

# Statements 2025 – IOIA Board of Directors Candidates

## Justin Hurley

I conducted 47 handler inspections and 207 retail inspections in 2024.

My most important goal for IOIA in 2025 is to advocate and work with the director and board towards attaining funding and updating the mentor system to improve new inspectors' opportunities for extended advice while ensuring mentor inspectors are compensated fairly.

Important goals for IOIA in the next five years include inspector mentoring, fundraising and building an endowment, the Director succession plan, and raising awareness of both independent and staff inspectors, of the benefits of IOIA membership.

I am a former chef sourcing organic produce and meats since 1982, managed kitchens & retail including high volume packaged foods. Former certified instructor for ServSafe, the National Restaurant Assn's food safety program that is a requirement for retail foodservice across many states. An organic inspector for processing, handling and retail. I have conducted 700 processing/handler inspections and 1500 retail inspections in 43 states since 2015.

I am currently an IOIA Board member and Board Liaison for the By-Laws Committee.

Trainings attended:

IOIA: Advanced (2024, 2023, 2019, 2018) Processing (2015), Non-GMO (2017), In/Out Balances & Traceability (2017), COR Processing Standards (2018), Fraud Prevention Processing 300 Level (2019), NOP Processing Input Materials (OMRI 2019), NOP Processing Standards (2021), Community Grower Groups (2023), Crop Materials (2024)

CCOF: Inspector Training (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020), Mexico Certification & Compliance (2018).

PCO: Annual Training (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019), GFCO Gluten Free 2016

NOP: NOP Inspector Training (2018, 2019, 2021,2023) Traceability Techniques (2022)



## Wendy Paulsen

I am running to give back and to be of service. I have a wide range of experiences in the industry that I believe could help with perspective and discussions. I started my Inspection / Certification journey with IOIA basic crop and livestock training in 2004 and continue today. I started with years working on a number of organic farms, trying my hand at produce farming, and later running my own landscape business. Then, I decided to try inspecting. My timing was perfect. I was living in Montana and met Margaret Scoles. I was one of her lucky apprentices.

I spent 10 years as a contract inspector from Montana back to my native Minnesota, full time for the last five years, working for 7 certifiers in all scopes. I contracted initial and final reviews and fit in a few gluten free and biodynamic inspections.

For the last 10 years, I have worked in the Organic Program at the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association, mainly as a Certification Specialist / Inspector. I also coordinated the contract and staff inspectors, including on-boarding, mentored new inspectors, created and presented the annual inspector training meetings, and conducted field evaluations.

I was once on the IOIA membership committee, helping find candidates to run, and I have led a few IOIA Basic Farm and Processing field trips. I have experienced and continue to see the value of IOIA Training and know the importance of keeping its quality high. The pace of change is continuing to increase. We have to be flexible and proactive. As to where IOIA should go - I'd like to work with others, generate ideas together and listen. IOIA needs to continue high quality training, be relevant to the industry, provide benefit to its members, and be resilient.

I try to stay grounded in my little homestead, raising a variety of vegetables, herbs, flowers, berries, apples and mushrooms.



## Leonard Pollara

Please accept this as written commitment of my interest in seeking a position as member of IOIA's Board of Directors.

My walk with organic began at 16 on our family farm in NJ. From that moment forward I learned all that I could about organic farming. 50 years later, having built my farm from 4.5 acres to 153, serving in many roles in the organic community, notably as president of NOFA-NJ, Sussex County Bd of Agriculture, & Rutgers Board of Managers, I would like to bring that experience to IOIA. For the past 15 years I have been working as a full time inspector, now accredited in all scopes by IOIA. Serving on the Policy committee, Bylaws committee and participating in numerous joint committees with ACA has kept me current with the growth of the organic industry. 2024 was a particularly challenging year in many ways during which I completed 58 inspections between mid-April and year's end. In addition to which I participated in the IOIA/ACA mentoring study project, and served as a TOPP mentor.



Looking into 2025 it appears that in addition to continuing the existing operations, focusing on expanding training, mentoring and membership recruitment is vital to IOIA success. Also to continue exploring mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities and compensation strategies seems worthy. All the while continuing to build upon collaborative relationships that further support inspectors.

Given the current state of affairs, my crystal ball is dim on 5 year goals. And yet it seems that working on harmonizing inspection quality via developing and offering a portfolio of calibration exercises would be most useful to inspectors.

In addition to working as an inspector I have completed numerous ACA internal reviews for NOP compliance and helped as a reviewer. Thank you for considering me for a role on the board.