

2015 AGM and Advanced Organic Inspector Trainings at Chico Hot Springs - March 26 - 29

Chico Hot Springs Resort, located in the beautiful Paradise Valley, Montana, just north of Yellowstone National Park, is the site of IOIA's 2015 Annual General Membership Meeting and Advanced Organic Inspector trainings.

Advanced training is scheduled March 26-27. The reserved room block includes a few days after the AGM to allow members to enjoy field trips, the surrounding area or to just relax and enjoy the waters.

The AGM on March 28 will begin at 10 a.m. and includes an introduction to the developing **IOIA Peer Evaluation Program** (Co-chairs Al Johnson & Lois Christie) and an update on the new inspector accreditation program which was developed in response to input from trainers and from the membership at the 2014 AGM. Also, two members of the research team of Alison R. Kent, MPA candidate; David P. Carter, PhD candidate; and Sara Miller Chonaiew, PhD student will report on *"Inspectors in the U.S. Organic Food Industry: Characteristics, Roles, and Experiences"* published Nov 2014. The day will end with festive events including an introduc-

tion to Korean food, a cash bar, a FUNdraising auction, and fiddle music. Wes Henthorne of the B Bar Ranch will speak on how the ranch saved the Ancient White Park heirloom cattle breed <http://whiteparkbeef.com>.



Visit our AGM page at www.ioia.net for links to the AGM draft agenda, Board of Directors Candidate statements, downloadable proxy form and event registration. The AGM page also has links to advanced training info including the draft agenda, speaker bios, and field trip options.

Advanced Training: March 26 - 27

Advanced organic inspector training will be followed by options for field trips to organic operations on March 29. All events will be at the Chico Hot Springs Resort, near Pray, Montana.

See **2015 AGM**, page 6

Notes from the Chair

By Ib Hagsten

What an exciting time to be part of IOIA activities! IOIA staff are working on "all six cylinders" to meet the deadlines of the NOP-funded Sound and Sensible projects, preparing for the advanced training and AGM (Annual General Meeting), and maintaining the normal on-going training activities around the world.

I just received a note from Margaret and Kathy where they completed the first slaughterhouse project of shooting a video, which will become available for all of us to promote more organic slaughter facilities. Following the on-site capture of the facility tour, where Margaret did the narrative, another blizzard arrived so they are holed up in a hotel awaiting decent travel weather.

Those of us who have inspected in North America (USA and Canada) the last couple of months know how tricky it can be to travel to and from locations in between the numerous severe snow and ice storms. It is our sincere hope that each of you who are on the treacherous roads or temporarily stranded in airports will use common sense, be warm and safe, and

See **Notes**, page 4

Welcome New Members!

Inspectors:

Rob Knotts, MT
Jolene Swain, BC

Supporting Individuals:

Josh Edge, CA
Carol English, NJ
Stephanie Dehner, CA
Justin Hurley, NC
Steven Kinder, MI
Paul Lehmann, MO
Mark Novak, OH

Supporting Businesses:

Montana Dept of Agriculture
Organic Producers of Manitoba
The Fertrell Co., Pennsylvania

Patron Members:

Aurora Organic Dairy

Thank you for your support!

Sustaining Members:

Driscoll's Strawberry Associates

**Thank you, Driscoll's, for increasing
your level of support from Patron to
Sustaining Member!**

IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Editor: Diane Cooner webgal@ioia.net

Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.
Published quarterly on recycled paper.

Mini-Directory in this Issue

The Mini-Directory is published annually as an insert in our winter issue. There are no membership updates, as we have just finalized the 2015 Membership Directory. For the most current membership info, please visit our [on-line Directory](#). The hard copy 2015 Membership Directory will be available by March 1. Price is \$15 for members, \$30 for non-members. Copies of the directory are provided by IOIA to all supporting certification agency, patron, and sustaining members as a membership service. All other member categories must pre-order. If you have not already pre-ordered and would like one, [contact IOIA](#). A limited number of extra copies will be printed.

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

Advanced Inspector Trainings and Annual Meeting, Montana March 26-29, 2015

IOIA will sponsor Advanced Inspector Training on Mar 26 - 27, in conjunction with the Annual Meeting on March 28, all at Chico Hot Springs Resort near Yellowstone National Park. Regional Independent Verifier training for on-farm food safety is offered on March 26, running concurrently with the advanced training. Field trips are scheduled on March 29. Our cover story this issue is all about the events; see our website www.ioia.net for full details and registration.

Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings, North Carolina April 26 – May 8, 2015

IOIA will sponsor Crop Inspection Training on April 26 - May 1, followed by Processing Inspection Training on May 4-8, both at the Mountain Lodge & Conference Center in Flat Rock, North Carolina. For more information about the venue go to, <http://mountainlodgeflatrock.com>

San José, Costa Rica, Farm Inspection Course - Spring 2015

IOIA and Eco-LOGICA will cosponsor a 4.5 day Basic Organic Farm Inspection training using USDA National Organic Standards as a reference. The course will be held at ICAES, Coronado in Costa Rica in the spring of 2015. Exact dates to be announced. Instruction will be conducted in Spanish. Please contact Sue Wei at ph.: (506) 4010-0232 or (506) 2297-6676, fax: (506) 2235-1638 or e-mail: swei@eco-logica.com for further information.

Basic Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings, Oregon September 28 – October 2, 2015

IOIA and Oregon Tilth Certified Organic (OTCO) will sponsor Crop and Processing Inspection Trainings Sept 28 - Nov 2, running concurrently at the in Corvallis, Oregon. Further information and a registration link will be posted when available.

Basic Crop and Livestock Inspection Trainings, Iowa November 2 – 13, 2015 (under development)

Full details for this event will be posted on our website as soon as they are available.

2015 WEBINAR TRAINING
*for complete details on our webinars
please go to: www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html*

300 Level Webinar – February 13, 2015. Maple Syrup Inspection

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PST). One 3 hour session. IOIA Trainer: Monique Scholz.

100 Level Webinar – February 19 and 26, 2015. NOP Livestock Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PST). Two, 3 hour sessions. IOIA Trainer: Garry Lean.

200 Level Webinar – February 25 and March 4, 2015. In/Out Balances, Traceability Tests, and Recipe Verification for Crop Inspection under NOP and COR

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. (PST) Two, 2 hour sessions. IOIA Trainer: Monique Scholz. **This is the first such webinar offered and is a must for all working farm inspectors.**

Exercises are available to participants in a choice of US Standard or Metric units.

100 Level Webinar – March 10 and 12, 2015. COR Crop Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PDT). Two, 3 hour sessions. IOIA Trainer: Lisa Pierce.

100 Level Webinar – April 8 and 10, 2015. IOIA/COTA COR Processing Standards

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

300 Level Webinar – April 23 and 30, 2015. In/Out Balances, Traceability Tests, and Recipe Verification for Processing Inspection under NOP and COR

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. (PDT). Two, 2 hour sessions. IOIA Trainer: Monique Scholz. **Developed to challenge the most experienced inspector**, this webinar will allow inspectors and certifiers to further their understanding of the requirements of the NOP and COR standards as they pertain to recordkeeping in a complex processing environment, with an emphasis on methodology, practical applications and standardized reporting. The course exercises are designed as real-life scenarios with the expectation that participants will work with a combination of metric and US standard units. This course is designed for persons with at least three years of experience in organic inspection or certification review experience. Course participants will have completed an IOIA Basic Inspection course and are already working as inspectors or reviewers. **Participants must have approval** from IOIA to sign up for this webinar course if they have **not** taken the Basic IOIA Processing Inspection course and do not have three years of experience inspecting processing facilities.

200 Level Webinar – Biodiversity and Natural Resource Assessment on Organic Farms (postponed until April)

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PDT). One, 3 hour session. IOIA Trainer: Garry Lean, with assistance from Jo Ann Baumgartner, Wild Farm Alliance. This webinar has been rescheduled to allow for time to digest and incorporate the NOP's Draft Guidance on Natural Resources and Biodiversity Conservation.

200-Level Webinar – May 15, 2015. Regional Independent Verifier On-farm Food Safety

Two, 3 hour sessions same day, for a total of 6 hours of instruction. IOIA Trainers: Karen Troxell and Jonda Crosby.

100 Level Webinar – September 9 and 11, 2015. NOP Crop Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PDT). Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainers: Garry Lean and Margaret Scoles.

200-Level Webinar – September 25, 2015. Regional Independent Verifier On-farm Food Safety

Two, 3 hour sessions same day, for a total of 6 hours of instruction. IOIA Trainers: Karen Troxell and Jonda Crosby.

Notes, from page 1

that all of you, wherever you are, may arrive safely to your destination and home again, too.

The first-ever AGM and associated training in Montana will take place on March 28th and the days on either side thereof. It is very exciting to hear of the many inspectors who are planning to join us in person at Chico Springs. We hope you will find the advanced training interesting and fulfilling and the networking sessions in the hot springs enjoyable. Your support for and inter-active discussions during the AGM are most encouraging for the staff and board and very helpful for IOIA membership at large.

The IOIA office has received requests for training from two new countries where we have never before trained and late last year IOIA trained in yet another new country. So, when a few years ago we changed the name of IOIA from Independent to International, we really did not have any inkling of the breadth and width for where our training programs would be utilized.

However, in the event you have noticed fewer in-person and webinar training sessions being offered for 2015, it is because of the extra work load put on all IOIA staffers in order to meet the four assignments within the \$106,000 Sound and Sensible project. We, the IOIA board, really appreciate the dedication and diligence of our IOIA staff.

The renewed activities and committee engagement of the Asia Committee and the Latin America Committee is very encouraging to the board and it should be encouraging to the entire IOIA membership. Thank you to **Isidor** and **Garth**, respectively, for their liaison and leadership, and thank you to **Mutsumi Sakuyoshi** and **Juan Carlos Benitez**, the respective

committee chairs for Asia and Latin America. The Canadian Committee and the Accreditation Committee have also stepped up their engagement under the liaison and leadership of BOD members, **Stuart** and **Pam**, respectively, and thank you to **Bill Barkley** and **Christopher Warren-Smith** as the respective chairs for Canada and Accreditation.

Margaret Anne has faithfully chaired the Scholarship Committee for **more than a decade** and in recent years she also filled the liaison position; we really appreciate her tenacity and diligence. Thank you fellow board members for making my job so easy, as all I have to do is “get out of the way” and watch you “make things happen.”

Respectfully,
lb

NOP Regs Now in Spanish

NOP organic regulations and the Program Handbook Table of Contents have been translated into Spanish and are now available on the NOP’s website:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5109866>

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5109982>

Avian Flu Advisory

In December 2014, USDA confirmed cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the Pacific flyway. The disease is NOT found in U.S. commercial poultry and there is no public health risk. The HPAI is circulating in wild birds. Some backyard flocks with outdoor access are also being impacted.

[Follow good biosecurity practices](#) and prevent contact between your birds and wild birds. Spread the word!

NOP Clarifies Biobase Mulches

On February 4, the NOP added an allowance for the use of biodegradable, biobased mulch films to the USDA regulations for organic crop production. According to the final rule, such mulches must meet certain criteria for compostability, biodegradation, and biobased content, all according to specific ASTM International standards, in order to comply with the organic regulations. However, the ASTM test methods for biobased content ([ASTM D6866](#)) yield a percentage result and do not specify a standard for biobased content. In response to inquiries, the NOP recently released [Policy Memo 15-1](#), which clarifies that all feedstocks (resins) used to make the mulch films must be biobased, and that non-biobased feedstocks from synthetic polymers such as petrochemical resins are prohibited in organic production.

Based on OMRI’s research and understanding of these products, most and possibly all, of the currently marketed biobased mulch films contain some petrochemical feedstocks, and the feedstocks are typically less than 50% biobased. It is unlikely that OMRI will be able to add any biodegradable, biobased mulch films to the OMRI Products List© this year. OMRI comments that they do not know the feasibility or timeframe in which mulch film manufacturers may develop new formulas that comply with the NOP policy for biobased content. *From OMRI website*

Accreditation News

Congratulations to the following member who has been

successfully accredited:

Silke Fuchshofen: Processing
Congratulations – Renewals!

Al Johnson: Crop, Livestock,
Processing

Christopher Kidwell: Processing
Robert Howe: Processing

Notes from the ED

by Margaret Scoles

Thoughts for an Old Year and a New One –

Each year, as we close out one year and step into a new one, we say good-bye to some members and welcome others as they step up to Inspector status. The actual number of inspector members remains remarkably static – about 220.

Members who don't pay their dues on time are a mixed blessing. As we close the year, I review the list of unpaid members and pitch in to make contact. And I am always right! Most members who didn't renew meant to. The blessing comes in because I get a chance to visit with a few dozen members. Some retired from inspecting but paid dues anyway. Very few fail to respond at all.

IOIA must continue to draw in more revenue from the industry – to do two critical things –

1. Gather more financial resources for work that doesn't recoup as well as basic training;
2. Provide more membership support and services for working inspectors.

We made significant strides in diversifying our revenues in 2014. We broke all previous fundraising records (!) and welcomed more patron and sustaining members. Our success in capturing **Sound and Sensible** funding was another healthy way to bring in more resources. (Last issue, front page, described this project). This project will help inspectors and certifiers while lowering the barriers to certification, especially for smaller scale and diverse crop/livestock producers. To free up staff time, we scaled back modestly on basic trainings in the US and Canada and our webinars.

IOIA - in the movies?? My highlight experience for last week focused on one aspect of the Sound and Sensible project-- the **on-line organic slaughterhouse certification module**. Kathy, our US Training Services Coordinator, and I drove to Big Timber, MT to assemble IOIA's video crew for the first time. **Rich Myers**, videographer, came from Butte from the **National Center for Appropriate Technology**, one of our project partners. Jonda, our Training Service Director, traveled from Helena. We converged at **Pioneer Meats**, our slaughter house partner, to meet **Brian Engle**, owner/manager, for the first time in person. The plant is certified organic and state inspected, and a phenomenal partner. They made every effort to keep it real. A bit later, the cattle arrived – yes, real cattle, actually on schedule to be slaughtered whether or not we were making a movie. **Wes Henthorne**, manager of the **B Bar Ranch**, drove up with four grass-finished steers in a trailer. Other than his new white B Bar cap, there was no hint of his impending role in a movie that might reach thousands of viewers. We started with the unloading. And then we captured the making of organic uncured sausages (aka hot dogs). Pioneer employees made jokes about movie royalties, but they were dedicated to doing a quality job. We were on location again before 7 a.m. Divergent from a real inspection - we were present for virtually every activity including unloading, harvest of the animals, washing carcasses, coolers, cutting room, grinding, multi-ingredient products, smoking, and removal of cellulose casings– right down to putting the final labeled product into cardboard cases or freezer. A dozen workers continued with all their regular activities throughout our movie-making. White-capped blue mountains in the background added a real-movie look. And now for the editing! Except for Rich, we were novices



ED Margaret Scoles with Brian Engle, Pioneer Meats, in the carcass cooler

at movie-making. The hours of filming will be sliced down to a 30-45 minute video of a slaughter-house inspection to use in the module. We might find time for an optional preview at the AGM. The movie should be finished by then. **See you there!**

International: IOIA has always had relevance in US, Canada and Latin America. Membership in Asia and Australia followed years later. IOIA took training to many countries, but events in Europe and the Middle East were scarce. We are changing that; web-based delivery is a key tool. In 2014, largely due to the efforts of IOIA Trainer **Luis Brenes**, who built a new training from the ground up, IOIA delivered in-person training in **Dubai** (see pages 10-11). We are providing NOP and JAS Standards training to inspectors in **Turkey**– all via web. And we are developing training in **New Zealand**. The Asia Committee is working toward training in **India**.

IOIA – a community! Why else would a group gather in a pub in **Guelph**; consume sweet potato fries, beer, and chocolate truffles all intermingled; talk loudly for two hours; and each say “thank you” as we closed? We are hard-wired to need each other. **IOIA provides a network – for a community of organic inspectors.** Thanks for renewing or joining!

2015 AGM, from page 1

Two advanced training options are offered on March 26. **One option focuses on topics for the organic livestock inspector**, including poultry and sheep. Speakers include **Ib Hagsten**, PhD Animal Nutrition and **Joseph Ward**, PhD Ruminant Nutrition. Ward has been active in organic animal production and organic animal feed manufacturing and processing since the early 90's. Hagsten is certified as a professional animal scientist (PAS), an agricultural consultant (CAC), a conservation planner (CP & CAP), a complete nutrient management planner (CNMP), and an animal welfare auditor (dairy, beef, swine & poultry). Both speak globally on livestock and other topics.

Becky Weed, a Montana certified organic producer who developed an on-farm wool processing business and travels globally speaking on topics including predator-friendly wool, will speak on the challenges of organic sheep and wool production. Weed is co-owner of Thirteen Mile Farm, a BOD member of the Wild Farm Alliance, and holds an MS degree in Geological Science.

Other speakers include **Georgana Webster**, MT Dept of Ag Organic Certification Program Director and experienced livestock inspector, who will speak on using body condition scoring tools. **Lisa Pierce**, experienced inspector and IOIA trainer from British Columbia, will describe three types of assessment approaches to verify livestock production: animal based measures, input or resource based measures, and management based measures.

The second option, Regional Independent Verifier On-Farm Food Safety training, will be offered the same day by co-trainers **Karen Troxell** and **Jonda Crosby**. Karen is a co-founder of The Organic Consulting Firm; she has worked in all fields of the organic industry and is trained in GAP, GMP and as an RIV trainer by PrimusLabs. Jonda Crosby, the Training Services Director of IOIA, is an organic inspector and a certified GAP Auditor for fruit and vegetable operations. The RIV On Farm Food Safety Training will include: audit training to assess on farm risks associated with food safety including; site selection, adjacent land use, fertilizer usage, water sourcing and usage, pest control and pesticide monitoring, harvesting practices (including worker hygiene, packaging storage, field sanitation and product transportation) and food defense using standardized audit tools and reporting procedures.

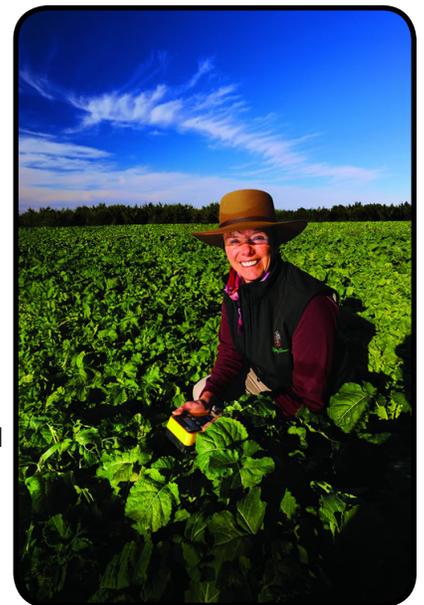
The day will end with a presentation by **Stanley Edwards**, graduate student in Food Science, experienced inspector and IOIA trainer. He will discuss ways to approach organic processor inspections at facilities that are certified to **GFSI standards**. This will briefly cover standards requirements and internal documents that can be useful for organic inspectors verifying compliance to NOP 205.201(a)(3) and some approaches for verifying NOP Policy Memo 11-6 "Reporting Health and Safety Violations". This final session is open to participants of both courses and to anyone who is arriving that day for the subsequent events.

On **March 27**, a second day of advanced training will be offered. **Dr. Jill Clapperton** of **Rhizoterra, Inc.** www.rhizoterra.com, will be speaking on the topic of assessing soil health and management practices that can enhance soil health on organic farms. Clapperton has done soil research in both Canada and the US and currently works out of Washington State.

Lars Crail, from the USDA NOP Accreditation and International Activities Division, will present the National Organic Program Update. **Dr. Jean Richardson**, of Vermont, organic inspector member and current chair of the National Organic Standards Board, will give the NOSB update. **Lindsay Fernandez-Salvador** will provide an informative session "How OMRI Evaluates and Lists Inputs – and that formidable upcoming Sunset Review list".

**DEADLINE TO APPLY IS
FEBRUARY 20.
AFTER THAT DATE,
A LATE FEE OF \$50 APPLIES.
DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR THE
AGM ONLY IS MARCH 1**

To Register go to
<http://ganconferencing.qualitywebconference.com/registration/pid=18371420239659>



Dr. Jill Clapperton

The course concludes with **Technology Tips and Tools for the Organic Inspector**, facilitated by **Lois Christie** and **Garth Kahl**, and open to all participants and those just arriving.

Patti Bursten Deutsch will present the results of her informal survey of certifiers on the meaning of the different dates on organic certificates.

Monique Scholz of Québec will speak on how experienced processing inspectors approach formula verification in processing plants. She will also share her thoughts on how the Lac Mégantic train disaster has influenced – and will continue to influence - her organic inspections in the communities around the town and further afield. Scholz lives about 45 km (30 miles) from downtown Lac Mégantic.

Basic training courses and minimum inspection experience are required to receive a Certificate of Completion for IOIA Advanced Training. Auditors are welcome if space is available and will receive Certificate of Completion for Organic Inspection Workshop. On Farm Food Safety Training will require pre-course and final exam for RIV certification. Participants may register for one or both days of training.

Chico Hot Springs - Big Sky Country is Waiting for YOU!

The Paradise Valley is famous both for the beauty of the snowcapped mountains and for geothermal activity which is associated with the Yellowstone region. All pools are outdoors. Natural hot springs water averages 103°F (39.4°C) in the small pool and 96°F (35.5°C) in the large pool. No chlorine is added. Winter visitors often enjoy the novelty of soaking in the pools while the snow is falling.



Accommodations

A variety of lodging options include old-fashioned historic rooms in the main lodge with antique furnishings and bathrooms down the hall for around \$80/night to similar rooms with a private bath for about \$100/night to fully modern rooms for up to \$134/night. If you desire a private room, please book directly by calling (406) 333-4933. **Our group ID is IOIA.** Shared room options are available for \$45 (historic room, shared bath), \$55 (historic room, private bath, and \$75 modern room, private bath). **Please do not call the hotel to book a shared room.** IOIA will prepare the shared lodging list. Just indicate shared room when you register. **Please be aware that rooms are limited and different types of rooms will be available on a first come- first served basis.**

Transportation

Shuttle service is available from the Bozeman airport, <https://www.karststage.com>. Call 800-287-4759 (toll free) or 406-556-3540. Cost is \$60 round trip (2 person minimum). Rental cars are also available. If you are traveling to Billings, we strongly encourage you to consider renting a car. IOIA will assist group carpooling efforts.

Recreational Opportunities Abound! Horseback rides to dog sledding and lots in between! See the AGM page on our website for more details. Note that snow is not guaranteed at the end of March.

*Plan to bring an item to the AGM in Montana
for the FUNdraising Auction -
IOIA Auctions are part entertainment, part fundraising, and all FUN!*

Popular items include regional and organic foods and beverages, hand crafted items, useful gadgets for organic inspectors, and items unique to your region. Easy-traveling items are favored. And if you are unable to join us, consider sending something - the auction helps IOIA offset the cost of the AGM.

If you have an item to donate, please email Joe Whalen, IOIA Admin, at ioia@ioia.net and let him know what you are bringing/sending and the approximate \$\$ value (internal use only!). IOIA is happy to receive items that are shipped to the IOIA office to arrive by March 24. Shipping options are available on our [AGM page](#).

CANADA ORGANIC NEWS

SOD Restructures

Members of the **Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (SOD)** met in Saskatoon on January 19 to consider the organization's future direction. Members voted unanimously to adopt a new set of bylaws resulting in new name, membership structure and funding model.

SaskOrganics is the new name for the revitalized industry association. From this point forward, everyone who is certified organic in Saskatchewan will be a member removing the requirement to purchase a membership fee to belong. Having all certified organic entities in the province as members will create a much stronger body and more representative voice to enable SaskOrganics to better fulfil its mission to advocate for a sustainable and thriving organic community through leadership in research, market development and communications. As an alternative to the membership fee funding model, SaskOrganics is working with Organic Alberta, Manitoba Organic Alliance and organic industry partners to establish a more sustainable funding mechanism - The Prairie Organic Development Fund (PODF) - for the organic industry on the prairies.

SaskOrganics' President, Garry K. Johnson commented, "The changes signal a fresh start for Saskatchewan's organic industry association. The organic industry recognizes the need for unity and collaboration from the producer through to the consumer and all of the stake holders in between. The demand for Saskatchewan organically grown products continues to be strong and the sector is poised for growth. SaskOrganics is committed to playing a vital and responsible role in the future of organic agriculture in Saskatchewan."

from Organic Federation of Canada website,

Inspectors Get Together at Guelph



Left to right at the **Food & Wine Dinner** on Jan 30. **Bill Barkley**, IOIA Canada Committee Chair; **Garry Lean**, IOIA Trainer and past IOIA BOD Chair; and **Tony McQuail**, Meeting Place Organic Farm and Holistic Management Institute. McQuail joined the IOIA's table of members and friends.

He is currently the convenor of **The Organic Federation of Canada's** Working Group on Small-Scale Organic Certification. Many small-scale organic farmers depend on establishing relationships directly with their clientele – and for many of these farmers, the traditional route to organic certification are often deemed not worth the expense and effort. Canada has no small farm exemption for certification similar to the NOP's \$5000 exemption. For inter-provincial markets, organic must be certified. The Working Group has proposed two alternative models for small-scale certification: The Peer Certification Model and the Self-Declaration Model. McQuail addressed them during the evening Keynote Forum – a popular and lively event that follows the Food & Wine Dinner each year. Tony and his wife Fran have been farming in Ontario since 1974 and converted to organic in 1976. They were active in starting the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario.

IOIA's booth is ideally located - nestled among the certifier tables, COTA, the Biodynamic Association, Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario, and COG. A pleasant surprise was several international discussions – inquiries about potentially developing training in Cuba, Burma, Barbados, and others. A pleasant contrast to the larger expos in the US, there is no entry fee for attendees and no limit to the number of booth volunteers. Traffic by the booth was heavy and included curious university students and organic consumers.

Right: **Stuart McMillan**, IOIA BOD Vice-Chair, and **Gunta Vitins**, BC, visit in front of the booth. Stuart staffed the booth for two days at the Trade Show with Margaret Scoles, ED.



Left: IOIA Accredited Inspector Member **Tom Cassan**, at left, is a loyal volunteer every year at the booth. He wasn't able to spend as much time as usual this year because his wife was recovering from knee surgery. But he drove to Guelph to join us for the inspector get-together at Brass Taps and of course ended up being a good booth volunteer.

IOIA's Canada Committee hosted an IOIA member get-together at the Brass Taps, the pub in the Guelph University Centre for a few hours at the end of Day 1 of the show, Jan 31. About 25 people attended – including inspector members of IOIA, a few past and future inspector members, supporting members in all categories, and other friends of IOIA. Inspectors mostly work solitary so it doesn't take much to make a party. They tend to throw themselves at each other with hugs and immediately engage in animated conversation in a complete mix of talking shop and catching up on personal details. They enjoyed starters and more starters, beverages, and for dessert – Bill Barkley brought an enormous box of truffles contributed by his chocolatier brother. A good time!



Left: L to R - Kelly Monaghan, Chuck Mitchell, Tom Cassan, and John Warner.

Right: Stuart McMillan, IOIA Vice-Chair, and Dave Lockman, Pro-Cert, at the IOIA party in Brass Taps.



IOIA sponsors advanced organic inspector training

every two years in Guelph. Next training is in 2016.

IOIA members Garry, Bill, and Kelly Monaghan did workshops at the conference. Garry and Bill: “Nervous about your upcoming inspections? – tips from experienced inspectors on livestock & crop issues”; and **Kelly Monaghan**, with **Maureen Kirkpatrick** of The Big Carrot – “Organic certification demystified – how to read organic labels in the retail store & know what they mean”.

Review of the Canadian Organic Standards

The Canadian General Standards Board is now preparing the draft of the revised Canadian Organic Standards* that will include all of the modifications recommended by the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture (TC) from the three 3-day meetings that have been held since the launch of the review, which will be balloted by voting members of the TC in February. This first ballot is a turning point: over 250 modifications will be scrutinized and hopefully well received by the voting members of the TC.

After the ballot, the Working Groups responsible for submitting recommendations to the TC will analyze the

negative votes issued by the voting members to determine if they are based on valid arguments. If so, a new recommendation may be submitted to the TC, which will meet again in May 2015 to resolve all negative votes and also assess any late modification requests that may be submitted by the sector.

The agenda of the May meeting of the TC will also include the presentation of the integration of the organic aquaculture standard into the two organic agriculture standard documents (32.310 & 32.311). A new Task Force, the Agri-Aqua Task Force, is already meeting to determine how to best merge the organic agriculture and aquaculture standards.

Two conveners, Rochelle Eisen, from the terrestrial sector, and Tim Rundle,

from the aquaculture sector, are leading the Agri-Aqua Task Force, which is composed of stakeholders from both sectors, and created with the financial support of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the aquaculture sector.

After the May meeting, the merged agriculture-aquaculture organic standard will be balloted a second time and undergo a public review. The CGSB hopes that the merged standard will be favourably received by the organic community, allowing the revised COS to be published in late summer.

If a situation arises where the agriculture section is well received by the community, but the aquaculture section is subject to numerous negative votes and comments, the CGSB may

See Canada Review, page 19

IOIA Expands Scope with Crop and Processing Inspection Training in Dubai, UAE

by Luis Brenes

On December 14-18, 2014 IOIA provided its first inspection training in the Middle East in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) following a very kind invitation from the Emirates Authority for Standardization & Metrology - ESMA. It was a specially created training for ESMA about Crop and Processing Inspection based on the IFOAM norms.

The UAE has developed a national regulation under the Ministry of Environment and Water (Ministerial Resolution 84 from 2012) that regulates the federal law number (5) of the year 2009 on organic inputs and products.



Luis Brenes, center left in jeans, with participants of IOIA's first inspection training in Dubai



ESMA has been assigned the task of inspecting and certifying operations under this Ministerial Resolution and has gone through accreditation audits under the IFOAM Family of Standards.

As part of its continuous improvement process, ESMA contacted IOIA to conduct this first introductory training. It was a very pleasant surprise to know that ESMA was already using the IOIA/IFOAM Inspection Manual for several years as part of their certification scheme development process.

This in-house training was provided for nine participants among which we had three ESMA officers, two MoEW, and four auditors



from private control bodies.

IOIA wants to thank Mr Yousef Mohamed AlMarzooqi, ESMA's Head of International Conformity, and Mr. Harold Grecia Oroña, ESMA's Conformity Office, for their trust in IOIA's training quality, for their kind invitation and for arranging all the details and logistics that made this training possible.



Feedback from Course Participants

"Our IOIA Organic Crop & Process Inspection training course in Dubai, U.A.E. was highly beneficial, educational and ultimately an unforgettable experience. On behalf of RACS/TSE, I'd like to offer my utmost appreciation and respect to Mr. Luis Brenes for leading us on this educational adventure and providing the best support and guidance.

"Coming from a chemistry and biotechnology background, my knowledge of organic crop and process was quite limited. A week's worth of classes and field trips did not make me an expert, but my knowledge of the subject matter improved substantially. Thank you Mr. Luis and IOIA for this thrilling experience!

"It was highly enjoyable to listen to the personal experiences and stories that Mr. Luis shared with our team, and I look forward to creating experiences of my own through constant practice and training.

"I can say that I've started becoming more conscientious of organic foods. I'd find myself randomly picking up a can or packet of organic food and reading the label carefully.

"Thank you IOIA & Mr. Luis Brenes! Thank you ESMA! It was a wonderful experience."

Sincerely, Mohamed Omar Jabri
Conformity Engineer, RACS/TSE

Dear Luis,

On behalf SGS Gulf Ltd, I would like to thank you to gave this excellent training to us.

At the outset, it is definitely our pleasure to have you with us from past 5 days and we learned lot of information especially you indexed so many factors to become an Organic Inspector. We are in correct platform now to become an Inspector. Even though, I do not have any experience in audit, now I am having the confident to perform the inspection.

We will contact you in case any assistance we need in future.

Thanks and Regards,

Dr. Vetriselvi Jayabal

CTS Food Microbiology Laboratory

SGS Gulf Limited, Head Office – Middle East Region



Celebrating 2014 – A brief review of the IOIA Annual Report

Prepared by Ib Hagsten, IOIA Board Chair, and Margaret Scoles, IOIA Executive Director

Note: The complete Annual Report will be posted on the IOIA website (www.ioia.net) during February and copies will be available at the Annual Meeting in Chico Hot Springs, Montana, on March 28, 2015

Year 2014 was one of exciting new initiatives, goals attained, and of new and continued successful collaborations -

A highlight of the year was success in meeting goals aimed at diversifying the revenue stream. IOIA won a contract through the USDA NOP Sound and Sensible funding initiative for \$106,000+ to create tools aimed to reduce barriers to certification, especially for smaller scale and diverse crop/livestock producers. This helped IOIA limit the number of basic trainings aimed at creating new inspectors. Fundraising and increased levels of support at the higher membership categories – patrons, sustainers, and supporting certification agencies - was also a significant goal attained. This was the second year to implement a two-step increase in dues for supporting certification agencies.

Shifting the spotlight to within our organization –

Spotlight on Canada – A record number of trainings in Canada included two Crop (BC and AB), the first processing course (ON) since the full implementation of the COR in 2009, plus one advanced (in conjunction with the Guelph Organic Conference). A delegation from IOIA, including founding BOD member and current IOIA Trainer Monique Scholz, IOIA's Training Service Director Jonda Crosby, and Vice-Chair Stuart McMillan, met with the entire full-time staff of the Canada Organic Office in Ottawa on January 31. The purpose of the meeting was to foster communications between the COO and IOIA. IOIA and OMRI launched the COR based Input Materials Webinar series (Crop, Livestock, Processing), adding to previous success with the NOP-based series.

Spotlight on Latin America – IOIA's Annual Meeting and associated training events in Costa Rica were a catalyst for significant change and strengthened IOIA's presence in Latin America. IOIA hosted two days of Spanish language training by the USDA National Organic Program in Costa Rica and did the work of translating the entire NOP regulation into Spanish. The NOP drew from that document to publish later in the year the first Spanish-language NOP version since 2000. This is a key and valuable new document for training in Latin America. The events also drew in some new members and more trainings. IOIA welcomed a new supporting certification agency member (Agricert - Mexico). The BOD listened to the membership comment and approved a reduced-fee structure for inspectors from Latin America. IOIA did a membership drive in the Spanish language, tried again to energize the Spanish language Forum, and started publishing key articles from the newsletter in Spanish – now available from the website. Juan Carlos Benitez Izurieta of Ecuador volunteered to Chair the Latin American Committee.

Spotlight on Asia - With BOD member Isidor Yu as liaison, Mutsumi Sakuyoshi of Japan stepped up to chair the first Asia Committee. Members of the committee are inspectors from Republic of Korea, Nepal, India, and Japan. The committee is working toward sponsoring IOIA training in India and preparing for IOIA's first-ever Annual Meeting in Asia – on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea. In keeping with member requests to plan the location of the AGM two years out, rather than just one, the Costa Rica AGM meeting participants suggested Asia. The Japan Organic Inspectors Association (JOIA) continues to support IOIA through membership and continues to lead trainings. JOIA reorganized in 2014 to better serve organics in Japan. After 14 years as a nonprofit, they reorganized as a general company.

Spotlight on Membership Service and Issues and Concerns of Organic Inspectors -

For direction in 2014, the Board of Directors drew from the 2013 Membership Survey and the membership input from the 2014 Annual Meeting.

- ▶ Members were engaged at the AGM to envision a new inspector accreditation program through discussion round tables. The BOD funded their own travel to Denver in October for an extra in-person meeting to add shape and develop the structure. They then met with the Accreditation Committee via conference call to present the concept and draw insights. The new program will be presented to the membership at the 2015 AGM for discussion.
- ▶ IOIA acted as a key player in the industry-wide response to the NOP Certifier Instruction on Personnel Evaluation. Al Johnson volunteered at the 2014 AGM to spearhead an initiative to develop a Peer Evaluation Program as a subcommittee of IOIA's Accreditation Committee. Lois Christie joined him as co-chair, and IOIA struck a working group with ACA to include certifier perspective. Certifiers are reluctant to use contract inspectors that they cannot afford to evaluate singly and annually. This program has the potential to prevent duplication of work, keep contract

inspectors on the lists of multiple certifiers, satisfy the NOP's requirement for annual evaluation of all inspectors, and improve both inspections and inspectors. This program will be launched in 2015 and is expected to fold into the new accreditation program.

- ▶ In response to membership support, IOIA launched food safety training for a new category of inspector work – the Regional Independent Verifier (RIV). RIVs will help fill a critical gap in the ability of smaller, local farmers to access markets. This new training direction for IOIA provides useful cross training in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and HACCP. IOIA sent a team of IOIA staff and trainers to the PrimusLabs office in California for a week-long “Train the Trainer” in February. IOIA's team developed the new training and in 2014, the training was delivered both in-person and by webinar to organic inspectors. The training opened other new doors for the IOIA Training Institute. In 2015 and 2016, IOIA will deliver six RIV trainings in Montana, in collaboration with a regional partner, Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center. The courses are funded through a Montana Department of Agriculture USDA Specialty Crop grant.

Other Key Activities and Alliances -

- ▶ The Accredited Certifiers Association continues to be a key partner. ACA is a partner in IOIA's Sound and Sensible contract and facilitates a working group to review deliverables. They also participated in working groups on Residue Testing training and Peer Evaluation for inspectors.
- ▶ Organic Trade Association became a new training partner for the “200-level Residue Testing under the USDA National Organic Program”. Nathaniel Lewis remained the lead presenter and works for OTA.
- ▶ Canada Organic Trade Association agreed to cosponsor the 100-level COR Processing Standards webinar. The broader support enhanced enrollment by increasing press about the training and drawing in more participants from the organic sector.
- ▶ Canadian Organic Growers and IOIA cosponsored all three basic trainings in Canada, continuing a collaborative relationship begun in 2013.
- ▶ Initiated a positive messaging campaign, “Stand up and Speak up for Organic”.
- ▶ Continued to work with Wild Farm Alliance on the Biodiversity Education Project.
- ▶ IOIA and OMRI helped OEFFA train veterinarians in 2014 on input materials in organic livestock and will provide a second and similar training in 2015.
- ▶ Continued membership support of IFOAM and wrote letters of endorsement for two IOIA members who ran for the IFOAM World Board. IOIA did not attend the General Assembly in Istanbul, Turkey in October.
- ▶ Commented to the National Organic Standards Board in writing and in person.
- ▶ Participated in Guelph Organic Conference (Ontario), Expo West (Anaheim), Expo East (Baltimore), and Organic Connections (Saskatchewan).
- ▶ Continued our sponsorship of the Guelph Organic Conference in Ontario.
- ▶ Hosted quarterly Certifier-Inspector Dialogue conference calls. The on-going dialogue is invaluable in shaping the training program and addressing inspector issues and member concerns. It also provides a great way to invite participation on the IOIA-ACA working groups. Certifiers provided advisory input to IOIA with working groups.
- ▶ Continued to participate on the Canadian General Standards Board's Organic Technical Committee. Kelly Monaghan is IOIA's representative.
- ▶ Published the quarterly newsletter, IOIA Inspectors' Report, each issue including technical articles. Based on member input, hard copy newsletters were discontinued as a membership service for all individual membership categories during 2014. Inspector Bob Howe submitted “Organic Inspection – A Story of Competence and Professionalism”, published in two parts.

Trainings -

IOIA trained 587 people in 2014. IOIA training continues to increase in diversity and global recognition. IOIA sponsored training events in Hong Kong, Ontario, British Columbia, Costa Rica, California, Kentucky, Alberta, Pennsylvania, Japan, Mexico, Australia, and Dubai. In addition, in-house training was provided in Oregon (OMRI), North Dakota (ICS), and Utah (UDAF). **Advanced in-person training quadrupled over 2013.** When IOIA launched the webinar training arm of the Training Institute, we expected to see less need for in-person training. However, members demonstrated support for the in-person trainings and cited the advantages as being worth the travel expense.

In-house training was also delivered via webinar to three Australian certification agencies in a collaborative effort.

The 200-level Livestock Inputs Webinar was delivered in collaboration with OEFFA as part of a SARE-funded project to

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introduce livestock professionals, including veterinarians, to the inputs allowed for organic livestock production.

Twenty webinars were conducted. IOIA completed the 100-level COR Standards series by adding Crop Standards. New webinar topics including two 200-level webinars – In/Out Balance for Processing; Feed Audit in Grazing and Non-grazing Season – in addition to the new IOIA/OMRI COR series (Crop, Livestock, Processing Inputs).

Exit Interview Training was developed by IOIA, with support from an ACA working group, after the exit interview was identified in the ACA's Sound and Sensible discussions in 2013 as an area that would benefit from more training. The training was delivered at the ACA's Annual Training in San Diego, and at two advanced inspector trainings during the year.

Gluten-free Verification Training was made available to organic inspectors through collaboration with Gluten-Free Certification Organization, a program of the Gluten Intolerance Group, and PCO.

Scholarships - With no applicants for the Organic Community Scholarship, two Andrew Rutherford Memorial Scholarships were awarded. Anna Russell, of Hawaii, and Eric Soderholm, of North Carolina, attended Basic Crop Inspection Training in Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

A summary of in-person training activity and languages:

Basic Crop Inspection Training – 1 Japanese, and 6 English

Basic Processing Inspection Training – 2 Spanish, and 5 English

Basic Livestock Inspection Training – 2 English

Community Grower Group – 1 Spanish

Advanced Organic Inspector Training – 4 (1 Costa Rica - Spanish, 1 Canada, 1 Australia, 1 USA – all English)

Finances -

IOIA maintains a solid financial position and, once again, did not dip into reserves. The BOD had prepared a balanced budget. We ended with a bottom line of about -\$6,000 this year in spite of a successful fundraising drive and increased membership. The single largest factor for the shortfall was the investment into the Food Safety training initiative, which was slower to recoup than anticipated. Through the Montana training project alone, IOIA expects to recoup all of the 2014 costs as well as contribute to earnings.

IOIA's Fundraising Drive broke all previous records! The drive brought in more than \$10,000, some of that through new Patron membership. In 2014, IOIA gained four Patron members and one of those has since stepped up to become a Sustainer in early 2015. One of the fundraising activities was a "Join the IOIA Team" event in Anaheim, California, in March in conjunction with Expo West. Over 20 people attended, and it was a major contributor to the success of the patron/sustainer member drive.

Under the diligent eye of IOIA's Treasurer, Pam Sullivan, IOIA's cash reserve was invested in higher interest bearing accounts in 2014.

Board of Directors in 2014-

IOIA's Board of Directors experienced the greatest stability of the past decade when both incumbents (Stuart McMillan, Canada, and Isidor Yu, Republic of Korea) were re-elected, creating no change on the BOD. Ib Hagsten was re-elected as BOD Chair. Bill Stoneman (Wisconsin, USA) resigned late in 2014.

The BOD met in person at the AGM in March, in Colorado in October, and 8 times via conference calls. With an eye to cost control, the BOD met for 2 days in Costa Rica and decided not to meet again later. However, it became clear that the topic of a new accreditation program could best be tackled in person. So each BOD member paid their own airfare to meet in Denver for a second meeting. The 'theme' for the BOD in 2014 has been – giving!

Bylaws were amended in 2014 to increase the length of BOD terms from two to three years. This was an effort toward greater stability given the recent trend of BOD members serving only one or two terms. And it will restore staggered terms to the BOD of three potentially changing one year and four, the next. Ib Hagsten, Ph.D., BOD Chair, presented on behalf of IOIA at agronomic meetings. He presented to the NRCS in Iowa on "CAP Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition – from the TSP's Perspective." He spoke twice at the joint annual meeting of the International Agronomy Societies, Soil Science Division, in California, in the fall. He also addressed Spring and Fall meetings



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Congratulations to the 2015 Rutherford Scholarship Winner Ariel Russel of California

The Scholarship Committee and IOIA are pleased to announce that Ariel Russel is the recipient of the 2015 Rutherford Scholarship. IOIA accepts applications for the annual Andrew Rutherford Scholarship Award, which provides full tuition for an IOIA-sponsored organic inspector training course during the following year. Both prospective and experienced inspectors are eligible to apply for the Rutherford Scholarship. It is awarded to an individual on the basis of need and potential as judged by the IOIA Scholarship Committee. Applicants can choose to attend any IOIA-sponsored training. The Scholarship pays for tuition, room and board but does not cover transportation or other expenses.

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

IOIA also offers an annual Organic Community Initiative Scholarship (OCIS), which provides full tuition for an IOIA-sponsored basic organic inspector training during the following year. It is awarded to an individual on the basis of need and their potential to have a positive impact on their regional organic community. The Organic Community Initiative Scholarship is only open to applicants from outside of the US or Canada. Applicants can choose to attend any basic IOIA-sponsored training. The Scholarship pays for tuition, room and board but does not cover transportation or other expenses.

From Ariel Russel

Ever since I was a child, farming has been in my blood. I grew up on a small farm in rural Marin County, California and helped my family raise cows, sheep, goats, chickens, and a large organic veggie garden. After studying political science and ancient studies at Santa Clara University, in Santa Clara, California, I made my way back to farming and ran, with my husband, a five acre diversified organic urban farm in Sonoma County, California. Together, we developed a unique farming system that focused on regenerative farming practices, bio-intensive methods aimed at maximizing production, and a multilevel direct marketing sales approach that focused on making our produce as accessible as possible to our local community. I saw

organic farming as a way to not only feed people food that could be the basis of a healthy lifestyle, but also as a way of combatting the increasingly destructive monoculture practices of conventional agribusiness. In 2013, we lost the land we had farmed for eight years due to pending commercial development and set out to find our next place in the organic movement.

After much searching, I found IOIA and discovered the opportunity to become an organic inspector. I believe that helping develop future organic farms through a career as an organic inspector is a way that I can continue to affect positive change in our food system. While I pursue this dream, I am also working with an exciting start-up in the Silicon Valley that is developing self-contained, self-service residential Farmstands (veggie vending machines) with the goal of making locally grown, sourced-direct-from-the-farm, organic produce more accessible to urban populations. I am also excited to support my husband in his latest organic farming project where he is will be farm manager for a 120 acre property on the California coast south of San Francisco. In my free time, I love to visit local farms in new places, shop at farmers' markets, play with my two year old daughter, and explore the outdoors.

I am so happy to be a part of the modern organic farming movement. I believe that organic farming can not only feed the burgeoning world population, but can also help heal our environment. I am thrilled to be the recipient of the Andrew Rutherford Scholarship and am so excited to continue my journey as a champion of the organic movement.



Organic Equivalency Policy of Republic of Korea

The first in a series of articles on international equivalency

By Isidor Yu



One of the most active countries in international equivalency for organic certification in recent years is the Republic of Korea. Korea's regulation made it possible to have equivalency agreements with other countries since 2014. It had been demanded strongly by importers in Korea since the organic certification program was first applied in 2008. Because certification had not been required for imported organic processed foods, the new regulation about organic processing certification had a large impact on importers. They worried about the certification cost of processed foods. E.g. baby food includes more than ten ingredients such as powdered milk. Powdered milk may come from a producer group consisting of dozens of dairy farmers. All the farmers have to be inspected and the conversion period is applied from the first year. This same kind of situation affected many products and seemed to threaten the organic market. It was a serious challenge to the organic businesses that had imported organic processed foods without Korean certification.

The worry impacting the organic market by the new regulation continued. So the government delayed the exclusive implementation of the new regulation until the end of 2013. The Korea Organic Food Act including equivalency policy was promulgated to mitigate the impact on the organic market. The exclusive implementation of the certification and equivalency negotiation began from January 2014.

The first partner of the equivalency negotiation was US. US has been the major exporter of organic processed foods to Korea. Both countries were

rushing to the same goal of equivalency. US could not give up Korea market and Korea could not leave the expected impact to the market. The agreement between Korea and US launched last July. Organic foods certified under USDA NOP can be labeled as organic including organic seal under Korea regulation as well. Vice versa. A few conditions were understood mutually because there were striking differences between two countries' regulations.

USDA NOP prohibits any use of antibiotics for livestock, but Korea regulation allows antibiotics, provided the withdrawal period of the animal medicine is extended to double that allowed in conventional livestock. In contrary, Korea regulation requires zero tolerance of GMO for organic foods, but USDA NOP doesn't define the tolerance of GMO for the final product. Both regulations prohibit use of GMO for organic production and processing. The result of the negotiation set conditions of acceptance. Product including any ingredient originated from livestock treated with antibiotics cannot be imported to US with organic labeling. Product detected any amount of GMO material is not approved to be sold as organic in Korea. These two points are the conditions of the equivalency agreement.

The second negotiation partner of Korea was the European Union. There was one adjustment to harmonize the two regulations. It was about GMO tolerance, as the case between Korea and US. EU accepted the requirement of zero tolerance of GMO for organic foods. The other regulations were regarded as acceptable and equivalent requirements of one another. The agreement between Korea and EU launched February 1, 2015.

Japan, Australia, and Chile applied for equivalency to the Korea's National Agricultural Quality Management Service (NAQS). These countries want

to get agreements to continue and expand trade with Korea. And the Korea government doesn't want to make organic market be shrunken, because consumers demand more and more organic products for their health. New negotiations with the applying countries will follow the EU agreement.

When organic products are traded internationally, Transaction Certificate(TC) or Import Certificate(IC) must be enclosed according to the Korea regulation. If certified organic product is imported to Korea, TC must be issued by the certifier that is accredited by NAQS and that certified the product. If non-certified but under-equivalency organic product is imported to Korea, IC must be issued by the certifier that is accredited by USDA and that certified the product.

The equivalency is applied only to processed foods. Fresh produce and feed must be certified by Korea organic certification to export into Korea. The definition of "food processing" follows Korea's regulation. Change of nature which makes observation doesn't infer the original product, e.g. pulverizing, heating, or input of additive are the defined as processing. Simple cutting, peeling, salting, preserving, disinfection, sorting, packing, or handling are not regarded as processing in the equivalency and the product has to be certified to the Korean regulation.

The equivalency is limited to the products for which the final processing is done only in Korea or US. Products manufactured in another country for the final processing stage but certified for the national program of Korea or US are outside the equivalency agreement.

Isidor Yu of Gyeonggi, Republic of Korea, is an organic inspector, IOIA trainer, member of the IOIA Board of Directors, and BOD Liaison to the Asia Committee.



Asia Committee Update

by Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, chair

One of my good friends and a member of the board of directors of IOIA, Mr. Isidor Yu (Korea) and I had been talking at times about IOIA activities in Asia. IOIA is an international organization, but we had not worked well in our area (Japan). When Isidor became a member of the BOD, I promised I would support him. But actually I had not done anything in the last year.

When he decided to continue on the BOD, we started to have monthly meetings, at first on Skype. We exchanged info and also invited some other members in Asia to join us. That was the start in April 2014.

Now we call our group the "IOIA Asia Committee". The following are our introduction, which is short but enough. Asia committee members: Members from Korea, Nepal, India, Australia, and Japan (6 members). Margaret Scoles also attends our meeting recently to inform us about training requests from Asia and some other correspondences from and to Asian countries.

We have now set up a monthly meeting on Skype. We would like to get together in the future, to have a face-to-face meeting.

Purpose: Develop IOIA activities in Asian countries. Currently our topics are the trainings in India and the 2016 IOIA AGM in Korea. We also share local topics each other.

The same as other IOIA members, we, each has his/her own job, so we are all busy. As such, we could not line up a lot of topics, but, of course, we welcome your input and feedback.

The Equivalency topic will be reported in the IOIA newsletter.

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights

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

Full Board Meeting, Denver Colorado, October 23, 2014 6-8 p.m.

Present: All Board Members Present: Ib Hagsten-Chair, Stuart McMillan-Vice Chair, Pam Sullivan-Treasurer, Margaret Weigelt-Secretary, Isidor Yu-Director Member, Garth Kahl-Director Member Also present: Margaret Scoles-Executive Director.

2016 ANNUAL MEETING – UPDATE FROM KOREA

Isidor reported that he had a positive response to his AGM proposal from provincial council member Mr. Park Sung Jun (former IOIA member). He explained that he had emphasized the benefits for Jeju Island of hosting the IOIA AGM. The plan is to include organic producers as much as possible in the event. Isidor described his successful negotiation for Provincial financial support. Next step is to present the proposal to the Jeju Governor. **DISCUSSION:** Isidor took questions from the BOD about budget, venue, field trips, accommodations, airport options, weather etc. He said Raymond Yang, also an IOIA member from Korea, is willing to help with the AGM event. Margaret S suggested we plan to make this our first digital AGM for the members who won't be traveling to Asia.

TREASURER'S REPORT – 3RD QTR BUDGET VS ACTUAL, 3RD QTR BALANCE SHEET, PRELIMINARY 2015 BUDGET DISCUSSION BOD discussed the benefits and disadvantages of using the accrual vs cash basis for accounting.

MOTION: Garth moves to accept the October 18 2014 Treasurer's Report. Stuart seconds the motion. The Chair calls for the vote. Subsequent motions were to accept the two financial reports for 3rd quarter. All 3 motions passed unanimously.

MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT FOR TRAININGS – POLICY

Discussion starts by Garth asking whether anyone is abusing the privilege. We discussed the question should we continue to give the \$50/person discount to supporting businesses? Pam suggests we continue the discount. Consensus was to continue the discounts, including to supporting businesses because it increases business.

NEWSLETTER, INCLUDING SPANISH TRANSLATION

Diane Cooner proposed we not do abstracts (takes too long to do) and simply translate the pieces that are the most interesting. She will get help with translation and Sacha will do the final proofreading.

RIV UPDATE: Copies were distributed to BOD for review of document created by Jonda Crosby - "IOIA Food Safety Project: Training RIV, Update for BOD: October 2014".

Respectfully submitted by Margaret Weigelt, Secretary

Additional Notes: The Board of Directors met on Dec. 4 and Jan. 9 for regular business meetings, but approved minutes are not yet available. In addition, a subcommittee of the BOD met on Dec. 24 with the Executive Director for the annual ED evaluation. **Next BOD meeting is Feb. 26.**

Peer Field Evaluations Entering Testing Stage

By Al Johnson

The Peer Evaluation Subcommittee (of the Accreditation Committee) has been working since last spring to develop an IOIA program to address the NOP Instruction 2027 of August 2013 which states that “Inspectors should be evaluated during an on-site inspection by a supervisor or peer (another inspector) at least annually...” Leaving field evaluations solely to the certifiers would result in collectively significant cost to them – especially when contract inspectors who work for multiple agencies are field evaluated by all agencies for whom they work. Certifiers might have an incentive to reduce costs by whittling down the number of contract inspectors. It is our hope that Peer Field Evaluations conducted by veteran inspectors will satisfy the NOP Instruction and fulfill the needs of multiple certifiers and inspectors. Our first accomplishment has been the development of a Field Evaluation Form which committee members will begin testing on each other in March.

Committee members are geographically diverse and include myself, Lois Christie, Amanda Birk, BOD member Garth Kahl, Patti Bursten Deutsch and Karen Troxell of the USA. Luis Brenes of Costa Rica and Juan Carlos Benitez of Ecuador have provided an international perspective, which was particularly helpful in our beginning stages. We are fortunate to have former organic inspector and current NOP Lead Auditor Lars Crail as a member of our Subcommittee. His perspective has been invaluable. Certifier representatives have been offering feedback to our committee through an Inspector/Certifier Working Group. Margaret Scoles jumped us to a faster pace with IOIA teleconferencing resources and with her valuable insight and leadership. Margaret and I will present an update on the committee’s work to the February ACA meeting in Arkansas. Our tasks are divided into three phases, as follows:

Phase 1 – Development & Testing of a Field Evaluation Tool

We have made good progress in developing a Field Evaluation Form with special thanks to the work and insight of Amanda Birk and to the many certifiers who shared their resources. We found the existing certifier and NOP forms to be very task oriented. We used these tasks as our basis, but organized them into what we are calling competencies. For example: “Has or has access to current standards...” is a line item to which there can be a yes or no answer, but this is an indication of the inspector’s organizational skill or competency. Other competencies for which tasks have been grouped include: Thoroughness of On-Site Tasks; Knowledge, Skills and Abilities; and Reporting.

Our committee is divided over a scoring system. The two lines of thought are: using a numerical scoring system, possibly with each question weighted; and a non-numerical scoring ranging from outstanding to unsatisfactory. Both systems will be tried in our upcoming March testing. Before a decision is made, the testing results will be evaluated, coupled with more thought into how and by whom the results will be used.

Phase 2 – Implementation of the Program

Certifiers are looking to us for help in complying with the evaluation request of the NOP in 2015. Patti Bursten Deutsch has taken a lead role in providing her insight and organizational skills for the implementation stage of this program. Discussion is in the early stages but issues have been categorized as:

1. Criteria for Evaluators - such as:

- Background and Training

2. Evaluation’s intended outcome and Conflict of Interest – such as:

- Who will own the final Evaluation (inspector or some as yet unknown IOIA entity)?

3. Administration – such as:

- How are evaluators chosen/assigned?
- How will confidentiality issues be addressed?
- How will the evaluations be paid for?

4. Appeals

Continued on page 19

Many implementation issues are ones that must ultimately be decided by the BOD, (which has taken a keen interest in our work). It is our goal to present our progress and implementation recommendations to the BOD at their meeting following the annual meeting in Montana.

Phase 3 – Incorporation of the Peer Evaluation Program into IOIA’s Accreditation Program

Phase 3 has the goal of making accreditation the standard of measurement for the quality of inspectors. Work on this phase has not begun.

So, where does this leave you – **the Inspector?**

According to IOIA’s 2014 Membership Directory, 20% of inspectors list only one certifier for whom he or she has worked. Some of this 20 % may be staff inspectors. Unless certifiers contract with IOIA Trained Evaluators, this program might have little impact on this group. Certifiers will likely perform their own field evaluations on their staff inspectors and for contract inspectors who work only for them. Most, and perhaps all costs will fall on certifiers.

Sixty percent of our members list 4 or more certifiers for whom they have worked. Peer evaluations in this group will save certifiers significant resources, but how these will be paid for is still under discussion. Inspectors will only need to be evaluated once as opposed to 4 or more times. Is this time-savings worth a dollar figure to the inspector? Can the savings to certifiers be funneled into paying for the Peer Evaluations? These are questions we are hoping to answer.

The remaining 20% of members list 2 to 3 certifiers for whom they have worked. These members could opt for one of the above scenarios or another not yet conceived.

At the IOIA Annual General Meeting in March, our committee will make a presentation on its progress during its first year and on its goals for year two.

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of the NOSB.

The BOD, on behalf of the entire membership, thanks Diane Cooner for her 20 years of valued service to IOIA.

Staff:

- ▶ Margaret Scoles, Executive Director
- ▶ Sacha Draine, International Training Manager and Assistant ED
- ▶ Kathy Bowers, U.S. Training Services Coordinator
- ▶ Jonda Crosby, Training Services Director
- ▶ Joe Whalen, Office Admin
- ▶ Linda Bird, Bookkeeper
- ▶ Teri Lindberg, Administrative Assistant
- ▶ Diane Cooner, Newsletter Editor, Website Manager, and moderator of the IOIA Forums
- ▶ Tony Fleming, Newsletter Technical Editor



Canada Review, from page 9

decide to only publish the agriculture standard, which could be amended at a later date to include the aquaculture section.

**Note: OFC will soon publish the revised draft that will be submitted to the ballot in order to inform the Canadian organic sector. Please keep in mind that the next public review is planned to be held in June 2015.*

from [Organic Federation of Canada](#)

NOSB Fall Meeting Materials Published

NOP has electronically published National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) recommendations and transcripts from the October 2014 meeting. The NOSB met from October 28 - 30, 2014, in Louisville, Kentucky. To view the transcripts and other meeting materials click the links below:

[View Transcripts](#) or [NOSB Meeting Materials](#)

USDA's 2014 Organic Survey

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is now conducting the 2014 Organic Survey to learn more about the trends of organic agriculture in the United States. You don't need to be certified organic to respond to the survey, and the USDA still wants to hear from you if you are exempt (sales under \$5000) or transitioning. Fill out the survey online by April 3, 2015. NASS will publish the results in August 2015. Learn more about the Organic Survey at <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov> or by calling 800 851-1127.

Free IFOAM Directory

The 'IFOAM - Organics International' Membership Directory 2015 is an invaluable instrument, linking you to the worldwide organic movement by providing you with the contact information of their entire membership base.

[Download the E-Directory here](#)



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Keep IOIA Strong - Lend Your Strength And Get Involved!

2015 Calendar

February 14 - 15 Burlington, VT.
NOFA-Vermont Winter Conference
33rd annual Northeast Organic
Farmers Association Vermont
<http://nofavt.org/annual-events/winter-conference>

February 26-28 MOSES Organic
Farming Conference, La Crosse,
WI. 67 workshops over 6 sessions;
2-Floor Exhibit Hall; 3,000+ Partici-
pants. <http://www.mosesorganic.org/conference/>

February 27 Deadline for public
comment on the Natural Resources
and Biodiversity Draft Guidance.

February 27 - March 1 [Western Re-](#)
[gional Grazing Conference, Chico,](#)
CA

March 5 – 8 [Expo West](#), Anaheim
Convention Center, Anaheim, CA

March 26-29 IOIA Annual General
Meeting (March 28) and Advanced
Training, Chico Hot Springs, Pray,
Montana. See cover story.

April 14 - 16 [OTA policy confer-](#)
[ence and hill visit days April 14-16,](#)
[2015 | Washington, D.C.](#)

April 26 – May 8 Basic Crop and
Processing Inspection Trainings,
North Carolina, info on page 2.

Spring 2015 San José, Costa Rica,
Farm Inspection Course - details to
be announced.

May 11 - 16 [International Work-](#)
[shop on Agroecology and Sustain-](#)
[able Agriculture](#), Miami, FL

August 29 - 31 4th Annual World
Congress of Agriculture in China .
More info at [http://www.bitcon-](http://www.bitcongress.com/wca2014/)
[gress.com/wca2014/](http://www.bitcongress.com/wca2014/)

September 28 – October 2 Basic
Crop and Processing Inspection
Trainings, Oregon. Info page 2.

November 2 – 13 Basic Crop and
Livestock Inspection Trainings,
Iowa (under development). Info
page 2.

***Please see pages 2 & 3 for the current list of
IOIA on-site trainings and webinars***