



INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW

IOIA BASIC CROP INSPECTION TRAINING HAROLD R. BENSON RESEARCH FARM FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY

November 4 – 8, 2024 - Basic Crop Training

This document is the companion document for the Inspection Training Application and the Online Registration for attending the following IOIA Organic Crop Inspection Training in Frankfort, Kentucky. Please read this document carefully before filling out the application form. The training will be held at the Howard R. Benson Research Farm, 1525 Mills Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601. For information about the farm, <https://www.kysu.edu/academics/college-ac/school-of-ace/facilities/harold-r-benson-research-and-demonstration-farm.php>

Online Registration and Application consists of two steps. Both must be completed by the deadline for you to be considered for acceptance to the basic courses.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR THE TRAINING: September 20, 2024.

1) IOIA Basic Crop Inspection Training, 11/04 – 11/08/2024 – [REGISTER HERE](#)

All registration is through the IOIA office. If you have any questions, please contact IOIA at (406) 436-2031, or email ioiassistant@rangeweb.net. When you register for the course, you will be emailed an application.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Each course includes 4 days of instruction including a field trip to a certified organic operation, plus ½ day for testing.

This training is supported through funding from the United States Department of Agriculture, through a Specialty Crop Block Grant administered by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and is part of a larger project, “*Addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Kentucky Organic Agriculture sector*”.

Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm, 1525 Mills Lane, Frankfort is the location of the training. Kentucky State University purchased 203 acres on Mills Lane in Franklin County, Kentucky in 1986 under the leadership of Land Grant Director, Harold R. Benson. In 2009 KSU acquired additional acreage making the total nearly 300 acres. The farm hosts a variety of research projects including small ruminant research, soil management research, organic agriculture research, ornamental horticulture research, livestock nutrition research, honeybee research, conservation biological control and beneficial insect research, and urban agriculture research. The USDA National Clonal Germplasm Repository (Gene Bank) for pawpaws has been housed here since 1994 and includes over 2,000 trees from 16 different states.

A room block has been reserved at the Hampton Inn, Frankfort, 1310 US 127 South, Frankfort, KY 40601. This training qualifies for state rate (\$139/night plus 13.42% lodging tax). Other suggested area hotels are the Best Western or the Fairfield, both a little further from the farm. A room block link will be provided to you in your acceptance packet.

Lunches and snacks will be catered and included in the training each day.

PARTICIPANTS: WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

IOIA Basic Organic Inspection Training courses are recommended for inspector trainees, certification agency staff, regulatory agency staff, farmers, quality control personnel, consultants, and technical service providers who want to better understand the organic inspection and certification process.

The course is limited to 16 participants. A minimum of 12 participants is required or the course will be postponed to a later date.

Funding through the grant is available to support participation by minority and socially disadvantaged stakeholders. Kentucky participants who are qualified and fit those groups will be prioritized. Space will be made available to qualified applicants from nearby states, and finally open to others in the US if space is available.

PARTICIPANT: Acceptance, Timeline, Materials, and Completion Expectations

Participants accepted into the course are mailed an acceptance package about one month before the course. Participants should allow several days to complete pre-course reading and assignments. Completed assignments must be emailed to IOIA according to deadlines. The IFOAM/IOIA International Organic Inspection Manual and the USDA National Organic Program Standards are the basis for the Crop course. Copies of the Manual and the USDA Rule are included. Participants are also provided a subscription to the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI), which includes access to brand name and generic materials lists.

The courses are rigorous, with some evening sessions. To receive a Certificate of Completion for the basic course, participants must meet minimum course acceptance criteria, participate in all sessions, complete the pre-course assignments, complete specific in-course assignments, and earn at least 75% on the final exam. Letters of Participation are provided for those who choose to audit the course (test and written assignments not required of persons who audit courses) and for those who fail to meet the course completion requirements or the minimum score on graded materials including the exam.

The training initiative is a response to the shortage of trained organic inspectors in the Midwest. Aims of this training include:

- Lowering barriers to access to inspector training by socially disadvantaged participants.
- Supporting increased diversity in the organic workforce, in recognition of the currently imbalanced demographics and ethnic homogeneity.
- Encouraging organic certification among socially disadvantaged farmers in Kentucky and surrounding states.

Dr. Shawn Lucas of KSU - *“Organic farming represents an opportunity for minority farmers to participate in a growing market while garnering higher farm profits. Organic inspection is an overlooked career path and bringing diversity into the ranks of inspectors may help bring more diversity into the ranks of organic farmers.”*

WHAT THE COURSE INCLUDES:

Organic Crop Inspection Training: Registration is scheduled from 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. on Monday morning, November 4, at the farm. The 4 ½ -day Basic Crop Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements which include: classroom instruction on the organic standards (focus on the USDA National Organic Rule); working with organic system plans; how to inspect organic farms; audit trail requirements; risk assessment; investigative skills; report writing; approved input materials; assessing natural resource management; inspector conduct, confidentiality, and ethics; understanding the difference between inspecting and consulting; and effective communication.

The course also includes a field trip/practice inspection to a certified organic farm, a written assignment (inspection report), and final exam. The exam is scheduled for Friday morning, November 8th.

The course begins at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, November 4, 2024 and will conclude at 12:00 (noon) on Friday, November 8, 2024. Participants must leave no earlier than the actual end of the course or after the final exam, to receive credit. This course is based on the USDA National Organic Program regulations.

Participants are also required to complete IOIA's 6 hour, prerequisite 100-level NOP Crops Standards Webinar before taking the in-person Basic Crop inspection course. If you are accepted into the course, you will be sent a link to register about one month before the course. There is no registration fee for participants accepted into the Basic Crop course. IOIA designed our training format to increase the opportunity for learning and increase participant success.

REQUIRED - NOP CROP STANDARDS WEBINAR

October 15 & 18, 2024, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Pacific

If you are accepted into the course, you will be sent a link to register.

Note: Participants will be expected to complete a pre-course learning assessment and some preparatory work in addition to participating in the Webinar. Participants are required to complete a pre-webinar assignment, mid-webinar assignment and final exam and some background reading preparatory work in addition to participating in the Webinar.

APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

Applications for participation in IOIA courses are evaluated and ranked according to the applicant's relevant education, training and life experiences. Attendance to IOIA courses is limited. If you are accepted into the course, an instructional letter and the curriculum materials including pre-course readings and assignments will be mailed to you (about one month prior to the training). Applicants to IOIA trainings must meet the following acceptance criteria.

All Courses:

- Submission of complete **registration, application, résumé.**
- Fluency of the language in which the course is given.
- Demonstration of good communication skills (written, verbal and listening).
- Understanding of and commitment to, enforcement of organic certification principles.
- Demonstration of related continuing education.

Additional Course Acceptance Criteria

- **Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training**
 - A minimum of 1 year training and/or 1 year experience in organic/sustainable agriculture, with knowledge of conventional agricultural practices.
 - Knowledge of basic accounting and ability to solve mathematical problems.

TRANSPORTATION:

Nearest airport is Blue Grass Airport (LEX). There is no shuttle service available from the airport. IOIA will not be providing transport to/from the training location. However, transport to the certified farm will be provided for the field trip. Howard R. Benson Research Farm, 1525 Mills Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601 is located about 30 miles or 40 minutes from the airport.

MEALS:

Monday – Thursday - Lunch and snacks are included with the training. Special dietary requests including vegetarian or gluten free diets will be accommodated with advanced notice.

Note: IOIA must be notified at least 2 weeks before you arrive for the training, if you have special dietary restrictions.

LODGING:

Participants may commute daily (recommend maximum 25 minute commute). Training will be occurring at the research farm, not at the Hampton Inn. A room block has been reserved at the Hampton Inn. This training qualifies for state rate (\$139/night plus 13.42% lodging tax). You are responsible for your own individual reservation. A room block link will be provided with the acceptance packet.

WHAT TO WEAR AND BRING TO THE TRAINING:

Please bring athletic or other sturdy footwear, light outer wear, rain gear and boots for field trips (suggested), extra notepaper, clipboard, and calculator. **Laptop computers are required for the written assignments. If you do not have access to a laptop computer for the course, please contact IOIA to discuss the requirements for the report assignment.**

WEATHER

Weather in early November for this area can be unpredictable, but generally will see daytime highs around 50F and overnight lows in the 30's. For updated weather conditions, plan to check online before travelling to the training location.

Tuition: There are no registration fees for qualifying participants in this course. In lieu of a registration fee, participants agree to complete pre- and post-training evaluations, to aid in the development of future training. Your acceptance will be based on your training application form. **Please be aware that completion of registration and submission of an application form do not guarantee acceptance.** If you are not sure whether you qualify, please contact IOIA.

IOIA MEMBERSHIP: IOIA welcomes all participants to consider joining IOIA. Please contact IOIA to request a membership application form or visit [IOIA's website](#) to download the appropriate application form.

IMPORTANT DUE DATES

- **Registration by September 20, 2024.**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Statement of Commitments

The three components of equity, diversity, and inclusion, together with access, engagement, and retention, are essential to the success of this training. Diversity among participants is valued in this course. The current demographic mix of organic inspectors nationwide tends to be ethnically homogeneous and lacking in diversity by gender, age, socioeconomic status, and cultural background. Our goal is to make the organic sector a more attractive and inclusive career choice, for a new generation of inspectors and reviewers.

We envision a future in which every individual has the opportunity and resources needed to pursue a career in the organic sector. This includes improving access for all people, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age and so forth. Moreover, we are committed to engaging with course participants in a way that makes them feel valued, supported, and welcomed.

This statement is inspired by Diversity, Values, and Anti-Racism statements of partner institutions Kentucky State University, University of Kentucky, and Organic Association of Kentucky and by the Diversity Statement of Michigan State University College of Agriculture & Natural Resources.