them out of the creeks and riparian areas and ensuring that they move frequently without over-grazing. And, they succeed while co-existing with large predators. He described how the natural systems regenerated, how the beaver eventually came back, and the value of biological diversity. Their cattle became much healthier as they transformed from eating 300+ species of vegetation to more than 500.



Board during AGM



Brian Magaro - Auctioneer Extraordinaire!

Thanks for volunteering once again - not only a great inspector but a great auctioneer as well!!



Drew and the book he's been searching YEARS for - found ONLY at the IOIA AGM Auction!

Seasoned campaigners (Rachel Myers, Bob Scoles and Brian) plotting the benefit auction...By the time the event ended, nearly every woman was wearing a pair of Bob's handcrafted horseshoe nail earrings.



Janine and Margaret Anne enjoy the music provided by band *Meyer'd Down*



Margaret and a new friend

Adv Training Day 1 - Soil Biology and Supply Chain Traceability



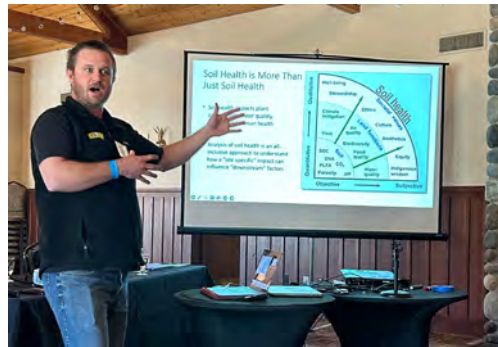
Above, Dr. Kris Nichols, demonstrating a variety of simple tools and techniques for monitoring soil health.

Right Center: Dr. Sean Stokes

Far Right: Dr. Bob Quinn

Below: Nate moderating soil health panel.

On March 26, the group of 16 participants heard from 3 soil experts. Dr. Kris Nichols, Understanding Ag consultant, of Calgary, Alberta, spoke on Soil Biology and demonstrated practical ways to measure soil microbiological activity, soil aggregates, compaction, and water infiltration. Dr. Bob Quinn of the Quinn Institute in Big Sandy captivated the audience covering the topics of tillage and rotation as he told the story of his farm in northern Montana. He is perhaps best known for developing the ancient grain KAMUT®. Dr. Sean Stokes of the Rodale Institute's Midwest Organic Center, addressed soil carbon, amendments, and regenerative principles. Nate Powell-Palm moderated a panel following, with a focus on how inspectors can move the needle on continuous improvement in soil health through discussions with the farmers they are inspecting without crossing the line to consulting.



Angela Wartes Kahl, with Garth Kahl, led the 2-hour session on Supply Chain Traceability Audits, which started with a bag of organic brown sugar. The group broke up into smaller groups and then presented a remarkable variety of approaches and ideas on how to follow the sugar as it progressed from a sugar cane farm through processing, transformation, and packaging before arriving at a US market. With SOE, SCTAs

are now required. This is one of the hottest topics calling for more training available to inspectors and certifiers. Thank you, Garth and Angela, for a great session!

Raymond Yang presents for his SCTA small group.



Adv Training Day 2 - Social Accountability



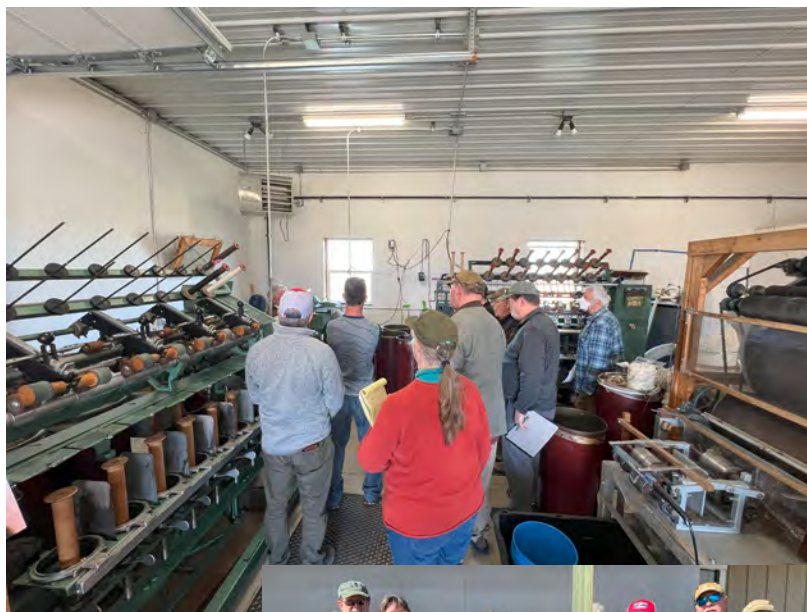
Left to right, Kathe, Elizabeth, Ryan – teaching by role play. Kathe developed and delivered this training as a contribution to IOIA, above and beyond her board duties.

Although NOP is silent on social responsibility, many standards around the world do address it. Also, markets increasingly want to know more about how their suppliers are monitoring environmental impact, worker health and safety, and social justice. IOIA presented our first Introduction to Social Responsibility Auditing on March 27. Led by Kathe Purvis of Australia and developed in collaboration with Elizabeth Whitlow of the Regenerative Organic Alliance and Ryan Sitler, the North American representative of GOTS, the training was delivered to a group of 12 seasoned inspectors from 10 states and 2 Canadian provinces.



The training ended with an optional field trip on March 28 to The Wool Mill in Belgrade, MT (<https://thewoolmill.com>)

Adv Training and field trip - Day 3 - Custom wool processing mill



LaVonne Stuckey, manager and operator of The Wool Mill, was an extraordinary host.

Those who wished to earn a Certificate in the course completed an Environmental/Social Responsibility Assessment following the field trip. Whether inspectors planned to go on for further training and social auditing or not, all inspectors learned interview and audit preparation techniques that would be helpful in any organic inspection.



Annual Report 2024 - Highlights

Please see the full AR 2024 on our website

STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY AND 2024 ACTIVITIES

Objective 1: Enhancing Training for Organic Inspectors

IOIA continued expanding its gold-standard training program in 2024, focusing on hybrid learning formats. Partnerships with Tuskegee University (U.S.) and Hong Kong Baptist University allowed trainers from Canada and Costa Rica to deliver crop inspection courses internationally. Two multi-year projects wrapped up, including transition-to-organic workshops with the National Center for Appropriate Technology, funded by the USDA. Working with Kentucky State University, also funded by USDA, thirteen scholarships for basic training were awarded to socially-disadvantaged and minority stakeholders. A major milestone was completing a two-year post-training survey study, with plans to launch the Training Advisory Council in 2025.

Objective 2: Advocacy & Industry Engagement

IOIA strengthened its role as an advocate for organic inspectors, responding to public comments on regulatory proposals and ensuring industry visibility. The Policy Comment Committee provided input on Residue Testing and Risk-based Certification proposals. Representatives engaged in international policymaking, with IOIA maintaining a presence in Canada's General Standards Board and major organic industry events.

Objective 3: Organizational Growth & Stability

2024 marked the first full year of IOIA's Staffing Plan, with Development Director Drew Gourdie improving organizational resilience. Leadership attended the Montana Nonprofit Association conference, and the board updated the Emergency Plan to ensure ongoing operational efficiency.

IOIA's 2024 Policy & Industry Engagement

Independent Contractor Classification Statement

Following the Department of Labor's 2024 rulemaking, IOIA analyzed the final rule (Employee or Independent Contractor Classification), and published a clarification statement with legal counsel. Rachel Myers & Margaret Scoles co-presented on the statement at an ACA Lunch and Learn. IOIA provided written and oral comments at both annual NOSB meetings on Residue Sampling, Organic Seed Sourcing, and Risk-based Certification.

Industry Conference Participation

Development Director Drew Gourdie represented IOIA at major events such as: Guelph Organic Conference; Marbleseed, Expo West, and CHFA Vancouver.

Drew and Executive Director Margaret Scoles attended these events together: OTA's Organic Week in Washington, D.C.; and Montana Nonprofit Association Conference. Margaret attended the NOSB fall meeting in Portland, Oregon, further strengthening IOIA's policy presence.

Advancing Inspector Visibility

IOIA expanded its reach beyond certification by engaging with industry leaders. To name a few: Interview with Max Goldberg (Organic Insider) on inspector recruitment & retention; ACA 20th Anniversary video featuring IOIA's Executive Director; Presentation at the Arkansas Grown Conference with our ED alongside IOIA member Leonard Pollara.

Ethics Committee Review

The Ethics Committee conducted a thorough review of IOIA's Codes of Ethics & Conduct, preparing recommendations for the Board and membership.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas featured keynote speaker Rikki Held. She spoke about the successful lawsuit filed by Our Children's Trust against the State of Montana, for violating the constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment.



Annual Report 2024 - Highlights

Please see the full AR 2024 on our website

Summary of IOIA 2024 Training & Policy Initiatives

Fraud Training Expansion

IOIA kicked off 2024 with advanced fraud training in San Antonio, a major collaboration with several industry partners including the Alliance for Organic Integrity. This highly rated program was featured in *The Organic Standard*. IOIA also continued efforts to align with ACA by holding its annual meeting and training alongside the ACA Conference.

Hybrid Training Growth

New hybrid training models gained popularity, blending live online instruction with in-person practicums. Universities in China, Alabama, and Japan hosted sessions, with trainers delivering real-time lessons internationally.

Innovative Organic Staff Training

IOIA partnered with ACA on a pilot training for certification agency staff in Minnesota, integrating reviewers with prospective inspectors for a collaborative learning experience.

Expanding Spanish-Language Access

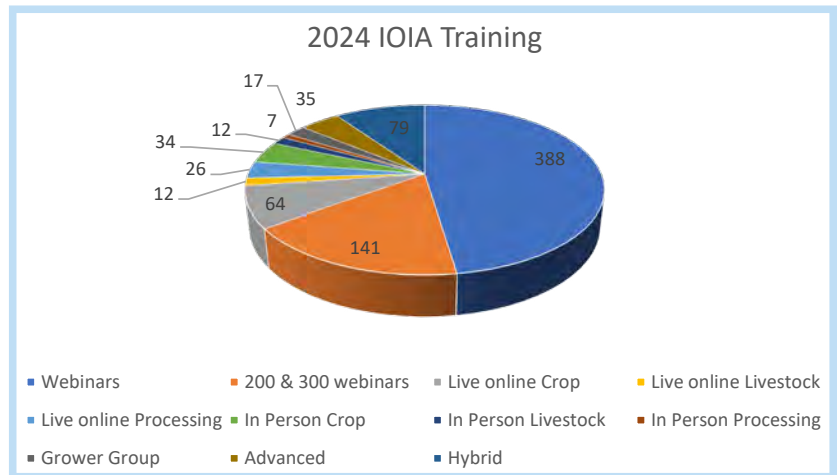
A new affordable Spanish training model debuted in Mexico, co-sponsored by AgriVita and OCIA. IOIA endorsed the 36-hour introductory course, awarding certificates to participants.

Policy & International Agreements

Kathe Purvis led a EU Regulations webinar and wrote a companion newsletter article. IOIA and Isidor Sustainability Research Institute signed an MOU, restoring training opportunities and improving industry relations in South Korea.

Membership Benefit Webinars

IOIA partnered with Strengthening Organic Standards to provide 2 special topic webinars on the new USDA Organic Livestock and Poultry Standard and fraud prevention plans. IOIA and OMRI also collaborate each year on input materials webinars.



IOIA's EQUITY STATEMENT

"IOIA is committed to advancing equity principles within organic agriculture, especially for those who work as organic inspectors. We believe that a robust community of inspectors thrives when it embraces the diversity of the producers and processors we serve from coast to coast in North America, and around the globe. By fostering an inclusive environment, we ensure that differing voices and perspectives are heard, to support the optimal development and delivery of inspection training. We are dedicated to equitable access to resources, education, and opportunities for all those who pursue a career in inspection, particularly those from historically marginalized groups. We believe that the ethnic and gender demographic of organic producers and processors (and those in transition) should ideally be reflected in the pool of active inspectors.

"Our intention is to promote organic best practices that not only nourish the earth, but also cultivate social justice, empowering inspectors to thrive alongside the operations they inspect. We recognize that the path to embracing equity principles is a journey, not a destination. This is an incremental process that will develop over the months and years to come."



Kentucky Basic Crop Inspection Training

Annual Report 2024 - Highlights

Please see the full AR 2024 on our website

In 2024, a total of 697 participants received training through IOIA, in 48 courses and 3 languages, with 15 cosponsors.

IOIA's International Training Manager works with cosponsors such as NGOs, certification agencies, universities, and governments to make training accessible around the world. In 2024, IOIA fielded queries and/or developed training proposals for a certification agency in Egypt, the government of Peru, and a state in India. We celebrated our first training in Fiji, with Kathe Purvis of Australia delivering the grower group inspection content.

IOIA's Peer Field Evaluation program: 2024 saw a significant uptick in requests from certifiers for peer field evaluations, doubling from 2023.

Scholarship Recipients



Rutherford Scholarship -
Elizabeth Rutila, U.S.



Organic Community
Initiative Scholarship
Nasser Amer, Germany



Reynaldo de La Rosa
Scholarship
Gisela Esmeralda Ascencio Zárate,
Chiapas Mexico

International Organic Inspectors Association Balance Sheet (Cash Basis) As of December 31, 2024

	Dec 31, 2024	Dec 31, 2023
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings/CDs	259,081.74	340,654.76
Accounts Receivable	50.92	-129.08
Total Other Current Assets	35,372.64	27,245.75
Total Current Assets	294,505.30	367,771.43
Fixed Assets		
Total Building	38,768.86	38,768.86
Other Assets		
Accumulated Depreciation	-22,732.20	-22,225.45
TOTAL ASSETS	\$310,541.96	\$384,314.84
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Equity		
Contributed Property-FMValue	29,031.80	29,031.80
Total Restricted Scholarship Funds	21,745.97	21,129.37
Retained Funds	334,153.67	410,126.40
Net Income	-74,389.48	-75,972.73
Total Equity	310,541.96	384,314.84
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$310,541.96	\$384,314.84

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Rhea Epp, Manitoba,
Canada, new to the board
in 2024.



Left to right: Kathe Purvis (Western Australia), Justin Hurley (North Carolina), Janine Gibson (Manitoba), Joe Ward (Iowa), Margarito Cal (Hawaii), and Allan Benjamin (Missouri). Not pictured: Rhea Epp.

Synthetic Biology: Hidden Threat to Organics

Guest Technical Article by Alan Lewis

Abstract - *Note: This abstract was submitted to the IFOAM World Congress in 2024 for presentation in Taiwan.*

Old GMOs haphazardly mutated the genetic expression of seed genomes, from which certain cultivars were selected for propagation. **New Synthetic Biology** is a set of technologies used to create and manipulate the base pairs of DNA to generate specific projected traits and behaviors in organisms that may result in substances and downstream traits and behaviors that have never before been present in natural systems. The novel traits and behaviors are further deployed within various collateral processes to create materials that can be commercialized for profit, such as pharmaceuticals, foods, crops, fertilizers, pesticides, microorganisms, fungi, polymers, etc. However, many of the resulting materials are being introduced into the food, feed, and fiber supply chain without notice, consent, or disclosure.

The global organic community thus faces the risk of accidentally and unintentionally deploying bioengineered materials that may undermine organic integrity. Furthermore, nearly all these technologies and techniques are proprietary, resulting in the risk of patent infringement and significant licensing costs. Synthetic biology can create ongoing codependence, which a farmer or farm community may have difficulty regaining sovereignty. The hidden threat to organic agriculture is that the methods by which synthetic biology is being introduced are not obvious and the consequences are not measurable. In one example of many, a novel microorganism placed into a “broken” soil biome to “fix” it may not be disclosed, may not be labeled, may not be identified, may not be tested, may not have a reliable laboratory identification protocol, and, in any case, will continue to evolve and adapt in ways its creators cannot imagine. Similarly, foliar applications of novel synthetic substances may be designed to trigger novel genetic expression in a target plant or vector, with unknown and non-self-limiting outcomes.

Synthetic biology expressly acts outside of the balanced biological controls that exist in natural ecosystems, which is the antithesis of the prime organic/agroecological principle of working within the natural dynamics of the energy, nutrient, and water cycles. The global synthetic biology industry believes organic is “broken” and believes it is being called to “fix” organic agriculture by introducing its novel materials and organisms. The technology is driven by complex artificial intelligence and machine learning models that are themselves uncontrollable and considered highly suspect.

This presentation describes the mostly likely biotech strategies and contaminants, using thorough research and up-to-the-minute market surveillance -- and suggests how to identify and avoid them. It also describes the unbridled venture-driven ideology of synthetic biology and presents effective ways to avoid and counter its reductionist solutions. If you are interested in further exploration of the topic, please see [a version of this presentation from Supply Side West with panelists Dr. John Fagan, Karen Howard of Organic and Natural Health Association, and Alan.](#)

Alan Lewis serves as the Vice President of the IFOAM North America Board. He also oversees organic certification and compliance for Natural Grocers, a Colorado-based health food chain that operates in 20 states and boasts over 160 stores. In this capacity, he engages with federal, state, and local policymakers on a range of issues, including food, agriculture, nutrition, rural economic development, technology, biotech, cannabis, trade, and health. He also provides guidance to food, natural product, and ag-tech start-ups across the country.



Proposed IOIA Bylaws Changes

The IOIA Bylaws Committee is proposing changes to modernize our bylaws and allow for digital means of voting and communication. The board reviewed and approved the changes for presentation to the 2025 annual meeting; they were presented to the membership at the Annual Meeting. Next steps for a vote are a 2-week comment period, and a vote via Election Runner, an online voting platform.

There are no substantive changes in this proposal. All changes involved minor edits/deletions to clarify certain points, or changes to account for means of communicating or voting, new since the Bylaws were originally written and before most voting and communications means were digital.

Inspector members were sent an email invitation to review the changes and give comment. The proposed changes are posted on the IOIA website at this link: [Proposed Bylaws Document](#)

Watch for an upcoming ballot coming soon. We need a 25% quorum to amend our bylaws: your vote is important.

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

Dec 19, 2024 – 6-8 PM EST by Zoom

Attendance: All board members were present. Others: Margaret Scoles, ED, and Drew Gourdie, Development Director.

AOAC testing for synthetic Nitrogen - Request for letter of support by SOS. The BOD declined to provide a letter of support. MS will send a letter indicating that support for this project is outside the scope of the BOD.

Isidor Sustainability Research Institute & IOIA relationship in Korea - Isidor Yu has requested the IOIA BOD to consider Isidor Institute as a representative of IOIA in South Korea. This will assist Isidor Institute to be recognized as a training body by Korean government (NAQS). IOIA would not set up a legal entity in South Korea. KP noted this is a good potential connection for IOIA providing support to Asia Pacific regional initiatives. IOIA APC would need to consider how this may benefit IOIA APC and present ideas to IOIA in 2025. BOD agreed to draft an MOU with IOIA and Isidor Institute for long term relationship. MS to draft an MOU to present to the BOD for further guidance before sending to Isidor Institute.

2025 budget: AB noted trends have been downward for the last five years which complicates the fundraising aims for 2025. Nate Powell-Palm joined the meeting to raise an innovative idea for fundraising. The BOD confirms sufficient interest to direct Nate to develop a detailed plan. Finance Committee and MS to complete the budget based on BOD input.

Jan 16, 2025 – 6-8 PM EST – by Zoom

Attendance: All board members were present, except Rhea Epp and Justin Hurley. Others: Margaret Scoles, Drew Gourdie.

Key topics were: Finalize 2025 Budget, End-of-2024 Financial Reports; Draft Gift Acceptance Policy, Ethics Committee, and AGM Planning.

AB presented on Finance committee meetings and 2025 budget. MS explained deficit amount for financial year 2025. The BOD discussed line items and confirmed a balanced budget as the best outcome for 2025, also noting that monthly monitoring is required, with possible adjustments end of first quarter if needed. On behalf of the BOD JG thanks DG & MS for donating time, expenses and recording these specific contributions.

Feb 20, 2025 - 6-8:30 PM EST – by Zoom

Attendance: All board members were present. Others: Margaret Scoles, ED, and Drew Gourdie, Development Director (part of meeting).

2025 Budget - Final Adoption: Minor changes to 2024 budget bottom line since last meeting with +\$2000 balance indicated, based on increase in membership dues and DG salary being offset by fund development income. KP confirmed IFOAM Manual revision completion is on track, due to be ready for initial print at the end of February. JH moved and RE seconded a motion to accept the budget as presented. All in favor.

Draft IOIA – Donor Acceptance Policy reviewed: Policy accepted by the BOD, as ready to present to the Ethics Committee for informal feedback.

Ethics Committee Update: Ethics Committee Chair provided a report on progress on Ethics Committee tasks as directed by the BOD. Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics update policy will be ready to present to members at the AGM. The Ethics Committee would like to spend more time considering the Complaints procedure, after direction from the BOD. The Ethics Committee has identified other tasks that they may present to the BOD in due course. KP to communicate with BB, appreciation for progress on policy updates and timeframe to respond regarding Complaints policy and procedure. Add Ethics Committee direction as an agenda item in the Strategic planning session post AGM – Complaints procedure/ Ethics Committee mandate for 2025/2026

Proposal from Bylaws Committee: BOD agreed to accepting the Bylaws Committee proposed changes.

Development Director Progress Report: DG presented the Development report with multiple funding opportunities with both donors and grants identified. Two applications in progress and \$\$\$ targets identified. Documents presented include a generic Donor Letter addressed to Advocates of the Organic Movement and a table of grants and awards identified with timelines for applications.

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

Mar 20, 2025 - 6-8 PM EDT – by Zoom

Attendance: All board members were present. Others: Margaret Scoles, ED.

2024 Annual Report: The draft Annual Report and PowerPoint for presentation at AGM were approved.

2024 Financial Reports: Final version of Budget vs Actual and Balance Sheet were approved for presentation at AGM.



The Flaming Orange, World famous Chico Hot Springs dessert

March 27, 2025 - 7:08 – 7:35 PM MDT – Chico Hot Springs, MT

Attendance: Janine Gibson, Past Chair (JG), Joe Ward, past vice-chair /present Chair (JW), Allan Benjamin, Treasurer (AB), Justin Hurley (JH), Wendy Paulsen (WP) and Kathe Purvis, Secretary (KP) on site, and Rhea Epp (RE) and Margarito Cal (MC) online.

The board reorganized, electing all officers. Chair (JW), Vice-Chair (JH), Secretary (KP), Treasurer (AB), Executive Committee At Large (MC); The Executive Committee will comprise of JW, JH, KP, AB, and MC. Janine Gibson was invited to participate as Special Past chair for 1 year. Accepted. Motion by AB to accept the full slate as above. All in favor.

March 28, 2025 - 2:30 to 8:00 PM MDT – Chico Hot Springs

Attendance: All board members were in attendance. Present in-person: Special Past Chair Janine Gibson, Chairperson Joe Ward, Secretary Kathe Purvis, Vice Chair Justin Hurley, Wendy Paulsen (WP), Treasurer, Alan Benjamin. Present Online: Rhea Epp, Margarito Cal. Others: ED, Margaret Scoles. Joe Ward chaired the meeting.

ED Support: RE moved & JG seconded that the Board affirms full support for MS as our ED. Motion passed by consensus.

Business Development position: RE moved to terminate the contract on 30-day notice, seconded by JH. Motion passed 7 to 1. The BOD is open to any approach and future proposal from Drew Gourdie.

Risk Based Working Group with ACA: MS and MC to work together to progress this project on behalf of IOIA.

Conflict of Interest: The BOD members present signed/re-signed the IOIA Staff and Board Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Confidentiality Statement.

Ethics Committee: Moved to accept draft codes as presented as amended at the AGM. KP to develop and provide prior to next BOD meeting: a draft of complaints procedure; suggestions regarding Ethics Committee policy / tasks; suggestions on Ethics Committee Policy; list of next steps for Ethics Committee.

Organic Integrity Cooperative Guild: OICG has a training proposal under discussion with IOIA. MS to continue to progress this initiative with BOD support.

Social Media presence: RE and JG to research cost/hours of operating for other successful social media positions.

Strategic Plan /membership development: JW to pursue the potential for group insurances after seeking input from a contact in the insurance industry. JH to research the discounted car hire options. This research will include options within USA, and for international application. JW requests the BOD to review the strategic plan prior to the next BOD meeting and decide priorities to be focused on at upcoming BOD meeting.

Post AGM- Moving forward: The BOD confirmed the 2026 AGM will be online. A hospitality suite is planned at ACA in Albuquerque, New Mexico. 2027 AGM will be in-person.



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2025 IOIA Board of Directors

KEEP IOIA STRONG – LEND YOUR STRENGTH AND GET INVOLVED!

2025 Calendar

April 25 - 27 [CHFA NOW Natural Organic Wellness conference & trade show](#), Vancouver, B.C.

April 29 - May 1 NOSB virtual meeting. The National Organic Standards Board will meet via webinar from noon-5 EDT. Along with voting on materials up for sunset, the Board will hear presentations from the National Organic Program and the Transition to Organic Partnership Program. [See the meeting agenda and meeting documents for details.](#)

June 2 - 4 [Biofach America](#) - Atlanta, GA.
Public comment session will also be via webinar April 22 and 24.

June 5 [Central Plains Organic Grain Field Walk and Buyer Tour with Albert Lea Seeds and Clear Frontier](#)
Hudson, CO.

June 22 [European Organic Congress](#), Warsaw, Poland
Join 250+ participants in Warsaw, Poland, for three days of insightful discussions and inspiring keynotes on the future of organic agriculture in Europe.

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

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