

IOIA Annual Report – 2007

Prepared February 1, 2008 by
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This has been a “Big”, “Building” year for IOIA and, depending on the outcome of the vote, an international “Banner” year as well. The Board endeavored to focus on the **mission directives** and, in their long-range planning retreat, re-defined IOIA. “*We make sure organic is really organic*”. Ambitious? Perhaps. A definition to live up to and grow into? We think so.

A summary of progress on key ongoing/new initiatives during 2007 is listed below. Detailed information can be obtained from the IOIA newsletter (“The Inspectors’ Report” available on line at www.IOIA.net)

IOIA Mission

- To address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors
- To provide quality inspector training and
- To promote consistency and integrity in the organic certification process

Issues and Concerns relevant to organic inspectors:

- The Inspectors’ Report (IR) – Volume 16; No 1 – 4.
- The Mini Membership Directory included with Vol.16; No 1 of the IR
- The hard copy 2007 Membership Directory, published January 2007
- IOIA Forum – an internet list-serve providing an essential communication tool for current issues, frequently cited as a valuable member service
- The Organic Standard – electronic international newsletter from GroLink AB for a nominal fee (based on IOIA as the primary subscriber)
- Secondary forums through YAHOO for Board Matters and the Canadian Committee.
- Inspector Membership Survey – survey results are currently being analyzed
- Spanish language section in each quarterly newsletter.

Promoting Consistency and Integrity:

- Doubled the promotional budget - \$2000 to \$4000
- Attendance at major organic events including:
 - Guelph Organic Conference in January
 - Expo West in Anaheim, California in March
 - All Things Organic in Chicago, Illinois in May
- Continued support of OTA, IFOAM, OMRI, Co-op America, Montana Non-Profit Association and COG (Canadian Organic Growers) through membership and subscriptions
- Continued partnership with National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture

- Promoted valid and rigorous inspection of Community Grower Groups (CGGs). When the USDA National Organic Program announced a controversial policy impacting inspection of CGGs, IOIA struck a committee, wrote formally to the NOP, and sponsored a delegation to Washington, DC.

Training:

IOIA sponsored the first-ever conference format advanced training, in conjunction with the AGM in Encinitas. The training provided concurrent and repeated sessions to maximize options for members. It helped increase attendance at the AGM (a new record for attendance).

A new goal was identified by the BOD at their retreat: Launch an **Organic Training Institute**. Repackaging the IOIA training program will diversify training opportunities and create an umbrella for collaborating with other institutions.

The **Basic Crop curriculum** was revised extensively. It is providing a basis for increased training consistency for all Trainings. The **Basic Livestock and Processing Courses** are being built on the same platform – including enhanced participatory and OSP exercises as well as a new grading system that includes value for pre-course assignments, homework and in class exercises. Course Evaluations are showing strong support for the developments and changes that have been implemented.

IOIA sponsors an average of two trainings each month, usually following one of two models. **IOIA-managed trainings** are limited in number (about 5 annually) and are administered out of the head office. **Cosponsor-Managed trainings** continue to increase each year. Cosponsors handle most of the administrative and logistical workload. **IOIA-managed trainings continue to be the primary revenue source for IOIA**. Spanish language trainings broke another record in 2007 (8 basic trainings and 2 advanced trainings). Revenue from cosponsor-managed trainings is much lower, but they are an important component in IOIA's efforts to achieve our overall mission.

The trainees for basic courses continue to come from all areas of the organic industry. About 25 percent of the participants are 'non-inspectors'. Providing in-house training for certifier staff continues to be a rapid growth area.

Trainings over the past year included:

- **IOIA-Managed Trainings**
 - California - Advanced at the AGM in Encinitas in February
 - First Personal Body Care Products Inspection Training – 1 day
 - JOIA/IOIA JAS Training – 1 day
 - Montana – Advanced in March
 - California – Basic Processing in February
 - Ohio – Basic Crop and Livestock in April
 - California – Basic Crop – (2 concurrent courses) in May
 - Pennsylvania - Basic Crop, Livestock and Processing in November

- Pennsylvania – Advanced and EU Regulations in November
- **Co-sponsor Managed Trainings**
 - Crop - Costa Rica, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Japan, Jamaica, El Salvador, Korea, Peru, California
 - Livestock – Korea
 - Processing – Korea, Japan
 - Advanced – Costa Rica, El Salvador

FINANCES

The details of the budget will be presented by the Treasurer in The Inspectors' Report and at the AGM. Key aspects include:

- The BOD adopted a Cash Reserve Policy.
- **IOIA had the first full financial audit** according to international accounting principles. Based on the results of this audit, IOIA improved internal controls and the Finance Committee drafted an Audit Policy for IOIA.
- IOIA membership supported IOIA with a fundraising auction associated with the AGM.
- Inspector and Supporting Certification Agency dues were increased.
- IOIA celebrated its largest single donation to date, the gift of our office building.

A balanced budget was presented at the AGM in Encinitas. The Board is pleased to announce that a modest surplus was accomplished, primarily with strong income from IOIA managed trainings.

On the other hand, significant expenditures needed for non-budgeted activities included:

- One-time building acquisition costs associated with taking ownership of the IOIA Office Building in Broadus, MT (finalized in August 2007)
- A four day Board Retreat in Broadus during October with a professional facilitator, Bill Milton
- Continued curriculum development for the Basic Inspector Training Courses

STAFF

Margaret Scoles continues as Executive Director.

IOIA is blessed with a support staff of dedicated and talented part-time individuals:

- Judy Hessong, Membership Services, continues as primary support for membership including scholarship, accreditation, on-line database, and annual Membership Directory.
- Diane Cooner continues as Newsletter Editor, Website Manager, and moderator of the IOIA Forums.

- The 2007 year began with a farewell to Lisa Pierce, who served as International Training Manager 2002-2006.
- Sacha Draine stepped in to handle most of the administrative duties for cosponsor-managed trainings, leaving a gap in training support for IOIA-managed trainings.
- Lynell Denson and Ben Brewer stepped in to fill that gap. Ben Brewer left IOIA for a full-time job in May. He continues as Information Transfer (IT) support on a limited but much appreciated basis. Lynell remained as Office Assistant.
- Gordon Mulkey took on the maintenance tasks associated with building ownership and helps out with a variety of tasks around the office
- Teri Lindberg started as our bookkeeper in early January 2008.

COMMITTEES

At the 2007 AGM, the membership voted to reduce the size of the BOD to 5 Directors, with the goals of reducing costs and shifting more energy away from the BOD and to the IOIA Committees.

The Board extends a sincere thanks to all of the IOIA members who have volunteered to be part of IOIA committee activity and for their accomplishments over the last year. A brief summary of highlights is listed below (more details are included in The IR Vol.16; No 4).

- **Membership – thank you to outgoing chair Sandra Conway and welcome new chair Kelly Monaghan.**
 - First member survey in five years. Results summary is printed in IR-Vol.17; No. 1. The full report will be posted in the “Inspectors Only” section of the website in Spring 2008 Response (81 members replied, a 36% response rate) was more than three times the average for this type of survey.
 - **Nominations Committee** – a full slate of candidates has been prepared for this year’s election
- **Scholarship** – Special thanks are due for their efforts in handling a high number of Spanish language applicants.
 - Awarded the Andrew Rutherford Scholarship and the Organic Community Initiative Scholarship (OCIS) in 2007.
 - Through member initiative and donations, IOIA established a fund to help defray travel costs for OCIS winners.
- **Bylaws** – responded with three alternatives to the Board proposal for a bylaws amendment to change the name of IOIA to incorporate the word “International”. The results from the **vote on name change** will be announced at the AGM.

- **Accreditation and Accreditation Review Panel (ARP)** – This has been a year of major changes. A big thank you to outgoing Accreditation Committee Chair Jake Lewin. Special thanks to outgoing ARP Chair Stephen Grealy, and ARP members John McKeon and Ami Greenberg. Ami served as the certifier representative on the ARP from the time it began dealing with the first applications in 1995. All applications received in 2007 were processed by the ARP.
 - **Three (3) New Accreditations and Five (5) Renewals**

- **Canadian Committee** - Thank you to outgoing Co-Chair Leanne McCormick. Co-Chair Janine Gibson represented IOIA on the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) Organic Committee and invested many hours into the new Canadian organic standards. In the face of imminent implementation of regulations and standards, IOIA will increase support of the committee in 2008 and plans training to the standards for inspectors. **(See Vol. 16; No 4, page 8 for a full report on the Canadian Organic Standards Update).**

IOIA BOARD – 2007 Activity summary

The Board had 4 new members and 2 new alternates as the result of the AGM in Encinitas last year. Newly elected members included Bob Durst, Monique Scholz, Catherine Cash and Alternates – Erin Beard and Sue Baird. Alternate Maheswar Ghimire was appointed by the Board to fill a vacancy.

Outgoing members included Luis Brenes (Chair), Marina Sexty Buchan (Secretary), John Trinterud (Director), Ann Baier (Director) and Ann Lameka (Alternate). **THANK YOU**, for your dedication, time and energy.

The 2007 Board Retreat details are available on page 10 and 11 of The IR Vol. 16; No 4.

Four target impact areas for the longer term (12 months/3 years) were identified:

- Develop Inspector Protocols
- Develop the Accreditation Program
- Become a significant player
- Foster financial Viability

The short term work plan (4 months) included:

- Create a draft written plan for financial viability
- Launch the IOIA Organic Training Institute
- Establish a Training Advisory Group
- Repackage the training program
- Prepare BOD job descriptions

The work in progress is aimed at meeting these goals and objectives – 2008 will be a busy year for the Board of Directors. **Your help as volunteers and committee members is necessary and greatly appreciated.**