



The Inspectors' Report

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Notes from the Chair By Jim Riddle

As the long and extremely busy inspection season comes to a close with harvest, I find myself both exhausted and full of anticipation concerning the future for IOIA and all organic inspectors.

I look back over this past year with a great sense of accomplishment concerning the efforts of IOIA. We have coordinated or supported inspector training courses in Florida, North Dakota, British Columbia, California, Manitoba, Cuba, Hawaii and Russia.

We have developed a comprehensive inspector training curriculum with supporting resource materials through a Federal-States Market Improvement Program (FSMIP) grant from the USDA.

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IOIA Shares Concerns with the OCC

By Jim Riddle

During our IOIA Board of Directors meeting on 9/9/94, we identified the following.

1. Non-payment of inspectors. There have been instances which have come to our attention when inspectors have not been paid, even when the inspections have been completed and inspection reports filed on a timely basis. In these instances, the payment has not been made by the inspected party to either the inspector or to the certifier, yet certification has been granted. We request that the OCC urge its members to stand behind inspectors on this issue, and to develop policies which require pre-payment of inspection fees prior to inspections being assigned, or at the very least, policies which assure that the inspector has been paid before certification is granted. The IOIA supports the implementation of payment policies by all certifiers whereby inspection fees are submitted prior to the inspector receiving the assignment.

2. Standardized inspection affidavit/interview forms. The IOIA board approved the

submission of a new FSMIP grant request, to be submitted to the USDA by Jan. 15, 1995. The current FSMIP funded project has focused on the development of inspector training curriculum and supporting resource materials, which include narrative inspection report guides for farms and processes. The future proposal is planned to request funding for the development of livestock inspection narrative report guidelines and the development of standardized on-site inspection affidavit/interview forms which could be utilized by all certifiers. We request OCC cooperation and support for this effort. IOIA is asking for a letter of support that would accompany our FSMIP grant request, a commitment to help develop these forms, and a commitment to utilize these forms in your certification processes.

3. Recognition of IOIA training and inspector accreditation. IOIA has cooperated in training over 200 inspectors at 7 training events (OCC, continued on page 4)

The 1995 IOIA Annual Meeting

PLAN TO ATTEND!

The 1995 IOIA Annual Meeting will be held Friday, February 3 at 1 pm at the Centros de Convenciones de la Catalina, San Jose, Costa Rica.

The agenda will include an annual report from the chair, a financial report, committee reports, policy discussions, balloting on proposed by-laws changes and election of board members and alternates. A detailed agenda along with ballots will be sent out to all members in December.

Three 2-year terms to the board of directors will be up for election. These seats are currently held by Rob Dixon, Chip Kraynyk and Bernardo Rojas. In addition, Joe Smillie is resigning from the board, so there will be an election to fill the remainder of his term (1 year). There will be two alternate seats elected. These positions are currently held by Pete Gonzalves and Rick Martinez.

It is imperative the energetic, creative and committed people step forward to run for these board and alternate positions. IOIA has a firm foundation and a good reputation, but we need more people to share leadership responsibilities. Please contact Chip Kraynyk or Jim Riddle if you are at all interested in serving IOIA by running for one of these positions.

A Dance-Party will be held Friday evening. These are always fun-filled events and you won't want to miss it. In addition, EcoTours are being scheduled to be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. Lodging and recreational activities are available for spouses and families. The facility offers soccer, swimming, basketball/volleyball, billiards and ping pong. You will be impressed by the natural beauty of the area.

If you plan to attend the annual meeting in Coast Rica, please contact the IOIA office for more details. If you cannot attend, make sure that you return the mail-in ballot prior to the election.

BYLAWS CHANGE PROPOSED

By Joyce Ford

At the 1994 Annual Meeting, the membership voted to direct the Bylaws Committee to draft a change to the bylaws to allow for a reduction in dues for IOIA spousal memberships. The approximate cost of mailing savings is \$10 per year. A motion passed to establish membership dues for couples at \$80. per year. IOIA currently has 3 couples that would fall into this category.

As only \$10 (not \$20) would be saved per couple, the Bylaws Committee changed the total annual membership dues to \$90, not \$80 as suggested in the motion above.

It is the intent of the Bylaw change to reduce membership fees for those members whose mail can be combined or only one copy need be sent out, in order to reduce postage costs. It is not the intent of this Bylaw change to make any statements concerning people's living situations.

Thus, the Bylaws Committee would like to propose the following change to IOIA Bylaws, to be

voted on at the annual meeting in Costa Rica. Ballots will also be mailed to all members so they can vote if they are not attending the annual meeting.

Article II. Membership. 2.02 Dues and Fees.

Add after sentence 3: "The annual dues for two IOIA members who share a mailing address would be assessed at \$90 annually, instead of \$50 each."

If you have any comments on this change before the ballot is mailed out in December, please contact Jim Riddle.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Thom Shelsky, California
Nicholas McGill, Indiana
Stanley Edwards, Colorado



(Notes from page 1)

IOIA members overwhelmingly passed standards for an inspector accreditation program. Our membership has grown to over 130 inspector members, with 7 supporting organizations, all listed in the 1994-1995 IOIA Membership Directory. The demand for IOIA-trained inspectors continues to grow.

Despite these and other accomplishments, we face new challenges. The inspector accreditation program is yet to be implemented. Jodi Snyder has recently resigned from the Board for personal reasons. Joe Smillie plans to resign from the Board halfway through his 2-year term, effective at the annual meeting, scheduled for Friday, February 3, 1995, in San Jose, Costa Rica. Clearly, there is a need to re-energize the IOIA Board. Opportunities exist, as there will be 3 Board and 2 Alternate seats up for election at the annual meeting.

We also face continuing challenges concerning the role and job performance of inspectors. I have received verbal complaints from members of the Organic Certifiers Caucus about the quality of inspection reports. It seems that some inspectors have a habit of filing incomplete or unclear inspection reports. This has continued, despite feedback to the inspector from the certification agent.

With the third party inspection system, it is imperative that the inspector write clear, complete, descriptive reports, since the inspector is not making certification decisions. Under this system, the certification committee is largely reliant on the inspector's narrative report in order to make an informed decision. If the inspector's report is incomplete or unclear, the certification decision will be flawed unless the certification committee takes the time to clarify all missing information.

With the growing demand for organic products, too much is riding on the job performance of inspectors to take this job lightly. If you feel that writing comprehensive narrative reports is too much of a hassle, then you probably shouldn't be an organic inspector. Otherwise, you should work to change the system so that inspectors have a larger role in the certification decision-making process through the use of "score card" or "check-off" type inspection reports. So long as our role is largely one of investigative reporter, however, it is incumbent on us to do it in a thorough and professional manner.

INSPECTOR HANDBOOK OUT IN DECEMBER

By Joyce Ford

As part of the USDA's FSMIP grant, IOIA has been developing an Organic Inspector Handbook that is used in IOIA's inspector trainings. This Handbook will be published in December and is available for \$25 to members and \$50 to non-members. The Handbook includes information on how to inspect farms, livestock operations and processing facilities as well as detailed guides for writing inspection reports and other subjects pertinent to the organic inspector.

If you are planning to attend an IOIA training in 1995, you will automatically get a copy as part of the course. To order a copy of the Handbook, please contact Joyce Ford at the IOIA office, ph/fax 507-454-8310.

1994/95 IOIA DIRECTORY NOW AVAILABLE

The latest edition of the IOIA Membership Directory is now available. All members should have received a copy by mail in September. If you have not received your copy, please call or fax Joyce Ford at the IOIA office, 507-454-8310. For non-members, the price of the directory is \$10 US.



The 1994/95 directory features biographical information of 130 inspectors, 7 supporting memberships from certification agencies, and individual members. Geographical and language indexes help to pinpoint inspectors for specific tasks. Also included is IOIA's current board of directors, committee chairs, and Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics.

Suggested improvements for the next directory should be sent to Joyce Ford. As usual, all comments and corrections are welcome! One suggestion so far has been to include information on computer skills, compatibility, modem, etc.

UPDATES: Monique Scholz - phone & fax are the same number...Lisa Lanza, email at LisaLanza@StPauls.edu.



(OCC, from Page 1)

this year. We have worked with a wide variety of certifiers and government agencies in these efforts. The IOIA membership has also passed the standards for an IOIA Inspector Accreditation program, but the program still needs to be fully implemented. We ask that the OCC and its members continue to support and fully recognize IOIA sponsored inspector trainings, and to become familiar with and eventually supportive of our inspector accreditation program. Certifier participation in these programs is crucial to their success, and we hope that you see their value in complementing and facilitating your tasks as certifiers.

4. Inspector liability. IOIA

requests that as the OCC and its members continue to investigate liability and/or errors and omissions insurance that you look at the issue of inspector liability as part of this investigation. IOIA members who have looked into carrying individual policies have found that the cost would be around \$9000/yr, which is more than most inspectors make in a year. As you can well imagine, this cost is prohibitive. While our baseline opinion is that our best insurance is to do our job in a thorough and professional manner, we are not naive. We realize that the IOIA, OCC and USDA all need to work together on this issue to come up with an affordable and appropriate solution. Joe Smillie and John Moore are the IOIA members working on this issue.

5. Pre-inspection preparation.

IOIA requests that the OCC encourage its members to adopt

policies, procedures and the forms necessary to improve the pre-inspection process. In many instances which ave come to our attention, questionnaires have not been adequately reviewed prior to an inspection being assigned. This leads to confusion, costly delays, wasted money and, in some instances, hard feelings.

Questionnaires should be filled out and signed and accompanied by clear maps and complete field histories before they are sent to an inspector. We further encourage certifiers to develop and distribute to inspected parties the necessary tools to facilitate the inspection and certification process, which will ultimately help assure compliance with the standards. These tools include such things as expanded field history sheets, harvest and storage registers, sales registers and standardized bill of lading forms. Some certifiers have already made great strides in this area, and we applaud these accomplishments. IOIA members are willing to help out with any unified OCC effort in this area.

6. The dance. As the pace of the music quickens, it behooves us to better coordinate our movements, so that our steps be fluid and a pleasure to behold. Thanks for this dance!

NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR

IOIA is pleased to announce that starting with this issue, there will be a new editor. Diane Cooner, a new IOIA member, will be taking on the duties associated with production of our quarterly newsletter. Diane is active in her local chapter of the California Certified Organic Farmers, serving as Certification Coordinator, treasurer [and newsletter editor!]

Diane is looking forward to interacting more with IOIA. If you have any questions or comments about the newsletter, please direct them to her at Box 1259, Guerneville, CA 95446 USA. You can also phone or fax newsworthy items to her at 707-869-3017.

☆ ☆ ☆

IOI Board of Directors

Jim Riddle	Chair* and Training Committee
Chip Kraynyk	Vice-Chair* and Forms Committee
Jody Snyder	Secretary* and Membership Committee
Norm Bernhardt	Treasurer* and Financial Committee
Robert Dixon	At-Large* and Communications Committee
Joe Smillie	
Bernardo Rojas Montoya	Latin American Committee
Linda Kaner	Alternate
Rick Martinez	Alternate
Pete Gonzalves	Alternate, Accreditation Committee

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ADDITIONAL BY-LAWS CHANGES

By Rick Martinez

The following By-Laws changes have been submitted to the By-Laws committee and will be brought before the full membership by mail-in ballot and at the annual meeting in February in Costa Rica.

The changes to the specific By-Laws are as follows (changes are in bold-face):

- 2.06 Decision Making and Voting: Inspector and Inspector Apprentice **members who have been members for 6 months or longer** have voting rights. These members may vote at regular or special meetings with one vote per member.

This would replace:

- 2.06 Decision Making and Voting: Inspector and Inspector Apprentice members may vote at regular or special meetings. Each Inspector member shall have one vote.

- 3.02 Election of Directors: Any Inspector member or Apprentice Inspector member **who is eligible to vote**, may serve as a Director if elected by majority vote of the membership.

This would replace:

- 3.02 Election of Directors: Any Inspector member or Apprentice Inspector may serve as a Director if elected by a majority vote of the membership.

- 3.03 Filling Vacancies on the Board of Directors: Whenever any vacancy occurs in the office of an elected Director, such vacancy shall be filled by the appointment of an elected Alternate by the Executive Committee **or by a special election following the voting procedures as described in these by-laws.**

This would replace:

- 3.03 Filling Vacancies on the Board of Directors: Whenever any vacancy occurs in the office of an elected Director, such vacancy shall be filled by the appointment of an elected Alternate by the Executive Committee.

I feel that the following changes are appropriate and prudent and are for the long term good of our organization.

I propose the voting and office holding eligibility requirements to insure that persons who attend our meetings and partake in our important election and voting processes are serious about their participation and have had sufficient exposure to the issues of our organization, and the context from which these issues evolved, to make informed decisions on these matters. As it stands, someone may attend an event, and be voting on issues on which they are being exposed to for the first time that day, without sufficient time to think about them, and possibly to never participate again. I do not think this situation is healthy for our organization. I feel a six month waiting period is reasonable for any serious members to become familiar with the important issues that determine the direction and fate of our organization.

The second proposed change in the by-laws is to allow for a special election to fill a vacated board of directors seat upon vacancy, when the board chooses to do so. Currently the by-laws call for the board to fill the seat from the pool of alternates. If the board feels they would like to give the membership an opportunity to fill this position, this change would allow the action.

ENERGIZING THE POLITICAL PROCESS

By Chip Kraynyk

During the upcoming annual meeting and training in Costa Rica, the Independent Organic Inspectors Association will elect at least 5 officers and two alternates to the Board of Directors. What are the issues? Where do the candidates stand? Upon what will you base your vote? Who's running? Who knows?

The fact is the IOI has yet to develop a dynamic political process. This is unfortunate because uneventful, issueless elections constitute missed opportunities. The political arena is where ideas about this organization's purpose and direction can and should compete with one another. This newsletter, for example, should feature candidate debates over issues relevant to inspectors. It's not as if everything is settled. There are many unresolved issues and ambiguities relevant to the IOI. Right within our own identity, for example...Independent Organic Inspectors...What does that mean? Or, how about the issue of making recommendations in inspection reports...recommendations for or again certification, or improvement recommendations. Do you do it? If so, why? Are you required to do it? What are the implications regarding your liability?

As an inspector's organization, the IOI has addressed, and will continue to address, situations where inspector's interests are at stake. The nonpayment of inspectors issue, which was presented to the Organic Certifiers Caucus in Baltimore this September, is but one example. (see **OCC**, page 1). Even if the certifiers stand behind inspectors in such situations, is it prudent to assume that the other entities in the certification industry will always take it upon themselves to look out for IOI's interests? And in the event that they do not, what is our recourse? I ask the following, knowing how political incorrect it is to even pose such a question: Should the IOI engage in collective bargaining???

My purpose is not to go on with an exhaustive list of issues and questions pertinent to the IOI. Rather, it is to suggest that many of these matters could and should be flushed out in our political process.

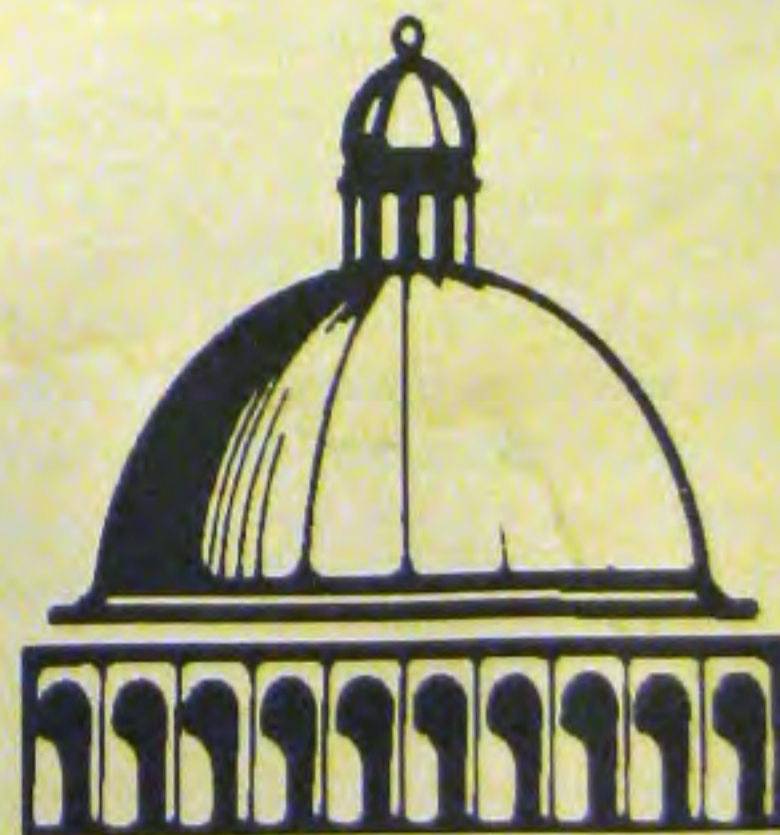
Currently, I sit on the IOI Board as Vice Chair and will run for a second term this January. My interest in continuing with this job is based upon whether or not themembership relates to the approach and perspective that I bring to it, which I will attempt to provide with the following narrative.

I agree that chemical dependent agriculture is very much like drug addiction. In both cases we see quick fix product-based solutions masking underlying problems within dynamic living systems. In both cases, the contamination potential goes beyond the chemical or physical to effect attitude and perspective, diverting attention away from process orientation. An additional parallel is the way each can economically and intellectually devitalize the users and community.

I take the holistic view of organics from which I understand it, as a socio-political phenomenon having as much to do with values as with scientific knowledge and technique. I see organics as the agricultural component of the environmental movement, generally admire environmentalists, and am flattered to be referred to as one.

As most of you are probably aware, the agronomy departments within our academic institutions have not championed organics. Perhaps it's because organics' proactive and ethical side do not square well with academia's assertions about objectivity and neutrality, though it is interesting that these assertions have had little effect at moderating the enthusiasm with which these institutions have promoted the chemically dependent approach to agriculture.

One are which illustrates how the above perspectives translate into the specifics of IOI business is my role on the IOI Inspector Accreditation Committee. In short, the task that



this committee faced this past 2½ years was to determine what made good inspectors, how to gather this information, and how to assess it once gathered. I felt it was fundamental that the criteria be as holistic as possible. And therefore, take such things as the inspector's commitment/beliefs regarding organics into consideration. Like organic farming, inspecting is both an art and a science. So, I felt that rating academic credentials in the sciences higher than those in the non-technical disciplines would be an unjustifiable bias. And in the end, the criteria should strive to look at the whole person more than the credentials. After all, organics has evolved in spite of, not because of, academia. I felt that this was important to give inspectors the opportunity to make their case concerning how their particular education and background contributed to their qualifications as an inspector. I also believe that self-assessment is a very useful tool for gathering relevant information.

In many instances, my approach boils down to gleaning information and messages from the organic model. A synergistic relationship between the technical and the non-technical, favoring process over product, whole systems thinking, creativity and innovation over conventional formula, and self-assessment are just some of the messages that reside within that model.

I would like to close by saying that the IOI, because of the nature of inspection work, has a unique and valuable perspective which can be used to help maintain and upgrade the quality of the certification industry. I also think that the IOI has a special obligation to address the concerns and problems unique to inspectors.

And finally, I find Rush Limbaugh and Oliver North disgusting!

[An excellent opportunity to effect positive change and seize the day! Don't pass up this chance to get involved. There are openings on the IOI Board. Enrich the organization with your constructive input. Get involved! Submit your nomination to Jim or Chip at the IOI office - Ed.]



IOIA ACCREDITATION APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

Application packets for IOIA Accreditation are now available from the IOIA office. The Accreditation Committee recently finalized the application form, including a form to solicit input from certifiers on inspector job performance. Applications will be reviewed by the Accreditation Review Panel (ARP). The panel will consist of 4 members of the Accreditation Committee, plus one non-IOIA member appointed by the IOIA Board.

Accreditation is available only to IOIA members and is offered in 3 categories - Crops, Livestock, and Processing. The application fee for 1 category is \$60 US, plus \$10 for each additional category for which accreditation is requested. In addition to completing an application form, including a form from at least 1 certifier for which the applicant has done inspection work, inspectors must have attended an IOIA-approved training within the past 3 years.

Accreditation is offered as a service to inspector members; it is not required to maintain IOIA Inspector Member status. However, future editions of the IOIA Membership Directory will be divided into sections for "IOIA Accredited Inspectors", "IOIA Trained Inspectors", and "Supporting Members". Accreditation Standards were approved by the general IOIA membership. Amendments to the Accreditation Program must be approved by a majority vote of the IOIA membership. The application format was developed by the Accreditation Committee. The Committee is currently requesting feedback from certifiers through the OCC on the certifier input form, which may be further revised in response to their comments.

Accreditation Committee members are Pete Gonzalves (chair), Linda Kaner, Chip Kraynyk, and Margaret Scoles. The non-IOIA member of the ARP has not yet been appointed.

For Accreditation Applications, contact the IOIA office.

UPCOMING COSTA RICA TRAINING

IOIA will be holding a comprehensive farm and process inspector training course at the Centros de Convenciones de la Catalina, San Jose, Costa Rica, from Monday, January 30 through Monday, February 6, 1995. Participants should plan to arrive on Sunday, January 29. The course will be simultaneously translated in Spanish and English.

The course includes a 4-day farm inspector training course January 30-February 2. Topics such as an overview of the organic industry, the certification process, basic farm inspection techniques, organic standards, farm audit trail, risk assessment and confidentiality and ethics, will be presented. The course will also include sessions on tropical agriculture and the inspection of community grower groups as well as an introduction to livestock inspection and on-farm processing. The course will conclude with an on-site inspection and exam.

The 1995 IOIA annual meeting will be held on Friday, February 3. Committee meetings and presentations from certifiers will be scheduled for the morning, and the membership meeting and elections will be held in the afternoon. A party and dance will be held that evening.

The 3-day process inspector training course will be held February 4-6. It will include instruction on conducting processing facility inspections, organic processing/handling standards, audit trail for organic processors and investigative skills. It will also cover such topics as organic quality management, writing good inspection reports, facility pest management and plant sanitation. It will also conclude with a field trip inspection of a processing facility and an examination.

EcoTours are being organized to be offered on Tuesday, February 7, for course attendees. Those interested in such tours should contact course organizers to make reservations.

Fees for this course have been set at \$200 for IOIA members and \$250 for non-members. Participation is limited to 75 attendees. Due to the fact that this course is designed as a regional training event, attendance is being limited to existing IOIA members and new trainees from Latin American countries at the request of IOIA's Latin American Committee.

Existing IOIA members can register by contacting the Minnesota office (ph/fax 507-454-8310 or fax 507-454-5238). New trainees are being asked to register by contacting Bob Mack or Gabriela Sota (ph 506-224-6090 or fax 506-253-7524) to request a course application form.

NEW Q.A.I. COORDINATOR

Quality Assurance International, based in San Diego, California, announces the appointment of Howie Ross as Certification Coordinator for their organic certification program.

Ross brings with him over 20 years of related experience in agriculture, food processing, marketing, and development of organic programs within the natural foods industry.

Ross' responsibilities at Q.A.I. include detailed review of all applications for organic certification prior to and after the inspections have occurred. He will also oversee the entire inspection and certification process.

Regarding the inspections, Ross says "Q.A.I., with its commitment to professionalism and quality of service, is instituting as policy what has been in practice and will contract and use only

(Q.A.I., from page 8)

those inspectors who have successfully completed the IOIA certification course."

Ross continues, "Because we are involved in organic certification services worldwide for growers, manufacturers and handlers through all stages from the farm to the consumer, and because we use minimum three year standards as stipulated by the Organic Food Production Act of 1990, it is imperative on our part to employ capable and professional independent inspectors.

Ross looks forward to this new appointment at Q.A.I. and to continued involvement in the organic industry during this exciting time of growth and change.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

By Jim Riddle

IOIA is planning to hold the following training courses in 1995:

1. Farm and Process Inspector Training with emphasis on tropical agriculture. January 30-February 6, 1995. Centros de Convenciones de la Catalina, San Jose, Costa Rica. IOIA members should register through the IOIA office. Others should register by contacting Bob Mack or Gabriela Soto (506-224-6090 or fax 506-253-7524).

2. Regional Farm Inspector Training for the Southeast United States. February 24-26, 1995. Glen Agape Retreat Center, Guilford County, North Carolina (near Greensboro). To register contact Tony Kleese (919-968-2481) or Sarah Slover (919-362-8632). Application deadline is January 1, 1995.

3. Farm and Process Inspector Training. March 27-April 1, 1995. Facility yet to be determined, but this course will be held in the San Diego, California area. Physical logistics for organizing the course are being handled by Howie Ross of Quality Assurance International (619-792-3531). Registration and curriculum will be handled by the IOIA office.

4. Farm and Process Inspector Training with emphasis on crops of the Upper Midwest and Northern Plains, including special instruction for the inspection of livestock operations. Tentatively scheduled to mid to late April in the Minneapolis, MN area. Registration will be handled by the IOIA office.

5. Farm and Process Inspector Training. July 10-16, 1995. Facility yet to be determined, but somewhere in Guatemala. Contact Mark DuPont, Altertec, Guatemala (916-627-3379), Rafael Solorzano (ph. & fax 502-2-20781) or the IOIA office for more information.



This list of planned trainings is not all-inclusive. IOIA responds to regional needs when organizing inspector trainings. Other training courses have been suggested for Peru, New York, Ohio or Michigan, Louisiana, and Saskatchewan. Please contact IOIA if you are interested in helping to organize a regional training in your area.

The IOIA office plans to send out a letter in December to all members and people who have made inquiries with additional information about these 1995 trainings.

REPORT FROM RUSSIA

By Jim Riddle

From October 16-31, 1994, Joyce and I traveled through Russia, where we conducted a 10-day organic farm inspector training course in cooperation with EkoNiva, Russia's first and only certification agency.

We traveled as volunteers through the **Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA)** program. The IOIA Regional Training Criteria were followed and the course was based on the same curriculum as other IOIA courses. It was much longer, however, due to the need for translation and because the course included some basic information on organic production and marketing not normally included. We also visited 2 different farms, so more time was spent traveling.

Nine students from 7 different regions of Russia took the final test, and all passed, receiving Certificates of Completion. Other people attended the course for a few days, but did not take the exam.

Yuri Vasyukov, EkoNiva director and IOIA member, was the primary organizer in Russia for the course. He was assisted by **Yevgeny Saranin**, certification coordinator for EkoNiva, who did much of the translating and lined up the field trips. Yevgeny also was the author of EkoNiva's certification and inspection documents, which will be upgraded for 1995 as a result of this course.

Special guest instructor for the course was **Stefan Brandmeier**, an experience inspector from the German inspection service, **IMO**, which provides contract inspections for the German certification agency, **Naturland**. He lectured one day about the European Economic Community's (EEC) organic standards and inspection procedures, as well as sharing some of his observations about agriculture in Russia and the potential for organic production. Stefan also accompanied us for one of the farm inspection field trips.

Russian agriculture is presently in a state of disarray, with the collapse of the state-run farms and uncertainties about the future for private farms. Both farms that we visited were

family-run private farms who had modest but serviceable equipment. They were cautiously optimistic about their future, but were enthusiastic about organic (or, as they say, "ecologically clean") production.

A primary focus for the Russians in implementing organic practices will have to be a significant increase in the use of soil building legumes and grasses. These are not now commonly being grown on Russian farms. As **Stefan Brandmeier** stated, "Organic crop rotations should be comprised of at least 20-25% soil building legumes". Such soil building crop rotations are sorely needed in Russia, where fall moldboard plowing is the most common tillage method, and manure is poorly utilized.

Composting of manures is also a management practice which needs a great deal of development in Russia. It was encouraging, though, to see the biodynamically treated compost piles on the organic farm of **Dmitriy Safronov**.

Access to appropriate equipment, inputs such as cover crop seeds and mined rock fertilizers, capital, transportation and markets all are extremely difficult, making the challenges for ecological farmers in Russia beyond the comprehension of most Western producers. On the positive side, however, most private land has not recently been subjected to heavy chemical applications due to their expense and lack of availability.

Most private Russian farmers do not have access to adequate crop storage or small scale processing facilities. The collective farm and state farm storage and processing facilities are enormous and protection of organic integrity would be nearly impossible to guarantee.

In spite of these hardships, the Russians we had the pleasure of working with are determined to establish a rigorous, verifiable certification program consistent with EEC and United States standards, and are committed to the growth of ecologically clean farming in Russia. It was truly a privilege to contribute in a small way to their project.

LATIN AMERICAN INSPECTOR TRAINING IN CUBA

By Rick Martinez

An inspector training was held in Cuba June 6 through 12, sponsored by "El Instituto Superior DE Ciencias Agropecuarias de La Habana (ISCAH) and el Comité Universitario Certificador De Productos Organicos de La Universidad de Colima (CUCEPRO). IOI member Alejandro Angulo of CICEPRO along with Roberto Garcia of ISCAH, were the main organizers of the event. The course was attended by over forty persons from the six Latin American countries of Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, Columbia, Argentina, Costa Rica and the US, and included both farm/ranch and processor training. The farm/ranch portion of the course was presented by IOI members Gabriela Soto and Rick Martinez and included visits to a sugar cane farm and a dairy operation. The processor portion was presented by Dr. Klaemann of Guadalajara, Mexico and included a visit to a pulping operation that processes products from carrot juice to tropical fruit marmalades. There were various other supporting presentations by speakers from both Cuba and Mexico. presented by Dr. Klaemann of Guadalajara, Mexico and included a visit to a pulping operation that processes products from carrot juice to tropical fruit marmalades. There were various other supporting presentations by speakers from both Cuba and Mexico.



The training was held at the "Instituto de Ciencia Animal", the ISCAH facility near Catalina, Cuba, which is about one hour southeast of Havana. This facility is an educational center for agricultural and livestock sciences that also provides extension services. This is a part of Cuba where sugar cane

and livestock production are the main agricultural activities. A small friendly community surrounds and supports the facility and many of its residents work there. Their hospitality and friendliness made us feel right at home. The attendees were a group of highly qualified, hardworking professionals who all had degrees and jobs in related fields, but no matter how late we worked, there always seemed to be time for the guitars and conga drums at the end (some might say the beginning) of every evening, and that usually brought out many members of the community. These activities had the effect of bringing the group and the residents much closer together.

One of the milestones of the event was a resolution that was passed to form a Latin American inspectors organization that can more adequately deal with the language, culture and geographical needs of its members. They have set a time period of one year to develop basic goals and objectives and are open to support and suggestions from IOI and other organizations. As the IOI representative, I reassured them that they could count on our support. There was discussion on how important it is for all inspector's organizations to work closely together towards our common goals. They all seemed very excited and circulated a copy of the resolution for all to sign. Alejandro Angulo of the University of Colima is the contact person.

On the final day, we had presentations, and the going-away fiesta lasted into the wee hours. We danced, drank (Cuban rum) and were merry. Come time to part, I felt the happiness and sadness we all have felt. Sad, knowing that it may be a long time before we again see our new found companeros, but happy, knowing how fortunate we are having been able to share the experience.

CALL TO MEMBERS

We would like to add two new columns to the REPORT - one on concerns, comments and tips on being an inspector - **we need YOUR input!**

We also want a "controversy" column - one that **addresses INSPECTOR issues** - that we can carry on issue to issue. Please address your input to Diane Cooner, Box 1259, Guerneville, CA 95446.

MANTOSA TRAINING REPORT

By Dawn Summersfield

An Advanced IOIA training course was held the weekend of June 18th & 19th in Manitoba, Canada. The course was accredited by IOIA International and is the first course organized by the new and only Canadian committee of IOIA. Lots of firsts for a small group of inspectors, all from Manitoba, who are, in the process, increasing membership throughout the country to ensure that it will become truly a Canadian entity.

The course was held at the Neuschwander family farm near Gladstone. I can't go any further without thanking the Neuschwander family for their absolutely marvelous hospitality and hard work. We would not have had the opportunity to gain anywhere near as much from the course without their valuable help. Our few breaks were made that much more enjoyable by their friendship and anecdotes. Thanks again Willi, Marianne, Margaret, Gabby, Rachel and Agabus.

It was a great place to hold the course, the farm environment and the abundance of good food provided by the Neuschwanders and the participants. It was obviously the right choice for the inspectors training.

Assinboine Community College, in conjunction with IOIA representatives, put together the course that comprised required reading, assignments, speaker workshops, a marked inspection and an exam. A lot of work for most of us who find June one of our busiest months!

The list of speakers included Dr. Gary Platford on plant disease, Dr. Frank Baker on livestock diseases and inspection techniques, Tom Tolten on herbicide damage identification and Cyril Ross, not only on internal organic standards but lots of other very pertinent information. We also had sessions provided by IOIA inspectors on problem solving, communications and ethics. Not one of these sessions ended on time as the speakers had so much to offer we were all loathed to let them go without gleaning the last bit of information we could. Our brains were totally saturated by the end of the weekend, and then we had to write and exam and achieve 80%!!

We also had the opportunity to look over some IOIA inspection forms that have been

developed over many years.

To close I would like to say from all the new and old IOI Canadian committee members we are really looking forward to seeing you all again and being able to use some of the valuable information we were lucky enough to acquire on our course.

IOIA HAWAIIAN TRAINING

By Zee Sonnabend

A farm inspector training was held in Hawaii on August 1st-3rd, 1994, and was sponsored by Hawaiian Organic Farmers Association (HOFA) which is a new certification group, with assistance from IOIA. The course was taught by Brian Baker and myself from California. The training was structured so that the first day was open to all interested parties with a segment for them to find out about HOFA, and the next two days were devoted to potential farm inspectors only.



HOFA's purpose includes creation of a statewide information network for Organic growers and processors to promote the organic industry in Hawaii; development of both consumer and farmer educational programs concerning organic products/practices; support of research in organic agriculture; and administration of an Organic Certification Program. Since its inception in January 1994, HOFA has adopted a materials list and certification standards. In the last month, HOFA has developed a certification program and is now

administering inspections and certifications in Hawaii. With the newly trained inspectors, HOFA hopes to provide affordable certification to all organic farmers in the state who need to comply with the federal certification requirements.



The course was well received and successful on the whole, but the situation had some distinct disadvantages as a design for an inspector training. The first day attendance was over 40 people and most of the 20 or so who were there just for the day were farmers wishing to know what was involved in certification. Also, HOFA was having their board meeting during the first day, which was where they elected officers and a certification committee and reviewed their standards. The instructors were hindered by not being able to see the HOFA standards until we arrived for the course and therefore we couldn't easily answer questions about the standards.

All of the 18 people in the full course were new to farm inspecting and had widely varying backgrounds. Because of this some allowance was made for those people who were relatively unfamiliar with agriculture to start with. All participants were eager to learn and seemed to understand and benefit a lot from the information.

Hawaii is a state with a very particular set of conditions, climactically, environmentally and logistically, and so the course needed to specifically address some of these issues. Most of the organic growers in Hawaii are small growers on marginal land growing crops which are considered unusual in the rest of the U.S. There are few mixed operations, little livestock (except aquaculture), and resources are expensive and hard to find. Some of the training materials provided by IOIA need to be adapted for local conditions since they tend to be

very Midwestern and commodity-based in focus.

The site was Wood Valley Retreat Center, a beautiful Tibetan Buddhist Temple in Pahala, not far from the volcano on the Big Island, with the main meetings held in the meditation/retreat center. The site worked well for the training, being both secluded and accessible, with comfortable meeting space and an ample kitchen.

The most challenging part of the course for this trainer was the field trip. The grower was very cooperative which helped, but the group of 20 or so was large and the grower had never been certified before and so did not know what to expect. Although it was only a 2-acre operation, the farm was very input intensive and neither the grower nor the instructors had been able to review the HOFA standards in advance to know what standards we were looking for compliance to in terms of materials, boundaries, records, etc. However, we made the most of it, and some flexibility was allowed on grading the farm inspection reports on the materials issues raised in the inspection.

While not everyone who completed the course is ready to be a farm inspector yet, there are enough qualified people so that HOFA should be able to meet their needs for inspectors. The HOFA board members who attended the training benefitted from the expertise of the trainers in developing certification standards and enforcing them in the field. It looks like the HOFA certification program will be ready to go very soon and will provide a valuable local service to organic farmers in Hawaii.



PHOSPHORUS, ORGANIC CERTIFICATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

By Rob Dixon

One thing I noticed this year during farm inspections bothered me. It was the low level of available PHOSPHORUS on the grain farms that did soil testing. The same thing showed up in the 1992 soil test results from 22 farming operations in the Peace River region of British Columbia, Canada.

What makes these test values really interesting is that it looks like organic farming methods are resulting in low levels of available phosphorus over the long term. A three year study call the Viability of Organic Farm Practices has been completed in Saskatchewan, Canada. The researchers (including IOI members Gary Smith, Mark Gimby and the late Andrew Rutherford) were doing side-by-side comparisons of conventional and certified organic farms to see the economic returns, costs, yields, weed competition and the effects of farming practices on the soil as shown by soil tests.



One of the surprising results was the very low levels of available phosphorus on the organic farms (conventional farms also had low levels). A 1990

study in Germany found soil test results showed that the longer the farm had been organic, the lower the available phosphorus levels were!! (most organic farms do not use phosphorus).

As inspectors, we are expected to

assess and document any soil deficiencies and bring these to the producers' and certifiers' attention (this is clearly written out in many standards, including OCIA's). A healthy, biologically active and fertile soil is the cornerstone of organic farming. This living, non-contaminated soil is the first Critical Organic Control Point. Any deficiency, chemical residue or imbalance in the soil will influence the crop, the livestock & the people that consume that crop. There is also good evidence to show that how food is affected by processing also is related to the fertility and vitality of the soil.

The whole issue of sustainability and what is meant by certified organic needs to be explored. How can organic agriculture be sustainable if soil tests show a decrease in available phosphorus? Are low phosphorus levels showing up in soil tests from certified farms in other parts of the world? Are there some fields where the available phosphorus is not decreasing? There is some evidence to show that zero-till fields and land in long hay rotations show an increase in available phosphorus over time.

As organic inspectors, we must be concerned with more than just an audit trail or if all the forms are filled out correctly. We must also have practical tools and accurate information about how to grow certified organic food in an already contaminated global environment. Consumers expect that someone is looking at issues like residue levels, maintaining soil resources and producing high quality nutritious food.

It is a living soil, full of micro-organisms that make nutrients like phosphorus available to crops, that certified organic farmers strive to develop and maintain. Why is it, then, that levels of available phosphorus seem to be decreasing on many organic farms??!!

We should be helping to find the answer to that question.

☆☆ Resources ☆☆

800 Number for Pesticide Queries

The National Pesticide Telecommunications Network (NPTN) is a toll-free telephone service that operates Monday through Friday from 8 am to 6 pm Central Time. The program is designed to provide accurate and prompt responses to questions about pesticides. Answers are given on the telephone or sent in the next day's mail. Requested information that is outside NPTN's expertise or authority is referred to a more appropriate source. NPTN maintains a library of technical reference materials, records of pesticide manufacturers, and files of trade, chemical and generic names.

NPTN supplies the general public and scientific communities with:

- ☛ pesticide product information
- ☛ information on recognition and management of pesticide poisonings
- ☛ toxicology and symptomatic reviews
- ☛ referrals for laboratory analyses, investigations of pesticide incidents, and emergency treatment information
- ☛ safety information
- ☛ health and environmental effects
- ☛ clean-up and disposal procedures

For more information, call 1-800-858-7378 or write National Pesticide Telecommunications Network, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, School of Medicine, Dept. of Preventative Medicine and Community Health, Lubbock, TX 79430.

NOFA Organic Method Videos

Every year the Northeast Organic Farming Association brings together over 100 organic farming and gardening experts to pass on their accumulated knowledge and skills in workshops and other presentations. In 1988 they began videotaping the most popular of these unedited sessions. They have also created several shorter, edited videos for more general audiences. You can purchase any NOFA video for \$15 postpaid (\$2 more for shipment outside USA). If videos are returned in original condition within 90 days, they will refund \$10 of your purchase (in effect, renting for \$5 each). For a complete listing of titles, contact NOFA at 411 Sheldon Road, Barre, MA 01005, or call 508-355-2853

Independent Organic Inspectors Association

I AM INTERESTED IN THE FOLLOWING:

IOIA Membership Application (Membership includes quarterly newsletter and membership directory).

PLEASE SPECIFY CATEGORY

Individual (Annual dues \$50.00)

Organization (Annual dues \$250.00)

The INSPECTORS' REPORT - 1 Year Subscription \$10.00 US (4 Issues)

1994-95 IOIA Membership Directory - \$15.00

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY. Mail to IOIA, Rt. 3, Box 162-C, Winona, MN 55987, USA

Name _____

Phone _____ FAX _____

Address _____

Business Name _____ Business Phone _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Date _____

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 10-14, 1994 10th International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements Conference, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand. Contact: IFOAM Conference, Centre for Continuing Education, PO Box 84, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand; telephone (64)(3) 325-3819, Fax (64)(3) 325-3840.

January 7-12, 1995 Pennsylvania Farm Show, Harrisburg PA. Contact Victoria C. Ritter, The Farm Show complex, 2301 N. Cameron, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408. 717-787-5373.

January 13-15 4th Annual Conference & Trade Show, Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SAWG), Gulf Shores, Alabama. Registration \$15, covers most planned activities. Farm tours, tastings, organic cotton, workshops. Contact Squealy Mason, #3 Office Park Circle Ste. 225, Birmingham, AL 35223, 205-879-7070.

January 27, Northern Plains Organic Marketing Cooperative - Open/Membership Meeting, prior to opening of 14th Winter Conference, see next listing.

January 27-29, 14th Winter Conference, Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society, Aberdeen, S.D. Keynote Speaker Kenny Ausubel (Seeds of Change), workshops. Contact NPSAS at HC 5, Box 104, Langdon, ND 58249, 710-256-2424.

January 25-28 15th Annual Eco Farm Conference: "Seeds of Sustainability...Planting Our Future". Asilomar, CA. Sponsored by the Committee for Sustainable Agriculture. Contact CSA, PO Box 838, San Martin, CA 95046-0838.

February 25-27 Canadian Natural Products Spring Show, Vancouver Trade & Convention Center, Vancouver, BC. Contact Maureen Murphy at 905-479-6939

FYI

Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the new name of the former Organic Foods Production Association of North America (OFPANA). The name was changed to better reflect the scope of their mission to organic agriculture and their expanding membership which includes producers, distributors & retailers of organic products. Contact them at 413-774-7511.



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1/92

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