

IOIA to join ACA/NOP again for 2021 AGM in New Orleans

Plan to come to New Orleans for the next NOP/ACA/IOIA collaborative training and the Annual Meeting!

At the Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, 85% of the voting members voted in favor of New Orleans in conjunction with the ACA as the preferred location and time for the 2021 AGM. The vote is a testament to the clear success of the first collaborative event in January 2020. Even the most skeptical members were overheard saying how much they enjoyed and appreciated this first event. NOP staff, ACA board members and presenters, and inspectors all acknowledged the value of having everyone together in the same room as well as the critical role that inspectors play in maintaining organic integrity. A record 50 people took the IOIA advanced training.

In response to member concerns about the 2020 Annual Meeting being sandwiched in a little too tightly between events in Texas, the 2021 AGM will be on Saturday, January 23, with field trips and BOD meetings on Sunday, January 24, followed by a full day of advanced training on Monday, January 25. The NOP training will follow on Tuesday, January 26, then the ACA training on January 27-28. This will allow more time for member-

ship discussions, and the new lineup for training means that no one has to miss any of the events.

Location of the events is the Hyatt Centric in the French Quarter.

New Orleans is a city-parish located along the Mississippi River in the southeastern region of Louisiana. Founded in 1718 by French colonists, it is the most populous city in Louisiana. Serving as a major port, New Orleans is considered an economic and commercial hub for the broader Gulf Coast region. According to Wikipedia, New Orleans is world-renowned for its distinct music, Creole cuisine, unique dialect, and its annual celebrations and festivals,



especially Mardi Gras. The historic heart of the city is the French Quarter, known for its French and Spanish Creole architecture and vibrant nightlife along Bourbon Street. The city has been described as the "most unique" in the United States, owing in large part to its cross-cultural and multilingual heritage. New Orleans has been considered for the AGM location more than once in the past, and narrowly missed being chosen in 2014.

See 2021, p 4

Notes from the Chair

by Lois Christie

Our Annual Meeting was, as always, a great time to catch up with colleagues, come up with new ideas and hear about past IOIA accomplishments. Our Annual Report summarizes 2019 as a year of "Strengthening our Foundation, Setting Big Goals, and Taking Bold Strides Forward"... and it was all of those things.

It was a bittersweet Annual Meeting as Margaret Anne, our long-time BOD and second-ever Special Past BOD Chair, leaves her post. Margaret Anne has an amazing way of bringing different perspectives to the BOD Meetings and interim calls. Although she will not be acting as Chair, I suspect this will not be goodbye and that Margaret Anne will continue to be very active IOIA. We will miss your valuable input on all of our calls!

See Notes, p 4

Welcome New Members

New Inspector Members

Lanre Amoo, Kitchener, ON
 Alyssa Brett, Calgary, AB
 Regina Dahl, Lunbreck, AB
 Seok Ho Im, Seoul, Republic of Korea
 Carol Kenyon, Empire, CA
 Karen Mischel, Viroqua, WI

Upgrading to Inspector

Kristin Brandt, Syracuse, NY
 Cathy Colley, Pittsburgh, PA
 Brenda Gross, New Berlin, NY
 Martin Lichty, Clearville, PA
 John Welton, Orono, Maine
 Suzanne Wickham, Danville, PA

Returning Inspector Members

Bryan Hindert, Tampa, FL
 Rob Knotts, Laupahoehoe, HI
 Evrett Lunquist, Raymond, NE
 Doug McCormack, Yalaha, FL

New Supporting Individuals

Richard Clough, Eugene, OR
 Lou McDonald, Lowell, OR
 Kimberly Pohle, Silver Lake, IA

New Supporting Business Member

Rodale Istitute, Kutztown, PA

IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- VICE CHAIR —
- JANINE GIBSON
- TREASURER —
- RYAN SITLER
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The Inspectors' Report is the newsletter of International Organic Inspectors Association. IOIA is a 501 (c)(3) educational organization. Our mission is to address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors, to provide quality inspector training and to promote integrity and consistency in the organic certification process.

Editor: Diane Cooner webgal@ioia.net
 Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.

WEBINAR Training Schedule

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

300 Level Webinar - March 19, 2020

Organic Cosmetics
 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two 2 hour sessions w/ a 1 hour break
 Presenter: Gay Timmons, Oh Oh Organic
 IOIA member cost \$325

200 Level Webinar - March 26 & April 2, 2020

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

200 Level Webinar - March 31 & April 7, 2020

In/Out Balance and Traceability Tests for Processing Inspection Under NOP & COR
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two 3 hour sessions.
 Trainer: Kelly Monaghan IOIA member cost \$275

300 Level Processing Webinar - April 21, 2020

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

200 Level Webinar - May 19 & 22, 2020

Livestock Feed Audits - Grazing and Non-Grazing Season
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) Two 3 hour sessions.
 Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm IOIA member cost \$300

250 Level Webinar - May 28, 2020

Inspecting Bee Keeping Operations
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific) One 3 hour session.
 Trainer: Monique Scholz IOIA member cost \$175

Webinar Discount Note:

All IOIA Inspector Members are eligible for 1 half-price webinar in 2020.

Recovery Fund for Leonard Pollara - \$6,685 raised of \$10,000 goal by Angela Wartes, Organizer

On January 28, 2020, our friend Leonard Pollara suffered a heart attack while attending the IOIA training week in San Antonio. Leonard needs our support as his extended community of fellow inspectors. We are all in the same position as independent contractors - an injury, unexpected medical emergency, family illness - one minute you are working and the next you're not.

We've started a fund to help Len weather this difficult time. Please consider making a donation!

[Click here to go to our GoFundMe campaign to help Leonard get through this difficult time!](#)

see Len, p 3

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

March 16-20 - Greenville, South Carolina - Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Training

IOIA and Clemson University have developed basic Crop and Processing inspection training, running concurrently, at the Springhill Suites in downtown Greenville, South Carolina. The courses include 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. A minimum of 12 participants is required for each course or it will be cancelled.

March 30-31, British Columbia, CANADA - This training has been postponed and will be rescheduled to a later date. IOIA and the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program will cosponsor 1.5 days of advanced organic inspector training to focus on "Assessing Biodiversity & Natural Resources on the Farm".

April 27 - May 8, Essex, Vermont - Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Training

IOIA has developed Basic Crop and Livestock inspection training. The trainings will run sequentially with Livestock following Crop. Basic Crop Inspection Training will be presented on April 27 - May 1, 2020. Basic Livestock Inspection Training will be presented May 4 - 8, 2020. The courses include 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. A minimum of 12 participants is required for each course or it will be cancelled. Application deadline is March 20, 2020.

June 1-5, Corvallis, Oregon - Basic Crop and Processing Training & Field Training

IOIA and Oregon Tilth will cosponsor basic Crop and Processing Inspection training and Field Training at the LaSells Stewart Center on the campus of Oregon State University. Basic Crop and Processing trainings will run concurrently. Field trainings are under development.

October 5 - 9, Saco, Maine - Basic Crop and Processing Training

IOIA and MOFGA Organic Certification Services will cosponsor basic Crop and Processing trainings at Ferry Beach Retreat & Conference Center in Saco, Maine. Details will be posted as they become available.

November 2-13, Farmington, Minnesota - Basic Crop and Livestock Training

IOIA will cosponsor basic Crop and Livestock Inspection training at Mt. Olivet Conference and Retreat in rural Farmington. Basic Crop training is scheduled November 2-6 and Livestock training will follow November 9-13.

November 4, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CANADA - Advanced Organic Inspector Training

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training in conjunction with the Organic Connections Trade Show and Conference at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon.

January 25, 2021 - New Orleans, Louisiana - IOIA Advanced Training

In conjunction with NOP/ACA trainings and the Annual General Meeting.

Len, from page 2

A note from Len

I am improving slowly and steadily. I am mostly dealing with the effects of the medicines in regard to the heart attacks. I am in cardiac rehab and starting Occupational therapy on my hand on March 9. I am actually using both hands to type this and my left feels like I have about 35% to 40% control. It is slow with many typos and 'yet he persisted' to paraphrase a slogan. I improve a little daily. I am alive!



Words are inadequate to describe how much I appreciate the generosity folks have shown. The money will help immensely to be sure, but there is no way to put a value on the uplifting of spirits that all the kindness and grace mean to me. I am grateful beyond what words can convey, and deeply humbled by the support. I feel that support every day, all day! All I can say is Thank you from the bottom of my repaired heart!

A HUGE GROUP HUG TO ALL.

2021, from page 1

Watch the Annual Meeting page on [our website](#) for details as they develop.



COVID-19 Corner

How is it affecting IOIA? – a few training registration cancellations due to travel advisories. Expo West. Planned participation in NOSB cancelled. As an association of members who travel for a living and that makes our living by people traveling to our trainings, uncertainty, for sure.

A member – “I have a trip to NYC scheduled for next week that I will likely cancel. As contractors self-quarantine without pay for at least 14 days...Or worse, potentially causing a quarantine and therefore closing a facility that processes milk from farms that are already struggling? Facilities are already weary of asking for my travel history.”

A bright spot – airlines are helping out with no rebooking penalties.

Margaret Anne Weigelt, Special Past Chair and outgoing board member extraordinaire

What a privilege it has been to work with the remarkable Margaret Scoles, our Executive Director, and the IOIA team. I'm so pleased to have had the opportunity to help in my small way to increase the capacity of this organization - in service to its members - and to the global organic movement at large. Thank you. With confidence I pass on the torch. Persist. Activate.

Notes, from page 1

For the first time since the inception of the USDA NOP, inspectors were invited to attend the NOP and ACA trainings. It was invigorating to have our value as inspectors recognized and it was a valuable learning experience and I look forward to next year's NOP and ACA trainings in New Orleans!

Our Board also met with the ACA Board, which was a momentous event. We are excited to be working with the ACA in some of the working groups that affect inspectors. We will keep you informed and we will also be asking for member participation on some of these working groups.

The BOD Retreat was an amazing experience. Lisa Spicka acted as our moderator taking us through a Strategic Planning Session journey for two days that resulted in a report with clear and concise directions that the BOD feels IOIA should take – IOIA's DNA if you will. These are (1) Grow & Connect the Global Community, (2) Sustainable IOIA Future, (3) Vibrant Membership, and (4) Enhanced Trainings. With these guidelines in mind, four committees were created and will be guided by Board of Director members that will see that Actions are carried through.

We are looking forward to a fruitful new year.

Lois

Lois Christie
IOIA Board Chair

Lois presents Margaret Anne with a memory book of her time with IOIA.



Notes from the ED by Margaret Scoles

IOIA joined ACA in 2011. The next year was the first ACA Professional Development Training that I attended. Since then I have been both grateful and astonished at the excellent quality, highly affordable training offered by ACA, paired with extraordinary networking opportunities. Many of our IOIA trainings are born at this event, the one place where virtually all cosponsors and potential cosponsors come together. Our 100-level NOP Standards webinars were born there. Al Johnson joined me there when we proposed the Peer Field Evaluation Program and certifiers like OTCO and ICS helped to breathe life into it. It has always also interested me that it is the one place where people are most likely to pick up IOIA paper – yes, hard copy! Newsletters, training schedules, and promotional pamphlets.

At times I have chafed with the feeling that I was a lone voice for inspectors, but overall it was an invigorating experience that I looked forward to. When I proposed a year ago in Mexico that we collaborate with ACA on training, the response from the membership was mixed. Some felt that our collective energy would be “diluted”, that our interests and concerns were too different from certifiers, it was too US-based while we are international. Etc. But a bit reluctantly, the members agreed to try it, but on one condition. NOP had to recognize us as IOIA independent inspectors! If they required that we register under a certifier, then we would NOT participate. Some of those voices are still ringing in my ears.

So, it was with a bit of trepidation that I approached the mega collaborative event in San Antonio. Would the members be disappointed? Would there be clashes between the interests of inspectors and certifiers? Would it work? We are a group of rather independent, vocal, and strong-minded individuals, after all. Add to that, after we'd made the agreement to join up, the shock of a mass shooting in Texas and the concern that our international members outside the US might be reluctant to come.

But the proof is in the pudding, as my grandmother would say. It was not only a good idea to try, it was a GREAT idea. And it was most validating to have some of those same members who questioned whether we should pair up come to me in San Antonio and say “thank you! For making this happen!” It took a lot of collaborative work, and I have to say “thank you, to the ACA Board, for being open to this” and “thank you, NOP, for being expanding the size of the room and welcoming independent inspectors in”. And “thank you, IOIA members for making this a truly spectacular launch of a new decade.” It was an even greater validation to have 85% of the voting members present vote to do it again, next year in New Orleans!



L to R – Lisa Spicka, retreat facilitator, Margaret Anne Weigelt (Special Past Chair), Chuck Mitchell, Lois Christie, Rachel Cherry Myers, Janine Gibson, Heather Donald, and Ryan Sittler. Philippe Descamps could not join in person and so spent 1 ½ grueling days on GoToMeeting catching up.

The IOIA Board after 8 days! This amazing group of dedicated board members put in many hours. Everyone was tired after a day of field trips, a day of NOP training, 2 days of ACA/IOIA Training and the IOIA Annual Meeting, and one day of IOIA Advanced Training. But these IOIA volunteers made it a marathon by adding two days for Strategic Planning, facilitated by Lisa Spicka.



Just Another Day in the Office

When I came to work yesterday morning I observed something moving in a large plastic tub with a cloth over it. At first I startled, and then I asked staffer Jennie Olson if we had a baby at the office and she said “yes”. She and John rescue orphan lambs and raise them on milk from her dairy cows. Someone had brought her a lamb. She assured me that it would be quiet and she would take it home at lunch time. Meantime, every time it bleated, she warmed up some milk and fed it.



Jennie had a little lamb...

Not every day we have a lamb at the office...

Sector News

Dirt Farmers File Suit over Hydroponics

The USDA was sued March 2 in a civil action brought by organic interests that use soil to grow their crops. They claim the USDA decision allowing hydroponics to be sold under the organic label puts dirt growers at a disadvantage. Led by the Center for Food Safety, the plaintiffs include Swanton Berry Farms Inc., Full Belly Farm Inc., Durst Organic Growers Inc., Terra Firma Farms Inc., Jacobs Farm/Del Cabo Inc., Long Wind Farm Inc., OneCert Inc. and the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. The crux of the groups' argument is that the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA), which set up the National Organic Program, imposes standards that require organic growers to "foster soil health."

"These mandatory specific soil-based production requirements create an equal marketplace for organic farmers and ensure that foods labeled and sold as organic are consistently produced to deliver the ecological benefits that consumers associate with the organic label," says the complaint. "... stakeholders in the organic marketplace have consistently held that as a soil-less crop production system hydroponic operations do not foster soil fertility, and cannot meet the requirement for organic certification under the National Organic Program." [FoodSafetyNews 3/9/202](#)

OFRF Makes Lemonade from Lemons of Expo West Postponement

Expo West and related events were postponed on March 3 due to COVID-19. Unfortunately, that meant postponing the Organic Farming and Research Foundations' (OFRF) annual fundraising event, which has been held for 23 years on the day before Expo opens.

A small crew from OFRF, along with their volunteer chefs, had begun prepping the all-organic lunch for over 300 guests over the weekend prior to the event. When the decision to postpone Expo was made late Monday afternoon, they contacted [Bracken's Kitchen](#), a local non-profit whose mission is to recover, re-purpose, and restore both food and lives through food recovery, culinary training, and community feeding programs. They happily picked up all the perishable food Tuesday morning. Nothing went to waste. [OFRF press release 3/4/2020](#)

**Feds: South Dakota businessman made \$25M selling non-organic grains as organic**

Federal prosecutors have charged Kent Duane Anderson, a Spearfish and Rapid City businessman, with fraudulently making \$25 million in five years by selling non-organic grains and seeds as organic and spending much of it on high living, such as an \$8 million yacht, a \$2.4 million home and a Maserati, a Jaguar SUV and \$400,000 in jewels.

Anderson, who is 50, pleaded not guilty in a Rapid City federal courtroom on February 14, to 42 counts from a grand jury's indictment. It alleges Anderson, aided and abetted "by persons known and unknown to the grand jury," devised the scheme from about Oct. 1, 2012, through March 14, 2018, in South Dakota and elsewhere.

Prosecutors say Anderson, through employees, bought non-organic grains and seeds from Archers-Daniels-Midland Co., (ADM), and Cargill Inc., and shipped them to his storage and loading facility in Tappen, North Dakota. Anderson's employee in Tappen would put the product in bins and receive instructions from an Anderson employee in Florida about which products to load out for customers looking for natural or organic products.

Under Anderson's company name of Green Leaf Resources, the Tappen employee would prepare shipments to customers, with the bills of lading and invoices identifying them as organic. A small amount of the non-organic grains and seeds Anderson purchased would be shipped to a processing facility in Rapid City leased by Anderson, prosecutors say. Anderson "primarily contracted with one trucking company," identified as U.F. in the indictment, and paid U.F. more than \$5 million over the five years, the indictment alleges.

Anderson hired his sister-in-law and a college friend as "figurehead executives" in Green Leaf Resources and "used them to apply for and obtain" USDA certifications as authorized handlers, brokers and traders, of organic grain and seed products. Anderson and his certified employees asserted that the products they handled, brokered and traded were obtained from "organic" suppliers, according to the indictment.

Anderson "used these certifications to falsely market and sell his products as being legitimate 'organic' products," prosecutors allege. [Source: CapJournal](#)

Sector News

GOTS facilities worldwide grew substantially in 2019

The number of facilities certified to the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) worldwide in 2019 [grew by 35 percent](#), rising from 5,760 to 7,765 located in 70 countries. The top ten countries based on number of GOTS-certified facilities are India (2,411), Bangladesh (1,194), Turkey (858), Germany (565), China (448), Italy (444), Portugal (301), Pakistan (276), USA (147), and the United Kingdom (75). GOTS certification helps to ensure compliance with each of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. More than 3 million workers are employed in GOTS-certified facilities. In 2019, 40 new companies in the United States became certified to GOTS. [OTA Newsflash, 3/4/2020](#)

IFOAM North America News

IFOAM North America held its annual membership meeting on February 19 on-line. The meeting was well-attended, with a solid quorum of voting members and a sizable number of observers. President Sarah Brown gave a report that listed the many accomplishments during her term. We contracted with a consultant to conduct an assessment survey and prepare a business plan. IFOAM NA weighed in on various policy issues and formed a Policy Committee to develop positions on various matters arising in the organic community. The Policy Committee is also drafting what is tentatively titled an "Organic Manifesto" that will build upon the Principles of Organic Agriculture and provide a foundation for maintaining the integrity of organic food and farming systems.

IFOAM fosters connections between North America and the organic movement world-wide. By bringing an international and long-range perspective to the table, IFOAM NA can play a strategic role in growing organic and inspire local action that has global implications. IFOAM NA is planning to launch a series of webinars for 2020 that will take on timely, high level subjects that the organic community faces. The membership is looking for IFOAM NA to build solidarity and heal some of the divisions that the organic community in North America has seen over the past several years.

The members elected Marla Carlson, Saskatchewan, Canada; Arzeena Hamir, British Columbia, Canada; Margaret Scoles, Montana, USA; Monique Marez, Colorado, USA; and Allison Squires, Saskatchewan, Canada to the IFOAM North America Board. The Board gives us a broad geographical representation with three new Canadian board members. Incoming board members have a winning combination of global experience and youthful energy. New officers include Brian Baker, President; Jennifer Taylor, Vice President; Stephen Walker, Secretary, and Margaret Scoles, Treasurer. Outgoing Board members Sarah Brown, Dag Falck, Beth Unger and Leslie Zuck were honored and recognized for their service.

OFRF and OSA Encourages Farmers, Ranchers to Participate in Surveys

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) and Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) are working collaboratively with the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) to identify the challenges and research priorities of certified organic producers, as well as producers transitioning land to certified organic production.

The project includes two national surveys—one for certified organic producers and the other for producers transitioning to organic certification. If you are a certified organic farmer or rancher OR a farmer or rancher who is currently transitioning to certified organic, this is an opportunity to make your voice heard. Results will be published in updates of OFRF's National Organic Research Agenda (NORA) report and OSA's State of Organic Seed (SOS) report to provide a roadmap for future research funding.

For certified organic farmers and ranchers, please take the organic survey on our secure website at: <https://www.opinion.wsu.edu/organicproduction/>

For farmers and ranchers who are transitioning to organic certification, please take the transition survey on our secure website at: <https://www.opinion.wsu.edu/transitionproducers/>

If you have any questions about the surveys, please contact Lauren Scott at sesrc.nora.survey@wsu.edu.

The surveys opened on **February 18, 2020 and close April 1, 2020**. They are voluntary, confidential, and will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Alliance for Organic Integrity

IOIA has received an invitation the Alliance for Organic Integrity to become a partner. The Alliance is a daughter/sister company of the IOAS and the idea for founding the organisation came out of that 20th Anniversary IOAS seminar held in New Delhi in November 2017. IOIA participated in that seminar, 'Organic Inspection and Certification 2025'. The Alliance for Organic Integrity was established in 2019 with the ultimate goal of "ensuring, protecting and enhancing the quality and integrity of the organic guarantee being provided to consumers." The Alliance is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in the state of North Carolina and is beginning its first projects.

AOI and IOIA share a common focus on education and protection of organic integrity. IOIA supports this endeavour and is exploring partnership.

From the invitation letter, "as the remarkable market growth of recent years has stimulated longer, more complex and more opaque supply chains, and current regulatory and control systems are not rising adequately to this challenge." "It is not only about fraud, it is also about harmonisation between national approaches, competence and training within the control system, better communication between actors, being smarter. It is also about improving organic more generally, to recognize best practice and to empower producers and supply chains towards closer alignment with organic principles."

The Alliance welcomes Partners and Supporters to join in this work.

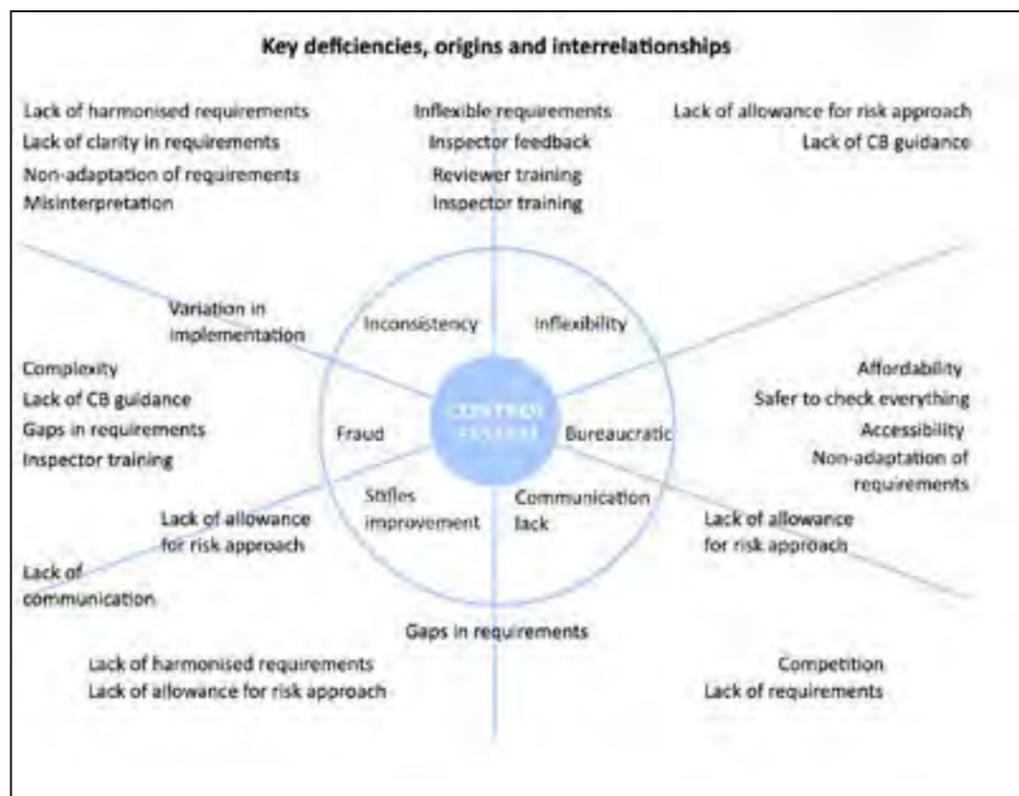
Partners will generally be institutions, organizations and companies that endorse the Alliance's purpose and principles and who wish to actively support its activities. To be accepted as partners, they must be able to demonstrate their commitment to the Alliance's purpose and principles. The Alliance wishes to combine the strengths and expertise of its partners to support and further its aims. Supporters will generally be individuals (or organizations) who are interested in the Alliance's purpose and principles and wish to support its work. Assisting the Alliance Board will be an Advisory Board, primarily drawn from the Partners, who will act as a think-tank, helping it in the strategizing, prioritizing, delivering and promoting of its work and mission. Further committees or working groups will be formed to oversee individual projects, undertake technical research and otherwise provide more specific input/expertise.

Officers of the Alliance are:

- Francis Blake (president) on blake@alliancefororganicintegrity.bio
- Bo van Elzakker (treasurer) on elzakker@alliancefororganicintegrity.bio
- Michael Sligh (board) on sligh@alliancefororganicintegrity.bio
- Jan Deane (coordinator) on deane@alliancefororganicintegrity.bio

You can read more about AOI and sign up via their website, <http://alliancefororganicintegrity.bio/>

From the Alliance for Organic Integrity's promotional leaflet.



Canada's Organic News

BC training postponed

This Advanced training, "Assessing Biodiversity and Natural Resources on the Farm", has been postponed until a later date. Check our website for updates on rescheduling. You can read about what this training will include [here](#).

Another Successful Guelph Conference!

IOIA thanks **Garry Lean**, IOIA Trainer and former BOD Chair, and **Tom Cassan**, long-time booth volunteer for staffing the IOIA booth at the Guelph Organic Conference in Ontario. IOIA is an annual sponsor of the conference and typically has advanced training in conjunction with the event every 2-3 years.



Garry Lean, Jennifer Scott, Cheryl Laxton and Roy van Wyk at the booth in 2019.

Three Canadians at the IOIA/ACA Reception on January 29. L to R Kymberley Snarr, IOIA member and newly appointed member of the IOIA Accreditation Review Panel; Roxanne Beavers, QAI, speaker at the Advanced Training on International topics; and Yehuda Nestel, IOIA inspector member and member of the IOIA Policy Committee and Bylaws Committees.



Review of the Canadian Organic Standards

Work continues on the revision of the Standard. The Organic Federation of Canada reported on the key changes presented to the Technical Committee December 18, 2019 and resulting from the comments submitted during the 90-day public consultation on the proposed changes to the Canada Organic Standard held in the summer of 2020.

[Click here to read the report.](#)

Standards Interpretation Committee

New Public Comment Period from February 17 to March 17, 2020. [Details here.](#)

Poultry welfare at heart of discussions

[More details here.](#) [Source: OFC](#)

Advanced Inspector Training

Hosted at
2020 Organic Connections
Conference & Trade Show

Nov. 4, 2020 8:30am-5pm
PrairieLand Park, Saskatoon, SK

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training in conjunction with the Organic Connections Conference. This training will include a review of key COS updates, a hands-on audit exercise, technology tips for inspectors, and fraud detection.

For Training Info, Phone:
1 (406) 436-2031

For info about Organic Connections:
1 (306) 221-7950
www.organicconnections.ca

**IOIA Crop Inspection Training in Hong Kong, PRC - January 13 - 17
by Chloe Chan, Certification Officer, Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre**

Co-organizing with Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre (HKORC), IOIA delivered an Organic Crop Inspection Training in Hong Kong from January 13 to 17 (4.5 days). Different from the perception of the modern city which is dominated by financial and service business, the agricultural sector in Hong Kong is getting higher attention day by day. More than 120 farms are certified organic in Hong Kong now. The fast-growing industry requires new professionals to join for better organic agriculture development.

Experienced IOIA trainers Luis Brenes and Nate Powell-Palm led a class of 25 participants throughout the week. On Day 4, the training took place at an organic farm in the Northern part of Hong Kong where participants were divided into three groups to conduct a real inspection practice. Some of the exercises included checking records, viewing inputs in storage area and observing crops grown on field. Walking along the fields with rows of green cabbages and fresh lettuces, trainers demonstrated inspection skills in details. "Good inspectors always uproot the crops to check seeds and soil," Luis reminded the future inspectors, "Get dirty!"

Combining in-class lectures, on-site activities and take-home assignments, participants were able to learn inspection skills in a full scope. Feedbacks received are positive overall and some suggested spending more time in field inspection. The training is a valuable chance for interested industry insiders and hopefully foster future experts in organic inspection.



**Asia Pacific Committee's First Training - Chiang Mai, Thailand - January 15 - 17
by Mutsumi Sakuyoshi**

Fifteen participants gathered at Chiang Mai, Thailand, to learn about Grower Group inspection. They came from India, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Korea and Japan. Unfortunately, 2 people were not available to join because of volcanic eruption troubles in Manila. But another 4 women from the Philippines were able to attend and participated a lot, including leading working groups.

"Buffer zone is a critical issue in organic certification. But do organic farmers farm in a bad way? They grow crops by better way compared to conventional farmers!"

The IOIA Asia Pacific Committee planned over 3 years to make this event a reality. And finally we did it!

Lead trainer **Isidor Yu** said this training was successful. Good start. He has been working as an IOIA trainer for many years and his smile is approachable to anyone. He is very good at explaining serious, difficult concepts. **Vitoon Panyakul** arranged all accommodation as a host. We could not have set up this training without his hard work. His policy is clear to support organic farmers. For example, when participants worried about buffer zone verification, sometimes young/serious people think very nervous or get too strict and lose the direction of inspection. He gave the quote above to calm them down! **Sandeep Bhargava** started with an IOIA training scholarship over 15 years ago. Now he is a representative of OneCert International and serves various trainings to their staffs, and to other CBs. He has concrete information through his experience, included accreditors' position to each standard. Three great trainers gave good presentations and the workshops were very active among participants. To hear the voices from other areas gave us common understanding besides new farming/standards by each.

The 3rd day, we requested participants to give a short presentation to share their experiences on Grower Group Certification. There are various experiences and we enjoyed hearing about actual grower group activities in several countries.



Sandeep and Vitoon



Mutsumi



Isidor



We all needed to go back home after the training, and daily work starts again. But the energy received from these 3 days of training helps them to continue general tasks. And they know the place to come back when we lose the direction. The world is small enough to see each other again.

By the way, this training was our trial run and all trainers worked free. The cost was reasonable for the people for most Asian countries. We need to develop the new structure to sustain our trainings in this region to develop IOIA actions. Another challenge!

NOP Training Highlights for Inspectors – January 30

This NOP Training was a landmark event for inspectors, who were able to register for the first time as independent contractors under IOIA or under any NOP-accredited certifier. IOIA is grateful to the NOP and ACA for working together with this to make this happen. *Note that selected NOP presentations are available on the NOP's Online Learning Center.*

Jenny Tucker, opened with the NOP Update:

"You play a vital role in the certification process."
Lars Crail, NOP Lead Auditor, to inspectors.

- **4% increase net in certified operations**
- **Proposed rule on Strengthening Organic Enforcement.** Still "coming soon" –OMB will have 90 days total, followed by publishing in the Federal Register, then a 60-day comment period. The new rule will require a minimum number of hours of training for staff, including inspectors. It will address unannounced inspections, inspector/reviewer training, traceback and mass balance audits, and grower groups.
- **Certifier Info Sharing Speeds Fraud Detection! – this was a common theme throughout.**
- **Fumigation Update** - About 15 kinds of organic products were fumigated this year at the border, mostly fruits and vegetables. Top 3 - bell peppers, bananas, and herbs.
- **Operation Transitions: When a Certifier Exits** - Certifier notifies Operations of Exit List to NOP, NOP updates OID, and calls them "Transitioning". Operations surrender or apply to another certifier. New Certifier evaluates new application, NONCs if needed. If new Certifier certifies or denies, notifies NOP. NOP takes action (if no response or denial), NONC, Proposed Suspension, Final Suspension. When a certifier exits, NOP cannot force an operation to surrender. They have 90 days to make a good faith effort to get an application in, they don't actually have to be certified in that 90 days. If they haven't done anything at all in that 90 days, NOP will begin the adverse action process.
- **US - Canada USCOEA – attestation statements must now be issued by the certifier!**

Office of Inspector General – Brad Meyer and Chris Phillips - gave a riveting recap of the Randy Constant case, **Organic Land Management & Jericho Solutions**. A few Learning Points: OIG likes to see aerial photos and real field numbers that correlate to FSA maps. They were astonished that 3 different certifiers can certify the same field by 3 different field numbers. It took them 10 days to get the fields all identified. Sharing of information between NOP, FSA, RMA is vital. For Crop Insurance – producers certify as non-OG or OG. In closing, they shared the OIG hotline for complaints.

www.usda.gov/oig/hotline.htm

Learning Points: What they learned that may be useful to inspectors.

- All of the reports commented on how organized RC was. Because he was keeping 2 sets of books!
- Red flag - gaining organic ground rapidly through break-out of CRP.
- Red flag - producer continually schedules inspection during non-growing season.
- Inspectors need to get out in the field farther than 1-2 passes on outside round.
- Increase unannounced visits if possible.

Question from an inspector – "could 'we' have done something differently, or do we need them?" **OIG answer** - that they have access to more – they needed all of the bank information; 'we' can't get that. FSA records – we can't go get them, but we can make the producer provide them. **Betsy Rakola, NOP:** There are a lot of things that are in our power to get and to do (unannounced inspections, records requests, traceback/mass balance exercises).

Betsy Rakola, Compliance and Enforcement - Corn for grain, hay, and wheat are the top risks for fraud. They go to livestock feed (milk and eggs are top), so there is need for a big supply. The forecast is a constrained supply, with frequent complaints of fraud, along with pressures on conventional market (trade, etc.). Good news: Fraud has stopped faster with suspensions and revocations. "We have to talk to each other."

Lars Crail, Lead Auditor - In the witness audits, they see many excellent inspections, but need to have more consistency on how to do them well. They also see poorly designed OSPs that don't capture the right information. Inspectors may not be asked to record the in/out or tracebacks. Inspectors are not always verifying all inputs and fields, citing the regulations in the exit interview, or working from the regulations. Inspectors are not always understanding or communicating their role.

Emily Prisco – Livestock Specialist with NOP Pasture Surveillance – Overview and Findings – Goal: Determine if organic dairies are following access to pasture rules. How: NOP performs unannounced inspections during the grazing season. Good news, most alarming complaints were unfounded. all cows were grazing at least 120 days and many for more. Bad news, temporary confinement reasons were not all compliant. She also noted that some inspection reports just reiterate what was in the OSP, not taking any numbers from the producer and actually verifying. Inspectors are sometimes calculating the DMI for the farmers. "It is OK to guide but they should be able to show what they are feeding." They see more certifiers doing their inspections during the grazing season. Good mass balance audits are happening. Need to continue. Looking ahead – will continue, with focus on temporary confinement. Will expand their scope a little to include livestock health care practices and traceability.

Texas Field Trip – January 27

Tim Miller and Ann Berghammer-Miller of Millberg Farms, Kyle, Texas hosted IOIA for a very interesting farm field trip on January 27. The trip opened with an audio tour of the The Alamo historic site in downtown San Antonio, followed by a bus ride to the farm. Millberg Farms (NICS certified) was the first permaculture farm in Texas and the first CSA in Texas. Tim Miller has been farming organically since 1989. The operation markets primarily through a CSA and farm stand, with a small amount of specialty sales to restaurants. It is distinctive for its focus on heirloom vegetables and fruits; irrigation water conservation, micro-watering (water jugs!), and rainwater harvesting; multiplying alliums; and use of recycled materials.



Host Tim Miller with allium.

The Millers rescued a local heirloom fig and have propagated hundreds of fig plants using air layering. They have been awarded a state "Blue Legacy Award" for water conservation. The Millers are currently engaged in an effort to prevent a highway from being put through their small farm. Warm sunshine that day was an especially welcome enhancement for winter-worn travelers. Barbeque meats were delivered from the famous Salt Lick BBQ nearby, and the Millers added organic salads. A group of about 25, mostly IOIA members, participated.



"The food, people, tour, and conversations were wonderful. Thanks." – a final note from host Tim Miller.

Conversation for a New Decade By Margaret Scoles

It was the end of a long day – following the IOIA Annual Meeting and day two of the ACA Training. But as gauged by the frequent and enthusiastic applause, it was a conversation worth having. Three great minds, an energetic moderator (Terrance Layhew, organic inspector of *The Intellectual Agrarian* podcast fame), and a crowd of about 100 participants from the ACA and IOIA events came together. They looked at where organic is now, and where it should be headed. The panelists were Michael Sligh, recently retired from RAFI-USA, a part of Rural Advancement Foundation International, and current president of the IFOAM IOAS; Nate Powell-Palm, organic inspector, IOIA Trainer, certified crop/livestock producer, and new NOSB member; and Sarah Brown, certified small diversified farmer, Oregon Tilth Education Director and president of IFOAM North America.

Michael shared stories from the early years, as the Organic Food Production Act (OFPA) was made a reality and he volunteered for the first NOSB. He served as the first chair. "The core NOSB was organic but at least half the board came from conventional agriculture (i.e. American Meat Institute, American Fertilizer Institute). The best way to win them over was to go see organic operations. Eventually we won them over enough to put together a pretty good set of regulations." He shared "the moment when our whole movement galvanized and we were on common ground, with a common cause" after the first NOP regulation was published in 1997 suggesting that radiation, sewage sludge, and biotech be allowed in organic. He received resounding applause when he announced the formation of the new **Alliance for Organic Integrity**. He invited partners. "We don't want to re-invent the wheel. We want to cooperate."

Sarah described growing up in the Bay area of California, loving to cook with her grandfather. She had not intended to pursue agriculture but was pulled in with Hope's Edge by Frances Moore Lappé. She switched majors and launched into agriculture at UC Davis.

See New Decade, p 17

ACA Training

Updates from the ACA Materials Working Group is always popular with humor to spice up what could be a dry topic. Presenters were Jen Berkebile (PCO); Jackie DeMinter (MOSA); Sam Schaefer-Joel (WSDA); Doug Currier (OMRI); Adam Seitz (QAI); Nate Lewis (Ecocert ICO). Sodium lactate – is it allowed as an electrolyte? They agreed “yes”. How to verify oil free grades of nitrogen or oxygen? Excluded methods best practices; Glycerin – impacts non-OG flavors and colors that use glycerin. Process of reviewing the non-OG glycerin discussed. Bottom line - PLEASE JUST USE ORGANIC GLYCERIN! Useful resource – the **ACA Best Practices for Common Material Review Issues July 2019**. All guidance documents and best practice documents are posted at <https://www accredited-certifiers.org>

A few highlights from the **Working Group Roundup - Karlin Warner (OneCert)** spoke on **Organic Certificates**. **Liz Figueredo (QAI)** summarized the **Risk Assessment Guidance**. **Kyla Bedard (VOF)** - need to reconvene **DMI Verification and Enforcement WG** to do a few updates, such as including the OILC course input. **Jenny Cruse (PCO)** – Cross-Agency Investigations WG – developed a Best Practice document. Addressed Confidentiality – NOP has been clear that certifiers must provide information. The “Cone of Confidentiality” allows for that sharing. **Jen Berkebile (PCO)** – **Natural Flavors WG**. Planning to produce a Best Practice document 2018 Final Rule affected more than 35 items on the NG including natural flavors. Working on forms that operators and certifiers should find useful.

Contract or Staff Inspectors was a dynamic panel made up of both. Bottom line is that although they may differ administratively, the role they play and the work they do is identical and critical. **Jenny Cruse (PCO)** focused on Communications. Certifiers feel they generally have a good mechanism to get info from this training and feedback to their inspectors, but they could invite more feedback the other way from inspectors. PCO traditionally did inspector training in person; this year they did it remotely. She noted that face to face evaluation has a real value. **Georgana Webster (MTDA)** Most certifiers use contractors. At MTDA 60% are done by staff inspectors (shared with other programs). Employees cost more because they get insurance, retirement, etc. Cost of time spent with a contractor is an investment. **“Remember to communicate to maintain a culture of trust.”** **Sean Feder (CCOF)** discussed the impact of the recent California Assembly Bill 5 and the impact on their inspector roster. He explained the difference between the ABC test (used in 8 states) and the Common Law Test (used in 16 states). The interpretation of when a contractor becomes an employee is stricter in the ABC test. CCOF decided to make all of their CA-based inspectors into employees, starting on January 1, 2020. That was about 2/3 of their inspectors. A few of their CA inspectors could still qualify as contractors through some type of business structure. See page 15 for **Patti Bursten Deutsch’s** complete comments.

Quality Inspections panel addressed other key components of the inspection. IOIA Inspector Members Karlin Warner (OneCert) and Al Johnson (independent contract inspector) were among the panelists.

ACA Training – “Sharing Our Perspectives”

Training Service Director **Jonda Crosby** (at right) participating in one of the “**Sharing Our Perspectives**” sessions focusing on Crops & Livestock.

There were 7 topic areas: Crops/Livestock; Natural Resource Assessment; Materials; Handling; Audits; International; Accreditation & Management. Each person could participate in 3 sessions.

Great discussions!

Each session was charged with identifying top issues, questions, or inconsistencies, then proposing solutions, and finally suggesting action items for the ACA Board and the IOIA Board.

The IOIA Board and the ACA Board are now meeting and prioritizing topics for work.



Panel Comments – Contract or Staff Inspectors? By Accredited Inspector Patti Bursten Deutsch

I spent 136 nights in hotels rooms last year.

That’s about 3 nights per week for every week of the year. Traveling is a most thankless way to earn a living. So when I look around the room and see all of you, it helps me remember that - what regularly feels like a long, lonely climb through a year’s worth of inspections - is indeed, a community committed to ensuring organic integrity. I am grateful for the opportunity to be here with all of you.

Part of the description for this panel is “Learn answers to questions regarding contract versus staff differences and insurance for contractors.” The word “versus” in this sentence is interesting to me. This word implies “being against” or “opposition”. I believe using a word like that automatically creates tension that does not need to exist. We’re inspectors first, everything else is secondary.

Also, interesting to me is the word “contractor”. As an old-school inspector, I prefer the word “independent”. “Contractor” is a legal word, which defines the terms of an agreement for work. “Independent” on the other hand, is a more philosophical word, which is typically understood to mean “free from outside influence”. When someone uses the word “contractor” to describe the person who does a job, they are focusing on the business exchange - not the role or the personal relationship.

I believe both independent AND staff inspectors are necessary to accomplish our certification mandate. In terms of sheer numbers, we need all hands on deck. With unannounced inspections, there are nearly 47,000 separate NOP inspections required annually. Qualified, trained inspectors are in the best interest of every NOP stakeholder. Certifiers must have capable inspectors – both in quantity and quality, and the system must provide for that - one way or another.

IOIA’s mission statement is “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.” Notice that IOIA’s mission is not only about training inspectors – but emphasizes consistency and integrity in certification. The way they have done this is by uniformly training inspectors to our national standard for implementation around the world.

IOIA has functioned as the pipeline for getting new inspectors into the certification system. For staff AND independent inspectors, this has been the primary pathway. But IOIA alone can’t ensure that future inspections will be consistently served by well-trained, focused individuals. This is the responsibility of everyone in the room who cares about quality in organic certification. Training must be the responsibility of all stakeholders. This requires cooperation. Lots more cooperation. I want to add, briefly that some of what I am saying also applies to our cousins, the reviewers, many of whom are - or were - also inspectors.

If we want to recruit and retain intelligent, inquisitive people – individuals that will represent not only your organization, but the organic community at large – it is time to join forces to address this unique and demanding role. It’s time to stop thinking in either/or, us/them language, to move forward together. I applaud the NOP’s plan to communicate and train directly with inspectors. ACA, I challenge you to find ways to have more purposeful dialog and interaction with all inspectors. IOIA, it’s time to dial up the trainings to meet the evolving needs of the certification process. I sincerely hope this amazing event is not a one off – but a model for the future. Collaboration and communication are the keys to our shared glorious future.

I think we can all agree from Jenny Tucker’s session, that upgrading the human capital is a priority. To that, there must be substantive, meaningful discussion about the burdens of travel on all inspectors, about the ever-increasing requirements for on-site verification, on the relative stagnant

wages over time, of the retirement [or other departures] of the most experienced inspectors, and what IOIA reports to be a declining number of new inspector registrants. As the demands continue to increase on inspectors, it is not reasonable to expect that these basic issues will simply go away.

I implore you to support IOIA’s mission - and all inspectors - in ways that promote professionalism and longevity. IOIA’s reach is greater than any one accredited certifier, greater even than the NOP. Individual inspectors around the world – primarily trained by IOIA - are doing the face to face work of NOP certification. All inspectors should be encouraged to be IOIA members. Certifiers, give your staff inspectors the support and benefit of their professional association.

Like every independent inspector in this room, I am here on my own time, and at my own expense. This is what I came here to say: The incredibly demanding full time profession of organic inspector is losing ground, not gaining. No inspectors, no inspections, no certification. Every one of those 47,000 inspections require an inspector to show up!

With that in mind, if you’ve ever done an inspection, please raise your hand!

You all know the pleasure and pain of this responsibility... thanks so much for your hard work!

If you’ve received any IOIA training at all - please either put up or leave your hand up, and others please put your hand down. It’s clear that IOIA is a powerful influence on organic certification. If your hand is not up, chances are you are only one degree of separation from IOIA. IOIA is clearly an essential partner. Thank you all – you can put your hands down.



IOIA Annual General Meeting - San Antonio, Texas
 Draft minutes will be posted on our website in the Inspectors Only section when available



Michael Sligh kicked off the AGM with a thought-provoking, salty keynote.

Common Ground/Common Cause - The Struggle for the Soul of Organic.
 A native Texan, keynote Michael Sligh began with a story about how one of his ancestors owned Davy Crockett's rifle for a while but lost it in a poker game. As we move away from a compliance based to a risk assessment and performance based system, we need to increase communications with each other and deter fraud, earlier! Move from being reactive to proactive. We need more cross-checks, more tools. The new Alliance for Organic Integrity could become an organized conduit for global strategic conversations about markets outstripping oversight capacity; about certification inconsistencies, gaps, and fragmentation; and to address issues of regional isolation in the movement. "We have to raise the professionalism at all levels." and "More paperwork is not the answer!". "If we can harmonize on specific fronts to deter fraud - adopting organic best practices such as crop rotation, enhancing biodiversity and soil building the movement can be a force in mitigating climate change. As movements grow into the mainstream, they are subject to the same as the rest of agriculture. Robots, consolidation, etc. "We must have justice and fairness for farmers and workers". We must embrace continuous process improvement and continuous innovation to retain the ethics and soul of the organic movement!

He agreed to provide the full text for an upcoming issue of the newsletter - unfortunately not enough room in this issue.

Results of the BOD election: Both Chuck Mitchell and Heather Donald were re-elected to a 2nd term.

Important member discussions: The idea of an inspector co-operative seemed to be an old idea whose time has finally come. An ad hoc committee volunteered to explore it. Peer field evaluation was discussed vigorously. All agreed that IOIA should not be losing money on this program and there has to be a more sensible way to do it. How IOIA engages internationally was another strong theme.

Door Prizes - Part entertainment, part camaraderie, part sharing of organic products! All donated by Board members.



Rachael Savage won this beautiful cardinal painting brought from MN.



Kathe Purvis and Jessica Walden (NOP), old friends from Australia, delighted to be re-connecting in Texas.



Tom Page with one of the "Inspector Emergency Coffee Kits" brought from the Philippines by Chuck, made of coconut shell and coffee from a plantation destroyed in the recent Taal eruption.

New Decade - San Antonio - January 30
 Continued from page 13

Nate told a story about how he and his two employees scraped 2000 bu. of peas out of a bin by hand, while the custom trucker watched and waited. It was dirty, dusty, hard work. The trucker asked "Why are you working so hard?" They burst into enthusiastic explanations of organic production. A few weeks later, he was invited by a group of very good conventional farmers to talk with them about what it meant to transition to organic. "The work that we are doing is a catalyst to something bigger than ourselves".



Question: What does Organic mean to you?

Nate - "It means I get to farm. I wouldn't be farming if it wasn't for organic agriculture. There is not room for young farmers to get into conventional ag." He noted the benefits of organic in carbon sequestration. He described organic as a "system that people joyfully get into" and told how an Amish farmer said that he didn't really expect all 7 of his children to want to farm. "Rural communities get to change their own story. They have people scrambling to get in."

Michael - "I subscribe to the IFOAM definition with principles of health, ecology, fairness, and care." He described how writing the NOP regulation was like "putting a square peg in a round hole". "Some of the corners get knocked off, and we lost that corner about the people. We have to find a way to put in back. At the end of the day, we will not cash flow unless we include the people in the definition".

Question: What is happening in the Organic movement which excites you?

Sarah - "Organic 3.0! The concept of taking it to the next step, how to incorporate fairness and care. And even beyond certification, identify allies that are not necessarily organic." She also applauded the work of organic plant breeding and the focus on natural resources and biodiversity in the standards.

Question: What steps can we take in addressing over-supply of Organic products?

Nate - "There is not a wand to wave from an enforcement point of view that will fix this problem. We can have really even enforcement across the board and we will still have over-supply." He suggested lobbying to make organic milk be a part of the school milk program. "We need a culture of contracts. No quicker way to kill this than an over-supply."

Question: How can we more inclusive?

Sarah - "When you look around the room we are not a very diverse audience. You can't pursue diversity just in the name of diversity. It has to be inclusive. We need to genuinely find a way to reach out to be more inclusive."

Michael - "The majority of organic farmers are in the global south and they are farmers of color. Half the farmers are women."

Question: More labels every year - is the increased number of labels good, bad, or neutral?

Nate - "The cacophony of labels is a direct symptom of our failure to communicate what "organic" means. Almost every additional label is captured in the organic label."

Michael - In visiting with a producer in Costa Rica who was certified fair trade, bird friendly, shade grown, organic, Rain Forest Alliance.... "Can you people not get your act together and send one inspector so I can have multiple labels?!" In referencing a study in Europe about consumer perceptions of organic. "We found that consumer

"IFOAM represents the global movement to support organic. It has provided some visionary guidance and leadership about where this movement can go. Organic in the US is more industry and market based. Globally there is a movement toward something more visionary. People are craving that. In the US, there are plenty of people who are using organic practices and that is even more true around the world. IFOAM can be an umbrella for those not certified or considering transitioning to organic."
 ~ Sarah Brown

IOIA Advanced Training – San Antonio – January 31

A packed agenda! Sarah Brown, Oregon Tilth Education Director, opened with **“Putting the Buzz in Biodiversity and Natural Resources”** focused on enhancing inspector competency in verifying compliance to the natural resource assessment standards and guidance. Roxanne Beavers, QAI, presented **“Dotting the ‘i’ on Imports and Exports of Organic Products”**, a summary of the key variances to be verified in the international equivalency agreements and touching on upcoming changes such as the new EU regs soon to be implemented and addition of the JAS livestock scope during 2020. Seasoned inspectors Kathe Purvis and Kelly Monaghan discussed common pitfalls in in/out balances, tracebacks, and formula verification, techniques to avoid them, **“The Seasoned Inspector’s Guide to On-site Audits”**. Small group exercises allowed the big group of 50+ participants to get to know each other better. And that was all before lunch! Sam Welsch discussed cross-checks and gave examples of how they have been used effectively. Silke Fuchshofen gave a short, but thought provoking presentation, **“Records are only as good as the procedures they represent: A Thought Experiment”**. Miles McEvoy finished out most of the afternoon with **“Risk Management”** (more theoretical- how ISO 31000 and the Table of Eleven can help identify and reduce organic fraud risk) and **“Investigations & Evidence”** (more practical - how to utilize investigative plans, interview techniques, and documentation methods in instances where organic fraud is detected). **Lisa Spicka, Maracuja Solutions**, provided training facilitation.



Decade – from page 17

attitude is very different from consumer behavior. The consumers were not confused. The reason they were not confused is that consumers didn’t understand enough to be confused! Consumers are in a hurry, and they want to get something that they feel good about.” “One label doesn’t include the people. Another says “Fair-Trade” but has only 2% FT ingredients. It is a mess! It is not a new issue and it is a real one.”

Sarah – “Organic has to be the foundation”.

Question: Within the last decade organic agriculture has made significant strides forward, both in the marketplace and the number of farmers, where do you see it headed next?

Sarah – “There has been a bit of navel gazing within the organic movement. We really need to broaden what organic means to include a wider group of stakeholders.”

Nate – “We are right at the cusp of not learning from our conventional forebearers. We need to figure out how every farm can belong to a co-op! Not just higher prices, but also bargaining power!”

Michael – “Now that were in the mainstream, we have to realize we are in the same macro conditions as conventional ag in terms of over-supply. Are we going to follow that same road or are we going to do something different?”

Question: What is holding us back?

Sarah – “Money and politics, agribusiness lobbying. “Us” vs. “them” mentality – transitioning growers don’t always feel welcome. More growers would transition if they felt welcome. Look at state level advocacy, not just federal. They are working in Oregon on state level action plans; a few other states are doing the same.”

Michael – “Can we get big money out of politics?” “If we want to have a rational food system, we have to turn this around. We need to join the folks in conventional agriculture in turning it around”.

**“I get angry when I see dairy companies sending out suicide prevention pamphlets. What prevents suicide? Paying people!”
~ Nate Powell-Palm**

Resources

NOP unveils new Enforcement Dashboard

USDA’s National Organic Program has developed an Enforcement Dashboard to more effectively provide regular enforcement updates to certifiers, businesses and entire organic community. It will use this format to provide quarterly numbers related to the enforcement process. Going forward, NOP intends to focus more on outcomes rather than process, and provide graphs that make it easier to see at a glance how the numbers relate to one another.

[Check it out here.](#) OTA and USDA 2/14/2020

CCOF outlines Part 2 of Roadmap to an Organic California

California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) has unveiled the second part of its first-of-its-kind research project investigating how organic is a solution to California’s toughest challenges. Tackling climate change, economic challenges, and health inequities, CCOF’s Roadmap to an Organic California: Policy Report offers nearly 40 policy recommendations – a blueprint – to grow organic to combat climate change and build healthier, more secure communities. <https://ccof.org/roadmap-organic-california>

Veteran Inspector Bob Howe Retires

Bob Howe, New York, has been inspecting since 2000, has served on the IOIA Board of Directors, and mentored many inspectors in the course of his career. Following is excerpted from the IOIA Forum. We wish Bob the best!

“On the day that the EU leaves the UK and our “president” is being tried for abuse of power, etc., I want to wish you all a successful future.

“Organic food is important and you cannot forget or deny that statement. You have a critical responsibility to ensure that the label remains valid and trustworthy.

“I have spent more than the past 20 years working in the community and, hopefully, strengthening the value of the label. I have enjoyed my time here and consider it the best and most significant time of my life. Do not make little of your effort because it is imminently meaningful. The world will depend on safe food and it rests with us to ensure that safety. Do not let the big \$ drive the outcome. “Work as a group and strengthen IOIA with your support. Be active!
“May the creator bless you and yours, “Love, Bob Howe”

“From one (almost) retiree to another, congratulations and a hearty thank you for your many years of service and perseverance in keeping the label honest. I, for one, have really appreciated your erudite comments on the forum over the years, which often directed our attention to crucial issues and developments. I can just about guarantee that you will find life after inspecting rewarding.
“Take good care my friend, Tony Fleming”

“Bob, You leave some very big shoes to fill - thanks for everything you have brought to the organic industry. I am honored to call you my mentor. Enjoy your retirement and your family. Amanda Birk”

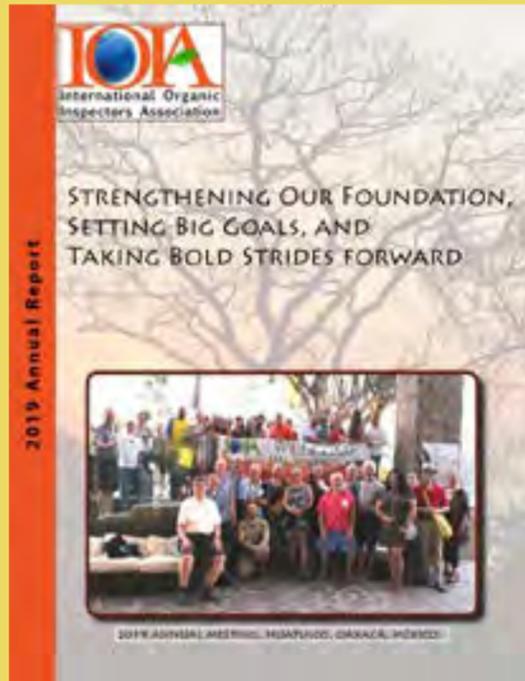
A card with best retirement wishes was passed around at the AGM in San Antonio. Bob’s reply:

“The wonderful card came in the mail yesterday. That has made my whole experience in IOIA and trying to live up to the responsibility of organic inspection, as my dear Mother used to say, “worth every penny”. A family of like minded (most of the time, anyway) folks has become the spearhead for the now sophisticated “organic method”.

“I have come to believe that the profession of Organic Inspector is the most interesting work I ever did and - it has allowed me to make a contribution to the betterment of my fellow beings (human and otherwise). Not very many endeavors can say that. My sincere respect goes out to you all, and I am humbled by your kind remembrance of me.
“I love Organic, Bob Howe”



Annual Report Highlights – please see the full report on our site!



Message from the Chair International Outreach

Through collaboration with partners, IOIA trained in 8 countries and in 4 languages during 2019.

- IOIA in Latin America
- IOIA in the Middle East
- IOIA in the Asia Pacific
- IOIA in Canada



Building Community - Engaging the Membership

Training – Continuing Education for Inspectors

- Record attendance at the Guelph Advanced Training in Canada. IOIA also hosted a member reception.
- A popular benefit for inspectors – a half-off discount for one webinar each year – (18 members in 2019).
- Fraud training in México was developed in response to several significant organic fraud cases. It drew from the wisdom and experiences of IOIA's seasoned inspectors and was delivered in two languages.
- Advanced Biodiversity & Natural Resource assessment training "The best continuing education opportunity I have ever participated in an advanced inspector training" - participant.



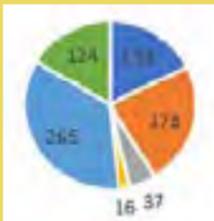
Advocacy & Outreach

Ensuring the inspector's voice is heard, IOIA and IOIA's members continually step up and speak up to strengthen organic integrity.

Consumer Outreach - 'Ask An Inspector'.

Highlights from Training Around the World

- Apiculture Training in Oaxaca, Mexico
- Assessing Biodiversity & Natural Resources on the Farm in California



Advanced In-person 133
 In-person workshop 37
 In-person basic 178
 Online learning web 16
 100 level webinar 265
 200 & 300 level webinars 124



2019 AGM Huatulco, Oaxaca, Mexico



Annual Report Highlights – Please see our website for the full version!

Collaboration

IOIA ENGAGES WITH THE ORGANIC COMMUNITY

Contributors

Supporting Certification Agencies, Supporting Businesses, Supporting Individuals, Sustainers, Patrons, IOIA Trainers

Scholarship Program 2019-2020



Peter Obidike, Nigeria
OCIS winner



Anais Edwards, Florida
Rutherford Scholarship Winner



International Organic Inspectors Association Balance Sheet (Cash Basis) As of December 31, 2019

	Dec 31, 19	Dec 31, 18
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Total Checking/Savings/CDs	389,702.85	430,088.25
Accounts Receivable	50.92	50.92
Total Other Current Assets	108,860.55	84,890.05
Total Current Assets	498,614.15	495,029.22
Fixed Assets		
Total Building	38,766.86	38,766.86
Other Assets		
Accumulated Depreciation	-18,854.19	-18,918.05
TOTAL ASSETS	\$518,526.82	\$514,880.03
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Equity		
Contributed Property-FM Value	29,031.80	29,031.80
Restricted (Scholarship Travel Fund)	1,598.00	1,598.00
Retained Funds	486,250.23	431,773.38
Net Income	1,646.79	54,476.85
Total Equity	518,526.82	516,880.03
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$518,526.82	\$516,880.03

Financial Statement

Investment for the Future

\$87,646 of cash reserves were earmarked into a special asset account for the new technology upgrade and inspector credentialing. These funds (currently in Certificates of Deposit) will be expended in 2020 and could result in up to -\$85,000 bottom line in the Balance Sheet for 2020. The Board moved them into an Other Asset Account to differentiate those expenses from the regular operating and program expenses and to improve clarity for the membership. Outside of that expense, IOIA's Finance Committee and BOD prepared a balanced budget for 2020.

Looking to the Future

Board of Directors - 2019 Goals and Beyond

Our activities focused around Inspector Credentialing, Technology Upgrade, IOIA Comment Policy, and Policy Committee launch. We continue to seek to make Membership more valuable, and strive to forward and strengthen Fraud Prevention and Deterrence. We explored a more robust Fundraising strategy, spearheaded by Janine Gibson, Vice Chair. We initiated quarterly meetings with the USDA NOP leadership, Dr. Jennifer Tucker, Deputy Administrator. We appreciated having a board of 8, rather than 7, with the participation of Margaret Anne Weigelt as "Special Past Chair".

Inspector Credentialing: IOIA's Accreditation Program was approved by the membership in 1995 and has stood the test of time with few changes. It addresses inspection experience, work/life experience, education and training, a demonstrated commitment to organics, and certifier evaluations. IOIA experienced a record number of applications in 2019 and is now poised for a major upgrade in inspector credentialing.

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

November 11, 2019 - 7:30 p.m. EST Via GoToMeeting

Board Members Present: Lois Christie, Janine Gibson, Chuck Mitchell, Heather Donald, Margaret Anne Weigelt, Rachel Cherry Myers. Also present – Margaret Scoles. Absent: Philippe Descamps. Invited guest/business consultant Lisa Spicka of Maracuja Solutions joins at 7:46 p.m.

2020 Strategic Planning: Lisa Spicka introduces and describes the two components of her document presentation. Initial Assessment: Strategy Meeting Approach (1) Preview of the Strategic Plan Structure and (2) Membership Survey. (To help determine the emerging themes and strategic planning agenda possibilities for the document Lisa had interviewed Lois, Ryan, Margaret Anne and Margaret Scoles.) Lisa invites the BOD to comment on the content and structure. Chuck points out that we should also include unaddressed membership concerns brought up during previous AGM membership discussions. Margaret Anne is willing to participate in strategic planning leading a session to gauge IOIA's life cycle status. Lisa asks BOD members if they are willing to participate in strategy research outreach by conducting 3 phone interviews with a group of carefully selected new, medium and long term members. Each interview would likely take an hour. Lisa asks whether the BOD would like to do a full membership survey as well. Consensus is to only do the interviews with strategically chosen members, including previous board members and a founding member.

3rd Quarter Financials, Preliminary 2020 Budget: MS shares the hard wrought Draft Preliminary 2020 Budget Heather, Ryan, MS and the Finance committee developed. She comments that the bottom line will change depending on when the IMS expenses occur (~\$85K). The Finance Committee recommended adding an additional training to help balance the budget. Expenses for the Information Management System (\$85K) have not been included in this draft budget. The IMS project money has been set aside in a separate account and when spent will create a significant negative bottom line. MS reports and Heather explains more in depth a recommendation made by the Finance Committee to increase our cash reserves from \$100K to \$200K. Motion by Heather to increase the cash reserve from \$100K to \$200K. Janine seconds. Passes unanimously. Motion is made by Heather to move \$85K total from CDs to the Accreditation Account. Ryan seconds. Passes unanimously.

Emergency Transition Plan: MS screen shares Emergency Plan. Janine suggests the BOD approve the Emergency Transition Plan in principle and refer it only for appendices and additional editing. The BOD indicates its agreement to accept this document in principle without objection.

Latin American Committee: Philippe reports about his inquiries to Latin American inspector members. 25% of the people he contacted responded. He concluded that most wanted more in-person Spanish language trainings. Philippe will be meeting with Homero Blas next week and he thinks that maybe we could build a relationship with the Approved Mexican Certifiers Association which is like the ACA of Mexico. MS thinks we might be able to capitalize on the collegiality of inspectors in Latin America who don't appear to her to view one another as competitors. MS suggests she and Philippe get together by email to talk about creating some Spanish Language webinars.

December 16, 2019 - 7:30 p.m. EST Via GoToMeeting

Board Members Present: Lois Christie, Janine Gibson, Heather Donald, Margaret Anne Weigelt, Chuck Mitchell, Philippe Descamps, Rachel Cherry Myers, Director (joined 9:11 PM). Also, present - Margaret Scoles, ED Absent: Ryan Sitler.

Draft Budget & Amendments: Janine moves to accept the draft 2020 budget in principle. Margaret Anne seconds. Passes unanimously.

BOD Strategic Planning: MS asks who the BOD is inviting to the Strategic Planning Retreat? Consensus is to have MW participate and to invite Jonda. Goals Sheet: MW suggested adding a section for an ED Evaluation System. It was noted that this is one of the most important BOD obligations. Consensus is to place high importance on utilizing the Goals Sheet at every meeting in order to progress on our stated strategic initiatives.

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

January 13, 2020 - 7:30 p.m. EST Via GoToMeeting

Board Members Present: Lois Christie; Janine Gibson; Heather Donald; Margaret Anne Weigelt, Chuck Mitchell, Ryan Sitler, Rachel Cherry Myers. Also present - Margaret Scoles, ED, Sacha Draine, IOIA Intl Training Manager, invited guest – attending from start through Point 4. Absent: Philippe Descamps

Intro to BOD of IOIA Intl Training Manager Sacha Draine:

Lois welcomes and Margaret S introduces Sacha to the BOD via Go-To-Meeting video feed. Reasons for the introduction - Sacha has a strong role in the IOIA Emergency Transition Plan and is a senior member of the staff (14 years) with generally little interaction with the BOD. MS gives the floor to Sacha, inviting questions from the BOD. Sacha explains that she was born in Switzerland and moved to the US when she was 23. She speaks Swiss, German, French, English and Spanish. Her degrees are in Business & Foreign Languages. She and her husband split their time between the ranch and a home in SD. MS suggests Sacha be involved in the final review of the Emergency Transition Plan with MW and MS to examine for substantive changes. MS describes her appreciation for the work Sacha has done with preparing the Emergency Transition Plan and her recent work with the Asia Pacific Committee's training plans.



2019 Budget vs Actual; Finalize 2020 Budget; Peer Evaluation: MS notes that we lost about \$1K in Peer Evaluation. Rachel suggests we request that agencies interact enough that an inspector is only evaluated once for multiple agencies. Ryan suggests he would pay extra on top of his IOIA membership for us to facilitate only one evaluation per year universally accepted by certifiers. MS notes, per today's Certifier Inspector Call, that certifiers now seem to be open to the idea of sharing their yearly inspector lists with IOIA and letting us propose a schedule to avoid multiple evaluations for the inspector. It may be possible to obtain agreement amongst the requesting certifiers to rotate the cost of the initial 'single' evaluation every three years. MS asks for input regarding a modest increase for in-person training fees. Discussion follows. Consensus is to increase \$50 after the SC training. Motion to approve the 2020 Budget as presented – by Janine. Second – by Rachel. Approved unanimously.

BOD 2019 Strategic Goals Sheet: MS screen shares the Strategic Goals Sheet updating tasks 2 & 3 for the IMS Project. Contract is signed and the project is entering Phase 1, Information Gathering. MA suggests adding a line for communicating with Dr. Tucker, especially about the upcoming inspector qualifications regulations. MS makes some adjustments for the Policy Manual noting that the final formatting task was reassigned from Heather to Rachel. Membership value section MS notes Chuck contacted ProCert and was told an IOIA membership invitation would be put in their newsletter. Ryan starts a discussion pointing out that IOIA is mostly viewed as a training platform instead of an association that serves and benefits inspectors – should these remain linked? Rachel thinks we should utilize more social networking bites to tell young busy inspector professionals that IOIA is more than training, that IOIA IS the voice of inspectors and that's why join.

Accreditation Issue: Discussed the meaning of the requirement of 'IOIA approved training' to be accredited. Rachel suggests for criteria consistency that an evaluation has to be done in order to determine if it's equivalent. Consensus is to seek detailed information about curriculum or a description of internalized understandings of inspection in order to vet the applicant's previous training in comparison to IOIA basic training. MS suggests we need to create a process to evaluate training equivalency. MW suggests adding this to our goals sheet.

Submitted by Margaret Anne Weigelt, Secretary



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

KEEP IOIA STRONG – LEND YOUR STRENGTH AND GET INVOLVED!

2020 Calendar

March 26 - 27 SaskOrganics 2 day conference, trade show and annual meeting. Regina, SK. saskorganics.org

April 15 - 17 Natural and Organic Products Europe. London, UK.

April 27 - May 8 IOIA Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection training, Essex, VT.

April 29 - May 1 Spring NOSB meeting, Westin Crystal City, Arlington VA. [Info.](#)

June 1 - 5 IOIA Basic Crop and Process-

ing Inspection Training, Corvallis, OR.

June 8 - 11 OTA Organic Week in Washington, D.C. Including OTA Annual Meeting and Leadership Awards Dinner.

July 8 - 9 Organic Produce Summit. Monterey, CA.

Sept 21 - 27 Rennes, France. 20th Annual IFOAM Organic World Congress and General Assembly. Deadline for early discount is March 25.

September 23 - 26 Natural Products Expo East, Philadelphia, PA.

October 5 - 9 IOIA Basic Crop and Processing Training, Saco. Maine.

November 2-13 IOIA Basic Crop and Livestock Training Farmington, Minnesota.

November 4 IOIA Advanced Organic Inspector Training Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CANADA.

November 4 - 6 Organic Connections Conference, and Trade Show, Saskatoon, SK. organicconnections.ca

January 25, 2021 - IOIA Advanced Training New Orleans, Louisiana. In conjunction with NOP/ACA trainings and the Annual General Meeting.

PLEASE SEE PAGES 2 & 3 FOR THE CURRENT LIST OF IOIA ON-SITE TRAININGS AND WEBINARS