

## Advanced, Basic, and Gluten-Free Training Opportunities in Pennsylvania

IOIA and Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) will cosponsor basic and advanced organic Inspector Trainings September 28 to October 10, 2014 at The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel in State College, Pennsylvania.

Scheduled trainings include:

- Organic Crop and Processing Inspection Training (run concurrently): Mon 9/29 to Fri 10/3
- Advanced Organic Inspector Training: Sat 10/4 to Sun 10/5
- Gluten-Free Certification Inspector Training: Mon 10/6
- Organic Livestock Inspection Training: Mon 10/6 to Fri 10/10

The two-day Advanced Training opens with **Will Your Report Stand Up in Court?** by Matthew Michael, Director of NOP Compliance and Enforcement and **Best Inspection Practices** with Steve Ross, National Supervisor ASQ CQA USDA LSP Quality Assessment Division. Luis Brenes, IOIA Trainer & Margaret Scoles, IOIA Executive Director, will pair up to present a workshop on **Improving the In/Out Balance for Processing Operators, Inspectors, and Certifiers**.

IOIA Trainer and Inspector Sarah Flack, from Vermont, will present **Livestock Feed Audits – Grazing and non-grazing season - in a Multi-species System**. Flack is the IOIA presenter for the 200-level Feed Audit webinar. This session will include much of the same material as the webinar, but content will be adapted for the complex but real-life scenarios with multiple species, some purchased and some raised feeds. George Lockwood, Chair of the 2006 NOP Aquaculture Working Group, will discuss different **Organic Aquaculture** systems and the key issues for organic aquaculture production and regulation. Margaret Scoles will present **Improving the Exit Interview**, a training module which came out of an inspector/certifier working group earlier this year. Luis Brenes of Costa Rica and Brian Magaro, experienced organic poultry inspector from Pennsylvania, will explore **Grower Group Inspection and Certification (as applied to contracted poultry operations)**. Brenes has developed and presented the IOIA Grower Group Inspection and Certification webinar. He is an experienced inspector and consultant to grower groups in Latin America.

For the first time at an IOIA event, **Gluten-Free**

See **Gluten-Free**, page 7

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### Notes from the Chair

By Ib Hagsten

It is summertime here in the States, when it is either too hot, too wet, too dry, too windy, and/or too cold for the season – all depending on where one might be and/or how long one stays as an inspector in one place. As we do one day per year “snapshots” of the farm, ranch, handler or processor, it is sometimes a challenge to see past the temporary weather modification to our recorded observations. Yet, that is why we inspectors took and continue to take IOIA training to improve our “savvy” or professionalism in knowing and sorting the key organic integrity issues from the weather variables.

Most of you have never visited the IOIA office in Broadus, MT, so you would not recognize the recent changes. Therefore, let me fill you in on the numerous behind-the-scenes improvements that should further encourage your perception of the organization, which helped us all to get started in the organic inspector field of agricultural professionals.

See **Notes**, page 6

## Membership Updates

Please welcome the following new members:

### Inspectors

Stephen McConnell  
North Vancouver, BC  
[visuddhi2504@yahoo.co.th](mailto:visuddhi2504@yahoo.co.th)

### Accreditation News:

Congratulations to the following member who has been successfully accredited:

**Pamela Sullivan:** Crop, Processing

Congratulations to the following member who has been successful in renewing accreditation status:

**Monique Scholz:** Crop, Livestock Processing

### Next Accreditation Deadline:

October 1

## IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

IB HAGSTEN, PHD  
— CHAIR —  
STUART McMILLAN  
— VICE CHAIR —  
PAMELA SULLIVAN  
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MARGARET WEIGELT  
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— DIRECTOR —

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

Editor: Diane Cooner [webgal@ioia.net](mailto:webgal@ioia.net)

Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.

Published quarterly on recycled paper.

## Supporting Individuals

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## Supporting Businesses

Ayrshire Farm Management  
Upperville, VA  
[dstephens@ayrshirefarm.com](mailto:dstephens@ayrshirefarm.com)

Organic Processing Institute  
Middleton, WI  
[carla@organicprocessinginstitute.org](mailto:carla@organicprocessinginstitute.org)

[org](http://www.organicprocessinginstitute.org)

## Don't Miss the 2015 IOIA AGM in Big Sky Country!

Chico Hot Springs Resort, the cozy and historic hot springs set in beautiful Paradise Valley just north of Yellowstone National Park, is the site of IOIA's 2015 Annual General Meeting, which will be held March 28, 2015. Paradise Valley is famous both for the beauty of the snowcapped mountains and for geothermal activity which is associated with the Yellowstone region.

Advanced training is scheduled March 26-27. The reserved room block includes a few days after the AGM to allow members to enjoy the surrounding area or just relax and enjoy the waters. The modern but rustic Conference Center will be entirely available to IOIA and includes a cash bar for the AGM.

Food and beverage offerings include the western-style Chico Saloon with live music on Friday and Saturday; The Dining Room at Chico, long noted as one of the region's best restaurants; and the Poolside Grill for lunch and dinner (more affordable offerings). Chico also has a geothermal greenhouse and provides organic and sustainable locally raised food from area farmers and ranchers. Wifi is available throughout most of the facility although there are some dead spots.

Chico offers a full spectrum of recreational activities for all ages, plus a Day spa. All pools are outdoors, no chlorine used. The venue is pet friendly.

Chico is close to the Canadian prairies - in prairie terms, the venue is reasonable driving distance from Calgary, Regina, or Saskatoon.

For more about the venue - [www.chicohotsprings.com](http://www.chicohotsprings.com) For more information about Yellowstone Park [www.nps.gov/yell/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/index.htm)

**On-Site Training Schedule - full details and applications at [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net)****Waseda, Tokyo, Japan - Farm Course - August 31 - September 3, 2014**

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor 4 day Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training using JAS Standards as a reference. The training language will be Japanese. Please contact JOIA for more information about the course. E-Mail: [info@joia-organic.com](mailto:info@joia-organic.com)

**Pennsylvania Crop, Livestock, Processing, and Advanced Inspection Courses - See story page 1.****California Crop Inspection Course - October 27 - 31, 2014**

IOIA will sponsor a Basic Organic Crop Inspection Course in southern California. The course is 4.5 days long. Location is the Highland Springs Resort, Beaumont, in Cherry Valley. Courses will use the USDA National Organic Program standards as the reference.

**Ontario, Canada – Processing Inspection Course - November 10-14, 2014**

Canadian Organic Growers and IOIA will cosponsor Basic Organic Processing Inspection Training in Mississauga, Ontario. The course includes comprehensive training on the Canadian Organic Standards and is 4.5 days long. For more and to receive an application contact Ashley St. Hilaire of COG. E-mail: [ashley@cog.ca](mailto:ashley@cog.ca) Phone: 613-216-0741 or 1-888-375-7383 Fax: 613-236-0743 website: [www.cog.ca/news\\_events/inspector/](http://www.cog.ca/news_events/inspector/)

**San José, Costa Rica, Farm Inspection Course - November 24-28, 2014**

IOIA and Eco-LOGICA will cosponsor a 4.5 day Basic Organic Farm Inspection training using USDA National Organic Standards as a reference. Instruction will be conducted in Spanish. Please contact Sue Wei at (506) 4010-0232 or (506) 2297-6676, fax: (506) 2235-1638 or e-mail: [swei@eco-logica.com](mailto:swei@eco-logica.com) for further information.

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## **2014 WEBINAR TRAINING**

*go to: [www.ioia.net/schedule\\_list.html](http://www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html)*

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**100 Level Webinar – August 14 and 21, 2014. NOP Crop Standards**

Trainers: Margaret Scoles & Garry Lean.

**200 Level Webinar – August 15 and 16, 2014. Regional Independent Verifier On-Farm Food Safety Training**

Trainer: Karen Troxell

**200 Level Webinar – August 19 and 22, 2014. IOIA/OTA Residue Sampling under the USDA National Organic Program IOIA/OTA Presenter: Nathaniel Lewis.****100 Level Webinar – August 25 and 27, 2014. NOP Processing Standards IOIA Trainer: Stanley Edwards.****200 Level Webinar – September 10 and 17, 2014. In/Out Balances, Traceability Tests, and Recipe Verification for Processing Inspection under NOP and COR IOIA Trainer: Kelly Monaghan.****100 Level Webinar – September 16 and 19, 2014. NOP Livestock Standards Trainer Garry Lean.****200 Level Webinar – September 18. IOIA/OMRI COR Livestock Input Materials Presenter: Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador.****100 Level Webinar – September 23 & 25, 2014. IOIA/COTA COR Processing Standards IOIA Trainer: Kelly Monaghan.****200 Level Webinar – October 22 and 29, 2014. In/Out Balances and Traceability Tests for Crop Inspection under NOP and COR IOIA Trainer: Monique Scholz.****200 Level Webinar – October 23, 2014. IOIA/OMRI NOP Livestock Input Materials Presenter: Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador****300 Level Webinar – October 23 and 30, 2014. In/Out Balances, Traceabil-****ity Tests, and Recipe Verification for Processing Inspection under NOP and COR IOIA Trainer: Monique Scholz****200 Level Webinar – November 13. 2014 Natural Resource Assessment on Organic Farms IOIA Trainer: Garry Lean.****300 Level Webinar – November 18, 2014. Inspecting Organic Wineries Presenter: Pam Sullivan.****300 Level Webinar – December 4, 2014. Maple Syrup Inspection IOIA Trainer Monique Scholz.****100 Level Webinar – January 13 and 15, 2015. COR Livestock Standards IOIA Trainer: Garry Lean.****200 Level Webinar – February 6 and 9, 2015. Livestock Feed Audits – grazing and non grazing season Presented by Sarah Flack.**

## Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

### Stand up and speak up for Organic!

*The following message was sent out to our inspector and supporting individual members on July 23 from the IOIA Board and Executive Director.*

**Greetings!** The IOIA leadership invites our members to frame the message - stand up and speak up for Organic. Organic has been taking too many hits in the media lately.

It is hard enough when hits come from the conventional, pro-GMO industry that pours money into an effort to discredit organic. But it is harder when the hits come from within our own community. As we all know, we are a vocal and passionate community. We speak up, and we don't all think the same way. For example, at the last NOSB meeting, some of our members were on both sides of the National List sunset provision issue. Following that meeting, several organizations released a volley of critical attacks on the NOP. The Accredited Certifiers Association, on the other hand, sent a 'vote of confidence' letter to the NOP, which was immediately and publicly attacked by a watchdog group. The IOIA BOD considered doing something, but we decided to take a different approach.

What do we really want to be messaging? -- why organic is important and valuable, why organic really does have meaning.

Who is more knowledgeable to speak up for organic than the very people who are scrutinizing certified operations and engaging in

those penetrating dialogues with the operators - we, the inspectors! IOIA's decision not to make a unified public statement wasn't motivated by fear or uncertainty about how we could make a unified statement given our extremely diverse membership. We decided to just skip to the important part and stand up for organic, correct the misinformation, talk back, and ask questions. Consumer oriented blogs have a huge readership, and organic inspectors can be a respected voice there. Yet, we often see inaccurate things posted and too often, we just sigh and return to our work.

We all see negative press and social media, often inaccurately demeaning and diminishing organic. And we see posts by well-meaning or uninformed people who simply don't understand what organic means. We see press that slams governments and big corporations for dumping synthetics on our permitted substance lists. If you're like us, you may get irritated but you don't respond to point out that the list of synthetics allowed in organic goes back to before any governments got involved. How often do you hear about 'watered down standards', that 'organic doesn't mean anything', or that 'buying local is better than organic'? We don't take time to comment. Why? Because we don't have time, we don't really think one voice can make a difference....

### Whatever the reason, here's the challenge.

We think IOIA inspectors can be a highly credible voice to speak the truth about organic and do it with positive, rather than negative,

messaging. Please, seek out at least one negative posting about organic and counter it with a positive posting. And when you do that, let the Forum know. Send a note to the IOIA Forum to encourage others to do the same. Here's a suggested template to follow in responding on-line:

1. Identify the negative post.
2. Counter with your experience.
3. Point out the negative's motivation.
4. Give the facts.

Also, here's a good article that summarizes recent press and includes references to organic-minded rebuttals. <http://fair.org/extra-online-articles/the-assault-on-organics/>

We don't all have to think alike about very many things, but we do need to be united in speaking up for organic.

Thank you. Your IOIA Board of Directors and Executive Director



**And it worked** –it made a positive impact! Following are a few messages we received back. IOIA members are encouraged to participate not only in speaking up for organic in a positive way, but also in telling each other about it when we do. It really changed my day when I received a message like these below, rather than those framed with inflammatory and negative language:

**Dr. Jean Richardson, Vermont:**  
THANK YOU so very much for this posting. It is excellent. I am having an uphill battle as NOSB Chair to get positive PR about organic and to remind the organic

community that we are very small and need to work together. Best regards, *Jean*

### **Matt Miller, Iowa**

Thanks for initiating this. I don't get into blogging, but I will be at our Iowa State Fair in the organic booth in the agriculture building in a couple weeks talking face to face with people who have these kinds of questions. Joe Ward will be there for a day or two as well. Harriet is someone that I have a tremendous amount of respect for in having the guts to speak out against this sort of thing, keeping a balanced perspective, and doing it in a tactful way. Thanks again for your efforts.

### **Al Johnson, New Jersey**

My feelings exactly. I have begun speaking about the positive meaning of Certified Organic. Gave my first talk to two town "Green Committees" (about 25 people) at an organic farm. Talk went well. Have another tentative talk to either the staff or customers of a large local health food store. Doing this in conjunction with my position on the NOFA-NJ BOD, but if you ever get requests for a speaker on this topic, I have put a lot of prep work into it and would be happy to speak again. Haven't pushed this much and won't until or if my IOIA work dies down. But I could give the same talk tomorrow.

### **Kathy Bowers, IOIA's US Training Services Coordinator**

Very good message from you and feedback from Jean! Every organization needs good messaging. As we all know, it takes 7 – 9 positive messages to offset one negative one. Keep up the good work on **keeping it positive!** ~

## **Sound and Sensible RFP**

IOIA submitted a proposal to the USDA Sound and Sensible funding initiative, in spite of the challenges of an extremely short time frame (Draft RFP posted May 1, Final posted May 22, and proposals due June 26). IOIA proposed four sub-projects, including

1. An on-line learning module for slaughter house inspection;
2. A "What to Expect at Organic Inspection" video;
3. An Inspection Guide that could be used to simplify the reporting requirements on all farms, but especially small diverse crop operations; and
4. Reviewing all IOIA training materials to implement Sound and Sensible, especially in training on verification of scale-appropriate recordkeeping.

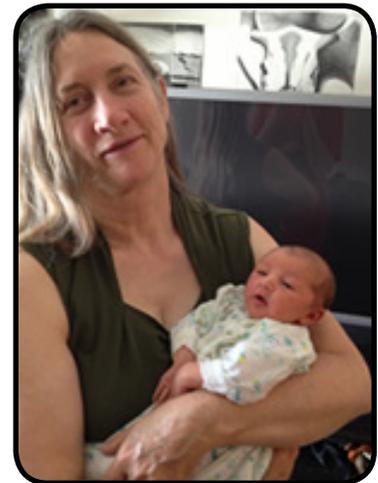
Funding is anticipated to be announced by late September. Projects must be completed in one year. IOIA's project partners would include the Accredited Certifiers Association and the National Center for Appropriate Technology. Special acknowledgment is due Jonda Crosby, who was crucial to submitting a solid IOIA proposal. Now it is a waiting game until successful projects are announced.

A goal of the BOD this year was to be more aggressive in pursuing grants. Jonda came to IOIA three years ago with significant experience in securing grant funding and completing grant-funded projects. Her past proved to be a great asset to IOIA. She worked this spring to incorporate IOIA as a partner in a successful Specialty Crop Block Grant (federal program, administered by Departments of

Agriculture). IOIA will be providing support in food safety training in Montana over the next two years through the grant, which includes funding for up to six RIV trainings.

*"If it were not for the inspections, I would not want to do paperwork for a living either. The farms and their efforts and knowing where food comes from and knowing how desperately this game needs to be played sound and sensibly and how paperwork needs to be simple and sufficient makes me stay with it." – an anonymous inspector*

**Personal Note: My summer – a double blessing!**



My first granddaughter (Annabel - born to my daughter and her husband on May 23) and my first grandson (James - born to my son and daughter-in-law on July 17).



## Notes, from page 1

1. The new IOIA logo is now on a large permanent sign outside the office building;
2. The backyard is well in the process of being landscaped (stone and soil work) and re-planted (grass and trees) following the dragged-out plumbing issue that was started one growing season, shut down during a long winter, and now finally able to be worked on; and
3. The interior of the building where a part-time cleaning lady (Glenda) keeps the office clean, and sparkling (a) without taking key staff time to do so, and (b) assuring a work-friendly environment for our hardworking staff there.

Adding to the many inspector training activities that our staff does so well, like (A) planning classes (in-person and webinar; in the US and around the world); (B) updating and producing training materials (folders/binders/presentations/pages/webinars); (C) assuring that the training material arrives at the correct destination with the right supporting material (including banners, books, caps, etc.); (D) bill the right individuals, organizations, governments for the correct amount and assure the bills get paid in a timely manner.

Recent “add-ons” have required extra time commitment for several staff members, directly and/or indirectly), such as the food safety training, and the two grants submitted with very short deadlines. We will be happy to share their content once we know the results of the funding agencies



decisions, as we try hard not to “count our eggs til they are laid, collected, and delivered.”

So, the extra compliments that are due to the persons who made the above-mentioned things happen would include:

- (a) Margaret, for extra grant writing time allotment and approving/encouraging the activities of IOIA and its staff functions;
- (b) Jonda, for the great insight and skill sets in the “grantsmanship” arena, which to a large extent made the quality, details, and content of the two grants possible;
- (c) Kathy, for managing and growing both the webinar program and most of the in-person trainings and for picking up the slack left by others as they diverted their temporary focus on activities not domain to the normal or assigned job descriptions; and
- (d) Joe, for getting the signage completed, for shipping stuff everywhere, and for utilizing his former farm experience in driving landscape and seeding equipment in the back yard.
- (e) Sacha, for deftly fielding communications regarding international trainings in her five languages and coordinating trainings around the world.
- (f) Linda, for utilizing her bookkeeping experience to help IOIA one day a week

getting the books balanced and QuickBooks current, so Margaret can relax and focus on the more important executive director activities.

In summary, when I think of our IOIA staff I am reminded of the duck swimming on the calm farm pond; on the surface, that duck looks serene and stately, yet below the surface the web feet are paddling furiously between the one shore and the next. Whenever, we call in – to ask a brief question, a complicated question, state a disappointment over something that had “fallen through the cracks”, or share an encouraging remark – the busy person on the other end always listens intently, interrupts minimally (for clarification), and promises to get back with a resolving reply.

Thank you to all our staff, both the ones listed this time, and to the rest of them who in their own way or area of supportive services behave like ducks (see definition above).

Lastly allow me to share an interesting request from the NRCS of Iowa: On September 5, I have been asked to provide a talk entitled, “CAP Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition – from the TSP’s Perspective.” This will give me opportunity to embellish on such concepts like BUFFER, which to NRCS is a way to “keep nutrients in the field,” whereas it to the organic farmer/inspector, it is a means to “manage against spray drift from outside the field.” *Same word yet two very different world-concepts colliding.*

Respectfully, *lb*

## Gluten-Free, from page 1

**Certification Inspection Training** will be offered. The Gluten-Free Certification Organization (GFCO), a program of The Gluten Intolerance Group, will present this one day training. Admission to this course requires approval by GFCO. Each basic training (Crops, Livestock, and Processing) includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing. For complete details and to register,

- [Draft Advanced Agenda \[pdf\]](#)
- [Basic Training Information and Application](#)
- [Advanced Training Information and Application](#)
- [Gluten-Free Training Information and Application](#)

Visit [http://ioia.net/schedule\\_on-site.html](http://ioia.net/schedule_on-site.html) to find the forms listed above. contact IOIA at (406) 436-2031 or e-mail [ioiassistant@rangeweb.net](mailto:ioiassistant@rangeweb.net).

Registration deadlines are August 18 for the basic courses and August 25 for the Advanced and Gluten-Free Courses.

Accommodations and Travel: The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel <http://www.thepennstaterhotel.psu.edu/> is 4 minutes from Penn State University and 5 minutes from the University Park Airport (SCE). Complimentary direct shuttle service is available from the airport.

IOIA Organic Inspector Training courses are recommended for inspector trainees, certification agency staff, and regulatory agency staff who want to better understand the organic inspection and certification process.

## Organic Certification for West Africa - Can you Help?

By Rebecca Brown, IOIA Inspector Member, Oregon

The global Organic movement must become more inclusive. It should be accessible, and affordable, offering incentive in order to promote environmental stewardship while increasing food security and quality.

For farmers in West Africa, participation in the global marketplace is challenging. Many western buyers are skeptical of African agricultural integrity, leaving certified organic producers as the only truly trusted suppliers of African agricultural commodities into Europe, Asia, North and South America. Typically, those who can afford to meet the organic requirements in Africa are non-Africans.

West Africa holds immense potential in terms of natural resources and human power to make things happen. Unfortunately Europeans continue to exploit these resources, including the organic market. Since Europe dominates the organic sector in Africa by requiring verification by European certification bodies along with their impossible fees, African farmers continue to be repressed and left out of the marketplace.

Although African farmers face challenges entering the international organic agricultural market, they do not necessarily fall short of the standards. SAPOA - The Senegalese Association for the Promotion of Organic Agriculture - is an IFOAM accredited organization, found-

ed in the late 1980's. Serving on the board of Senegalese Organic standards, the founder conducts organic inspections on a regional basis and offers educational conferences. International accreditation for SAPOA seems within reach and vital to the restoration of a deteriorating and overpopulated landscape. Having access to international organic markets provides incentive to practicing sustainable methods of agriculture and increases food security in these areas where increased food production is needed. Certification fees must be appropriate in order to offer inclusivity in the organic movement, a baseline value SAPOA follows. By following a proven model of growing small crops for local markets alongside high-demand larger scale crops for export, farmers can earn a reasonable income while supplying local food.

As an organic inspector in the US, I am looking forward to returning to Senegal this winter to apply my skills in organic certification in order to **facilitate the development of the first internationally accredited organic certification agency in West Africa**. Having worked with SAPOA since 2007, meanwhile developing the ability to speak the languages French and Wolof, and having personal connections with Senegalese government officials, I am ready to take on this challenge. We are in this together.

To make a donation, contact Rebecca at [rebecca@organicwestand.com](mailto:rebecca@organicwestand.com) or visit [www.OrganicWeStand.com](http://www.OrganicWeStand.com).

**Thank you for your interest and support!**

**SECTOR NEWS****US & Korea Finalize  
Equivalency Arrangement**

As of July 1, 2014, processed organic products certified in Korea or in the United States may be sold as organic in either country.

Since January 1, 2014, when a change in Korea's regulations closed the market to U.S. organic exports, U.S. and Korean officials have been working to finalize the organic equivalency arrangement.

Without this equivalency arrangement in place, organic farmers and businesses wanting to sell products in either country would have to obtain separate certifications to meet each country's organic standards. This typically has meant two sets of fees, inspections, and paperwork. Similar to previous U.S. equivalency arrangements with Canada, the European Union, and Japan, this trade partnership with Korea eliminates significant barriers, especially for small and medium-sized organic businesses.

The partnership allows both countries to spot-check imported organic products to ensure that the terms of the arrangement are being met. Korea's National Agricultural Products Quality Management Service and USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) will take on key oversight roles.

*NOP Press Release*

**AMS Webpage About  
U.S.-Korea Organic  
Agreement**

[http://www.ams.usda.gov/  
AMSV1.0/NOPTradeKorea](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/NOPTradeKorea)

**Organic industry briefs  
Congress on citrus disease**

As concerns rise over the heavy spraying of unhealthy chemicals in many of the most productive citrus regions of the country to fight off a deadly citrus disease, staff members from more than a dozen congressional offices gathered for a briefing on July 29 to hear from the organic industry on its efforts to find safe approved organic ways to ward off the threat.

Dr. Jessica Shade, Director of Science Programs for The Organic Center explained the importance of the research on the disease known as citrus greening, and told policy makers they can help in the campaign to find safe ways to combat the disease by letting their constituents know that they too can get involved.

"Citrus greening is not just an organic problem, and this research is not just for organic growers," said Shade. "This disease is threatening both organic and conventional citrus growers, but many of the non-organic methods being used to fight it are proving to be not only inadequate, but pose dangerous risks to the environment and human health. The solutions we find for organic can be used by all."

The Organic Center (TOC) has launched a comprehensive multi-year study to find methods to prevent and treat citrus greening disease, or Huanglongbing (HLB) that are compliant with the strict organic standards established and enforced by USDA's National Organic Program.

Citrus greening is the most devastating disease ever faced by the citrus industry, but most research on controlling the disease has concentrated on conventional citrus production and on methods such as heavy chemical spraying that are prohibited to organic growers under federal regulations, and are harmful to the environment.

One of the most dangerous insecticides being used heavily in the conventional citrus industry to control the disease is a class of pesticides known as neonicotinoids. Neonics, as they are known, are banned for use on organic farms and groves. The use of neonicotinoids by conventional agriculture has skyrocketed in recent years, and a study just published by the United States Geological Survey has found that neonicotinoids are polluting streams throughout the Midwest. The use of neonicotinoids has been associated with bee deaths and its use on citrus has been found to be having detrimental effects on pollinator populations.

*OTA News*

**OTA Announces Leadership  
Awards**

To be honored September 17 at OTA's 2014 Organic Leadership Awards Celebration in Baltimore, MD, will be:

**Marty Mesh**, Executive Director of Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Growing the Organic Industry Award;  
**Doug Crabtree**, Farmer and Organic Farm Trainer, Vilicus Farms, Organic Farmer of the Year Award; and

**Barry A. Cik**, Technical Director, Naturpedic Organic Mattresses, Rising Star Award *OTA News*

**CANADIAN ORGANIC NEWS****Stephanie Wells to Retire from COTA**

Stephanie Wells, Senior Policy Advisor, Canada Organic Trade Association (Western Office) will be retiring this fall, after an epic run with OTA/COTA, as well as various other organizations linked to organic and Fair Trade during a career in the organic community that has spanned decades.

Matt Holmes, Executive Director of COTA, says, "Stephanie was essential in preparing the path for my own role at COTA, and she has directly influenced the outcomes of many things we now take for granted: the development of Canada's organic standards and regulations, the equivalency agreements, Organic Week, and indeed COTA itself. She has always been a great networker and facilitator, and many times has helped smooth the waters after some of my bridge-building attempts. We'll definitely miss her at COTA!"

Wells was also instrumental in the success of the COG/COTA/IOIA collaboration in 2009 that trained producers, processors, inspectors, and certifiers across Canada as the Canada Organic Regime was implemented.

COTA will be preparing a memory book to present to Stephanie. If you would like to contribute photos, memories, roasts or well-wishes for her, please send all information by August 24th to Kelly Monaghan: [kelly@ashstreetorganics.com](mailto:kelly@ashstreetorganics.com)

**More Canadian News on page 17**

**Public review of Organic Agriculture Standards**

The Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) has released draft editions of the following Organic Agriculture Standards:  
 CAN/CGSB 32.310 Organic production systems — General principles and management standards  
 CAN/CGSB 32.311 Organic production systems — Permitted substances lists  
 These two standards can now be downloaded for public review.

Alternatively, you can contact CGSB at <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ongc-cgsb/cn-cu-eng.html>

The first period of public review will be for a minimum of 60 days in accordance with the development of a National Standard of Canada and will be opened for comments until September 22, 2014.

To access the documents in French, please go to this site:

<https://ssf.scc.ca/forums/cgsb-ongc/dispatch.cgi/admin>

Nom d'utilisateur : anonyme

Mot de passe: ongc

To access the documents in English, please go to

<https://ssf.scc.ca/forums/cgsb-ongc/dispatch.cgi/f.discussion19/showFolder/100004/def/def/f79c>

**Organic Week - September 20-28 2014**

Canada's National Organic Week is the largest annual celebration of organic food, farming and products across the country. Hundreds of individual events showcase the benefits of organic agriculture and its positive impact on the environment.

Last year, events included anything from pickling workshops to recipes contests, farm tours, or organic food and drink tastings in retail locations across the country. If you want to get involved in organic week this year check out our Organic Week events section of our website <http://organicweek.ca> or plan an event in your community.

**IOIA/COTA Webinar – During Organic Week!****Canada Organic Regime Processing Standard - September 23 & 25, 2014**

IOIA and COTA are collaborating to offer a two day, 3 hours each session on the Canadian Organic Regime (COR) as it pertains to processing operations. This webinar is highly recommended for QA staff of organic processors, consultants, educators, extension, and certification agency staff. The presenter is experienced organic processing inspector and IOIA Trainer, Kelly A. Monaghan. This course will provide comprehensive training on the Organic Products Regulations, "the Standard" and the Canadian Permitted Substances Lists (aka "the PSL" - CAN/CGSB-32.311).

**Cost for Webinar**

- \$300 for IOIA and COTA members
- \$325 for IOIA or COTA members
- \$350 for non IOIA or COTA members

**To register**

**For more info**

[www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net)

## IOIA Offers 200 Level Webinar “Livestock Feed Audits – Non Ruminants & Ruminants - Grazing & Non Grazing Season”

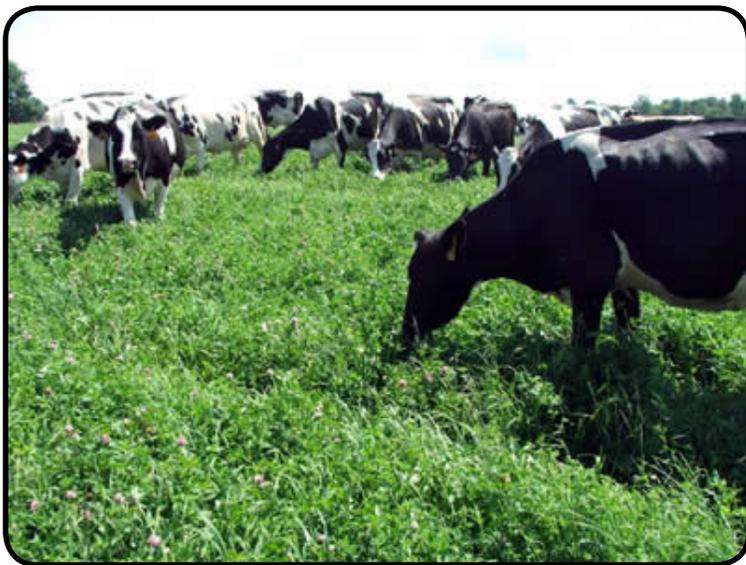
By Jonda Crosby, Training Services Director

Have you ever wondered how to accurately and quickly calculate dry matter intake on a livestock operation, while the farmer is standing at your elbow? Have you needed to know how much grain a laying flock of hens will eat over the course of a year and what the corresponding egg production and feed ration should be to complete an inspection or review? Are you curious about just how does and how much will feed quality, climate, and the level of meat, milk, or egg production influence feed intake? Are you looking to expand your inspection prowess? Have you ever turned down inspection opportunities because you felt unqualified to do livestock feed audits?

In February of this year IOIA and Sarah Flack teamed up to offer a new comprehensive **200 Level Livestock Feed Audit webinar**. The webinar, deemed a great success by participants, is a must for every working livestock inspector and reviewer.

*“I thought this was an excellent webinar. I liked how it moved rather quickly, with lots of practical examples.”*

The **Livestock Feed Audits** webinar training course is designed to explain, explore and teach participants how to evaluate organic certification requirements for ruminant and non-ruminant livestock operations. The course includes regulation information for both the NOP and the COR, and the major differences between the two.



**High Quality Pasture**

Key components of the course include learning how to quickly figure out dry matter content of feed ingredients, and how to apply that information to determine dry matter intake. Based on production, i.e. eggs per day, milk herd average or meat animal gains, participants learn how to determine if the rations being provided match production sales, inventory, purchased or grown ingredient records - **or not!**

Pasture calculations are covered in depth to establish if the percentage of the ration being provided by pasture is adequate to meet the NOP and COR regulations. The course also includes regulation requirements and exemptions for the pasture rule, in detail.

The course ensures participant learning with practice calculation exercises to allow every participant the opportunity to fully comprehend and practice effective and efficient feed audits.

The course is chock full of practice exercises to ensure participant learning the opportunity to fully comprehend and practice how to conduct effective and efficient feed audits for NOP and the COR Standards. The course also provides practice using and becoming familiar with a wide range of resources available to inspectors. A few are listed here – **see sidebar on page 11.**

The course also covers types of grazing systems, pasture quality, feed storage facilities and calculating inventories. Course participants review organic standard sections related to feed audits and resources useful for completing successful feed audits.

At the conclusion of the course participants will have a deeper understanding of types and values of feed used in ruminant and non-ruminant feed rations including forages, grains and concentrates. They will understand roughly how much feed is needed for each class of livestock and the myriad ways farmers make their rations work for the production levels they are anticipating and meeting.

**Livestock Feed Audits – grazing and non-grazing season** webinar is taught by experienced organic and biodynamic inspector Sarah Flack, of Vermont. Sarah is nationally known for her public speaking, workshops, books and numerous articles on a range of agricultural topics. Sarah Flack has worked and lived on diversified, organic and biodynamic dairy, livestock and vegetable farms; she has been an independent organic inspector since the mid 1990's. Sarah is consistently rated as one of IOIA's best instructors.



**Sarah Flack, Livestock Feed Audit Webinar Presenter**

There are two opportunities to take a training with Sarah in the future including: PA Advanced Training October 5 and the next webinar training: Livestock Feed Audits – grazing and non grazing season February 6 and 9, 2015.

Cost for the Webinar: \$300 for non-IOIA members, \$275 for IOIA members, and \$225 for participants who have previously completed IOIA's, "Verifying Compliance to NOP Pasture Rule" webinar.

*"I appreciated the amount of material and resources that was covered in the pre-course, mid-course and the actual presentations – well worth the money I paid to take this course."*

**Register Here or visit our website**

### **A Sampling of Feed Audit Webinar Resources shared during the course:**

Dry Matter Content of Feeds: [www.das.psu.edu/dairynutri>on/nutri>on/tables](http://www.das.psu.edu/dairynutri>on/nutri>on/tables)

Silage Inventory Tools: [www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/uwforage/storage.htm](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/uwforage/storage.htm)

eXtension/eOrganic: [www.extension.org/article/28976](http://www.extension.org/article/28976)

Goat Ration Balancer: [www.luresext.edu/goats/research/nutrition](http://www.luresext.edu/goats/research/nutrition)

Also Quick & Easy Feed Consumption Spreadsheets for: Chick to Layer, Layer, Broiler, Turkey and Hogs are shared with course participants.

## Curso Básico Internacional de Inspección de Proceso Orgánico

por Juan Felipe Ortega

### El Contexto

El curso estuvo vinculado con otros eventos relacionados con la certificación orgánica administrada por el USDA-NOP. Lamentablemente el grupo de CERTIMEX no pudo asistir a los otros eventos, pero la idea me parece muy buena, pues en un momento determinado se aclararon muchas inquietudes y dudas respecto a la certificación bajo este programa.

### Los Anfitriones

Eco-Lógica es una certificadora de la cual conocía muy poco, sin embargo, en la convivencia con ellos durante el curso la identifiqué como una Agencia de Certificación hermana a la nuestra, con similares principios, objetivos, problemas y soluciones. Después del curso los veo como aliados y compañeros de trabajo, y espero que en el futuro nuestra relación con ellos se fortalezca.

Los anfitriones seleccionaron un adecuado lugar y facilidades para el desarrollo del evento. La única diferencia con mis expectativas es que esperaba un poco más de convivencia extra muros con los participantes.

### El Temario

El curso está muy bien planeado, los temas seleccionados fueron de mi más completo interés. En lo particular los temas de Sanitizantes, Ingredientes y Ayudas de Proceso fueron los temas de los que más necesitaba aprender, y en el curso logré obtener la información que necesitaba. Con lo aprendido espero beneficiar a los procesadores y consumidores orgánicos con los

que mi Organismo de Certificación trabaja.

Los temas de formación básica para inspectores ya los conocíamos en parte, pues los participantes de CERTIMEX son todos inspectores acreditados por la agencia, sin embargo, siempre se aprende algo nuevo (p. ej. Imparcialidad = “o pa todos o patadas”), y esperamos que los comentarios que hicimos en el curso sobre estos temas hayan sido de utilidad para los compañeros que van incursionando en el trabajo de inspectores orgánicos.

### La Luminaria

Todos los temas del curso fueron presentados con maestría por el instructor general Luis Brenes. Este no tuvo recelo en exponer toda su experiencia como inspector de procesos orgánicos; experiencia enriquecida por la asesoría profesional de su esposa que se desempeña en el sector de la industria alimenticia y que aunque físicamente no estuvo en el curso, nos mandó sus enseñanzas a través de su compañero de vida. Además de tener experiencia en la inspección de procesos orgánicos, Luis es poseedor de habilidades docentes que ha desarrollado en su trayectoria como académico de la Universidad de Costa Rica. IOIA no pudo haber elegido a un mejor instructor para el evento.

### La Práctica

Para hacer la inspección de práctica nos dividimos en dos equipos. A mí me tocó revisar una planta de procesamiento de chile habanero, en la cual logramos hacer

un gran número de observaciones relacionadas con los temas que estábamos revisando en el aula. Considero que la práctica fue muy adecuada y el lugar elegido para el almuerzo también.

Mi punto de vista, es que la planta visitada es una muestra de lo que está pasando con los operadores orgánicos de América Latina, específicamente los procesadores y/o comercializadores. Se trata de pequeños o medianos procesadores en desarrollo que con algunas dolencias técnicas y otras más fuertes en la comercialización, tratan de incluirse en el sector orgánico. Estas condiciones dan pie a que se puedan identificar oportunidades de mejora al menos en lo relativo a la conformidad con los reglamentos orgánicos, y para la práctica esto fue muy conveniente. Los aspectos que limitaron el desarrollo de la práctica fueron: la inspección que un día antes había sido realizada a la planta por parte de su certificadora, lo cual tenía desfasados en su trabajo a los responsables de los procesos; y por otra parte, el bajo flujo de procesamiento y venta del producto orgánico, con lo que no se tenía registros abundantes, ni recientes.

### La Nota Triste

Lamentablemente, el evento tuvo una sombra de desgracia humana. Una participante registrada para el curso, procedente de un grupo de comisionadas del gobierno de Colombia, sufrió una parálisis cerebral que le impidió asistir al curso, y que finamente le impidió continuar acompañándonos en esta aventura que es vivir en el siglo XXI, y en la iniciativa de convertir la

## Experiencia Curso Básico de Inspección Orgánica

por Yadira Ocampo

Desde el punto de vista institucional, este curso teórico - práctico de 5 días, me permitió actualizarme y evaluar la función del Instituto Colombiano Agropecuario ICA en temas referentes de producción orgánica, fue muy importante debido a que nos encontramos en un proceso de reglamentación de nuestra norma nacional (187 de 2006) y es la base fundamental para estar acorde a las normas internacionales.

Desde el punto de vista comercial, una gran oportunidad para los productores de Colombia, pues como estado, estamos en la obligación de orientar, supervisar y reglamentar las producciones de este tipo, además por el potencial que tiene mi país para producir con calidad, teniendo en cuenta que tenemos mucho por ofrecer.

Desde el punto de vista personal, una experiencia maravillosa, pues es una bendición contar con un experto que nos enseñó demasiado de las normas y de sus experiencias profesionales personales, conocí personas de diferentes partes del mundo y por ende el curso fue muy rico culturalmente hablando, habíamos personas de todo tipo de perfiles y de aplicaciones del curso en muchos ámbitos, pero todos con ganas de aprender y de aportar, un cambio total de pensamiento, pues como funcionaria tengo la experiencia y conocimiento en procesos relacionados en la producción primaria “producción en finca” y este tema me llevó a otros escenarios importantes para tener en cuenta en la ejecución de mis labores y en lo que le puedo aportar a mis usuarios cuando quiero acompañarlos en el proceso de lograr la certificación

En conclusión el curso llenó y sobre pasó mis expectativas, de hecho, pienso hacer el otro y lo estoy promoviendo en mi país para que mis compañeros y amigos también tengan la oportunidad de hacerlo.

Muchas gracias por el profesionalismo con el que nos brindaron los temas de este curso, totalmente satisfecha por lo aprendido y gracias a Eco-Lógica por hacer extensiva esta importante información que cambiará la vida de muchos productores que desean mejorar su calidad de vida en Colombia.



### Proceso, para p 12

agricultura en orgánica. Esta situación se sintió cada día del evento, y la persona más afectada fue su compañera Yadira Ocampo, quien a pesar de tener que dividir su tiempo entre ayudar a la familia de su compañera de trabajo, y participar en la capacitación, logró terminar el curso sorprendiéndonos a todos cada día con su fortaleza. Descanse en Paz Julieta Miller Monroy, los que le sobrevivimos continuaremos con el esfuerzo por hacer disponibles más alimentos sanos para el mundo.

### Seed Survey Deadline is October 3

The Organic Seed Alliance has launched its national organic seed survey. The survey comes around every five years, and seeks to assess certified crop producers' attitudes and perceptions regarding organic seed, as well as better understand current organic seed usage.

All responses are voluntary and confidential, and will be processed in aggregate; no data will be identified by individual or farm. The data collected will be analyzed and compiled as part of the next *State of Organic Seed* report, which will be published in 2015. This report captures successes, obstacles, opportunities, and risks in organic seed systems, and will offer detailed recommendations for improving access to seed that is optimal for U.S. organic agriculture.

The deadline for completing the survey is October 3, 2014, and you may [access the survey online](#). [Learn more about the Organic Seed Alliance](#)

## IOIA Crop Course Enjoys KY Hospitality and Spring in Lexington

by Margaret Scoles

Twenty-three participants from across the US completed the Crop Inspection Course at the Ramada Hotel and Conference Center on the outskirts of Lexington on May 12-16. Garry Lean of Ontario was lead trainer assisted by Margaret Scoles for the week, with Jonda Crosby as the third field trip group leader. Kentucky Department of Agriculture again supported the training with superb hospitality and logistics support. One incentive for IOIA to return to Kentucky was KDA's great support at the same location in 2010. Adam Watson, Organic Program Manager, came by daily to ask what was needed, from delivering protective foot covers and office supplies to driving one of the field trip vans. Eunice Schlappi, seasoned KDA inspector and IOIA inspector member, filled in as field trip van driver and later as Livestock field trip group leader. Doris Hamilton helped organize field trip documents. Doris and Joshua Lindau, also of KDA, completed the intensive two weeks of courses sequentially.



**Kentucky Crop Course Group**

Robert (Mac) Stone, who farms at the Elmwood Stock Farm nearby, stopped by on the first morning, on perfect cue – as trainers were presenting a slide in the NOP standards presentation that describes the role of the NOSB in standards-setting. The speaking spot was handed over to Mac. He warmly welcomed the group to Kentucky and then discussed the NOSB a bit from his perspective as outgoing NOSB Chair. Although he handed over the reins to Dr. Jean Richardson in Texas a few weeks earlier, he continues to serve on the board.

Field trips were hosted by Cedar Ring Greens, Berea College, and the University of Kentucky Horticulture Organic Farm Research Unit. In spite of surprisingly chilly temperatures, all groups enjoyed their field trip experience.

The field trip is consistently rated one of the most helpful aspects of the IOIA courses. Many of the participants managed to get away during lunch one day to visit the famous Buffalo Trace Distillery, a certified organic handler.

## Shared Learning + Challenging Field Tour + Good Food = Great Kentucky Livestock Course

By Jenny Cruze

It felt like a time-lapse video as we headed south to Kentucky for the IOIA Livestock training, which took place from May 19 to May 23. The trees were just beginning to bud as we left Southwest Wisconsin, but as we headed south, springtime unfolded over the course of an eleven-hour car ride. We weren't the only students to visit from afar; participants came from as far away as Washington, California, Texas, and Colorado. Garry Lean led the course, assisted by Eunice Schlappi as a field tour leader of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA).

The main training site was in Bowling Green, just a short drive from Mammoth Cave National Park, which is part of the world's longest known cave system (<http://www.nps.gov/macac/index.htm>). The broader landscape of south central Kentucky consists of karst topography and lush hills. Crop fields in various stages of early

spring growth were often accompanied by the rise and fall of oil well heads, which were a sight to behold for those of us accustomed to farm fields limited to crops, livestock, and the occasional irrigation system.

While the trainers were full of useful information, the participants in the course were also a great source of knowledge! The students themselves brought a wealth of experience, ranging from the organic inspection and certification realms, to agricultural extension and farm management. We were all able to learn from one another.

Besides building up our inspection and National Organic Standards-related knowhow, we were also able to get some hands-on inspection practice and witness the different styles with which our colleagues engaged the farmers who hosted the mock inspections. We also got a kick out of Eunice, the trickster, who threw some sneaky compliance-related curveballs at us during one of the trips!



**KY Livestock Inspection Training KY Group:  
Garry Lean Trainer**



**Jonda Crosby, IOIA Training Services Director  
at Livestock Inspection Training in Kentucky.**

At this diverse farm operation, the main organic enterprise was a herd of curious and energetic Jerseys. Course participants were quick to point out the “happy lines” on these well conditioned animals and noted the obvious species diversity within and surrounding the rotationally-grazed paddocks. We all got our hands dirty managing different parts of the inspection, from the pasture and facilities tours, to the number crunch during the mock inspection audit. When we left the farm, our host said, “I grew up on a farm, and for my kids I wouldn’t have it any other way.” As we pulled away in the van, they waved to us from the porch and garden, and I think we could all understand exactly what he meant.

By the time the course wrapped up, everyone had their own favorite take-away. Mine might have been the consistency with which those in the room viewed the National Organic Standards and the role of the inspector within the process of certification. In an industry where varied legal interpretations can spell high anxiety and high stakes, it was encouraging to witness consistency in the way so many questions were answered by IOIA, as the leading inspector training body, and by representatives of other Accredited Certification Agencies.



**Friendly Jersey Cow**

So all in all, it was a fun and enlightening spring mini-vacation – if you can classify a work-related training in that way! And, by the time my group arrived back in Wisconsin, spring had finally sprung there as well.

## Basic Crop Inspector Training - Lamont, Alberta - June 16-20, 2014

by Lisa Pierce

*[Note - Livestock training slated for Alberta is being rescheduled for later this year or early 2015 - info will be available on the IOIA website.]*

The sign says 'remove your work boots' as you enter the Heartland Hotel in Lamont, Alberta, Canada. The modular hotel assembled on the outskirts of the small prairie town was built to serve the workers in the oil and gas industry and an earnest little band of participants attending the IOIA crop training held from June 16-20, 2014.

Course cosponsors were Alberta Organic Producers Association (AOPA) and Canadian Organic Growers. The primary cosponsor for the intense, IOIA managed course, was AOPA - a chapter of OCIA. AOPA is hoping to be able to immediately hire some of the course graduates to alleviate the inspector shortage in Alberta. The participants consisted of 6 participants from the region with strong agricultural backgrounds and a participant from Switzerland who was traveling and had been working on a local farm.

Our group was blessed with rural Alberta hospitality throughout the training. The hotel receptionist informed me he lived on a farm and lifting my 55 lbs of printed course material would not be a problem. Day 2 of the training, a husband of one of the staff was phoned and awakened to borrow the overhead projector from the local fire department (mine had broken down). And so it went on, including a participant wearing borrowed rubber boots for the field trip - I think that involved a different husband....

Our field trip hosts, Ward and Jaqueline Hocolak, were awesome. The farm was only a 15 minute drive from the hotel and consisted of 2000 acres of forage and mixed grains (oats, wheat, barley and triticale). We managed to inspect the equipment, grain bins, and buffers of selected fields before the dark clouds rolled in and we went inside to verify the records and audit trail. Many thanks to our hosts for the coffee, the food, finding invoices, and rescuing the work boots we had removed, from the rain.

## IOIA Processing Course in Temecula California Wine Country

By Sarah Costin

July in Temecula can bring extreme heat, but not to the 2014 California IOIA Processing course during the week of July 14 - 18. Temperatures were in the high 70s – low 80s, with clear skies. The weather, combined with serene accommodations at Vina de Lestonnac, a swimming pool, all delicious meals on site, and the beauty of Temecula's wine valley helped the participants relax after long days in the classroom. Of the 11 participants - 1 from Georgia, 1 from Oregon, 2 from Nevada, and the other 7 from California, over half were certifier staff, the others from different areas of the organic world- a few training as organic processor inspectors. It was a quiet, focused group with a lot of depth!

The 3 class days were soon over - Thursday was the day for the "mock inspection" field trip. After a last minute cancellation by the original field trip host, we were grateful that



## CA Process Training, from page 16

Luie Nevarez of Eben-Haezer's Happy Hens stepped up and offered his egg handling facility for the mock inspection. The facility, though small, offered plenty of interest and good basic practice, and an opportunity to see "chicken tractors" in the fields surrounding the facility. Thanks to local certifier A Bee Organic for your help with finding a field trip host, twice!

Co-trainer Karen Troxell said good-bye to the group after the field trip debrief on Thursday afternoon. During the week in class she provided a lot of interesting anecdotes from her years as an inspector. Her story of being left in a cooler will not be forgotten. Then suddenly it's Friday, exam day. Co-trainer Sarah Costin distributes the papers, only to be told that page 2 is missing. No worries, the helpful staff at Vina de Lestonnac offer a computer and printer, the page is quickly added, and after 3 hours of silence punctuated by rustling papers, the 2014 California Processing course is complete.

## CANADIAN NEWS, from page 9

### Organic Connections Convention & Trade Show

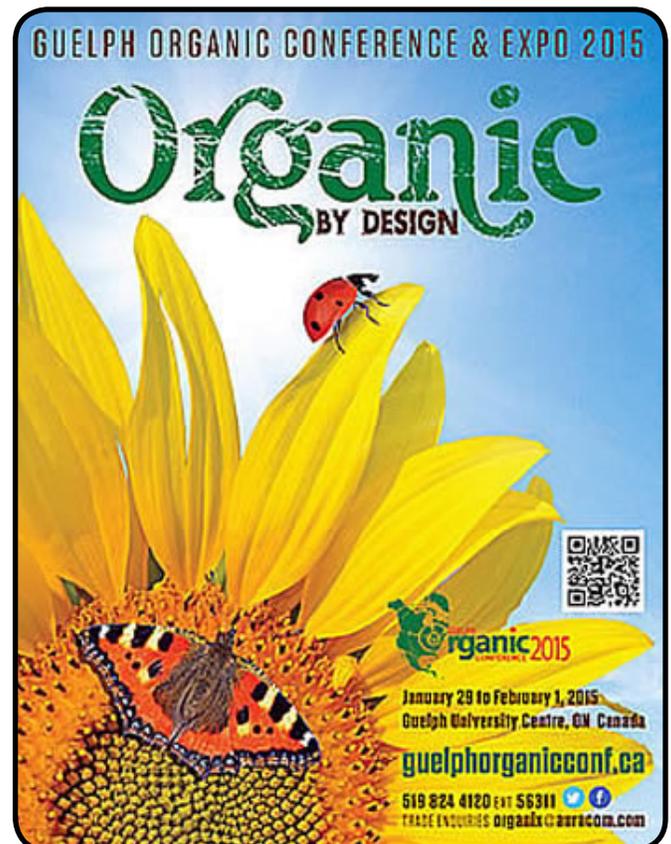
Organic Connections is a non-profit organization established to organize conferences and trade shows for the prairie organic industry. "We celebrate organic food and farmers through activities that connect and educate at every level from the farm through to the consumer." The conference is scheduled every two years in Saskatchewan. The 2014 Organic Connections Convention and Trade Show is planned for November 7th and 8th and will be held at the Conexus Arts Centre in Regina. For more information, including bios of keynote speakers, see <http://www.organicconnections.ca>.

IOIA will have a booth in the trade show, staffed by Stuart McMillan, IOIA Vice-Chair. If you plan to attend and can volunteer to help out with staffing, please email Stuart at [organicinsp@gmail.com](mailto:organicinsp@gmail.com)

### Student Event in Conjunction with Organic Connections, September 26, 2014

In 2010, Organic Connections initiated a student field day. In 2012 and 2013 the field day went to the Saskatchewan Science Centre. The feedback was so positive and the students so receptive and engaged that it became an annual event. On September 26, Organic Connections will be partnering with the Science Centre again for another day of connecting kids to their food. Through a series of "stations," students will: Plant a Plant, Learn about Soil, Sprouts, Honey Bees, Soil Conservation, How to Read a Label, Vermicomposting, Soil Critters, Name the Grain, Herbicide Residue on Grain and Brix's Testing.

The project will begin on September 26th with a field trip to the SK Science Centre during **Organic Week**. The field trip will start a six week program developed by the Food Miles Committee of the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate, <http://foodmiles.saskorganic.com/content/educators>.



## A Comparison of Non-GMO and Organic Standards: Many Similarities and a Few Key Differences

by Tony Fleming

### Background

A rapidly growing number of Non-GMO Project Verified products are appearing on store shelves, reminiscent of the meteoritic growth of products bearing the organic label. These verified products bear the seal of the Non-GMO Project, the organization that originated the concept of distinct non-GMO verification and whose well-honed standard (now in its 11<sup>th</sup> iteration) is widely recognized in the natural foods industry and among consumers in the know. In fact, according to the Project's website, more than 20,000 products representing some 2,200 brands are now verified, and the list is expected to expand exponentially during the next few years. Many of these verifications require on-site inspection, which represents a significant opportunity for organic inspectors, because the inspection process is broadly comparable to the process of an organic inspection, and in some instances, Non-GMO Project Verifications and organic inspections can be performed during the same visit.

It is important to note that the Project does not engage inspectors; rather, it functions as the originator and keeper of the Standard, much like the NOP does for organic standards. Actual verifications are carried out by contract third-party technical administrators (TAs) whose role is analogous to accredited organic

certification bodies. Currently there are two fully-operational TAs—FoodChain ID (FCID), formerly FoodChain Global Advisors, and NSF—with a third (IMI) involved on a pilot basis, and a fourth (SCS) just beginning its technical training with the Project. These are the entities that inspectors need to engage with to perform Non-GMO Project Verifications and to participate in training. Inspectors can be trained by either TA. A typical reaction among inspectors who are exposed to the Non-GMO Project Standard through training or other means goes something like “this is the same/almost identical/very similar to organic standards”. While that certainly is true of several core aspects, there also are some notable differences that have implications for the inspection process and reflect a somewhat different approach undergirding NGP verification. This article provides some basic background to inspectors not yet familiar with the Non-GMO Project Standard, mainly by comparing the major aspects of the current NGP standard (v. 11, May, 2014) to the NOP rule. It is intended only to give a general idea of the major similarities and differences, and not as a comprehensive review.

### Core Elements of the Standards

Like the NOP, the NGP Standard is process based, and covers the entire food chain from seed to fork, with verifications occurring or potentially occurring at all levels (seed, farm, post-harvest handling, processing, distribution and retail). The Standard is predicated on the use of industry best management

practices (BMPs) established by almost two decades of observation, practical experience, and empirical evidence since GMO crops and inputs became widely deployed. The Standard contains major sections that directly address these BMPs, which include: traceability (§1.2.3.1; §2.1), segregation (§1.2.3.2; §2.2), input specifications (§1.2.3.3; §2.3), documented QA/QC protocols and procedures designed to meet the Standard (§1.2.3.6; §3) and action thresholds for testing (§2.6)

These sections have close analogs in the NOP's sections on recordkeeping (205.103), contamination and commingling prevention (205.272), allowed and prohibited substances, methods, and ingredients (205.105), handling requirements (205.270), and organic system plans (205.201) and need little elaboration, as they will be familiar to experienced inspectors. For example, verification requires the operator to make records available to third-party auditors that enable a specific lot of product to be traced back to verifiable non-GMO inputs, and to perform a mass input-output balance on ingredients or other inputs. Traceability is non-negotiable, “even if the presumed chance that non-verified goods have GMO content is low” (NGP Standard Section 1.2.3.1).

Non-GMO labeling also is regulated by the NGP Standard, and the requirements there also mirror those for labeling an organic product. The NGP seal functions much like the “USDA Organic” seal—it serves as a distinctive, visual cue to consumers—and its

style and placement are regulated under the Project’s Licensing Agreement. One aspect worth mentioning here is that the NGP does not allow “GMO free” or similar claims on its verified products, a tacit acknowledgment of both the quantitative approach to GMO presence embodied in its Standard (more on that in a moment), and practical exigencies reflected in the stated philosophy of Continuous Improvement, which is another core aspect and major section of the NGP Standard.

### Key Differences

In its field-to-fork coverage, the NGP Standard places major emphasis on greatly expanding a verified non-GMO seed supply, supporting a core goal to “increase the supply of non-GMO options for high-risk crops and inputs, so that they may eventually become low risk”. The key element of this statement is risk assessment, which has no explicitly stated counterpart in the NOP rule. Here is where the NGP and NOP standards part company.

Under the NGP Standard, inputs are designated as either no-, low-, or high-risk (§2.4). The non-risk category is reserved for materials of abiotic origin, i.e., those lacking genes that can be manipulated. Examples include naturally occurring minerals and water. Low-risk inputs include species for which GE versions have not been commercialized and/or which the risk of contamination is exceedingly low. Those designated as “high risk” (Appendix B) have GMO versions that are widely grown and handled, either in North America or elsewhere. The methodology and documentation

required for verification under the program depend on the risk category, and ramp sharply upward with increasing risk. The current focus of the program is on high-risk inputs, the goal being to eventually downgrade high-risk materials to low-risk once the sector gains sufficient experience to develop and demonstrate new methods that effectively mitigate the risk.

While the NOP and NGP standards are both process based, the basic premise of NGP verification differs in another fundamental way: testing of inputs and products is a routine part of the verification and surveillance program, unlike the NOP, which for years required little residue testing. Even with the recently added NOP requirement for certifiers to test 5% of their operations annually, this still amounts to a small fraction of certified products, and has often been an Achilles heel of sorts in the way organic products are portrayed in certain media stories pertaining to both pesticide residues and food safety.

In contrast, testing of high-risk products and inputs for GMO traits is a prescriptive requirement for participation in the Non-GMO Project Verification program, and may be performed by the participant or its suppliers on a planned schedule as part of their participation, or by the TA for monitoring and surveillance purposes. The NGP Standard is quite specific about testing protocols, specifying not only the frequency and kinds of inputs and products to be tested, but also the GMO events and test procedures to be employed. For inspectors, who may be called

upon to verify the testing regimen, the major focus on testing means that a working knowledge of the nuances of GMO traits and testing is an essential piece of knowledge, unlike in organic inspections, where it is far less critical.

The prominent role of testing in NGP verification implies that not only is there a quantitative basis for the program and its verified products at large, but also that certain benchmarks must be met by participating inputs and products in order to be included on the NGP verified products list. This is handled in the Standard through the use of Action Thresholds (§2.6), with which tested materials must comply (and continue to comply) to achieve and maintain verified status. The thresholds depend on the category of product, and currently are: seeds (0.25%); food, products, ingredients, supplements and personal care (0.9%); livestock feed (1.5%); and packaging and textiles (1.5%).

The Standard also allows participants to opt to conform to temporary variances as long as the participant can demonstrate that they are actively working within the sector to continuously improve the systems and methodology for reducing risk. “Continuous Improvement”, both in concept and practice, is a core element of the program and is spelled out in §4 of the Standard. Temporary variances that acknowledge current practical limitations in meeting the Standard’s ultimate aspirations are one part of that; these variances are expected to be reduced or eliminated as the

**See Non-GMO, page 20**

**Non-GMO**, from page 19

process improves for maintaining the non-GMO integrity of verified products.

### Getting Started on Performing Non-GMO Verifications

Performing NGP verifications appears to be a natural fit for experienced organic inspectors. Many elements of NGP and NOP standards are similar, and for some participants, NGP verification can be performed concurrently with the organic inspection. There are a few key differences to keep in mind, however, the most important being: by definition, the NGP Standard focuses solely on one topic—preventing and detecting GMO contamination—whereas organic standards cover

a wide range of subjects, of which GMOs are just a small fraction. Because of this focus, inspectors interested in performing NGP verifications may need to acquire more in-depth knowledge of the GMO topic generally, or at least certain aspects of it that may be less significant in organic inspections but play a more prominent role in the NGP Standard (understanding the uses and limitations of various GMO testing methods, for example).

Much like organic certifiers accredited to the NOP, the TAs who administer NGP verification have their own systems of verification, and the training each administers will presumably focus on their particular system. That said, these systems are all verifying to the same (NGP) Standard, ergo,

familiarizing oneself with the NGP Standard is a good first step for inspectors who may be considering adding Non-GMO Project Verification to their resumes.

As for access to trainings specifically geared toward NGP verifications, this is largely the purview of the TAs. IOIA and FCGA jointly offered four full-day NGP trainings in 2008 (one of which I attended). Since then, trainings involving IOIA have been relatively sparse: a webinar in 2010 and a 2011 training on the West Coast. With the recent rapid growth in NGP Verified products as the catalyst, however, IOIA is exploring the possibility of providing more jointly sponsored trainings in the near future.

**Stay tuned.**

#### Why Is Non-GMO Project Verification Needed?

One might ask: “Why do we need non-GMO verifications? Why not just buy Certified Organic products?” The short answer is that the NOP rule, while prohibiting the intentional use of “excluded methods”, does not forbid or preclude unintentional contamination. It is left up to individual certifiers to determine what constitutes adequate verification of the non-GMO status of an input and whether producers and handlers are making “reasonable” efforts to avoid unintentional GMO contamination. The situation is further muddled by the lack of established tolerances for adventitious GMO presence under FDA or EPA law, from which NOP takes its cue. Thus, while offering certifiers some guidance on how to administer the organic rule viz GMOs, when it comes to the adventitious presence of GMO material in certified organic products, the NOP basically says that determining the acceptable level is “best left to the marketplace”.

At best, this hands-off approach is likely to result in a lack of consistency in application and interpretation, and at worst, makes it at least theoretically possible (though not likely) for an organic product to contain a significant percentage of unintentional GMO contamination. *But no one really knows*, which simply perpetuates the existing “don’t ask, don’t tell” paradigm re GMOs and foodstuffs in general. And beyond that, not all consumers choose to buy organic products, or at least not organic versions of every type of product (some of which may not be available in organic form), so there needs to be a non-GMO option available for conventional products, especially the large number of non-organic products in the natural foods marketplace.

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## Resources

### ***Protecting Organic Seed Integrity: The Organic Farmer's Handbook to GE Avoidance and Testing***

This resource is designed to help organic seed growers maintain the integrity of organic seed, free of genetically engineered (GE) contaminants and is now available from The Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association (OSGATA), [www.osgata.org](http://www.osgata.org).

It serves as a one-stop tool for organic farmers, seed handlers and seed companies to determine individual, scale-appropriate and crop-specific strategies to maintain genetic purity in organic seed, as well as organic food crops.

This book offers pertinent guidance on seed contamination avoidance and testing protocols for the following at-risk crops (those with USDA-approved GE counterparts which are currently in commercial production): corn, soy, cotton, alfalfa, papaya, canola (*Brassica rapa*), sugarbeet, and squash (*Cucurbita pepo*).

The peer-reviewed work has been synthesized through an assessment of international literature, as well as solicited input from organic farmers, seed company professionals, and seed breeders familiar with isolation and purity concerns, along with implementation constraints in the field.

The book has also been published online as an e-book and is available for free as a resource in the commons. <http://www.osgata.org/organic-seed-integrity/>

***Organic Seed-Finder sites*** You may already be familiar with the site; [pickacarrot.com](http://pickacarrot.com), if not, it's worth checking out. Like [www.organicseedfinder.org](http://www.organicseedfinder.org), [pickacarrot.com](http://pickacarrot.com) helps crop producers in their search for organic seeds. The site has the added features of:

- A printer friendly version of search results, to save or send for certification agents doing audits.
- A "Lettuce Search" button for those who cannot find what they are looking for. [pickacarrot.com](http://pickacarrot.com) will do added research to see if they come up with the seed or a comparable alternative. (Brilliant!)

***Online calculator to help with nitrogen and nutrient use*** Oregon State University Extension Service has developed a new spreadsheet-based online tool, the Organic Fertilizer and Cover Crop Calculator, <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/calculator>, to help small-scale organic farmers estimate how much nitrogen and other nutrients that cover crops and fertilizers provide for their next cash crop. Farmers and gardeners who don't use cover crops can still use the calculator to determine which types and amounts of organic and synthetic fertilizers to use.

***Greenhouse gas calculator*** The Cool Farm Institute (CFI) launched its new Cool Farm Tool, a free, online greenhouse gas calculator for growers to help them measure the carbon footprint of crop and livestock products. <http://www.coolfarmtool.org/CoolFarmTool>

***National Organic Program Accreditation Assessment Checklist*** A revised NOP Accreditation Assessment Checklist (NOP 2005) has been added to the NOP Program Handbook.

This checklist provides a standard format for auditors to record evidence of compliance during on-site assessments. [View NOP 2005, Accreditation Assessment Checklist - http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?d-DocName=STELPRDC5096506](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?d-DocName=STELPRDC5096506)

***GOTS Version 4.0 resources are available for download*** OTA and Textile Exchange recently hosted a webinar on the revised Global Organic Textile Standard. Over 130 registrants from 40 countries signed on to hear from [Marcus Bruegel](http://www.gots.org), GOTS Technical Director, as he detailed the revisions. Materials from the meeting are now available online for download at <http://www.global-standard.org/the-standard/latest-version.html>

## How Biodiversity Conservation is Being Implemented in Organic Agriculture

By Jo Ann Baumgartner, Director, Wild Farm Alliance

This past winter, Wild Farm Alliance and IOIA collaborated on surveys and interviews of over 50 inspectors and certification reviewers, as part of a joint project to integrate biodiversity and natural resources conservation as a fundamental principle in organic inspections. This project reflects on current and future natural resource materials in the NOP Handbook.

Within the last few years, the NOP has added the natural resources standard to their audit checklists used to accredit certification agencies, and has added a natural resources section to their model Organic System Plan (OSP) for crops and livestock. At the spring 2014 NOSB meeting, the NOP predicted that draft Biodiversity and Natural Resources Conservation Guidance will be published this fall and finalized next year. The NOP is also currently working with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to make it easier for transitioning farmers enrolled in NRCS' Conservation Activity Plan 138 to use that paperwork for part of the Organic System Plan.

### Highlights of Survey

***Survey Question: Do you think organic operators on average understand what is meant by Biodiversity Conservation as part of compliance for the organic regulation?***

According to those who responded, an average of only about 60% of organic farmers understand biodiversity conservation as part of compliance

for their certification. More on this topic revealed a range of opinions.

Some reported farmers understand, and that makes their job easy. Responders said that in general, a good farmer will naturally do the right things, because that will help them maximize profits and make their operation more sustainable. With a somewhat different twist on this issue, some said farmers limit their efforts for promoting biodiversity only as far as it does not affect their farming operations and profits. Some thought mostly the farmers who are philosophically aligned and not in it for higher prices are addressing conservation. Some were concerned that farmers are challenged with an unclear direction on how to translate what they do into their OSP.

Answers also depended on the location, size and previous assistance from USDA NRCS. A few said that much of the landscapes where they work are naturally diverse and so farmers easily comply. Another repeated this assessment specifically about farmers in northeastern states, and compared them with those in mid-western landscapes where it was harder for farmers to comply because much of the diversity was lost in the past. Others said that it was a question of size and that most small farmers address conservation while most industrial sized farms do not. While farmers' interactions with NRCS also made a difference, it was stated that even some of those farmers might still not really understand conservation

because sometimes NRCS creates the plan for them.

For those farmers that don't understand or comply with the biodiversity and natural resources regulations, it was reported some are unsure, some have problems with semantics—for instance 'riparian' versus 'creekside,' some don't read all the regulations, some do not know how to answer the questions, and some have an OSP that doesn't address these enough or at all. The rest don't think biodiversity conservation is part of the rule.

***Survey Question: Is Biodiversity Conservation integrated into the organic inspection/certification review?***

While 79% of those who responded said biodiversity conservation is integrated into the organic inspection and/or certification review process, only 55% integrate it as foundational principle of organic agriculture.

Of those who responded positively, a few said it was because the certifier addresses it well in their OSP, making it really easy to do. If there is a problem, they have the client develop a plan and then submit it. Sometimes they make it mandatory that the client gets help from NRCS or the Resource Conservation District.

Some said it only comes up as related to pollinating and beneficial insect habitat, or only during the site walk. Others said it may be discussed, but not to the degree it deserves. Some try

to integrate biodiversity practices but find it challenging, and are not sure what the minimum requirements are. Some said there are a couple of questions but it is not an underlying theme, and the inspection tends to be limited in dialogue—it is included, but barely addressed or enforced by inspectors and certifiers.

For those who said it was not discussed well, or at all, they offered several reasons. One is that they felt there are so many bigger issues, such as pesticide usage, that take up 99% of the time with 1% left is for everything else.

Another reason is that certifiers think it is too much paperwork to change their systems and since they have a lot of leeway on how they interpret the regulations, that they don't address biodiversity conservation better than they do.

Further reasons pointed to OSPs that only have checkboxes, which means the inspector only has to verify what they checked, whereas other certifiers require a narrative, which then makes for a much richer discussion/verification process.

A final reason has to do with actual and assumed expertise. Some said that there are a lot of people in the certification business who are under-qualified and need further training, and it would help if they would visit natural landscapes near farms so they can learn to recognize high quality natural areas on the farm. Some mentioned that there are inspectors who have been in the business awhile and don't think they need to learn more. Then there are some

certification personnel that come initially from industrial agriculture and don't care about biodiversity conservation.

***Survey Question: Do you have a basic understanding of Biodiversity Conservation, but need more advanced information?***

All respondents reported a basic understanding of biodiversity conservation, and 40% of those rated themselves as having a deep understanding. 94% would like more about non-compliances and how NRCS and other conservation programs work. Some would like to learn how farmers can prevent and fix conservation



problems, or what is a wetland and other natural resource features. Some would like to look at the whole system - inputs flows, carbon/nitrogen balance, etc. Others suggested that advanced IOIA 200 and 300 Webinar series makes sense, especially since there are new expectations by the accreditation checklist and upcoming Guidance.

**Insights Gained During Interviews**

When speaking to certification personnel on the phone, some mentioned roadblocks and others suggested ways in which to integrate biodiversity and natural resources conservation more thoroughly into organic inspections.

**Technical Assistance – Is it a Roadblock or an Opportunity?**

During the interviews, the issue

of how much inspectors share information when they are not allowed to consult came up over and over. For some it was a case of not knowing enough to share information, but for many others it seemed easier not to say anything. After all, an inspector's job is to verify the OSP and with some OSPs, very few questions are geared to natural resources. According to inspector Ib Hagsten, Chair of IOIA, an inspector who finds a noncompliance cannot specifically tell a producer what to do to get back in compliance—because that is consulting. But they can tell a story that helps the producer understand, or they mention an article they heard about, or share a statement someone made about a similar issue and suggest that the producer may want to check into it—this is not consulting. Interviewing Ib inspired him to write an excellent article about technical assistance and natural resources in IOIA's Winter 2014 issue under "Notes from the Chair."

**Getting on the Same Page – Certification Agencies and the NOP Can Help**

Inspectors have seen how once a certifier learns that their competitors are addressing an issue, it can empower their agencies to do a better job than they did in the past. They say certifiers would like to think that they are addressing what is considered the norm throughout the organic certification world.

Further, these inspectors suggested See **Biodiversity**, page 24

**Biodiversity**, from page 23

that the best place and time for a discussion of this type would be at trainings given or supported by the Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA) and USDA after the Biodiversity and Natural Resources Conservation Guidance comes out. The training should drive home the need for OSPs that reflect the new guidance, educated inspectors, and consistent and thorough coverage at the inspection and certification review. Several certification personnel felt it will be very important for the gray areas to be addressed; otherwise the certification agencies won't put in the energy needed to making changes. For instance, it was thought that the NOP will need to spell out how an inspector weighs the mandate for natural resources when examining the extenuating circumstances related to a farm's barren landscape devoid of all biodiversity but the annual crop and its pests.

**New Biodiversity Conservation Trainings and Support Materials as a Result**

IOIA has been teaching about conservation in organic inspections since before the NOP regulations came out. In the last three years, Tony Fleming's IOIA articles—*Fumbling Towards Complexity*—continues on this theme, and helps to parse out many gray areas, while calling into question others. His latest piece in the Spring 2014 issue offers a matrix as a way to keep track of the natural resource issues.

IOIA embarked with Wild Farm Alliance and our team (Harriet Behar, Barry Flamm, and Lynn

Coody) on the assessment of biodiversity and natural resources conservation to ultimately offer better trainings to organic inspectors. Our intention for the new training material was to insure that inspectors are well prepared, more efficient and know how to inspect to NOP requirements with confidence. As mentioned, almost all certification personnel would like more information. To that end, we have collaborated on a new set of Power-point slides and handouts for the IOIA Basic Training. These new materials cover biodiversity not just as it relates to natural resources (205.200) but also in many of the other regulations (205.203, 205.204, 205.205, 205.206, 205.238, 205.239, and 205.240). Once the Biodiversity and Natural Resources Conservation Guidance is finalized, these materials will be updated.

For those certification personnel who want advanced information, IOIA is offering a webinar training titled *Natural Resource Assessment on Organic Farms* on November 13, 2014, given by Garry Lean and myself.

In the interest of addressing the need for farmer education, Wild Farm Alliance will be making presentations at sustainable agriculture conferences in many parts of the country this coming winter. We are also updating our Biodiversity Conservation materials for **organic farmers** and **certifiers**, the latter of which is shared at IOIA's basic crop and livestock trainings. New critical issues related to the NOP regulations, food safety and climate change are being addressed, and relevant

NRCS resources are included so that biodiversity and natural resources conservation principles continue to be a fundamental aspect of organic certification.

**FEATURE ARTICLE BY IOIA MEMBER****Michigan's Food and Agriculture Border Gateway Summit III**

by Tom Schoenfeldt  
Schoenfeldt Services, Inc.

On February 20, 2014 a meeting was held in Michigan to discuss the transfer of products between the United States and Canada. This third Border Summit was sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security, Urban Area Security Initiative grant allocated to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Consulate General of Canada in Detroit, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and Global Food Protection Institute. This meeting was a full day of discussions by various departments from both Canada and the United States.

There is a sincere desire by both countries to work together in the area of import and export for the benefit of both countries. There were representatives from the USDA APHIS, FDA, Canadian CFIA, FBI, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Consulate Members from the Consulate of Canada in Detroit, and the food industry. All of these individuals were there for the same purpose - to better understand how these two countries can better work together.

Continued on page 25

This was a meeting that did not discuss organic production but everything that was discussed has an impact on organic production, especially if it is being imported or exported to Canada. As the new Food Safety Modernization Act was discussed, the focus was on the Foreign Supplier Verification Process that is still in the comment stage. This is a rule that will govern the responsibilities for the safety of the food as it is imported into the United States from any country. At the same time Canada is writing a new Food Safety Law that is planned to be based on the Food Safety Modernization Act in the U.S. The new Canadian law will hopefully combine their four existing Food Safety Laws.

The FBI discussed how they are involved in the intentional contamination of the food chain as an act of terrorism. Avenues of entry for the contamination of food that are being observed by the FBI were discussed and some of the recent things that are being done.

The CTPAT (Customs and Trade Partnership against Terrorism) process was discussed and how this can be used to improve the process of getting goods from one country to another. This is a process of verification that makes it much simpler to get products moved from one country to another. The process was explained and how brokers and importers can use this system to help speed the process of getting goods through customs and on to the customer and consumers. The CTPAT system has three tiers in the process. Tier 1 is Certification where a security profile has been submitted and approved by the customs officials. Tier 2 is validation of the organization, ensuring the minimum

security standards are being met by the organization. Tier 3 is Best Practices which exceeds the other two tiers.

One of the large issues involved in international transport of goods is wood. Insects travel in the wood and pallets must be heat treated and stamped with the proper stamp. But they still have to be verified for insects. Pallets and wooden items coming into the U.S. is how we received the Emerald Ash Borer. There is a type of fly that they are watching for that can come in from the Asian countries now. This fly comes in in the larvae stage and needs to be caught before it gets into the country and can spread. Much of the international transportation of goods in the Detroit area involves auto parts but these are on wooden pallets. Even some of our food shipments are being made on wooden pallets. There is a curriculum being developed by the International Food Protection Training Institute to train people in Food Safety and meet the training requirements of new standards. This training was discussed and is being developed and will be distributed via various methods including online, community colleges etc.

There was a panel of individuals that discussed import/export of goods. Two of the panel members were lawyers that described the import laws and their requirements. These laws have to be complied with even if it is an organic product. The difference with organic products is that there has to be the proper organic identification as it is exported or imported. The responsibilities of the importer and the exporter were discussed. These responsibilities are the same for all products.

*Learning from the non-organic world - it is essential for organic inspectors to keep abreast of regulatory changes affecting the operations we inspect. The side benefit is learning how the non-organic industry is implementing verification systems.*  
- M.Scoles

Even though this conference was not focused on Organic production, there was much there to be learned that can be applied to organic production. As inspectors we need to be aware of what is being offered in our areas and be willing to learn what other agencies are doing and see how these might impact what we have to do as organic inspectors. There may be conferences like this in your area if you are near a border or coastal ports and my recommendation would be to seek these out and make every effort to get to it so you understand better what might be involved in some of the international agreements. Conferences like these are excellent opportunities for continuing education that can be used to help better understand what is happening in the food industry and how the organic world may be impacted.

*Tom Schoenfeldt of Redford, MI, is a IOIA Inspector Member and Independent Contract Inspector who has been inspecting organic operations since 2007. Previously, he had many years of experience as a consultant, helping clients achieve their goals related to supplier management including several ISO certification standards. He holds a B.S. in Chemical Engineering and taught college courses in Quality and Business.*

## Organic Inspection - A Story of Competence and Professionalism - Part II

by Bob Howe

*What I observed was not as the report said and most of the concerns and issues noted in that report did not reflect the current situation. The OSP had not changed and there were no significant changes in the plan or the operation, the personnel involved were the same as were present at the previous inspection.*

*My reason for telling you about this experience is not to convince you to review previous reports but to demonstrate the impact on the client/certifier/inspector relationship when we don't do a good job.*

And, yes, I have reviewed previous reports as part of my preparation ever since that incident. It has been helpful, not just to get a better understanding of the client, but I admire how some of the reports are done and how concerns and issues are illuminated by the word. That in itself has been educational and contributed to my growth.

For the most part the reports I am provided with are good and reflect the operation I am inspecting; however, there are enough that I consider weak and lacking in accuracy and unclear in explanation of concerns or issues. When I see these I can't help but wonder what the client thinks about "The organic inspector". I feel that my reputation is at stake and I consider the poor inspection done reflects on us all. As we do our inspections and prepare our reports we need to keep in mind the reviewer and do our best to ensure our reports paint an accurate and clear picture.

A couple of comments about cer-

tifiers and our relationships with them. The certifiers I consider to be good have a few things in their favor. They are good with their clients and do not keep them hanging when the client needs advice or guidance and they are not shy when it comes to telling a client that they have issues that need to be resolved in order to obtain or renew their certification. In other words, they have a respectful, strong relationship with their clients and their clients are stronger because of it. Also, they are helpful to us as inspectors and show us respect in much the same way they do their clients. They are courteous and "professional" and I can accept their criticisms without dread because I know they are helping me improve.

Taking that a step toward the inspector's relationship with the clients inspected, our job is many faceted and the relationship we enjoy with our inspection clients hinges on our honesty. We need to help them prepare for an inspection when they have questions and we need to be clear and honest about concerns we have as a result of our inspections. I might not recognize my less than competent or less than professional attributes if I did not get and listen to the feedback provided. That feedback helps me clean up my act and become a better inspector. Likewise, letting our concerns about the client's compliance go without mention and communication to the certifier is unfair to the client, unfair to the certifier and the consumer. In other words, failure to cite raises concern about being honest and is

less than a professional action.

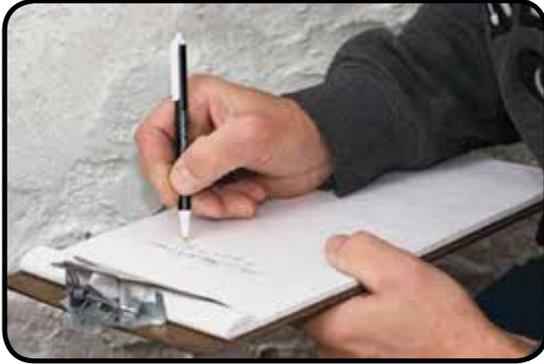
We as organic inspectors have experienced a multitude of changes with regard to the NOP and the NOP administration and their interpretation and emphasis. Not to mention the addition of regulations throughout other parts of the world and their relationship with the NOP. Couple that with the varying interpretation and emphasis received from the certifiers and we operate in a somewhat confusing, if not at times frustrating, environment. Overall; however, the road has become much more smooth and extreme differences have been addressed to a considerable degree. They still exist and we take issue with them at times. The important thing I think we need to remember, and the survey reflects this, is we need to be better than that and do the most competent, professional job we are capable of. Every inspection is new, even when the client has been one of our previous inspected parties or clients being inspected for the first time. Systems and controls become more sophisticated, processes and facilities, land and crops and livestock are all subject to change and they more often than not change from year to year. On occasion we will receive an OSP that should have been more thoroughly reviewed. New clients often have introduced changes by the time the inspection takes place. These events and changes we expect and accept and take them in stride, when we are competent, when we are professional.

People are who and what they

are. The primary interface we have with the client is usually an individual of some authority and one who can provide access to the information we need to complete our audits. There does not seem to be a typical "type" but the one I mostly encounter is the interested, motivated and intelligent person who knows their way around and

can facilitate the inspection. These folks react positively to correct concerns and issues and usually work to improve the retention of

information so it becomes more suited to verification of their OSP. Then there is the occasional individual who is the fish out of water, the one who got tossed into the fray, often last minute and often with a full plate to begin with. These people need a lot of help just to begin to understand the regulations, let alone understand how an audit requires data. Usually these people have made some effort to prepare and they are happy to accept the notice of concerns and have an idea what they need to do to bring their OSP into compliance. Do we empathize in this situation and take the time to discuss the regulations and various parts of the OSP or do we simply write up the concerns and leave them to figure it out? What is the professional, the competent thing to do? From the responses in the survey, I think that most of us will empathize and, stopping short of consulting, make an effort to have the requirements become clear in the persons mind.



Two "types" I tend to put into the same category are the individuals who can't be bothered, are rude and arrogant and try to make you into something less than you are, and the individuals who are so thick that they can't seem to grasp a concept, even when you explain it several times and in several different ways. I include with this

type the individuals who begin the inspection with you and leave to get you some information, only to disappear and make you track them down a considerable time later, often repeating the disappearing act again. How do we work with these people and still retain our competent, professional manner? I have, on at least two occasions, extreme cases, shut down my laptop, packed up and left without completing the inspection. What usually works for me is to confront the person/persons and, often in a stern and lecturing manner (if I think it necessary), make the case that I cannot do my job objectively unless..... Is that being competent, professional? I can't be sure but it usually gets results and if/when I return for a subsequent inspection, that inspection goes much more smoothly and my relationship with these clients shows that there is more of a mutual respect. Perhaps empathy with the client encompasses understanding each other and not necessarily being fully accepting of our differing natures, simply accepting the difference and acting to make it work.

One thing I am sure of, and I think most of us are, when I/we walk out that door at the end of an inspection we have some confidence that the client knows if they need to do anything differently and why. Also, we need to feel that there is some mutual respect and that we would be welcomed back, if the assignment came up and we wanted to visit there again. Which brings me to my final thought on this complicated subject; I have a choice when an inspection is offered. I can accept it or refuse it based on my sense of my level of bias toward the client. Seldom, but it does happen, I will turn an inspection down because I believe that my bias would not be to the benefit of the client.

Please, review the Power Point summary and, very importantly, study the responses, look for the threads of commonality and think about how your values, your personality, your approach to the job as an organic inspector relates to them. On the whole, the more we appear as consummate professionals the stronger our union confederation becomes as a force for organic.

*In 2013, IOIA-Accredited Inspector Member Bob Howe conducted an informal survey of IOIA inspectors on what defines a competent, professional organic inspector. He compiled the results into a PowerPoint presentation and wrote this insightful article.*

**Both his PowerPoint summary and the full article are available in the "Inspectors only" section of the IOIA website under Business Resources. Part 1 was published in our last issue.**

**Board of Directors Minutes Highlights** *Note: Due to the large number of minutes since the last issue, the minutes are abbreviated more than usual. Members are encouraged to visit the IOIA website to read the full minutes.*

## February 26 2014, Conference Call

### Final Approval: 2013 Year-End Financial Reports.

**New Inspector Accreditation Program for IOIA: Decision:** After much discussion and viewing of schematics we agreed to ask the membership for help in fleshing out our new accreditation scheme. Bill initialized the suggestion that we ask the membership at the AGM four questions and break into small groups, each facilitated by a BOD member. For instance: “What is the value of an accreditation program for inspectors?” “What are the key elements of an accreditation program?” “What would the structure look like?” “What is necessary to be a qualified inspector?”

**Rationale:** Our current program is not supported. We need the Accreditation Committee to be part of a BOD working group who will take input from the AGM and design a new program. After doing all of the above we take the new program to a membership vote.

**Liability Insurance for Inspectors:** Consensus was to add Hiscox to the list of insurance companies on our website.

**IOIA Inspector Member conference call:** Enthusiastic BOD support for Patti Bursten’s proposal for IOIA to sponsor a conference call for independent inspectors, IOIA members only, limit of 25.

**Annual Meeting- Tilajari Resort & Conference Center, Costa Rica - Saturday, March 22, 10:00 AM – 6:26 PM**  
*DRAFT Annual Meeting Minutes are posted on the IOIA Inspectors Section of the website. Minutes will be approved at the 2015 Annual Meeting.*

**BOD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Stuart McMillan, Pam Sullivan, Margaret Weigelt, Bill Stoneman, Garth Kahl, Isidor Yu, and Margaret Scoles. BOD Chair Ib Hagsten attended via Skype. Vice-Chair Stuart McMillan presided.

## IOIA BOD Meetings March 23-26, 2014 - Tilajari Resort & Conference Center, Ciudad Quesada, Costa Rica

### MEETING WITH PAST BOD MEMBERS SILKE FUCHSHOFEN AND DAVID KONRAD

**March 23, 7:45 – 8:45 PM.** Discussion only. No decisions were made. Full Notes were taken for the BOD.

### Agenda Planning Session - March 24, 3:08 PM – 6:08 PM

**BOD Reorganization.** No change in BOD positions. All directors continued in same positions. Meeting dates and times were set for the coming year, through Feb 2015.

## Board of Directors Retreat, March 25, 8:11 AM – Noon

**INSURANCE:** Informal discussion took place regarding inspector-insurance history.

**ACCREDITATION:** Each BOD member summarized what happened in their discussion groups.

### BOD RETREAT, March 25, 2:00 – 6:03 PM

#### ACCREDITATION Discussion Continued:

Session began with a discussion to clarify the scope of Al Johnson’s idea presented during AGM for a witness audit-working group. Pam suggested we set up a timeline for roll out of a revised Accreditation Program/Training Program.

MS stated we **need to have a Training Advisory Council** (with at least 3 members, a technical expert, a seasoned inspector and Jonda, our educational expert).

**LATIN AMERICA and ASIA**

Garth said he will invite members to a Latin American Forum and will be moderator in the short term. He will work with Diane. MS suggested he contact Homero Blas about the Spanish IOIA Facebook page. Pam suggested we need a membership drive in Latin America. AGM-identified barriers of cost and language were discussed as well as the membership value vs cost. Consensus was to develop more Spanish language webinars and create a reduced Fee Schedule.

Ib opened discussion pointing to a previous BOD discussion about having executive summaries as part of our newsletter in Spanish, Korean, and Japanese. Isidor announced that he and Mutsumi Sakuyoshi (JOIA) have discussed the executive summary idea and agreed to share regional news of interest to their inspectors with IOIA in English. He proposed it would be a separate summary from the main newsletter.

**MOTION:** Garth made motion effective immediately we create a dues level of \$60 for membership in Latin America in parallel with the three-tiered fee schedule for co-sponsored trainings. **DECISION:** Unanimous in favor.

**MOTION:** Stuart moves to direct IOIA staff to examine a three-tiered fee structure for worldwide membership and come back with a specific proposal for implementation by May 8. **DECISION:** Unanimous in favor.

**MOTION:** Isidor makes a motion that we establish an Asia Committee. **DECISION:** Unanimous in favor.

**MOTION:** Pam moves we appoint Isidor as the BOD liaison to the new Asia Committee. **DECISION:** Unanimous in favor.

**MOTION:** Garth made motion to appoint Juan Carlos Benitez as chair of the Latin America Committee.

**DECISION:** Unanimous in favor.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING:** We determined 4 questions to ask consultant Mary Hernandez.

**BOD RETREAT, March 26, 8:03 – 11:10 AM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL with consultant MARY HERNANDEZ**

Question 1: difference between a governance board and a working board?

Question 2: pros and cons of having an Advisory Board?

Question 3: tips/best management practices for succession plan for ED and/ BOD members?

Question 4: Strategic Plan?

2nd RETREAT this year? Pam suggested we look at how we are doing financially at the half-year mark before we commit.

**BOD RETREAT San Jose, Costa Rica - Wednesday, March 26, 5:45 - 7:33 PM**

**COMMITTEE LIAISONS** were determined. Liaisons will contact committees to confirm membership and chair.

**ACCREDITATION: MOTION:** Bill moved “to re-elect our current accreditation chair and committee members for one more year or until our new accreditation system is installed.” Discussion followed to clarify that the current accreditation committee will be invited by the Ad Hoc Accreditation Working Group (Bill and Stuart) to work on and/or implement a revised accreditation scheme. Decision: 5 Yes. 1 No. Motion carried.

**Board of Directors - Conference Call - May 8, 2014 7:00- 9:32 EDT**

**Motion:** Garth moved “that a notice is put in the newsletter and out on the forum encouraging inspectors to get on public forums to talk about organics and to do something about the charges leveled at the NOP and the NOSB.” **DECISION:** Unanimous approval.

**Treasurer’s Report & 1st Qtr Financial Reports:** Garth moved to accept the Financial and Treasurer’s Reports.

**DECISION:** Unanimous approval.

**Bylaws Amendment Ballot Proposal – BOD Terms:** Pam wrote a draft Bylaws Amendment Ballot Proposal to change BOD terms to three years instead of two. Pam also noted that we need to remove “apprentice mem-

See **BOD**, page 30

**BOD, from page 29**

ber” from the bylaws. The changes will be jointly proposed to the membership by BOD and Bylaws committee.

**IOIA-Asia Committee & 2016**

**AGM:** Isidor reported that he contacted Mutsumi Sakuyoshi from JOIA and she agreed to help us plan the 2016 AGM in Asia. She agreed that Jeju Island is a good place for both Korean and Japanese inspectors to meet. He also said that he had made contact with a former IOIA member (Mr. Park Sung Jun) who works for the Rural Assembly of Jeju Island. Isidor said he will continue to communicate with (Mr. Park Sung Jun) as well as recruit additional help from Korean inspectors. **DECISION:** Unanimous approval of Mutsumi Sakuyoshi as Chair of the Asia Committee.

**Liability Insurance for Inspectors:**

Stuart reported that he had called all certifiers based in Canada. Only one requires E&O, CARTV and they offer their group insurance to inspectors with the cost prorated on the number of inspections. He called Canadian inspectors and found that business insurance was being obtained at a modest cost. Garth reported that there is a pool of 33 OTCO contract inspectors that are required to carry E&O. MS said MCIA connected her to a general liability/business insurance company and will be doing some follow up with the company.

*Respectfully submitted by  
Margaret Weigelt, Secretary*

**Inspector Peer Field Evaluations**

By Al Johnson

NOP Document 2027, released last August, instructed certifiers to implement annual personnel performance evaluations. One section, particularly relevant to IOIA stated: “Inspectors should be evaluated during an on-site inspection by a supervisor or peer (another inspector) at least annually”.

Should the burden of performing inspector evaluations fall solely on certifiers, the cost in time and money could be substantial. This cost might be a certifier incentive to reduce inspector pools to in-house staff or a smaller core of independents. IOIA sees this as a potential threat to its members, the majority of whom are independent. Our geographical spread around the country helps to keep certification costs down and our independent members are amongst the most experienced and skilled in the industry.

Peer field evaluations conducted by inspectors:

- Can be a valuable educational tool for the inspector being evaluated
- Can be a valuable educational tool for the inspector performing the evaluation
- Will satisfy the needs of multiple certifiers
- Might be done at a fraction of the cost to certifiers
- Will take advantage of years of experience of independent inspectors
- Will eliminate the need for inspectors to arrange field evaluations with the staff of each certifier for whom they work
- Can be an important tool in the NOP’s underlying goal to maintain, improve and monitor the quality and professionalism of organic inspectors.

The “Peer Field Evaluation” Sub-Committee of IOIA’s Accreditation Committee was formed at the 2014 IOIA Annual Meeting and consists of 6 experienced inspectors: Lois Christie & Karen Troxell from California, Amanda Birk from Pennsylvania, Luis Brenes from Costa Rica, Juan Carlos Benitez from Ecuador and Al Johnson from New Jersey. An NOP auditor with both organic farming and inspecting experience is serving as a committee advisor and several members of the Accredited Certifiers Association have volunteered to participate in a Working Group as our work progresses. Two certifiers, CCOF and PCO have agreed to work with us during our testing stages and have been helpful in sharing their resources.

Phase 1 of the sub-committee’s work is to develop and field test tools, techniques and protocols for effective peer field evaluations. During

**Peers**, from page 30

Phase 2 we will work with the IOIA Board of Directors to incorporate these peer field evaluations into the Accreditation Program to strengthen this program to the point it will be recognized by certifiers and the NOP as an effective measure of the quality of organic inspectors, fulfilling the underlying goal of this NOP directive to maintain, improve and monitor inspector quality and professionalism.



Peer Field Evaluation Subcommittee members Juan Carlos Benitez and Al Johnson.

**IOIA MEMBER PROFILE****Meet Jean Richardson**

In May 2014 Dr Jean Richardson was elected Chair of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). Jean is Professor Emerita, University of Vermont, where she taught Environmental Studies and Environmental Law. She currently works with her family to produce certified organic maple syrup, and is an independent inspector of organic farms, processors and handlers, and a member of the IOIA.

Dr. Richardson's research included work on the impact of long distance transportation of air pollution on dioxin uptake in dairy feeds and milk, and a major rural development project, Environmental Partnerships in Communities (EPIC) which included considerable research on pasture management. The ten year EPIC project which Jean directed also provided extensive technical assistance to farmers on pasture management and on sustainable livestock systems, encouraging new farmer-run organizations which continue today. Lessons



learned can be found in her book "Partnerships in Communities, reweaving the fabric of rural America", Island Press, 2000. She also taught as an Adjunct Professor at the Vermont Law School, Environmental Law Center, and in the 1970's and 80's she and her first husband ran an electric fence franchise, and sheep farm.

Jean has extensive state, national and international experience. Jean lives in an old house on a trout stream surrounded by sugar maple trees, a small orchard, berries, vegetable gardens, perennial beds, and thousands of daffodils in spring.



## 18th Organic World Congress 13-15 October 2014 Istanbul, Turkey

Every three years IFOAM members choose a new World Board and gather to debate, decide and vote on the future strategic direction of the organic movement for the coming tenure.



Over two days members can discuss motions, meet World Board candidates, and appraise the bids submitted to host the next Organic World Congress. It is the opportunity to voice your opinion on the issues impacting the organic sector and suggest ways forward.

For complete conference information, registration and voting instructions, please see their website: <http://www.owc2014.org/>

The 2014 slate of candidates for IFOAM's World Board includes two IOIA members -- Peggy Miars, Executive Director of OMRI, and Mohammad Reza Ardakani, of Biosun Certifier Company, Iran. OMRI and Biocun are both supporting business members of IOIA. Endorsement by five IFOAM members is a prerequisite for all candidates. IOIA endorsed the candidacy of both members.

Good luck in the election, Peggy and Reza!



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## Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!

### 2014 - 2015 Calendar

**August 31 - September 3** Waseda, Tokyo, Japan. Farm Inspection Course. See page 3.

**Sept 17** Baltimore, MD. OTA Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration. [www.ota.com](http://www.ota.com)

**Sept 18-20** Baltimore, MD. Expo East. [www.expoeast.com](http://www.expoeast.com)

**Sept 28 - October 10** Pennsylvania Crop, Livestock, Processing, and Advanced Inspection Courses - See page 1.

**Oct 4** 27th Annual Hoes Down Festival, Capay Valley, CA. [www.hoesdown.org](http://www.hoesdown.org)

**Oct 08 - 09** Louisville, KY. Crop Insurance and the 2014 Farm Bill Symposium.

<http://tinyurl.com/kbn95eg>

**Oct 14 - 16** Side, Antalya, Turkey. 9th International Soil Science Congress on "The Soul of Soil and Civilization." <http://soil2014.com/>

**Oct 13 - 17** 18th Organic World Congress & IFOAM General Assembly. Istanbul, Turkey. <http://www.owc2014.org/>

**October 27 - 31, 2014** California Crop Inspection Course, see page 3.

**Oct 28 - 30** Louisville, KY. Fall 2014 NOSB meeting. Galt House Hotel. Room reservations via phone: 1-800-843-4258

**November 10-14, 2014** Ontario, Canada - Processing Inspection Course -

**January 29 - February 1, 2015** Guelph Organic Conference & Expo. [www.guelphorganicconf.ca](http://www.guelphorganicconf.ca)

**February 5-7, 2015** Portland, OR. Organicology [www.organicology.org](http://www.organicology.org)

**March 28, 2015.** IOIA Annual General Meeting, Chico Hot Springs, Montana. See page 2 of this issue.

**San José, Costa Rica, Farm Inspection Course** - November 24-28, 2014

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