



Right: A small but enthusiastic group attended IOIA's *The New Organic Inspector* workshop on October 1 at the OWC. Speakers included Margaret Scoles, explaining the IOIA Training Institute and the potential for web-based training; Dr. Jay Sakle, from the Natural Organic Certification Association, who filled in for Sandeep Bhargava, on the topic of Grower Group Inspection and Certification. Yutaka Maruyama spoke about the Japan Organic Inspectors Association and their activities. Isidor Yu concluded with the founding and activities of the Korea Organic Inspectors Association. Originally scheduled for 90 minutes, the workshop stretched into two full hours. The participants came from Europe, Nepal,



Sri Lanka, Japan, Korea and China. Gabriela Soto, IOIA Inspector Member and Trainer from Costa Rica, also attended. IOIA gained a new member from the workshop -- Natsuko Kumasawa of Japan.

Left: Don't try this at home: Margaret learning to make rice cakes.

Top left: At the Scent of Autumn Farm, the gracious head of the soybean paste/sauce plant offers the group a taste of the soybean paste for which she became famous.



Above: The environmentally friendly pear producer explains how he determined what type of music he should play for his pears. According to him, the stomates opened farthest for classical, and they did not appreciate rock music.

Below: A day off! Amy LeBlanc, IOIA inspector member from Maine, and the ED, happy roommates at a certified organic soybean paste plant. Both enjoyed a spectacular blue-sky Yangpyeong bio-tour. The group learned about making soybean paste and

soy sauce; made rice cakes and visited a pear farm, visited a temple, saw how snails are used for weed control in rice, and toured an organic kimchi factory. Thanks to my training team, who shoo'd me away and staffed the booth.



Above: Yutaka Maruyama and Mutsumi Sakuyoshi delivered the one-day of advanced training comparing the key updates and differences for EU, JAS, and NOP Standards on October 3. Training was in English. Isidor Yu assisted with translation to Korean and helped organize the event. Raymond Yang helped translate for the English-language trainers. A total of 16 participants received certificates, including several staff of MAEIL. Mr. Chung of MAEIL explained the practical challenges of organic livestock certification in Korea. Maruyama is Chair of the JAS Review Committee. The JAS Standards are up for review every 5 years, and 2011 is that review year.

IOIA gifted JOIA and JOIA with tablecloths, customized with the names of all 3 organizations at the conclusion of the Advanced Training on October 3. JOIA's featured JOIA in the center; KOIA's cloth featured KOIA in the center. IOIA used the third one for the World Organic Fair booth. Special thanks to IOIA staff Kathy Bowers and Lynell Denson, for this labor of love, which involved many hours of designing, cutting, measuring, and ironing.



Entrenamiento de Inspeccion Organica en Nicaragua

por Humberto
Gonzalez

De acuerdo a los datos estadísticos, Nicaragua es el mayor productor y exportador de productos orgánicos en la región centroamericana.

Cuenta con uno de los mayores potenciales de crecimiento gracias a sus condiciones climáticas, disponibilidad de mano de obra y acceso a mercados.



Actualmente existe un gran incentivo internacional para el apoyo a proyectos de producción orgánica para diferentes rubros, incluyendo la ganadería. La apicultura se perfila como uno de los rubros de mayor facilidad de crecimiento. Es por ello que se requiere la formación de personal técnico altamente capacitado, con conocimientos normativos adecuados para garantizar el acceso y la constancia en los mercados internacionales. Adicionalmente el Estado como ente regulador debe garantizar un control adecuado de los procesos productivos y de comercialización, garantizando transparencia y concordancia con los principios orgánicos.

El IOIA como institución independiente y sus cursos de formación juegan un papel muy importante en el diseño de programas con una alta capacidad técnica normativa que garantiza un manejo adecuado de los sistemas de producción adaptados a los diferentes mercados. En el curso organizado pro Mayacert en Managua, Nicaragua, en Octubre 24-28, estuvieron presentes personas involucradas en los diferentes sectores, desde ONG, Gobierno, productores y representantes de organismos de certificación, lo cual va a contribuir al acercamiento de las partes y una clara interpretación y adaptación normativa local, cuyo objetivo primordial es el desarrollo de la agricultura orgánica local proyectada hacia el mundo entero.

Gracias IOIA por su aporte en el fortalecimiento de la transparencia en la agricultura orgánica.

IOIA in Ecuador

By Patricio Ajitimbay, BCS
Ecuador

IOIA/AGEXPORT/BCS basic organic farm training August 22-26 carried out in the city of Quito, Ecuador was an opportunity to understand better the way to do business in the organic world based on the rules. At the beginning of the course the participants had an idea of what organic means. Now, they have developed their own criteria based on what they learned in the five-day course. They shared their experiences, problems and triumphs as producers, agricultural consultants, students, professionals along with the facilitators who once again have given their best performance with relevant information regarding the matter. The local Regulations were analyzed too.



Training Group in Managua

IOIA in Peru

By Aida Bustamante

Control Union Certifications organized for second time in Peru the course of Organic Inspectors IOIA. This course was held in the facilities of the Crop Research Center at La Molina University (UNALM) in the city of Lima; a total of 3 countries were represented at the training including Peru, Chile and Ecuador. The course was held from November 7 to November 11th, 2011. The Lead Trainer for the course was Luis Brenes who had the support of two assistant trainers: Mrs. Patricia Quijandria and Mr. William Mercedes, both certifiers of Control Union Peru.

The Schedule of the training introduces participants in to the Organic Certification scheme, Organic Production Standard NOP-USDA 7 CFR 205, organic control points and Allowed inputs in Organic Agriculture. On day 2 and 4 participants learned about records, tractability, mass balance, inspectors' code of conduct, organic system plan (OSP), IOIA code of conduct and ethics, risk assessment, elaboration of inspection report and Group certification. The US National Organic



Program (NOP) was introduced and used as the standard to assess organic compliance and crop inputs during the field trip.

On day 3 we have the field inspection, performed in the organic camps of the UNALM. The participants demonstrated



their skills as organic inspectors making all the necessary questions. The inspection was divided in 4 areas: Production Fields, Greenhouse production, Inputs storage, and Field records. Provided staff of El Huerto-Unalm was very helpful in the inspection, guiding us in all their process.



The IOIA course curriculum consisted of 3 days of participatory session, 1 day of field trip and ½ day of graded exams. In addition to the on-site sessions, the course participants were required to complete several pre-course assignments that were graded and subsequently reviewed in class.

All the participants were satisfied with the schedule of the course, the knowledge of the trainer and co-trainers.

“ I found the course very important in my training as an inspector. In fact, I felt that I’ve learn so much things in this course as in my 2 years of experience as a inspector. Luis Brenes, the instructor, gave excellent examples making easy to understand all the aspects in organic certification.” Daniel Oblitas – Inspector, Control Union Certifications –Peru

IOIA Organic Crop Inspection Course

IOIA Crops Course, October 17-21

By Jonda Crosby

Sunday, October 16th, as Garry Lean and Margaret Scoles were setting up for the Organic Crop Inspection Training in Farmington, Minnesota, course participants began to arrive – from all over the U.S. and even from across the globe. This class, not unlike others, had representation from 15 states and even one participant from “Down Under”: Australia. Course participants represented a wide array of professional backgrounds, agencies, and non-profits. There were farmers, agronomists, teachers, soil scientists, a chef, and a college student.

With such a diverse variety of participants, it was hard to imagine how the course trainers would get them all going in one direction. But they did, and the entire class of 25

IOIA Crop Course participants check the buffer between an organic hay and corn field and a conventional corn field as part of the Organic Field Inspection practicum.



Participants at the Organic Certification Training in MN listen as Certified Organic Farmer, Scott Johnson, describes his tillage and nutrient management practices during the Organic Inspection portion of the training.

successfully completed the requirements to become organic inspectors. It was no walk in the park, though. Pre-course reading, assignments, a webinar and then the week-long intensive training, that included more reading, report writing, practice audit trails, role playing inspector interviewing and a final exam – this was a rigorous course. Course evaluations praised Margaret, Garry and Joyce Ford for their expertise and support.

“I thought this course was fun & interesting and I really appreciated Garry’s stories & experience as an inspector.”



“It (the course) gave me some ideas as to what the work is like & what to expect.”

“I felt like Margaret really wanted us to learn how to be good inspectors and was making a great effort to teach, share her experiences & help us.”

“I learned a great deal about inspecting & using the NOP rules, how this works on a farm, etc. I enjoyed this course!”



Margaret Scoles IOIA Executive Director listens intently as the Organic Inspector Training Field Tour host explains his crop rotations for corn, hay, small grains and green manures at the recent Organic Inspectors Training in MN

Inspector training included a balanced mix of class work, practice exercises, games, skits, role-playing, and an on-site practice inspection. The week-long course mixed up the work, the pace and ways of learning. These essential teaching elements, built into the course curricula, helped keep the participants engaged, inquisitive and learning as a group. Clearly this strategy for learning works well, as one participant noted, *“Margaret and Garry were so good at keeping us involved and interacting throughout the class, and it helped us as a group to learn quickly and to feel free to stop the process and ask questions.”* Another noted, *“The pace was a bit fast for me until we did the practice inspection – then I saw all those slides flashing before my eyes – and I realized just how much I had absorbed. I feel prepared to start inspecting farms.”*

Another lasting part of the training is that graduates have access to all of IOIA’s expertise and resources as well as the relationships they developed during the class.

No, we never got all of Jerome’s questions answered, but we ate well from organic food donations organized by IOIA and Gina finally got to ring the retreat center bell!

Jonda Crosby is IOIA’s new Training Services Director



Evaluating Livestock Inputs

As the Organic Industry Grows, Public Material Listings Lag Behind

By Matt Sircely

When Lisa McCrory started as Dairy Technical Assistance Coordinator for NOFA Vermont, there were only a few certified organic dairy farms in the state. "It was definitely exciting," she says. "It felt like a family was growing. Everybody knew each other. It was very cozy and warm and personal." The producers had followed organic practices for years — none were transitioning conventional herds.

But new issues arose as more producers chose organic. Herds dependent on conventional methods like antibiotics experienced heavy cull rates, while producers scrambled for solutions that could meet organic standards. McCrory began compiling lists of allowed materials and products, sometimes categorized by health situation, to support transitioning farmers. Without a public comprehensive organic livestock materials list, certifiers nationwide began to fill the void.

In a sense, little has changed says Jim Riddle, Organic Outreach Coordinator at the University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center. "Compared to crop inputs, the whole organic livestock sector is still in a much earlier stage of development," he says. The fact that certifiers still review most livestock materials means that products "end up on the certifier's list, but the manufacturer isn't driven to get a generic approval from OMRI or WSDA."

Today, the most extensive lists of organic livestock materials are still compiled by certifiers for internal use. Certifiers say that there are many reasons why OMRI listing is less prevalent for livestock products. Some input manufacturers are big enough that the organic sector is beneath their radar, while other manufacturers are so small, that the cost of a generic listing seems prohibitive. Many manufacturers still do not understand the basics of organic certification. Unfortunately, this means that certifiers must review the same product repeatedly and for each different application, each time requesting the most current information from the manufacturer. This can translate to higher costs for organic producers, because certifiers incorporate this unpaid material review work into their certification fees.

As Executive Director of the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Association (NODPA), Ed Maltby spends much of his time advocating on a policy level. "What has increasingly become apparent is that different certifiers will allow different products for different applications, and that has caused some certifier shopping. There also seems to be a lack of consistency of what kinds of records are needed, and how to review those records." In his efforts to advance producers' interests, Maltby advocates for a higher degree of qualification for certifying agents performing materials review, along with a greater understanding of the practical challenges producers face.

"Any movement towards more consistent review criteria between certifiers and with OMRI is a step in the right direction," says Johanna Miranda, Materials Specialist and Inspections Coordinator at Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO). "It's better for us, it's better for the operators, less confusion, less certifier shopping. I think the guidance that's coming from the NOP, slow and steady, has been really helpful."

PCO maintains an internal list of more than 7,000 materials — approximately half are livestock oriented. Miranda reviews products such as mineral and vitamin premixes, including the carrier, forage and silage inoculants, medical treatments, teat dips, fly sprays and drinking water additives to control bacteria or pH.

"First, we check with OMRI, because if that product is OMRI Listed, then that certainly saves us a lot of work," says Miranda. She then determines review criteria based on the material's intended use, but then must usually contact the manufacturer. Most are proactive, but she sometimes has to explain the basics of organic certification. "It can really slow down a review if we're not getting responses from the manufacturer," she says.

Jackie Von Ruden, Farm Certification Manager at the Midwest Organic Services Association says materials review is "definitely not always enjoyable. We have a MOSA status of 'MU', she says. "Manufacturer uncooperative." Nevertheless, the MOSA staff have established strong working relationships with most manufacturers in the process of building their comprehensive list for internal use. These relationships grant MOSA quick access to current information, so that they

can verify materials for each specific use. Some manufacturers furnish outreach materials that facilitate quicker reviews. Von Ruden cites broad agreement among certifiers about what should be allowed, but since the process[see [Livestock](#), p 22]

FDA Rejects Petitions to Ban Certain Antibiotics in Animal Agriculture

On November 7, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) denied two citizen petitions that asked the Agency to ban certain uses of antibiotics in food animals. The petitions, filed in 1999 and 2005, urge the FDA to withdraw the approvals for antibiotics given to animals in feed or water for purposes other than disease treatment if the antibiotics are also used in human medicine. The petitions were filed by Environmental Defense, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Food Animal Concerns Trust, Union of Concerned Scientists and other groups because evidence shows that use of antibiotics for non-therapeutic purposes in livestock production can lead antibiotic resistance within human populations. The groups argue that these antimicrobial drugs shouldn't be used for growth promotion and disease prevention, but rather for treating diagnosed illnesses.

The response to these long-standing citizen petitions came after several of the petitioners filed suit in May against the FDA for not responding. In its response to the petitions, the agency expressed shared concern with the public and the need to address this issue, yet proceeded to deny the petitions on the basis of statutory hurdles such as a notice to the drug maker and an evidentiary hearing on the matter. It argues that taking these drugs off the market would simply be too expensive, resource intensive, and cumbersome: "The agency's experience with contested, formal withdrawal proceedings is that the process can consume extensive periods of time and agency resources."

Instead, FDA is "currently pursuing other alternatives to address the issue of antimicrobial resistance related to the production use of antimicrobials in animal agriculture." The proposed alternative is collaborating with the pharmaceutical companies that produce these antibiotics to voluntarily take them off the market for animal feed.

<http://sustainableagriculture.net>

The Lowdown on Being a Technical Service Provider

By Tony Fleming and Ib Hagsten, Ph.D.

Overview

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has for decades provided a variety of technical resources to crop producers and livestock operations, aimed at both improving agricultural productivity and enhancing conservation outcomes. In recent years, programs have been adapted to help producers make the transition to organic production while maintaining or improving the natural resources of the operation. While the principal role of these new programs is to develop organic system plans and grazing conservation plans for both transitioning and established organic producers, there also are many other opportunities to integrate established NRCS programs into organic operations. In recent years, much of this work has been carried out by technical service providers (TSPs)—individuals, businesses, and non-profits qualified to develop, implement, and verify specific kinds of conservation plans and practices. Currently, a huge demand exists nationwide for TSP-qualified individuals to perform these services for transitioning and established organic producers, thereby creating a significant opportunity for experienced organic inspectors to expand their scope of work. Becoming a NRCS-certified TSP is a straightforward process not unlike that involved in becoming an organic inspector.

Background

The TSP program came about via the 2002 Farm Bill, which expanded the scope of USDA voluntary conservation programs to both private and tribal lands. These programs are typically administered by the NRCS and have historically been carried out by local county NRCS staff. Because the demand for these programs was outstripping both the knowledge base—one of several qualifications to write CAP (transition to organic) plans is a minimum of two years of organic experience, which NRCS typically lack—and capacity of agency staff, the bill also provided the mechanism by which the USDA could qualify, use, and retain outside TSPs to expand the scope and availability of these popular programs.

The added focus on organic production came about through the 2008 Farm Bill, which recognized and encouraged organic production methods as a viable means of achieving certain conservation goals. As a result, NRCS implemented the programs noted above, and adapted many others to meet specific parts of the NOP rule (see the NRCS “Organic Crosswalk” at [ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/IA/Programs/OrganicCrosswalk.pdf](http://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/IA/Programs/OrganicCrosswalk.pdf)). The NRCS relies almost exclusively on TSPs to develop organic production plans. Demand for technical services from the organic sector is growing steadily and is present in all regions of the country, but a particularly large need for TSPs exists in the upper Midwest and Great Lakes regions, where there is a backlog of hundreds or thousands of such plans waiting to be written. A brief perusal of the lists of certified TSPs (posted on the NRCS website) for several states shows only a tiny percentage of TSPs as being qualified to perform organic-related services, and of those, a vanishingly small number as having had any direct personal experience in the organic sector, whether in production, livestock, or inspecting. This gap results in a substantial opportunity for experienced organic inspectors to expand their scope of work. Much of the work can be done during the winter, which dovetails nicely with the typical growing-season-focused schedule of organic farm inspectors. The rest of this article briefly outlines the steps involved in becoming a TSP, along with the typical activities, responsibilities, and technical content of the projects.

Becoming a TSP

The steps involved in becoming an NRCS-certified TSP are similar to the process of becoming an inspector. In essence, a prospective TSP signs up with the NRCS, completes several required training modules (either in person or online), and then becomes registered as a certified TSP. The process is outlined below:

1. The first step is to obtain an eGovernment account and password. This enables access to web-based resources and training programs available through the USDA website. To do this, log on to <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> and establish a Level 2 eGovernment account. Then visit your local USDA service center to activate your

account and obtain a user ID and password.

2. Register as a prospective TSP by logging on to TechReg (<http://techreg.usda.gov>), which is where you will complete a form describing you, your business, and your background. Just like becoming an inspector, this step requires prospective TSPs to demonstrate that they have sufficient knowledge of the subject matter (through training, education, and/or experience). Your background as an organic inspector is ideal.
3. Take the TSP training. The TSP program has categories of technical service, much like there are categories of organic inspecting (crops, livestock, processing, wild harvest, etc), and specialty areas within those categories (for example, there is a constellation of specialty practices associated with the broad category of water quality). Generally speaking, you can pick and choose among categories, but the TSP Orientation Course (7 modules) is required for all types of TSP, including becoming certified for basic organic plan development. Depending on the scope of work one wishes to pursue, NRCS has a wide variety of training courses available through AgLearn that a certified TSP can take at no charge. Thus, if one is doing conservation livestock grazing or water management, for example, there are specific trainings available for those. A test is required at the end of each course, upon which you must achieve a score of 80 or better to successfully complete the training. TSP training is available on line through the USDA AgLearn website, or may be taken in person at regional trainings offered periodically by NRCS, such as the one in Wisconsin recently posted by Harriett on the IOIA forum. The AgLearn website is available at no charge to a registered TSP; NRCS also sends out regular notices to the pool of TSPs, announcing trainings held in classroom-like settings, whose cost ranges from \$250-\$500.
4. Once you have successfully completed the initial training, you will then be listed on the NRCS TSP roster and can begin providing

services. You need not stop there, however. You can add more categories to your qualifications at any time by taking additional trainings available through AgLearn. One such area where a strong need exists falls broadly under the category of “Maintaining or Improving the Natural Resources of Operation”. As mentioned in this column in the Winter and Spring newsletters, this aspect of the rule seems to have fallen between the cracks during the first decade of the NOP, and many certifiers and operators are looking for practical methods by which to better meet both the letter and spirit of that aspect of the rule. Existing NRCS-funded conservation practices and programs as diverse as establishing pollinator habitat, intensive management of rotational grazing, and extending riparian buffers for water quality protection and wildlife habitat all fit handily into the experiential knowledge base of organic farm inspectors.

The TSP Experience

Many kinds of activities directly applicable to organic production are available to qualified TSPs. Broadly speaking, these include developing and writing various kinds of conservation and management plans, designing and implementing a wide range of conservation practices, and performing on-site inspections to verify the proper design, implementation, and efficacy of completed conservation practices. The NRCS **Organic Crosswalk** document noted above suggests the range of possibilities. Perhaps the activity of greatest interest to readers of this newsletter is working with producers to develop and write OSP’s, a document an experienced inspector should be highly familiar with. The NRCS will soon be implementing a template for such plans, similar to those used now by certifiers and following the ATTRA model.

The responsibilities required of a TSP also parallel those of the typical organic inspector. Foremost among these is providing a high-quality product that complies with applicable laws and meets specific program standards, much like a clearly-written inspection report elucidates the operation’s compliance with the NOP. Maintaining the producer’s confidentiality and avoiding conflict of interest will also be familiar to inspectors. Likewise, providing the producer with

clear and complete documentation of the technical services provided (via an OSP, for example) is a key element of the program. Pretty basic stuff for an experienced inspector.

Being a TSP does differ from inspecting in one important way, however. Unlike inspections, which are assigned and compensated through a third-party certifier, *TSPs are contracted directly by the producer*. The scope of services provided, as well as the cost of providing those services, is negotiated directly between the TSP and the producer. The NRCS provides specific cost guidelines (including a not-to-exceed amount) for each type of service. By the standards of the typical farm inspector, however, these guidelines appear rather generous. For example, the TSP typically earns between \$1,000 and \$1,200 for each OSP or conservation grazing plan completed.

Experienced inspectors who take on the challenge of writing OSP’s as a TSP may find it to be a learning experience, particularly for those on the receiving end. Dr. Hagsten produced the first CAP plan in the U.S. When his state conservationist in Missouri excitedly announced to NRCS headquarters, “I got my first one!”, he was asked to supply a copy of that TSP-generated plan for nationwide distribution. The state conservationist happily signed off on that request, obtaining the signed consent of the producer, and shipped the plan off—only to receive scathing evaluations from two categories of NRCS staff: 1) those with desk jobs who had never operated a tractor pulling a disc or any other cultivating implement; and 2) those who knew absolutely nothing about organic farming. A steep learning curve quickly became apparent.

Simple things such as buffers had to be redefined. During seven training sessions provided by Dr. Hagsten to hundreds of NRCS staff, it was amazing to observe the body language and facial expressions of the trainees when it was explained that—in contrast to an NRCS buffer which is designed to contain nutrients *within* a field—an organic buffer is an attempt to keep drift and contamination *out* of the field and away from the organic crop surrounded by the buffer.

Anecdotally, NRCS conservationists seemed perplexed by the concept that

organic systems can greatly reduce soil loss and raised the existential question, “how in the world can we fund a CAP, when T must be less than 5 tons per acre”? NRCS uses a program called RUSLE2, which is based on a computer-generated soil-loss equation, and the conservationists could not imagine how organics could plow, disc, and cultivate reasonable level ground and still have less than 5 tons per acre per year of soil loss. It may be of interest to organic inspectors that by adding a winter rye cover to a three-year rotation of corn-soybeans-wheat, the T value (soil loss) is 2.6 tons/acre. Do we fully realize, as NRCS now has through these experiences, the true value of year-round cover crops?

Following these and other modifications to meet everybody’s perceived needs, CAP plans are now readily approvable by the agency. You can learn more about the TSP program, and initiate the process of becoming a TSP, by visiting the NRCS Technical Service Provider Orientation page:

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/nedc/training/catalog/?&cid=nrsc143_024158

Tony Fleming is a hydrogeologist and the technical editor of the newsletter.

Ib Hagsten has been a TSP for NRCS for ten years, is a seasoned organic inspector, and a member of the IOIA BOD.

OMRI, from page 22

don’t ask for any additional information from me because it has the OMRI seal.” For Lynn DeVaney, Vice President of Environmental Care and Share, Inc., OMRI Listing is crucial for several reasons. “OMRI not only helps us be sure we are in compliance with the organic standards, it is also a really great source of promotion.”

OMRI has already incorporated into its strategic plan the goal of increasing livestock product listings. “Any time we can increase the utility of the OMRI Products List, we will,” says Executive Director/CEO Peggy Miars, adding: “We’re aware of the organic community’s need for more public listings of livestock products, and we are consistently looking at ways to meet that need.”

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Non-GMO Month a Huge Success

October was Non-GMO Month. From the 46% increase in retailer participation to the historic Right2Know March from New York City to Washington, D.C., food activists got out the word that consumers are not interested in eating genetically modified foods.

Non-GMO Month in Numbers:

1,039 [Participating Retailers](#)
54,000 Non-GMO Project Pocket Guides distributed
50,000+ Followers on [Facebook](#)
40,000+ Visitors to related websites (including the new [nongmomonth.org](#))
466,000+ Overall "engagements" on Facebook (likes, shares, clicks)
3,800+ Followers on [Twitter](#)
2,500+ Mentions on Twitter
598 [Products verified](#) in the 90 days prior to Non-GMO Month
Non-GMO Project Verified products recently hit \$1 billion in annual sales.
www.nongmoproject.org

Groups Petition FDA to Just Label It

Another highlight in October was the launch of the broad-based [Just Label It!](#) Campaign.

The Center for Food Safety filed a legal petition with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) seeking mandatory labeling for foods made from GM crops. Labeling has been long opposed by big biotech companies.

The CFS petition alleges that the "absence of mandatory labeling disclosures for GE (genetically engineered) foods is misleading to consumers," and says the "requested actions are necessary to prevent economic fraud, and to protect consumers who are deceived by thinking the absence of labeling means the absence of GE foods."

The FDA had no immediate comment on the CFS legal petition, but a spokesman said previous court decisions have found that the agency does not have the authority to require labeling on the basis of consumer interest alone.

The legal action by CFS requires a formal response from the FDA and is the first step toward ultimately filing a lawsuit against the government agency to try to force labeling. CFS, a consumer advocacy organization, has filed several lawsuits against the government in recent years and successfully stymied approvals of

some biotech crops. FDA has 180 days to respond.

The CFS action is backed by a coalition of about 350 organizations that include representatives of the healthcare industry, consumer advocates, environmentalists, food and farming organizations and businesses.

In addition to the legal petition, the coalition has also launched a website petition campaign to encourage consumers to pressure the FDA on the labeling issue. The coalition argues that many other developed countries such as the 15 nations in the European Union, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Russia and China, have laws requiring labeling of genetically engineered foods. A majority of U.S. consumers wants such labeling as well, according to polls.

The petition now has over 300,000 signatures. The campaign vows to make labeling of GMOs an issue in the upcoming US presidential election.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/04/fda-food-gmo-idUSN1E79316220111004>

Consumers Hope for GM Label in CA

California voters may soon enact nation's first GMO label requirement.

The organization behind the proposed labeling law - the Organic Consumers Association - needs to collect 500,000-plus signatures to see their initiative on the 2012 California ballot. If enough signatures are collected, it will give California voters a chance to decide if the state will become the first in the nation with a mandatory label requirement for GMOs.

Despite decades of public outcry to label and even ban this lab-created food, the FDA has seen no need for identifying bioengineered products. Since 1992 FDA policy states there is "no basis for concluding that bioengineered foods differ from other foods in any meaningful or uniform way, or that, as a class, foods developed by the new techniques present any different or greater safety concern than foods developed by traditional plant breeding."

After facing a dead-end in changing federal label requirements, U.S. -based GMO label advocates have since turned their efforts to enacting laws at the state level. While California may become the first state to require labels, it isn't the first to try. Oregon attempted a similar initiative in 2002 - Measure 27; but a

coalition of biotech industries mounted a convincing ad campaign that prompted voters to doubt the value of the measure. Companies such as Monsanto, DuPont, General Mills, and PepsiCo joined forces against Measure 27 in the Coalition Against Costly Labeling Laws. Their \$5.5 million campaign hit voters where it always hurts: their wallets.

With several billion dollars invested in GMO products, this same coalition is likely to pour money into swaying California voters as well. The industry assures consumers that their gene-altered products are not only safe to eat, but also save money by increasing crop yields, and benefit the environment by reducing the use of pesticides. But unlike other technological innovations, the biotech food industry is not interested in identifying its creations from their natural counterparts. For all their proposed benefits, public stigma against GMOs has convinced industry leaders that identifying their technologically-enhanced food on store shelves would be bad for business.

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/united-states/push-for-gmo-labeling-on-food-62992.html>

ECJ Issues Ruling on GM Contamination

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has issued a groundbreaking ruling in a case concerning the contamination of honey with pollen from GM crops. The court ruled that honey contaminated by pollen from a GM maize variety (MON810) cannot be sold on the market, as the maize was not specifically authorized to be in the honey. The case concerns German beekeepers, whose honey was contaminated by pollen from GM maize during field trials of Monsanto's GM maize. The ruling directly challenges the abandonment of the policy of zero tolerance for GMOs that have not been authorized in the EU, and clearly underlines the need for EU regulation that would protect farmers, food producers and consumers against the contamination of their products from GM cultivation.

Commenting on the ruling, Green MEP José Bové said:

"This case is proof that coexistence is a fallacy and that GM cultivation does not leave a choice for GM-free products. Permitting the cultivation of GM crops clearly leads to the contamination of non-GM crops and other foodstuffs like honey. Beekeepers are powerless to

prevent the contamination of their honey by GM pollen, as farmers are for their crops, and thus powerless to prevent the tainting of the foodstuffs they produce and the integrity of their product. The only sure way to prevent this is by precluding the cultivation of GMOs." <http://www.greens-efa.eu/ecj-ruling-on-gmos-4290.html>

EU Feed Imports: Traces of GMOs Now Allowed

The new EU Regulation 619/2011 passed at the end of June allows feed imports to contain up to 0.1% of unapproved GMOs in the future.

The EU Commission regards this value as the "technical recording limit", below which no reliable test results are available. A requirement for the new arrangement is that the unapproved GMO in the EU is first already approved in a country outside the EU, and second has been undergoing an approval process in the EU for more than three months. In particular, feed from South America and the US contain more and more GMOs that are not approved in the EU. Unapproved GMOs are still not allowed in food, however, not even in traces.

The European Union has applied a zero-tolerance policy to unapproved GMOs in feed imports until now. This has meant that not even traces of them were allowed in feed, reports the German Organic Producers and Traders Association (BNN).

Posted on [August 18, 2011](#) by [greemtorganics](#)

Consumers Speak Up Against Monsanto's GE Sweet Corn

In response to Monsanto's release of the company's first genetically engineered sweet corn for human consumption, a coalition has collected more than 264,000 petition signatures from consumers who refuse to purchase the corn and are asking retailers and food processors to reject it. The coalition, including the Center for Environmental Health, Center for Food Safety, CREDO Action, Food Democracy Now!, and Food & Water Watch, announced that they have delivered the signed petition to 10 of the top national retail grocery stores including Wal-Mart, Kroger and Safeway, and top canned and frozen corn processors including Bird's Eye and Del Monte.

Two major national food companies, General Mills and Trader Joe's, have already indicated that they will not be

using the Monsanto GE sweet corn in their products, according to replies the companies sent to a request from the Center for Environmental Health.

In August, Monsanto announced that its Roundup Ready GE sweet corn - as opposed to corn that has been used primarily in animal feed and highly processed foods since 1994 - would be available for the fall planting season. Although the sweet corn is the first GE vegetable of this type to be commercialized by Monsanto, it received swift approval from the USDA since the agency does no independent testing of GE crops and the seed's three distinct traits were previously approved, each separately, in 2005 and 2008. The three traits are corn borer resistance, rootworm resistance and tolerance for glyphosate - the primary ingredient in Monsanto's herbicide Roundup.

Monsanto is aiming to grow its GE Sweet Corn on 250,000 acres next year, which is roughly 40 percent of the US sweet corn market. They believe the corn will be used primarily in frozen and canned corn products, but could also be sold as fresh corn on the cob through retailers. <http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/2011/10/27/enough-tricks-consumers-speak-up-against-monsanto-s-ge-sweet-corn/>

RR Crops to Raise the White Flag?

Herbicide resistant weeds are winning the pesticide "arms race" in US Roundup Ready crops, and Monsanto has no intention of shouldering responsibility for rising weed control costs, according to a briefing by GM Freeze.

The briefing reports that in the 2010/11 season so far, two new weed species have become resistant to glyphosate (the active ingredient in Monsanto's herbicide Roundup used on RR soya maize and cotton), bringing the global total to 21.

Infestations of superweeds now cover 4.5 million hectares in the US alone. The noxious weed Palmer Amaranth is spreading "exponentially" in RR cotton according to Robert Nichols of Cotton Incorporated, and once it has reached a certain size it can only be controlled by hand pulling.

GM Freeze also reports that Monsanto's warranty on the weedkiller does not cover the failure of the product to control weeds that are now resistant to it:

"Growers must be aware of and proactively manage for glyphosate-resistant weeds in

planning their weed control program. When a weed is known to be resistant to glyphosate, then a resistant population of that weed is by definition no longer controlled with labeled rates of glyphosate. Roundup agricultural herbicide warranties will not cover the failure to control glyphosate-resistant weed populations."

The severity of glyphosate resistance has forced Monsanto to sign agreements with other pesticide companies to provide other herbicides to be used in combination with Roundup.

RR crops were once marketed as a cheap and simple way to manage weeds in cotton, soya and maize. Now the rise in glyphosate resistance is cited by at least one investment adviser in its recommendation to sell Monsanto shares. <http://www.gmfreeze.org/news-releases/169/>

Monsanto Corn Falls to Illinois Bugs as Investigation Widens

Monsanto's Bt corn is toppling over in northwestern Illinois fields, a sign that rootworms outside of Iowa may have developed resistance to the genetically modified crop, according to one scientist. Michael Gray, an agricultural entomologist at the University of Illinois in Urbana, said he's studying whether western corn rootworms collected in September in Henry and Whiteside counties are resistant to an insect-killing protein derived from *Bacillus thuringiensis*, or Bt, that has been engineered into Monsanto corn. The insects were collected in two fields where corn had toppled after roots were eaten by rootworms, Gray said. Planting Bt corn year after year increases the odds that the bugs will develop resistance to the insecticide. While the symptoms parallel bug resistance that's been confirmed in Iowa, he said analysis of the Illinois insects won't be complete until next year. Many farmers consider the worm-like larvae of the corn rootworm beetle corn's No. 1 enemy.

Gray detailed his preliminary findings in September in the university's Pest Management and Crop Development Bulletin. He said he's since been contacted by more farmers whose Bt corn is succumbing to corn rootworms.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-09-02/monsanto-corn-is-showing-illinois-insect-damage-as-investigation-widens.html>

Minutes, from page 23

changes may arise as a result. Membership Committee recommended strengthening membership base, implementing a member recruitment campaign and promoting membership benefits.

Deb Bunn move to raise inspector dues, add a payment plan, create and implement a membership campaign. Michelle Sandy seconded. Eric Feutz opposed. Motion carried. Raising dues with small increment this year and additional increment in new year was discussed. BOD appreciates and gave careful consideration to Membership Committee recommendations. Jennie Clifford moved to raise the dues \$15 this year with an additional inspector dues increase next year in conjunction with a Membership Campaign. Seconded by Deb Bunn. Motion carried. Action Point: Jennie Clifford will ask Membership Committee to plan a Membership Campaign, assess membership interest to an Auto-payment option, the option of a dues spread over several months and thank them for all their good work. Kelly Monaghan will be resigning as Chair to Membership Committee.

BOD Retreat Planning: Silke Fuchshofen collected agenda items from BOD. Action Points: Jennie Clifford and Silke Fuchshofen will put forward a concrete plan and work with facilitator on agenda.

- Goals – Business Plan, work with USDA, IOIA role & vision

- Facilitator – to be considered within budget. Potential facilitators discussed

- BOD Preparation –

- Staff Preparation – Action Point: Staff & BOD to read materials from website

- New staff will attend part of November retreat based within budget, time and agenda. **Action Point:** Silke Fuchshofen will visit with new staff whether they could develop and present a workshop for board retreat (decision making, new endeavor, new resources)

- Within Budget – inexpensive venue with facilitator

Bylaws Proposals: Have not heard back from Bylaws Committee. Action Point: Margaret Scoles will send ballot for board and members with any by-laws proposals 45 days before annual meeting, as per bylaws – 1st January to mid-January timeline.

Non-Staggered BOD terms discussed. Currently 5 BOD elected every other year

and 2 BOD elected every other year. Nominations Committee is currently working on nominations and number of candidates. 3 yr. terms vs. 2 yr. Discussion deferred to next meeting.

Grant Writer: Grant writer ad appeared in last Inspectors report. Discussed available USA grant writers, payment structures and grant seekers.

ED Report: Action Points:

- Finance Committee normally meets by December. Preliminary budget normally looked at in November, needed by December. Action Point: Eric Feutz will engage Finance Committee and discuss budget on November 18th. Agreement that we have BOD retreat, Finance Committee report, then BOD meeting December 13th.

- Mischa Popoff's letter turned over to the Membership Committee. It was noted that to meet IOIA membership requirements the by-laws require members to support what IOIA does, and members have training.

Livestock, from page 17

differs, so too do approval results. Some manufactures even use one certifier's ruling as blanket approval, says Von Ruden. "They don't understand why they have to release their proprietary information fifty times. I think the draw for manufacturers to OMRI would be the release of information one time and one time only."

Katherine Withey, Organic Livestock Certification Coordinator and Organic Material Registration Coordinator at the Washington State Department of Agriculture notes few livestock products are publicly WSDA registered even though WSDA has reviewed hundreds of products for individual operators. "The lack of OMRI listed or WSDA registered livestock products means that we have a much more complicated job in other segments of certification. We're doing deeper reviews on a more consistent basis," she says.

The landscape of organic livestock inputs is broad. The National Organic Standards Board continues to discuss several materials considerations, including yeast products, enzymes, genetically modified vaccines, amino acids, and the issue of excipients. With forthcoming regulatory clarifications, input manufacturers, certifiers and producers must remain attuned to minute details of which

materials and ingredients are allowed, prohibited and restricted.

Brad Heins, Assistant Professor of Organic Dairy Management at the University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center operates a low-input trial herd of 90 organic cows alongside a parallel conventional herd. A comprehensive list will be an ongoing need into the future, he says, and is integral to the industry moving forward. "I've talked to some producers who are thinking of transitioning, and one of their biggest holdups is: 'What do I do when a cow gets sick? I can't use antibiotics anymore, so what am I supposed to do?'"

Albert Straus of the Straus Family Creamery in Marin County, California, notes that "Ninety-nine percent of the cure is prevention." Still, he worries most about the health of his fragile calves, and when searching for medications, vaccines and other materials, he generally approaches manufacturers before asking his certifier. "If there was a more user-friendly system to be able to know if something is allowed or not, I think that would be helpful. Most producers and processors don't have time to run around and figure it out," says Straus, adding "OMRI listing is a very effective tool for producers as well as manufacturers, helping to make it a more streamlined process for everybody involved."

Maltby echoes the importance of instant access to information in crisis situations. "There is a great shortage of veterinarians who understand organics, so in times of emergency, producers need to call on the nearest veterinarian and they need to know what they can and can't use."

Many certifiers and consultants agree that a public comprehensive list would aid innovation in the organic livestock sector. The combination of urgency and uncertainty around allowed inputs can drive producers to only use products that have already been approved for their operation, creating disincentives for the use of new products and technologies. Heins echoes the sentiment. "We tend to use things that we've used in the past just because they've been approved. Then we don't have a cow that's sick and need to do some fast thinking."

At Van Beek Natural Science, Anita Soodsma, Research and Development Product Formulator, says she is pleased with how certifiers and producers react to the OMRI Listed status of her organic product line. "They [see **OMRI**, p 19]

Minutes, from page 9

BOD Retreat: Location and cost of facility was discussed with consideration given so that 3 BOD can drive and also where airport is within close proximity with ease to accessibility for shuttle service.

Expo East Participation: Michelle Sandy will attend OTA dinner Wednesday, Sept 21st. Ib Hagsten is available on Sept 22. Silke Fuchshofen arrives 22nd and will represent IOIA during Expo. Action point: Margaret will coordinate BOD Retreat Pre-work meeting to communicate and pre-discuss BOD retreat with Michelle, Ib Hagsten and Silke Fuchshofen present. IOIA will not have a booth, but will attend meetings and events.

ED Report: BOD discussed ED August 2011 report. NOP CORI project (Criteria for Reviewers and Inspectors) is a top priority.

Action point: Dues structure – idea to add option for annual credit card, monthly deduction, with analysis of added cost for credit card, with review with Membership Chair. It was noted that the new hire recommendations will be done by mid-September. Margaret suggested postponing and moving monthly meeting to September 22nd when the first two CORI deliverables were done and the BOD could offer input on the final deliverable (proposed licensing/accreditation program for inspectors and reviewers).

IOIA BOD Conference Call - September 22, 2011

Attendance: H  l  ne Bouvier, Deb Bunn, Jennie Clifford, Eric Feutz, Silke Fuchshofen, Ib Hagsten, Michelle Sandy, and Margaret Scoles – Executive Director. Minute taking: H  l  ne Bouvier. Chair: Michelle Sandy. Dana Miller note-taking, via recording.

Action Point: Silke Fuchshofen offered to interview people and put together BOD November agenda.

Criteria for Organic Inspectors and Reviewers (CORI) Task 1 – 3: Winfried Fuchshofen, as a member of the Shared Management Team for the CORI Project, joined BOD Executive Session to discuss the project. Winfried explained the main differences between these tasks: the first two are research and knowledge based. IOIA has experience, so it’s comparatively straight-forward. Task 1 is criteria for inspectors and reviewers and Task 2 is training content. Task 3 is different – decision based. Discussion presented ideas such as creating an advisory board.

Meeting shifted to Agenda Item #7 to accommodate Bob Durst’s appearance on the call.

Training Services Director Search Committee Report: Bob Durst gave report on the TSD search committee’s activities, as chair of that committee. Bob Durst, Michelle Sandy, and Margaret Scoles conducted the phone interviews. There may be a need for additional training, such as web programs, which would be an added expense for IOIA. The preferred applicant’s references held a great deal of weight with great teaching skills, rejuvenation of organization, good knowledge in agriculture, and references with great credibility.

Set 2012 Member Dues: It was agreed that the inspector dues be raised from last year. The past three years, inspector dues have not been adjusted. The BOD discussed various options, such as an automatic pay option with no renewal process, just an automatic deduction, and it would take action to discontinue; or to raise the dues along with a monthly deduction option. Also discussed was doing business as usual this year and then sending a letter out stating a pay increase next year. Various raise increases were discussed.

2012 AGM and Upcoming BOD election: It will be March 1 or 2. Venue not yet confirmed. Canadian members did not have a problem with setting date back to Friday, rather than a weekend.

3-yr BOD terms and staggered terms were not discussed: deferred to next meeting.

ED Report: Margaret Scoles referred to her written report, adds -- A membership application was received from Mischa Popoff. This will need to be addressed at the next meeting, as IOIA is still in the process of previous related action points.

IOIA BOD Conference Call - October 13, 2011

Attendance: Jennie Clifford, Silke Fuchshofen, Ib Hagsten, H  l  ne Bouvier, Eric Feutz, Deb Bunn, Michelle Sandy and Margaret Scoles – Executive Director. Chair: Michelle Sandy. Margaret Scoles note taking, H  l  ne Bouvier minutes, Silke Fuchshofen timekeeper.

Secretary’s Report: Minutes of the September 22nd meeting were deferred for approval at November 18th meeting along with October 13th meeting minutes.

Discussion of Minutes Procedure: Dana Miller, Margaret Scoles and H  l  ne Bouvier will have a conference call to establish best procedures for note & minute taking.

CORI (Criteria for Organic Reviewers and Inspectors Project): 3.1 & 3.2 were submitted to NOP. This was completed under an intense deadline. IOIA is awaiting NOP’s response. The NOP has requested the NOSB make qualifications for inspectors. The next NOSB meeting is a scheduled in Savannah, GA Nov. 29 – Dec. 2. **Action Point:** Michelle Sandy is attending and could present.

Action Point: BOD will need to decide by email how to present. A written comment and request to be on the list to present oral comments (3 minutes) to NOSB regarding IOIA’s position on the CACC’s proposed guidance re: inspector qualifications. Deadline to submit written comment is November 13, 2011. Public time to speak and put forth oral comments is Tuesday morning, November 29. November 30th the NOSB will put forth their recommendation for proposed guidance to NOP. Ib Hagsten moved IOIA provide written and oral comment to NOSB meeting in Savannah, GA and get on agenda. Seconded by Deb Bunn. Motion carried. Action Point: Margaret Scoles will get a slot on agenda. Michelle Sandy, Jennie Clifford, Margaret Scoles and Luis Brenes (to be invited) will prepare written comment.

September 2012 member dues: The decision to set inspector member dues in the September meeting was revisited. Jennie Clifford is Membership Committee liaison. Action Point: Membership Committee recommends putting forward auto-payment and pay plan questions to assess interest from membership for auto payments and quarterly options. Future by-law [See **Minutes**, p 22]



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2012 Calendar

January 5 – 7 Great Plains Growers Conference, St. Joseph, Missouri.
<http://www.greatplainsgrowers.org/>

Jan 10-14 North American Beekeeping Conference and Tradeshow, Las Vegas.
<http://www.nabeekeepingconference.com/>

Jan 11-13 Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism and Organic Conference & Trade Show Springfield, Illinois.
<http://www.specialtygrowers.org/iscaoc-conference.html>

Jan 11-14 National No-Tillage Conference, St. Louis, Missouri.
<http://www.no-tillfarmer.com/pages/NNTC---National-No-Tillage-Conference-Home-Page.php>

Jan 12-14 [Practical Farmers of Iowa Annual Conference](http://practicalfarmers.org/events/annual-conference.html), Ames, Iowa.
<http://practicalfarmers.org/events/annual-conference.html>

Jan 12-14 [GrassWorks Grazing Conference](http://grassworks.org/?11034000000), Wausau, Wisconsin. Nationally known speakers include Don Huber, Abe Collins and Joel Salatin.
<http://grassworks.org/?11034000000>

Jan 13 – 14 [Future Harvest CASA Annual Conference](#), Landsdowne, Maryland. "Farm to Institution: Making Local Food Economies a Reality."

http://www.futureharvestcasa.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=168

Jan 14 NOFA/Mass Winter Conference: The 25th Annual Winter Conference will be held in Worcester. John Jeavons to keynote. Click this [link](#) for info.

Jan 17 [Sustainable Foods Summit, San Francisco, CA.](#)

Jan 18 - 21 [Southern SAWG Conference: Practical Tools & Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms](#), Little Rock Arkansas

Jan 19 – 21 6th Organic Seed Growers Conference, Port Townsend, Washington. Download the [registration packet](#).

Jan 20 – 22 NOFA-NY Winter Conference, Saratoga Springs, New York. Dr. John Ikerd will speak Friday, January 20 at 8 p.m. as part of the three-day event.
<http://www.nofanyconference.org>

Jan 24 – 26 Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA)/NASOP Annual Trainings and Meetings. Hyatt Regency, San Antonio, Texas.

January 26 – 29th 31st Annual Guelph Organic Conference & Expo.
www.guelphorganicconf.ca/

February 1 [CCOF Annual Meeting & Conference](#), Pacific Grove, California Complete agenda at [CCOF Annual Meeting & Conference page](#).

Feb 1 – 4 EcoFarm Conference, Pacific Grove, California. www.eco-farm.org

Feb 1-4 21st Annual Farming for the Future Conference Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, State College, PA. "Breaking Ground for a New Agriculture: Cultivating Versatility and Resilience."
www.pasafarming.org/conference.

Feb 15 – 18 [BioFach 2012](#), Nuremburg, Germany.

Feb 23 – 25 The MOSES Organic Farming Conference, La Crosse, Wisconsin. [Registration and lodging information](#).

March 3 [NOFA-NH Winter Conference](#), Dover High School, Dover, New Hampshire.

May 21 – 24 NOSB Spring 2012 meeting, Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

June 18 – 21 [2nd International Organic Fruit Research Symposium: Organic Fruit 2012](#), Leavenworth, Washington.

*For a complete listing of upcoming IOIA trainings,
please see page 3 of this issue*