

Don't miss the 2026 Annual Meeting! Two speakers!

Dr. Jennifer (Jenny) Tucker, has served as the Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program since 2018. Before that, she served as Assistant Deputy Administrator for 7 years. She has also been a group facilitator and organization development consultant, working primarily with scientific and technical government and non-profit organizations. She earned a B.A. in Environmental Science from Wesleyan University, an M.S. in Management from Purdue University, and a Ph.D. in Science and Technology Studies from Virginia Tech. NOP is a regulatory program housed within the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service that develops and enforces national standards for organically-produced agricultural products. These standards assure consumers that products with the USDA organic seal meet consistent, uniform standards for production and distribution. She will kick off IOIA's online annual meeting at 4 p.m. Eastern, with *"From National Policy to Local Oversight: The Critical Role of Inspectors in the Organic System"*. Her presentation is free to the public, including IOIA inspectors and supporting members.



Plenty of time for questions with both speakers.

After an hour break, IOIA members will be treated to a keynote by former US Senator Jon Tester at 6 p.m. Eastern entitled, *"Why are inspectors important?"* and other topics. Mr. Tester has been a certified organic farmer since before the NOP program was launched and was instrumental in Montana's first organic regulation. He was elected to the Montana State Senate in 1998, where he was elected President of the Senate in 2005. In 2006, he ran for the US Senate and successfully won three terms, all while farming the certified organic family farm in northern Montana. In 2020, he authored the book, *Grounded: A Senator's Lessons on Winning Back Rural America*. He co-hosts a podcast with Maritsa Georgiou and in May 2025, he joined MS Now, known then as MSNBC, as a political analyst for *Deadline: White House*, a television program airing weekdays from 4 to 6 p.m. Eastern. It is hosted by NBC News senior political analyst Nicolle Wallace.



Mr. Tester's presentation is free to all inspector members and supporting individuals attending the AGM. The IOIA annual business meeting will follow at 7 p.m. Eastern.

[Register Here!](#)

Notes from the Chair by Joseph Ward

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to wish everyone a blessed and happy holiday with family and friends.

As we embark on the new year, the Board of Directors have been actively reviewing the previous strategic plan and have identified key focus areas for the coming new year. Membership growth and engagement, professional development for members, effective communication and fundraising are highlighted as key activities and areas of focus for 2026. A special thanks is extended to members who have mentored new inspectors. The Board of Directors truly appreciate your continued support through your membership and involvement with the IOIA and the organic industry. It is important that all of you remember and communicate to others that the IOIA is the "gold standard" for training and advocacy for organic inspectors. Over the years, others have attempted to replicate our efforts in the industry but

See Notes, page 4

Welcome New Members!

2026 Webinar Training Schedule

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

New Inspectors

Bernie Ehnes, Taber, Alberta
 Kerry Sides, North Platte, NE
 Joshua Stamp, Croghan, NY

Supporting Individual

Meret Beutler, Palmer, AK
 Brent Borchardt, Windsor Heights, OH
 David Cedar, Freshwater, CA
 Magdalena Cynk, Leduc, Alberta
 Lisa Davies-Hoes, Winnipeg, MB
 Kate Gilmore, Newbury, MA
 Frances Girling, Fallbrook, CA
 Kelly Globeck, Homer, OH
 Ariel Kloeckner, Lee's Summit, MO
 Stacy Sangsland, Bellaire, MI
 Mary Selland, Brandon, SD
 Aubrion Spear, Fruitland, ID
 Shelly Toombs, Newburg OR
 Joshua Volk, Strasburg, ND

January 13 & 16, 2026

100 Level NOP Processing Standards

The webinar is a 100-level course that will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Processing Standards. \$350

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific

IOIA Trainer: Garry Lean

Register and Pay Here

February 3 & 6, 2026

100 Level NOP Crop Standards

The webinar is a 100-level course that will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Crop Standards. \$350

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific

IOIA Trainer: PJ Wiebusch

Register and Pay Here

March 10 & 13, 2026

100 Level NOP Livestock Standards

The webinar is a 100-level course will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Livestock Standards. This webinar focuses on topics including the National List of allowed synthetic and prohibited natural inputs for livestock production. Participants will also gain skill in understanding and navigating the NOP regulations. \$350

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific

IOIA Trainer - Garry Lean

Register and Pay Here

**IOIA Membership
 Dues Reminder!
 Deadline is December 31**

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](#)

Webinar Discount Reminder

All inspector members are entitled to take 50% off any one webinar during 2026

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.

Online and Onsite Basic Courses 2026 - [see the IOIA website for full details](#)

February 2 - 6, 2026

Online - Basic NOP Processing Inspection Training

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

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

Registration and Application is a 3-step process.

Deadline to Register and Apply is Monday, December 22, 2025



February 23 - 27, 2026

Online - Basic NOP Crop Inspection Training

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

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

Registration and Application is a 3-step process.

Deadline to Register and Apply is Monday, January 12, 2026



March 2 - March 6, 2026

Online - Basic COR Crop Inspection Training

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

The Basic Crop Inspection Training to COR Standards provides basic level training to develop skills required for inspecting and reporting on the management of an organic crop operations according to a specified set of standards. For inspections conducted in Canada, the standard is CAN/CGSB-32.310-2020 and Permitted Substance Lists CAN/CGSB-32.311-2020.

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

Registration and Application is a 3-step process. Deadline to apply is January 26, 2026



March 30 - April 3, 2026

Online - NOP Basic Livestock Inspection Training

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

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

Registration and Application is a 3-step process.

Deadline to Register and Apply is Monday, February 16, 2026



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

IOIA's excellence and expertise remains unmatched.

We hope all of you will take time out of your busy schedules to spend time with loved ones and acknowledge those who have supported you and those close to your hearts. We often get so busy that we forget to say thank you for those who have been by our sides during the difficulties of 2025.

Wishing you all the best in 2026,

Joe Ward



2026 Advanced Training Opportunity

IOIA's first advanced training of the new year will 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 6 online sessions offered over 4 weeks in March. Each session will be 2 hours long, scheduled late afternoon/evening US time, and will have a different topic and expert or panel of experts. The format is spread out 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.

Registration link coming soon! Send a message to [Margaret](#).

New Webinars Under Development in 2026 - in Partnership with the Organic Integrity Cooperative

In 2026, IOIA will partner with the Organic Integrity Cooperative to offer two membership benefit webinars, at a significant discount for IOIA inspector members:

1. Supply Chain Traceability Audits - with Garth Kahl and Angela Wartes-Kahl. Garth and Angela's presentation delivered in-person at the advanced training in Montana earlier this year was very well-received. The topic is an essential one, given the requirement in Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) for certifiers to do SCTAs and the limited expertise available to conduct them.

2. Inspecting Transloaders, port facilities and bulk ships - with Garth Kahl. Increasingly, organic commodities are moving around the world in bulk ships and passing through large port and transloading facilities in the process. At the same time, few inspectors are trained in the relevant organic control points and terminology, understand nature of these complex supply chains or are prepared to perform these kinds of inspections. Training will focus on specific OCPs for these kinds of inspections as well as involve realistic trace back exercises drawn from recent work the members of the OICG have been performing in this sector over the last six years.

The Organic Integrity Cooperative is a cooperative of organic inspectors, trainers, and consultants. They specialize in tailored compliance consulting and investigation, training, and internal audits that strengthen certification and quality systems. For more info, see <https://www.organicintegrity.coop/>

Watch for more information and registration links coming soon at [Webinars](#)



Notes from the Executive Director by Margaret Scoles

The last quarter of this year has been very full, with a flood of training inquiries and trainings running full and over-full. In September, husband Bob and I took a trip to Arizona (mostly vacation) and in November, I was a week away to California for the onsite training in Ventura. Followed rapidly was a mid-week processing inspection involving a bit of winter travel with an apprenticing inspector. I forgot just how much I enjoy mentoring, because I don't do enough inspections to accommodate an apprentice that well. Mentors are in such short supply! In December, I was networking at the Montana Organic Association conference.



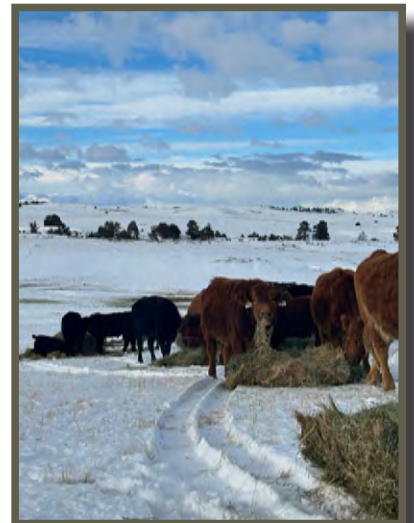
CA group enjoying a meal at the end of the training

Getting away from our work gives us perspective. We can get myopic without that perspective. And sometimes, we just have to be home. I was visiting with a midwestern inspector earlier this year. We were commiserating about the constant on-the-road life of inspectors. She said, "I came home and just needed to get out and be with the cows, so I walked into the pasture, and the heifers ran away from me...!" A silver lining in the cloud of my husband's Parkinson's Disease is that we do almost all of the ranch work together now. The cattle and I had become estranged after so many years of spending so little time with them. They recognized Bob as the "herdsman" but who the heck did I think I was? Now that I spend so much more time with the cows, we are familiar again. And it brings me comfort to feed them and walk among them. Perspective. **And balance.**

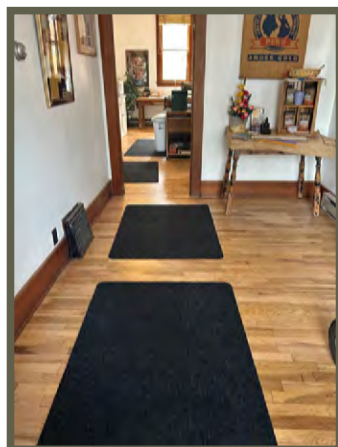
In our last issue, I wrote about our efforts to win an award funded by TOPP Workforce Development. We were not successful, but we will continue doing what we do best, TRAIN. Around the world - within this issue, from South Korea to Peru. We are INTERNATIONAL. Note that the three career development award recipients this round were all from countries other than the US. Watch for an article next issue on the training Luis Brenes is conducting for SENASA, the government of Peru. Online basic training in Spanish over 6 weeks to be followed by advanced training in-person in 2026. **New webinars.** New format for advanced training in conjunction with our AGM. New webinars in development with the Organic Integrity Cooperative. Our slogan for this year?

"Training, it's what we do."

Best wishes for a wonderful time with friends and family over the holidays. See you soon at the Annual Meeting! *Margaret*

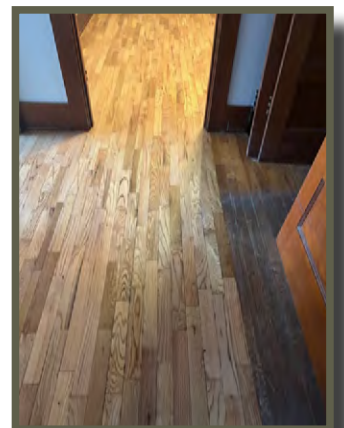


2025 was a good year for carrots and granddaughters.



With support from the Powder River Community Endowment Fund - Renovated office space including refinished floors and a new coat of paint throughout.
Right: Before and after.
Left: All finished!

A beautiful update to our historic office building!



Sector News

Fall NOSB meeting rescheduled to January 13-14 online

The Fall NOSB meeting has been rescheduled to a virtual environment on January 13-14, 2026. The meeting was previously cancelled due to the government shutdown. The event is now posted on the AMS site, <https://www.ams.usda.gov/event/national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meeting-fall-2025>

The meetings will be held from 11:00 a.m. to approximately 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) each day. **The deadline to submit written comments is December 30, 2025.** It is suggested that anyone that submitted comments for the cancelled October Omaha meeting should resubmit those comments.

National Organic Coalition pushed USDA to find a way to proceed and are thrilled to see that they have. This means the Board members transitioning off who have reviewed numerous public comments, taken part in Board discussions, and heard community input will get to see that work through. Topics on the agenda include whether to allow synthetic compostable packaging in organic compost, induced mutagenesis, and what colors should still be allowed in the sunset renewal.

The Real Cost of Lost Connections

By Bill Wolf & John Foster

This week we were booked to be at the Fall National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting; historically these have been touchstone events for our community to come together, deliberate, and move the organic program forward. Instead, the meeting was canceled. The loss goes far beyond a date on the calendar; it represents a pause in the dialogue that has sustained and grown organic integrity and enterprise for decades.

For those who have been part of this movement since before the NOP, the NOSB is more than an advisory body — it's the connective tissue of the organic system. It is where farmers, certifiers, advocates, consumers, and businesses meet face to face to dissect, argue about, and interpret the evolving meaning of "organic." The conversations in hallways and over coffee have often shaped the trajectory of policy as much as the testimony at the microphone. Without that, something essential is missing.

The cancellation reflects a deeper uncertainty. The current administration's approach in appointing the next round of board members (a third of the Board, mind you), coupled with an ambiguous commitment to future meetings, stalls the Board's critical advisory role. As a result, important work, petitions awaiting review, materials due for re-listing decisions, and policy recommendations that need public input are suspended. The cumulative effect goes beyond mere delay; it begins to erode the democratic process and the transparency of our standard.

We've been here before, but not with as much important work at stake. The cancelled agenda included deep dives into implementing risk-based processes - but five of the Board members who worked tirelessly on this and other key issues will have their terms end in January 2026. Having their voices missing from the deliberations from the next (notably unscheduled) NOSB meeting is a loss for which there is no compensation available.

During the pandemic, the loss of in-person engagement had a quiet but lasting impact on collaboration and accountability. The organic community thrives on human connection, on seeing and hearing each other, debating earnestly, disagreeing constructively. When that disappears, so too does the shared sense of purpose that has always been our greatest strength.

Wolf & Associates continues to advocate for the restoration of consistent NOSB engagement—public, participatory, and transparent. Organic stakeholders deserve a functioning process that invites their voices and honors the statutory intent of the Organic Foods Production Act. We urge the administration and USDA to act swiftly to appoint the new members and schedule catch-up Board meeting, thus reaffirming its commitment to meaningful stakeholder participation.

The vitality of the organic movement depends not only on the strength of its standards, but on the strength of our community. Let's not allow procedural uncertainty to undo what decades of dialogue have built.

November 2025 Wolf & Associates newsletter

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Sector News

IFOAM North America News - Connection and Regeneration

IFOAM North America Annual Membership Meeting was held online November 13. A conversation on the topic of “Connection and Regeneration” followed the regular membership business aspect of the meeting. Conversation speakers, all farmers, are shown below. [Click here](#) to see the slide deck and minutes of the meeting.



Ana Moran, New Mexico



Elizabeth Henderson, New York



Michael Carter, Virginia

EU agrees to relax regulations around genetically edited crops, sparking renewed debate

The EU Parliament, EU Council, and EU Commission agreed to deregulate New Genomic Techniques (NGTs) on December 3, 2025. While the agreement isn't final, the policy is a sharp reversal of the EU's precautionary approach to biotechnology. The governing bodies of the EU completely overrode opposition from the organic movement.

North American organic farmers have coexisted with GMOs for over 20 years. Europe has been an important source of uncontaminated organic and identity preserved seed for North American organic farmers.

On December 3, negotiators from the European Union agreed a new framework for new genomic techniques in plant breeding that exempts many [NGT](#) plants from strict GM rules, with the European Council saying it could help farmers compete globally.

The [framework](#) exempts many NGT plants from the bloc's strict regulations surrounding genetically modified (GM) crops and foods.

It also allows for the easing of rules on foods modified with new genomic techniques, allowing such products to be sold in the future in supermarkets without special labeling.

Patents had been a central dispute, with the European Parliament originally calling for a patent ban to protect farmers' rights while proponents of new genomic techniques argued loosening rules boosts food security and reduces dependency on non-EU suppliers.

NGTs differ because they do not require inserting foreign DNA. The deal preserves farmers' right to save seeds while easing labeling for supermarkets.

The agreement now awaits formal endorsement by the European Parliament and member states in a second-reading step, with agriculture unions supporting it while consumers and critics raise choice and safety concerns.

If enacted, the change could increase adoption of gene-edited crops across the EU.

The agreement must still be endorsed by the parliament and member states in second reading, a step usually considered a formality after such negotiations.

Sources: [Kate Hairsine](#) with DPA, AFP, AP; News from Deutsche Welle via Ground News

NOP & ACA Conference & Training - Albuquerque, NM



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

[Registration information here](#)

January 21 - NOP Certifier Training

January 22- 23 - ACA Conference & Training



IOIA is hosting a **social event for IOIA inspector members** on January 20, late afternoon, at a venue near the Hotel Albuquerque. Appetizers and beverages will be provided.

IOIA is inviting the ACA Fellows (aka apprentices) to join in. **To RSVP Click button**

Mentorship Opportunity

Mentors needed - ACA is conducting a Southwest Organic Workforce Fellowship opportunity for a 9-month mentorship program for aspiring organic inspectors in or strong ties to the Southwest TOPP region (Arizona • California • Hawaii • Nevada • New Mexico • Texas • Utah). Due to overwhelming positive response, the application process for the fellowships has closed. ACA succeeded in their goal to identify fellows for the program, and acceptance messages have been sent out to the selected applicants. Included in the fellowship is a full conference tuition waiver and travel stipend for the Albuquerque ACA conference.

Now, to find the mentors! This is a paid mentoring opportunity over the period December 2025 - August 2026. Mentors will be asked to support the fellows through 3 to 5 inspections. If you are interested in serving, or just would like to know more, please email fellowship@accreditedcertifiers.org.

This project is supported through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP).

News from Canada

Review of Canadian Organic Standards released! The Technical Committee Voted Yes

32 votes of 35 are positive.

A major milestone has been reached—the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture of the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) has voted: the version of the Canadian Organic Standards submitted for a vote on October 31 has been adopted by a large majority of the Technical Committee’s voting members.

The OFC, which has administered the CGSB revision process since 2023 in accordance with CGSB procedures, is pleased with the result; 32 of the 35 Technical Committee members voted in favor, and 3 members voted against CAN/CGSB-32.310 and CAN/CGSB-32.311. However, the negative votes and comments must be resolved before the final version of the COS can be established. The Working Group Chairs will meet to evaluate and resolve negative comments and submit recommendations to the Technical Committee members.

The analysis of a complex comment that requires in-depth research by the Working Group and the Technical Committee may be postponed to the next revision cycle.

The Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) is working closely with the CGSB to analyze the comments and complete the revision work as soon as possible. Stay tuned! *Organic Federation of Canada website, December 2025*

COR Processing course, September 29 - October 3

Led by IOIA veteran trainer Garry Lean, five course participants from Canada took the Live Online COR Processing course. A very interesting group of people participated, including a retired organic dairy farmer, a product development consultant, a quality assurance manager of a certified organic chocolate maker, a food safety auditor, and a compliance specialist at a certified organic operation, who was taking the course to strengthen internal procedures.



Sorry, no group photo!



Kym Snarr

COR Crop course video debuting in March

IOIA accredited inspector member Kym Snarr organized the COR field trip/inspection video in Ontario. Jessica Foote of Lunar Rhythm Farms hosted. Farming with horses adds a special touch to the charm of the farm and to the video. Graduate film student Shinowa Okumura, our videographer, worked with Kim 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!



Jessica Foote, whose farm features in the new video



Committee News

Membership/Nominating Committee

Thanks to Terrance Layhew and Justin Hurley, we will have a robust slate of great candidates to carry on the work of the IOIA board. Election will be administered through the online voting platform Election Runner. Deadline for nominations is December 20. This committee is also seeking members interested in growing IOIA membership and/or membership benefits.

Scholarship Committee

The committee revamped all forms and application process for 2024-2025 and continued refining for 2025-2026. We are pleased that we have 8 reviewing members plus a historian, board liaison, and staff. It's all running very smoothly. We are also pleased to welcome our first committee chair from Latin America, Veronica Ledesma Marquez. There were 11 applicants for the 3 awards this year you can read about the recipients on the following page.

Ethics Committee - Thank you Brian Baker!

After chairing the Ethics committee in 2024/25, committee chair Brian Baker will be stepping down from that position in 2026. In his resignation letter, he shared, "Our work to update the Codes and Policies followed by organic inspectors has served the entire organic community. I see the lack of complaints as a sign that our work has been effective in creating a culture among IOIA members that values ethical behavior and good conduct". Brian will stay with IOIA as Inspector Emeritus member and is planning to spend more time as a researcher and consultant. Thank you, Brian, for your diligence and enthusiasm in your work with the Ethics committee!

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)

Board of Directors / Full Board Meeting THURSDAY - July 31, 2025 - 6-8 p.m. EDT by Zoom

- Members Present:** Joe Ward (JW), Justin Hurley (JH), Allan Benjamin (AB), Margarito Cal (MC), Rhea Epp (RE), Wendy Paulsen (WP), Janine Gibson (JG). Regrets: Kathe Purvis (KP), Secretary. Others: Margaret Scoles, ED. JW Chaired the meeting.
- Bylaws Amendment:** MS: Good news – in ED report, 56 votes, we needed 38 for quorum. 55 yes, one abstain. Motion to accept the vote to amend the bylaws, thank the Bylaws Committee for their good work, and direct the ED to implement on website. All in favor.
- 2nd Qtr. Financials & Treasurer's Report with End-of-Year Projection:** AB: Treasurer's report: Revenue and Expense: consistent, close to projections. Motion to accept report. All in favor.
- Enterprise Car Rental Proposal - Member Benefit:** Enterprise does not want to change the language of the contract. Wait for the attorney's response.
- Insurance Benefit for members via Farm Bureau:** JW: Good discussion with Farm Bureau in Minnesota (where IOIA is incorporated) who says we can couple with BCBS. Waiting for clarification from BCBS. There may be errors & omissions liability and business insurance possibly too.
- Ethics Committee Appointments:**
 - MS: 6 people willing to continue serving for one more year (will term out in 2026).
 - There can be 10 inspector members.
 - Additional Yes(s) if appointed would term out in 2027. Motion to appoint Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, Pam Sullivan, Harriet Behar, Jennie Clifford to a two year term. And notify the others to stand by for next year. All approved.



Past board chairs Brian Magaro and Rachel Myers connecting in Pennsylvania

Minutes continued on page 18

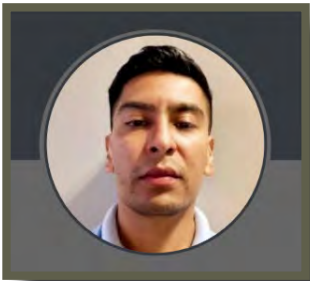
2025-2026 Career Development Awards Announced



Andrew Rutherford Career Development Award - Moetaz Mahdy Ali, Egypt

With extensive experience in inspections and certification processes since 2019, I have conducted over 300 inspections across various standards for firms, farms, and export offices. My expertise has enabled me to provide official training and consultations to inspectors and clients on certification procedures. I possess a strong background in quality control, farm management, and a deep understanding of multiple standards, which has allowed me to serve as a consultant for numerous organizations. My career has honed my attention to detail, problem-solving skills, and ability to communicate complex regulations in practical terms for farmers and businesses. Passionate about organic practices, I am committed to making meaningful contributions to the organic community on a global scale.

The training I seek will further strengthen my technical knowledge of organic standards, regulations, and auditing techniques. It will also help me build a professional network, access new opportunities, and develop a training system for other inspectors. Ultimately, I aim to apply these insights to support farmers and businesses in achieving organic certification, advancing the organic movement, and fostering sustainable agricultural practices.



Organic Community Career Development Award Ricardo Garcia Tapia, Mexico

My name is Ricardo García Tapia, and I coordinate over 50 producers at Mercado el 100, ensuring strict compliance with organic production guidelines. As an organic inspector, I verify that each production unit meets regulations, advise producers, and promote sustainable, ethical, and traceable practices. After completing my training, I will dedicate time to thorough and continuous inspections, supporting producers in improving their processes and guaranteeing product integrity.

Over the next five years, my goals include strengthening our producer network, incorporating new units with business potential, and expanding sustainable markets locally and regionally. Receiving the OCI award would allow me to replicate these experiences across Latin America, sharing knowledge, promoting organic certification, and helping new producers meet international standards.

I am passionate about becoming an organic inspector because I believe my work directly contributes to the growth of the organic movement. My experience includes implementing traceability systems, training emerging producers, and reinforcing sustainable agricultural practices. My strengths—organization, empathy, and leadership—help me build effective working relationships. I am committed to continuous improvement, updating my knowledge in regulations, communication, and team coordination. Even without the scholarship, I would pursue IOIA training, convinced that education is key to advancing organic production in the region.



Reynaldo De la Rosa Memorial Career Development Award Ana Gabriela Calderon Gutierrez, Mexico

Over the next five years, my professional goal is to consolidate and expand the Mercado El 100 model regionally and nationally, amplifying its economic, social, and environmental impact. I plan to replicate best practices, include more producers in organic certification and agroecological transition, and develop digital tools to enhance direct sales and traceability. Education in food sovereignty, responsible consumption, and sustainable entrepreneurship will be central, alongside fostering social inclusion and community participation through new cultural experiences.

I aspire to become a reference in sustainable food systems by sharing our experiences at international forums and building partnerships to scale the model. Training will be a key strategy, focusing on strengthening the skills of our team, producers, and collaborators. Through programs in agroecology, organic certification, business management, and digital tools, we will professionalize participants and help them adapt to a competitive, sustainable environment.

Additionally, I will promote collaborative learning and mentorships to encourage innovation, ensuring everyone involved contributes to the comprehensive growth of Mercado El 100. My commitment is to cultivate a resilient network that connects producers, consumers, and allies, drives agroecological practices, and supports sustainable growth based on soil health, biodiversity, and food sovereignty.

Live Online Basic Courses, Summer/Fall 2025



Online Basic NOP Crop Inspection training

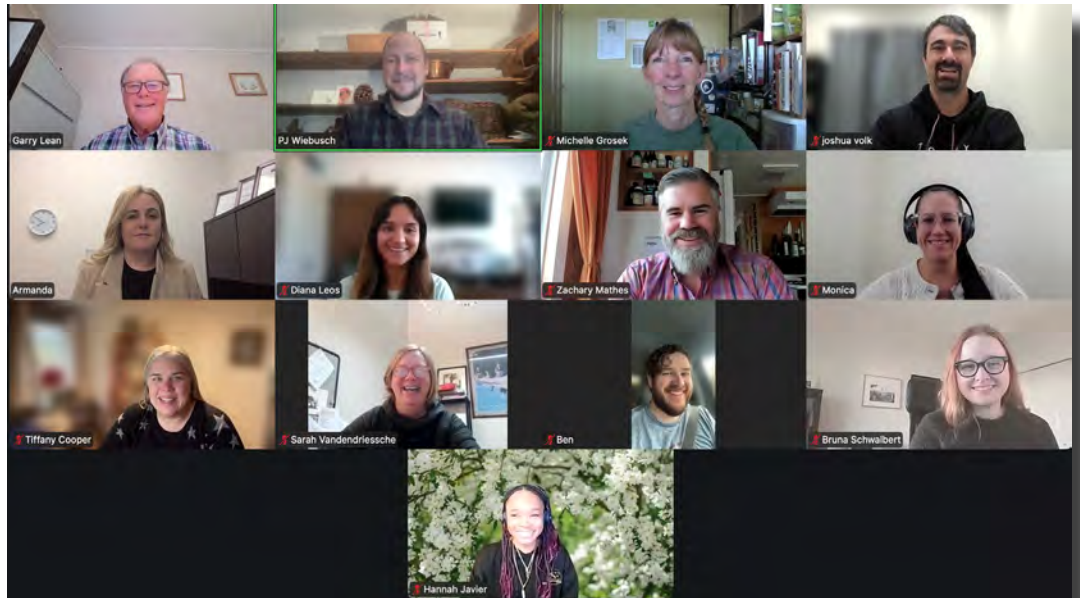
August 18 - 22

Trainers:
Garry Lean
PJ Wiebusch

Online Basic NOP Process Inspection Training

November 3 - 7

Trainers:
Garry Lean
PJ Wiebusch



Online Basic NOP Crop Inspection Training

November 18 - 21

Trainers:
PJ Wiebusch
Nate Powell Palm

Training moves from California Rodale Center in Camarillo to Ventura

With IOIA, the show always goes on! When IOIA experienced extra-heavy registration for a scheduled live online training November 17-21, coupled with a request from Rodale Institute to have in-person training in California, IOIA responded in three ways. There were so many qualified applicants! Trainers Nate Powell-Palm and PJ Wiebusch accepted 12 participants for the Live Online course; the usual limit is 10. Trainer Garry Lean agreed to add a small training for the extra 5 applicants. Garth Kahl and Margaret Scoles paired up for in-person training in California.

Rodale requires IOIA training for their agronomy consultants and prefers in-person training. Rodale staff from PA, ID, NC traveled to join one from the local area; they made up the majority of course participants. Once all of the applicants were vetted and divided up into one of the 3 options, a last wrinkle appeared. A California participant traveling to Camarillo came down ill, though not too ill to complete the online course. To keep everyone well, the Powell-Palm and Wiebusch team made space for her to their already very full course. Everyone stayed well, and everyone successfully completed the course.

Accommodation of 25 participants wasn't the end of the story for special circumstances! Flooding the weekend before the training closed the roads into Rodale's Center, and at the last-minute the training moved to the Saticoy Food Hub. The course was delivered in a tiny conference room amid the distribution of food items through the community fridge, packing for mobile markets, and AmeriCorps interns. The interns enjoyed our surplus lunch food! Special thanks to Daniel Chavez of Rodale for making this a painless switch and to our Training Coordinator who re-routed catered lunches. Although it rained almost every day, the clouds cleared for an extraordinary blue sky field trip day to King and King Ranch. Newly certified in 2025 by CCOF, Lan King was an extraordinary and patient host. After a successful practice inspection, we were invited to partake in a treat - fresh pomegranates picked from their bushes. Veteran inspector/trainer Garth even produced a Tide stick for the pomegranate stains. One night, the entire group made it out for a special farm to table dinner at the Onyx Bistro, which sources local and organic foods. The field trip debrief and report writing assignment followed the next day. Both trainers and course participants said they were very glad to do the course in-person, proving that this format is still alive and well with IOIA.



Maple Syrup Certification - An outline of key OCPs

Guest Technical Article by Claire Ackroyd

Maple syrup inspections present some unique and interesting challenges. I have conducted inspections in the industrial-size operations along Maine's northwestern border with Quebec for many years, and have encountered most of them.

Canada Produces 72% of global maple syrup (US is 20%) and 90% of Canadian production is in Quebec*. The Canadian Organic Regime has specific standards for maple syrup, but under the USDA/NOP, maple is treated as a specialty crop - as are, for example, honey, mushrooms and seaweed - and accredited certifiers have developed their own guidelines. Maple trees may be certified to the Wild Crop scope or to the Crop scope, and where the COR specifies materials that are allowed or prohibited, certifiers in the US must refer to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (Subpart G, NOP 205.600-205.607)

In either situation, syrup inspections have two distinct parts - the sugar bush and sap collection systems, and the camp itself where the sap is converted to syrup. Organic control points include the following.

- In large operations, the trees may stretch for miles, with remote pump stations and extensive line installations to carry sap to the sugar house. An inspector is responsible for verifying that tapping standards, land requirements and tree health standards are compliant.
- Pump houses and sap collection systems present opportunities for contamination from open sap tanks and cleaning materials.
- Pre-filtering. Producers may use cloth and/or sand filters ahead of the reverse osmosis step - also requiring compliant cleaning protocols.
- Reverse osmosis. A sophisticated process that concentrates sap prior to evaporation. Verifying care and cleaning of the membranes is an important element of an inspection. Note that smaller producers may not have R/O systems.
- Evaporation - where the concentrated sap is boiled until the desired brix (sugar concentration) is reached. Check cleaning methods and materials for the evaporator pans. Defoamers added to the sap must be organic, plant-derived products. Note here that the COR does not permit the use of air injection into the evaporating sap, but is allowed under the NOP guidelines provided the air intake location is not a contamination risk.
- Final filtering. In larger operations, diatomaceous earth is added to the syrup and then filtered out through a large press, to remove nitre and other debris from the finished syrup. Filters are typically single-use but re-useable cloth filters, if used, are also subject to cleaning regulations.
- Packing and storage. Most producers pack syrup into bulk barrels, for wholesale shipment or for storage prior to re-packing or processing into value-added products. The composition and condition of the barrels are subject to inspection. Note here that non-retail containers must display lot numbers and organic status of the product. Record keeping in large maple syrup operations where the final product is sold wholesale in bulk is typically very straightforward. Production records include tapping records, with dates and tap counts for installation and removal, cleaning logs, input receipts and production logs. Audit exercises are similarly uncomplicated. Correctly labeled barrels will track to daily production logs and total barrel count will match wholesale purchase records.



IOIA launched our new 250-level Maple Syrup Inspection webinar on December 3, delivered over 3 hours by John Welton and Claire Ackroyd, both of Maine, the heart of maple country. Ten participants took it, including a learning assessment, and all successfully earned certificates. IOIA paid for development of the training materials and plans to offer this as a live webinar every 1 to 2 years. Also under discussion - the idea to extend accessibility by converting it into a self-directed learning module.

See page 16 for more about Claire Ackroyd's books "*Murder in the Maple Woods*" and "*Body in the Blueberry Barrens*". "*Maple Woods*" is a riveting mystery and highly educational for those not familiar with maple sap harvesting and maple making.

Where producers process syrup into value-added products such as maple cream or candy - or into smaller retail units - inspections follow guidelines for any processed or re-packed product.

Demand for maple syrup is increasing and, although sugar maple forests face threats from climate change, the need for organic inspections can be expected to grow. The challenges faced by inspectors and certifiers are dictated largely by the fact that producers have to locate their operations where sugar maples naturally occur, however remote that may be. Add to that the season for tapping trees - late winter, when travel and working conditions can be at their worst! Despite that, I have found great pleasure in understanding the skills and hard work it takes to produce this unique and - to my mind - magical product. *Producteurs et productrices acéricoles du Québec

질량 균형 고급 교육

Mass Balance Advanced Training

Republic of Korea

Jillyang gyunhyeong gogeup gyoyuk

By Yunhee, Isidor Training Institute

November 20, 2025



Our training was held in November 2025 in Chungju South Korea. It was an advanced course providing organic inspectors knowledge and skills of mass balance for all sectors of agriculture, livestock and processing. Isidor and 14 participants had a successful course after the last training that was held a few years ago.

In South Korea, inspectors have few opportunities to acquire international inspection techniques. This is because organic inspections are centered on pesticide residue analysis and do not require advanced skills in evaluating production processes and management systems such as mass balance. Furthermore, the association of CB's, with strong support from the authorities, provides training to inspectors at low cost. This environment has made it difficult for the basic and advanced courses offered by IOIA to gain traction.

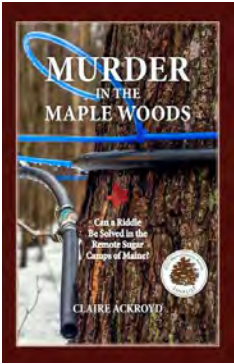
Isidor frequently cannot fill the training quota and has to cancel. In fact, this training was planned for two sessions, but one was canceled.



However, the need for IOIA training has not disappeared. Some highly professional inspectors are eager to learn and master international techniques for evaluating organic systems. It is IOIA's mission to provide systematic training for these individuals, and IOIA will continue its efforts to educate high-quality inspectors.



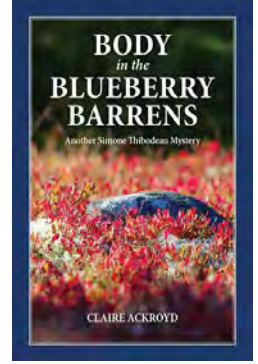
Life after Inspecting - Inspectors as Authors



Claire Ackroyd Delivers Second Mystery Novel

Claire Ackroyd's books - *Murder in the Maple Woods* and *Body in the Blueberry Barrens* grew out of her work as an organic inspector in Maine. They combine the intrigue of 'whodunit' mysteries with depictions of the lives of the producers of these iconic products are two 'whodunits'.

In *Murder in the Maple Woods*, the protagonist and amateur sleuth, an organic inspector, uses her knowledge of the audit exercises for maple syrup certification to unravel the mystery of a boy's death in the remote maple woods of northwestern Maine. The sequel, *Body in the Blueberry Barrens* takes a look at conflicts between conventional and organic producers of the wild lowbush blueberries in Downeast Maine.



Both books can be found at www.claireackroyd.com or <https://maineauthorspublishing.com/>



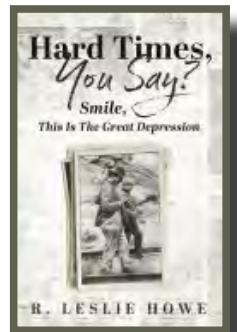
Review of *Hard Times, you say? Smile, this is the Great Depression* Reviewer Sean Patrick Tracy - OnlineBookClub.org

Bob Howe started his career as an organic inspector at the age of 65, and after he retired at age 85 he reported that it was the best job he'd ever had. Now in his 90's, Bob is still going strong, offering up this latest historical novel among his many other writings.

"*Hard Times, you say? Smile, this is the Great Depression*" by R. Leslie Howe is a historical fiction novel set during the Great Depression, beginning with the 1929 stock market crash. The story centers on Michael, a finance graduate who faces unemployment and hardship. He befriends Gunther, a disabled literature graduate, and together they endure labor work, confront adversity, and form a deep bond through shared struggles, including a violent encounter with a local ruffian.

Their journey leads them to Syracuse, where they live as "Hobos," finding camaraderie and work with a bakery owner, Richey. In Shanty Town, Olean, they receive support from Leo and Gretta, further highlighting the era's sense of community. Themes of love and resilience are woven throughout: Michael's romance with Celia, Leo's daughter, and Gunther's relationship with Pauline (Daisy), who is entangled in mafia conflicts, add emotional depth and tension.

The novel excels in character development, especially the friendship between Michael and Gunther, whose loyalty and courage are tested repeatedly. The depiction of hobo life and solidarity is vivid and engaging.



The Latest Novel from T Layhew

IOIA inspector Terrance Layhew has authored several novels, each with a unique blend of adventure, mystery, and historical intrigue. His most recent work is entitled **Diamonds in Denver: A Mitch Mayhew Story**. When pilot Mitch Mayhew takes a job ferrying a mysterious woman out of the Rockies, he doesn't expect bullets, betrayal, or a diamond necklace worth more than his soul. But in the glittering speakeasies and back alleys of 1920's Denver, every gem casts a long shadow... and someone will kill to own it.

Previous novels include **Reason and Romance**: First in this series, published in 2022, it follows the story of Mitch Mayhew, a former pilot with a war-tested heart and a wallet full of IOUs; **Unwanted Passenger**: A historical thriller set in the 1920's, where Mitch Mayhew is roped into flying a sealed envelope to the Denver Meadows Gang; and **One Man's Treasure**: This standalone novel continues Mitch's adventures in the Prohibition-era Midwest.

Layhew's books are available for purchase on various platforms, including Amazon and ThriftBooks. You can also check out T's site: <https://terrancelayhew.com/>



Remembering Organic Pioneers



Remembering Fred Kirschenmann

by Dan Imhoff, Wild Farm Alliance Board President

In late September, the sustainable agriculture movement lost an exemplary leader when Fred Kirschenmann passed away. Fred was known for his easy smile and expansive vision—one in which agriculture co-exists in balance with wild nature. Born into a farming family, he dedicated his life to the challenges of being both a conservationist and a large-scale grain farmer. Inspired by Aldo Leopold, Fred believed humanity's greatest challenge was to find our place in the biotic community, not to control the land.

“Clearly every farmer knows that wildlife can be damaging to your farm,” Fred once said. “But on balance, the wildlife can also eat enormous amounts of insects. So the question is, how do we manage the system to not only provide a place for wildlife, but to create a habitat so that they're there to do other services for us.”

Fred served as director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture for 20 years, mastering biological farming methods and agricultural economics. He earned a Ph.D. in religion and philosophy from the University of Chicago. Reading *A Sand County Almanac* as an undergraduate in the 1950s inspired him to champion a new consciousness around land use. For Fred, organic agriculture was just the beginning of that change.

In his essay “Tame and Wild,” co-authored with David Gould, Fred wrote: “Organic agriculture must begin to reinvest itself in terms of landscape ecologies. If we are to be successful as organic farmers, long term, we cannot ignore the intricate and complex ecological processes of nature which sustain the whole ecosystems of which our farms are a part.”

Fred was a mentor, collaborator, and a low-key high-quality human being. He was a long-serving advisory board member of the Wild Farm Alliance. He wrote the Foreword to *Farming with the Wild* and the Preface to two editions of *Food Fight: A Citizen's Guide to the Food and Farm Bill*.



Michael Sligh passed away peacefully on November 7, 2025, leaving a legacy of fairness, compassion, and progress in sustainable agriculture. A visionary leader in organic farming, Michael Sligh played pivotal roles at the International Organic Accreditation Services (IOAS), serving on the Accreditation Committee from 2000, joining the board in 2003, and leading as President for the last decade. His commitment extended to the Alliance for Organic Integrity since 2019, and he regularly contributed to *The Organic Standard*, helping relaunch TOS in 2023 and sharing his expertise through several articles.

Known for his inclusive leadership, Michael Sligh was deeply respected for his kindness, intelligence, and unwavering dedication to the greater good. He helped establish organizations and committees focused on environmental and social justice worldwide, including the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, National Organic Coalition, Domestic Fair Trade Association, Agricultural Justice

Project, and co-creator of the Food Justice Certified label.

For nearly 30 years, Michael Sligh served as a program director for the Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA (RAFI), leading coalitions such as the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. As RAFI's Just Foods Program Director for 29 years, he was a driving force behind the National Organic Program and a champion for small and mid-scale farmers. He excelled at building coalitions and turning shared values into collective action. Colleagues remember him as a forefather of organic standards, a mentor, and a source of inspiration for policy advocacy.

He helped establish Southern SARE and was a voice for farmers in every Farm Bill debate. Active internationally, Michael Sligh participated in the IFOAM Organic World Congress and served on the IOAS Accreditation Board. Even after retiring, Michael Sligh remained passionate about organic agriculture until illness intervened in early 2025. Grounded in his love for the earth and those who cultivate it, he united communities, coordinated farmer-to-farmer initiatives, and inspired countless colleagues with his humanity and storytelling. He will be greatly missed.

IOIA remembers Fred as our first keynote at the IOIA Annual Meeting in 1993 and again in 2011. Michael did the same in 2020. They were both gentle giants and our community will miss their wise counsel. ~ Margaret

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights - *(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website) - Continued from page 10*

7. Workforce Development RFP Draft Proposal Review: Proposal will go in on Monday. Agreed we don't have enough data (but we know there are probably less than 1000 inspectors out there). Message in Needs Assessment is we need more inspectors and we there will be 58% turnover in the next 5 years. We don't think that people who are not inspectors can turn out inspectors.

Board of Directors / Full Board Meeting THURSDAY – August 21, 2025 - 6-8 p.m. EDT by Zoom

1. **Members Present:** Justin Hurley (JH), Kathe Purvis (KP), Allan Benjamin (AB), Margarito Cal (MC), Rhea Epp (RE), Wendy Paulsen (WP), Janine Gibson (JG). Regrets: Joe Ward (JW). Others: Margaret Scoles, ED.
2. **Financial Check-in:** Alan spoke to annotated budget vs actual as presented by MS. Training revenues are not as strong as anticipated but four months till end of year and some good training options ahead as well as a potential funding revenue project recently commenced. Cosponsor managed training is underperforming so far this year. Self-directed training revenue will improve in 2026 on a new, cheaper platform.
3. **Proposal for ACA session in Albuquerque:** MS was encouraged by the BoD to deliver a session. MS is balancing the benefits (discount on event fee) and visibility for IOIA Training Program.
4. **Certifier Cohort:** MS notes six certifiers have agreed to participate in the cohort, hopes for at least three meetings before the end of the year.
5. **Mentorship:** MS will act as consultant for \$5000 remuneration to assist on the ACA mentorship guide (funded by FAFO). MS has requested and obtained confirmation from ACA for co-branding on the Guide.
6. **Appoint Scholarship Committee Chair:** MS spoke regarding a candidate for Scholarship Committee Chair (Veronica Marquez Ledesma). The Bod discussed appointing the candidate for a one-year term as Scholarship Committee chair. This committee manages our career development program in a robust system. RE notes the benefit of an international chair. Moved that the candidate be appointed as IOIA Scholarship Committee Chair for a one-year term. All in favor.
7. **ED Report:** IFOAM has completed a review of the IFOAM Manual, asking for an up-to-date addition of the IFOAM Principles, and recommending numerous other edits in the IFOAM references. Next step will be to set up a QR code for electronic access to the manuals, pending agreement by IFOAM as co-copyright holder.

Board of Directors / Full Board Meeting THURSDAY – September 18, 2025 - 6-8 p.m. EDT by Zoom

1. **Attendance:** All members present, plus ED. Joe Ward chaired.
2. **Follow-up to meeting with J. Tucker** All participants in the JT meeting thought it was productive and insightful. The BoD reconfirmed our key mission being the training and support of organic inspectors as an independent organization. JT tentatively agreed to work with IOIA by providing an NOP update for the online advanced training early in 2026. IOIA has reengaged with the commitment to a meeting with JT every second month. Best time might be same day as BoD meetings. AB suggests that we prepare for future meetings with more specific questions. The BoD looks forward to improving communications with the NOP and to more direct first-person contact. MS to contact JT and propose times.
 - Nate Powell-Palm (NPP) joined the meeting. He spoke to the Washington Organic Week event. The community is hoping for more action from IOIA. IOIA must quickly decide what to do and where to take the feedback coming from the cohort to maintain confidence. There are now other organizations, with funding, who are moving into the same space as IOIA. Funding may be directed to writing free inspector training curriculum. NPP and MS discussed best time to meet for the agreed quarterly meeting, as a standing meeting with the entire BoD invited, supported by informal meetings with JW & MS. NPP urged IOIA BoD to revisit the strategic plan and develop a targeted plan that can be used to confirm the robustness and pertinent direction of IOIA.
3. **Set 2026 Membership Dues:** JG agrees with the ED to leave the dues schedule as is, noting that the dues were raised in 2024. JW suggests that by retaining the dues in the current structure we give the members a benefit in a tight year. MS notes that many of the inspectors whom IOIA peer evaluates are not IOIA members, and expressed hope that the dues do not increase, to retain the members we have. JG moves that the dues are left the way they are for 2026, All in favor. MS confirmed that after this meeting the invoices for 2026 dues will be created and issued. All in favor.
4. **NOSB Fall Meeting (IOIA participation, Letters of Support, and Focus of Comments):** MS notes that there is a high

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

level of support for IOIA, lapses in support may relate to less personal attendance at events by the IOIA ED in recent years. JW notes that IOIA needs to clearly and concisely present what IOIA has accomplished as an experienced, independent, unbiased organization. MS spoke to the letters of support for two candidates Beth Rota (QCS) and April Vasquez (CCOF) for the certifier position. AB moves and JG seconds that Margaret issue the letters of support for the two candidates. Motion accepted. MS states that a comment regarding the proposed USDA NOP Handler standard would be appropriate. MS notes that the NOSB appointments will be very important as a third of the NOSB Board members will be replaced with this appointment round. The BoD confirmed support for MS to progress comment as ED.

5. **IOIA's proposal for session at Albuquerque:** MS noted the support of WP in developing a session and the value in promotion and networking. JH will attend this event.
6. **ED Report:** MS spoke to office renovations, the work put into this by the contractors and the very good outcome, supported by a \$5000 grant. Losing the RFP bid was disappointing. JW spoke on a positive note, citing IOIA achievements and confirming MS as instrumental in moving IOIA forward. KP notes that the basic plan is sound but not yet converted into concise documents that could be used in marketing and to inform stakeholders. JG notes that we already have the Annual report as a document commending what IOIA has achieved. This could be part of outreach for funding drives. MS notes that this may require additional capacity to progress and describes some current ideas raised by NPP.

Board of Directors / Full Board Meeting

THURSDAY – October 16, 2025 - 6-8 p.m. EDT by Zoom

1. **Attendance:** Joe Ward (JW), Allan Benjamin (AB), Justin Hurley (JH), Margarito Cal (MC), Wendy Paulsen (WP) Others: Margaret Scoles, Executive Director (MS). **Quorum** confirmed. Kathe, Rhea, Janine (arrived late) not in attendance. In absence of the Secretary, WP offers to take minutes.
2. **Financial Check-in: Moved** to accept Treasurer's report and 3rd Quarter Financials. All in favor.
3. **Strategic Plan Review & Process:** Plan was approved Jan 2022. In 2023 made fundraising a bigger focus. Total IOIA 2020 budget was approximately \$1 million, now we are closer to \$0.5 million. The landscape has changed; membership retention has been a problem. The Strategic Plan was based on three main objectives: (1) Training, (2) Membership, and (3) Operations. JG - Strategic plan has to have budget associated with it. Noted that the Strategic Plan led to adding the business development director position. JW – Have a meeting, is to set out parameters and determine what areas will affect us quickly, with the greatest positive impact. AB: any plans miss the mark, strategic planning should be done, but it is not a priority. It can be clear and concise. He would like to see a couple projects as an outcome. WP - points out NPP asked for a very clear and concise strategic plan he can use to market IOIA. JW - One initial virtual meeting to focus on implementing a maximum of 5 bullet points. MS will send out link to Strategic Plan. Board members should read Plan. Shared google doc – each Board Member should list out up to 5 bullet points for what our strategic plan / mission should be for the discussion. Clear instructions and timeline for completion will be important. There will be a ranking mechanism so each BOD member can rank what seems priority to them. MS meet with JW/JH to review what everyone lifted from the Plan. Idea is to come up with 5 bullet points to move organization forward. MS will send out meeting time options.
4. **AGM:** MS is planning free annual meetings and training in a modular, webinar training on different days where the experts are less presenters, but more there to answer questions, minimizing preparation. Feb was preferred month by members. Agreed to use: **February 19, 2026** for the AGM. Late afternoon US time.
8. **OCIA Impartiality committee request:** IOIA will propose a non-IOIA inspector to assist. JW will serve.



IOIA's newest BOD member Wendy Paulsen, Minnesota, eating garden grown dried ratatouille on Shade Lake, Quetico Provincial Park, Ontario this fall. Wendy works for MCIA as a staff Certification Specialist/Inspector, and has inspected for 20+ years.



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

*Training -
It's What We Do!*

KEEP IOIA STRONG – LEND YOUR STRENGTH AND GET INVOLVED!

2026 Calendar

January 9-10 [Practical Farmers of Iowa](#), Des Moines, IA

January 13 - 14 NOSB Virtual Meeting, see page 6 for details

January 20 Inspector Social and Networking at ACA Conference, Albuquerque, NM. See page 8 for more info.

January 21 - 23 [ACA Summit and NOP Certifier Training, Albuquerque, NM](#)

January 21 - 24 46th [Eco-Farm Conference](#), Asilomar, California

January 21-26 [Northern Plains Food and Farming Conference](#), Aberdeen, South Dakota

January 27 - 28 [45th Guelph Organic Conference, Guelph, Ontario](#)

January 30-31 Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK) [Annual Organic Farming Conference](#), Frankfort, KY

February 10 - 11 [High Plains Organic Conference](#), Laramie, WY

February 10 - 13 [Biofach Trade Fair](#), Nuremberg, Germany

February 13 - 15 [OEFFA Farm Show](#), Newark, OH

February 19 [IOIA AGM - online](#)

February 20 - 22 [CHFA NOW Natural Organic Wellness conference & trade show](#), Vancouver, B.C.

February 26 - 28 [37th Marbleseed Conference, La Crosse Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin](#)

February 28 [NOFA/MASS Winter Conference](#), UMASS, Amhearst, MA

March 3 - 6 [Natural Products Expo West](#), Anaheim, CA

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