

## IOIA Launches NEW Field Training for inspectors – August 3-4, Wooster, Ohio

The IOIA/OEFFA Livestock Inspection Training in Ohio May 16-20 piloted a landmark change in how organic inspectors will be trained by IOIA. This first training to pilot IOIA's new basic training model, which was envisioned in 2012 by IOIA trainers and staff, was deemed a resounding success by the 15 participants and by the Ohio training team. The pilot training team included Garry Lean, lifelong educa-

tor and veteran trainer for IOIA for the past decade; Margaret Scoles, Executive Director and trainer for more than 20 years; and Jonda Crosby, IOIA Training Services Director, inspector and agricultural educator.

The basic classroom training remains 4.5 days long with a field trip to a certified operation, and it still requires successful completion of an exam and written assignment (inspection report). Many of the instructional materials and exercises are the same or nearly so. So how is the training different? There are now three significant training requirements to complete the entire basic training course.

Step one; each participant comes into the course having completed the related 6-hour standards webinar. Taking this course before the in-person training creates more time for richer discussions and more exercises that apply the standards and deepen understanding. This increases learning and improves success in the course.



**Participant Mike Gessel evaluates body condition on field trip.**

Step two; in-person training with classroom instruction and field trips. Field trips now occur on Day 3, not Day 4. In the previous format, participants met early on Day 4, organized their inspection plan, performed a mock inspection in the morning, and spent the afternoon debriefing and preparing to write. They often didn't begin writing until late afternoon or early evening. After an exhausting night in their

first attempt at an inspection report, they got up the next morning to take the final exam. Repeatedly, the participants rated IOIA trainings excellent and valuable regarding content and trainers. But course schedule usually scored much lower. Now, the field trip occurs on Day 3 afternoon, and the entire Day 4 is devoted to debriefing, practicing, and writing under the tutelage of their group leader. Some participants even finished their Ohio dairy inspection reports in the daylight! Not surprising – the Ohio

course evaluations rated course schedule significantly better, including several 5 out of 5 scores. The participants who

had just completed the 4.5 day Basic Crop course the week earlier especially applauded the introduction of the new format.

And finally – Step three; of basic training is field training as a structured apprenticeship, which includes two days

See **Field Training**, page 4

## Notes from the Chair

By Stuart McMillan

I keep thinking back to the IOIA AGM that occurred in April. We were blessed with ideal weather while on the Island of Jeju, Republic of Korea. Margaret emailed me about the rainy weather she encountered as she was one of the first of the IOIA members to arrive. I immediately went out to buy a new rain jacket so I would be ready. And true to form, it didn't rain the entire time of the advanced training, AGM and in-person board meetings when I was on the island. Just goes to show if you want to prevent bad weather, best be prepared for it.

One of the most exciting parts of the AGM was it truly put the *international* into our name of IOIA. Participants from Australia, Canada, China, Ghana, India, Japan, Korea, Thailand and the United States were able to share, learn and laugh together. I had eagerly anticipated the opportunity to meet other inspectors from different parts of the globe, that I either never have been to, or when I travelled there I was at my infancy of involvement with organic agriculture. I am excited to maintain the connections made at this remarkably international AGM, as I know the other participants are.

See **Notes**, page 11

**Welcome New Members****Inspectors:**

Margarito Cal, Galesburg, IL  
Kirk Northrup, Summerland, BC, Canada

**Supporting Business:**

Georgia Organics, Atlanta, Georgia

**Supporting Individuals:**

Alvie Fourness, Coudersport, PA  
Allen Freund, Marshfield, VT  
Heather Ganske, Medford, MN  
Alana Henderson-Bayzath, Huntsburg, OH  
Daniel Holley, Dayton, Nevada  
YeonHwa Kim, Gyeonggi-do, Rep. of Korea  
Nathan McFall, Colton, OR  
Yehuda Nestel, Guelph, Canada  
Mark Osborne, Danville, VA  
Vitoon R. Panyakul, Bangkok, Thailand  
Shallini Patnaik, California  
Meghan Patrick, Louisville, KY  
Sharon Piper-Martin, Chelsea, MI  
Kathleen Plachetka, Rice Lake, WI  
Cydnee Pletcher, Wray, CO  
Kimberly Pohle, West Lafayette, IN  
Frank Weigand, Quarryville, PA  
Deborah Wolman, Quebec, Canada  
Janice Zimmerman, Westby, WI

**IOIA 2017 AGM**

**Ottawa - 25 March**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

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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](mailto:webgal@ioia.net)  
Deadlines: Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1.

## On-Site Training Schedule - full details and applications at [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net)

**Hong Kong Crop, Processing and Aquaculture Courses, June 11-24**

IOIA and Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre (HKORC) will cosponsor a 4.5 day Basic Organic Crop Inspection Course, a 4.5 day Basic Organic Processing Inspection Course, and a 1.5 day Aquaculture Workshop. The courses are using the HKORC-Cert Organic Standards as a reference and will be held at Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong, China. All courses will be given in English. Dates: **Aquaculture Workshop June 11-12, Basic Organic Crop Inspection Course June 14-18 and Basic Organic Processing Inspection Course June 20-24.** Application forms and more information about the course will be available at the website of HKORC at [www.hkbu.edu.hk](http://www.hkbu.edu.hk). For enquiries, please contact Cyber Hung or Emily Chang Email: [cyberh@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:cyberh@hkbu.edu.hk) / [emilyc@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:emilyc@hkbu.edu.hk) Ph: (852) 3411 2536 / (852) 3411 6620 Fax: (852) 3411 2373

**IOIA/OEFFA Livestock Inspection Field Training, August 3-4**

IOIA and Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) will cosponsor 2-day Livestock field training. This training is based in Wooster, Ohio at the Best Western Wooster Hotel. A room block has been reserved until July 2. The course will include two days of mentored inspections on dairy or poultry inspections in the Wooster area. This training has been developed closely with OEFFA to provide actual organic inspection experience. Participants must have successfully completed IOIA Basic Organic Livestock Inspection training. Participants without that training will be considered for acceptance on the recommendation of a certification agency. For more info about the training or to apply, see the IOIA website, or E-Mail: [ioiassistant@rangeweb.net](mailto:ioiassistant@rangeweb.net)

**IOIA/WSDA Basic Organic Crop & Processing Inspection Training, August 22-26**

IOIA and Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) will cosponsor two 4.5 day trainings. Basic Organic Crop and Processing Inspector Training will run concurrently. These trainings are based on the USDA National Organic Program Standards. The courses will be held at IslandWood, on Bainbridge Island, Washington. IslandWood is a LEED certified conference center and an active participant in energy conservation, composting, recycling and harnessing alternative energy sources. IslandWood meals showcase local, organic and sustainably sourced ingredients. For more info about the venue, [www.islandwood.org](http://www.islandwood.org). **Click here for more info** about the training, or to apply, see the IOIA website, or E-Mail: [ioiassistant@rangeweb.net](mailto:ioiassistant@rangeweb.net)

**IOIA/MOSA Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training,**

**Oct. 31 – November. 4**

**IOIA/MOSA Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training,**

**November 7 – 11**

IOIA and Midwest Organic Services Association (MOSA) will cosponsor two, 4.5 day trainings using the NOP Standards as a reference. The courses will be held at the Mt. Olivet Conference and Retreat Center, Farmington, Minnesota. Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training will run October 31 – November 4, 2016. Basic Organic Livestock Inspection Training will be held the following week, November 7 – 11, 2016. Please contact IOIA for more information about these courses. E-Mail: [ioiassistant@rangeweb.net](mailto:ioiassistant@rangeweb.net)

**IOIA/MOSA Livestock Inspection Field Training, November 14 - 15**

Viroqua, Wisconsin. Under development.

## WEBINAR Training Schedule for full details & to register please go to: [www.ioia.net/schedule\\_list.html](http://www.ioia.net/schedule_list.html)

**IOIA/OMRI webinars are back!****200 Level Webinar – August 10, 2016. IOIA/OMRI COR Crop and Livestock Input Materials Update**

One, 3 hour session. Presenter: Johanna Mirenda, OMRI Program Director. This webinar will highlight the revisions to the Canada Organic Standards that were published in November 2015. Operators have one year to come into compliance with the new standards. The course is geared for persons with an understanding of COR Crop & Livestock Standards and farm inspection or certification.

**100 Level Webinar – August 16 & 19, 2016. COR Crop Standards**

Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainer: Lisa Pierce.

The training will prepare participants to verify compliance with the COR Crop Standard. The course is geared for those who intend to take further training to become organic inspectors or file reviewers and for working inspectors and reviewers who have taken a basic crop inspection course to a standard other than the COR. It is also recommended for organic handlers, processors, consultants, educators, extension, and certification agency staff. This course can be used as a credential to seek work as an entry-level file reviewer.

**200 Level Webinar – August 18, 2016. IOIA/OMRI COR Processing Input Materials Update**

One, 3 hour session. Presenter: Johanna Mirenda, OMRI Program Director.

This webinar will highlight the revisions to the Canada Organic Standards that were published in November 2015. The course is geared for persons with an understanding of COR Processing Standards and processing inspection or certification.

**100 Level Webinar – August 30 & September 1. NOP Processing Standards**

Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainer: Luis Brenes.

This basic training course will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Processing Standards. The course is designed as an essential session for the Processing Inspector or Reviewer. It is highly recommended for organic handlers, processors, consultants, educators, extension, and certification agency staff and can be used as a credential to seek work as an entry-level certification file reviewer. This course is also geared to prepare those who intend to take further training to become organic inspectors or file reviewers.

**100 Level Webinar – September 22 & 29, 2016. COR Processing Standards**

Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainer: Kelly Monaghan.

This course will focus on topics including the Organic Products Regulations, the General Principles and Management Standards & the Standard and the Canadian Permitted Substances Lists. Participants will gain skill in navigating the Organic Products Regulations as well as the Standard and PSL, understanding the labeling rules, inspection and certification requirements. It will also cover the issues relating to Canada's two equivalency arrangements with the USA and the EU.

**100 Level Webinar – October 12 & 14, 2016. NOP Crop Standards**

Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainers: Garry Lean & Margaret Scoles.

This course is designed to prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Crop Standards. This webinar training course will focus on topics including the National List of allowed synthetic and prohibited natural inputs for crop production. Participants will also gain skill in understanding and navigating the NOP regulations.

**100 Level Webinar – October 19 & 21, 2016. NOP Livestock Standards**

Two, 3 hour sessions. Trainer: Garry Lean.

This webinar is a 100 level course will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Livestock Standards. This webinar training course will focus on topics including the National List of allowed synthetic and prohibited natural inputs for livestock production. Participants will also gain skill in understanding and navigating the NOP regulations.

**300 Level Webinar – November 29, 2016. Winery Inspection Webinar**

One, 2.5 hour session. IOIA Presenter: Pam Sullivan.

This course will prepare participants to conduct winery inspections. The course is geared to experienced inspectors or reviewers who wish to familiarize themselves with the scope and idiosyncrasies of winery inspections. Basic wine making techniques, vocabulary, and equipment will be reviewed. There is a strong focus on identifying winery-specific organic control points during all stages of production from receiving through bottling. Detailed information including the role of sulfur dioxide and the differences between the US and the EU standard regarding inputs will be discussed. The presentation will include sample audit trails, which will be reviewed and decoded. At the conclusion of the course, inspectors will have a practical understanding of winery operations and the confidence to tackle complicated winery inspections.

**Field Training, from page 1**

of practice inspections with an IOIA trainer mentor. By the time the participants finish the Field Training, they will have completed three inspection reports. The first one will be carefully guided and monitored by IOIA's basic classroom trainer. The second, based on Day 1 of Field Training, will be in a group of about six with an experienced inspector as their leader and facilitator. The final report, based on Day 2 of Field Training, will be in a group of two, with the mentor mostly hands-off and observing and assessing their performance.

A new idea? No, not really so new. IOIA's Training Institute, a new way of looking at IOIA's training program that allowed for expansion of training opportunities for entry-level inspectors, working inspectors, and non-inspector audiences, was born during a Board retreat in 2007. In 2010, IOIA launched its webinar program and in 2011 added the new position of Training Services Director. With the addition of staff and a cadre of expert trainers and presenters, IOIA now offers 24 different webinars, with many more in the wings. Some are presented with IOIA-developed and owned materials, some by trainers who use their own materials (i.e. Maple Syrup and Winery Inspections), and some with partners such as OMRI and OTA who provide technical content. The structure of the Institute includes 100-level (basic trainings and standards webinars), 200-level webinars for working reviewers and inspectors, and 250 or 300-level for specialty and advanced topics.

Input into the development of the new training model included trainer reports from dozens of trainings; ideas from IOIA's most experienced classroom trainers; conversations with certifiers through the IOIA-sponsored Certifier-Inspector Dialogue conference calls; and hundreds of participant course evaluations over the past decade. In 2015, the new training

model concept was presented to the membership as a continuum with a new IOIA Accreditation Program. IOIA inspector members heartily endorsed the new vision. The new basic training and field training concepts are being implemented in 2016.

In 2017, IOIA plans to add the final step – a new IOIA Accreditation Program that includes different accreditation levels for inspectors – 100-level, 200-level, and 300-level. The 200 and 300 levels will require minimum levels of inspections and continuing education for renewal. The 100-level certification won't expire, and the certificate will remain very similar to the current basic training certificate.

In addition to creating better inspectors, this new model answers to a crying need for structured apprenticeship. Newly trained inspectors report ongoing challenges finding mentors and certifiers willing to work with them. Experienced inspectors often voice frustration with the barrage of mentor requests they get from new inspectors who will potentially compete with them for work. Mentors often are expected to provide apprenticeship support for free. Field Training creates a ladder so new inspectors can progress from basic training to actually being ready for entry-level inspections. Some certifiers may require additional training in their procedures and forms, and some may even require additional apprenticeship. But for sure, the graduates of

IOIA Field Training will be much better prepared to do inspections and should find acceptance by certifiers easier. Another key benefit of the new training model is that IOIA will need regional field trainers for the structured training apprenticeship. This creates a work opportunity for veteran inspectors and is a logical step to growing IOIA's staff of basic classroom trainers.

Field Training answers to the need for more mentors willing to apprentice inspectors and will result in inspectors ready to do 100-level inspections. In Wooster, Ohio, with the help of partner Ohio Ecological Farm and Farm Association (OEFFA), prospective inspectors who have successfully completed an IOIA basic livestock training will have the opportunity for the first

time to complete a structured apprenticeship. They will complete real inspections. OEFFA is making both dairy and poultry inspections available for the training. Participants without basic livestock training will be considered for acceptance with an endorsement or recommendation from a certification agency. This can also be excellent opportunity for current inspectors wishing to add livestock inspections to their resume or for livestock inspectors who wish to sharpen their skills. A second Livestock Field Training is tentatively scheduled for November 14-15 in Viroqua, Wisconsin, working with Midwest Organic Services Association (MOSA) as a partner. The new format will be implemented with the Crop and Processing Inspection Training in Washington and Minnesota later this year. Originally slated for launch in 2017, the launch was fast tracked based on the success of the pilot in Ohio.

*"I really liked this format over the structure used in previous courses. I felt like I had more time to focus on what I was learning with less stress & a bit more time to rest and relax at night. The inspection report part was much more manageable. I am a BIG fan of this new format."*

*Course participant*

**Notes from the ED**

by Margaret Scoles

*A Tale of My Quest for Business Liability Insurance –*

I know of no certifiers who ask independent inspectors to carry Errors & Omissions insurance, but some do ask us to show proof of regular Business Liability insurance. I started my quest for such insurance when I took on Non-GMO Product Verification. I am sharing the tale of my quest in the interest of helping other inspectors. I recently acquired Business Liability for the first time, after inspecting 27 years.

I took the FoodChain ID inspector training, seeking to provide dual inspection service. The operations wouldn't have to pay for two inspectors. I admit to some irritation about their requirement for insurance to do NGP inspections. I would lose money on doing just one NGP inspection, if I bought insurance to do just one.

But let me digress for a moment - IOIA would like to provide a list of potential E&O insurance providers for inspectors. We frequently get requests for such a list. Everyone wants a magic list of companies anxious to provide affordable insurance to inspectors. However, the problem is this – our pool is too small for insurers to be willing to invest time in us. We are in an unfamiliar line of work. Almost without fail, every time an inspector member finds a company and we share that with other inspectors, the next inspector who calls is declined. Two inspectors were insured with Hiscox. But when a third inspector called, they were declined and told that Hiscox didn't insure organic inspectors. One of the first two who had been insured by Hiscox was then declined when his annual renewal came up. About a year ago, one of our members acquired affordable insurance through Insureon. We published contact information. I was disappointed, but not too surprised, to hear that Insureon recently declined to insure another inspector.



**Margaret, inspector Sarah Gibson, and newsletter editor Diane Cooner at Expo West**

If nothing else, I decided my quest would give me good experience that might benefit our members. We currently advise inspectors thus:

1. We recommend that inspectors get liability insurance.
2. Philadelphia is the only company that we know is reliably open for business to insure organic inspectors for E&O
3. You can't get business insurance from Philadelphia without E&O, so it is pricey.

Surely we could provide better information to inspectors, I thought.

So I embarked on my quest, and here is my tale. First I took the NGP verifier's advice and called a company in another state that reportedly insured other inspectors. That company told me that they didn't insure people in Montana. Then I did what I should have done in the first place. I called my own insurance agent who insures our cars/trucks/ranch and everything else. I asked if I could get a business liability insurance policy. They said "Yes, no problem". I asked, "Will it be in the ballpark of \$500?" I was assured that they could certainly get something around that price, especially since I do fewer than 20 inspections per year. Pretty quickly, my proficient agent who has worked with us for 20+

years called me back. She said "This is going to be harder than I thought"; "The first 2 companies said no."; "I need more information"; and "I'll get right back to you." Two weeks later, I hadn't heard back, and followed up. Profuse apologies. "I'm having more difficulty than I expected" and "I need even more information." A month had gone by. I called again. More apologies. She finally got back to me, "This is going to be more expensive than I expected." \$870.63 to be exact. I said I needed it anyway, knowing that by now I would definitely lose money on that one inspection. Still good experience, I thought...

I now carry a business liability policy with \$1 mil/\$2 mil aggregate. It took persistence and it cost more than I like. But it wasn't difficult, just a little messy. I found the best way to get insurance is to go to your own local agent. Tell them what you need, and shop at home. I went with **Scottsdale Insurance Company**.

One of our members got a policy for about \$400 through Hartford. He gave me permission to share contact info: InsuranceBee Inc., Maynard, MA 01754 978.344.4200 [www.insurancebee.com](http://www.insurancebee.com)

**Good luck!**

**SECTOR NEWS**

**Livestock, Poultry Proposed Rule**

The public comment period for the Proposed Rule on Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices is now open. Comments period has been extended through **July 13, 2016**. When the proposed rule was first announced last month, there were initial concerns about specific requirements to improve the humane treatment of livestock that seem to restrict current practices.

Read the proposed rule [here](#).

*MOSES newsletter The Organic Link May 2016*

**On-Farm Manure Usage**

The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has extended the comment period to July 5, 2016 for its risk assessment of human illness associated with the consumption of produce grown in fields on which raw manure is used as fertilizer. Farmers can comment directly or take a survey through the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) on how they use and apply untreated or raw manure on their farms. NSAC will share the collected information anonymously with the FDA.

*MOSES newsletter The Organic Link May 2016*

**Revised guidelines for amending the National List**

The USDA has announced revised guidelines for requesting amendments to the National Organic Program's (NOP) National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List) in a Federal Register Notice. These guidelines implement recommendations made by the National Organic Standards Board in April 2014, and clarify the information to be submitted for all types of petitions requesting amendments to the National List. In addition, the agency has made available NOP 3011: National List Petition Process as part of the NOP Handbook to replace the previous petition guidelines published in the Federal Register on Jan. 18, 2007.

*OTA News Flash 3/15/2016*

**USDA renews seven substances after Sunset Review**

USDA published a Federal Register notice, effective Sept. 12, 2016, that renews five synthetic and two non-synthetic substances for continued use in organic food production. USDA's National Organic Program has accepted NOSB's recommendation to renew the seven substances, thus completing their 2016 Sunset Review and keeping them on the National List. Substances include ferric phosphate (for use as a slug or snail bait), hydrogen chloride (in seed preparations for delinting cotton seed for planting), activated charcoal (only from vegetative sources, for use as a filtering aid), peracetic acid/peroxyacetic acid (for use in wash and/or rinse water, for use as a sanitizer on food contact surfaces), sodium acid pyrophosphate (for use as a leavening agent), L-malic acid (non-synthetic), and microorganisms (non-synthetic, any food-grade bacteria, fungi, and other microorganisms).

*OTA News Flash, 2/23/2016*

**EU and Chile strike trade agreement**

The European Union and Chile have concluded negotiations on an organic equivalency trade agreement. Under the agreement, the EU and Chile will mutually recognize their organic production rules and controls systems as equivalent. Broad in scope, it will allow products produced and controlled according to EU rules or Chilean rules to be marketed in the partnering region. The EU-Chile agreement will be the first of "new generation" agreements in trade in organic products and the first bilateral recognition with a Latin American country.

*OTA News Flash 4/12/2016*

**U.S. certified organic operations total over 21,000**

USDA reports that there are now 21,781 certified organic operations in the United States, with a total

of 31,160 around the world. This represents an increase of nearly 12 percent between 2014 and 2015—the highest growth rate since 2008 and an increase of nearly 300 percent since 2002. The statistics are publicly available as part of the recently launched Organic Integrity Database.

**Mislabeled fiber-related products**

The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) organization has won a civil action in the U.S. District Court against defendants Serta Simmons Bedding, Delta Enterprises Corporation and Dreamwell Ltd. for unauthorized uses of GOTS certification trademark on sleeping mattresses, particularly infant mattresses. The civil suit was resolved with a permanent injunction prohibiting unauthorized use of the GOTS certifying trade mark. Subsequently, GOTS filed a complaint with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission documenting the widespread inaccurate and misleading use of the term "organic" by U.S. companies and marketers on textile products.

*OTA News Flash, 4/12/2016*

**NOP Compliance Efforts**

From January-May 2016, there have been 97 complaints to USDA and 93 complete complaint reviews and investigations, resulting in two settlement agreements and \$16,500 in civil penalties.

**U.S. organic sales post new record of \$43.3 billion in 2015**

according to OTA's 2016 Organic Industry Survey. May 19, 2016

The booming U.S. organic industry posted new records in 2015, with total organic product sales hitting a new benchmark of \$43.3 billion, up a robust 11 percent from the previous year's record level and far outstripping the overall food market's growth rate of 3 percent, according to the Organic Trade Association's **2016 Organic**

Continued on next page

**SECTOR NEWS**

**Industry Survey.**

The industry saw its largest annual dollar gain ever in 2015, adding \$4.2 billion in sales, up from the \$3.9 billion in new sales recorded in 2014. Of the \$43.3 billion in total organic sales, \$39.7 billion were organic food sales, up 11 percent from the previous year, and non-food organic products accounted for \$3.6 billion, up 13 percent. Nearly 5 percent of all food sold in the U.S. is organic. 2015 was a year of significant growth for the industry despite the continued struggle to meet the seemingly unquenchable consumer demand for organic. Supply issues persisted to dominate the industry, as organic production in the U.S. lagged behind consumption.

**Organic produce** retained its long-standing spot as the largest of all the organic categories with sales of \$14.4 billion, up 10.6 percent. Produce has always been and continues to be a gateway to organic. It's easy for shoppers to make the connection between agricultural practices used in the field and the fresh fruit or vegetables they bite into. Almost 13 percent of the produce sold in this country is now organic. The demand for fresh organic was most evident in the continued growth of "fresh juices and drinks," which saw explosive growth of 33.5 percent in 2015, making it the fastest-growing of all the organic subcategories.

**Dairy**, the second biggest organic food category, accounted for \$6.0 billion in sales, an increase of over 10 percent. Dairy accounts for 15 percent of total organic food sales. Americans still like to snack, and more and more of them are snacking organically. Also seeing a big growth in sales in 2014 – and more than triple the level of just 10 years ago -- was the organic snack food category, with sales of \$2.3 billion, up almost 14 percent from 2014.

Consumers are not just eating organic, they are incorporating more into their total lifestyle. Organic non-food products continue to gain in popularity. Even though non-food products account for just 8.2% of overall organic sales, the almost 13 percent growth rate in the sales of organic non-food products outpaces the growth rate in organic food, as well as the overall growth of comparable products, primarily conventional, which inched up by a mere 2.8%. Growth in the non-food category was led by organic fiber, followed closely by organic supplements.

**More accessible, but challenges persist in supply chain**

Increased consumer demand for organic products in 2015 could also be attributed to greater access to these products from mainstream retailers. As supermarkets, big box stores, membership warehouse clubs, and other outlets continued to up their organic offerings, organic options have become more available than ever before.

The growth in the organic market, however, did not come without continued challenges to the supply chain. Dairy and grains were two areas where growth could have been even more robust in 2015 if greater supply had been available. There is an industry-wide understanding of the need to build a secure supply chain that can support demand. This goes hand-in-hand with securing more organic acreage, developing programs to help farmers transition to organic, and encouraging new farmers to farm organically.

*OTA's 2016 Organic Industry Survey was conducted and produced on behalf of OTA by Nutrition Business Journal (NBJ). The survey was conducted from January 7, 2016, through March 25, 2016. More than 200 companies responded to the survey.*

**ConAgra to label GMOs**

ConAgra has joined the list of food companies announcing they will begin rolling out labeling on foods that contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs). This announcement follows on the heels of General Mills, Mars and Kellogg to also label for GMOs. In January, Campbell Soup made the first announcement to do so.

This past week, Vermont's Attorney General outlined the state's enforcement plan for Act 120 requiring labeling food produced with genetic engineering and prohibiting labeling or advertising GE foods as natural. Act 120 goes into effect on July 1. The plan allows a six-month "safe harbor" for foods distributed before July 1, and offered for retail sale through December 31. Beginning Jan. 1, 2017, all products must be properly labeled regardless of when they were distributed.

*OTA News Flash 3/29/2016*

**Acquisitions to Watch**

**Bayer AG** is currently in talks to buy Monsanto, for a reported \$62 billion, which amount Monsanto has reportedly responded is not enough to satisfy shareholders. Bayer, based in Germany, seeks to be the world's largest supplier of seeds and ag chemicals.

**ChemChina and Syngenta** are in talks 3 months after ChemChina offered a record \$43 billion for the biotech giant.

- ChemChina's offer for Syngenta is on the table.
- Both companies have agreed on the deal.
- Syngenta trading below the offered price suggests increased doubts that the deal will actually go through.
- US approval will be the key. Major US senators are against the deal due to food security concerns.

**NOSB News**

**National Organic Standards Board - Spring 2016 Meeting**

The NOSB met April 25-27 in Washington, DC. Six recent appointees, Harriet Behar (IOIA inspector member), Jesse Buie, Emily Oakley, Scott Rice, A-dae Romero-Briones, and Daniel Seitz, joined the others on the 15-member advisory board: Carmela Beck, Ashley Swaffar, Tracy Favre (IOIA member and inspector), Francis Thicke, Jean Richardson (IOIA inspector member), Harold Austin, Tom Chapman, Lisa de Lima, and Zea Sonnabend (IOIA inspector member).

The agenda included a status report from the [Hydroponics and Aquaponics Task Force](#). The group's current position is that hydroponic systems cannot meet key requirements for organic production as laid out in OFPA and the USDA organic regulations because they do not align with the founding principle of organic agriculture concerning sound management of soil biology, ecology, and overall soil health.

Some key votes that will eventually result in changes in the National List after federal rulemaking action:

Sodium & Potassium lactate:	Add to §205.605(b) with annotation: for use as an antimicrobial agent and pH regulator only.
Electrolyzed Water (Handling)	Add to §205.605(b)
Squid Byproducts	Add to §205.601(j) - with the annotation - can be pH adjusted with sulfuric, citric or phosphoric acid. The amount of acid used shall not exceed the minimum needed to lower the pH to 3.5.
Electrolyzed Water (Crop)	Add to §205.601(a) As algicide, disinfectants, and sanitizer. (2) chlorine materials (iv) electrolyzed water.
Electrolyzed Water (Live-stock)	Add to §205.603 of the National List (a) As disinfectants, sanitizer, and medical treatments as applicable. (7) Chlorine materials-disinfecting and sanitizing facilities and equipment. Residual chlorine levels in the water shall not exceed the maximum residual disinfectant limit under the Safe Drinking Water Act. (iv) electrolyzed water.

**Significant Livestock Proposals related to Materials: The following two proposals were unanimously supported by the NOSB.**

**Proposal: Amend Use of Parasiticides in Organic Livestock Production -**

Three substances are currently approved for use as parasiticides in organic livestock: ivermectin, moxidectin and fenbenzadole. Their use is confined to emergencies. Routine use of parasiticides is prohibited in organic production. Parasiticides are prohibited completely for slaughter stock and fiber bearing animals. The proposal will remove a significant barrier to organic fiber production by allowing parasiticides for fiber producing animals. IOIA spoke in favor of the proposal, which will likely lead to a change in §205.238 Livestock Health Care Practice Standard, but only after rulemaking. It recommended that:

- Parasiticides continue to be prohibited in slaughter stock.
- The milk withholding period after treatment with fenbenzadole or moxidectin be changed from 90 days to 2 days for dairy cows, and 36 days for goats and sheep.
- The listing for ivermectin remains as presently listed, with a 90-day withdrawal period.
- Moxidectin be allowed for both internal and external use.
- Fleece and wool from fiber bearing animals be allowed to be certified organic even if use of parasiticides was necessary at some time in the animal's life.
- Fenbenzadole be allowed without written order of a veterinarian.

**Proposal: Annotation Change for Lidocaine and Procaine Use in Livestock Production -**

Local anesthetics, Lidocaine and Procaine, used to reduce or prevent pain during de-budding horns in livestock or for general minor surgery on mature livestock require withholding the animal from production for 90 days, which may discourage timely humane treatment of animals. The proposal would reduce the withholding period to 8 days for slaughter stock and 6 days for dairy animals.

NOSB voted to amend 205.603(b) As topical treatment, external parasiticide or local anesthetic as applicable.

See **NOSB**, page 21

**Canada Organic News**

**"Main Changes to the Canadian Organic Standards"** - Maureen Bostock, Inspector Member, has provided IOIA members with this essential resource, a summary of the changes made in the 2015 revision which will be fully implemented for certified operators in 2016. The standards are reviewed every 5 years, so this revision will be in force until 2020. Certified operators have a year to come into compliance with updates to the standards. This revision represents significant changes to the livestock standards. Specific clauses have been added to sections dealing with the production of organic ruminants, poultry, rabbits and pigs. Other key changes were the addition of Sprouts and Microgreens and clarification on the soil requirements for Greenhouse Production. Microgreens production has been added to the sprout production section; the use of organic seeds will be mandatory. A minimum quantity of soil to be used in greenhouse container production has been established at 70 liters per m2. This revision also has taken on the challenging issue of GMO contamination and clarified operator responsibility to have in place a risk management approach that protects their crops from GMO contamination. The summary document is available to IOIA inspector members via the passworded section of our website. It is also available to supporting members upon request of the IOIA office. This summary is an unofficial document. Maureen encourages all readers to access the actual standards. She is not responsible for errors or omissions.

**Link to Organic Principles and Management Standards**

<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ongc-cgsb/programme-program/normes-standards/internet/bio-org/pgng-gpms-eng.html>

**Link to Permitted Substances lists:**

<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ongc-cgsb/programme-program/normes-standards/internet/bio-org/lsp-psl-eng.html>

**For more details, see Organic Federation of Canada's website:** [http://www.organicfederation.ca/sites/documents/151125%20InfoBio%20eng%20rev\\_0.pdf](http://www.organicfederation.ca/sites/documents/151125%20InfoBio%20eng%20rev_0.pdf)

*Maureen Bostock, Ontario, is Convenor of the Organic Technical Committee's Permitted Substances List (PSL) Working Group & Chairs the GMO Task Force. She is also an experienced inspector. Watch for her upcoming article on GMOs and other Plant Breeding Technologies.*



**Prairie Organic Grain Initiative announces toll-free number to assist prairie farmers**

By Stuart McMillan

In case you had not heard of this initiative, I think it is a tremendous step in Canada where extension for organic, transitioning and interested grain and field crop producers has been relatively lacking compared to the US. We all know as inspectors, we are prohibited from providing consultation ... so here is your answer, if you are working in the Prairie Provinces:

Now you can provide a toll free number (1-800-245-8341) or email [info@pivotandgrow.com](mailto:info@pivotandgrow.com) to the producer and they have the opportunity to get to talk to an organic specialist and receive unbiased advice in 1-3 business days. More info at [www.pivotandgrow.com](http://www.pivotandgrow.com).

Hope this is a useful additional resource in the 2016 inspection season.

Also as a side note. I hope to see as many of you as possible at the IOIA AGM in Ottawa Canada. It will be an important one as IOIA turns 25. Its our Silver Anniversary!!! Stay tuned to IOIA website for more information.

**Extended scope for EU-Canada Organic Equivalency in effect**

On April 7, European Union Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan and the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, jointly announced the extended scope for the EU-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement is now in effect, following a March 2 vote. The extended scope includes equivalency arrangement for organic wine which was left off the previous arrangement. In addition, Canadian organic processed products certified to Canadian organic standards and imported into the EU can now contain organic ingredients from third countries. Europe is the second largest organic market in the world valued at €23.9 billion, and the Canadian organic sector will now have full access.

See **Canada**, page 27

## Accreditation News

by Pam Sullivan, Accreditation Committee and ARP Chair

Just 6% of IOIA's inspector members are currently accredited. Why so few? It certainly isn't the fee. In 20 years, the fees for the program have never been increased. An inspector can apply and become accredited in all 3 scopes (Crop, Livestock, Processing) for 3 years for just \$80. Or they can choose from among those scopes and apply in one to three scopes. And it isn't the paperwork burden. A recently accredited member submitted her application and commented that she "was surprised by how simple it was!"

If you are not currently accredited, here are 5 good reasons why you should consider it.

- The most recognized professional inspector credential available. IOIA's accreditation process includes peer review by three inspector members of IOIA's Accreditation Review Panel, certifier evaluations and the perspective of certifiers through the certifier representative on the panel, and the perspective of the broader sector through the non-IOIA member on the panel.
- Distinctive listing in the IOIA hard copy and on-line Membership Directories.
- Certificate suitable for framing and wallet sized laminated card.
- Frequently, certifiers consult the accredited inspector list when they are seeking an additional level of credential in inspectors.
- IOIA accredited members can apply to become Peer Field Evaluators in IOIA's Peer Evaluation Program. The process is streamlined for accredited inspectors.
- Accredited members will be grandfathered in as IOIA's new Accreditation Program is launched.



**We welcome you to consider applying. Next deadline is October 1. The Program, application forms, and on-line payments can be accessed on the IOIA website.**

**Thank you** to outgoing member Ellen Hagsten, for her service as the non-IOIA member, for the past two years!

**Thank you** to Christopher Warren-Smith, for his four years of service on the Accreditation Review Panel, chairing the Accreditation Committee.

## IOIA Welcomes New Members to the Accreditation Review Panel

Tom Cassan, IOIA accredited in all 3 scopes since 2007, stepped into the Inspector position vacated by retiring Christopher Warren-Smith. He took basic training in 2004 and has been inspecting since. He received his A.S. in Agriculture from the University of Guelph; HACCP auditor course, Guelph Food Technology Centre, 2005 and has experience both as a farmer and as an organic handler. He is also a frequent IOIA volunteer, assisting almost every year at the Guelph Organic Conference booth.

Amanda Birk, accredited in 2015, also in all 3 scopes, now serves as Alternate on the ARP. She has been inspecting since 2010. Before that, she was a certified organic farmer with her husband. For the past 4 years, she has worked as a staff inspector for Pennsylvania Certified Organic. She is a past IOIA BOD member and currently serves as PCO's *Director of Education & Outreach*.

Dave DeCou of Oregon accepted a term as the new non-IOIA member. He retired last year after three years as Certification Manager at Ecocert ICO (previously Indiana Certified Organic). Previous to that, he served as Certification Officer at ICO for four years, as Executive Director of OMRI for 5 years, and as general manager of Organically Grown Company for 8 years. He has also been an organic farmer.

Other ARP members are Pam Sullivan, California (Accredited in Crop and Processing); Linda Kaner, Minnesota; and Kelly O'Donnell of OTCO (certifier representative).

## Congratulations to the following members who have been successfully accredited!

David Dahmen: Processing  
Karen Troxell: Crop, Processing  
Ryan Merck: Crop, Livestock, Processing

**Congratulations – Renewing!**  
Tom Cassan: Crop, Livestock, Processing

## Open Letter to Inspectors regarding Peer Evaluation

Last year, IOIA evaluated 50 inspectors in the field. This year, we have been asked to evaluate more than twice that many. So your chances of receiving a call from an IOIA Peer Evaluator saying "I've been asked to evaluate you" just doubled.

The program was born largely as a response to the USDA NOP's Certifier Instruction 2027, originally published in August 2013 and revised in March 2016. The revised instruction does two important things. It underscores the requirement for all inspectors to be evaluated annually in the field by every certifier they work for. That didn't change. The biggest change in the revision was that there is now a provision for certifiers to share evaluations with each other. When we read revised 2027, we wondered if this would diminish interest in IOIA's Peer Evaluation Program. But clearly that hasn't happened.

Why is it a good thing if you get the call from an IOIA Peer Evaluator? Here are 5 good reasons.

1. If you inspect to the NOP as an independent inspector, it keeps you working. It's that simple. Without this program, it will become increasingly difficult to survive as an independent. Evaluating you costs money. IOIA's program keeps the cost to a minimum for certifiers.
2. It can potentially reduce the number of evaluations you have to undergo. In 2015, peer evaluation reports were requested for some of our members by 5 to 8 certifiers. Would you like an evaluator observing you on one inspection or eight?
3. The evaluator will be an highly experienced inspector, unlike many of the supervisors who otherwise are sent to evaluate us.
4. Most of the inspectors (92%) who were evaluated last year found the program useful. More than half said the experience "provided useful tips and idea on how to do inspections better". And more than a fourth said it "improved their understanding of NOP regulations".
5. Transparency – you have the opportunity to read the evaluator's report before it goes to the certifier and the chance to rebut or comment. If the report remains unchanged, your comments will still go to the certifier along with the report.

So please look at the call as an opportunity for improvement and capitalize on this chance to discuss inspections with a colleague.

## Notes, from page 1

While I am sad to see **Isidor Yu** leave the board of directors, as we were elected together in Chilliwack, Canada back in 2012, I wish him all the best in his on-going work in the organic sector and want to thank him again for his time given to the board. Also, it is good to know that he is far from abandoning his involvement with IOIA as he was appointed as Chair of the Asia Pacific Committee. I am also excited with the new board members joining the board. With **Matt Miller** and **Mutsumi Sakuyoshi**, we are now back to a full complement of seven board members and will regain our planned staggering of terms to allow continuity in the board.

One of the special aspects of the AGM is that all the board members have a rare opportunity to see each other face to face. Importantly, we allocated two days of intense planning and working together following the main events. We were assisted by facilitator **Mary Hernandez** who allowed us to work on strategic planning and succession planning. As a board, just like it is as an independent inspector, it is all too easy to get so caught up with the routine and day-to-day requirements that one puts off the longer term projects. We were able to sit down and make progress on those challenging issues.

Now the challenge will be to remain focused on making those thoughts reality, especially as inspectors we are about to enter the busiest season for most of us. I know we will work hard to make that a reality and I hope too that for each of you, that you are able to balance the day to day with the long term in building a successful organic inspection profession.

I wish you all the best with the season ahead.

*Stuart*

### Historic first IOIA Annual Meeting in Asia draws participants from 9 countries!

Jeju Island, Korea, April 6-12, 2016

Organic Aquaculture Inspection Training on April 6 was led by Lisa Pierce of British Columbia. She was assisted by Vitoon Panyakul of Thailand, who helped with a shrimp case study. IFOAM Norms and Canadian Aquaculture Standards were used as the standards for the course. After hearing from aquaculture expert George Lockwood of Monterey, California via web delivery on aquaculture production, the group applied what they'd learned to 3 case studies – oysters, net pen salmon, and pond production of shrimp. Participants came from 9 countries!

Kathe Purvis of Western Australia led one day of Advanced Training on April 7 – focus on inspecting to multiple standards. She was assisted by a cadre of quick presentations, all by experts in their own regional standards: Sandeep Bhargava (NPOP, India), Raymond Yang (Korea), Mutsumi Sakuyoshi (JAS, Japan), Janine Gibson (COR, Canada), and Vitoon Panyakul who spoke about Certification Alliance – a regional collaboration platform where each organization retains its own identity, but clients can access multiple types of certifications and equivalencies. Kathe spoke to the challenges and presented a great solution, which she called “mapping”, a term for addressing the key differences in multiple standards. The groups, which each represented multiple regions of the world and different standards, were then assigned case studies. In the report back, “mapping” worked brilliantly.



At the organic mandarin orange operation

Bob Durst of USA and Sandeep Bhargava of India paired up for a day of advanced processing topics.

Dr. John Fagan presented via the web on what inspectors should know about GMO technology. Bob's presentation on the nuances of ingredients listed on 205.605 startled everyone. We didn't know just how much we didn't know about which ingredients might be irradiated or impacted by excluded methods. This was followed by a case study to evaluate how much purging is enough in dry processes where wet cleaning isn't an option.



Below: Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, Japan, and Tang Wei (China) reporting back on kimchi case study.

### Advanced Organic Inspector Trainings and IOIA Annual Meeting

See the Full AGM Recap at [www.ioia.net](http://www.ioia.net)

On April 10, a full day of field trips took the group by bus straight across the island to a flatfish operation, which produces natural flounder, shipped out year-round live in tanker trucks. Next, lunch, production and processing of organic green tea, and finally an organic mandarin orange operation under cover.

On April 11-12, Lisa Pierce led the Train the Trainer workshop, aimed to increase the number of IOIA trainers in Asia. Participants came from Korea, Australia, and Thailand. Though the number was small, this event has great potential impact on IOIA's activities globally.



A popular activity for the visitors to Jeju was watching the women divers (above). They dive with no supplemental air to harvest shellfish, sea cucumbers, and other seafood. The entertainment at the AGM was a folklore dance, honoring the traditions of these divers.

Dol hareubangs are large rock statues found everywhere on Jeju Island. They are considered to be gods offering both protection and fertility and were placed outside of gates for protection against demons travelling between realities. A popular tourist pastime is being photographed in the same pose. At right above, we see IOIA members and friends from 7 countries, being proper tourists!



Stuart McMillan (left - Canada) on the tea field trip, with Salix Wartes-Kahl

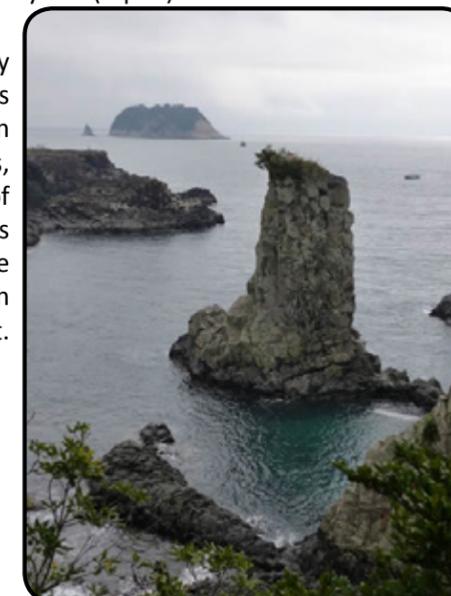


Isidor Yu, outgoing board member, was instrumental in developing the Korea events. Ib Hagsten, IOIA Vice-Chair, and Isidor got a chance to play at the beach and drew again “IOIA” in the sand, this time in Korea on the edge of the China Sea (right), same as they drew in 2013 near Asilomar Beach, the site of the 2013 AGM (left).



L to R back – Sandeep Bhargava (India); Margaret Weigelt (USA); Andre Leu (Australia), Evans Kwaku Duah (Ghana), and Raymond Yang (2016 AGM Organizing Chair, Korea). L to R front – Vitoon Panyakul (Thailand); Bob Durst (USA); and Mutsumi Sakuyoshi (Japan).

Many participants spent time on the Olle Trails, a series of walking paths along the southern coast.



**2016 AGM Keynote Andre Leu, presenting:  
Organic 3.0, Children's Health and Climate Change**

IFOAM Organics International is the only global umbrella organization for the organic sector and has around 800 member organizations in 120 countries worldwide. It includes all the organic stakeholders from farmers, retailers, consumers, processors, wholesalers, researchers, certifiers, service providers and others who have a keen interest in organic agriculture and products.

The Mission of IFOAM Organics International is 'Leading, uniting and assisting the organic movement in its full diversity.' Its Goal is 'The worldwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems that are based on the principles of Organic Agriculture.'

One of its major projects is **Organic 3.0**. This is the third phase of the organic movement – the next paradigm shift.

Organic 3.0 is about bringing organic out of a niche into the mainstream and positioning organic systems as part of the multiple solutions needed to solve the multiple problems facing our planet, our species and the whole of biodiversity.

Organic 1.0 was started by our numerous pioneers, who observed the problems with the direction that agriculture was taking at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and saw the need for agriculture to take a different direction.

Organic 2.0 started in the 1970's when the writings and agricultural systems developed by our pioneers were codified into standards and then later into regulatory systems.

Organic 3.0 is about developing the new big collective vision for the organic sector and about actively engaging with the major global issues.

The strategy for Organic 3.0 includes six main features

1. A culture of innovation, to attract greater farmer adoption of organic practices and to increase yields.
2. Continuous improvement toward best practice, at a localized and regionalized level.
3. Diverse ways to ensure transparent integrity, to broaden the uptake of organic agriculture beyond third-party assurance and certification.
4. Inclusiveness of wider sustainability interests, through alliances with the many movements and organizations that have complementary approaches to truly sustainable food and farming.
5. Holistic empowerment from the farm to the final product, to acknowledge the interdependence and real partnerships along the value chain.
6. True value and fair pricing, to internalize costs, encourage transparency for consumers and policymakers and to empower farmers as full partners.

Organic 3.0 is resonating around the world. People on every continent are engaged in our process of developing our new collective vision for the organic movement. This will be signed off by all of us at our GA in India in 2017.

Organic 3.0 will have many facets and consequently there will be a number of priorities. Two important ones will be health and climate change.

You can read the full 11 page paper that Andre presented on our website, [link here](#).



Andre Leu, 2016 Keynote Speaker, presenting IFOAM's Organic 3.0 concept at the IOIA AGM.

**Curso Basico de Inspeccion de Proceso - Guadalajara, México 15-19 febrero 2016**

Por Luis Brenes

En la hermosa ciudad de Guadalajara se llevó a cabo en febrero este curso coorganizado por Driscoll's para su personal más algunos otros invitados especiales del anfitrión de la gira y su certificadora. La gran mayoría de los participantes tenía amplia experiencia en auditorías y en proceso de alimentos, y 13 de los 15 participantes habían llevado el curso básico de inspección de finca de IOIA. Esto hizo del curso un reto importante para el instructor Luis Brenes, quien a veces no sabía si estaba impartiendo un curso avanzado o no.



La práctica de auditoría se llevó a cabo en la planta de Tequila Sauza y su organización contó con el apoyo de eficaz CCOF y Christie Organics. ¡Gracias Tequila Sauza por abrirnos sus puertas de una manera tan generosa y amable! Los 15 estudiantes se dividieron en tres subgrupos y Tequila Sauza puso a nuestra disposición a su gerente de producción y tres miembros de su staff totalmente dedicados a recibir al grupo.

Este es el segundo curso coorganizado por Driscoll's en México. IOIA le agradece su confianza y confía en poder seguir colaborando en la formación de su personal.

**Comentarios de participantes**

*El curso IOIA superó por mucho nuestras expectativas como empresa. Luis Brenes es un instructor con amplia experiencia en el tema, y con una habilidad sobresaliente para compartir su experiencia. Definitivamente recomendamos los cursos para inspectores orgánicos de IOIA.*

Saludos, Humberto Maldonado, Driscoll's Mexico

*Como un inspector de finca, ansiaba mucho tomar una clase de procesamiento para mejorar mis habilidades de inspección y añadir mi certificado de procesamiento. El curso fue dado en Guadalajara y enseñado por Luis Brenes. Revisamos algunos de los asuntos siguientes: Análisis de riesgo y puntos de control, insumos aprobados para procesos de alimentos, manejo de plagas, composición de productos y etiquetado, auditoria de registros, trazabilidad, balance de masas, uso de agua y plan de auditoria.*

*Esta información ha fortalecido mis experiencias haciendo auditorias de fincas (campos). Esta clase me ha enseñado como entender más no sólo sobre de procesamiento solamente sino también sobre inspeccionar en general. La educación anual da más sabiduría y también afila las herramientas de inspeccionar. ¡Gracias IOIA para otra clase tan excelente! – Arthur Bassett*



*En principio agradezco al grupo de Driscoll's por hacerme sentir como entre un grupo de amigos, a pesar que anteriormente jamás nos habíamos encontrado, eso habla de la excelente calidad humana de la empresa que conforma Driscoll's.*

*Los conocimientos adquiridos durante el curso fueron expuestos por el instructor con excelente habilidad y claridad de tal manera que despertaron mi interés y compromiso para identificar su aplicación en la empresa que representé, siendo este evento mi primer acercamiento a los requisitos que establece el Programa Orgánico Nacional.*

*Estoy convencido de que en una empresa que se dedica a la elaboración y/o manipulación de alimentos le sería de gran utilidad a su personal este curso siempre que su instructor tenga un nivel de competencia como el que Luis Brenes hizo evidente en Guadalajara la semana del 15 al 19 de febrero. – Antonio Alvarez*

← Processing inspections can be a lot of fun!

## Pursuing the Right Course - IOIA Crop Inspection Training, Mt. Sterling, Ohio

by Alvie Fourness

Last month, I attended the IOIA Organic Crop Inspection training held at Deer Creek Lodge and Conference Center in Mt. Sterling, Ohio. IOIA gave a training session by trainers Margaret Scoles and Jonda Crosby that was true to the IOIA mission to promote consistency and integrity in the organic certification process. There were 25 participants who attended from several states around the country including California, Oregon, Colorado, Wisconsin, and Kentucky to name a few, and one participant was from Canada. And, there was me coming from north-central Pennsylvania.



It was a demanding five day event with an abundance of class work, homework assignments and exercises. The highlight of the training came on Thursday with a mock inspection (a real-world scenario) of a 500 acre farm in organic production of wheat, corn and soybeans. Our class group was led by organic inspector Doug Raubenolt of OEFFA. It was a spot on learning experience, as Doug provided us with much valuable guidance and mentoring. The farm inspection consisted of over three hours of information gathering and questioning the farmer about his practices and the farm's Organic System Plan (OSP). After the inspection, it was back to Deer Creek to debrief the inspection so as to get started writing the individually-written inspection reports that were due by 8 am the next morning. Much thought went into it, looking back through my notes where I jotted down my observations at the farm. And, much time was necessary for me to sort through the pages of written data gathered for the report. And then, there were the **CFR Part 205** requirements to address and relate to the farm maps, fields, buffers and farm practices contained in the farmer's OSP. My endeavor was to report the necessary information making the report complete, fair and accurate. I mostly finished the report by 2 am that night, making it a point to awake early enough in the morning to make some last-minute corrects and changes. Somehow I met the submittal time. And the kicker was that the final exam started at 9 am on Friday morning. It took me the full three hours to finish the exam. In a seemingly short flash of time, the course came to conclusion. And then, I was on my way driving back home to Pennsylvania after finishing one very tough course.

The course was not an easy one. The next steps to complete the training will be a few shadow inspections with an organic inspector mentor, where I go with an inspector on an inspection; and watch and learn. Then, finally an inspection or two where I actually conduct the inspection while being observed by the mentor. That will then, if all goes well, complete the necessary training to become an organic inspector. Of course, then there are the additional IOIA courses available that cover the other organic categories such as handling and livestock operations. Maybe these IOIA courses will become future pursuits of mine if I find this sort of work gainful. Let's leave it as it's too early to know for sure.

One might wonder, why one would want to be an organic inspector. It's a fair question, because it's not an easy job. One important reason is that there is a need. The Organic Matters magazine published by the Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) gave the following data in the Fall 2015 edition, for a regional perspective to this need:

*"Pennsylvania remains a powerhouse of organic production, maintaining its number three ranking with \$3.13 billion in organic "farmgate" sales, an increase of 47 percent. New York comes in at number seven with \$1.64 billion. In number of organic farms, New York ranks 3<sup>rd</sup>, with 917, and Pennsylvania are 5<sup>th</sup>, with 679. Additionally, the survey shows the potential for more growth with approximately 5,300 organic producers (39 percent) reporting that they intend to increase their organic production in the United States over the next five years. Another 688 farms with no current organic production are in the process of transitioning into organic agriculture production."*



**Organic farmer Becky Barnes answers question during the on-farm inspection training.**

## Ohio Livestock Course



**IOIA/OEFFA Livestock Inspection Training - the group that piloted the new training model. Participants came from Washington state to Georgia and everywhere in between.**

## IOIA/OEFFA Basic Processing Inspection Training

Sixteen participants came from across the US for training in Ohio, under the guidance of IOIA Trainer, Garry Lean of Ontario, Canada. The classroom looked out over the beautiful Deer Creek Lake. Some participants intended to become inspectors. Some were already inspecting to other scopes and had completed other trainings previously. Some were certification specialists and did more reviews than inspections. The varied backgrounds of the participants, ranging from experience with Kosher, OMRI, HACCP, Harmonized USDA GAP, COOL, or Quality Control enriched the course for others.

An impressive and nearly unprecedented 100% of the participants passed by completing both a satisfactory inspection report and achieving the required minimum on the exam.

OEFFA helped arrange field trips for the mock inspection, an essential component of the basic courses. IOIA gratefully acknowledges our helpful and patient hosts, Richelieu Foods and Crazy Kraut, for the field trips.

## Basic Crop Course, from page 16

An observation noted during the farm inspection for the IOIA course captures the above trends in increased organic production: Six additional farms in the area were in transition to organic practices, lessening the number for field buffers needed on the organic fields; thereby lessening the risk of contamination across neighboring farm boundaries. So it turned out that on my first farm inspection assignment, I got to verify a national trend that I was very pleased to see. And also interestingly, while I was at the training on Tuesday of that week, our farm's updated organic certificate and Organic Product Verification (OPV) were sent to us arriving by email. The paperwork had the updated PCO logo. So, we also received a new copy of our farm's organic certificate along with this year's update. This timely correspondence gave me the added assurance coming when it did, that I was on the right path, and pursuing the right objectives at the right time.

## New Caps from IOIA

Now available on our website – adjustable 100% organic cotton caps with the IOIA logo. In colors olive, avocado and stone. The "stone" is somewhat darker than the "natural" that we offered in the past. US \$23.



**From Burning Questions to On-Farm Food Safety Plans - IOIA Training Services Director Providing Leadership for Food Safety Trainings in Montana**

*“By all accounts the February On-Farm Food Safety trainings in Montana were a complete success, and a good share of that success was due to the leadership and knowledge of IOIA’s Training Services Director, Jonda Crosby,” Jan Tusick, project funding partner and Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center Director.*

Three GAP on-farm produce food safety plan-writing workshops were held in Montana during February 2016. Training locations were selected to minimize travel time and expense for the one and a half day trainings while maximizing farmer participation.

Fifty-two participants attended the courses, which were held in Great Falls, Bozeman and Ronan, Montana. Seventy-five percent of the participants were farmers. Other participants included educators and produce retailers working with farmers to develop on farm food safety plans, buyers of fresh fruit and vegetables, community produce growers, Farm-to-School garden managers, Food Banks, and agency staff from both the Montana Department of Agriculture and Montana State University.

Participants noted they were interested in taking the course for a variety of reasons including; “To increase understanding of food safety management and risks on my farm”, “To be able to teach others how to complete a food safety plan for their farm”, “To start off right with our new farm”, “ I want to be a resource to help farmers I work with who will never make it to class to take the course”, “As a buyer of local produce I am concerned about the safety of the products we purchase so I am taking the class to learn about the questions I should be asking the farmers I buy from about their practices”, “I am selling fresh produce direct from my farm and want to know how to do it safely to protect my customers.”

In the opening session of the course the trainers opened the session with a “Burning Questions about On Farm Food Safety”. The trainers assisted by Montana Department of Ag GAP Auditors Larry Krum and Dan Poff made sure everyone in the room had up to date and accurate information – particularly the differences between the Food Safety Modernization Act and GAP.

“Course trainers were simply brilliant to design the “Burning Questions” Q & A at the beginning of the course, so we all could get on the same page and clear up any misconceptions we had . We also got to learn a lot about each other during this process and it established confidence in us as participants about the training team’s capacity – which was phenomenal.”

The course training materials were designed and developed by using training materials from primarily the Minnesota Cooperative Extension, USDA, FDA and other public food safety training materials that were gathered, evaluated and incorporated into a concise and complete one and a half day training. These materials included were provided to each participant as a Resource Binder and Flash Drive. The Course Binder included everything the farmers needed to complete their on farm food safety plan including; a brief introduction to GAP planning; sample farm and production area maps and a sample diagram of a house packing facility, a GAP-plan template based on one produced by the University of Minnesota Extension and substantially modified by this project to fit the scale and nature of most of the Montana produce operations targeted by this project; appendices with detailed information and resources related to the more complex GAP standards and practices, worker and visitor training materials and hand-wash signs; two sets of sample log sheets; and USDA’s GAP/GHP Audit Checklist and the User’s Guide.

Other resources used as part of the training were video clips from the Minnesota Extension Service YouTube video on how to build a simple on farm hand washing station, Family Farmed YouTube clips of Atina Diffley describing how she records activities on her farm and the importance of a food safety plan. As Atina says in the video “You have to think about record keeping like brushing your teeth, you just do it every day, you don’t need to be reminded, it is part of your routine”.



**Training Services Director  
Jonda Crosby**

Continued on next page

**On-Farm Food Safety, from page 18**

The workshops were designed for fresh produce growers, especially those who are exempt from the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Rule. Participants left the training with insight into the food safety risks on their farms, a draft food safety plan for their farm, understanding of the relationship between FSMA, USDA-GAP and Group GAP and an ability to assess food safety risks associated with on farm fresh produce production.

The post course evaluation suggestions and feedback included;

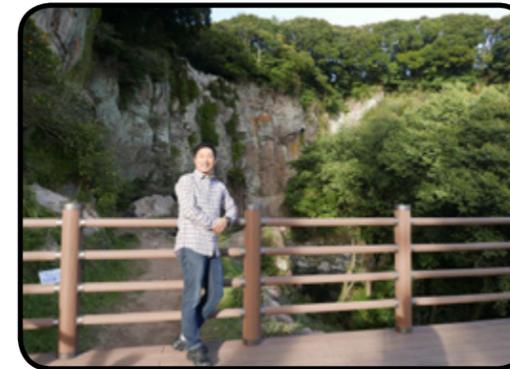
*“Great “hands on” workshop.*

*“This (training) was critical for my farm.”*

*“Thank you for the Template - super helpful.”*

The workshops were designed, developed and presented by Nancy Matheson and Jonda Crosby, both of whom have extensive On Farm Food Safety training and experience. The purpose of the workshop was to help growers of vegetables, fruit or nuts through the food safety plan-writing process, and to make it less daunting.

Funding for the On Farm Food Safety Trainings was provided from the Montana Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grants program through the Montana Food and Agriculture Development Network partners Lake County Development Corporation and Headwaters RC&D.



**Thank you, Raymond!** Raymond Yang chaired the 2016 Organizing Committee, and helped on-site with the photography. He helped with on-site transportation, including picking up some members from the airport, and a multitude of small errands. He taught the group the “Ko-rean way” to take photographs, first one serious, next one with everyone giving the “peace” or “V” sign, and finally goofy, all jumping. This resulted in some fun photos!

**SAVE THE DATE – IOIA to celebrate 25th Anniversary in Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA**

March 23 & 24, 2017 – Advanced Training

March 25 – 2017 Annual Membership Meeting and Anniversary Party!

Field Trips to organic operations (under development).

Cultural Interest Field Trips (under development).

Selecting the venue is in process. Draft training agenda and details about the venue will be posted on the IOIA website as the event is developed. The Canada Organic Office, housed within the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, has promised to attend and participate. Field trips in Quebec and Ontario will be offered.

If you have ideas for training content or presenters, contact the IOIA office or a member of the 2017 AGM Organizing Committee –

- Stuart McMillan, Manitoba (Chair of IOIA Board of Directors)
- Bill Barkley, Ontario (also Chair of the IOIA Canadian Committee)
- Monique Scholz, Quebec (past BOD member and IOIA Trainer)
- Kelly Monaghan, Ontario (IOIA Trainer)
- Joel Aitken, Ontario
- Jennifer Scott, CSI



## Organic Agriculture in Cuba

by Garth Kahl, Treasurer, IOIA Board of Directors

Cuba and organics. In many people's minds the two are synonymous, largely due to the country's response to the so-called "Special Period" between 1989 and 1998, when the dissolution of the Soviet Union and other East Block countries led to a severe shortage of oil and food in Cuba. Average daily caloric intake fell to below 2,000 calories a day as people tried to survive on meager rations from the state dispensaries and were forced to walk and bicycle nearly everywhere.

The government responded with a massive campaign to implement low input, "agroecological" and organic agriculture on a broad scale, including crash policies to breed and train teams of oxen for farm work, composting/vermicomposting of all urban food waste, and the establishment of hundreds of local urban/suburban farm coops and farmers markets. Famine was avoided, and Cuban agronomists throughout the Americas gained a reputation as the "go to" source for organic and agroecological innovations.

Fast-forward 20 years. Cuba in 2016 is at a crossroads. Food intake is back to pre-1990s levels, and incidences of obesity again resemble that of any other country in the hemisphere. Much of this food however (some say nearly 80%) is imported. Generous donations and subsidies of oil, synthetic fertilizer and pesticides from the Chavez/Maduro regime in Venezuela have allowed the resurgence of conventional production

in Cuba's traditional crops, namely tobacco and sugar cane. Tourism has become far-and-away the country's largest source of hard currency and the nation is struggling to feed its own population while at the same time supplying luxury hotels, most of which feature "all included" packages with ample buffets of food. Although not opposed to using conventional inputs, particularly for export crops, the government remains very committed to promoting organic and "agroecological" cropping systems, chiefly as a way to produce more food and animal feed while reducing costly inputs.



Garth Kahl (in cap) inspects tools available at local community store.  
Photo by Dr. Roberto Caballero Grande



Visiting a local farm.

With relations between the US and Cuba finally starting to warm, and the prospect of the decades-long trade embargo finally ending, there has been a great deal of interest in Cuba within the US organic community. OTA sent a delegation to the island last year, and the Board of Directors of CCOF visited last winter. So, when someone with ties to the small US-based NGO Winrock International provided IOIA with an entre to attend the biannual meeting of the Cuban Association of Agronomy and Forestry Professionals ("Asociación Cubana de Técnicos Agrícolas y Forestales," or ACTAF for short), the Board of Directors jumped at the chance and I, as the sole fluent Spanish speaker on the Board, was lucky enough to carry the IOIA banner south to Cuba.

IOIA did hold at least one training in Cuba in the late 1990s, but after that interest appears to have died away. Titled "The 11th Encounter on Organic and Sustainable Agriculture," the ACTAF meeting provided us

with a chance to introduce ourselves to prominent agronomists, veterinarians, researchers and representatives of the ministry of agriculture. Currently there are only a few projects in Cuba certified by third party certifiers. These include sugar production and a small coffee project, exporting to Europe. For various reasons, organic export projects have failed to take hold and the acreage under third party certification has actually decreased significantly since the early 2000s. The main focus for most of the professionals involved in ACTAF is the promotion a local, participatory certification model, aimed primarily at the tourist hotels and to a much lesser extent the local market. At a governmental level, there is a national standard, largely based on the EU standard, which codifies "organic" agriculture, but this has yet to achieve the level of law. A task force within ACTAF is working on a very detailed and complete policy manual for the implementation of the participatory certification programs around the country, using existing extension personnel and farmers coops.

See **Cuba**, page 24

## Needed: IOIA-Trained Regional Independent Verifiers!

The Local Farmer Program recently entered into an agreement with a large international restaurant chain to use the Local Farmer Program. That means Regional Independent Verifiers will be needed in the **Minnesota** and **New Jersey** areas (other areas to come) to pre-assess food safety based on the Basic GAP checklist and expectation guidelines. If you received a certificate of training from IOIA and feel prepared to conduct verifications in the above mentioned areas on behalf of the Local Farmer Program, please contact me for further discussion. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Debra Garrison, Program Director

debra.garrison@azzule.com

Voice 805.922.0055 | Cell 805.863.6927 | Fax 805.922.2462

PrimusLabs | 2810 Industrial Pkwy | Santa Maria, CA



## Resources

### Infographic: The Rise of Organic Farming

A [survey](#) by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service found that the more than 14,000 organic farms in the U.S. sold \$5.5 billion worth of organic products in 2014, a 72 percent jump compared with 2008. A new infographic by [LawnStarter](#) gives a quick overview of the state of organic farming in the U.S. [Check it out here.](#)

### Eco-Farm Workshop Recordings now available

Did you miss a workshop or couldn't attend the conference this year? You can now stream and download over 60 of the conference workshop recordings! Check out the [list of workshops included in the package here.](#)

Go to [eco-farm.org/conference/get-audio-access](http://eco-farm.org/conference/get-audio-access), complete the simple form and pay \$70 with your credit card to get the audio package of over 60 workshops recordings. You'll then receive an email with login information.

### The USDA releases results of first Honey Bee Colony Loss survey

Over 20,000 honey beekeepers participated in the survey, which asked for information about colonies lost and added, and those affected by certain stressors and symptoms, including [Varroa mites](#) and [Colony Collapse Disorder](#). The survey results provide information that can help the [USDA](#) and other programs and departments decide on an appropriate approach to the "National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators," which aims to reduce honey bee colony loss and increase the number of other pollinators. [Click here for more info.](#)

First 3 from Eco-Farm newsletters – March, April, May

### USDA now offers National Organic Summary Report

USDA's AMS Market News Divisions including, Specialty Crops, Livestock, Poultry, and Grain, and Dairy, have developed a National Organic Summary report that highlights data from 200 different organic commodities. This weekly

report provides transparency in the marketplace by presenting data collected by market reporters from wholesale markets, retail ads, and industry participants from around the U.S. It includes links to additional organic market information and Market News contacts. This report will be updated and available on a weekly basis. View the [National Organic Summary Report](#).

OTA Feb 23 News Flash

### NOSB Resource Booklet is now available

OTA puts together a very nice Resource Booklet to help navigate NOSB topics. Follow the links below to the booklet for the latest meeting, that was held April 25-27.

[View the flipbook](#) or [download the PDF.](#)

### Take a look inside for NEW INFOGRAPHICS that help illustrate key NOSB issues and topics, such as:

[a model for developing organic and natural alternatives](#), like [celery powder](#) [turning organic wool into a GOTS certified garment](#), and [the making of electrolyzed water](#)

OFRF is pleased to announce the publication of its new educational guide, **Soil Microbial Actions and Organic Farming**. [Link to it here.](#)

## NOSB News, from page 8

- (4) Lidocaine-as a local anesthetic. Use requires a withdrawal period of ~~90 days~~ **8 days** after administering to livestock intended for slaughter and ~~7 days~~ **6 days** after administering to dairy animals
- (7) Procaine -as a local anesthetic. Use requires a withdrawal period of ~~90 days~~ **8 days** after administering to livestock intended for slaughter and ~~7 days~~ **6 days** after administering to dairy animals.

## Assessing Soil Quality in the Field: Uses, Interpretation, and Limitations of Soil Tests, Part I

by Tony Fleming

(ed. note: A previous column, in the Fall 2015 Inspectors Report, described a variety of visual and hands-on cues for assessing soil quality. Continuing the soils theme, this installment is the first in a series examining the role of soil tests in an organic production system.)

*“The producer must select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil and minimize soil erosion”.*

-NOP §205.203(a) Soil fertility and crop nutrient management practice standard.

*“An organic production or handling system plan must include: (3) A description of the monitoring practices and procedures to be performed and maintained, including the frequency with which they will be performed, to verify that the plan is effectively implemented”;* -NOP §205.201 Organic production and handling system plan.

**Introduction:** Optimizing soil quality is the cornerstone of successful organic farming. The ultimate goal is a largely self-sustaining soil ecosystem in which the action of myriad organisms on soil organic matter regulates the liberation, storage, and flow of macro- and micro nutrients. Achieving this goal is decidedly not a one shot deal: rather, it is an ongoing process that requires mindful observation and stewardship of soil organic matter through attentive management of crop rotations, organic matter applications, and in some cases, the use of external inputs. Language in several sections of the NOP (and every other major organic standard in force today) makes clear that management practices aimed at improving soil quality are not optional. The rule

also requires that these practices be monitored, which further implies that each producer has some level of understanding of how their practices are contributing to soil quality, based either on measurement or observation.

This series provides an overview of the applications of soil tests as a monitoring tool in organic production systems, focusing both on testing philosophy and on interpretation of the results. Of necessity, the discussion deals mainly with “standard” or “traditional” soil tests - ones that measure the levels of major (and sometimes minor) nutrients and other common parameters like pH, cation exchange capacity, and organic matter content - because these are the test results you are most likely to encounter at farm inspections. There are other kinds of soil analyses available that may, in fact, be more appropriate to organic production systems, but they are less well known and may not be available locally, whereas a standard soil test is available through virtually every local extension office or local soil lab. That said, some alternative tests are inexpensive and can be performed easily by the producer. I’ll give examples of alternative tests later in the series.

It should also be emphasized at the outset that the nutrient status of soils is closely intertwined with both soil geomorphology and geologic history, which vary greatly from place to place, and with the carbon cycle, itself a function of the ecological and cultural history of the soil - soils formed under a prairie differ greatly in this respect from soils formed under forests, for example, whereas the phosphorus status of soils that have received major applications of superphosphate over decades of conventional farming

will be different from soils that have not. A comprehensive discussion of these fundamental influences on soil fertility is beyond the scope of this essay; suffice to say that they vary widely and are unique to specific regions and even to specific farms and soil series within the same region. Readers are strongly encouraged to learn more about the types and geologic histories of soils in the areas in which they farm and inspect. The NRCS Soils website is a great place to start; in addition to providing much basic descriptive information, it has links to many other useful references, including Web Soil Survey, where you can map the soils on any tract of land and obtain a large amount of background information on individual soil series, which comprise the basic unit of modern soil mapping.

**Why Use Soil Tests?** Among the farms I inspected, I typically encountered variations on two very different scenarios with regard to monitoring of soil quality. Some producers performed soil tests on a regular or semi-regular basis, either as a guide for amending the soil for upcoming crops or to use as a benchmark for gauging progress in the overall soil fertility program. Other producers simply used qualitative field observations—crop yield and vigor, soil appearance, and weed populations are typical examples—as proxies for assessing soil quality. Soil tests were more common among farmers recently transitioning to organic production from a conventional background, while those who had been using organic practices the longest tended to rely mainly on qualitative field observations. This should not be construed as a value judgment: both methods are legitimate and can be readily validated by both scientific studies and observational paradigms. But it does

## Soil Testing, from page 22

raise the related questions of: 1) when are soil tests appropriate? and 2) how are the results to be interpreted in the context of an organic production system?

These questions are natural outgrowths of the well documented observation that *nutrient cycling in long-term organically managed soil is fundamentally different from conventional fertility systems*. This is reflected by the familiar refrain to “feed the soil, not the plant”. Stated a bit differently, traditional soil tests generally measure the currently available (soluble) fractions of most nutrients, whereas nutrient pathways in a highly biologically active soil tend to be more complex and are strongly dependent on the status and behavior of organic matter at any given moment in time or point in the rotation. This is especially true of highly soluble elements like nitrogen and certain trace elements, but the behavior of other elements like calcium and phosphorus is also affected by the organic matter cycle. In a conventional system, the same biological processes also act on nutrients, though often in a more muted manner, while apparent nutrient deficiencies are addressed by applying soluble fertilizer to meet the needs of the upcoming crop. In a mature organic system, by contrast, perceived deficiencies may be better overcome simply by adjusting the rotation or other practices to increase the amount or type of soil organic matter.

The greater complexity of nutrient pathways in organic systems has significant implications for the use and interpretation of soil tests: the season the sample was collected, the type of rotation (including cover crops) and at what stage of the rotation the test was taken, timing of the sampling

relative to applications of organic matter, how long the soil has been under organic management, tillage methods, and how (or whether) to use the results to tailor applications of fertility inputs or adjust the rotation are a few considerations. Another ramification is that soil testing laboratories may accompany standard test results with suggested application rates for nutrients based on a conventional fertility system, or at least a conventional mindset—some labs may provide “organic” recommendations but they are still based on using allowed inputs in which a sizable portion of the contained nutrients are readily available to the ensuing crop (e.g., bone meal, poultry litter, or some relatively fast acting amendment). Taken too literally, these suggestions can sometimes lead to unintended consequences, overloading the soil (and environment) with excessive soluble nutrients or creating imbalances within the larger nutrient/organic matter cycle. They may also divert resources away from longer-term soil building strategies, creating what is essentially a conventional approach to fertility using organic inputs. Ergo, it is crucially important for inspectors to determine that operators are using, interpreting, and responding to soil test results (or for that matter, qualitative field observations) in the proper context of a biologically active fertility system. That means inspectors need to understand the operator’s rationale for using soil tests and the significance of the test results within the specific context of the farm and its soil history.

Keeping these caveats in mind, standard soil tests can be extremely valuable in a number of situations, not least of which is during the early stages of transitioning from conventional farming or otherwise

establishing an organic production system. Every soil is the product of its specific geologic history - the five factors of soil formation include age, parent material, position in the landscape, biology, and climate - which determines the natural fertility baseline. Geologically old soils in humid-temperate or tropical climates, for example, commonly exhibit deep weathering profiles which are depleted in soluble base elements (calcium, magnesium, potassium) and many minor elements, and comparatively enriched in aluminum, silica, and iron, resulting in naturally acidic, relatively infertile soil. In contrast, young glacial and alluvial sediments are minimally leached and typically contain abundant trace elements and high levels of base saturation that buffer acidity, resulting in naturally fertile soils with a circumneutral pH. An entire spectrum of soil conditions exists between these two end members; moreover, the cultural history of a soil greatly influences every aspect of its structure and fertility. While there are some consistent regional trends in the histories and origins of soils, there is also much local variation. In any case, given the wide variety of geologic and cultural histories, it is clear that different organic farms may not be starting from the same natural fertility baseline, even within the same region.

Thus, a particularly useful application of soil tests, and one I commonly observed at inspections, is as a benchmark for assessing the overall effectiveness of the soil building program. There’s a saying that “to know where you’re going, you have to know where you’ve been”; in other words, a time series of soil tests can function as a road map of sorts, documenting the progress of the soil fertility program from day

See **Soil**, page 24

## Soil, from page 23

one. Applications of soil tests are by no means limited to that situation, however. Some cash crops (e.g., vegetables, alfalfa hay) are more nutrient depleting than others, and can diminish certain soil minerals over time or during certain stages of the rotation. Soil tests taken after each stage of the rotation can thus point to the optimum time to supply high-quality organic matter or other amendments. Beyond that, soil tests are useful for choosing appropriate amendments to supply base elements (calcium, magnesium, etc.) with or without modifying soil pH. It can make a big difference whether one applies dolomitic limestone or high-calcium limestone, depending on the existing relative base saturation of the soil; some soils, including many in the Midwest, are already characterized by very high levels of magnesium, so adding more is not necessarily desirable. And soil testing is highly advisable when adjusting soil pH, whether for acid-demanding crops like blueberries, or for more general purposes. Most crops perform best within a specific and well defined pH range, which can be difficult to achieve in the absence of quantitative data.

Used in any of these ways, standard soil tests are one tool for satisfying

the requirements set forth in 205.201 for monitoring the soil building program established by the producer's organic system plan. The results represent a quantitative measurement of the visible changes occurring in the soil in response to specific soil building practices. As alluded to earlier, however, standard soil tests are not a complete measure of soil health in an organic production system, particularly when it comes to assessing the cycling of organic matter and the intensity of the associated biological activity. Developing a more definitive picture generally requires combining a standard soil test with a soil respiration test or other alternative method of analysis geared towards measuring biological activity, together with detailed visual inspection of soil characteristics.

On the other hand, the need for soil testing typically lessens, and may disappear altogether, as the organic soil fertility program progresses. Over time, the organic matter cycle takes over as the primary mediator of nutrient availability, a phenomenon noticed by many organic farmers and gardeners and sometimes referred to by the term "mellow soil", which is another way of saying "highly biologically active soil". Indeed, this

transformation is mirrored by readily observable changes in the appearance and behavior of soil: the visual soil cues described in the Fall, 2015 *Inspectors Report* typically progress from "worst" to "best" during this process, signifying the enhanced role of organic matter cycling and related biological activity in providing the bulk of soil fertility. Experienced organic producers understand this relationship because they have witnessed first hand the complete transformation of soil quality and crop vigor since the beginning of the process, when soil quality may not have been so great. This probably explains why seasoned producers tend to rely more on qualitative observation than soil testing. Organic matter is the great equalizer.

*Next: Interpreting soil tests: pH, relative base saturation, and cation exchange capacity as indicators of overall soil quality.*

*Tony Fleming is a professional hydrogeologist, naturalist, and self-described "plant geek" who has worked in the fields of water resources management and geo-ecology for more than two decades. He frequently consults with conservation organizations on the interpretation, management, and preservation of natural areas. He worked as an organic inspector for more than a dozen years.*

## Cuba, from page 20

Virtually all growers in the country are already organized into coops and the ties between these and the local extension services are quite active and robust.

The ACTAF conference itself was very informative, with presentations from Cuba, Panama, Brazil, the US, El Salvador and Argentina. Although not strictly organic, the presentations and papers all had the common goal of reducing external inputs. Examples included papers on the use of cover crops inoculated with free-living nitrogen fixing bacteria as a way to reduce the use of synthetic fertilizer in tobacco, as well as examples of perennial forage crops used to augment grain in dairy production. Other papers and presentations included more solidly organic topics, including lots of focus on vermiculture production and interesting intercropping regimes, such as cassava/banana, sweet potato/corn, guava/cassava, etc. The three days of the conference were followed by two days of tours to various agricultural coops, extension stations and local community gardens.

ACTAF is very interested in collaborating further with IOIA and we are already in the early stages of negotiating future trainings. While the primary interest now is on training personnel to become inspectors (and inspector trainers) for participatory certification schemes, the Cubans know that come "the day after the embargo," there will be a huge demand for qualified, local organic inspectors who can inspect to EU and NOP standards.

## EU countries refuse to back new license for glyphosate weed-killer

EU nations refused to back a limited extension of the herbicide glyphosate's use on June 6, threatening withdrawal of Monsanto's Roundup and other weed-killers from shelves if no decision is reached by the end of the month.

Contradictory findings on carcinogenic risks have thrust the chemical into the center of a dispute among EU and U.S. politicians, regulators and researchers. Citizen and environmental groups have urged governments to exercise caution.

The EU executive had offered a 12- to 18-month extension to allow time for further scientific study by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), in hopes of allaying health concerns. Its earlier proposal to renew the glyphosate license for up to 15 years had failed to win support in two meetings this year.

The compromise proposal failed to win the qualified majority needed for adoption, an EU official said, adding the European Commission was set to discuss the issue at a meeting on June 7.

Seven member states abstained and 20 backed the proposal, a German environment ministry spokeswoman said. Only Malta voted against, diplomats said.

Without a majority decision that meets the required percentage of total EU population, the EU executive may submit its proposal to an appeal committee of political representatives of the 28 member states within a month. If there is again no decision, the European Commission may adopt its own proposal.

Monsanto defended the safety of its widely used herbicide, and said glyphosate's license should be renewed for the full 15 years. Monsanto has not ruled out a legal appeal if approval lapses after June 30, requiring a six-month phase-out of glyphosate-containing products. The industry lobby has criticized the regulatory uncertainty.

The controversy hangs over German chemicals group Bayer's \$62 billion offer in May to buy U.S. seeds company Monsanto. Germany was among states which abstained from voting and has opposed Monsanto's genetically modified seeds.

Glyphosate use is key for Monsanto in the United States and Brazil, where the U.S. company depends on sales of genetically modified corn and soybean seeds that can resist the widely used weed killer.

In Europe, sale and use of such seeds faces strong opposition and plays virtually no role in commercial farming. But an EU refusal of a new glyphosate license could signal stricter regulation of the broader agricultural chemicals industry.

It would also hit Monsanto's bottom line: If the EU were to halt glyphosate sales, the company could see earnings reduced by up to \$100 million as its premium branded Roundup product is diverted to the generic market, said Bernstein senior analyst Jonas Oxgaard.

Environmental and citizen campaign groups have called for an EU-wide ban in the absence of scientific certainty.

The prospect of a European ban could complicate EU-U.S. trade talks.

The U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) said in May glyphosate was unlikely to pose a risk to people exposed to it through food.

The finding matches that of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), an independent agency funded by the European Union, but runs counter to a March 2015 study by the WHO's Lyon-based International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

That agency said the chemical was probably able to cause cancer and classified it as a 'Group 2A' carcinogen. It assessed whether the substance can cause cancer in any way - regardless of real-life conditions on typical levels of human exposure or consumption.

*Reuters, 6 June 2016*

**Board of Directors Minutes Highlights***(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website.)***Conference Call – February 29, 2016**

BOD Members present: Stuart McMillan, Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), Isidor Yu, Pam Sullivan. Also Present: Margaret Scoles, ED. 5:30 Meeting opened by Chair Stuart McMillan; 5:47 Garth Kahl joins the meeting; 6:00 Ib Hagsten joins the meeting.

**2016 Annual Meeting Discussion.** We got a subsidy from Juju's governor's office of nearly \$4K. A professor at local university helped us with this subsidy. Actual subsidy will be through local Jeju University organic organization. Seoul governor will participate via video. Subsidy should cover the cost of the AGM. Subsidy is 5 million KRW or about \$4,300 USD.

**IFOAM North America.** Discussion of IFOAM North America and Margaret's participation there. The general consensus is that Margaret should continue to participate in IFOAM N. America.

**Discussion of Peer Evaluation.** Discussion of offering a "early bird" rate and impact of NOP communication to certifiers that they must evaluate every inspector every year. Consensus is to offer no early booking discount to CBs, but to increase the fee for those CBs that contract with us later in the season to \$550.

**Accreditation Review Panel.** MA moves we accept Pam (chair), Tom Cassan of (inspector member), and Dave DeCou as non-IOIA member, Linda Kaner, inspector member, and Kelly O'Donnell (certifier representative), and invite Amanda Birk to serve as alternate. Ib seconds. Unanimously approved. The BoD wishes to thank Christopher Warren-Smith for his service as Chair and Ellen Hagsten for her service as a non-IOIA member on the ARP.

**ED report.** Written report provided prior to meeting. MS asks BoD to move forward with discussion with Luis Brenes and Garth about increasing IOIA activities in Cuba. Pam makes motion to this effect. Ib seconds. Unanimously approved.

**BoD Retreat. April 11, 2016. Jeju Island, Korea.**

BOD members present: Stuart McMillan (Chair), Ib Hagsten, Pam Sullivan, Margaret Anne Weigelt (MA), Garth Kahl (GK), Mutsumi Sakuyoshi. Also present, Margaret Scoles: ED

MS- Explains that when they started planning the Retreat, they were planning on having Mary Hernandez work with us remotely. Now that she is going to be in person, we are going to focus on working with her. General agreement that we will be working with Mary most of today and save most of the meeting business for tomorrow.

**BOD election**

Discussion of issue relating to Martha Santizo Castillo being a legal representative for Öko-BCS in Guatemala. Based on the information she has provided during the AGM and afterwards by email, she is not eligible to sit on the BoD, because she holds a management position with an organic certification agency. Stuart- suggests that since we can't have a run-off election, we declare the person who gained the next number of votes as the winner of the open BoD seat. Garth moves that based on the election results from the 2016 AGM, we offer the open BoD seat to the candidate who garnered the next highest number of votes. 2nd by Pam. Unanimously approved. Stuart- thinks this highlights an issue we need to address in the next year. Do we want to change the exclusion from BOD members serving as CB management? MS calls Matthew Miller to tell him that we would like him to serve on the BoD. Matthew accepts.

9:15 Meeting adjourned for focused group training with Mary Hernandez, facilitator.

**April 12, 2016, Jeju Island, Korea**

Group work with Mary Hernandez until 11:10, when Stuart called the business meeting to order. Matt Miller (via Skype), in addition to those listed for April 11. Welcome **Matt and Mutsumi**.

**Board of Directors Minutes Highlights****Filling Board positions**

Stuart briefs Matt and Mutsumi on the strategy to have staggered terms (2 vs 3 yr. terms). Mutsumi wants 2 year term (off in 2018). Matt agrees to accept 3 year term (off 2019). Garth and Ib are both going to step down next year. MA and Garth are eligible to run again. MA is planning to run again.

Chair: Stuart

Vice: Ib

Secretary: Garth

Treasurer: Pam

Ex Committee at Large: Margaret Anne

Director: Mutsumi

Director: Matt

**Pam moves we accept the above slate of members of the Executive Committees. 2nd by Ib. Unanimously approved.**

Filling Chair and BOD liaisons for committees followed (see website for results).

**12:00 Garth Kahl moves we accept the slate for chair and BOD liaison positions. 2nd by Pam. Unanimously approved.**

Members present for afternoon: Pam, MA, Ib, Stuart, Mutsumi, Garth. MS is not present.

Discussion of tasks and deadlines for MS in terms of Emergency Plan and preparation of SOP for long time succession.

- May 1: MS to have Emergency Plan in place by May 1. Need to have an emergency plan for what happens if MS is unable to work.

Board Action Items:

- BoD to develop a copy of a job description for a potential new ED, using notes from workshop with Mary Hernandez.
- Pam and MAW will review the Accreditation Review Panel and Accreditation Review Committee to revise the instructions and scoring system prior to Aug 30th.
- Matt to work with bylaws committee to revise bylaws to allow for replacement of BoD candidates between AGMs, for example by creating a procedure for Special Elections.
- Stuart and Ib will perform an annual performance evaluation of MS by Nov. 30th
- Stuart and Ib will consider developing a process to perform a "mini" performance evaluation of MS on a quarterly basis.

15:30 MS returns to meeting.

**Canada News, from page 9**

Organic sector mourns the passing of Cathleen Kneen



Sustainable food systems pioneer and community leader Cathleen Kneen passed away February 21 after a struggle with pancreatic cancer. Since the 1960s, Cathleen has been instrumental in establishing and growing several social justice and food activism groups including Food Secure Canada, Just Food, and Ottawa Food Policy Council—just to name a few. Cathleen was also a recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award by Organic Council of Ontario and recognized as a Female Food Hero by Oxfam Canada. *OTA News Flash 3/1/2016*

Welcome to IOIA's newest staff member, Cynthia Jorgensen, who is serving as our Membership Services Coordinator. Glad to have you aboard!



**MOSES—the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service**—is seeking a dynamic new Executive Director. Ideally, the incoming director will have a personal or professional connection to organic/sustainable farming in order to understand the concerns of our constituents and credibly represent the organization. See <http://bit.ly/MOSES-ExecDirector> for the full job announcement.



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

## 2016 Calendar

**July 13 – 14** Organic Produce Summit, Monterey Hyatt Resort and Spa, California. [More info](#)

**September 17-25** 7<sup>th</sup> Annual National Organic Week, featuring celebrations and activities all across Canada.

**September 21** OTA Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration, during Expo East, Baltimore

**September 21-24** Natural Products Expo East, Baltimore

**November 3, 4,& 5** [Organic Connections Trade Show](#), Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

**November 16 – 18** The Fall 2016 National Organic Standards Board meeting, St. Louis, Missouri at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel, 212 N. Kingshighway Blvd.

**January 26 – 29, 2017** Guelph Organic Conference, <http://www.guelphorganicconf.ca/>

**January 31** USDA National Organic Program Certifier Training, Accredited Certifiers Association hosting events at The Hilton Portland, OR.

**February 1 – 2** Accredited Certifiers Professional Development Training for private and state accredited certifiers and supporters. Also, Accredited Certifiers Association Annual Meeting.

**November 9 – 11 2017** 19<sup>th</sup> Organic World Congress, New Delhi, India. <http://www.owc.ifoam.bio>

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