

NOP Clarifies Certification of Crop Container Systems

The USDA National Organic Program (NOP) clarified that the 3-year transition requirement applies to all container systems built and maintained on land. A lack of clarity regarding the USDA's policy has meant that some certifiers have allowed container-based operations to become certified without a three-year transition period after the application of prohibited substances. For example, weed barriers may have been put down, herbicide used. Then containers sat on the weed barrier, or perhaps no herbicide was used, but less than 3 years had passed since transition began.

According to the NOP's June 3 memo, certifiers must "assess land use histories for container system sites, just as they would for an in-ground soil-based system." If a prohibited substance is applied to the land at the farm site, then the operation must undergo a three-year transition period before the crops can be sold or labeled as organic.

Since March, National Organic Coalition, Organic Farmers Association, Organic Trade Association and many other groups urged the NOP to clarify that all organic operations will be required to undergo the same three-year transition period after an application of a

prohibited substance. This NOP memo, signed by Deputy Administrator Jenny Tucker, was generally applauded across much, though not all, of the community, as a win for organic integrity.

All new container systems that have not yet been certified will be required to follow this policy, but it will not apply retroactively to certified operations and sites that became certified without undergoing a three-year transition period.



Photo credit: therealorganic.com

Example given in the memo:

- A container operation is proposed to be constructed on land and that was treated with a prohibited substance within the past year. This land would not be eligible for organic production until three years had passed between the application and projected harvest.

To read the full memo, go to <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2019-Certifiers-Container-Crops.pdf>

Unfortunately, this clarification still has fuzzy edges. The NOSB has already asked the NOP for additional clarification. The memo is limited to container systems defined as "includes container, hydroponic, and other plant pot-based systems", with or without soil as the growing media. This seems to leave some ambiguity about systems

See Containers, page 4

Notes from the Chair

by Lois Christie

Thank you all for taking the time to read the Newsletter! I sometimes hear from members and non-members that IOIA does not give enough back to make the membership fees worthwhile. I couldn't disagree more. First and foremost is our support of the industry and organic agriculture. We, as inspectors, are a key part of the organic certification process, IOIA played a big part in the inspection process for most of us -- giving us our first trainings and assisting in advanced trainings and webinars in our continued education efforts.

An important part of my membership with IOIA is the advanced trainings and the networking aspect it brings to what can be very isolating work. The contacts and friendships I have made through these See Notes, page 4

Welcome New Members

New Inspectors

Angela K. Jackson, Vermillion, S.D.
 Mario Fernando Melchor Vila, Oaxaca, MEXICO
 Cara Smiley, New Haven, VT

**Supporting Members
 Upgrading to Inspectors**

John Siebert, Walnut Creek, CA

Returning Inspector Members

Maria Regina Cosenza Zea, Guatemala
 Rosalind Hobart, Clarksburg, Ontario, CANADA

Supporting Individuals

Rhyne Cureton, Charlotte, N.C.
 Richard Fero, Fort Myers, FL
 Ellen Jackson, New Milford, PA
 Samuel Malriat, Kutztown, PA
 Jeffrey Mass, La Mirada, CA
 Courtney Mudge, Austin, TX
 Brandon Mullis, Winter Haven, FL
 Kathryn Poppiti, Kennett Square, PA
 Michael Read, Sarasota, FL
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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 [webgal\[at\]ioia.net](mailto:webgal[at]ioia.net)
 Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.

WEBINAR Training Schedule

for details & to register go to: www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html

200 Level Webinar - July 16 & 19

Grower Group Inspection & Certification | Trainer: Luis Brenes
 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Pacific) | Two 2 ½ hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$275

100 Level Webinar - September 3 & 6, 2019

NOP Processing Standard | Trainer: Luis Brenes
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$325

100 Level Webinar - September 17 & 24, 2019

IOIA/COTA COR Processing Standards | Trainer: Kelly Monaghan
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions
 IOIA member cost: \$325, \$300 if also a COTA member

200 Level Webinar - September 25, 2019

IOIA/OMRI NOP Livestock Input Materials | Presenter: Tina Jensen Augustine
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | One 3 hour session
 IOIA member cost: \$275, \$250 if also an OMRI member

300 Level Webinar - September 26, 2019

Fraud Prevention in the Receiving Department | Trainer: Silke Fuchshofen
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | One 3 hour session | IOIA member cost: \$175

100 Level Webinar - October 1 & 4, 2019

NOP Crop Standards | Trainers: Garry Lean & Margaret Scoles
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$325

Webinar Discount Note:

All IOIA Inspector Members are eligible for 1 half-price webinar in 2019.

200 Level Webinar - October 3 & 10, 2019

In/Out Balances and Traceability Tests for Crop Inspection under NOP and COR
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 2 hour sessions | Trainer: Monique Scholz
 IOIA member cost: \$275

100 Level Webinar - October 29 & November 1, 2019

NOP Livestock Standard | Trainer: Garry Lean
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$325

200 Level Webinar - November 8 & 15, 2019

Livestock Feed Audits: Grazing and non-grazing season
 Trainers: Nate Powell-Palm & Jonda Crosby |
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$300

200 Level Webinar - November 13, 2019

IOIA/OMRI NOP Processing Input Materials | Presenter: Tina Jensen Augustine
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) One 3 hour session.
 IOIA member cost: \$275, \$250 if also an OMRI member

200 Level Webinar - December 2 & 9, 2019

Dairy Feed Audits Grazing and Non-Grazing Season
 Trainers: Nathaniel Powell-Palm and Jonda Crosby
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | Two 3 hour sessions | IOIA member cost: \$300

200 Level Webinar - December 3 & 10, 2019

Processing In/Out Balances, Traceability & Recipe Verification under NOP & COR
 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Pacific) Two 2 hour sessions. | Trainer: Kelly Monaghan
 IOIA member cost: \$325

250 Level Webinar - December 12, 2019

Maple Syrup Inspection | Trainer: Monique Scholz
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) | One 3 hour session | IOIA member cost: \$175

On-Site Training Schedule - full details and applications at www.ioia.net

August 2019 - Coralville, Iowa

Crop Inspection Training - August 12-16

Livestock Inspection Training - August 19-23

IOIA Basic Organic Crop and Livestock inspection trainings will be held at Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, Coralville. Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. Nearest Airport is Cedar Rapids, Iowa (CID) - 20 minutes from the Radisson Hotel. For more info or to register, see the IOIA [training page](#). Registration deadline is June 28.

August 26 – 27, 2019 - Coralville, Iowa

IOIA/IDALS/GOA Organic Crop Inspection Field Training

IOIA, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and Global Organic Alliance will sponsor Organic Crop Inspection Field Training in Coralville, Iowa. The Field Training course is designed as a structured apprenticeship for organic inspectors. Participants will work with experienced inspectors to participate in and complete two organic inspections and reports. Participants will be evaluated on their pre-course assignment, participation during the course and their successful completion of two inspection reports. Registration deadline is July 19. [More info on our website.](#)

August 27-30, 2019, Tokyo, Japan, Farm Inspection Course

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor a 4-day Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training using JAS Standards as a reference. The course will be held at Waseda Hoshien, Tokyo, Japan in Japanese language. Please contact JOIA for more info: info@joia-organic.com

September 12 – 13, 2019, Independence, Iowa

IOIA/NICS Organic Livestock Inspection Field Training

IOIA and Nature's International Certification Services (NICS) will sponsor Organic Livestock Inspection Field Training in Independence, Iowa. The Field Training course is designed as a structured apprenticeship for organic inspectors. Participants will work with experienced inspectors to participate in and complete two organic inspections and reports. Participants will be evaluated on their pre-course assignment, participation during the course and their successful completion of two inspection reports. Registration Deadline is August 9. [More info on our website.](#)

October 1 - 4, 2019 Tokyo, Japan, Processing Inspection Course

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor a 4-day Basic Organic Processing Inspection Training using JAS Standards as a reference. The course will be held at Waseda Hoshien, Tokyo, Japan, October 1-4 in Japanese language. Please contact JOIA for more information about this training: info@joia-organic.com

October 7 – 11, 2019 – Frankfort, Kentucky

Organic Crop and Processing Inspection Training

IOIA and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture are developing Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings to run concurrently October 7-11, 2019. Trainings will be held Monday – Friday, at Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort, Kentucky. Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. For more information or to register, see the IOIA [training page](#).

Under Development!

- CCOF and Wild Farm Alliance cosponsored Advanced Training “Assessing Biodiversity and Natural Resources on the Farm” in California in early October.
- Ecocert ICO cosponsored Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings, plus Advanced Training near Indianapolis, Indiana. Basic Trainings run concurrently November 4-8. Advanced training is scheduled for Nov 2 & 3.

Notes, from page 1

annual gatherings are invaluable to me, and it is so wonderful to see many of you, even if only once a year.

The Forum is a great place to learn and seek advice and interact with members around the world. I believe many new inspectors are hesitant to use it, but it is a wonderful resource with many seasoned inspectors participating in responses. The truth is -- there are no stupid questions. We have all been in a position where we feel should know something, but for whatever reason (complications or slightly different scenarios), we are unsure of how to deal with something in our report. Our work is full of these slightly “gray” areas and the Forum is the perfect place to get all your answers, or just assurances that your response was correct. We are implementing a new anonymous option that allows you to ask your questions anonymously and receive responses from our many members.

The Board is working on several projects that will be beneficial to all of us. Highest on our agenda is updating our current website and technology (information management system). Ryan Sitler has given countless hours as a Board member, working with Margaret Scoles, to break down what is needed for the future and to obtain cost estimates. He began the journey when he joined the Board and we are now very close to contracting to begin this project. Our end goal is to have a system up and running when the newly envisioned credentialing system replaces our current accreditation program.

Other membership benefits are the listing in the IOIA Membership Directory, quarterly newsletters, discounts on high-quality trainings

(especially valuable in the on-line trainings and webinars with the membership discounts). Members have access through the Inspector Member Log-In on the IOIA website to business resources, technical resources, and BOD Minutes. Members also have voting rights and can serve on the Board of Directors, which I highly encourage you to consider. It has been an amazing journey for me and I love the participation we have in the industry, including quarterly conversations with Jenny Tucker, Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program; the Policy Committee, which comments on various issues (if and when it is deemed appropriate that IOIA comment); and participation in the NOSB meetings. All of these connections deepen my conviction in what we do. I wish that more inspectors, who are not currently members, could experience what IOIA can do for them, as I have.

And last, but not least, is my deep appreciation for Margaret Scoles and what she does for IOIA. Although I am older than Margaret, I still feel as if she is “Mama Margaret”, in that she was my first trainer and my mentor in 2001 when I began this journey.



Board Chair Lois Christie

Containers, from page 1

that don't fall neatly into that definition. What exactly is a container? Many variations of constructed beds may or may not sit on the soil. Also, many greenhouse operations are split operations with organic and non-organic production in the same area over time, or separate areas at the same time.

Meanwhile, the ACA agreed at their Spring meeting in Seattle to work to define best practices for container production and how these systems can meet the regulations. ACA's Board has worked on a best practices/draft guidance related to container production, but it has not been adopted.

Inspectors should continue to gather information on the past 3 years on all types of greenhouse and container operations including hydroponic and other plant pot-based systems. And always, communicate with the certifier you're representing. This book is probably not closed.

Job Offers - Full info + more on the [Jobs page](#) of our website

OMRI is seeking Contract Inspectors to Inspect OMRI Listed Inputs – California, Midwest, Northeast, Gulf Coast. Visit omri.org/jobs for more info. Positions open until filled.

QCS is hiring a full time staff inspector in the Atlanta, GA area. Respond directly to their ad at indeed.com

QAI is seeking a full time senior organic inspector to perform a wide variety of inspections including complex operations and/or products. Click on [this link](#) for full info.

ACA has an immediate opening for the ACA Executive Director. Qualified candidates are invited to e-mail a resume and cover letter to [aca-employment \[at\] googlegroups.com](mailto:aca-employment[at]googlegroups.com) by July 1, 2019. The full job description [is here](#).

Notes from the ED by Margaret Scoles

Thoughts while killing hemlock

Two weeks ago, I spent a morning at the ranch with my husband. We had worked cattle the day before and discovered an ailing cow, so we needed to go back. I took a shovel. I'd noticed lots of hemlock in the corral. It's poisonous and noxious. It was a gorgeous spring day. Arriving at the ranch, I grabbed my shovel. The work was relatively mindless. My over-active mind wandered. I started thinking how I said to a friend a few years ago, "not sure exactly why we bought a ranch when I was turning 60..." He answered, "Of course you do, it's because when it is gone, it's gone." That was the best articulated reason ever. Taking it on seemed like the most respectful way to acknowledge my grandparents. They married and homesteaded on the line

between the two homesteads. They lived like paupers through the Great Depression and after, so that they could leave a legacy of land. Now I'm hoping that a grandchild will grow up to want to be in agriculture. That would be six generations! As I chopped the 2nd-year hemlock deep to ensure that it wouldn't make seed, I enjoyed the shade of the gigantic boxelder tree that my grandfather had planted. Its sprawling branches can shade 20 cows at once. I remembered the day I saw the western tanager in that tree. I remembered the day that my grandmother warned me (a little girl) of dire consequences if I didn't stay at the house while she milked. She milked a grumpy Hereford/Shorthorn crossbred range cow that didn't like children. The tree by the path to the barn was much smaller then. Lonely waiting, I started down the path to find my grandmother, hoping to meet her coming with her pail of foaming warm milk. Instead, I met the cow face to face. It scared my grandmother and me. I almost flew, in my bare feet, braids, and dress up the trail to get to a safe place.

It felt good to remember my grandparents and to be there, chopping hemlock, thinking of greats like Fred Kirschenmann, Wendell Berry, and others who have influenced me, and how experiences on organic farms changed me. I listened to abundant bird calls, thinking about how birds thrive on organic farms, and how Mother Nature works. The ranch had been damaged by excess prairie dogs for as long as I can remember. The bubonic plague came through last year, and every single one is gone. Just like that. I thought how much richer my life was because I became an inspector and how many good people I'd met along the way. I remembered growers who had taught me important things now 30 years ago and every inspection since. I cheerfully chopped and dug, taking out an occasional burdock. I left those for the cows. Curious horses joined me; the cows didn't notice me. I was comfortable just hearing the background sounds of birds, contented horses, and ruminating cows.

Yesterday, I completed a large ranch inspection with both crops and livestock. The grower was excited to show me the painted lady caterpillars that had arrived in force this year. It was fun taking time during the inspection to see Canadian thistle patches teeming with the caterpillars. Thistle nectar is their favorite food. Of course, they come in force only about every 7 years, so they aren't THE answer to Canadian thistle. But they are ONE answer. I'm glad he hadn't killed all of his thistles with herbicide.

We are fortunate to work in non-toxic environments with farmers who take time from their often-exhausting work to look at the thistle patches, celebrate the butterflies, listen to the birds, and chop their hemlock rather than grabbing the sprayer.

[10 Facts about the painted lady caterpillar](#)

[Hm, they eat soybeans, too](#)



Celebrating organic community in Huatulco, Mexico. Dixie Stark (Margaret's sister)— an avid birder, 2nd from right; Mary Lou Larsen, friend and Minnesota neighbor of Margaret Weigelt, 4th from right with the IOIA BOD.

Our focus is inspectors, but our community is much larger.

Happy Solstice!

SECTOR NEWS

USDA Shares Peer Review Response

NOP has published its response to the [2018 ANSI Peer Review Audit](#). The NOP annual peer review process reflects NOP's commitment to continuous improvement. The peer review evaluates the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) organic accreditation program, and is conducted based on the Handbook document, [Peer Review of National Organic Program Accreditation](#). Independent external auditors determine if the NOP has followed its quality management procedures. The auditors compile results of the review and submit them in a report to the NOP. NOP develops action items that respond to peer review feedback. [View NOP's response](#)

Recent NOP Enforcement Actions

[Fraudulent Organic Certificates](#) Updated, searchable list of fraudulent organic certificates that falsely represent agricultural products as certified organic under the USDA organic regulations.

[Suspensions and Revocations](#) Updates on suspension, revocation and appeal decisions.

[Settlement Agreements](#) Summaries of settlement agreements issued to resolve proposed adverse actions and to bring a certifier or operator into full compliance in a fast and efficient manner.

[Quarterly Report](#) (Jan - Mar 2019) Quarterly report of incoming complaints and appeals, initial actions taken, suspensions, revocations and case dispositions in Q2, FY 2019.

NOP Organic Integrity newsletter, 5/16/2019

Full Implementation of FSMA Delayed

Produce farms regulated under the Food Safety Modernization Act's (FSMA) Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption ("Produce Safety Rule") now have two additional years to comply with the rule's agricultural water requirements, this in response to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) decision to delay this portion of the rule.

<https://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/fsma-water-rule-delayed/>

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), March 15, 2019

Biodiversity Calculator Webinar

The Organic Center webinar on the Biodiversity Calculator is scheduled for Sept. 25th from 1 - 2 pm ET / 10 - 11 am PT. For background information on this compliance tool, check out the Organic Center website: <https://www.organic-center.org/nop-natural-resources-and-biodiversity-conservation-guidance-compliance-tool/>

Montana Scores Big with Hemp

Montana was one of a handful of states to have a fully federally compliant hemp pilot program under the 2014 farm bill. In 2018, Montana grew the most acres of hemp in the United States. With the signing of the 2018 Farm Bill, coupled with several pieces of legislation from earlier this year, Montana is poised to build significantly on those 2018 acres. For more information on Montana's hemp program, visit <https://agr.mt.gov/hemp>

Organic Farming Innovation Award Summit

IFOAM - Organics International has announced that the sixth Organic Farming Innovation Award Summit will be held in Amherst, Massachusetts, USA from August 10 - 11, 2019.

The Organic Farming Innovation Award (OFIA) is the organic movement's prize awarded to highlight organic innovations of scientists, extension agents, and practitioners. OFIA strives to contribute to solving problems, exploring the potential to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of organic farming, as well as improving viability for environment, plants, animals, and human beings.

Once every three years, the Rural Development Administration (RDA) of the Republic of Korea, IFOAM - Organics International, and the IFOAM Technology Innovation Platform (TIPI) use the platform of the Organic World Congress to bestow the Organic Farming Innovation Award to outstanding organic innovators.

OFIA is an initiative of the government of the Republic of Korea in remembrance of the 17th Organic World Congress held in 2011 in its Gyeonggi Province. The OFIA Committee selects Grand Prize and Science Prize winners based on criteria of innovativeness, relevance, applicability, and potential for impact.



To learn more about OFIA, visit <http://www.ifoam.bio/ofia>.



Rural Development Administration

SECTOR NEWS

Big Procedural Win for Animal Welfare Lawsuit

A federal court has agreed with the National Organic Coalition (NOC), the Center for Food Safety, and their allies, that USDA cannot hide communications and documents that led up to the controversial decision to withdraw the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) rule.

The “Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices” rule was sought by organic producers and stakeholders to provide much-needed detail in the standards for organic livestock care, especially outdoor access for egg-laying hens and poultry. A coalition of organic stakeholders — including NOC — has [challenged](#) the withdrawal of these standards as arbitrary and contrary to federal law.

In its [May 6 order](#), the Court held that agencies cannot hide their internal documents leading up to a decision, because these are part of the universe of materials the agency considered. USDA’s internal documents may reveal why the agency took a 180-degree turn from nearly three decades of organic policy and withdrew a rule wanted by the vast majority of the organic community. NOC and other plaintiffs are represented by CFS legal counsel in this lawsuit challenging USDA’s decision to overturn organic animal welfare rules. [Learn more](#).

NOC press release, May, 9 2019

[Earlier this year, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled that the Organic Trade Association has presented solid arguments that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) failure to put into effect new organic livestock standards has caused harm to the organic sector, and the trade association has legal standing to contest the agency’s withdrawal of the rule. - ED.]

Origin of Organic Livestock – Bill Language

The current lack of uniform enforcement by USDA regarding the origin of livestock regulations has resulted in direct economic harm for organic dairy farmers. The organic industry has been requesting clear rules surrounding the transition of livestock to organic production since 2002. In 2015, USDA issued a proposed rule that clarified the regulations around origin of livestock while still allowing a one-time transition of a conventional herd to organic. The comments from the organic industry reflected widespread support for the rule yet USDA failed to publish the final rule. IOIA joined many other organizations in urging USDA to issue a final rule on the origin of organic livestock based on the 2015 proposed rule without further delay in order to prevent further disruption of the marketplace.

Here is the USDA Secretary of Agriculture's response:



USDA Amends National List Sulfur added for Livestock and Handling Material Re-classified

The U.S. Department of Agriculture published a final rule in the Federal Register to amend the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances based on public input and the November 2017 National Organic Standards Board recommendations for livestock and handling.

This final rule:

- Allows elemental sulfur to be used in organic livestock production as a topical treatment to repel mites, fleas and ticks from livestock and their living spaces.
- Reclassifies potassium acid tartrate from a nonagricultural substance to an agricultural substance, requiring handlers to use the organic form when it is commercially available. Potassium acid tartrate is currently listed as a nonorganic ingredient allowed in organic products.

This final rule became effective May 30, 2019.

OTA 2019 Policy Conference - Recap

The 250-plus attendees at the Organic Trade Association's **Bold Ideas + Critical Conversations** conference on May 23 represented the diversity of today's organic sector: organic grain and livestock farmers from Montana, organic fruit and vegetable growers from California and organic dairy producers from the Midwest, national organic brands and small organic businesses, organic certifiers and organic distributors, organic importers and organic exporters, and organic policymakers and organic trendsetters.

Making its debut at the conference was **Coalition Alley**. The Organic Trade Association assembled a broad coalition of partners to connect with the conference attendees about their diverse priorities. What did they have in common? All of the passionate advocates are doing important work to promote the best practices in farming, to educate the public about healthy food and lifestyle choices, and to create sound policy changes to advance agriculture. Participants were American Farmland Trust, Organic Farming Research Foundation, National Farmers Union, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Partnership for a Healthier America, ShiftCon, USDA's National Organic Program and The Organic Center.

Also marking a first at the annual conference was the Organic Trade Association's first-ever **Influencer Program**. Seven widely followed social media influencers were chosen to cover the conference and other activities during Organic Week. The following of these enthusiastic and committed organic activists on Instagram alone totals some 263,000, but their reach and influence go far beyond that.

"We all need to commit to dig in and improve the way the public/private partnership between the government and the organic sector works," Laura Batcha, Executive Director of OTA, told attendees. "We need to keep organic advancing ... All of agriculture can learn from organic, and everyone could benefit from organic moving forward."
OTA press release, May 31, 2019

Back by Popular Demand: IOIA Organic Inspection Apprenticeship Field Trainings Offered in Iowa: Crop August 26 & 27 and Livestock September 12-13, 2019

Newly trained inspectors have reported over the past years that they face ongoing challenges finding mentors and certifiers willing to work with them to complete a structured apprenticeship. Our goal is to provide Field Training so new inspectors can progress from the basic training to actually being ready for entry-level inspections within a few months.

IOIA's evaluation of our first trainings have confirmed that the Field Inspection Training can provide a structured apprenticeship that will create better prepared entry level inspectors.

The trainings are designed for prospective inspectors who have successfully completed an IOIA basic training and want to complete a structured apprenticeship with an experienced inspector/field trainer.

Cost for the trainings is \$1,000 for non-members and \$950 for members.

Each training is limited to 12 participants. More details can be found on page 3 of this issue or our [website](#).

Canada Organic News

Review of the Canadian Organic Standards - Public Comment to be launched soon

The Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture held its last meeting Thursday May 16th, a three-hour teleconference during which some critical issues, such as parallel production, outdoor access for poultry, calculation of the percentage of organic ingredients in processed products composed of liquid and solid ingredients, and permitted substances in crop production, were discussed.

Launched in September 2018, the review process will now enter a new phase: the public comment period during which all stakeholders and the public will have the opportunity to issue comments on the proposed modifications to the Canadian Organic Standards. Check back with www.organicfederation.ca to stay updated.

From InfoBio May 24, 2019

Monique Scholz Represents IOIA at Roundtable with Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Presented by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Monique Scholz, an IOIA founding member and current IOIA trainer, received an invitation to a private roundtable conversation with the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, to share perspectives on the organic industry on June 14.

The occasion was the official launch of the public consultation of the Canadian Organic Standards review. The event included the announcement to launch the public consultation of the Canadian Organic Standards review, followed by one hour for the roundtable. Monique gave a short presentation regarding the profession of organic inspection at the roundtable, speaking on behalf of IOIA.



**the Honourable
Marie-Claude Bibeau**



2019 ACORN AGM and Visioning Session

The 2019 Atlantic Canada Organic Regional Network will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, June 23 at the Marché de Dieppe Market, New Brunswick.

As a result of special circumstances these past few months, this will not be a regular AGM. ACORN is at a critical juncture and they need as many people involved in the organic movement as possible to come out. Past, present and future ACORN members are invited to attend, as well as those who feel they have a stake in Atlantic Canada's organic sector.

The Board will provide context regarding the organization's recent challenges, and this will be followed by a Q&A on the same topic. An important goal at this AGM is to arrive at a general vision for moving forward. Therefore, ACORN asks those planning to attend to please come prepared with your vision for the future of ACORN (e.g. 1-2 minutes statements) and to participate in a facilitated session on ACORN's next steps. There will also be a call for nominations to the Board of Directors. A more detailed AGM Agenda and supporting documents will be made available soon on ACORN's website, www.acornorganic.org

Organic Value Chain Roundtable - Meeting Summary

[The Organic Value Chain Roundtable](#), met in Ottawa on March 18th and 19th. Both government and industry representatives presented on past accomplishments and objectives for the year and long term. Carly Livingstone, COG's Manager of Stakeholder Relations, and Chair of the Increasing Supply Task Force, highlighted COG's study on [Organic Transition](#) and the [Guide to the Canadian Organic Standards](#).

A summary of the entire meeting is posted [here](#).

COG Newsletter June 2019

Organic Federation of Canada - 2019 AGM Report - [Click here](#) to read the full report!

Did you know: The Canadian Organic Grower Site is Searchable!

Do you remember an article you wanted to read, but it's no longer on the main page? Fear not! You can always head to the TCOG site and **use the search function** to look through all published articles on the site. [Check it out now!](#)

Professional Development Events – Save the Dates!

NOP, ACA, and IOIA Trainings Hosted by:



Date	Time (Tentative)	Event
January 27, 2020	TBD	ACA Board Meets for Strategic Planning
January 27, 2020	12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	IOIA Field Trips (Option for those signed up for IOIA Advanced Training)
January 28, 2020	9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	USDA National Organic Program Certifier Training
January 29, 2020	9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Training Sessions for ACA and IOIA
January 29, 2020	5:30 – 7:00 p.m.	ACA and IOIA Welcome Reception
January 30, 2020	9:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Training Sessions for ACA and IOIA
January 30, 2020	11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Accredited Certifiers Association Annual Meeting
January 30, 2020	12:00 – 9:00 p.m.	IOIA Annual Meeting
January 30, 2020	1:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Training Sessions for ACA
January 31, 2020	8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	IOIA Advanced Training
February 1, 2020	8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	IOIA Board Meeting
February 2, 2020	8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	IOIA Board Meeting

Drury Plaza San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel

105 South St. Mary’s Street, San Antonio, TX 78205 phone: (210) 270-7799

- This training is for NOP-accredited certification staff and contract inspectors.
- Group rate for lodging: \$138 + tax for single or double occupancy (deadline December 30, 2019).
- Each lodging room has fridge, microwave, and free Wi-Fi. Free hot breakfast onsite.
- ACA/IOIA Training: \$275. IOIA Advanced Training: \$350 less \$25 member discount.
- NOP Training is free of charge.
- Registration links and details will be available in fall of 2019.

IFOAM - Why should I join?

The question should be – why aren't you a member yet?



Perhaps you just didn't know how much IFOAM does. If you haven't visited www.ifoam.bio recently, check it out. There is an amazing array of conferences and classes, including the Organic Leadership Academy, around the world. IFOAM has a great blog. No other organization can hold a candle to the support and scholarships they give to make it possible for farmers of all scale and nationality to gather to share organic research, ideas, and meals.

The beginnings of IFOAM – Organics International trace back to a meeting in Versailles, France in 1972. Roland Chevriot of Nature et Progrès envisioned the need for Organic Agriculture movements to coordinate their actions and to enable scientific and experimental data on organic to cross borders. He invited organic pioneers Lady Eve Balfour, founder of the UK Soil Association, Kjell Arman from the Swedish Biodynamic Association, and Jerome Goldstein from the Rodale Institute to join him in Versailles to set the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements in motion.

IFOAM is the only international umbrella organization for the organic world. Everything they do aims to strengthen the organic movement and lead it forward. IFOAM seeks to advance the [landmarks of organic agriculture](#), including the [Principles of Organic Agriculture](#) and [Organic 3.0](#). To unify, lead and assist a broad-based constituency in a fair, inclusive and participatory manner, IFOAM organizes a [General Assembly](#) every three years. IFOAM members elect the [World Board](#), who shape the direction of their work and appoint Affiliates to committees,

working groups and task forces on topics like the development of standards or the facilitation of Organic Agriculture in developing countries.

In September 2020, IFOAM will be going back to France (Rennes) for its 50th anniversary and the first General Assembly in France.

Member organizations also establish alliances based on regional priorities (Regional Bodies) and sector-specific priorities ([Sector Platforms](#)). Two examples of these sector-specific self-organizing structures within IFOAM are the International Network of Organic Farming Organizations (INOFO) INOFO and Technology Innovation Platform (TIPI). The Head Office collects all dues and fees and sets aside 25% of the dues for regional activities.

About IFOAM North America – IFOAM's newest regional body

IFOAM North America is the official self-organized regional body of IFOAM members in Canada, the US, and the English-speaking Caribbean. Its mission is to educate the public, provide a forum to exchange ideas,

and engage in North American-specific activities to advance organic agriculture and its principles, in partnership with IFOAM-Organics International and the global organic community. IFOAM members in the region held an initial GA in Sept. 2016. Board members were elected and the IFOAM NA Board held its first meeting in January 2017. IFOAM NA was incorporated in the US in 2018 and is a 501(c)3 non-profit. Sarah Brown recently stepped into the position of Board President. She is Oregon Tilth's Education Director and a small-scale organic farmer. Brian Baker, IOIA member, served as IFOAM NA's first President since January 2017. Brian will remain an active member on the IFOAM NA Board for the rest of his term, which ends in 2021. Other officers are Jennifer Taylor, a Georgia farmer, Steve Walker of MOSA, and Beth Unger of the CROPP Cooperative / Organic Valley.

Join IFOAM -Organics International and IFOAM North America!

Just 100 Euros, and you can join IFOAM NA with no additional dues. The only requirement is to be an IFOAM member. **This is a great way for inspectors to amplify our voice.** After July 1, it is just 50 Euros. Dues are invoiced annually so are due again on Jan. 1. The current membership structure limits membership to those organizations with at least 50% organic activities. Any individual or organization can be non-voting supporters or affiliates.

Margaret Scoles, Executive Director – Of course, IOIA has been a member virtually since we first organized. But me personally? – I hadn't joined until today. Please join me in joining IFOAM and becoming a voice in IFOAM North America! I have attended just three General Assemblies, and found them inspirational, educational, and affordable.

Why does IFOAM Matter to you?

"IFOAM – Organics International has been the voice for the global organic movement since 1972, representing affiliates in more than 120 countries. No other organization serves as an umbrella, connection and advocate for organic farmers, processors, NGOs, businesses and organizations around the world. IFOAM – Organics International matters to me because I know that day by day, IFOAM works toward true sustainability in agriculture, from the field, through the value chain to the consumer. Looking to the future, IFOAM is the change agent for organics...leading change, organically!" - Peggy Miars, President, IFOAM World Board

IOIA Trains Environmental Pipeline Inspectors to Monitor Organic Integrity of Farms within Construction Right of Ways - By Jonda Crosby, IOIA Training Services Director

In early May, IOIA trainer Joyce Ford worked with Mountain Valley Pipeline to train their Environmental Inspectors to implement NOP practices to protect organic farmers during the construction of gas pipelines across their land. The training developed by Joyce Ford in 2007 prepares environmental inspectors to develop processes to uphold the organic integrity while the pipeline right of way (ROW) across their farm is being developed and used. Joyce is one of a very few people in the US with experience working as an Organic Inspector/Monitor.

The Organic Farm Protection Plan (OFPP) requires that an organic inspector be hired to monitor pipeline construction through organic agricultural land. The project can last for quite a few months. Since it is usually impossible for an organic inspector to stay at the pipeline site for that long a period, this training was designed to train the on-site environmental inspectors to do the actual daily monitoring, with oversight by an organic inspector for the duration of the project.



Joyce Ford



The training covered the NOP regulation most specifically maintaining water and soil quality, allowed and prohibited substances (pesticides and fertility products), and cropping system requirements including seed source requirements. The course included review of the farm organic system plans and pipeline maps that indicate sensitive environmental areas and the mitigation efforts that were planned for use while building the pipeline. Discussion ensued on how to best implement both plans simultaneously to protect both the organic farm certification and the Federal Energy Regulatory pipeline requirements.

It would be ideal if the federal government required an Organic Farm Protection Plan for all pipelines and other right of way (ROW) projects that go through organic farms. Archaeological sites, eagle nests, wetlands, etc are unique features of the landscape that require special mitigation measures to reduce the impact of pipeline construction. Certified organic farms need this protection as well.

The Chief Project Engineer noted that there is a need for more organic inspectors trained as monitors and that they had a hard time finding a single Inspector/Monitor in the US. They finally used LinkedIn and typed in "Organic Inspector" which brought them to IOIA via Margaret Weigelt! Clearly this is a niche opportunity for organic inspectors which IOIA may explore as a possible new training for inspectors.



As a first step, IOIA will post our credentials to train Environmental Inspectors who are working on pipeline installations across organic farm land on our website. When a company needs a training, they can more easily find that IOIA provides it!

Jonda Crosby, IOIA Training Services Director, accompanied Joyce Ford at this training to learn to teach this training to Environmental Pipeline Inspectors. Joyce and Jonda will continue to mentor together. If any inspectors have an interest in being trained to be an Inspector/Monitor please contact Jonda Crosby jcrosby@mt.net for more information.

Eco-LOGICA/IOIA cosponsor in Costa Rica for organic inspector training

Eco-LOGICA S.A. is the only 100% Costa Rican certification agency with international recognition, the certifying arm of a non-profit association (ANAO: Asociación Nacional de Agricultura Orgánica) that seeks to promote and strengthen the organic production sector in Costa Rica. It is currently celebrating its 22nd anniversary, being the organic certification agency with the longest trajectory in the Costa Rican market, as well as being a leading company in terms of gender equity and environmental sustainability in its operations. Eco-LOGICA's main motive is to promote market access for small organic producers, where the certification services are a mean, not the end goal of the agency.

Eco-LOGICA actively collaborates in the training of producers, operators and independent professionals, both in the national and regional area, through training activities as a cosponsor with IOIA, as well as independent short courses and publication of support materials such as manuals, brochures and videos in order to help users better understand and comply with the organic norm.

Last May 20th to 27th, the “Basic Inspection of Organic Farms” course, cosponsored by IOIA, was carried out at ICAES, Coronado, Costa Rica. There were 8 participants from diverse areas of expertise such as primary production in individual farms, members of grower groups, governmental employees and inspectors from international agencies, all coming from countries as Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras and the United States of America. This multiplicity of experiences and geographical regions greatly enriched the learning process.



The group activities, field trip, and the extensive experience of the instructor were greatly appreciated by all the people involved in the process, from the students to the organizers and the instructor, demonstrating once more that the most valuable learning resource is the collective exchange of knowledge, where each student is an active participant of his or her own training process. We thank IOIA, and instructor Luis Brenes, as well as all the organizers and students who played such essential rolls of this enriching experience.

If you wish to contact Eco-LOGICA, you can write to info@eco-logica.com or whatsapp +506 8725 7100.

Nota sobre el curso IOIA, Mayo 2019, en alianza con Eco-LOGICA S.A.

Cosponsored Training with QAI



In response to a request for in-house training, from QAI, IOIA Trainer **Luis Brenes** traveled to San Diego, California, to deliver IOIA's basic processing inspection training to 15 people on April 29 - May 3. Luis was joined by assistant trainer Katherine Withey, from the QAI staff, who also served as a field trip leader.

The course was coupled with a pre-requisite webinar in advance.

Participant comment on Trainer Luis Brenes: *"Your choice of integrating the in-depth study of theory balanced with hands-on skills, made the program successful."*

Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training, Wimberley, Texas, April 4 - 8



Field trip group next to a swollen river.

Seventeen participants, including Rutherford Scholarship winner Will Bailey-Elkin from Manitoba, took the basic Crop Inspection Training. Garth Kahl, Nathaniel Powell-Palm, Margaret Scoles, and Kris Olson of NICS were the trainer team. This training could be known as “NICS-to-the-rescue”. When several field trip hosts didn’t respond or had conflicts and the number of potential hosts fizzled to zero, there was a moment of panic. Then Nature’s International Certification Services (NICS), the second largest certifier in Texas, stepped in to help. Soon three hosts, all NICS certified, were confirmed. And when Nathaniel was called away to

Washington, DC to speak to a House of Representatives Committee on Climate Change, IOIA was short a group leader. Kris Olson flew to Texas to help out with the third group. And then, the final straw... The chartered bus broke down on the way to Camp Young Judaea - Kris then piled his group of 5 into his rented vehicle and drove them to the site. Above and beyond, and much appreciated. Thanks, NICS, and thanks, Kris!



Audit trail on a hot Texas day in the air-conditioned bus.

A bonus for this training was heavy rain after months of no rain. The training was timed so that the grateful landscape was bursting in wildflowers. And the barbeque was good, too!



Now that’s a turnip!
Host Skip Connett explained what turnips do for his soil, and pointed out the mycorrhizal activity around the roots.



Basic Organic Processing Inspection Training, Wimberley, Texas

When IOIA contacted Texas Department of Agriculture’s Mary Ellen Holliman last year to explore the idea of training in Texas, she said, “come on down!”

She assisted with finding and confirming field trips, always a more challenging task for processors. IOIA simply couldn’t do basic training with our current format including a practice inspection at a host certified operation without the help of cosponsors. Processors have more reasons to say “no” because of the staff time it takes. While farms are generally less concerned about exposing their confidential business information to a group of potential new inspectors, processors generally have a higher level of concern. Fortunately, White Mountain Foods in Austin said “yes” and provided a site for the field trip. Organic yogurt offered an ideal level of complexity.



Texas processing course with Garry Lean, center left. Wimberley TX, April 8 – 12.

IOIA acknowledges and appreciates the support of both certifiers and host operations for the field trips.

The class was unexpectedly and atypically small – just 10 people. Veteran IOIA Trainer Garry Lean of Ontario stepped up to the challenge of teaching the course solo. He took the entire group together for the field trip. Giving collaborative feedback on 10 reports makes for a late trainer night. Although the class was small, it was diverse. Participants ranged from across the US and one IOIA member traveled from Guatemala. IOIA Inspector member Regina Cosenza said it was a personal challenge to take the course in English. The group included experienced farm inspectors adding the processing scope, seasoned certification specialists, an employee of the National Organic Program, one from a state certification agency, and recent graduates from crop courses. Courtney Mudge of Whole Foods in Austin took the course as an educational opportunity. As one of the few Texans at the training, she became the tourism consultant for both groups, from recommending BBQ joints to finding the suspended bridge and tree house over the river.

The training ran concurrently with the Basic Crop Course April 8-12 at Camp Young Judaea just outside of Wimberley, about an hour from Austin.

And did we tell you about the barbeque?

Celebrating the conclusion of the course, some Crop and Processing participants and trainers went to the Salt Lick Barbeque in Driftwood, Texas.

Left to Right: Rhyne Cureton (NC); Regina Cosenza (Guatemala); Thea Williams (DC); Victoria Chuong (CA)



California Crop Inspection Training, June 11 - 15

IOIA basic courses are usually limited to 18 participants. But sorting out three to refuse seemed impossible. All applicants were highly qualified. Most came from California, with a few from Oregon and Washington, and even fewer from outside the West Coast. At least one had been waiting a full year for a training to come nearer her. In the end, the trainer team accepted an extra-full class of 21. The class was more diverse than usual, including crop advisors, three team members from the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Cannabis program, and some participants with inspection experience already under their belt.



The flowers were a gift of Keren Ram, a course participant, farmer, and former flower farmer.

The trainer team was Nathaniel Powell-Palm and Margaret Scoles. They were assisted by local inspector Tim Cheng, who served as the third group leader. Each group of 7 visited a different operation and spent a full day debriefing and writing inspection reports, with feedback from trainers.



Taking notes in the greenhouse. Mark Twain's classic quote (he never actually said this but it's widely attributed none the less), "The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco" applied to this training, as the unusual 102F weather one day brought the natural fog air conditioning the next to cool everything down.

The training began with unseasonal heat and the uncomfortable awareness that there was no air conditioning. Within 2 days, it dropped to pleasant 70's for the field trip. Then it just kept dropping to around 60 degrees. The campfire after the field trip felt good by then! Participants bonded, mingled with the livestock training group, drank beverages, and made s'mores with organic chocolate.

Walker Creek Ranch proved the appropriate venue in a beautiful setting. The food was fabulous and featured daily bowls of amazing organic strawberries purchased from a local grower. Nasturtium flowers and kale came from the organic garden on-site. Wildlife and birds were abundant, with gray foxes and even a bobcat spotted.

**Too Much Fun Club - Are they happy it's hot?
Knowing tomorrow will be foggy? Or it is just getting to run
around with Nate that has everyone so giddy?
Nate front and center with the crop field trip group.**



California Livestock Inspection Training, June 11 - 15

By Raoul Wertz (Inspector with County of Marin (CA) / Marin Organic Certified Agriculture)

Over the course of five days in Marin County, California, a dozen students from around the country (and Australia) participated in an IOIA Livestock NOP Standards training session led by trainer Garry Lean. With participants traveling from Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, New Mexico, California, Canada, and New South Wales Australia, everyone arrived in rural west Marin under unseasonably hot (102 degrees!) and dry conditions. Classes and lodging were at the Walker Creek Ranch, an outdoor education facility nestled among dramatic rolling hills and wooded canyons for local elementary and middle school students – think summer camp with bunk beds, an on-site natural history museum complete with native Miwok Indian artifacts, a swimming and canoeing pond, and a campfire circle.

We learned about the standards for livestock (ruminants, poultry, swine, and others), did independent and small-group exercises in class, and split into two groups for field trips and mock inspections to two long-established dairies located on hundreds of acres of pasture and rangeland just east of the Pacific Ocean and the Point Reyes National Seashore, along Tomales Bay. We had the opportunity to learn about local dairying techniques, cow livestock husbandry and healthcare, milk production, conservation and enhancement of natural resources and biodiversity, record-keeping strategies, on-farm and purchased feed stocks, managing pastures as a crop, and stewardship of land that has been in families for several generations. We learned about “carbon farming” (sequestering atmospheric carbon into the soil through intensive applications of compost) and land development protections through an innovative ag-centered land trust that was the first farmland trust in the nation ([MALT](#)).

After collaborating on our practice inspection reports from our dairy site visits and composing drafts of our inspection reports and supporting documentation, all participants took a comprehensive exam that tested our knowledge of the NOP standards, inspection scenarios, and performing trace-backs and mass-balance calculations for animal origin, health measures, feed and milk production. This was all in an effort to sharpen our skills as inspectors and as guardians of the public trust to ensure organic integrity from source to sale, from farm to table.



Beth Dominick, far left, was on-site assisting trainer Garry Lean for 2 full days, and served as field trip group leader for the California Livestock Inspection training.

National Organic Standards Board Meeting News, Seattle – April 24-26

A presentation from Jenny Tucker, NOP Deputy Administrator, highlighted the NOP's oversight activities, especially for imported products. As a result of new directives on unannounced inspections and residue/GMO testing, 180 operations, primarily grain and oilseed suppliers, in the Black Sea lost organic certification. Efforts to ensure compliance on dairy operations has identified training needs. The community can expect a proposed rule in Fall 2019 on ways to strengthen organic enforcement. IOIA will be poised to participate in the discussion and ensure the inspector's voice is heard. Her full slide set is available on the [NOP website](#).

Summary of votes on materials petitioned for addition to the list. Votes are shown as "Yes" voting to add to the National List and "No" to not adding. Those that passed will move on to rulemaking.

Crops Subcommittee

FAILED – Allyl Isothiocyanate (AITC) as a pre-plant fumigant, for addition to 205.601. 14 No, 0 Yes.

FAILED – Ammonium citrate, as chelating agents in the formation of chelates, which are used to make micronutrients available for addition to 205.601. 14 No, 0 Yes.

FAILED – Ammonium glycinate, as chelating agents in the formation of chelates, which are used to make micronutrients available for addition to 205.601. 14 No, 0 Yes.

FAILED – Calcium acetate, as soil amendment, plant micronutrient, soil pH adjuster, and sunscald protectant, for addition to 205.601. 14 No, 0 Yes.

Livestock Subcommittee

PASSED – Oxalic acid as a pesticide solely for apiculture, for addition to 205.603(b). 12 Yes, 0 No, 2 Abstain.

Handling Subcommittee

FAILED – Silver dihydrogen citrate as an antimicrobial processing aid for poultry carcasses and fruits and vegetables, for addition to 205.605(b). 13 No, 0 Yes.

PASSED – Pullulan as the only NOP compliant option for vegetarian gel caps in the MWO category. Pullulan would be classified as non-agricultural and non-synthetic. It would be listed on 205.605(a). 14 Yes, 0 No.

PASSED – Collagen Gel derived from animal skins and used as sausage casings. It is more widely used in its denatured form, as gelatin. Collagen is the native form of gelatin. It would be listed on 205.606. 11 Yes, 3 Abstain.

Discussion – The NOSB considered 7 Discussion documents including Paper Pots (The Crops Subcommittee has requested a technical review) and Use of excluded methods in vaccines in organic livestock.

PROPOSALS PASSED – Strengthening the Organic Seed Guidance October 2018 – This proposal suggested updates to the NOP Program Handbook Guidance 5029 on Seeds, Annual Seedlings, and Planting Stock. The goal is to increase the use of organic seeds. This is one to watch. Suggested changes would have a significant impact on organic farmers, seed and plant suppliers, and certifiers.

PASSED – Proposed updates to NOP Guidance on Excluded Methods Determinations

Next meeting will be October 23-25 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel & Suites Pittsburgh City Center. [The link to information about the meeting is here](#).

For information and transcript of the Spring Meeting in April, [click here](#).

IOIA to Offer Self-Directed Online Training: Because You Asked for it - We Deliver

Jonda Crosby IOIA Training Services Director

"I really appreciate the trainings IOIA offers, but the time and expense it would require for me to travel to an in-person training is prohibitive..... webinar trainings excellent idea but they are offered during work hours when I cannot participate..... if only IOIA could make the trainings available online so I could complete courses to expand my capacity...."

When IOIA instituted the webinar program in 2010 we were in part addressing a need that members requested who wanted to deepen their capacity as inspectors, without using valuable time and money traveling to participate in an IOIA in-person Advanced training. We also knew that the next generation of inspectors would expect and require some form of an online training program. In 2010 it was webinar. Today it is **Self-Directed Learning!**

And Voila!!!! Because You Asked for It - IOIA has subscribed to and learned how to use the "Litmos" training platform to host IOIA's online self-directed training courses.

In July, IOIA will have edited, uploaded, edited, reviewed, edited, re-uploaded, edited, previewed the course online, edited, had inspectors preview the course online, edited, had the trainer of the course review the course online, edited, and finally released our first online training – drum roll – "IOIA/American Grassfed Association [Self-Directed Grassfed Dairy Inspection Training for Organic Inspectors](#)". Harriet Behar will hold the distinction of being our very first online trainer within a largely automated self-directed learning platform. Look for a special email from us announcing our launch!

Also in July IOIA's online training "200 Level Dairy Feed Audits: Grazing and Non-Grazing Season" will be added to the platform. Our strategy is to add additional online trainings to the training platform over the fall months. We will add 100 Level and Advanced 200-300 Level webinars throughout 2020. We will keep everyone informed via our website, the newsletter and our monthly training updates.

At some point we also will start adding new trainings. We would love feedback from members to help us identify priority trainings you need to help you advance your professional development. To contact IOIA staff managing this program email: ioiaonlinelearning@ioia.net

A special tip of the hat to Diane Cooner, IOIA's Communications Director, who provided the technical prowess to evaluate, select and manage all the technical aspects of IOIA's new training platform.

Organic Integrity Learning Center Launched

The NOP's Organic Integrity Learning Center (OILC), an online learning management system for organic professionals including inspectors, was launched during the NOSB meeting in Seattle in April. Training previously available on the NOP website is also still available through OILC.

IOIA encourages inspectors to take advantage of these publicly available training resources. There is no cost, training is available 24/7, and each lesson includes an assessment.

Initial courses offerings include:

- Introduction to the USDA Organic System
- Sound and Sensible Organic Certification (some of the resources were created by IOIA)
- Fundamentals of Inspection
- Compliance and Enforcement: Adverse Actions, Appeals, and Reinstatements
- Import Oversight Essentials
- Future courses will include Dairy Compliance, Traceability Techniques, Advanced Inspections, Materials Reviews, and Certification Administration.

To sign up for an Organic Integrity Learning Center account, send an email to USDA-NOP@apvit.com. Subject line: Request New Account: Organic Integrity Learning Center.

Individuals: Include your desired user name, first name, last name, organization, and email address in the body of the email. Contract inspectors who work for multiple agencies should list all of the certifiers they actively work for.

see OILC, page 23

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website)

February 18, 2019 7:30 p.m. EST (via GoToMeeting)

Board Members Present: Margaret Anne Weigelt, Chair; Heather Donald; Lois Christie; Ryan Sitler; Philippe Descamps - Left at 9:30; Matthew Miller; Charles Mitchell - Not available due to Internet Issues. Diane Cooner assisted in meeting set-up. Margaret Scoles, ED, came on at approximately 8:30.

Annual Report (MargS & MargW). Tentative approval; requested that we review for Edits.

Annual Meeting; Final Details. Membership Service in Latin America. ACA/IOIA Joint Training 2020: Ryan: suggested that we as a BOD learn more toward Carbon Neutral Meetings and Offsets; carbon tracking. Location unknown. How will ACA determine where the next meeting is; *Ask Jenny [Cruse] if she is open to a recommendation. Locations are generally determined at the AGM two years ahead of time. Someone should participate on the ACA Planning Committee. **Motion to Request that Members Vote on the Joint ACA/IOIA training; Recommend that IOIA talk to Jenny Cruse re: IOIA making a recommendation for the IOIA/ACA meeting, Continue to Cooperate with ACA, and that IOIA will poll the Membership at the Annual Meeting for a location at the AGM and to ask Jenny.** Motion passed unanimously.

IOIA 2021 Annual Meeting: Ryan: Would like to see Central America. Leonard has proposed Europe; Asia Pacific would like the AGM to go back to Asia. Don't spend a lot of time at the Annual Meeting, but better to take a poll. New Orleans, or Austin, TX are places we have not been. Austin music festival is at the same time making it very expensive.

BOD Goals Check-In; Membership Goals/Renewals: We need to get used to using it more; review at every meeting.

BOD Retreat - Agenda. Planning. New perspective on how we are relevant to our inspectors; extent of services (directory, trainings, etc.).

Information Management System (IMS) - RFP (Ryan's Update): Will prepare a report for the AGM BOD Meeting. Nothing new to add regarding Mind Map and Summaries. Jonda is focused on learning management system (LMS); already paid for LITMOS; working on classes. Diane will be tech end for LMS and IMS. Ryan and MS to meet at 8:30 ET; Thursday 2/21/19 to finish RFP.

ED Report: Preview to High Impact Manager Course/Webinar - BOD needs to review High Impact Manager Webinar called *Find Your Focus: The Secret of High Impact Organizations and Teams*. High Impact Manager Training (Non-Profit CEO) Begins in April. Diane will be taking on a bigger role as MS's administrative assistant.

March 4-5, 2019 Retreat - Huatulco, Oaxaca

Board Members Present: Margaret Anne Weigelt, Chair; Lois Christie; Charles Mitchell; Ryan Sitler; Philippe Descamps; Janine Gibson; Rachel Cherry Myers; Heather Donald (via online).

Agenda Item - Topics: Discussed the Special Past Chair: Refer to Article III 3.1: Board of Directors Membership service: Revisit how it is relevant. Electing officers. Succession planning. Set meeting structure; frequency, length. **New topics:** 2020 AGM (ACA); 2021 AGM; Follow-up to Annual Meeting.

Motion to accept agenda passed unanimously.

Goals Worksheet: Heather described Goal Worksheet for new BOD members. It is broken up into large goals and task groups who update the spreadsheet.

- #1: **Accreditation Program:** 2014 the BOD members paid for their own 1.5 day retreat to envision the new credentialing program. We now have \$40,000.00 in an earmarked asset account, plus \$10,000 in the 2019 budget. 1st Milestone: IMS needed. Certifiers believe their own systems are sufficient.
- #3: **Membership:** Chuck & Margaret: Mexico & Canada certifiers are reluctant to give us a list; however, they are willing to send IOIA information to their inspectors. Store Promotions: Consumer Outreach without visible sponsors. *Is there a category for Consumers?* – added as a task.
- #4: **Fraud App for Inspectors:** Margaret suggested we bring this up with Jenny Tucker. NOP's technology and focus is import fraud; however, it could be used for domestic fraud.
- #5: **Add to Task List:** What is our relationship with other inspector organizations? Many Canadian inspectors are IOIA members so there is no incentive to form a Canadian inspectors association. JOIA has been a member since 1997, but not recognized as an inspectors' organization - they are in the supporting certification agency category. Mexico is starting an Inspectors Association; Ryan suggested that a BOD member be a liaison to other regions.
- #7: **Sister organization engagement.**

Agenda Item: New BOD Member Orientation (Margaret): Confidentiality forms, BOD Member access to website. The BOD must decide annually what type of financial review/audit will be done. Earmarked Accounts: Take

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights, continued

(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website)

budgeted money and put it into an asset account so that it is available when needed for attorneys etc. OCIS Scholarship Travel Fund has, until 2018, been our only earmarked Asset account. Need to have 100% giving from the BOD members. Ryan and Lois: Human Resources – Margaret says we need to review the current benefit package; Vacation needs to be reviewed (full-time part-time/pro-rated).

Summary of Lunch Break: Discussed next AGM and perhaps having it in Northern Mexico; rests on ACA partnership. Inspector Member Benefits (supporting Mexican Inspectors' Association). Regional IOIA offices. AGM – Using technology for off-site members to attend. Credentialing: More input from certifiers. Information Management System/Ryan: Discussed RFP. This program includes credentialing ability. Reports that displays membership levels, revenue, memberships, geographical, trainees. Allows for future growth without increasing staff. Provide services to potential IOIA regional programs. **Notes:**

- The Board has allotted \$85,000.00 for this project (the prior BOD allotted \$75,000, plus \$10,000 in this year's budget).
- Priority/Bids: Ryan and Margaret will circulate the RFP to the Board for approval before sending to four identified potential contractors.

Agenda Item – Membership Services: Ryan: Value and needs are very different depending upon where you live. We need to make categories of services (e.g. insurance barriers for North Americans, etc.). Scholarships is not having the effect wanted; perhaps have the regional committees award the scholarships. How can we use the expansion of the IFOAM model to help guide us, if at all? Could IFOAM also be a source of financial or organizational support for regional office growth? List of existing member services: Discounts on training; Forum: Potential regional forums in regional language; directory listings, hard copy and on-line; IOIA charges \$10.00 for a transcript of trainings to members, \$20 to non-members; Newsletter; Office supporting services; Networking with colleagues; Mentoring and field trainings. Trainings include: Basic, advanced, field (3 years); starting one-on-one mentorships this year), and webinar. Field trainers are not currently required to be accredited. Peer evaluators need to be accredited and to have done 300 inspections (over their lifetime).

Regional Offices: different approaches

- Designated BOD seat for regional representative; limits size of BOD for other things. Chuck: Direct resources to the region instead.
- Janine: Need excellent communication between regions.
- Region might appoint the representative for the Board.
- Regional representatives would sit in to communicate regional information; contributing to conversation; but are not voting members.
- Appoint a non-voting representative.

BOD Positions: Everyone but Margaret Anne can run for another term; all BOD members are equal, and all participate. Elections: Philippe, Rachel – Directors; Executive Committee At Large – Chuck; Lois – BOD Chair; Janine – Vice Chair, Liaison to Canadian committee; Ethics Committee; Ryan – Director, Apprentice Treasurer; Heather – Treasurer; Margaret Anne – Secretary

NOP Training: Petition Jenny Tucker to find out if IOIA BOD can attend the NOP Training. Guelph and Eco-Farm are the week and weekend before. Decide at next meeting. Strong desire to have one of the next two meetings in Mexico.

Agenda Item – Committee Liaisons: Accreditation: Rachel; Asia Pacific – Chuck, no current Chair; Bylaws – Margaret W.; Canadian – Janine; Ethics – Janine; Editorial Review – Ryan; no Chair; Policy Comment Committee (new committee): Rachel; Finance – Heather; Fundraising – Heather; Chair Janine; Latin American – Phillippe; Membership – Janine; Nominations – Janine; Scholarship – Philippe; Training Advisory – Philippe.

2:10 pm - Lois takes over as Chair for the meeting & MAW takes over as Secretary

Fraud: Discussion; Stay at the table with the NOP.

Future Board Meetings: scheduled.

Submitted by **Lois Christie, Secretary**

(Tuesday March 5 afternoon minutes submitted by new Secretary Margaret Anne Weigelt)

IOIA BOD Meeting Minutes

April 22, 2019 - 7:30 p.m. EDT (Via GoToMeeting)

Board Members Present: Lois Christie, Chair; Janine Gibson, Vice Chair; Heather Donald, Treasurer; Ryan Sitley, Director; Rachel Myers, Director. **Also present** - Margaret Scoles, ED. **Absent** - Chuck Mitchell, **See Minutes, page 22**

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights, continued

(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website)

Ex. Comm. Member-at-Large; Philippe Descamps, Director; Margaret Weigelt, Secretary (in and out w/tech issues).

Lois opened the meeting at 7:43 p.m. EDT when quorum was confirmed.

Approval of Agenda: The following **additions were discussed and added** to points 4 & 12 of Agenda. (4) Foundation Search Database/David Persad – Janine; (12) NOSB endorsement request – MS

Secretary's Report: AGM Draft Minutes were reviewed via screen share. BOD candidate vote tallies were added to the document. **Motion to approve AGM draft Minutes with revisions for website posting passed unanimously.** Consensus to review the Huatulco BOD Retreat Minutes at our May 20, 2019 meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Heather presented 1st Quarter 2019 Financial Report which included Treasurer's Report, 1st Qtr Budget vs Actual, and Balance Sheets. She reported that actuals were closely on-track to budgeted. **Motion to accept the 1st Quarter Financial Reports as written: Janine; Second: Ryan. Motion passed unanimously.**

FoundationSearch: Janine reported about meeting with David Persad of *FoundationSearch* regarding a paid subscription service to access a large database of foundations that give financial support to nonprofits both in the USA and Canada. The db is used to match top foundations to nonprofits with similar values. She proposed we try to partner with to develop a MOU with other like-minded organizations (i.e. COG, IFOAM NA) to share a grant writer position. MS suggested approaching the ACA also. Ryan noted that we could share the person and/ or we could share the cost of access. Janine said she was open to pursuing both avenues. It was suggested that this item be added to the BOD Goals Sheet under Fundraising.

LPO Advanced Training Lois reported that SAGARPA would like to work with IOIA to plan a training for our 2021 AGM in Mexico.

Promoting Cosponsored Trainings: BOD addressed concerns brought up by Garth Kahl, Luis Brenes during the AGM in Mexico that co-sponsor managed training needs to be better promoted. It was noted that usually we are able to say 'yes' to the 2-3 requests we get per month. Sacha's staff hours are set (per her request) so we would need to hire more staff to increase capacity. MS - in 2017 we had 46 trainings; in 2018 there were 72 trainings.

BOD Goals Check-in: Heather guided us through a logistics discussion. She explained how the goals sheet can be used to record progress on yearly goals as well as keep a record of historical goals data. MS suggested the goals sheet always be reviewed when setting the next BOD meeting Agenda. The BOD agreed. A 'Future Topics' section has also been added to the end of each Agenda to help with goals setting.

IMS/RFP Responses: MS reported that she had spent time on the phone/online with all four contractors invited to bid on our IMS RFP. Summary of feedback is in her ED Report for this meeting. She detailed more for us each contractor's comments, suggestions, questions and concerns. She also described their various platform systems, software licensing schemes, and costs. Diane, as webmaster, sat in on the conversations. MS concluded that we need to break the IMS project into chunks, starting with the parts most supported by the organic sector. She thought we should keep the scope calm and pay for it over a two-year period. \$75,000 has been set aside previously by the BOD for the project. Additional communications will be had by MS and Diane with the four contractors. Ryan was recognized and thanked for his work leading up to and preparing the RFP.

Follow-up Jenny Tucker Call: Minutes of the meeting with Jenny Tucker from April 18, 2019 @ 4:00 pm CDT were taken by MW. Five BOD members were on the call. Topics covered were introductions; logistics for future quarterly call scheduling; check-in for the NOP/ACA/IOIA training in San Antonio, Jan 28-30, 2020; update from Jenny on Inspector Qualifications and Training; an update from us on the IOIA Information Management System/Inspector Credentialing; request for an update on the NOP's LMS; update from us on IOIA's progress with our LMS; and that we want to be at the table regarding the fraud recommendations. MS noted that our contributed Sound and Sensible resources are included in the NOP LMS. We were assured that NOP training would not overlap with IOIA basic training of inspectors, in-out balance or standards webinars. MS encouraged everyone to register for the NOP Organic Learning Management System which opens this Wednesday.

Solidify Employee Benefits Policy: MS asks that the BOD approve vacations for employees that work at least 8 hrs./week on the average, prorated based on hours worked in previous calendar year. She also requests approval of sick-leave benefits for employees that work at least 8 hrs./week on the average, prorated based on hours worked in the quarter. **Motion to approve the Employee Benefits Policy as written in the IOIA Employee Handbook Ver. Apr, 2019: Janine; Second: Heather; passed unanimously.**

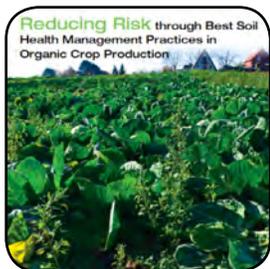
2020 Annual Meeting Layout: Various schedule layouts were talked through for the 2020 IOIA/ACA/NOP Annual Meeting and Trainings. Jenny Cruse confirmed that contract was signed for venue at the **see Minutes, page 23**

Resources

IFOAM 2018 Annual Report now available

'Change for Good' is the title of the 2018 Annual Report. The report highlights 2018, including all of the good work recently undertaken in the organic community, achievements, and stories of perseverance from two 'Agents of Change', who show through their experiences how motivated individuals can make a real difference. [IFOAM annual report](#).

New Tools to Manage On-Farm Risk Available



Organic Farm Research Foundation, in cooperation with USDA-Risk Management Agency, has developed two new guidebooks and webinars on how organic and transitioning growers can manage on-farm risk through crop insurance programs and sound soil health management. Free to download at ofrf.org. *OFRF April News, 4/17/2019*

Benefits of Organic Cotton - video highlights GOTS

Great video on organic cotton. The Soil Association partnered with the Charity HUBBUB and launched a short film to demonstrate the benefits of organic cotton. In the film GOTS is highlighted as gold standard for sustainable processing of textiles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0LFVIwhiPA&feature=youtu.be>

[watch?v=o0LFVIwhiPA&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0LFVIwhiPA&feature=youtu.be)

Posted to IOIA Forum 4/11/2019

Welcome Monica Stanton, IOIA's new US Training Coordinator

Monica moved to Montana from Yakima, Washington. A trained Medical Office Assistant, she worked for a clinic in Yakima and then for a year in Billings, MT. She has an AA Medical Assistant degree. Monica joined the IOIA team in mid-April. She manages most of the US based trainings, working full-time. She replaces Teri Lindberg, who left IOIA after 7 years.

She has 3 children ranging in age to 20+ down to 9 years old; loves her dog; and is learning to drive the adventurous Montana non-paved roads. She now lives about 30 miles from the office on a ranch.

Why did she come to Montana? – well, mostly for the rancher that went with the ranch. IOIA was fortunate that she agreed to join us and glad to find that she was such a fast learner.

Interested in attending an IOIA training? email her at ioiassistant@rangeweb.net.



Minutes, from page 22

Drury Hotel, San Antonio Texas. Consensus was to have the AGM Thursday Jan 30 and advanced training Friday Jan 31. This means our AGM party is on Thursday evening before the advanced training.

ED Report: MS reports that new staff hire, Monica, seems to fit in great with other staff.

Request for endorsement by NOSB candidate: It was determined by reading the IOIA BOD Policy Manual that we can only write an endorsement for the certifier position.

Submitted by Margaret Anne Weigelt, Secretary

OILC, from page 19

To Sign-Up a Group: Attach an Excel Spreadsheet (see template below) with a list of people who need accounts.

The National Organic Program pays for the Learning Center on a per user basis. Sign-up instructions ask that you please only sign up if you fully intend to complete lessons and courses. Accounts may be deleted due to prolonged inactivity.

“Fair and consistent certification and robust enforcement of the organic standards are keys to protect the integrity of the USDA Organic Seal that consumers trust and producers rely on,” said NOP Deputy Administrator Jennifer Tucker. “Maintaining organic integrity worldwide requires well-qualified and trained organic professionals. We want to make sure they have the tools they need.”

Here's the link to the flyer about how to sign up.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/USDANOPOILCEnrollmentFlyer.pdf>



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Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!

2019 Calendar

August 10 – 11 The sixth Organic Farming Innovation Award Summit, in Amherst, Massachusetts. More info: <http://www.ifoam.bio/ofia>.

August 13-23 IOIA Basic Crop and Livestock training, Coralville, Iowa

August 26 – 27 IOIA/IDALS/GOA Organic Crop Inspection Field Training, Coralville, Iowa

August 27-30 IOIA Farm Inspection Course, Tokyo, Japan.

September 12 – 13 IOIA/NICS Organic Livestock Inspection Field Training. Independence, Iowa

September 25 1-2pm ET, 10-11 PT Organic Center webinar on the Biodiversity Calculator. See story page 6.

October 1 - 4 Tokyo, Japan. IOIA Processing Inspection Course

October 7 – 11 Organic Crop and Processing Inspection Training, Frankfort, Kentucky.

October 23 – 25 Fall 2019 National Organic Standards Board meeting. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel & Suites Pittsburgh City Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219. 1-800-222-TREE (8733). Materials related to the meeting will be posted as they become available to the [NOSB Fall 2019 Meeting webpage](#).

October 29 Organic & Non-GMO Forum <https://www.ongforum.com/>

Please see pages 2 & 3 for the current list of IOIA on-site trainings and webinars