

2016 Annual Report - A Year Full of Critical Training Upgrades

Presented by Stuart McMillan, Board Chair

In 2017, I am honored to be the first Canadian to chair an IOIA annual meeting in Canada as we celebrate our 25th anniversary in Ottawa.

2016 was a year of bold steps forward to further IOIA's mission, including the first ever annual meeting in Asia. Inspectors from nine countries came together on Jeju Island, Korea. IOIA continued to strengthen financial reserves, made significant positive changes in the Training Institute, and took concrete steps toward a Succession Plan for IOIA – the major focus of the 2016 BOD Retreat.



- **Field Training** – IOIA took the lead and collaborated with certification agencies to launch this essential aspect of inspector training – structured apprenticeship.
- **IFOAM North America** – Our Executive Director served on the organizing Steering Committee, and IFOAM North America was launched in Baltimore. Inspector member Lisa Pierce of Canada agreed to represent IOIA on the ballot. She was elected to the founding Board.
- **Peer Evaluation Program** – IOIA submitted a report to the USDA NOP and received a congratulatory response. In 2016, IOIA nearly doubled the number of inspectors evaluated over the previous year. This success corresponds to a 40% jump in the number of accredited members. Accreditation is a prerequisite qualification to serve as a peer evaluator.
- **Trained 777 participants** - an increase of 13% over last year. About half of those were trained by webinar.
- **Cuba** - was the focus of a new IOIA discussion group. Board Member Garth Kahl traveled to Cuba where he introduced agronomists, veterinarians, researchers and representatives of the ministry of agriculture at “The 11th Encounter on Organic and Sustainable Agriculture”.

Spotlight on International Activities

Asia Pacific Committee - Chair, Isidor Yu, Korea.

Committee members hail from Korea, Japan, Australia, Nepal Thailand, and India.

The year's chief activity was planning the training in Jeju.

- Train the Trainer for Asia – participants from Thailand, Australia, Korea
- Processing training in Korean language
- Organic Aquaculture training
- Advanced inspector training

The committee is now developing training in India for 2017.

IOIA's newest trainer, Kathe Purvis of Western Australia, is an auditor and trainer for Fairtrade ANZ and the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA). She regularly travels across the Asia Pacific region auditing grower groups. In 2016, she organized an advanced training workshop in Korea on her approach to inspecting to multiple standards.



2017 IOIA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2017 ~ 1:00 P.M.–5:30 P.M.
LORD ELGIN HOTEL, OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA

AGENDA

*Lunch at 12:00 noon is provided for all IOIA Inspector Members who register in advance.
Supporting Members and Guests may register for an additional fee.*

1:00 p.m. - Call to order



Keynote Presentation

**“GMO2.0: Synthetic Biology and the next generation of genetic engineering technologies”
by Jim Thomas, ETC Group, Montreal, Quebec**

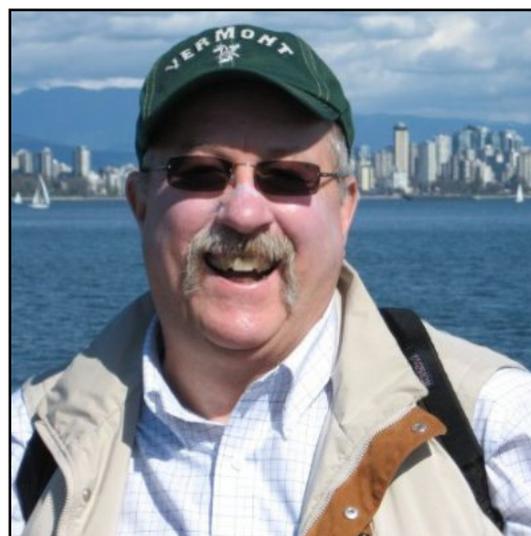
Endnote Presentation

**“In the Beginning....Looking back fondly”
by Joe Smillie, (Vermont/Florida),
Member of the founding IOIA Board**

Our Gala Social will feature appetizers,
beverages, networking
and later Live Music

Dance to Mystara

<http://www.mystara-music.com/>



See our web-
site for detailed
information on
the 2017 AGM

Spouses, families, and friends are welcome! Be sure to let us know the number in your party.

**There are field trips available on Sunday, March 26 including
Fulton Pancake House, a certified maple producer.**

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

IOIA Advanced Organic Inspector Training, Ottawa, Ontario - March 23-24 2017

For details about the agenda, please visit our site.

IOIA/IOA Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training – April 24 – 28, 2017

IOIA/IOA Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training – May 1 – 5, 2017

IOIA and Iowa Organic Association (IOA) will cosponsor Crop and Livestock Inspection Trainings, at Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, Coralville, Iowa. Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. A minimum of 12 participants is required for each course or it will be canceled. The corresponding IOIA NOP Crop or Livestock Standards webinar is prerequisite for each course.

Webinars have been scheduled for participants a few weeks before the on-site course begins. Please contact IOIA for more information about these courses, ioiassistant@rangeweb.net

Kobe City, Japan, Farm Course - August 1-4, 2017

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor a 4-day Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training using JAS Standards as a reference. The course will be held in Chuo-ku, Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan. The training language will be Japanese. Please contact JOIA for more information about this training. E-Mail: info@joia-organic.com

IOIA/OEFFA Organic Livestock Inspection Field Training, Wooster, Ohio - August 2 & 3, 2017

IOIA and Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) will cosponsor this training.

Field Training as a structured apprenticeship will include two days of practice inspections with an IOIA trainer mentor. At the Field Training, participants will work with an experienced inspector to participate in and complete, two inspection reports. On day 1 of the Field Training participants will be in a group of five to six with an experienced inspector as the lead inspector and facilitator. Day 2 of Field Training will be in a smaller group of two participants, with the mentor providing guidance, observations and to assess participant performance.

This training is designed for:

- prospective inspectors who have successfully completed an IOIA basic Livestock Inspection Training; participants without basic livestock training will be considered for acceptance with an endorsement or recommendation from a certification agency
- current inspectors wishing to add livestock inspections to their resume or for livestock inspectors who wish to sharpen their skills, and
- as a refresher for those working as crop and livestock inspectors or as certification reviewers.

Both dairy and poultry inspections are available for this training. The training is limited to 10 participants.

For more information and application please visit our site.

IOIA/CCOF Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training - Fall 2017

IOIA/CCOF Basic Organic Processing Inspection Training – Fall 2017

IOIA and CCOF will cosponsor Crop and Processing Inspection Training in the Fresno, California area in fall 2017. More information and links to register will be posted here as soon as available.

WEBINAR Training Schedule

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

100 Level Webinar – March 13 & 16, 2017

NOP Organic Livestock Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (Pacific Time). Two, 3 hour sessions. Presented by IOIA Trainer: Garry Lean.

300 Level Webinar – March 17, 2017

Inspecting Organic Wineries

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. (Pacific Time). One, 2.5 hour session. IOIA Presenter: Pam Sullivan.

100 Level Webinar – September 12 & 19, 2017 COR Processing Standard

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific Time). Two, 3 hour sessions. Presenter IOIA Trainer: Kelly Monaghan.

2017 Scholarships Awarded

IOIA is pleased to announce that **Craig Shroyer**, Coburn, Pennsylvania, is the recipient of IOIA's 2017 Rutherford Scholarship Award. The award provides full tuition, room and board for an IOIA-sponsored organic inspector training course during the following year. Both prospective and experienced inspectors are eligible to apply for the Rutherford Scholarship.

The late Andrew Rutherford was a farmer, organic inspector, and organic agriculture researcher from southern Saskatchewan. He served on IOIA's initial steering committee and then several years as a Founding Board Member.

Craig shared these thoughts with us:

"With my growing interest in organic agriculture and with the guidance from other inspectors in my area, I attended the IOIA Basic Crop training in May of 2016. Since then I have conducted around 20 inspections for two different agencies.

I plan to use the Rutherford Scholarship to attend the Spring 2017 Livestock training. With this wonderful opportunity I will be able to conduct livestock inspections that are more prevalent in my area and therefore contribute to a wider range of certified organic operations.

Aside from my interest in the organic movement I am also an avid gardener, fly fisher, conservationist and a stay at home father of two. The trainings and skills that IOIA have presented me have been life changing. Not only have I had the chance to carve out a career path for myself, but I have also had pleasure of working with an industry and movement that I truly believe in. I look forward to applying the skills that I have learned from past and future trainings to ensure organic integrity, growth, and sustainability within the Organic Sector."



Krishna Prasad Paudel, Kathmandu, Nepal 2017 Organic Community Initiative Scholarship recipient

As a government employee, my responsibilities include organic vegetable seed production, farm management, organic vegetable production in farm communities, and mobilization of farmer's group/cooperatives into organic cultivation. I also work part-time with consultancy to NGO and farmer's cooperative for organic production and marketing. Since my professional background is directly related to organic sector development, a proposed training program is related to my job nature. I wish to apply for the course that may support to carry out my responsibilities more efficiently.



In connection to the goal, at least five farmer's cooperatives will transform into complete organic farming over the next five years. At the same time, I'll add more to establish a model organic village with clear demarcation. The knowledge and skills acquired during the training will be utilized for technical, legal and managerial skill development for organic production, inspection, certification and marketing that can be applied to serve farm community and help to achieve the goal set for the next five years.

There were 10 applicants for the Rutherford Scholarship this year, and 3 applicants for OCIS. Deadline to apply is October 1. Application and more info available on our website, <http://www.ioia.net>.

Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

On January 31, I represented IOIA at the annual NOP training, then participated in the annual meeting/training of the Accredited Certifiers Association Feb 1-2. Miles McEvoy opened the meeting by presenting Pat Kane with an appreciation award for her many years of service. Jenny Cruse, formerly of MOSA, is the new ACA Coordinator.

OMRI's 20th anniversary was celebrated at a reception cosponsored by Organicology, OTA, and the Sustainable Food Trade Association. It was an evening of networking and connecting with IOIA members. A great party! I got a full update from Bob Durst, former Chair of the BOD. Brian Baker, another IOIA inspector member, introduced Peggy Miars, current ED of OMRI. During the meetings, I met Alvaro Martinez, inspector member from Peru, for the first time. The inspector/inspection topics roundtable provided the opportunity to connect with other inspector members (i.e. Ernesto de la Rosa from Mexico and Andrew Black from Oregon).

I'll focus here on two topics close to the heart of inspectors. For more details on the event, including **what the NOP sees as inspector areas for improvement on their certifier audits** – see page 13.

ACA Training: Inspector Shortage and Inspector Pay (are they inter-related?) During a roundtable "Sharing our Perspectives: Inspectors and Inspections topics" - most discussion centered around how to deal with a critical shortage of inspectors. At the same time certifiers are experiencing double-digit growth and need more inspectors, they are seeing more issues with inspection quality. This is partly due to the pressure on experienced

inspectors to perform more inspections in less time. Certifiers favored a standardized list of trainings for inspectors. I explained our concept of 100-200-300 level trainings.

- Where is the next generation of inspector coming from? "Lots of gray hair in the inspector pool." I announced (a bit strongly?) that the answer is not to train more new inspectors. IOIA is training about 100 new people a year in the US. We don't need that many new inspectors. What is needed is more transitional training (field training, apprenticeship, mentoring, etc.) to help newly trained inspectors overcome the hurdles to become successful inspectors.
- Kelly Abbott, ICS – suggestion for retention – They don't have a checklist report. The OSP is the report, when the inspector leaves the inspection, they are done with the report. Inspector Verification Form (add comments) is the only additional document that might be called a report.
- Cheri Courtney, USDA NOP – Suggests we recruit at the high school level. Not everyone is bound for college. They got some of the best auditors at USDA because they started young. They got them out of high school, trained them, and retained them because they were glad to have a good job.
- Field Training – I promoted the IOIA Field Training program and announced that we'd be offering all 3 scopes this summer in collaboration with MT Dept of Ag. Field training still a new concept, but certifiers were happy to hear more about it.
- Mentorship: Value of a long term



Patricia Kane (left), retiring ACA Coordinator, receives certificate of appreciation from Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator and Cheri Courtney, Accreditation and International Activities Division (AIA) Director.

mentor was acknowledged – perhaps for a year. I kept hearing the need for better retention and better mentoring.

During the **ACA Training – a panel, "Inspectors – Managing the Critical Players"** my favorite quote for the day was Kelly Abbott, ICS. **"Keep inspectors happy – that's the best way to retain them."** Certifiers clearly rely heavily on IOIA training for most everyone as a starter. Trish Dougherty, staff inspector in Wisconsin for OTCO, commented that inspectors need to get paid more. If there is a shortage, it may indicate that fees are too low. Amy Stafford, former inspector who now manages the CO Dept of Ag organic certification program, noted that contractors are charging same as they were 10 years ago. Another comment - if certifiers are experiencing a shortage of inspectors, logical assumption is that they are not getting paid enough to keep inspectors inspecting. Odd that certifiers are openly discussing in public that inspectors may be underpaid, while IOIA and inspectors aren't having that same discussion?!

I hope to see you in Ottawa!

SECTOR NEWS

AMS Delays Final Rule on Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is delaying the effective date of the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule by 60 days to May 19, 2017. These actions are being taken in accordance with guidance issued Jan. 20, 2017, to ensure the new policy team has an opportunity to review the rules. This is similar to procedures issued by previous administrations. Included amongst the delayed rules are the "Farmer Fair Practices Rules" (FFPR), also known as the "GIPSA rules."

National Sustainable Ag Coalition, 1/27/2017

NOP Handbook Updates

The National Organic Program has published updates to two Handbook documents -- 2024-2: List of Certified Organic Operations Template and NOP 2026: Submitting Annual Lists of Certified Operations.

[NOP 2024-2](#) is a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that includes a template and instructions for formatting data on certified organic operations for the NOP INTEGRITY database.

[NOP 2026](#) outlines an updated procedure for certifiers submitting annual lists of certified operations. Updated annually, this instruction informs certifiers of the January 2 deadline to update their client list and applies to all USDA-accredited certifying agents. Certifiers are to use the Organic INTEGRITY Database to upload their client information.

To see all NOP guidance, instructions and policies: [NOP Handbook](#). *USDA Organic Insider, 12/13/2016*

New Mexico organic program faces hurdle

New Mexico's Department of Agriculture is now looking at options to save the state's Organic Certification Program, according to a [February 1 article](#) in the *Los Alamos Monitor*. The program has operated with a deficit since the state cut the small agency's funding in 2010 and capped the fees that can be charged organic farmers and processors. The department has proposed five alternative funding options for addressing the problem. New Mexico is one of 6 U.S. states that still have a state-funded organic certification program.

OTA Newsflash 2/8/2017

AMS Extends Comment Period for Proposed Rule and Draft Guidance

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is extending the comment period for the Sunset 2017 Amendments to the National List proposed rule by 30 days to April 19, 2017 and the comment period for the draft guidance on Calculating the Percentage of Organic Ingredients in Multi-Ingredient Products by 60 days to April 7, 2017.

To learn more, access:

Sunset 2017 Amendments: [Federal Register notice](#) | [Proposed Rule](#)

- Calculating Percentage Organic Ingredients: [Federal Register notice](#) | [Draft Guidance](#)

USDA Organic Insider, 2/16/2017

Bacterial resistance to last resort antibiotics found on swine farm

Researchers from [Ohio State University](#) have discovered bacteria with resistance to antibiotics known as carbapenems—considered the last

line of defense—on a U.S. swine farm. "The implication of our finding is that there is a real risk that CRE [carbapenem-resistant bacteria] may disseminate in food animal populations and eventually contaminate fresh retail meat products," the researchers wrote.

The Organic Scoop, 2/6/2017

NOSB Taking Comments

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) has opened the public comment period prior to its spring meeting April 19 - 21 in Denver, Colo. March 30 is the deadline to submit public comments or sign up to make a comment at the meeting. The board also will take public comments at a webinar April 13. See the agenda of topics and current proposals and access the comment opportunities at the NOSB spring meeting webpage.

NOP guidance on the National List

NOP published final guidance in the December 2 *Federal Register* on which non-synthetic or natural substances are allowed and which synthetic substances are prohibited on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List). The result of over 13 years of work, the final guidance on **Classification of Materials (NOP 5033) and Materials for Organic Crop Production (NOP 5034)** is now available in the **NOP Handbook**.

OTA Newsflash, 12/6/2016

USDA extends comment period for organic checkoff 30 days

In line with the new administration's regulatory freeze, the USDA is extending the comment period

SECTOR NEWS

by 30 days on the proposed organic checkoff, to April 19. OTA, the sponsor of the proposal, said it hoped the USDA will perform a timely review of comments and call a vote on the checkoff. *Ag Insider*, 2/27/2017

KOREA Stopgap Labeling Memorandum

Organic Trade Association reports a critical labeling situation that has arisen in Korea:

According to Robert Anderson, Senior Trade Advisor at OTA,

"With very short notice, on February 4, 2017 Korea implemented a labeling law that required all products that do not have an official "exemption" to include "May Contain GMOs" on packaging in Korea.

"This was a pivotal issue in negotiation the U.S. Korea equivalency arrangement. USDA Foreign Agricultural Service in Seoul and Washington are aggressively working to resolve this issue. However, U.S. organic products are already being held at ports of entry and several more containers are already on the water."

Anderson has drafted a sample memo for certifiers to use as an official notification which should allow U.S. certified organic products to enter Korea without further labeling. FAS and NOP are aware that businesses are using this stopgap measure as the diplomatic wheels turn to resolve this critical issue.

Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) - New version 5.0 released

GOTS is the worldwide recognized standard for the processing of textiles made with 95 percent (label grade "organic") or at least 70 percent (label grade "made with organic") certified organic fibres.

GOTS V 5.0 now has stricter criteria for regenerated fibres and an added category for "Combined Products".

GOTS Version 5.0, the Manual for Implementation Version 5.0, a list of relevant changes and further information regarding GOTS can be found on <http://www.global-standard.org/>.

The criteria for the "additional fibre material" are now stricter regarding the environmentally improved and certified regenerated cellulosic fibres: The use of Viscose and Modal is now restricted to 10% (25% for sportswear and socks). Lyocell may still be used up to 30% because of its more sustainable manufacturing processes.

For the first time GOTS will allow "Combined Products" such as prams with textile fabrics, bassinets, car seats or furniture with textile fabric upholstery to have certified and labelled fabric components.

Regarding the GOTS social criteria an explicit section on Ethical Business Behaviour including a corruption ban was added, based on the UN Global Compact Principles. The mandatory GOTS Social Compliance Management System for the first time includes guidance on the use of tools such as SAI Social Fingerprint™ to help companies measure and improve their social performance.

The list of all stakeholders and more about the revision process can be found on <http://www.global-standard.org/the-standard/revision-procedure.html>.

Lori Wyman, North American Representative to GOTS, March 6, 2017
wyman@global-standard.org

USDA Implements Import Certificate Requirement for Organic Products Shipped from Mexico

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and Mexico's National Service for Animal and Plant Health, Food Safety and Quality (SENASICA) are committed to increasing transparency and strengthening monitoring and enforcement controls for organic products traded between the two countries. One important mechanism for achieving this goal is the use of import certificates.

In October 2016, USDA and SENASICA established an agreement to require import certificates for all organic products traded between the United States and Mexico. On Jan. 16, 2017, the new requirement was to become effective for all products entering the United States from Mexico, however that date has been pushed up 90 days due to the incoming US administration. These products must be accompanied by a National Organic Program (NOP) import certificate. Mexico will implement its own requirement for organic products entering Mexico from the United States in early 2017.

NOP import certificates are used to verify that products shipped to the United States comply with the USDA organic regulations and must be issued by an accredited certifying agent for products they certify. USDA currently requires an import certificate for organic imports coming from European Union member states, Japan, South Korea and Switzerland.

USDA Organic Insider, 12/22/2016 & 1/11/2017

Peer Evaluation

by Margaret Scoles

IOIA developed the Peer Field Evaluation Program in response to NOP Certifier Instruction 2027, published August 2013. Since then, the NOP has changed its stance on the instruction twice. First, they insisted that every certifier must evaluate every inspector in the field annually. Certifiers were told that they could not meet the requirement by sharing evaluations. IOIA's program was, however, approved as an acceptable alternative. The IOIA program was welcomed by certifiers as a way of sharing the cost. Certifiers themselves suggested an easy-to-administer flat rate fee schedule.

In 2015, IOIA evaluated 50 inspectors, many of whom were requested by multiple certification agencies. Ten certifiers participated. An unexpected surprise is that IOIA made significantly more than net revenue than expected. Another bonus, results of the pilot were reported to the NOP, and IOIA received a congratulatory response. Based on the comments of the NOP, certifiers, inspectors, and evaluators, the program was deemed a success.

In 2016, NOP threw in a wrinkle by allowing certifiers to share inspector evaluations. Still, IOIA's program was in high demand. IOIA evaluated 82 inspectors in the field for 11 certifiers. The IOIA team was a little sobered by mediocre end-of-year finances - more work for less money. It was time to go back to the drawing board. A new fee schedule was developed and introduced to participating certifiers in a series of conference calls. Al Johnson, co-chair of the committee; and Maria DeVincenzo, Coordinator for IOIA; and Margaret Scoles, ED, patiently listened. Based on very helpful certifier feedback, a new fee schedule was tweaked and presented for BOD approval. The BOD approved the program again for 2017 as well as the new fee schedule.

Then - a new wrinkle. NOP recently announced that alternative proposals, such as risk-based approaches, will be considered. They lifted the requirement for every inspector, every year. Now, certifiers are scrambling to come up with lists by IOIA's deadline of March 15. This change will probably affect the number of inspectors on IOIA's list this year. But it is clear that certifiers see the IOIA program as part of an effective field evaluation program. IOIA is gearing up to do evaluations more efficiently, with more peer evaluators, starting earlier this year.

Certified Transitional

On January 11, the Organic Trade Association (OTA) announced a new partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help guide farmers transitioning into certified organic agricultural production. Using standards developed by OTA, the National Certified Transitional Program will provide oversight to approved Accredited Organic Certifying Agents offering transitional certification to producers. OTA designed the certified transitional program to create a consistent mechanism for certifying agencies to document operations' adherence to organic regulations on land in transition to organic status. The new program provides certification and oversight to producers who are in transition to organic. It does not provide standards or criteria for labeling products certified under the program.

The program is recognized by the USDA Quality Systems Assessment Program, housed within the Agricultural Marketing Service branch. USDA will accredit organic certification agencies that comply with the National Certified Transitional Program criteria, enabling those agencies to conduct certification of producers. OTA submitted an application to USDA in May 2016—after over a year of work on behalf of its members through a task force—to create the program. A transitional product market can offer premiums to farmers in transition and assist in the financial barriers that transition poses.

The oversight provided by USDA to certifying agents offering transitional certification will consist of certifier audits and a uniform transitional production standard for both crop and livestock producers. Farmers will need to prove their land has been free of prohibited substances (synthetic pesticides and fertilizers) for a minimum of 12 months and must follow all other organic production standards to achieve transitional certification, including crop rotation, the fostering and conserving of biodiversity, and the avoidance of the use of genetic engineering.

Once eligible for organic certification, land can only enter into the transitional certification program one more time. This provision aims to ensure that transitional certification acts as an effective onramp to organic production rather than a mechanism to create an “organic-light” marketing term.

USDA was accepting applications for the first round from Accredited Certifying Agents through Feb. 28. On-site reviews of these certifying agents will occur at their next organic accreditation audit. See **Transitional**, page 17

Canada Organic News

Changes to the Canada Organic Office

by Kelly Monaghan

Within the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) there has been an internal reorganization of Canada Organic Office (COO) staff such that there is no longer an official single “office” that deals with organics in Canada. However, the industry was recently reassured that the CFIA’s commitment to the organic products regulations is as strong as ever and that all of the same roles and resources are in place. This realignment is in line with other sectors (egg, meat, dairy) that have been similarly reorganized within the CFIA based on function rather than specific commodity sector.



Board chair Stuart McMillan with Dave Lockman, Pro-Cert, and Roxanne Beavers, NSF/QAI, at the Guelph conference.

The new structure is called the **Food Import / Export and Consumer Protection Directorate** (FIECPD) under which there are two divisions – the Consumer Protection and Market Fairness Division – CPMFD (which will oversee food labelling, standards of identity, composition and grades, interpretive guidance, strategies and planning) and the Food Import and Export Division – FIED. There are two sections within the FIED which have sections relating to organics – foreign relations and issues management (organic equivalency arrangements – Heather Hollands is the manager of that section) and food systems evaluation (functions related to audit and third party oversight – Valeriya Staykova is within that group now, her manager is Gary Little). We are assured that the staff hasn’t moved their desks and they still interact and work together on organic industry concerns.

The email address for any concerns or questions relating to organics in Canada remains the same - opr.rpb@inspection.gc.ca.

Proposed Safe Food Regulation Comment Period Open Until April 21 by Kelly Monaghan

The Safe Food for Canadians Regulations is a new regulation which will incorporate the Organic Products Regulations (amongst others) and appears to be incorporating some changes that may impact the sector in significant ways (one example, requiring all transport and slaughter of organics to be certified). The proposed regulations are now available for public comment (until April 21st) and anyone who has business with organics in Canada should look into this and ensure that their concerns are heard. The CFIA is holding [information sessions](#). In addition, the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA) is helping to coordinate responses and has prepared key issues and COTA recommendations along with some other supporting resources and has organized a [webinar](#) for information.

Help develop agricultural policy in Canada

Every five years, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) conducts a national consultation process with the agricultural sector. The purpose of this process is to gather policy and program recommendations that ensure Canadian agriculture continues to thrive and adapt to new research, environmental challenges and consumer trends. This process will help inform the Government of Canada’s Next Agricultural Policy Framework – a set of policies and programs that will steer Canadian agriculture from 2018-2023.

Development of the next policy framework beginning April 1, 2018 is well underway. The individual provinces are hosting public consultation meetings and surveys to receive producer feedback. NBDAAF is seeking producer views to help set priorities for program development for non business risk management programs for the next policy framework. This survey can be [completed online here](#). *ACORN Organic E-News - March 2017*

OCO Seeks Organic Certification Consultants in Ontario

In order to better serve its diverse membership, the Organic Council of Ontario is creating an online resource of organic certification consultants that offer advice on certification, transition, organic farming or food processing best practices, and non-compliance issues. If you provide such services to either primary producers or processors within Ontario and would like to be listed in this resource, please contact Laura Northey at communications@organiccouncil.ca.

Annual Report, from page 1

Canadian Committee - Chair, Bill Barkley

Committee members include all IOIA inspectors in Canada (20% of the membership). Barkley spearheads and facilitates advanced inspector training every two years at the Guelph Organic Conference in Ontario. Activities in 2016 were advanced training in Guelph, and planning for the Ottawa 2017 Annual Meeting. Kelly Monaghan represents IOIA on the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture Organic of Canada's General Standards Board.

Latin America: Chair, Martha Santizo Castillo

- IOIA delivered processing and advanced training in Mexico.
- 200-level in/out balance training materials were translated into Spanish
- Bilingual BOD member Garth Kahl represented IOIA at the biannual meeting of the Cuban Association of Agronomy and Forestry Professionals ("Asociación Cubana de Técnicos Agrícolas y Forestales").

IOIA Strengthened Membership Benefits and Membership in 2016 by -

- Taking a bold step by investing in basic training in response to course evaluations and IOIA's professional trainers. Preparatory webinars in the standard(s) are now prerequisite to all basic courses. This opens up time for hands-on training and a deeper application of standards. Trainers provide collaborative feedback as course participants write reports. Success rate in the courses went up. Ratings on course evaluations went up correspondingly.
- IOIA initiated field training in response to the critical shortage of inspectors and available mentors.
- Garnering support from business – IOIA supporting business membership jumped 40%, a recognition of IOIA's role in protecting organic integrity through rigorous inspections and inspector training.
- Invigorated IOIA's accreditation program. 2016 saw a 40% increase in new accreditations.
- Expanding support and resources for inspector members:
 - Big webinar discounts to encourage continuing education.
 - Peer Field Evaluation Program – to coordinate evaluations for inspectors who work for multiple certifiers, while improving efficiency and increasing oversight of inspectors.
 - Regular technical articles in our newsletter, a benefit to all members.
 - "Ask the Experts -A recent Forum Discussion on Boiler Additives"
 - "Assessing Soil Quality in the Field: Uses, Interpretation, and Limitations of Soil Tests"
 - "The Top Five Things Inspectors Should Know About GMO's"

Peer Evaluation Program - Improving Inspector Skills

"I came away from the process with some helpful advice on how to be a better inspector, which is what this is all really about". – Darren Maum, inspector

Historic first IOIA Annual Meeting in Asia drew participants from 9 countries

Andre Leu, president of IFOAM, delivered the keynote on "Organic 3.0, Children's Health & Climate Change." Organic 3.0 is resonating around the world. People on every continent are in the process of developing a new collective vision for the organic movement. He explained in simple but powerful terms the global impact of putting carbon back into the soil. He also acknowledged the essential role that inspectors play in healing the planet and our bodies as we forward organic agriculture.

Annual Report, continued

Customized Training to meet the needs of the Organic Community

- Field Training was launched to meet the need for structured apprenticeship. Participants are expected to first complete the basic training in the related scope. They complete two inspections in teams with experienced inspectors/trainers. The goal – graduates are ready to go solo on 100-level inspections. For the debut, IOIA partnered with MOSA in Wisconsin, focusing on Livestock. It was a resounding success.
- GAP On-farm Food Safety Plan Writing Workshops – for 52 farmers, educators, produce retailers, community produce growers, Farm-to-School garden managers, Food Banks, and staff from MT Dept of Ag and MT State U.
- Transition Trainer Workshop – for extension agents in Kentucky.
- Increased webinar participation of 14% was partly a result of making webinar topics more accessible to certification agencies with a new in-house model.
- IOIA/OMRI Processing Inputs for Canada was launched.
- Processing inspection trainings doubled – in 4 languages and 4 countries (Korea, Japan, USA, and Hong Kong, China).
- Advanced trainings doubled – in 3 continents in 3 languages. (Mexico, Korea, Canada, and the US).



Aquaculture farmer, Korea. IOIA offered 2 aquaculture trainings in 2016.

Partnerships

IOIA continues to enjoy partnering with a number of important organizations in the organic sector that allow us to further our mission of addressing concerns relevant to organic inspectors, providing quality inspector training and to promoting integrity and consistency in the organic certification process.

Policy Work

- IOIA submitted comments to both the spring and fall meetings of the USDA National Organic Standards Board, in writing and via the web. Members of the BOD spoke in-person at both meetings. In response to "Personnel Performance Evaluations of Inspectors", IOIA advocated for rigorous inspector qualifications. IOIA promoted inspector accreditation as a viable option to satisfy NOP's certifier instruction that all certifiers evaluate every inspector in the field annually. Board members represented IOIA at the associated meetings of NOC at each NOSB event.
- IOIA's Executive Director served on the Steering Committee in 2015-2016 that led to the launch of IFOAM North America. Lisa Pierce of British Columbia was elected to the founding Board of Directors. Stuart McMillan joined them in Baltimore at Expo East for the historic launch.
- IOIA joined Canada Organic Trade Association. Stuart McMillan participated in the COTA "Parliament Day" in Ottawa, as well as Guelph Organic Conference and Organic Connections in SK.
- Al Johnson, Co-Chair of the Peer Field Evaluation Committee, joined the Executive Director at the annual meeting of the Accredited Certifiers Association to present the outcomes of the pilot Peer Field Evaluation Program.

Scholarship Committee

Board member **Margaret Weigelt** serves as chair of the Scholarship committee, which annually reviews applicants for the two IOIA Scholarships. Recipients receive free tuition to an IOIA Basic Organic Inspection Training.

The 2017 Rutherford Scholarship was awarded to Craig Shroyer, Central Pennsylvania, USA

The 2017 Organic Community Initiative Scholarship was awarded to Krishna Paudel, Kathmandu, Nepal

Read more about the recipients on page 4 of this issue.

IOIA Board

IOIA's hard working Board of Directors donates generously and works tirelessly to represent IOIA around the world. They forward the professionalism of organic inspectors with grace and good humor while juggling busy inspection schedules.

See **Annual**, p 22

QAI's In-house Basic Processing Inspection Training

by Luis Brenes, IOIA trainer

On Jan 16, 20, 2017 QAI, one of the largest certifiers in the US, co-sponsored an in house training for 20 members of its staff. It included five reviewers and fourteen certification project managers and the inspection coordinator. Luis Brenes and Stanley Edwards were the trainers for this very active group.

In class lectures, discussions and exercises were also combined with field trips to certified operations who generously accepted to host a group of inspectors who were willing to practice their recently acquired skills: interview, observe, review. Thanks Javo Beverage Company and Husks Unlimited Inc.!

Doing an in-house training with experienced people used to closely work together proved to be an interesting challenge for trainers but also proved to be an excellent way of standardizing approaches, sharing ideas, commenting on specific cases and leveling up the whole group. New certification project managers benefited from sharing with experienced reviewers and even the trainers enjoyed great discussions and questions.

QAI has set up an example for other ACA's on the importance of adequate training not just to some few of their staff but to all of them. IOIA wishes to thank QAI for trusting in its training services to upscale the qualifications of its staff.



More on QAI training

by Naomi Spoelman. QAI

This training was a dynamic experience that facilitated lively discussions that were applicable in our day-to-day work lives and provided a platform to discuss some of the more challenging aspects of interpreting the regulations in a practical way. In great part, this can be credited to such knowledgeable and experienced instructors, as well as the level of comfort and familiarity provided by taking a training with colleagues.

This inspector training bridged the gap in my knowledge; having experience both performing application reviews and creating work orders with specific instructions for inspection, as well as reviewing the inspection reports and determining non-compliances. It also provided the opportunity to go out into the field and see a facility first-hand. Learning about this vital in-between step has humanized the role of the inspector and given me, as a reviewer, insight into priorities of the inspection.

Most of all, this training has further solidified the importance of having, and understanding, the perspectives of the different parties during the organic certification process. Whether these perspectives are those of a client, a colleague, or an inspector, we all have an opportunity to learn every time we enter a new situation in the organic world.

I would like to thank QAI for taking this opportunity to invest in their employees and IOIA for facilitating the training.



NOP and ACA Training Re-cap

by Margaret Scoles

A total of 200 certification agency staff, NOP staff, and ACA Supporting Members participated. This again broken a previous attendance record. Countries included Mexico, Guatemala, Australia, France, Belgium, Armenia, Switzerland, Bolivia, Peru, Canada, Germany, India, Argentina, and the USA. Newly elected to the Board – Sam Welsch, OneCert; and Amber Pool, CCOF. Kelly Abbott of ICS was appointed to fill out the remainder of the term for Brett Bakker, who recently left due to approaching retirement from NM Dept of Ag.

Highlights from the NOP Training:

A few statistics from the NOP presentations:

- **Complaints:** Fewer Complaints in 2016. 86% of complaints are about uncertified operations; 4% Labeling; 10% alleged prohibited materials.
- **FOIA (Freedom of Information Act)** – 10% of NOP’s resources are going to comply with the FOIA requests - four full-time staff plus contractors.
- **Fastest growing food industry** – double digit growth, tripled in size since 2002, estimated greater than \$45 billion. > 4% total U.S. food sales.
- **Mexico** – their organic regulations are 90% implemented. 1635 NOP certified operations in Mexico.



The famous water fountains, each featuring bronze statues of different animals greeted us as we stepped off the train in downtown Portland.

NOP Training - Mexico was a hot topic. Last October, NOP signed a “terms of reference” with the competent authority in Mexico. Implementation includes the use of import certificates in both countries. This is part of all equivalency agreements except with Canada. NOP is looking at proposed rule that would require import certificates from all countries, not just those with which we have equivalency agreements. Mexico plans to implement its requirement in May 2017. We planned to have it implemented already on the US side, but that is now delayed.

NOP Training - Field Evaluations of Inspectors: Cheri Courtney – Accreditation & International Activities – drew lively questions when she announced that the NOP was looking at **2027 Personnel Performance Evaluations** (again). Inspectors still must be reviewed, but Courtney said NOP is open to looking at alternatives to 100% field observations annually. NOP said they will be glad to look at a risk-based or other approach sufficient to determine inspector competency. Since then, I’ve been talking a lot with certifiers, who are juggling new plans for inspector evaluation. It is heartening to know that certifiers still see IOIA’s Peer Evaluation as part of the puzzle to inspector evaluation.

AIA - Lars Crail, NOP Lead Auditor, reported on observations from the NOP audits.

A few of the things they look for:

- Are inspectors using or referencing the USDA regs when identifying Issues of Concerns?
- Are inspectors verifying the OSP? He sees the inspectors not using the OSP during inspection.
- Are inspectors issuing NONC and receiving Corrective Actions? They should not be.
- Are inspectors knowledgeable of the regs and NOP policies? He sees problems.

See **NOP/ACA**, page 19

Basic Processing Inspection Training, Lutz Florida

By Luis Brenes, IOIA trainer

On Feb 6th to 10th, fifteen participants gathered once again at the beautiful Bethany Center in Lutz, Florida, for an advanced processing training. Advanced? Yes! Well..... no... but kind of... When participants have already taken basic crop inspection training and are actively involved in the certification process either as inspector or certification reviewers, there is no way you can have a basic process training without jumping into questions that change the training more into an inspector's workshop....

"Can we review again this mass balance theory but now with complex multi-ingredient products?"; "Well,

that NOP policy memo has actually recently been edited to version 1.0"; "Have you've been in situation where the applicant asked you about...?"; "What is the current status of equivalency discussion among the US and?"; "Are you saying that tomatoes are not tropical crops and therefore cannot be ethylene ripened? Well. according to Vavilov's diversity centres of origin they come from South America..."

What still surprises me today and every day more is how organic certification keeps you engaged with very interesting topics and everyone has something to learn. The wisdom is in the group.

Field trips to Java Coffee and Pacific Tomato Growers were the perfect exercise after 2.5 days of class followed by group discussion and an afternoon focused on report writing. Thanks Americert and QCS for helping us setting up these visits!



Looking forward for another IOIA training at the Bethany Center, a spot that has already received IOIA in numerous occasions and still proves to be a perfect place for us.



*"Amazing course!
Loved the experience."*

**Margaret's Crop Group
making 'alligator jaws.'**

IOIA/QCS Basic Crop Inspection Training in Florida X2

By Margaret Scoles

IOIA took a big step with this training. We reduced the maximum size of the basic courses from 25 to 16-18 participants. A challenge arose when we overflowed with applicants. The solution? Have two smaller classes! Garry Lean taught a course of 16 participants, and I took a separate class of 15. Jonda Crosby did double duty – assisting in both crop classes. Brian Rakita, QCS staff inspector from Virginia, rounded out the trainer team and served as group leader.

Oddly, not a single participant in either class came from Florida. The participants flocked from colder climates to sunny Florida and enjoyed soaking up the rays every chance possible. “Can we go outside to work?” was a common question whenever we broke for small group work. The group also included a fair number of Californians who handled the time zone difference of 3 hours with mostly good humor. Special thanks go to Sweetwater Organic Farm in the Tampa urban area, who generously agreed to accommodate two groups when one of the hosts unexpectedly cancelled.

One group was hosted by 3 Boys Farm, a certified organic hydroponic operation. The farm employs solar power, rainwater harvesting, wind capture, and exhaust air redirection to reduce carbon footprint. Here, Robert Tornello works with the group as they practice their inspection skills.

“Garry made an intense course very approachable and awesome!”



Brian Rakita helped out in the classroom and as the field trip group leader on a blueberry operation.



Jonda Crosby, assistant trainer extraordinaire.



Garry's Crop Group

Bird flu on the move in Europe and Asia, with poultry and human victims

By [Maryn McKenna](#)

Strains of the influenza virus similar to the ones that [decimated Mid-western turkey and egg production](#) in 2014 and 2015 are now wreaking havoc in poultry production in several parts of the world, including China where the virus has jumped species and infected and killed humans.

The World Health Organization [reported recently](#) that since mid-January, 304 people in China were confirmed to have infections caused by a strain of avian influenza known as H7N9, and 36 people had died. Media in Asia say the toll is higher: The South China Morning Post, based in Hong Kong, [also reported](#) that cases have been recorded in 16 provinces of China, and that there have been 87 deaths.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of birds have died or been killed on affected farms, numbers that are recorded in [reports to the World Organization for Animal Health](#). Sampling [has shown](#) that birds carrying H7N9 flu in one-third of the live markets in Guangzhou, outside Hong Kong, and regional governments in several provinces [are pressuring](#) markets to close down.

(A note on nomenclature: Flu strains are named for variations in two proteins on the surface of the virus, H for hemagglutinin and N for neuraminidase; there are 16 possible Hs and nine possible Ns, making for lots of combinations.)

Periodic outbreaks of avian flu strains, which are carried to poultry by wild waterfowl, have been a problem for at least 20 years. In 1997, a different strain, H5N1, infected birds in Hong Kong, [jumped to humans](#), and killed six people. To shut down that outbreak, which health authorities feared might spark a global pandemic, the Hong Kong government ordered the slaughter of every chicken in the territory, more than 1 million of them.

Since then, [there have been](#) more than 800 cases worldwide of human infection with H5N1, and 452 deaths. The strain currently spreading in China, H7N9, is another of the small number of bird-flu strains that are known to jump species — and China is not the only place experiencing a spike in avian flu. On Wednesday, [Taiwan reported](#) a human case of H7N9 in a man who had visited mainland China. Even when human infections have been limited, or outbreaks have died down quickly, bird flu has caused enormous losses in poultry production, from sick birds dying or unaffected birds being killed to stop the spread. In the United States in 2014-2015, more than 50 million birds died or were destroyed, and supplies and prices of poultry and eggs were affected for months. Last year, only one farm was affected, in Indiana, and 43,000 birds were killed.

In the current wave, 1.5 million birds have been killed in Asia and more than 4 million in Europe, [according to the medical journal The Lancet](#).

[Vietnam](#) and [Cambodia](#) have both been contending with outbreaks of H5N1, a strain that in the past has jumped from birds to humans. South Korea has been trying to contain a different strain, H5N8, since the fall; the country has [killed more than 30 million birds](#) in an attempt to stop the spread.

That same strain also has been moving across Europe. It led to the prophylactic killing of more than a million ducks in France [in January](#) and so far [this month](#). It is the second year in a row that France has been hit by bird flu. [Ireland](#) and the [United Kingdom](#) also are culling tens of thousands of birds; in the UK, all poultry producers have been required to bring birds indoors. There

is no evidence that H5N8 can jump species to affect humans. One reason for the vast losses in poultry is that “stamping out” — preventive killing — is the main strategy for limiting the spread of flu in birds; unlike in humans, vaccination is not part of the flu-prevention toolkit. That is partly because vaccines are expensive and partly because vaccinating birds prevents illness but not necessarily infection, allowing the virus to continue to spread.

But veterinary-health authorities are coming around to the possibility that vaccination may have to be a part of any effective bird-flu response, because the economic damage — and the human risk — can be so great. Following the Midwest outbreak, the U.S. Department of Agriculture [solicited manufacturers](#) to fill a vaccine stockpile. But flu, a virus that mutates rapidly, is a moving target. And as with human flu vaccines, manufacturing capacity and distribution infrastructure would be sorely stressed if a bird-flu epidemic began to move.

Maryn McKenna is the author of [Superbug](#) and [Beating Back the Devil](#). She writes regularly about antibiotics and agriculture for [Ag Insider](#). Reprinted with permission from [FERN's AG Insider](#) 24 Feb 2017



More on Bird flu

A number of provinces in China have shut down live poultry markets to prevent the spread of avian flu after a surge in the number of infections from the H7N9 strain in recent months.

At least six provinces have reported human cases of H7N9 influenza this year, according to [Chinese state media, Xinhua](#).



A poultry market halted trading to reduce human contact with poultry on January 9 in Jiujiang, Jiangxi province. H7N9 is a strain of avian influenza first reported to have transmitted from birds to humans in [Shanghai in March 2013](#).

There is currently no vaccination for the H7N9 bird flu; officials advise that the best means of prevention is to avoid exposure. Treatment typically involves antiviral medications.

Benjamin John Cowling, head of the division of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of Hong Kong's School of Public Health, commented in a CNN interview, "The one thing about H7N9 is that the cases we see might be the tip of the iceberg of a much larger number of infections. Many infections are quite mild. They'll never be tested in a laboratory to confirm they've got H7N9." **CNN, 2/16/2017**

Bird flu found at Tyson Foods Tennessee chicken supplier

Tyson Foods said Monday, March 6, 2017, a strain of bird flu sickened chickens at a poultry breeder that supplies it with birds. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says the 73,500 birds at the Lincoln County, Tenn., facility were destroyed and none of the birds from the flock will enter the food system. The H7 strain of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, or HPAI, can be deadly for chickens and turkeys. (AP Photo/Danny Johnston, File)

NEW YORK (AP) — Tens of thousands of chickens have been destroyed at a Tennessee chicken farm due to a bird flu outbreak, and 30 other farms within a six-mile radius have been quarantined.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said 73,500 chickens were destroyed at the facility and will not enter the food system. The H7 avian influenza can be deadly to chickens and turkeys.

"Bird flu" is a catch-all phrase for a variety of influenza viruses that spread among poultry. They can be very contagious and deadly among birds, but rarely spread to humans. That said, deadly human flu pandemics have been sparked by viruses that first emerged in birds, and health officials closely track what's killing poultry.

Flu can spread from birds to humans when through the air, or when people touch a bird or an infected surface and then touch their eye, nose or mouth.

The company said it tests all of its flocks for the virus before they leave the farm "out of an abundance of caution." Results are known before the birds are processed, the company said, and animals are not used if bird flu is detected.

Department of Agriculture is not identifying the farm where the chickens were destroyed, saying only that it is located in the state's Lincoln County, just west of Chattanooga.

There have been bird flu outbreaks in China and in Europe in recent months, though they are of differing strains.

The USDA said Monday that it does not yet know what type of H7 bird flu is affecting the chickens at Tennessee, but will know within 48 hours.

[Associated Press](#) March 6, 2017

Transitional, from page 8

Further applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis.

USDA has expanded the reach of the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program to include transitional certification fees. *Organic Report, OTA, 1/25/2017*

GE Mitigation Measures for Corn

by Hugh Martin

Farmers need to practice Best Management Practices and mitigation measures to reduce the risk of GE contamination. Contamination may result from seed impurities, wind or insect-borne cross-pollination, volunteer or feral plants, and/or inadequate harvest and handling practices. Corn is a crop that is cross-pollinated by wind and pollen can spread 300 metres or more under typical conditions to contaminate an organic crop with GE pollen from neighbouring GE crops.

There are many different GE traits being used in GE corn crops. All are prohibited in organic production. While most GE varieties of corn are stacked on the glyphosate tolerant gene, growers are urged to make themselves aware of popular GE corn hybrids that are being grown by neighbours. It is important to establish and maintain open lines of communication with your neighbours on which adjacent fields are planned for GE corn in the coming year which may be within 300 metres of organic corn. Neighbours can sometimes plan and adjust their rotations to avoid the conflicts of having organic and GE corn in adjacent fields. Document where GE crops are being grown on farms adjacent to organic crops.

Verify with your seed supplier that the seeds you are getting are not the product of genetic engineering. This must be documented in writing either by seed tags or letter from the supplier or other acceptable statements of documentation. You must keep these records in your files. Enquire whether or not your seed supplier tests each lot for trace GE content. If not, you can test the seed yourself. Knowing how clean your seed is before you plant it can make the difference between a clean crop or one that is downgraded or diverted into the conventional stream by the buyer.

Selecting fields that are isolated from neighbouring corn fields either by distance or by woodlots and windbreaks can help to reduce the risk.

In addition to distance separation between organic and GE crops, you can usually plan for separation of pollination times. Organic corn is often planted several weeks later than the neighbouring non-organic crops. This will cause the organic corn to pollinate later than the non-organic corn and reduce the risk of simultaneous pollen shed and cross pollination. A minimum of two weeks is needed to avoid cross-pollination in corn. Hybrid maturity selection will also influence date of pollination. Growers should document the date of tasselling and pollination for each of their organic fields and the adjacent non-organic fields.

In situations where isolation distance is less than is required, border rows in the organic field can be used. The outside border rows in the organic field adjacent to the adjacent GE corn field are used to create an additional isolation zone. The corn from these border rows will “flood” the organic field with non-GE pollen to reduce the risk of GE pollen contaminating the organic corn. At harvest the border rows should be monitored closely by testing as they may receive pollen from the neighbouring GE crop and the appropriate areas that are contaminated sold as non-organic.

Some companies are developing hybrids that are non-receptive to GE pollen and they can be used in the organic field, especially in the border rows to reduce the risk of GE pollen contaminating the organic corn. These genes have been bred into the modern field corn variety from teosinte and popcorn parent lines, without compromising the productivity of the modern field corn variety.

Ideally planting and harvest equipment should only be used for organic crops and do not come in contact with GE crops. Ensure that all planting equipment including any augers, seed wagons or other equipment is thoroughly cleaned to eliminate risk of spreading GE seeds. Similarly, all harvest and storage equipment (combines, augers, wagons, buggies, trucks, tarps, dryer, bins, etc.) should be thoroughly cleaned (see equipment operator’s manual or website for more information). Make sure to document all cleaning activities with date, methods and who performed these activities. Inspect them again just before use.

Organic grains can be tested for GE contamination by either “strip” tests or by tests completed in a laboratory. There are several methods that can be used. *Immunoassay strip tests* are rapid low cost tests that can be performed yourself or locally to indicate the presence of a GE trait. The appropriate test strip will be needed for the traits you are trying to detect. You can also send samples to a commercial laboratory for testing. *PCR tests* which are generally conducted by commercial laboratories are much more expensive but are also much more accurate. They can be useful as a follow-up test. When preparing to ship your crop to the buyer, always retain samples of each shipment. This is a good insurance policy if your buyer informs you that a lot tested positive. You can follow up with your own PCR test and compare results. This enables you to challenge their test which may be positive because of commingling which took place after the load left the farm.

Make sure to complete an inspection of trucks used to deliver your products to market (especially when using trucks that you do not own) and complete documentation signed by the driver that the trucks have

Mitigation, continued

been cleaned appropriately and that the previous load will not contaminate your product.

Make sure you are aware of any extra requirements from your buyers. Continuous efforts are needed to reduce the risk of GE contamination. The Canadian Organic Standard recognizes that it is difficult to produce a crop with zero contamination in a polluted world. Our practices are designed to produce a crop with the least amount of contamination possible.

Additional Sources

GMO CONTAMINATION PREVENTION What Does it Take?

Jim Riddle, <http://www.demeter-usa.org/downloads/GMO-Contamination-Prevention.pdf>

About the author



Hugh Martin has been inspecting organic farms in Ontario since 2012. He is also chair of the Canadian General Standards Board Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture which recently updated the Canadian Organic Standards. Previously he was the organic specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and is a graduate of University of Guelph (BSc(Agr) and MSc).

NOP/ACA, from page 13

- Do inspectors clearly understand the difference is between consulting and providing clarification of the regs? (Inspectors seem to think they can't explain the regs.)
- Do inspectors think that verification is sufficient by interviewing the operator? It is a great way, but just asking the operator and not looking and walking the plant/farm is inadequate.
- Are Traceback and Mass Balance inspection activities conducted appropriate for the inspected operation, completed correctly, and recorded? He sees these as essential parts of the inspection.
- Are Inspectors verifying corrective actions from prior NONC? Sometimes they are not.
- Is the inspector hampered by the materials the certifier provided?
- Inspectors provided annual updates that lack complete OSP info?
- Inspector checklists or inspections provide an area to record Mass-Balance and Trace Back?
- Does Exit Interview Form require the regulatory reference? NOP thinks it should.

Highlights from the ACA Training

Verifying Organic Integrity of Products Handled by Uncertified Wholesalers: a panel – Rebecca Willows of Organically Grown Company; Ben Johnson of Bridges Organic Produce, and Sam Welsch of OneCert. Sam gave Silke Fuchshofen's IOIA webinar-in-development and her contributions to the session a nice mention.

Kiki Hubbard – State of Organic Seed – Larger producers are not using organic seed. Smaller ones are using more organic seed. Particularly onerous is the companies who contract with growers and give them a letter that says organic seed of that variety is not available. No surprises here for inspectors.

Natural Resources and Biodiversity – session with NRCS: There are clearly not enough TSPs to meet the demand.

Organic CSI – Investigation Stories & Successes – a panel – Jake Lewin, CCOF; Johanna Philipps, ISDA; Connie Karr, OTCO; and Brenda Book, WSDA received especially high ratings. Philipps spoke about the Idaho alfalfa seed case. Her take-away – addressing bad players is the most important thing you can do. Brenda Book took State Investigator Training. She thinks everyone should take it. Her take-away, we are always doing investigations. Don't think of investigations as different from inspections. They are civil investigations, not criminal investigations. Inspectors are agents of the ACA; ACAs are agents of USDA.

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

Conference Call - Nov. 30, 2016

Members present: Stuart McMillan (Chair), Pam Sullivan, Garth Kahl, Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), Ib Hagsten, Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, Matt Miller Others: Margaret Scoles (MS), ED,

Report from the Chair: Parliament Day (Ottawa)-Organized by COTA. Stuart enjoyed new experience of lobbying MPs. COTA had already addressed talking points and issues to raise with MPs. Lots of discussion of carbon credits within agriculture. COTA wanted MPs to understand why OG farming is far better from climate perspective. Stuart later went to Lord Elgin hotel and met with their meeting director. Stuart also attended Organic Connections Conference in SK. Suggests this would not be the best conference for IOIA to have a presence. Suggests another conference in Manitoba, "Think Whole Farm". Scheduled next in March 2018.

Financial Report: IRS Form 990 and Agreed Upon Procedures. **MA makes a motion that we approve the IRS Form 990, 2nd by Garth. Unanimously approved.** Discussion of the document created by Pam for 2016 to focus of Agreed Upon Procedures. We need to get some bids on undertaking this audit. MS-Policy manual does not require us to perform this annually. We only need to annually determine whether this procedure is necessary. It's been 4 years; we probably do need to do this again.

Discussion of 2017 Preliminary Budget: It looks like we did much better than we expected in 2016. 2017 numbers look very much like 2016. Pam highlights items in the budget. Budget assumes we will be continuing to do Peer Evaluations. Projected to perform 4 two-scope (8 trainings ... ex. C/L or C/P). Reduction of class size, esp. in crop classes will lead to drop in income, but better quality classes. Probably most of the crop trainings will be 16, max. 18 w/ 3 field trips. Budget does contain a salary for an "assistant to Margaret position" that we've talked about since Korea. **Stuart expresses thanks to the Finance Committee and especially Pam for their work on the budget. Ib moves we approve preliminary 2017 budget, 2nd by MA. Unanimously approved.**

COTA Membership: Matt moves that IOIA joins the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA), 2nd by Garth. Unanimously approved.

IFOAM North America. Canadian IOIA member Lisa Pierce is on the BoD! MS- We have \$1K in the budget for IOIA Representation on non-IOIA Committee. She assumes we will use this to send Lisa to the North American IFOAM General Congress in 2017.

Ib's report from fall NOSB meeting. Multiple (5) NOSB Board members are IOIA members. Lots of comment and general agreement that Peer Evaluation needs to be risk based.

2017 AGM; BOD Retreat; and BOD Succession: Key subjects to focus on: fundraising, the Accreditation Program, review of existing plans (from last year's retreat).

Asia Pacific Committee Goals for 2017: They are focusing on grower group inspectors training, including ICS auditors. Want to make a team to develop training materials.

Conference Call - Jan. 13, 2017

Members present: Margaret Anne Weigelt, Stuart McMillan, Garth Kahl, Matt Miller, Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, Ib Hagsten, Pam Sullivan. Others: Margaret Scoles, ED (MS)

Approval of agenda: Stuart proposes we add brief discussion about USDA Transitional certification program.

Report from chair. Stuart and MS talked to a reporter from Wall Street Journal. Stuart found him to be reasonable interviewer and journalist. Wanted to know about the validity of the inspection process in international locales. Stuart stressed with him there is no reason to categorically distrust certified product from abroad.

2017 Final Budget and Year-End Report for 2016: Matt moves we approve the 2017 budget, second by Ib. Garth moves we approve 12/31/16 balance sheet, 2nd by Ib. Both motions unanimously approved.

Peer Evaluation: Board is in consensus that they want to continue with the program with the fee schedule outlined by MS.

Resources

Interactive Training for Organic Certifiers and Inspectors

NOP has published an interactive scenario-based training program for organic certifiers and inspectors. The training follows an organic inspector through an annual inspection with a certified organic farmer. Using a series of “choose your own adventure” scenarios, the training teaches sound and sensible inspection principles in a practical and engaging way. Access the training here: [The Path to Sound and Sensible Organic Inspections](#)

Food Safety Resource

The Open Source Food Safety Initiative is making information about food safety free, publicly available, and easy to understand. The new website hosts Creative Commons-licensed Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HAC-CP) plans and invites people to share their own plans, comment on existing plans and adapt plans for their own businesses. It can be especially helpful to farmers who run on-farm food services or produce value-added products. The project is a collaboration between the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Underground Food Collective, Sarapis Foundation, and open source software developers. Check it out at <http://www.opensourcefoodsafety.org/>

MOSA 12/29/2016

MOSA Updated Certification Resource

We have revised and updated our popular [Guidebook for Organic Certification](#). The new version walks farmers through the steps to become certified organic, and provides insights into organic standards and production practices. The 32-page book also includes guidelines for organic processing and handling. It is available free as a PDF download or by mail.

SoilHealth Institute Releases Research Landscape Tool

SHI's free online library and search engine includes over 1,000 scientific resources. The tool is an important step toward SHI's primary goal to support soil research and the dissemination of research information. OFRF's Research Program Director, Diana Jerkins and OFRF board member, Klaas Martens serve on SHI's board.

OFRF Newsletter, January 2017

The Organic INTEGRITY Database has moved to a new server with a new web address. The result? Searches and data uploads are now MUCH faster than before! Check out the list of USDA certified organic farms and businesses today and update your bookmark to the new address: <https://organic.ams.usda.gov/integrity>.

USDA Organic Insider, 12/7/2016

IFOAM – Organics International Membership E-Directory. IFOAM brought the year 2016 to a close with 848 affiliates in 121 countries. **The Membership E-Directory 2017** is an invaluable instrument, linking you to the worldwide organic movement by providing you with the contact information of our entire membership base.

[You can download the E-Directory here.](#)



OFRF is pleased to announce a Spanish translation of its educational guide titled, Soil Microbial Interactions and Organic Farming. The guide provides information for organic farmers on how to build healthy soils through incorporating the benefits of a diverse soil microbiome.

Click here to [Read more](#)

Annual, from page 11

STAFF:

Margaret Scoles, Executive Director
 Jonda Crosby, Training Services Director
 Teri Lindberg, US Training Services Coordinator
 Sacha Draine, International Training Manager

Cynthia Jorgensen, Membership Services Coordinator
 Cil Earley, Bookkeeper
 Diane Cooner, Communications Director
 Tony Fleming, Newsletter Technical Editor

In Memoriam:

Linda Kaner, Minnesota, was a founding board member of IOIA and served 25 years on the Accreditation Committee, from its inception to the time of her passing.

Maarten Samsom, Vermont, inspector member since 2000, served as Membership Committee Chair and member of the Board of Directors. He was known for his ethics and a passion for organic integrity.



Pam Sullivan, BOD Treasurer, took over the reins of IOIA's finances in 2013. One of her first actions was to urge her colleagues to initiate 100% giving by BOD. Under her leadership and stewardship, IOIA has since increased cash reserves by \$150,000+ while investing in inspector training and accreditation.

IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STUART MCMILLAN
 — CHAIR —
 IB HAGSTEN, PHD
 — VICE CHAIR —
 PAMELA SULLIVAN
 — TREASURER —
 GARTH KAHL
 — SECRETARY —
 MARGARET WEIGELT
 — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT LARGE —
 MUTSUMI SAKUYOSHI
 — DIRECTOR —
 MATTHEW MILLER
 - DIRECTOR -

International Organic Inspectors Association Balance Sheet (Cash Basis)

As of December 31, 2016

ASSETS	Dec 31, 2016	Dec 31, 2015
Current Assets		
Total Checking/Savings/CDs	361,376.37	277,231.50
Accounts Receivable	-11,662.49	-7,722.49
Total Other Current Assets	15,346.33	13,745.50
Total Current Assets	365,060.21	283,254.51
Fixed Assets		
Total Building	38,768.86	38,768.86
Other Assets		
Accumulated Depreciation	-12,899.06	-10,690.95
TOTAL ASSETS	\$390,930.01	\$311,332.42
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Equity		
Contributed Property-FMValue	29,031.80	29,031.80
Reimbursables	50.00	50.00
Restricted (Scholarship Travel Fund)	0.42	573.42
Retained Funds	281,677.20	194,201.02
Net Income	80,170.59	87,476.18
Total Equity	390,930.01	311,332.42
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$390,930.01	\$311,332.42

The Inspectors' Report is the newsletter of the 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@ioia.net
 Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.

Maarten Samsom, 1941 - 2017

I am forwarding, sadly, this note about the passing of one of our much-loved members – Maarten Samsom. On Tuesday January 24 I received a notice from his sons; Martijn and Bart Samsom, about his passing the day before and the services in Fairfield, VT to be held on Saturday, January 28.

Maarten joined IOIA about 17 years ago. He battled multiple health issues over the past couple years with grace and fortitude, and finally fell gravely ill late last fall. He was still inspecting last fall. I had two lovely phone conversations with him over the past month or so. We shared fond memories of how he taught me to ride the city bus, how he once flagged down a charter bus in the middle of the street, and how we canoed together on a wonderful visit to Vermont and listened to the loons singing. He was the most extraordinary party host, and hosted an IOIA party in his home. He organized other IOIA socials at major events. Based on those recent phone visits, I believe Maarten would want me to share this as his final message, “the only thing that matters is Love”. In his final days, he was completely consumed and lit by love and very much at peace. ~ Margaret Scoles

Maarten Memorial Thoughts

I am so grateful for the time spent with Maarten this past year at the AGM in Korea. His passion and dignity and grace are imprinted inside of me. Maarten was a good one and I will miss him. ~ Lisa Pierce

I will be there [at the memorial] in spirit, toasting Maarten’s kindness and idealism. I have good memories of his thoughtful perspective on the world and his utmost respectfulness as we strolled the streets of Austin to look at the bat bridge at dusk. And his perseverance in negotiating the Annual Meeting in Essex, Vermont when I was voted onto the IOIA board, and where enjoyed one of the most delicious meals in my recollection. And I’ll think of him at EcoFarm where I will be Friday and Saturday, where 12 years ago he shared his food with me on the patio when my son was a baby and I did not have a lunch ticket. We carry on and work hard with integrity in honor of Maarten!
~Ann Baier, Soquel, CA

I’ll miss Maartin. He was the only one that laughed at my jokes. ~ David Demler

Maarten's family can be contacted via his son Bart, bartsamsom@xs4all.nl





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Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!

2017 Calendar

March 23 - 24 IOIA Advanced Inspector training, Ottawa

March 25 IOIA AGM

April 18 - 21 NOSB Spring Meeting, Denver, Colorado

April 24 - 28 IOIA/IOA Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training

May 1 - 5 IOIA/IOA Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training

May 22 - 23 Organic Confluences conference part of OTA's Organic Week, Washington, DC [More info](#)

May 22 - 25 Organic Week, Washington, DC.

August 1 - 4 Kobe City, Japan, IOIA Farm Course

August 2 & 3 IOIA/OEFFA Organic Livestock Inspection Field Training, Wooster, Ohio

September 13 - 16 Expo East & OTA Annual Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland

October 16 - 18 Austin TX. Esca Bona - Re-Writing Food. Conference. Escabona.com

Fall 2017 - IOIA/CCOF Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training - IOIA/CCOF Basic Organic Processing Inspection Training. Dates to be announced.

November 9 - 11 19th Organic World Congress, New Delhi, India. <http://www.owc.ifoam.bio>

Please see page 3 for the current list of IOIA on-site trainings and webinars