



Notes from the Chair

by Janine Gibson

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we move into a New Year with renewed optimism and faith in our values as organic inspectors, let's acknowledge the tremendous legacy of voluntary and paid hours that has brought us as IOIA, into this Celebration of our 30th year of service. We celebrate our 30 years along with IFOAM's 50 years of accomplishments toward maintaining organic integrity!

As part of the leadership team, we thank each of you (staff, contractors, and volunteer team) and all our organic community, for your efforts at diligence to improve the depth of cooperation and partnerships as individuals and as the IOIA community. Observing this gratitude and commitment to improvement in our sector, sustains me See **Notes**, page 4

Welcome New Members

Inspectors

Mathew Eddy, Viroqua, WI
Derek Sindler, Ecuador

Supporting Individuals

Dawn Anderson, Akron, OH
Maria Cash, Anaheim, CA
Megan Darnell, Colbert, GA
Collins Davis, Florence, AL
James Davis, Jackson, MI
John DeRosier, Paso Robles, CA
Rhea Epp, Winnepeg, MB, Canada
Shayan Ettehadieh, Canoga Park, CA
Kayla Friedrichsen, Novato, CA
Lydia Hsu, Athens, GA
Timothy Keneipp, Viroqua, WI
Carol Kleppe, Gonvick, MN
Alania Lindquist, Kenwood, CA
Gabe Oppegaard, Mckinleyville, CA
Talia Parfeniuk, Anmore, BC, Canada
Nicholas Parker, Spartanville, SC
Gabrielle Rovegno, Pittsburgh, PA
Tyler Zander, Cerrillos, NM

Accreditation News!

Renewals:

Garth Kahl (C,L,P)
Kymberley Snarr (C,L,P)
Leonard Pollara, (P)

New Accreditations:

Elizabeth Dominick (C, L,P)
Leonard Pollara (C, L)

IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

— CHAIR —
JANINE GIBSON
— VICE CHAIR —
BETH DOMINICK
— TREASURER —
ALLAN BENJAMIN
— SECRETARY —
KATE NEWKIRK
— EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT LARGE —
CHUCK MITCHELL
— DIRECTOR —
TERRANCE 'T' LAYHEW
— DIRECTOR —
BRIAN BAKER

The Inspectors' Report is the newsletter of International Organic Inspectors Association. IOIA is a 501 (c)(3) educational organization. Our mission is to address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors, to provide quality inspector training and to promote integrity and consistency in the organic certification process.
Editor: [Diane Cooner](#)

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

January 10 - 13, 2023

200-level Livestock Feed Audits - Grazing and Non Grazing Season
9:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m. (Pacific)
Two 2 ½ hour sessions. Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm

[Register and Pay Here](#)

January 17 & 20

100-level NOP Crop Standards
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (Pacific)
Two 3 hour sessions. Trainer: Nate Powell Palm

[Register and Pay Here](#)

February 7 & 10

100 Level NOP Livestock Standards
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (Pacific)
Two 3 hour sessions. Trainer: Garry Lean

[Register and Pay Here](#)

March 7 & 10

100 level NOP Processing Standards
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (Pacific)
Two 3 hour sessions. Trainer: Garry Lean

[Register and Pay Here](#)

*Webinar Discount Reminder:
All inspector members are entitled to take 50% off any one webinar during 2023.*

Online Basic Inspection Training

Online Basic Livestock Inspection Training - Feb. 27 - March 3, 2023

Detailed Course Information - PLEASE READ BEFORE REGISTERING
Registration and Application is a 3-step process.

Deadline to Register and Apply is Thursday, January 26, 2023.

[Download Application Here](#)
[Course Agenda](#)

Online Basic Processing Inspection Training - March 27 - 31, 2023

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements. Detailed Course Information - PLEASE READ BEFORE REGISTERING.
Registration and Application is a 3-step process.

Deadline to Register and Apply is Thursday, February 23, 2023.

[Download Application Here](#)
[Course Agenda](#)

Online Basic Crop, Livestock and Processing inspection training to the COR is under development for 2023.

Self-Paced Courses

IOIA offers several self-directed courses, see our [website for details](#).
We expect to offer a new COR course on livestock in 2023!
Watch for announcement here.

Advanced Inspector Training & AGM, New Orleans, Louisiana – January 2023

Hyatt Centric Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

About the IOIA training on January 27:

The morning will focus on Organic Integrity and the use of Residue Sampling as a tool, moderated by Dr. Brian Baker, Oregon. He will also address issues around high nitrogen liquid fertilizers, updates to the National List in process, and Sampling. The Alliance for Organic Integrity will open with an update on *What the Organic Observatory means for inspectors?* How can it find and deter fraud? Nathaniel Powell-Palm, IOIA Trainer and current Chair of the NOSB, will speak on Residue Sampling – Top Ten Things Inspectors need to know. George Lewko, PAg, and Instructor - Forensic Agrology at Saskatchewan Institute of agrologists in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan will speak on *Forensic Agrology – when is Sampling helpful?* Followed by *Inspecting Input Manufacturers* - Heather Hawthorne, Inspection Manager.

The afternoon will cover 3 topics that can help inspectors diversify their portfolios and bring additional work opportunities.

Mentorship – Lessons Learned – 2 models – work opportunity for experienced inspectors!

- Apprenticeship Intensives – Top 10 learnings - Garth Kahl and Nathaniel Powell-Palm, IOIA Trainers who led IOIA's NOP-funded apprenticeship intensives in 2022.
- One on one – adapting the model - Janine Gibson, IOIA Trainer and current BOD Chair
- How to become recognized as a Mentor and get paid Margaret Scoles, IOIA Executive Director

Fish Bowl! Moderated by David Gould, Portland, Oregon. *What are we Learning from Field Evaluations/Witness Inspections – as witnesses and as inspectors being witnessed?*

- What to Expect when you are being witnessed as an Inspector.
- How to perform witness inspections.
- Becoming an IOIA Peer Evaluator.

Regenerative Organic Inspections: Elizabeth Whitlow, Executive Director, Regenerative Organic Alliance, California will finish with *Regenerative Organic Certified® – an “organic plus” certification – what potential auditors need to know.*

[Course Agenda](#)

IOIA members - \$325

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

Non-IOIA members - \$350

For Details about the AGM on January 23 - [See our website](#) for complete info!

- Field trip the morning of January 23!
- Keynote Speaker, **Nathan Slabaugh**, film maker and photographer, Spokane, Washington, **“Telling our Story”** - the story of organic inspectors.
- Don't Miss our “Celebrate Organic” Parade at 4:15 p.m. on January 26!
- And don't forget to vote! We will be sending reminders via Election Runner.



Basic Crop Inspection training, cosponsored by WSDA, in Washington state, is under development for May 2023.

IOIA/ACA Joint training collaboration

IOIA and ACA will again partner on training in-person. In 2020, the two organizations partnered



in San Antonio, Texas on the first ever NOP/ACA/IOIA training. In 2021, we collaborated on all on-line training. Now in 2023, we return to in-person training, followed by online training in February.

[Register here for the training.](#) The online training is provided free to all who register for the in-person training. It is also possible to register for only the online training for a fee.

January 25 – NOP training
January 25-26 ACA training
February 7-9 online training
(12-5 pm EST)



Not finding a training you are looking for or all trainings full?
[Please register here](#) to be contacted by IOIA when that training is available.

Notes from page 1

personally as I heal from a time of burnout, a condition I am sure many of you have experienced in our challenge to balance our lives and work with a shortage of organic professionals.

We are living in times of challenge and change, with fractals around us reflecting universal patterns, able to help guide us in our choices to build symbiosis and cooperation. Best of luck to you and yours to deeper balance and health in the New Year, thank you for your services to our sector and for being part of the organic community of IOIA!

May you celebrate with us at the NOLA AGM and trainings, either in spirit or in person!

Janine Gibson



Some of the Founding Board - Monique Scholz, Margaret Scoles, Norm Bernhardt, Jim Riddle, Phil Hale, Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1993

IOIA Board after the election
Arkansas, 1993
Rick Martinez,
Margaret Scoles,
Jim Riddle,
Bernardo Rojas,
Norm Bernhardt,
Linda Kaner, and
Chip Kraynyk



First of their kind



First Canada training
British Columbia
April 1994



First training in Japan, 1998.

This issue celebrates our many partners, look for this icon:



First training in Asia, Russia, 1994

First Latin American training, Costa Rica, 1995



Notes from the Executive Director by Margaret Scoles

I will not start at the beginning. I will start in the middle – about 15 years ago – halfway through IOIA history. In 2007, the board convened in Broadus for the first time ever. IOIA's board included salty, seasoned, and brilliant inspectors. Garry Lean (Ontario) was Chair. Bob Durst (Oregon) was vice-chair. Other board members were Gene Prochaska (Indiana); Sue Baird (Missouri); David Konrad (Ontario); Monique Scholz (Quebec); and Erin Beard (Iowa). Monique was the first board member to come back and serve again. She had served on the founding steering committee and the founding board. Erin was, I believe, the youngest board member ever - yes, even younger than Terrance Layhew. Catherine Cash (Virginia) and Maheswar Ghimire (Nepal) weren't able to come.



Board retreat, Devil's Tower, 2007

Why Broadus? Well, first, it was inexpensive. Half of the board flew to Billings, MT and I picked them up. Half the board flew to Rapid City, SD, and rented a car. Second, we had just taken ownership of our own building. Amsden LLC had gifted us our building and we were property owners. This was a super-productive retreat; we had a great facilitator (Bill Milton, who was flown in to meet us at Devil's Tower, Wyoming). The only "flaw" was that we decided to save \$\$ by writing our own report of what we did. For our first ever comprehensive Strategic Plan (published in 2022) our paid facilitator prepared the final Strategic Plan. The retreat in 2007 was not our first attempt at major Strategic Planning – go back to 2000 in La Veta, Colorado. We had great facilitators there too, but they weren't paid to create the final report. This year – we finally got a cohesive Strategic Plan to guide our work forward after meeting in November 2021 in Boulder, Colorado. Profound acknowledgment to Monique Marez for her good work as facilitator and report writer.

At the 2007 retreat, we were telling stories and visioning. Monique was telling a story, with her unique way of pausing and seeking validation from the listeners. At one point, she paused, and David said, "It's your story, you tell it..."

There is not room here for me to tell my whole story and how it intertwines with IOIA's – but I will tell some pieces. My story started with an afternoon training on couches in the back of a health food store in Helena, MT in 1988. And discovering that year on my very first inspection that I had found work that fit like a glove. I did 4 inspections that year. I would never look back and that was half of a lifetime ago. I consider Slippery Rock University to be the place we conceived IOIA. It was at an OCIA training in 1990 when the idea sprang from a noisy after-training-hours meeting over beer. That training provided space and a critical mass of inspectors in one place. Everyone worked for free as we started IOIA. I traveled with homemade venison jerky and organic carrots from my garden in my bag. Within a year, we plunked down our dues to start IOIA. We were ambitious to launch training, but we couldn't do that immediately. In Baltimore, 1991, Jim Riddle and I met with the heads of OCIA and OGBA and proposed that we co-facilitate training for them. From that training forward, IOIA became the world leader in inspector training.

The next 30 years of IOIA will not look the same. In fact, the next 10 years probably won't. I probably won't be the person writing these notes. Nonprofits world-over are constantly re-inventing themselves. We were profoundly a membership organization when we formed, and we are still that. However, membership for most nonprofits is waning. We, too, are experiencing a slight decline in number of members. We have always been a training organization and there seems to be consistent demand for training – but with big changes. Most training is happening online. And increasingly in the organic sector, much of the training is free. How will we re-invent our Training Institute? Nonprofits don't exist to perpetuate themselves. They exist to serve their mission. Is our mission still relevant? I think so –



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

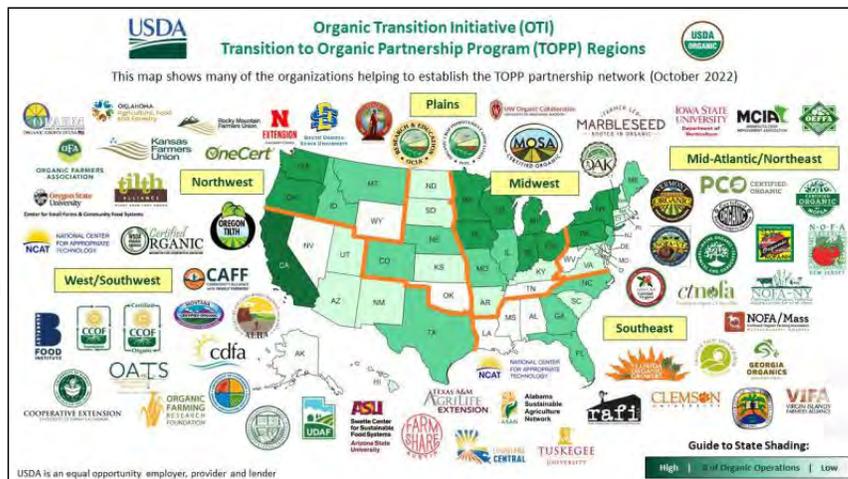
I have confidence in the future relevance of IOIA because we consistently have an amazing board of directors. One thing that hasn't changed is the dedication of our members and their willingness to serve. Have you looked at the slate of candidates this year?! Once again, a stellar ballot. Please, this is your organization, vote. Board members will continue to re-invent the organization. Their retreats might not be at Devil's Tower with the benefit of stupendous geology and Mother Earth to influence them. It might be on Zoom. But, ultimately the earth is who we are working for.

Sector News

USDA Announces Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP)

USDA has announced it is establishing cooperative agreements in six regions across the United States for the Organic Transition Initiative (OTI), Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP). Organizations participating in the partnership network will work together to establish and administer a farmer-to-farmer mentorship program providing direct farmer training, education, and outreach activities. Today's effort is part of the larger Biden-Harris Administration's effort to transform our food system post-pandemic so it is more secure, resilient, fair, and equitable.

The TOPP partnership network covers six regions: the Mid-Atlantic/Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Plains, Northwest, and West/Southwest. Organizations in these regions are actively forming partnerships to serve transitioning and existing organic farmers. Partnerships will provide mentoring services, technical assistance, community building, and organic workforce development.



Trademark Registration Increases Cost of Misusing the USDA Organic Seal

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced that it has registered the USDA organic seal trademark with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The USDA seal trademark is specifically described in the Organic Foods Protection Act (OFPA) and is currently protected by federal regulation. Registration of the organic seal grants additional intellectual property rights to further restrict the use of the trademark or a confusingly similar one, by uncertified farms and businesses. The trademark registration works in conjunction with OFPA and the organic regulations, providing another enforcement tool against misuse of the seal. As the trademark owner, USDA can seek additional civil remedies such as injunctive relief and monetary damages under the Lanham Act. Operations trafficking in counterfeit organic goods or otherwise willfully misusing the USDA organic seal may be subject to fines and imprisonment under the Trademark Counterfeiting Act. This also means the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) can now detain, reject, or re-export imported products confirmed to be fraudulently using the USDA organic seal. Trademark authority and penalties for misusing the seal are in effect regardless of whether the ® is included.

USDA Amends the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances

The USDA organic regulations contain detailed requirements about how to produce and label organic products. Part of the regulations, the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List), describes what can and cannot be used in organic—like what materials are allowed in organic food production and processing.

On November 14, USDA published a final rule that adds two substances to the National List:

- Paper-based planting aids, also known as “paper pots,” for transplanting crops on organic farms.
- Low-acyl gellan gum for use as a thickener, stabilizer, or gelling agent in organic products like beverages, icing, dessert fillings and confections, and capsules for supplements.

The rule also corrects a spelling error on the National List, changing “wood resin” to “wood rosin.” Changes to the National List require a recommendation from the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and rulemaking by USDA.

New Course and Microlearning - Organic Field Crop Practices

The National Organic Program (NOP) has launched a new course on Organic Field Crop Practices in the Organic Integrity Learning Center. The *Organic Field Crop Practices* course provides inspectors and certifiers with a foundational understanding of organic field crop production practices. You will learn the basics of soil health; fertility management; strategies for weed, pest, disease control; seasonal field activities; and the possibilities for offering professional organic technical advising services. By strengthening your understanding of on-farm production practices and equipment, this course will help you to assess a farm's implementation of its organic system plan (OSP) and protect the integrity of USDA organic products. Need a Learning Center account? [Access sign-up page](#)

News from Canada



Jan 23 - 29, 2023

Canada's Largest Organic Event
Something for Everyone!



#GOC2023



IOIA salutes the Guelph Organic Conference & Trade Show at Guelph University – the longest running organic conference in Canada. In about 2000, Tomás Nimmo approached IOIA about becoming a sponsor of the Conference. IOIA didn't become a sponsor immediately but held the 2001 IOIA Annual Meeting in Guelph in conjunction with the conference. For the next 5 years, IOIA had a booth at the conference. In 2008, IOIA moved to full sponsorship and an attractive upstairs location and has sponsored since. About every two years, an advanced inspector training is held in Guelph, in conjunction with the conference. This year, Bill Barkley (Canadian Committee Chair) and Tom Cassan (booth volunteer extraordinaire) will be managing the booth. The Canadian Committee will be hosting an inspector get-together.

The **Guelph Organic Conference** will be returning in 2023 for a hybrid in-person and online event, now hosted by the Organic Council of Ontario (OCO). Online programming will take place from January 23-27 and the much-missed in-person workshops and organic trade show will take place on January 28 and 29 at the University of Guelph. Nimmo initiated the conference and ran it for more than 30 years. His LinkedIn page says, "My history in this business began with bushels of "organic" carrots and broccoli thrown onto the back of an old pick-up truck in 1974, delivered to Toronto friends. And that his motto remains 'never stop promoting.'"

Advanced Inspection Training in Saskatoon!

IOIA delivered advanced organic inspector training, Nov. 15, in snowy Saskatoon, Saskatchewan with 22 participants from 5 provinces of Canada and one state in the US. The day moved quickly, opened with a presentation by Zoom from Valeriya Staykova of CFIA, followed by forensic agrologist George Lewko, PAg. The hybrid training set-up was fortunate when Elizabeth Whitlow of the Regenerative Organic Alliance was held up overnight in Vancouver.

With technology and Zoom, she was beamed in to present. Other presentations included a panel on innovative approaches to grain marketing and fraud deterrence and audit trail in parallel production grain/flour mills (Janine Gibson and Kelly Monaghan). IOIA was an exhibitor in the following 2-day Organic Connections conference.

Highlights of the event included connecting with very early founding IOIA members Mark Gimby and Gary Smith. Mark was a member of IOIA's foundational meeting in September 1991. Marla Carlson and Carla Borsa of Organic Connections helped bring this event to reality after a 2-year postponement due to the pandemic. Special thanks to Stuart McMillan, who was an essential member of the planning committee and to Janine Gibson, Trainer.



Online Basic Crop, Livestock and Processing inspection training to the COR is under development for 2023. Crop and livestock will be offered in the first half of the year. Processing will be offered in October. Check the [IOIA website](#) for dates and times.

Organic Inspector Scholarships

Rutherford Award - Rachel Chapman, British Columbia, Canada

Rachel Chapman is a young, motivated organic farmer residing in the organic capital of Canada, Cawston BC. She has seven years of organic farming experience, including volunteer efforts in sustainable projects in Canada, California and Mexico, and speaks English, French and Spanish. Rachel is part of Mariposa Organic Farm since 2019. She also helped start an organic CSA veggie box program at an established farm on Salt Spring Island. With some conventional ag experience, she understands the differences, pros and cons of organic and conventional farming, and being able to distinguish one from another.

At the CSA program, she was also blessed with the opportunity to work alongside an organic VO. She was able to learn about the job, which sparked her interest in pursuing this career. Seeing how she was able to take on her inspection contracts while at the same time producing clean, quality food for her family and community was highly inspiring.

Rachel recently learned that organic inspection applications are at an all time high, while actively working organic inspectors are at an all time low in her region of BC. This serves as just another great motivator to pursue her goal to become an organic inspector in British Columbia Canada, and possibly abroad.

Future goals include expanding/ honing her farm and farming methods so she can provide for her family and local community.



OCIS Award- Balkrishna Dahal, Nepal

As my family belongs to a farming background, I grew up working in the field with my parents. The melodious songs sung while cultivating paddy, the delicious local dish prepared by my mother after a long day's work, carrying farmyard manure to the field, and many other instances are engraved in my memory as joyful moments. I remember how my grandfather carried a drum on his back and rotated the handle to release a water-like substance, which I later understood was a chemical pesticide. And I cannot forget the fact that we lost our grandmother to cancer.

As I helped my mother in her kitchen garden, I could feel the connection with soil and plants revitalize me. This led me to choose the field of Agriculture Science for higher education. During my studies, an acquaintance with the hazardous effects of chemical fertilizers on soil and human health left me shattered. I never thought that the rising chemical pesticide use in our garden would result in multiple health issues.

Organic Farming is close to my heart. At our Karuna Organic Family Farm in Nanglebhare, Nepal, we completely follow integrated farming, free of chemicals, and pesticides, and free of external inputs, recycling all wastes inside the farm, and the change we've seen in the form of darker soil, robust plants, and growth in the number of earthworms and natural enemies is satisfying. Through the OCIS training, I hope to bolster my knowledge and put it into practice on my farm, leaving no stone unturned to mold my knowledge and understandings in this field.

I have gathered experience working on different projects with nationally reputed institutions like the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries/ Agro Enterprise Center (FNCCI/AEC) as an agriculture consultant. With the belief that change starts from self, I am the director of Mritika Agro Services Pvt. Ltd. involving a team of like-minded people, formed to give light to our passion for transferring knowledge and attitude to upcoming generations about organic agriculture. I have also engaged in a project with the Department of Agriculture under the Ministry of Agriculture, Nepal till June 2022. Moreover, I have more than five years experience working in sustainable agriculture and affiliated institutions.

The Organic Inspection training will be a great learning and networking opportunity for me which I vow to carry along in my future engagements and discussions.

Town Hall, Podcasts, Coffee and Forum updates

Town Hall, our inspector member-only live online event, is taking January off due to the AGM in New Orleans. We will be starting up again in February, the 2023 schedule is under development.

In lieu of Town Hall during the busy summer months, we developed three **podcasts** for our inspector members. You can [find links to them here](#), if you have't yet listened to them, or just want to listen again! Host is board member Terrance Layhew.

Coffee with IOIA, our newest outreach to the inspector community, launched in mid-2022, meeting bi-weekly. This live discussion is open to any and everyone, IOIA member or inspector or not. 2023 schedule under development.



IOIA Forum

Lively discussions continue, covering topics such as brokering unpackaged goods; insurance for inspectors, mass balance audits, fee schedules and more. If you are an inspector member and aren't using the IOIA Forum, you are missing out on a great benefit of IOIA membership! Contact the [Forum Admin](#) to get signed up.

Organic Inspector Scholarships

Reynaldo De la Rosa Award - Diana Jennifer Aguilar Gonzalez

We are very pleased to announce the first scholarship has been given to Diana Aguilar Gonzalez of Uruapan, Michoacán, Mexico. This scholarship covers all expenses including the training, lodging and transportation to the training, which we expect will be in Costa Rica for 2023. Special thanks to Garth Kahl and Angela Wartes-Kahl who spearheaded this award.

Mi nombre es Diana Jennifer Aguilar González, soy medico veterinario zootecnista, actualmente estoy trabajando en una certificadora orgánica MEXICOCERT, mis metas personales en los próximos 5 años son: ascender en el trabajo para poder ahorrar y emprender un negocio sobre producción orgánica, tener más inspecciones fuera de mi ciudad, conocer mas sobre la producción orgánica y fomentar la producción orgánica dentro y fuera de mi ciudad. El curso me ayudará ya que con él se incrementará mi conocimiento sobre el tema y de la misma manera pudiere realizar mi trabajo de manera más eficaz.



Mi relación actualmente con la industria orgánica es por mi trabajo, ya que laboro en una certificadora orgánica en la cual reviso documentación para la ley de productos orgánicos mexicana. La experiencia que pudiera compartir con la comunidad orgánica es sobre la producción orgánica de animales, ya que es mas apegado a mi rama. Mis fortalezas personales son: Gratitud, honestidad, coherencia, organización, persistencia y humildad. Afectan un poco la honestidad, ya que casi nadie es honesto y a mi me gusta ser derecha en todo y es en lo que no concordamos, mis demás fortalezas no afectan de manera negativa en lo contrario ayudan bastante con las demás personas. Se pudiera mejorar la efectividad de mi trabajo en relación con los compañeros mejorando la comunicación, fijando bien las tareas para cada uno, también una mejor organización dentro de la empresa y dando más motivaciones. Soy medico veterinario zootecnista, cuento con título y cedula profesional, soy inspectora orgánica dentro de la empresa en la cual laboro, he realizado inspecciones a empresas que realizan actividades orgánicas, como: producción animal, procesamiento y comercialización. Tengo cursos de producción orgánica.

Reflections from the Chair of the Founding Board of IOIA

by Jim Riddle

I started doing organic inspections in 1986, first for the Organic Growers and Buyers Association, then for the Organic Crop Improvement Association. In late 1990, I was asked by OGBA and OCIA, independent of one another, to lead their inspector training courses. I responded with a suggestion – that the 2 groups work together, and we deliver one, unified course. Evening discussions led to the formation of IOIA. By October 1991, IOIA had elected a Board (with me as chair), adopted bylaws, and developed Codes of Conduct and Ethics.



Jim and Joyce at a lovely lake in Vermont.

I got into organic inspection to protect organic integrity – to make sure that organic claims are authentic. As an organic farmer, I wanted to make sure that genuine organic farmers were protected from fraudulent claims. I also wanted to make sure that consumers were getting what they paid for, when they purchased organic products.



Vermont Technical College's "Organic Regs 101" class during our field trip to Luna Bleu Farm in Vermont.

Joyce and I ran IOIA from our solar-powered, off-grid home for 8 years. This was before the internet – it was a BIG DEAL when we got a fax machine and copier! We organized inspector training courses throughout the US and Canada, then Costa Rica, Mexico, Japan, Australia, Russia, and more. We got a chance to work with amazing people and visit incredible places!

Today, organic crop production has been undermined from within. USDA has pushed, and a court ruled, that hydroponic production systems can be certified organic. According to USDA, soil-based organic systems must comply with all provisions of OFPA, including soil-building crop rotations and biodiversity enhancement, while water-based systems only need to not use prohibited substances.

We used to say that you cannot become organic through input substitution - "Feed the soil, not the crop." Now, it seems you can become organic through input dependency! How things change!

Joyce and I still own [Blue Fruit Farm](#) in Minnesota, but we are passing it on to the next generation. We no longer do inspections, but we did deliver a course for Vermont Tech last fall on "Organic Regs 101" and were part of a big NOFA/MOFGA Human Capacity Building project. Joyce still chairs the Accreditation Committee for IOAS, which took us to Croatia last fall for IOAS' 25th anniversary. (I served on the IOAS board 25 years ago.)



Jim enjoying an organic snack with Bob Durst and Joe Smiley, Watsonville, 1994



We live on a lake in New Hampshire and spend our time hiking, kayaking, fishing, gardening, and grand-parenting.

Life is good!

Joyce with 2 of our granddaughters, Rose and Eleanor.

Onsite Basic Crop & Livestock training, Coralville Iowa

IOIA keeps returning to Coralville, Iowa as a favorite midwestern US location. Why?... largely because of the high concentration of potential field trips and the historic willingness of field trip hosts to do it again, as well as help from various certifiers to confirm field trip hosts. Big shout out this time goes to Iowa Department of Land Stewardship (IDALS) for help in securing field trip hosts via Jamey Meyer. Jamey, an IDALS staff inspector and past participant at several IOIA trainings, went knocking on doors of Amish farms without telephones to ensure that participants for both the Crop course (October 31-November 4) and the Livestock Course (November 7-11) had positive field trip experiences on working farms. Both of the livestock farms were dairies.

Trainers Nate Powell-Palm and Jonda Crosby guided both groups of 10 participants each through the courses, each leading a field trip group at the two crop and two livestock farms.



Crop participants with Nate Powell-Palm

The American Grassfed Association and IOIA collaborated in 2018 to launch training for add-on grassfed dairy inspection for certified organic dairies. This training was put into a Self-Paced format and remains available for inspectors.



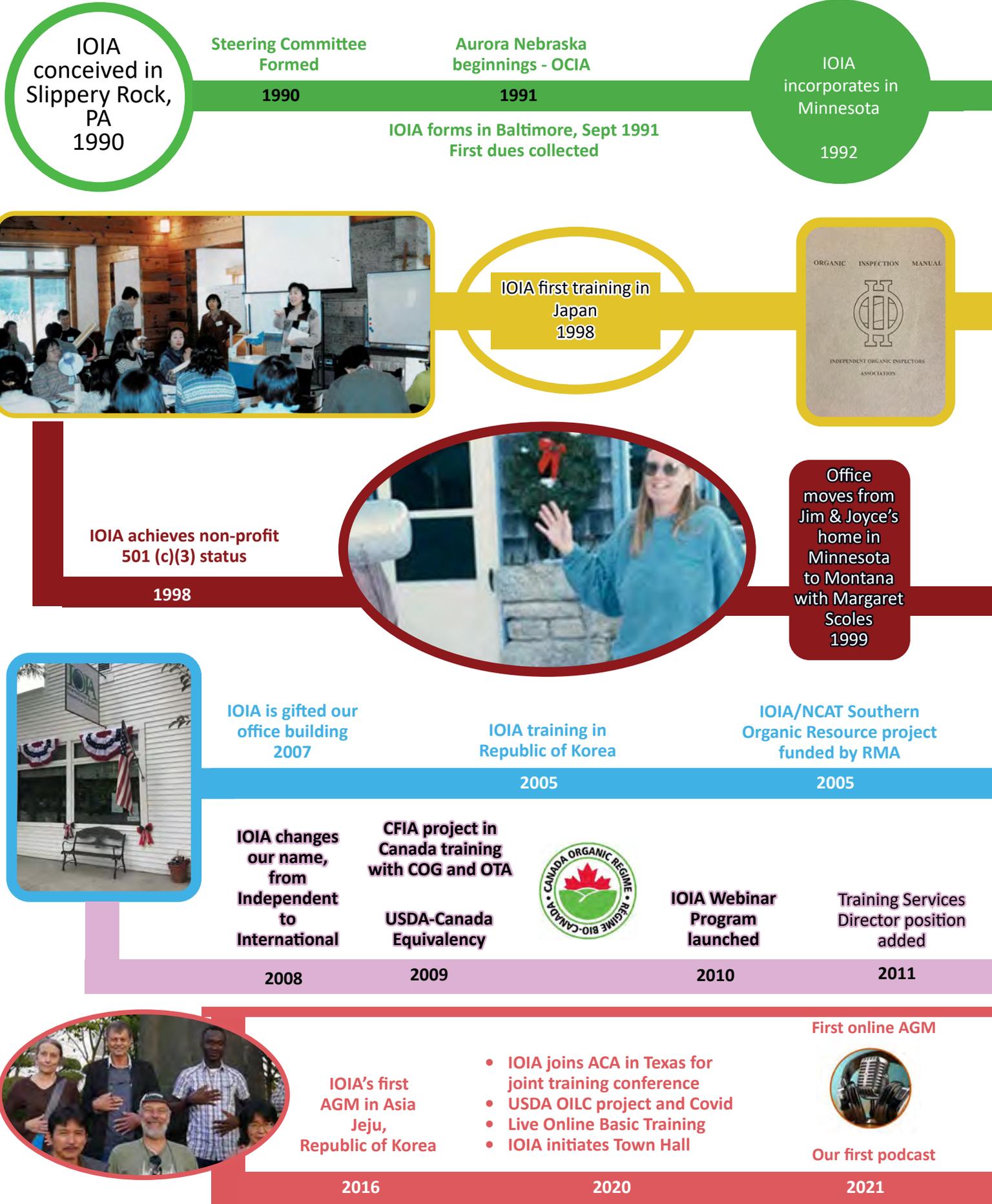
Livestock participants and trainers

“ Do I actually feel ready to do a livestock inspection after taking this course? Very much no. Do I feel more ready than before? Totally, of course! I am learning to adjust my expectations for these courses - from *“the”* training for inspections, to *“a step”* of training for inspections. Feeling “ready” won’t come until I do some shadow inspections and start doing them on my own. ”



Jennie Olson, at left, IOIA Admin and training support in Broadus, finally realized her wish to participate in an IOIA livestock training. After years of packing up name tags, copying NOP regulations, and ordering booties for others to use, she attended the Iowa Livestock course. Her favorite hobby is maintaining dairy cows, so she could both contribute to classroom discussions and enjoy seeing a dairy farm in Iowa.

Jennie and her husband John both completed the Organic Academy Road Show, for producers interested in transitioning to organic, presented by NCAT with IOIA as a partner.





**OCIA/OGBA
training, Nebraska**

1992



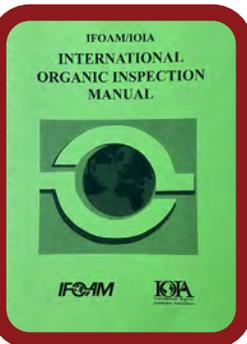
**First IOIA
training/AGM,
Arkansas, 1993**

**First IOIA Inspection
Manual published
1995**

**Accreditation Program
adopted
1995**

**Scholarships
initiated
1994
Diane Cooner takes over
newsletter production**

**Newsletter
initiated
1992**



**Published
IFOAM/IOIA
International
Organic Inspection
Manual**

2000

**IOIA's first Strategic
Planning board retreat,
La Veta, Colorado**



**USDA publishes
National Organic
Program final rule**

2000

**Arthur
Harvey
sues USDA
(Harvey
v
Veneman)**

2003

**IOIA expands capacity by
adding International
Training Manager position**

2002

**Full implementation
of NOP
First IOIA website**

2002

**IOIA moves from
contractors to hired
staff and first
Executive Director**

2001



New logo - 2012

**USDA Sound &
Sensible project**

**IOIA helps launch
IFOAM North
America**

2015

**Major
website
update**

2014



- IOIA's First Strategic Plan
- IOIA's First Intern
- IOIA completes USDA-NOP funded Human Capital Project - Apprenticeship
- Implemented Information Management System and website upgrade

2022



Online Basic Training



Basic crop course with Garry Lean and Nate Powell-Palm September 2022

Basic processing course with Garry Lean and Luis Brenes, September 26-30, 2022



Basic COR processing course with Kelly Monaghan and Garry Lean, October 2022

Garry Lean and Kelly Monaghan were trainers to lead the group of seven through the first-ever live online basic processing training to the Canadian standards. Every participant succeeded in earning a Certificate of Completion. Each one was required to complete the COR Processing Standards webinar (taught by Monaghan) as a prerequisite. A critical component to the live online format is the video “field trip” to give the participants a feel for real-life inspection, as well as hands-on practice in writing up issues of concern and report-writing. For this course, Monaghan worked with a Toronto manufacturer of organic soups to create a fictionalized video field trip. Special thanks to Yerba Buena for their assistance in making this great new training resource. And as always to the experienced IOIA trainers who work to make the live online training format an effective and sensible option for training processing inspectors, especially.



OMRI – IOIA and OMRI have jointly delivered 200-level webinars for working certification staff and inspectors on inputs used in organic production to all 3 scopes to the NOP and COR since 2013. IOIA and OMRI collaboratively delivered in-person advanced training even earlier in 2007 and 2008. All IOIA basic training participants receive a 1-year subscription to OMRI as part of their basic training resources.



Driscoll's cosponsors a Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training in Mexico

Driscoll's, a long time trusted IOIA cosponsor, organized again a training, this time at Ciudad Guzmán, Jalisco, from Nov 28th to Dec 2nd, 2022. Sixteen participants from the food safety and quality compliance area were actively engaged and participated in this successful in-person training long awaited since 2020 but only possible now after covid. Field trips included visits to very generous and open hosts growing different types of berries.

Algunos comentarios de los participantes. Considero que dentro de los mismo están incluidos el sentir de todos los participantes, Es un entrenamiento de gran nivel, aunando esto la experiencia y expertis de Luis le da un valor agregado a la ponencia, todos los participantes están muy satisfechos con el entrenamiento, brinda las herramientas bases para poder realizar de mejor forma las inspecciones orgánicas, pero además brinda un mejor panorama sobre como conducir y realizar auditorias como lo es de inocuidad.



Touring fields in Jalisco.

1. Considero que el curso brinda un panorama de cómo es la agricultura orgánica en total apego a la Nop. El curso tiene un enfoque práctico y dinámico que permite una amplia comprensión de la regulación. Luis Brenes es una persona con conocimientos y experiencia invaluable misma que transmite a sus oyentes.
2. En lo personal me gustó mucho el curso, me brindo una serie de herramientas muy útiles que puedo aplicar tanto en lo orgánico como en las auditorias convencionales, en cuanto a Luis Brenes mis respetos Domina ampliamente el tema y los ejemplos que utilizo fueron bastante prácticos y entendibles, en términos generales todo me gustó mucho!!
3. Por parte mía, Muy interesante todo el curso, muy interesante todo el conocimiento y experiencias que nos compartió Luis Brenes.
4. En lo personal fue un curso de mucho aprendizaje tanto teórico como practico. Siempre los temas impartidos estaban muy enfocados al tema que se estaba impartiendo, todas las dudas que tuvo el grupo fueron aclaradas contundentemente por parte del ponente.
5. Muy consiste la información brindada y el ponente domina el tema excelentemente por tal motivo la capacitación quedo clara, productiva y muy participativa. Agradezco totalmente al ponente Luis Brenes por transmitir su conocimiento teórico, por hacer del curso muy dinámico y por enseñarnos a realizar una inspección orgánica en campo de la mejor manera siempre ligando los puntos vistos en operación con la Norma Orgánica que es algo un poco complicado ya que la norma es muy ambigua.
6. Yo opino que el curso es bastante bueno, te mantiene en todo momento expectante y con ganas de aprender, con ganas de que llegue el día siguiente para poder seguir dando el seguimiento. El expositor siempre fue claro, me gustaría que se pudiesen incorporar más temas de no conformidades, aunque es un tema aparte.



Taking field notes.



Another successful training in Basic Crop Inspection in Jalisco.

Job Opportunities with IOIA

IOIA seeks to fill three new positions of Business Development Director, Operations Manager, and Webinar Support Specialist. We are the premier training organization for aspiring organic inspectors and the organic inspector profession: a dynamic organization where impact is high with our small but mighty staff team. IOIA staff have access to many benefits in the organic industry including education, networking, and the pride in knowing your work is helping to keep pesticides out of our food and fiber.

Demand for organic is at an all-time high, yet the industry faces challenges to maintaining a well-trained and retained workforce to support growth. IOIA seeks organized, friendly, initiative takers for our organization to support and improve organizational operations including technology platforms, internal and external-facing communications, programs, and a relentless pursuit of ever-higher impact.

Business Development Director

- Develop press strategy and other marketing plans as needed;
- develop 3-year fundraising strategy;
- represent IOIA at industry events;
- work with the Executive Director to develop and implement the annual work plan.

This position is a full-time or part-time position, based remotely or as a hybrid position, depending on the preference of the individual hired candidate. IOIA is based in Broadus, MT. This position may require up to 10-20% travel.

For a **full Job Description**, [please see here](#).

COMPENSATION: \$50-\$60,000/year plus incentive based on successful funds development. This position is full-or part-time, based remotely or as a hybrid position, depending on the preference of the individual hired candidate. To apply please respond [here](#), and send a resume to ioia@ioia.net

Operations Manager

- Develop membership strategy and other membership support plans;
- set up internal communication protocols and systems for optimal staff communication (internal);
- work with the Executive Director to develop and implement the annual work plan;
- schedule and lead staff meetings/check-ins.

This position is full- or part-time, based remotely or as a hybrid position, depending on the preference of the individual hired candidate. IOIA is based in Broadus, MT. For a **full Job Description**, [please see here](#).

COMPENSATION: \$50,000/year, negotiable, depending on experience. This position is a full-time or part-time position, based remotely or as a hybrid position, depending on the preference of the individual hired candidate.

To apply for the position of Operations Manager, please respond [here](#), and send a resume to ioia@ioia.net.

Webinar Support Specialist

The Support Specialist supports pre-production, live production, and post-production activities for IOIA webinars. This is a remote position, estimated hours 20-25 hours per week. We aim to fill this position within 30 days.

COMPENSATION: \$18-20/hr. plus paid time off and sick leave. To apply, please [respond here](#), and send a resume or work experience synopsis to ioiassistant@rangeweb.net

OUR COMMITMENTS TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

IOIA stands in solidarity with people of all backgrounds and welcomes diverse perspectives. IOIA recognizes that agriculture, organic agriculture, and structures within the American social-industrial complex have historically reinforced institutional racism, discrimination, micro-aggressions, violence, and harm. We want to be part of changing these norms, while recognizing we will make missteps along the way despite good intentions. We are committed to eliminating implicit bias in our recruiting, hiring, and managing of staff, so that people from all backgrounds feel welcome and valued in the recruiting process and on the job. IOIA welcomes applicants from all backgrounds. As a means to eliminate implicit bias in our recruiting and hiring practices, we are open to creative and non-traditional equivalencies to all listed qualifications, which should be viewed as a broad starting point and a welcoming first step to hearing your story.

Founding Board Member Monique Scholz

by Margaret Scoles

Monique Scholz still lives in southeastern Québec, as she did when IOIA was founded. Her diploma in farm management and diverse farming experiences, both conventional and organic, led her to take up organic inspections in 1990. She started training inspectors and industry quality control personnel in 1994.

In her bio to run for the IOIA board in 2007, Monique wrote, “I am an agricultural technician who is passionate about organic farming and re-designing the food system.” She was the first former IOIA board member to return after many years to run again for the board.

She had been inspecting almost full-time from 1990 until 2022 and dropped her IOIA membership one year ago as she retired from inspecting. She was always service oriented, from the founding board to the IOIA Accreditation Review Panel. When IOIA was founded, the top 3 issues for inspectors were networking (IOIA has done a great job of creating opportunities for networking); relevant training (some of us do not look back with fondness on the days when all inspector training was done in-house by certifiers); and credentialing. Only on credentialing has IOIA yet to make our mark and we might have to do that without Monique. She maintained IOIA accreditation in all 3 scopes from 2005 to 2022 – 17 years! Fluency in German, French, and English made her a versatile and valuable trainer. She added Spanish in 2008 while on the IOIA board. She was famous for her stylish scarves, her sense of humour, and her thoughtfulness. Each year, a touching hand written note and holiday card appeared at the IOIA office – for more than 20 years. She was involved in the creation and adoption of IOIA’s current basic training curriculum, often assisted at advanced trainings, and developed webinars in maple syrup inspection and apiculture inspection. Fortunately, she has expressed willingness to continue these webinars for IOIA!



Past board chair Garry Lean, Monique, and Michel Saumur, former National Manager, Canada Organic Office



Ib Hagsten and Monique, Montana AGM, 2015 What she had to say in 2007 (15 years ago) still rings true. “As a founding board member seeking to return to active duty on the IOIA board, I see we must collectively continue to enhance the professionalism of our field, through quality training, effective representation and an upgraded accreditation program. In the longer term, we must strive to achieve financial sustainability for our organization. As a Canadian member of IOIA, I think IOIA must have a concerted voice in the final building and initial implementation phases of the federal organic regulation, because it specifically addresses issues of inspector competency, experience and education.”

She has always valued and set aside time for gardening, hiking, and snowshoeing. She says she is “so busy” in retirement that she “wonders how she ever had time to work”! Two grandchildren and an elderly aunt live nearby. She still lives in Quebec, where she lived when she helped bring IOIA into a reality.

IOIA has been an IFOAM member almost since our inception. In 2000, with grant funds from the Finland government, IOIA and IFOAM published the IFOAM/IOIA International Organic Inspection Manual in English, followed shortly by Spanish and French versions. This remains the definitive text for organic inspectors and is used as the textbook at most IOIA basic trainings. IOIA was involved in the Steering Committee that helped found IFOAM North America.



Following up on a partnership established in 2020 with CIAO - Comisión Interamericana de Agricultura Orgánica – IOIA co-developed a self-paced Capacitación en Inspección Remota de la IOIA - nivel 200 (remote inspection training) in 2020 in Spanish. CIAO provided translation and hosting support. IOIA Trainer Garth Kahl delivered an updated webinar in Spanish for CIAO in 2021. This training is available in IOIA’s Self-Paced training.



High Nitrogen Liquid Fertilizers—An Inspection Challenge

By Dr. Brian Baker, Oregon

Nutrient cycling is essential to organic farming. The maxim “feed the soil to feed the plant” is used to describe the essence of organic methods. Management of the nitrogen cycle in the soil is arguably the greatest difference between organic and conventional practices. While supplemental nitrogen sources have long been used in organic production, recent developments have changed how nitrogen is used in organic production. The adoption and expansion of hydroponic and controlled environment agriculture in organic farming in the US has increased demand for water soluble nitrogen fertilizers as the main or sometimes even the only source of nitrogen provided to the crops being grown. Delivery of fertilizers through drip systems, known as fertigation, is also being adopted by a growing number of organic farms, and operations with fertigation equipment are transitioning to organic.



Organic standards limit or prohibit the use of soluble sources of nitrogen. Synthetic sources derived from the Haber-Bosch process and its successors are prohibited. So are synthetic petrochemical sources, such as the amino acid melamine and its derivatives. Although, the principles based on soil health and standards mandate soil management programs as the primary source of plant nutrition.

Farms that practiced input substitution and had not built soil organic matter or biological activity to a level that could provide adequate nitrogen created a demand for soluble sources of nitrogen that could not be met by the organic supply sector. As a result, various operations began producing fertilizers claimed to be organic. In 2009, the owners of two fertilizer companies—Ken Nelson, Jr of Port Organic Products of Bakersfield and Peter Townsley of California Liquid Fertilizers in the Salinas Valley—were prosecuted by the US Department of Justice for fraudulently representing fertilizers as allowed for organic production when they contained prohibited sources of nitrogen. Nelson and Townsley were both separately convicted of mail and wire fraud in Federal court and sentenced to prison.

Both operations had been inspected repeatedly over the previous ten years, going back to before the implementation of the National Organic Program Rule. The evidence gathered for conviction took years of investigation by multiple agencies. The fraudsters made millions of dollars by putting relatively small amounts of ammonia-based fertilizers in a matrix made mostly of liquid fish, then filtering out the solids, leaving a liquid that was able to pass through the filters and screens used in chemigation equipment.

Following the convictions, in 2011 the USDA’s National Organic Program (NOP) issued a policy guidance that classified all liquid fertilizers that guaranteed 3% or more of total nitrogen as high nitrogen liquid fertilizers (HNLFs). The current control number is NOP 5012.

For products classified as HNLFs to be use on an organic farm certified under the USDA’s National Organic Program, the manufacturer needs to have the product approved by a USDA Accredited Certifying Agent or a Materials Review Organization (MRO) accredited to evaluate inputs under the USDA Organic program. The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) is such an MRO. They need to agree to comply with the NOP regulation and maintain records. The ACA or MRO needs to be provided documentation of all ingredients, their process control information, testing, and any other information that is relevant. The manufacturer must also agree to give access to the whole facility, including access to where ingredients and inputs prohibited for organic production are stored and manufactured.



One inspection is announced and involves an audit that conducts a mass balance

High Nitrogen Liquid Fertilizers, continued

that shows that the nitrogen contribution of all ingredients with the nitrogen yield of the finished product. A specific spreadsheet is usually provided that needs to be populated with data from the records kept by the operator. The equipment and capacity need to be verified as consistent with what is described in the process controls and sufficient to handle the volume of throughput. Records need to be kept of all ingredients coming in and all products sold. The manufacturer needs to account for all plant nutrient content in the final product. A check sample is taken at this inspection. A second mandatory unannounced inspection involves a spot check to determine whether the operation is still making the product, and if any of the finished product is in inventory. A sample is taken to verify that it is the same as the check sample.

The sampling procedures involve collecting a liquid sample that is to be handled as something volatile and potentially hazardous. All plant safety procedures need to be observed and non-reactive gloves should be used. Sample sizes of 125 ml or 4 fl oz are usually sufficient to determine the nitrogen and other macronutrient levels. Clean non-reactive cups or disposable pipettes should be used to draw the sample. The operations will often have custom sampling tools. These are acceptable for an inspector to use if the operator consents and the tools are not contaminated. The bottles should be made of a non-reactive non-breakable polymer. The sample should be received as soon after sampling as possible and be packed with ice to slow degradation and volatilization of ammonia. The operator is given a sampling receipt and the sample submission form is coded in a way that the lab does not have the name of the operator or the product. Both the receipt and sample submission form should have a lot number that matches the lot number on the batch record and container that was sampled. A photograph of the container is good practice.

Organic fertilizer inspections have points in common with inspections in all the other scopes, but also a few key differences. The ingredients either need to be non-synthetic and not on the National List of substances prohibited in crop production for fertilizer use, or they need to be on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for crop production. If possible, the announced inspection should be scheduled when the product is being made. Fertilizers are required to be labeled according to state plant food control laws and the NOP labeling laws do not apply. The USDA Organic seal may not be used on fertilizers or other inputs. As with other scopes, an exit interview is required that includes any issues of concern that could be considered non-compliances. Production is often seasonal. In temperate climates, inventory is usually built between January and April in the Northern hemisphere, with production winding down and stopping by June. Late unannounced inspections run the risk of having no product available to sample. In Mediterranean, sub-tropical, and tropical climates, the windows will be longer, and production may take place year-round.

As with any inspection, the assignment is not complete until the ACA or MRO has received and approved the report. The report should include any issues of concern that were identify any potential ways that prohibited nitrogen sources can end up in the HNFLF products. Other risks should also be reported, and any special instructions provided by the ACA or MRO should be addressed.

We welcome Brian as the new Technical Editor for our newsletter. He has lifetime experience in agriculture, with a goal to help people produce healthy food in a ecologically sound way that uses appropriate technology and is fair to all involved. With over twenty years of work with organic agriculture. he is interested in research and education to make agriculture more sustainable. Brian holds a doctorate in Agricultural Economics from Cornell University. We are pleased to be able to bring his expertise to our readers.



Dr. Brian Baker at the IFOAM Organic World Conference
October 2022, South Korea

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

IOIA Board of Directors – Minutes July 21, 2022 – Conference Call

Attendance: Janine Gibson, Chair; Beth Dominick, Kate Newkirk, Allan Benjamin, Chuck Mitchell, Brian Baker, Terrance Layhew, Others: Margaret Scoles, ED

Committee Updates: Scholarship - Brian, met - Finalized Reynaldo de la Rosa Scholarship for training inspectors to work in Mexico, reviewed and brushed up Rutherford and OCIS scholarship applications, Diane getting ready for application to go online August 1, implemented new rubric for evaluating applicants, current rubric deemed too subjective. Acknowledge contributions by Garth Kahl & Angela Wartes Kahl recognized for their contributions to Reynaldo de la Rosa fund. Though not members of the committee, they've done tremendous work. **Canadian - Janine**, talking with Chuck and Nadene Gurule and some other inspectors, appropriate to address issues BC inspectors are experiencing, Janine and Nadene are working on a letter from the Canadian Committee to CFIA outlining the issues. **Asia Pacific** – Created entire grower group inspection training which can be adapted to multiple languages. Wants IOIA to own the materials. Development done at no cost by the Asia Pacific Committee. Inquiry from India certifier for Basic NOP Crop and Processing Inspection Training via online training. Committee would like to conduct training, but the IOIA cost is too much for many areas of the world even though bare bones for IOIA. Accessibility must be on the Training Advisory Council agenda.

Treasurer's Report: Allan – presented 2nd Qtr. Balance Sheet and Budget vs Actual. Motion to accept Treasurer's reports – Passed

2023 AGM: Date set January 23.

Strategic Plan - Evaluation Process ED/Staff; Draft Evaluation Policy Janine and Allan need to evaluate Margaret. Endorse in principle to proceed with evaluation of ED. IOIA draft PERFORMANCE REVIEW POLICY 2022, has been shared. Too early to endorse? Is a useful tool? Ellie questioned whether this should be a Board Policy because it is for evaluating Staff. Brian - sees two things missing. (1) missing interview of employees. (2) Keep in mind long-term leadership change, delegate/move forward. Ellie's term Long Term Talent development, incorporates language, keep universal and non-prescriptive. **Trial for ED evaluation.**

IOIA Board of Directors – Minutes September 15, 2022 – Conference Call

Attendance: Janine Gibson, Chair; Terrance Layhew, Allan Benjamin, Beth Dominick, Brian Baker, Kate Newkirk, Chuck Mitchell. Others: Margaret Scoles, ED

Committees Updates: Policy Committee - Rachel Cherry Myers has been contracted as Facilitator for Policy Committee. As the facilitator, she can no longer Chair; Board appointed Kate as Chair and Kate accepted.

Treasurer's Report - Setting Dues for 2023 - last raised in 2017, losing members, low membership in Canada. Declining membership of a greater concern. Need to Deal with Canadian currency differences. Motion to keep dues structure same as 2022 for 2023. Carried.

2023 AGM Update: Parade - is on. Keynote suggestions. Video Producer, Nathan Slabaugh, Engaging storyteller. Nathan could collect some video footage of parade. Terrance - Let's celebrate our stories. **Nominations** - Beth - Finalizing list of Candidates with bios due in Nov. Two positions will need to be filled.

Strategic Plan - ED/Staff Evaluation: Janine - Beth, Janine and Allan working with Ellie to put together HR research and developed self-evaluation questions for Margaret. Annual Evaluations one in spring and one in fall (fall to discuss remuneration). Benchmark tool will be finalized and developed. Proceeding and will be completed by end of year per Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan – Staffing Plan: Staffing Plans A, B, C - present to Board in order of preference (is appendix to ED report). For BOD discussion/comment only. Needed full time office person. Current part-time patchwork is not working well. Staffing decisions are up to Margaret. Added IT support. Board should give thoughts to Margaret by end of Sept.

Strategic Plan Review & Budget Process for 2023: Expand Oct. Board meeting to 3 hours, with facilitator. Ad-

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

dress financial and strategic plan update for 2023. Ask Monique Marez to facilitate all/part of Oct. meeting.

Follow up to IOIA/ACA Joint BODs: Margaret - **Inspector Retention working group**, some ACA members don't understand that retention issues are real. Some certifiers didn't agree that there was a retention issue with Inspectors. Questioned whether experienced inspectors were leaving. **Insurance** - Brian noted there were 3 separate issues discussed on call. 1. Which certifiers cover inspectors as insureds with their policies?

2. Of those who don't cover inspectors and who require insurance, how many require inspectors to name certifiers as co-insured? 3. Lack of qualified inspectors. The shortage is of experience. Margaret - Ellie and she need to take one more look at the Inspector Retention WG Report to address comments, mention the small sample size in the compensation data, and note geographical differences in compensation related to cost of living. Ellie and Margaret to suggest language changes to WG leadership. Make language more accurate.

IOIA Board of Directors – Minutes October 20, 2022 – Conference Call

Attendance: Janine Gibson (Chair), Chuck Mitchell, Terrance Layhew, Allan Benjamin, Beth Dominick, Brian Baker, Kate Newkirk. Others: Margaret Scoles, Executive Director, Ellie Hudson, Monique Marez

Treasurer's Report: Review of 3rd Qtr. Balance Sheet and P&L. Margaret - Needs motion in the minutes for Margaret to apply for a business Credit Card. Allan - Good move to have CC to ease travel and less cumbersome expenses. Motions - Authorize Margaret to have an IOIA credit card for travel. Move to accept Financial Reports. Kate/Beth moved, accepted.

Strategic Plan: Review of 2022; Looking forward; Tying to a budget. Round robin summary of 2-page board evaluation prepared by Monique, followed by detailed review of the 3 Strategic Plan objectives. Janine noted that the improved on-boarding process in 2022 didn't help Kate & Brian with their understanding of the strategic plan. Chuck - struggle with concept - is this strategic plan or a work plan? Allan - looks at as more of an 18-month budget - need to look at deliverables and review, then determine if we continue down that path or make adjustments and do we continue or adjust. **SEE APPENDICES FOR DISCUSSION OF EACH STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE.**

Objective 3: Organizational Accountability (Ellie excused herself.) Margaret - Needs help with staff and hiring issues and Ellie has been great at this. Janine needs help with Fundraising. Margaret - Fundraising - mark as Add to strategic plan. Kate what are necessary positions to hire? Margaret - New in strategic plan - Business Development Director could be or Operations Manager.

Objective 2: Membership Engagement Potential new tasks here. 2023 Best Practice Topic - ACA provided some of funds this past year. Post Training survey shouldn't cost anything as it is now developed; getting responses might take a budget. Add \$2000 for facilitating discussion groups. \$2000 for OILC discussion groups. Funding inspectors to write and deliver comments in person NOSB and CFIA should be modified to write and deliver online. Margaret - Put in \$22,000 for this objective. Need Policy Committee Contract Labor to be in here. Missing objectives - Train the Trainer and Fundraising. Ellie - need a revenue generating plan.

Objective 1: Training Margaret - Training Advisory Council budget, Will council be paid? Janine - No but an honorarium/travel expenses to be offered. Ellie - need an incentive to get post-training surveys returned. Margaret - \$3000 for post survey + \$3000 for training advisory = \$6000 + COR Livestock \$6000=\$12,000.00. Ellie - Diane will be researching polling returns.

Table completed for Approved 2022 Budget (net expense); 2022 Year to Date Expense (estimates); 2023 suggested budget; Board members monitoring each objective. Objective 1: Training – Janine and Allan. Objective 2: Member Engagement – Terrance, Chuck. Objective 3: Organization Accountability – Brian, Beth, Kate. New Activities (not previously identified or funded in Strategic Plan: Train the Trainer, Fundraising – Janine, Brian, Beth.

Minutes of November 17 board meeting will be published in our next issue, you can find them in their entirety on the IOIA website.

Free Webinar presented by IOIA Asia Pacific Committee

The Asia Pacific Committee is offering a free webinar, "Organic Certification & Lab Test"! Date is January 17 for the Asia-Pacific region and evening of January 16 for US/Canada/Latin America.



Organic certification is the process verification and it cannot guarantee "Zero residue". The certification process assesses the risk of contamination prior to on-site inspection and the organic inspector assesses risks during the inspection. Organic producers grow and handle crops carefully to avoid contamination. But in reality, some chemical residues are found in organic certified crops. This may make it difficult to sell organic crop as "safe" food. What is the priority to expand organic farming? How can organic certification manage residues?

A panel will discuss different approaches and rationales for using (or not using) residue testing in certification programs. Various approaches by Asia/Pacific countries, including NOP and EU regulation will be described. The aim is to promote a discussion on the usefulness, the applicability and fairness in the various methodologies.

The webinar is free, but registration is required. [Click here for Registration form](#) for RESIDUE TESTING SEMINAR. All registrants will receive a copy of the committee's position paper on the topic.

The IOIA Asia Pacific Committee was initiated in 2019 with a desire to expand training opportunities in the region and ensure that training is relevant and accessible. The Committee is IOIA's most international committee with 7 members from 7 countries. In 2020, the group delivered advanced grower group inspection training and Train the Trainer in Thailand. In 2022, a promotional webinar on grower group inspection was held, followed by advanced grower group training online twice. The committee is now diving into Chemical Testing, its value, its role in the organic certification process, and the various different approaches in different regions. Mutsumi Sakuyoshi of Japan is Chair. Mutsumi also serves as the current Chair of the Japan Organic Inspectors Association, founded in 1997. She participated in IOIA's first inspector training in the US in 1993. She went on to become a trainer, has led many trainings in Japan and other areas, and served on the IOIA board.

Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre and Hong Kong Baptist University have cosponsored basic organic inspection training since 2004, with dozens of successful graduates. HKORC is the only international-accredited organic certification agency in Hong Kong and has proactively advocated for the organic movement. Hong Kong Baptist University introduced the first agriculture related degree program in Hong Kong, BSc (Hons) in Bioresource & Agricultural Science Programme, in 2019. The IOIA course is part of the course. The most recent in-person course was in 2020. A live online training with IOIA trainer Luis Brenes was delivered in 2021 and another will launch shortly in 2023.



香港有機資源中心認證有限公司
HONG KONG ORGANIC RESOURCE CENTRE CERTIFICATION LTD



香港浸會大學
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



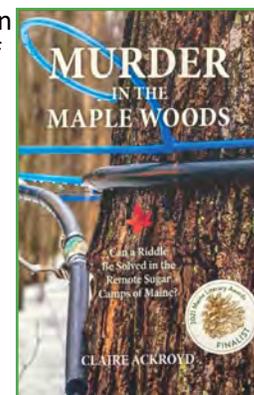
Book Review

Murder in the Maple Woods is a murder mystery with an organic inspector as the protagonist. Written by IOIA Inspector member Claire Akroyd. Published in 2020. Finalist for the 2021 Maine Literary Awards. A great read! Would be appreciated especially by organic inspectors everywhere. She says, "My book, Murder in the Maple Woods, has multiple origins: my affection for a good mystery combined with my love of language and writing and my desire to present a true picture of the way of life in the big, remote, largely francophone maple syrup operations along the northwest edge of Maine."

You can order directly from her website (www.claireackroyd.com) using PayPal, credit card, or debit card. Claire is happy to receive emails directly from organic inspectors at claire.ackroyd@gmail.com. Amazon and the publisher are also options.

Akroyd accepted an invite to the December online holiday party/Town Hall on December 15 as a surprise guest. She says she is now working on a book about organic blueberries.

When the King of England is a certified organic farmer and organic inspectors are writing novels featuring organic inspectors, we have truly arrived.



In Appreciation of Our Partners

IOIA is a partner of the Alliance, meets regularly with them, and has a Memo of Understanding to jointly seek funding for training development. IOIA has invited them to explain their Organic Observatory at advanced trainings.



Organic Farmers Association is leading the second year of a NOP funded 2-year project focusing on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion resources for organic professionals. IOIA, along with ACA, NOC, and IFOAM North America, serves on the Steering Committee.



Isidor Sustainability Research Institute, founded by IOIA board member Isidor Yu, has been cosponsoring trainings in South Korea with IOIA since 2016. Isidor was instrumental in trainings in his country since 2006, and brought groups from the Korean government to Montana for IOIA training in 2012 and 2017.



How IOIA came to be

by Margaret Scoles

A Steering Committee formed after discussions at an OCIA training in Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania late in 1990 and an OCIA training in Aurora, Nebraska early in 1991.

The organizational meeting of IOIA was held in Baltimore on September 5, 1991. Jim Riddle was elected Chair. Other founding board members elected at this meeting were Monique Scholz, Margaret Scoles, John Moore, Philip Hale, Joe Smillie, Andy Rutherford, and Norm Bernhardt. A motion was made to adopt the name IOI (originally there was no “A”). Codes of Ethics and Conduct were adopted. The Steering Committee presented the goals:

- Provide accreditation of inspectors
- Coordinate independent inspector training
- Establish a communications and support network
- To begin working on group errors and omissions insurance.

Nineteen inspectors were present at this foundational meeting: John Ferguson (NC); Martin Eddy (KS), Philip Hale (OH), Edwin McGlew (MA); Pete Gonzalves (OR); Christoph Meier (NY); Norm Bernhardt (MD); Mark Gimby (SK); Linda Kaner (MN); Monique Scholz (QC); Al Johnson (NJ); Harrier Behar (WI); Chip Kraynyk (CO); Margaret Scoles (MT); Joe Smillie (QC); John Moore (AR); Jean-Marc Aube (QC); Curt Whitehurst (IL); others present were Griff McClellan (QAI) and Dave King (OCIA).



Phil Hale, John Foster, and Fred Ehlert, Costa Rica, 2004

Letters were shared from some who could not attend in person.

The letter from Zea Sonnabend is an interesting read 30 years later. The IOIA Board was considering a Code of Ethics stating that members “may not hold elected or appointed positions in certification organizations they inspect for.” She said, “I feel that you will be doing a disservice to both inspectors and certifying organizations by adopting the policy that inspectors cannot serve on committees. The inspectors would be caught between wanting to improve the certification program they work for and the need for employment, while the organizations would potentially lose a lot of skilled volunteers”.

Some things, such as the list of goals and topics near and dear to the hearts of inspectors haven’t changed. And some things certainly have changed, such as the overlap of work between certifiers and inspectors.

In 2022, a highly effective collaboration of partners developed and delivered training in Kentucky as proof of concept for curriculum developed for inspector apprenticeship. This 1-year project was the largest dollar value project in IOIA history and was completed in September with partners Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Organic Association of Kentucky, University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, and the Organic Integrity Cooperative Guild.





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30 years of advocating for
organic inspectors and
organic integrity!



KEEP IOIA STRONG – LEND YOUR STRENGTH AND GET INVOLVED!

2023 Calendar



January 18-21 | [EcoFarm Conference](#), Asilomar, CA

January 23 | [IOIA AGM](#), New Orleans, LA

January 27 | [IOIA Advanced Inspector training](#)

January 23-29 | [2023 Guelph Organic Conference](#), Ontario

February 14-17 | [BioFach](#), Nuremberg, Germany

February 16 - 18 | 44th Annual [OEFFA Conference](#), Newark, OH

February 23-25 | [2023 Marbleseed Conference](#) (formerly MOSES), La Crosse, WI

March 7-11 | [Expo West](#), Anaheim, CA

March 21 | IFOAM-North America Annual Meeting

April 18-27 | [NOSB Spring Meeting](#), Atlanta, GA + online

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