

Organic Week in Washington D.C.



Margaret Scoles and Drew Gourdie, far left, on an Organic Advocacy Day visit in Washington DC May 16 with Senator Jon Tester. From left, Josh Poole and Bob Quinn of the Quinn Institute, Marni Karlin, Senator Tester, Nate Powell-Palm, and Charlotte Vallaeys of General Mills. Margaret and Drew also visited three other senators and representatives in OTA-organized groups. The event was organized by the Organic Trade Association and followed a 2-day conference. Groups focused the importance of support for organics in the Farm Bill. Senator Tester is a certified organic farmer and is one of very few farmers in the US Senate.

Our intrepid Executive Director Margaret Scoles and Business Development Director Drew Gourdie attended the Organic Trade Association's (OTA's) annual Organic Week conference, held May 14 - 16, in Washington, DC. The conference focused on current key themes and produced next-step ideas to support the industry's continued growth, and help address pressing issues and opportunities within the organic sector.

Regulatory Updates: Dr. Jenny Tucker presented an update on the USDA's new Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) rule, and initiatives such as the Organic Market Development Grants, focusing on creating new market pathways for organic products. **See Washington, page 4**

Notes from the Chair by Janine Gibson

Wishing you and all members the best in the busyness of this season! May you take the time to feel the value of the work you do, and your role in the teamwork, supporting the growing and distribution of this healthy food and food system, we are strengthening together!

As I struggle with the balance of the needs of scheduling and conducting inspections with my own food production in my garden and farm, I respect the efforts we are all making to keep balance and health in our lives and work, as we live our goals.

When I look at all the valuable training opportunities and projects our staff team and partners are working on, to fulfil our mandate to you and our sector, I am amazed at what our IOIA team has accomplished and is **See Notes, page 4**

Welcome New Members

Upgrading to Inspector

Jennifer Chesworth, Altoona, PA
Drew Gourdie, Toronto, ON, Canada

Returning inspectors

Silvia E. Perez, Oaxaca, Mexico

Supporting Individuals

Meg Corrigan, Markdale, ON, Canada
Courtney Cox, Buellton, CA
Jared Darrow, Willis, MI
Aspen Hoyer, Orland, CA
Jing Jiang, Calgary, AB, Canada
Stefan Baimbill Johnson, Stefenville, TX
Daniella Lewis, Sheridan, WY
Stacey Ogo, Long Beach, CA
Nikki Oke, North Augusta, ON, Canada
Kerry Sides, North Platte, NB
Andrew Weber, Lansing, IA

Returning Supporting Individuals

Paige Benveniste, Alameda, CA

New Regional Certification Agency

Monterey County Certified Organic,
Tim Lewis, Salinas, CA

Webinar Discount Reminder

All inspector members are entitled to take 50% off any one webinar during 2024

Next Scholarship Application

Deadline is October 1
See our [website](#) for details and to apply.

IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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JANINE GIBSON	KATHE PURVIS
VICE CHAIR:	DIRECTOR:
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TREASURER:	DIRECTOR:
ALLAN BENJAMIN	RHEA EPP

— EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT LARGE —
MARGARITO CAL

The Inspectors' Report is the newsletter of 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](#)

Webinar Training Schedule

for details & to register go to our [website](#)

June 18 & 21 100 Level NOP Livestock Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific). Two 3 hour sessions.

Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm

[Register and Pay Here](#)

August 6 & 9 100 Level NOP Crop Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific). Two 3 hour sessions.

Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm

[Register and Pay Here](#)

NEW August 16 Organic Fraud Prevention Plans - the SOE Fraud Prevention Tool

12 p.m. (Pacific). One 2 hour session includes 1/2 hour Q&A.

Presented by Gwendolyn Wyard, Johanna Phillips of SOS (Strengthening Organic Systems). Check [IOIA's website](#) for most current information.

[Register and Pay Here](#)

September 10 & 13 100 Level NOP Processing Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific). Two 3 hour sessions.

Trainer: Garry Lean

[Register and Pay Here](#)

September 12 & 19 200 Level Processing In/Out Balances, Traceability & Recipe Verification under NOP & COR

200-level course allows inspectors and certifiers to further their understanding of NOP and COR standards.

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Pacific). Two 2 hour sessions.

Trainer: Kelly A. Monaghan

[Register and Pay Here](#)

September 18 100 Level IOIA/OMRI NOP Processing Input Materials

This webinar is a 100-level course designed as a way for new organic professionals to gain an understanding of the compliance requirements of inputs used within the processing/handling production scope through a discussion and learning session with staff from Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI).

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Pacific). One 2 hour session.

Trainer: Experienced OMRI Trainer

[Register and Pay Here](#)

October 8 & 11 200 Level Livestock Feed Audit (Non-Dairy)

This webinar is geared for livestock inspectors, reviewers and organic program managers. This course is focused on organic certification requirements to the NOP Standards.

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Pacific). Two 2.5 hour sessions.

Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm.

[Register and Pay Here](#)

October 15 100 Level IOIA/OMRI NOP Crop Input Materials

See listing for September 18 - Crop input materials scope.

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Pacific). One 2 hour session.

Trainer: Experienced OMRI Trainer

[Register and Pay Here](#)

October 16 & 18 100 Level NOP Crop Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific). Two 3 hour sessions.

Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm.

[Register and Pay Here](#)

October 29 & November 1 100 Level NOP Processing Standards

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Pacific). Two 3 hour session.

Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm

[Register and Pay Here](#)

Coming in Winter 2024: NOP Organic Livestock and Poultry Standard webinar with SOS. Check the [IOIA website](#) for date and most current information.

Onsite Basic Courses 2024 - [See the IOIA website for full details](#)

Basic Processing Course, Tokyo, Japan. July 19 - August 7

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor a 5-day Basic Organic Processing Inspection Training using JAS Standards as a reference. The course will be held online July 19 & 26 and in-person August 5-7, 2024, at Utsumi, Kandamisakicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

Basic Organic Farm Training, Tokyo, Japan. September 11 - September 26

IOIA and JOIA will cosponsor a 5-day Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training using JAS Standards as a reference. The course will be held online September 11 & 18 and in-person September 24-26, 2024, at Utsumi, Kandamisakicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo Japan.

Basic Crop Inspection Training, Farmington, Minnesota. November 11-15

Basic Processing Inspection Training, Farmington, Minnesota. November 18-22

The Minnesota trainings will be held at Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center, IOIA's favorite and most oft-used venue. It is peaceful, rural, hospitable, with walking paths, a lake, and 150 acres of outdoors space. A perfect setting to focus! An on-site garden provides vegetables for the kitchen. There are many bird feeders around the dining room; speakers bring the bird sounds inside. And less than one hour from the MSP airport center, www.mtolivetretreat.org.

Experience the value of learning in-person in small groups with guidance from experienced inspectors.

Deadline to apply for either training is September 30.



Online Basic Courses 2024 - [see the IOIA website for full details](#)

Online Basic NOP Processing Inspection Training. June 24 - 28

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements. Deadline to Register and Apply is Friday, May 10, 2024.

Online Basic NOP Livestock Inspection Training. July 8 - 12

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements. Deadline to Register and Apply is Friday, May 24, 2024.

Online Basic NOP Crop Inspection Training, August 19 - 23

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements. Deadline to Register and Apply is Monday, July 8, 2024

Online - Basic NOP Processing Inspection Training, September 23 - 27

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements. Deadline to Register and Apply is Monday, August 12, 2024.

Online COR - Basic Crop Inspection Training - postponed until Fall 2024

The Basic Crop Inspection Training to COR Standards provides basic level training to develop skills required for inspecting and reporting on the management of an organic crop operations according to a specified set of standards. For courses conducted in Canada, the standard is CAN/CGSB-32.310-2020 and Permitted Substance Lists CAN/CGSB-32.311-2020.



Not finding a training you are looking for or all trainings full?
[Please register here](#) to be contacted by IOIA when that training is available.

Notes from the Chair, from page 1

accomplishing! Our committees are active and vibrant in their work, and I thank all members who volunteer their time on these committees! We have seen more timely NOSB comments by our fine Policy Committee. Thanks to both Terrance Layhew for accepting the torch from retiring Eric Feutz, and to Eric for leading our Membership Committee - crucial to our strong board candidate slates! The ongoing international efforts of our Asia Pacific and Canadian committees, along with our board members efforts, are so needed and appreciated! And thank you, Ethics Committee members for your proposed updates and recent survey (do it now if you haven't yet, and thanks for your time!).

From Margaret and Drew's recent advocacy meeting with Senator Tester, to increasing our understanding of the EU Reg Update by Kathe Purvis, to the planning and delivery of our next 11 webinars, 6 live online trainings, 4 in-person trainings, with another 8 trainings still in development, our staff, contract and leadership team continue to do the work needed on our behalf, with amazing efficiency!

We have updated our Emergency Transition Plan, we are conducting an internal financial review and continuing our participation and learning with the Equity Learning Exchange. We are nearing completion of an Equity statement we hope to have polished and off to dear Al Johnson and our Bylaws Committee, soon.

If you have been remembering a dramatic, humorous, or moving inspection experience, write it down, or record the memory, and send it to Al and myself! We thank those of you who have done so for our Inspector Tails, fundraising book- and are looking forward to receiving more- especially from past IOIA board members!

Much gratitude to all of you, our members, who make it possible through your support, for our teams to work as effectively as we do! May you all be safe, well and feeling your joy in your work, travels and adventures!



Washington DC, from page 1

Market Trends: The latest data from the OTA's 2024 Organic Industry Survey was released, showing that U.S. sales of certified organic products approached \$70 billion in 2023, and will surpass that level in 2024. Breakout sessions explored current trends in the organic marketplace, the impact of competing label claims, and strategies to boost organic production.

Investment & Innovation: Keynote speakers, including top government officials such as Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Under Secretary Jenny Lester Moffitt, discussed continuing federal investments in organic agriculture. They provided insights on expanding the organic market and enhancing sustainability practices.

Advocacy: The conference concluded with a day of advocacy on Capitol Hill, where OTA members met with lawmakers in the Senate and the House to advocate for policies supporting the organic sector. Our delegation met with Senator Jon Tester (MT) and staffers from Steve Daines (MT) office, to discuss legislation affecting the organic sector - most importantly the pending Farm Bill.

Honoring our Best: The OTA's Annual Organic Leadership Awards were also held, recognizing individuals for their contributions in advancing the organic movement. Honorees included George Siemon, founding CEO of Organic Valley, and Jyoti Stephens of Nature's Path. The full list of honorees: <https://ota.com/news/press-releases/23132>

Organic Week underscored the importance of continuous improvement in organic standards and transparency, to build consumer trust. It emphasized the need for the organic community to grow and evolve with the times, particularly in view of recent significant growth in regenerative and sustainable certifications. The challenges faced by Organic Inspectors were discussed in several forums, highlighting our crucial role in organic integrity. The conference themes and outcomes reflect the OTA's goal of charting a forward path for the organic movement, ensuring its relevance in a rapidly evolving market, on an increasingly complex global stage.



Drew and Margaret in DC

Notes from the Executive Director by Margaret Scoles

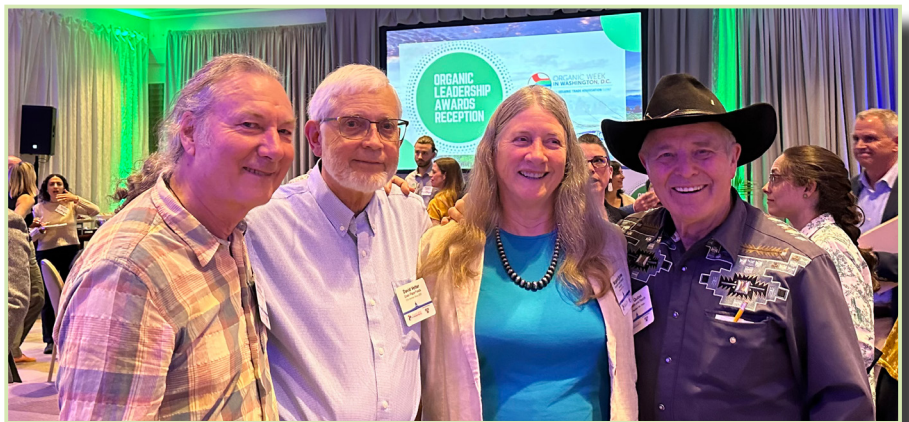
Welcome to another issue packed with timely news and helpful information, such as the technical article on the EU organic regulation and new member-benefit webinars with *Strengthening Organic Systems (SOS)*. I will focus on a few items that couldn't fit.

Equity Learning Exchange: IOIA applied for and was accepted into an Equity Learning Exchange project funded by the USDA NOP, with Organic Farmers Association leading. The cohort has 9 organizations participating. The IOIA team is Janine Gibson, Joe Ward, Justin Hurley, Drew Gourdie, and me. We are all seeking to create positive impact within our organizations. Learning is highly participatory. There will be a total of 9 monthly meetings (3-4 hours each), ending in December. It is too early to know the potential impact on IOIA. One thing that keeps ringing in my ears is when Nate Powell-Palm said during an NOSB online comment webinar, "there has been a big change in the faces in our training courses since the NOP started putting more focus on diversity, equity, & inclusion." Please see p. 11 for more information about how you can help have a positive impact on a more equitable and diverse inspector pool.

Collaboration with ACA: The past 5 years of IOIA AGM and Advanced training have happened in a variety of training formats. Most included a high level of collaboration with the Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA). In 2018, the IOIA members spoke strongly their desires that IOIA advocate for inspectors gaining access to the annual NOP certifier training, which is hosted by the ACA. Many inspectors attended before then, but could only attend under the umbrella of a certifier. At the 2019 AGM, members reiterated that desire and agreed that IOIA should explore co-branding with ACA, provided both contract and staff inspectors could access the NOP training. IOIA reached out to request this, and in 2020, we had our first truly co-branded conference with ACA, plus a one-day IOIA advanced training. IOIA inspector members inspecting for NOP-accredited certifiers were allowed to attend the NOP training as individuals for the first time, and not just under the umbrella of a certifier. That was in San Antonio, Texas. The Covid pandemic followed close on the heels of those events. In 2021, IOIA and ACA delivered another co-branded and highly successful training, but this time online. In 2022, IOIA hoped to have in-person annual meeting. Although that didn't happen, IOIA and ACA still collaborated, but only in online events. Each organization had a separate AGM online. IOIA members were welcomed to attend the ACA training online, including the NOP training, although it was not actually a co-branded event. In 2023, the ACA event returned to in-person format in New Orleans. It was an ACA/NOP/IOIA event. Although we enjoyed the co-branding, registration was somewhat confusing and deemed unnecessarily complex. By 2024, the in-person ACA event was back in San Antonio, TX, and the event was no longer co-branded. IOIA held its AGM in person both in New Orleans and San Antonio in conjunction with the events. At both events there was an IOIA advanced training in-person. Please see page 19 to learn more about how we are seeking training proposals. for 2025!

Organic Insider interview: Max Goldberg, who writes an organic blog called *Organic Insider*, reached out to me last week. I intended to get off the phone quickly (interviews with any kind of press make me very nervous), and I invited Drew to join. We talked for more than an hour and had to reschedule a second session the next morning, which turned into more than another hour. The final draft of *'Preparing the Next Generation of Organic Inspectors Must be a Priority for All of Us'* turned out to be a great overview of the problems and potential solutions for inspector recruitment and retention. Check it out at www.organicinsider.com.

Highlight of the spring? Definitely the trip to Organic Week in DC with Drew (our cover story). My last was 2019! It was a delight to connect with so many old friends and new ones. In the photo at right, these three men were part of the internal review committee that provided oversight of the OCIA inspector list, in 1988 and 1989, when I began inspecting. I was the only woman at the OCIA training in Denver in 1989. Thirty-five years later, we're all four still working in organic!



Seasoned Campaigners

Mark Squire (Good Earth Natural Foods, CA); David Vetter (Grain Place Foods, NE); Margaret Scoles, IOIA, and Bob Quinn (Kamut International and Quinn Institute, MT) at Organic Week 2024 in DC.

Best wishes for the summer.
May your gardens grow well, thrive in spite of frequent absence, and may your soil increase in fertility.

Sector News

HPAI has now infected third person working with dairy cows

On May 29, the USDA broadened its efforts to quell the spread of the virus by extending its offer of financial assistance to dairy farmers to include uninfected herds. To date, the H5N1 bird flu virus has been confirmed in 52 herds in eight states. Michigan has the most, 15, followed by 14 in Texas, where scientists say the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus jumped from birds to cattle in late 2023 or early this year.

While the risk to the general public is low, the risk is higher for farm and slaughterhouse workers and for people with close, prolonged, and unprotected exposure to infected birds and other animals. Dawn O'Connell, assistant secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, said that a couple of weeks ago, as a precaution, the federal disease stockpile ordered 4.8 million doses of vaccine against bird flu. There are no immediate plans to use the vaccine, said O'Connell. The CDC recommends livestock workers wear personal protective equipment, such as gloves and face shields.

Dairy workers were infected in both cases of cow-to-human transmission, and the Michigan worker, like the first infected worker, in Texas, reported conjunctivitis — redness of the eye.

Please see Tips on page 7 regarding suggested safety precautions while inspecting this season.

FERN's Ag Insider, May 31, 2024 | FERN's Ag Insider, May 23, 2024 | The Guardian UK, May 22, 2024

IFOAM North America AGM July 23 - Help Shape the Future of the Organic Movement in North America.

The IFOAM North America's annual meeting is coming up via on Zoom July 23. Confirmed speakers are Andre Leu, Australia (keynote from IOIA's AGM in 2016); Karen Mapusua, Fiji (President of IFOAM-Organics International's Board); and our own Gabi Soto, Costa Rica (IOIA inspector member, trainer, and also AGM keynote in 2014) For info about how to register [click here](#).



USDA Seeks Nominees to Fill Five NOSB Vacancies

The National Organic Standards Board was established to assist in developing standards for substances to be used in organic production and to advise the Secretary on the implementation of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990. Through this Notice, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is requesting nominations to fill the following vacancies:

- One individual who owns or operates an organic farming operation or employee of such individual;
- Two individuals who own or operate an organic handling operation or employees of such individuals;
- One individual who owns or operates a retail establishment with significant trade in organic products or employees of such individuals; and
- One individual with expertise in areas of environmental protection and resource conservation.

Appointees will serve a five-year term beginning January 2025 and ending January 2030. Additionally, AMS seeks applications for a pool of candidates that the Secretary of Agriculture can draw upon as replacement appointees if unexpected vacancies occur.

For more information about the NOSB, time commitments, workload, and how to apply, please visit the [NOSB Nominations page](#).

Applications must be received by mail or postmarked on or before June 28, 2024.

New URL for Complaints to NOP

The National Organic Program's online complaint portal has a new address: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/enforcement/organic/file-complaint/onlineform>.

This is the place to report complaints, including credible allegations of fraud.

Sector News

Tips for the inspection season to address the risk of HPAI *Thanks to OneCert for providing these tips*

Due to the current situation surrounding the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, it is advisable to **stay informed and to be prepared to implement some extra precautions.**

STAY INFORMED:

- Read this article for an overview of developments so far: [What is the risk to humans from cows infected with H5N1 avian flu? - STAT \(statnews.com\)](#)
- Read this FAQ from [APHIS about HPAI and Dairy Herds](#).

Bookmark/save this link to APHIS, and check periodically for updates in areas you are inspecting: [2022–2024 Detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(usda.gov\)](#)

- Become familiar with the NOP information page [Confinement of Organic Poultry due to risk of Avian Influenza](#). This page includes a link to **NOP Policy 11-12** which discusses Confinement of Poultry Flocks Due to Low or Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, or Other Infectious Diseases. Please note that there are increased cases of HPAI and HPAI is now being detected in other species (mammals, cattle, wild birds). Note that this NOP information page does not address the recent HPAI developments.

BE PREPARED:

Take precautions to protect your health and to help prevent spreading the virus. There's no need to panic, but everyone should take some reasonable precautions:

1. When scheduling, please ask all farmers if they have any requests for you regarding protective equipment or other precautionary measures so you can be prepared when you arrive. Ask all farmers, even if they are not certified for live-stock! Many crops-only clients have conventional cattle or poultry, or use liquid manure applicators, etc. so there are still risks. **Contaminated surfaces or materials, including manure, can contribute to the spread of the virus.**
2. Consider *not* driving onto the premises. Check with the farmer about this when scheduling, but some operations may prefer to have you park at the gate and then move to their vehicle for the inspection to help prevent carrying contaminants off your vehicle as you travel from farm to farm.
3. Boots: Clean your shoes/boots between every inspection and consider using boot covers. If you purchase boot covers for use at inspections, ask your certifier if you may submit that expense for reimbursement. Consider carrying a can of Lysol or other disinfectant to spray down your boots between inspections.
4. Glove up for Sampling: Always use gloves when taking samples! Again, ask your certifier if you can submit receipts for these supplies for reimbursement.
5. Other Hygiene: Wash your hands, carry hand-sanitizer, etc. From my understanding, the individual that tested positive for H5N1 is suspected of being infected through the eyes, so washing hands frequently and avoiding touching your face may help protect you.
6. If clients believe they are or will be impacted by HPAI, please encourage them to reach out to their certifier ASAP.
7. Please alert the certifier immediately if an operation is confining due to HPAI, if there have been known HPAI infections and/or potential HPAI related issues (such as the farm / operation not taking measures and it appearing they are an at risk operation or have at risk practices or sick animals).

Free *World of Organic Agriculture* Download from IFOAM - Organics International

The 25th edition of the yearbook "The World of Organic Agriculture", jointly published by [FiBL](#) and IFOAM – Organics International, shows global organic farming area increased by over **20 million hectares in 2022**, reaching 96 million hectares. The number of organic producers also saw a significant rise, surpassing 4.5 million. The sales of organic food reached nearly 135 billion euros in 2022. Data was provided by 188 countries. The yearbook is available for free download at this link: <https://www.organic-world.net/yearbook/yearbook-2024/download.html>

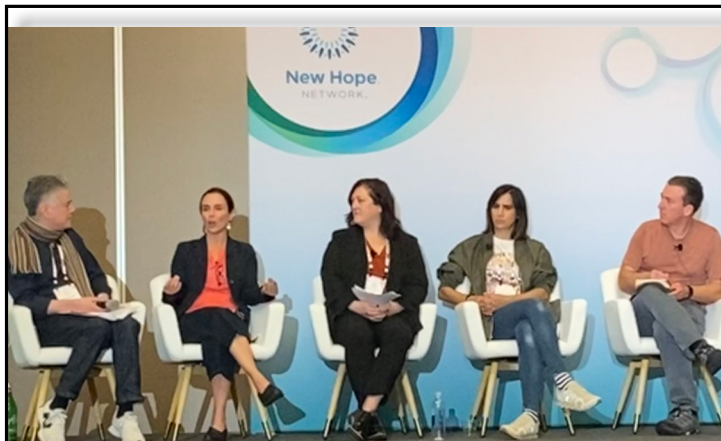
Spring Organic Industry Events - Recap by Drew Gourdie, Development Director

One of IOIA's goals is to be well integrated into the organic industry, staying abreast of trends and continuously building our rolodex of important contacts across farming communities, certifiers, and key people in our sector. We're also always looking to recruit new inspectors! To that end Drew Gourdie has attended or exhibited at several industry events this year, including Guelph Organic Conference, highlighted last issue, and Organic Week in D.C., cover story this issue.

Marbleseed - February It's hard to imagine a better-run conference, in as welcoming a city as La Crosse WI. Formerly the MOSES organic conference, this is a marquee event for farmers, Midwest-based certifiers, and other industry participants. Marbleseed is a well-crafted balance of networking and learning opportunities. This is a farmer-centric event, offering many sessions on organic and transitional farming practices. Nearly 100 organizations, including IOIA, presented products and services to hundreds of participants. It is a blueprint for how to manage a successful conference.

Expo West - March Expo West is the premiere event for the retail and distribution segment of the food and beverage industry in North America. More than 3,000 brands exhibit, with 50,000+ attendees over five days of educational sessions and trade show exhibits at the Anaheim Convention Center. The USDA's NOP program had a significant presence this year; they gave a rousing keynote address with speakers and topics surrounding NOP funding opportunities and their latest developments. They also led or sponsored other events, collaborating with the OTA on several projects, including:

- *Organic Education Sessions:* The OTA organized multiple sessions, such as "The State of Organic," which provided current data and trends in the industry. Several organizations presented updates in their work to support adoption of organic practices, including Nature's Path, Patagonia, The Organically Grown Co., Organic Farming Research Foundation, and Whole Foods Market.
- *An Organic Night Out:* This event, described as the "Organic Oscars," was an evening dedicated to celebrating achievements in the organic sector. It featured awards, a science fair showcasing research in organic agriculture, and opportunities for professional networking about advancing organic food production and sustainability.
- *Climate Day Resource Fair:* Held at the beginning of the Expo, this fair focused on environmental sustainability within the organic industry, offering insights and discussions on how organic practices can contribute to climate solutions.



Expo West Speakers, l to r: Errol Schweizer, Industry veteran; Brise Tencer, Organic Farming Research Foundation; Krista Kinder, The Organically Grown Company; Jyoti Stephens, Nature's Path Foods; Paul Lightfoot, Patagonia Provisions

Spring NOSB Meeting - April/May The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) Spring Meeting was held recently in Milwaukee, WI. The NOSB meets twice a year to review substances petitioned for addition to (or deletion from) the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (the "National List"), substances due to sunset from the National List, and to hear recommendations on organic policies through oral (online webinar and in-person) and written comments. Key discussions focused on inert ingredients in organic pesticides and the production of organic compost. The Board reviewed substances set to sunset from the National List in 2026, including ammonium soaps, hydrogen peroxide, and potassium bicarbonate, which are used for various purposes in organic farming such as pest control and soil inputs. Many of the public comments focused on the ongoing challenges in the organic market, emphasizing the need for more market opportunities and price stability for organic producers, as well as increased scrutiny of imported organic commodities. The NOSB also explored new research priorities and methods to support organic food system capacity.

A full overview of the meetings, provided by the OTA, can be reviewed here:

https://ota.com/sites/default/files/indexed_files/OTAReport_NOSB_2024_Spring_FINAL.pdf

IOIA also participated in the National Organic Coalition (NOC) 2024 Pre-NOSB Meeting, held the day prior to the NOSB meetings. The NOC is a national alliance of organizations working to provide a "Washington voice" for farmers, ranchers, environmentalists, and consumers who care about organic agriculture. NOC seeks to advance organic food and agriculture and ensure a united voice for organic integrity, which means strong, enforceable, and continuously improved standards. IOIA also participated in the regional TOPP meeting, which focused on Workforce Development.

News from Canada

Organic Action Plan

Canadians continue to show their commitment to the organic movement, as evidenced by an ongoing expansion of its organic sector in many segments of the economy. Canada is now the 5th largest organic market in the world (worth more than \$CAD 10 billion in 2022), and growing. Accordingly, a policy framework was needed to ensure that Canada's future food system had a strong foundation in organic agriculture.

Building on similar actions to grow the organic industry in the United States and the European Union, an Organic Action Plan (OAP) is a comprehensive plan that will recognize the important role that organic plays in the future of sustainable agriculture in Canada. The three national organizations, Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA), Canadian Organic Growers (COG) and the Organic Federation of Canada (OFC), have developed an Organic Action Plan for Canada, in consultation with stakeholders across the organic sector.

The OAP proposes benchmarks, targets and policies that look at incentivizing production, reinforcing the organic supply chain, and increasing the overall demand for organic. It provides a blueprint to mobilize government resources and key players in the organic industry.

The Organic Action Plan is based on four pillars to develop all segments of the organic value chain:

- Framework and Infrastructure Growth
- Accelerate Growth and Innovation in Organic Production
- Stimulate Organic Market Development
- Advance Research with Impact

A successful plan depends on the commitment and support of both the organic sector and government. To learn more about the OAP, visit <https://canada-organic.ca/en/what-we-do/advocacy/organic-action-plan>.



COTA Organic Gala (CHFA West) - Recap by Drew Gourdie continued

In April, COTA held its annual 2024 Organic Leadership Awards and evening gala, honoring pioneers and visionaries of the Canadian organic industry. Attendees including our Development Director, Drew Gourdie, came together to applaud organic achievements and acknowledge the champions driving innovation in the organic sector. This marked the 9th consecutive year that COTA celebrated these valued awards, highlighting the talented Canadians who are propelling the country's organic sector to unprecedented levels of success.

"Every year, we eagerly anticipate the opportunity to pay tribute to remarkable organic leaders who have significantly advanced the organic sector. We take immense pride in acknowledging these trailblazers and draw inspiration from their unwavering commitment to organic progress. Their achievements are truly worth celebrating." Tia Loftsgard, Executive Director, COTA

Award recipients:

- Organic Champion of the Year – Salt Spring Coffee
- Organic Supplier of the Year – Barentz
- Outstanding Leadership in Organic Science – Derek Lynch, PhD, PAg
- Organic Innovator of the Year – Greenhouse
- Organic Farming Award – Prairie Heritage Seeds, PHS Organics
- Distinguished Organic Supporter of the Year – MP Alistair MacGregor
- Organic Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Leader of the Year Award – Margaret Coons, Nuts For Cheese

To learn more about the awards and view past recipients, visit <https://canada-organic.ca/en/who-we-are/organic-leadership>

IOIA and HKBU Partner in Hong Kong training



Eryn H Y Ng, Executive Officer of HKBU, and Eva TW Suen, seated on either side of Department Head.

From Feb 20th to March 21st IOIA organized a Basic Organic Crop Inspection for the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU). HKBU has an undergrad program Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Bioresource and Agricultural Science under whose curriculum can be found the course BIOL4057 Organic Certification and Inspector Training. Dr. Anna O. W. Leung is the Associate Programme Director and has been key in organizing this training as a very effective cosponsor organization with IOIA. IOIA is also grateful to HKBU staff Eryn H.Y. Ng and Eva T.W. Suen for their proactive assistance to IOIA trainer Luis Brenes. Luis was teaching remotely from Costa Rica.

This training was provided under the private Hong Kong Organic Resource Center Ltd (HKORC) standards - which are part of the IFOAM Family of Standards. IOIA has been cooperating with HKORC -an IFOAM accredited certification agency, and HKBU - under whose umbrella HKORC was established - since 2004 when inspection training was first delivered. Since then more than 15 IOIA trainings have been delivered covering crop, handling and aquaculture scopes. IOIA trainers have included Mutsumi Sakuyoshi (Japan), Lisa Pierce (Canada), Nate Powell-Palm (USA) and Luis Brenes (Costa Rica).

The last in-person training was in 2020 right before Covid. In 2024 HKBU requested IOIA to conduct training under live online model. Eight sessions of 4 hours each were scheduled through a one month period. In order to allow students to prepare for their sessions and do assigned homework, two or three sessions per week, every other week, were scheduled ending with an in-person exam proctored by HKBU.

Once again IOIA would like to thank HKBU for its long standing and continued trust and cooperation in developing adequate local human resources to foster consumer's trust in organic certification.



IOIA/Tuskegee Training

Similar to our training in Hong Kong, IOIA worked with Tuskegee University in Alabama to deliver the basic crop inspection training to graduate and undergraduate students in plant science and animal science. Garry Lean delivered the course remotely via Zoom from Ontario, Canada.

Watch for more news in the next issue!

IOIA - back in Kentucky and back at Kentucky State University

IOIA and Kentucky State University are cosponsoring an Onsite / In-Person Basic Crop Inspection Training in at the KSU Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm, Frankfort, Kentucky, November 4 – 8. The Organic Association of Kentucky and Kentucky Department of Agriculture are assisting with outreach.

This training is part of a project funded by a Kentucky Specialty Crop Block Grant “Addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Kentucky Organic Agriculture sector”. IOIA looks forward to the opportunity to work again with KSU to bring awareness of organic agriculture to a broader group of producers, professionals and consumers. A coalition of partners including IOIA and KSU delivered basic crop and livestock inspection training and apprenticeship intensives in Kentucky in 2022.

Dr. Shawn Lucas of KSU says, “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.”



The 4 ½ -day Basic Crop Inspection Training follows IOIA’s curriculum requirements which include: classroom instruction on the USDA organic standards; 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 includes 2.5 days of classroom instruction, a half-day field trip to a certified organic farm for a practice inspection, 1 day of guided inspection report writing, and half-day for testing. Participants who attend all sessions, write a Satisfactory sample inspection report, and earn at least 75% on the exam receive Certificates of Completion. **Note: Pre-Requisite, 6-hour Online NOP Crop Standards Webinar must be completed in advance and is included in the registration.**

The course is limited to 18 participants. 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 applications from nearby states, and finally open to others in the US if space is available.

Registration links to apply will be available by late June at www.ioia.net Please check IOIA’s training schedule for more details as they become available. Email: ioiassistant@rangeweb.net with questions.

If you know someone who you think has the qualifications to become an inspector and falls into the description of minority or socially disadvantaged, please send them to IOIA. This can include immigrant farmers and small farmers who can’t access the resources to pay for a training on their own.



Meet the farmers and inspectors of Kentucky: Kenya Abraham, now Organic Transition Program Manager at the Organic Association of KY, took the same training course in 2022, when IOIA and KY partners received funding through the USDA NOP’s Human Capital initiative. She followed with livestock apprenticeship training. She was among the inspectors featured in a video, also funded by the NOP. (Click on the photo to the left to see her interviewed at her micro-dairy farm). Two of the host farms featured in the video are in Kentucky.

Basic Live Online Inspection Training - Spring 2024



Above: Live Online NOP Crop
March 11 -15

Trainers:
Garry Lean and
Nate Powell-Palm, top row left.



Left: Live Online NOP Processing
March 25 - 29

Trainers: Garry Lean and
Nate Powell-Palm, top row left.



Left: Live Online NOP Livestock
April 1 - 5

Trainer: Nate Powell-Palm,
top row left.

(Non-official photo)

New York On-site Crop and Livestock Training - April/May 2024

Collaboration and partnerships are key to the success and longevity of IOIA's training programs. Since the pandemic of 2020 and the advent of basic live online training, it has been a challenge to settle on just how onsite training fits in the altered landscape of bringing on new inspectors.

IOIA believes in the unique value of onsite training and plans to continue to offer it.



Crop Inspection training group. Assistant trainer Jonda Crosby at far left, Trainer Garry Lean second from right.



Hosts Justine and Brian Denison of Denison Farm, upper left, with Crop field trip group.

This was the first onsite training in the Northeast since the pandemic. NOFA-NY was a key partner in developing the training in Latham (Albany area), sending lots of staff as participants, and helping to confirm field trips. When crop hosts were in short supply, PCO responded to our request for assistance and identified other hosts from among their clients. The training was originally scheduled for the fall of 2023 but moved ahead due to low enrollment. The northeast certifiers supported the training, with participants coming from BOCS and NOFA-NY, and supported by participants who came for the technical training from Fertrell and Rodale Institute – supporting business members of IOIA.

One person flying from California was grounded on departure and had to postpone for a later training. Both trainings had robust enrollment (final numbers were 11 for Crop and 13 for Livestock). Garry Lean of Ontario, Canada, led both trainings, assisted by Jonda Crosby of Pennsylvania. Weather cooperated and the training venue was great. Special thanks to our hosts (Martin Tessarzik, Denison Farm, and Hu-Hill Farm - dairy). Without our field trip hosts, it would not be possible to deliver training as we do.



Livestock Training group. Trainer Garry Lean standing in center in plaid. Farmers Rob and Shirley Hudyncia at far right.

IOIA Committee News



Thank you to outgoing chair **Eric Feuz**, who has served as IOIA's **Membership Committee** chair for the past 10 years! Eric sought out excellent candidates to serve on the Board of Directors each year, a key task of the Membership Committee, which also serves as the Nominating Committee. IOIA is grateful for the highly dedicated members who have filled this role, consistently confirming great candidates for IOIA's leadership. He followed in the notable footsteps of Chris Kidwell, Kelly Monaghan, and Maarten Samson.

We welcome **Terrance 'T' Layhew**, former IOIA board member, who is stepping into Eric's shoes as the **new Membership Committee chair**.

His face is familiar to IOIA members, as moderator of IOIA's Town Hall, has produced IOIA's podcast series, and moderated dozens of other meetings of all sorts. He produced and hosted *The Intellectual Agrarian Podcast*, featuring interviews with farmers and agrarians about Philosophy from the farm. He was raised on an Organic Grass-Fed Cattle farm in South Eastern Wisconsin. He was IOIA-trained in 2015. He spent two years as a part-time inspector while working as the Quality Assurance Manager for Yorktown Organics, an Organic poultry feed mill, before becoming a full-time Organic inspector in all 3 scopes in 2018. Located in Iowa, he recently moved into a full-time position with Natural Food Certifiers.



Some key initiatives – increasing membership value and networking opportunities for inspectors, increasing and promoting membership in IOIA, and of course, seeking out candidates for a robust slate of candidates for the next annual meeting – March 25, 2025. T opines, ***“Long term, IOIA needs to not only take the lead in training the best inspectors in the industry, but in promoting it as a career path to the next generation of inspectors who are waiting to hear from us.”***

Interested in serving on the Membership Committee, or another committee? Please contact ioia@ioia.net

Asia Pacific Committee

The Asia Pacific Committee is exploring the idea of hosting an inspector workshop in conjunction with the IFOAM-Organics International Organic World Congress and General Assembly in Taiwan in December.

Accreditation Renewals due by October 1

If your renewal is coming up, don't delay! Send your requests for certifier evaluations out in advance. Being accredited also automatically gives you the opportunity to apply to be a Peer Field Evaluator. To apply or renew, [Click here for info.](#)

IOIA Ethics Committee Survey - In your Inbox!

The Ethics Committee has sent out a Survey of IOIA inspector members seeking their input on how inspectors are to conduct themselves in an ethical manner. Are the Codes of Ethics and Conduct still relevant? Do they need to be updated? What should IOIA do in cases where members are reported to be unethical or misconduct themselves? The email campaign contains links to current codes and proposed revisions to these policies and procedures to deal with allegations of ethics breaches and misconduct. The goal is to have updated codes, policies, and procedures in place by the next annual general membership meeting. Your participation is important! We invite your feedback - and will be sending periodic reminders to be sure we hear from you on this important matter.

Self-Paced Learning Courses

Canadian Organic Regime - COR Series Courses 1 & 2 each take approximately 3 hours to complete.

Inspector members price: US\$150 each.

#1 Our Organic Certification System - The Regulation

#2 COR Crop Production Standards

#3 COR Livestock Production Standards Note: This is a 10-12 hour course, Member Price US\$275

Remote Inspection Training Free to inspector members; All others \$200.

[Available in English](#) [Tambien disponible en español.](#)

200 level IOIA/American Grassfed Association Grassfed Dairy

Member cost \$325 - \$375 all others.

IOIA and SOS join forces to provide member benefits - 2 timely new webinars

IOIA is pleased to announce that **Strengthening Organic Systems (SOS)** will deliver two member benefit webinars for IOIA this year. The registration fee will be sharply discounted for IOIA inspector members. Both will be scheduled on Friday afternoons for maximum convenience to inspectors. Don't miss these great opportunities to be on top of the implementation for SOS and OLPS, enhance your ability to provide appropriate and accurate technical assistance for operators, and meet your required hours of continuing education for SOE compliance.



Session Titles:

1. Organic Fraud Prevention Plans- the SOE Fraud Prevention Tool (Gwendolyn Wyard, Johanna Phillips)
Date: August 16: 12 p.m. Pacific
2. Organic Livestock and Poultry Standard: Key Changes to the USDA National Organic Program (Johanna Phillips, Kim Dietz) Dates TBD- Winter 2024

Strengthening Organic Systems (SOS) was founded in 2023 to improve the resilience and overall integrity of global organic supply chains. "We are a team of experienced experts to ensure your business receives expert advice and support while navigating organic certification and implementation of SOE. Our goal is to assure authenticity of organic products, protect organic businesses from organic fraud, and maintain consumer confidence in the USDA organic seal." SOS is also a supporting business member of IOIA. SOS Website: www.organicosos.com

For more info and to Register, see listing on page 3 or go to our website: [Webinars \(ioia.net\)](http://Webinars(ioia.net)).

Some detail about the principals at SOS, no strangers to the organic community:

Gwendolyn Wyard has worked in organic certification and policy for over 28 years. Prior to SOS, Wyard served for more than a dozen years as the Vice President of Regulatory and Technical Affairs for the Organic Trade Association. While at OTA, Wyard was the lead developer and author of the association's Organic Fraud Prevention



Guide, now the industry standard reference for excellence in achieving integrity across complex organic global supply chains. In her early career, Wyard was an organic farmer, an organic inspector, and served as Oregon Tilth's Technical Specialist in organic policy and technical review of materials for use in organic. She holds an advanced degree in Fermentation Science, served on the OMRI Board of Directors for 12 years and was the North American representative on the Global Organic Textile Standard Advisory Board. Gwendolyn is a leading expert in: Organic standards and certification systems. and Conducting vulnerability assessments & control plans specific to organic operations. SOE requires certified operations to develop an organic fraud prevention plan.

Kim Dietz holds a master's degree in global food law and throughout her career has specialized in organic

standards and policy. She worked for 30 plus years with the J.M. Smucker Company and 3 years with Firmenich. She has



directly overseen 13 organic handling operations, including the management of the successful certification of the first certified organic handling facility in the US. Early in her career she spearheaded the development of the first organic flavor. Kim is a leading expert in: Global Food Law - In 2019

Kim obtained her Masters of Jurisprudence (MJ) in Global Food Law from Michigan State University College of Law and a certificate in International Food Laws from the Institute for Food Laws, Michigan State University. Handling - Organic Certification Program Management.

Johanna Phillips' roots are firmly planted in the fertile ground of agriculture, thanks to a youth spent on her family's third-generation Idaho farm. Johanna continues her agricultural endeavors at her farm in Eagle, ID, and through a beef production venture with her family. Johanna has a comprehensive grasp of food and agriculture regulations. As Idaho's Organic Program Manager, Johanna navigated certification and regulatory needs, playing a key role in an interagency fraud investigation that led to a significant conviction. Before her current role at SOS, she spearheaded Ecocert USA's certification division and provided invaluable technical assistance across Ecocert's global network.

Changes to EU Organic Regulation - Guest Technical Article

By Kathe Purvis

The European Union Regulatory system for organic production is undergoing significant change. The current system allows operator certification according to equivalency recognitions with European Union (EU). The new regulations include additional controls and require operators outside the EU to comply with the same rules as EU operators. The aim of the new regulation is to strengthen controls on operators and close perceived gaps in risk management for certified organic operations and supply chains. There is increased requirement for systematic risk management in procedures and recording, for both certifiers and certified operators. The best aspect of this is that the same rules will be applicable to all Control (Certifying) bodies. The concern is that the new system has no recognition of local conditions, norms, and realities.



The transition period for recognized equivalent Control Bodies (CBs) ends 31st Dec 2024. There is a lot to do! CBs should be in the process of recognition under the new rules, training staff and contract inspectors and informing operators of changes. CBs will have to understand and interpret the new regulation in updated policy, procedures, and templates which clearly demonstrate strong, realistic and achievable controls for operators. During 2024 CB inspections will anticipate the change, in readiness for new certificate issue January 1st 2025. While there is much discussion and some alarm regarding the changes, the best way to understand the new regulation is to take a deep dive into the European Commission website (eur-lex.europa.eu) and explore regulatory change in EC 848:2018 and the layers of associated regulation which informs and supports EC 848:2018.

The changes to EU organic regulation reinforce the ethics underpinning certified organic production systems and strengthen controls on organic operators by increased emphasis on preparedness, increased clarity in definitions, encouraging short distribution channels and local production, and emphasising natural production methods and materials, soil and system health, non-toxic environment and biodiversity.

The stated aim of the new regulation is to strengthen controls on operators by increased, systematic surveillance by CBs and complete transparency in the activities and flow of certified operations. This will primarily be managed by preventive and precautionary measures for all types of operators to avoid contamination & commingling of organic products. Procedural risk management is required at every stage of production, preparation, and distribution. The Organic Management Plan must provide clear and complete descriptions of control measures and list all inputs which may be used. Auditable records must be maintained by both CB and operators.

The strengthening of controls relates to issues identified during accreditor inspections of CBs and compliance issues identified after product was received into the EU as certified organic. There is increased emphasis on monitoring by CBs of non-organic and in-conversion production units, to close the perceived gaps in risk management of total operations. Under strict conditions defined in EC1698:2021 CB's may grant retroactive recognition of a previous period as part of the conversion period. The CB must conduct a risk analysis and risk-based sampling and physical inspection to verify consistency of information. Increased controls on operators transitioning from one CB to another are described in EC 848:2018. If insufficient information is supplied by the previous CB, additional control measures must be implemented by the new CB, according to pre-approved procedures. The new regulation lists additional control measures for certain third countries & products determined to be High-risk. High risk products/countries are identified by EU Commission after major, critical or repetitive non-compliances affecting integrity of organic products. Approved CBs are notified of an updated list annually. CBs must implement procedures for additional controls (management and annual monitoring) in all cases for operators with products listed on the High-risk list.

To monitor controls for operators the tasks of inspectors conducting site inspections are increased. For example, maps supplied by the operator must include cardinal direction and geo-location. The inspector must confirm that these maps are current and accurate. Operators must have procedures to check and record confirmation that products were packaged / labelled as per EC 848:2018 (transit risks managed, packaging seal intact, packaging appropriate). Inspectors must check that practices and procedures are as approved and sufficient. For high-risk producer operations, at least one field crop sample per year, must be taken by the inspector, at a time most likely to detect potential use of non-authorized substance. EC 848:2018 Art.6 includes rules for minimisation of impact on natural environment! Can the CB prove that the inspector is adequately trained to assess this?

Plant production rules Article 12 of EU 2018/848 and Annex II, Part I, 1.1-1.6 requires evidence for any approved derogation for plant reproductive material. CBs already check availability of organic plant reproductive material variety, and other evidence supplied by operator. Do CBs confirm the scientific name of reproductive materials? Or total weight of

Changes to EU Organic Regulation, Guest Technical Article, from page 16

seeds or number of plants concerned? Is a mass balance required of approved quantity of planting material against area/ quantity seeded?

To understand regulation for inputs to organic production EC 848:2018 must be understood and also EC 1165:2021 (authorised substances) amended by EC 121:2023, EC 540:2001 (EU approved active substances) and EC 1107:2009 (safeners, synergists, etc). The regulations also reference the EU Pesticides Database. A major change for certifiers previously working under equivalence is that if not in the regulations the substance cannot be used in EU certified organic production. There is a process to request an exception for regionally specific problems, this is not yet tested!

Changes for processing are similar to controls as for primary production, the approved organic management plan must include precautionary measures, suitable cleaning measures, and must monitor effectiveness of measures. Records must be maintained and available at audit. EC 848:2018 Art.3 references definitions in EC 852:2004 for unprocessed products, processing, and processed products. Organic regulations require food additives, processing aids and ingredients used for processing food and any processing practice applied comply with the principles of good manufacturing practice (GMP).

Regarding Groups of Operators (the new term for grower/producer groups) there is now detailed rules on definitions, required roles, records and procedures for the internal control system and the grower group in EC 771:2021, aligned to EC 848:2018. Key changes are that group numbers have maximum limits, the group can perform preparation activities but not processing activities, the ICS manager has a key role as the internal authority, the ICS has to internally inspect all purchase centres each year and CBs must complete annual inspection of Grower group /ICS to defined risk-based percentages. Audit trails are completed at both grower and group level. The reader might have noticed by now that I have not often provided a complete reference in the examples I have recorded in this article. That's my point! To understand the new EU organic regulation go and look it up!

On 01.01.2025 Approved CBs will issue certificates confirming operator compliance to the new EU Regulation EC 848:2018. Operators and CBs have increased requirement to maintain procedures for controls and records of control. Understanding and complying with the complex rules will be challenging for CBs and inspectors. The best way to understand the new regulation is to visit Eur.Lex, download and read EC 848:2018, then start to follow the references on a particular topic to the other relevant regulation. Working through the layers will assist in interpreting the intent and the rule of the new regulation. Interpretation will allow development of procedures to address the new regulation. Many elements of the new regulation will not be confirmed for interpretation until CBs implement updated procedures and controls, that is, until EU regulatory accreditation audits address EC 848:2018.

In May, Kathe delivered a webinar on this topic for IOIA. [Ed.]

REFERENCES

European Union Law: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/> -- use the search function to find 848:2018.

FIBL Research Institute of Organic Agriculture
<https://www.fibl.org/en/themes/certification-en>

IFOAM Europe

EU rules for production and labelling of organic products
<https://www.organicseurope.bio/what-we-do/eu-organic-regulation/>

IFOAM Guidance Group Certification New EU Regulation
<https://www.ifoam.bio/>

EU Pesticides Database
https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/pesticides/eu-pesticides-database_en

EU Commission: Frequently asked Questions on Organic Rules (V. 30.11.2023)
https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/organic-farming/organics-glance_en



Based in Australia, Kathe Purvis has extensive experience in training, facilitation, and auditing. Over the past thirty years, she has specialized in Organic, Fairtrade, and Regenerative certification audits. She is an APSCA accredited auditor for Ethical & Sustainability programs.

Kathe serves on the IOIA Board of Directors and an active participant in the IOIA APC (Asia Pacific Committee).

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights - Spring 2024

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

Board members: Janine Gibson (Chair), Joe Ward (Vice-Chair), Kathe Purvis (Secretary), Allan Benjamin (Treasurer), Margarito Cal (Exec Committee At Large), Rhea Epp, Justin Hurley

March 21, 2024 - 6:00 to 8:00 by Zoom

Attendance: All board members in attendance. Janine chaired the meeting. Others: Margaret Scoles, ED, and Drew Gourdie, Business Development Director.

ACA/IOIA BODs follow-up: Discussion regarding ACA event in Richmond February 2025. BOD agreed to investigate IOIA training options at the event as a service to IOIA members. Emphasis to be on cost of venue and IOIA training being adjacent to USDA NOP training.

2023 Annual Report, Future Annual Meetings: BOD approved 2023 Annual Report for publication. Montana confirmed for 2025 AGM. Discussion on calling for proposals from members in the Spring newsletter. Margarito suggests holding the AGM outside of the USA selecting locations where majority of members are collected or where there is a high level of organic farmers.

Organic Professionals Qualifications Database (OPQD) – report: BOD appreciated the budget proposals and timeline supporting the OPQD proposal from Silke Fuchshofen. Generally, BOD supports continuing this project. The BOD notes that it cannot and should not be progressed without industry “buy-in”. Revision required to identify suitable technical support and realistic cost estimates. MS & team to explore the opportunity for seed funding, approaching USDA NOP first.

Promotion Update (Drew): Drew described events attended and provided perspective of current trends such as Regenerative Agriculture, noting current and future networking opportunities. To provide written summary report.

Independent Contractor/ Labor Standards Act - Policy Committee: Margaret proposes to introduce this at ACA Lunch and Learn session. She confirmed Policy comment on this will be reviewed by an attorney.

Ethics Committee Work Plan: BOD approves Ethics Committee Work Plan and is grateful to the Ethics Committee for progressing this key initiative.

Racial Equity Cohort Five IOIA representatives will participate in the Racial Equity Cohort.

April 18, 2024 - 6:00 to 8:00 PM by Zoom

Attendance: Six board members, regrets from Janine. Joe chaired. Others: Margaret Scoles, and Drew Gourdie.

Treasurer’s Report, 1st Qtr Financial Reports (Allan): 1st Qtr financials reviewed, look good. MS notes membership is at a low point. IRS Form 990 (Tax reporting) in process. Allan is planning an on-site Internal Financial Review. Treasurer’s Report accepted.

OPQD/OCN – report (Joe): JW related a meeting with Dr Tucker where he presented the concept of the OPQD. Dr Tucker was receptive to the concept, noted that it aligned with SOE, but said there was no USDA NOP budget for this concept. We cannot progress without funding. Discussion included potential for partnering with aligned certifications. The BOD agreed to form a subcommittee to progress the concept. ***Subcommittee – to meet and explore ways to progress the OPQD/OCN. MS & DG will contribute to discussions***

Promotion Report: DG confirmed items in Promotion Report for successful attendance and networking on behalf of IOIA, describing observations during each event. Discussion on the Regenerative Report noted the rise of Regen and potential for alignment with like-minded organizations.

Independent Contractor/Labor Standards Act (EICC) - Policy Committee: Committee is over budget due to additional time required for the EICC comment. BOD authorized an additional \$1000 for Contract Labour to meet Policy Committee expenses.

Meeting date changes to May 23 approved. No meeting in July.

2025 IOIA Annual Meeting Events - Mark your calendars!

IOIA conducted a survey of members following the 2023 AGM to ask their opinions about the locations and formats of future AGMs. There was a strong preference for hybrid AGMs in-person with option to participate online and a preference for training to occur in conjunction with the ACA Conference and NOP training. However, attendance at the 2024 AGM sharply declined (about 20%) compared to the 2023 AGM in New Orleans. Many members cited the time and expense of 5 solid days of programming with the advanced training.

February was the preferred time of year for our members. January is challenging for the Nominations Committee, the IOIA staff, and almost everyone. Other locations discussed included Australia, Thailand, and Puerto Rico. Many members requested that the IOIA Advanced events be held adjacent to the NOP training, which is free and the most popular event. In New Orleans, the AGM preceded the NOP/ACA event and the IOIA Advanced training followed. That was inconvenient. In Texas, the IOIA Advanced training and AGM were adjacent, but both followed the ACA training, which split the IOIA events from the NOP. It was also recognized that as an international organization, it would not be appropriate to have all AGMs in the US. ACA/NOP meet only in the US and always in January.

Sound complicated? It is. So, where does IOIA go from here? Here is the tentative plan:

Richmond, VA, January – The ACA Conference in 2025 will occur in Richmond, Virginia the last week of January. January 28 (Tuesday) will be the NOP training. An all-day optional field trip to Williamsburg is planned for Monday. The ACA training will follow on January 29-30 (Wednesday-Thursday). IOIA is planning two activities in Richmond, but will also encourage members to join the NOP and ACA events.



IOIA will host a social, networking event, possibly with facilitated discussion or speaker, late in the afternoon/evening on Monday, January 27.

IOIA will participate in the ACA Conference by offering 1 concurrent session that will be held each day of the ACA Conference. IOIA will offer the same content on Wednesday and Thursday. There will be no separate IOIA advanced training.

Chico Hot Springs, MT, March - IOIA will hold a hybrid AGM on March 25, 2025, followed by 2 days of advanced training on March 26-27. The focus will be on broader issues of the organic movement; auditing to other schemes such as regenerative; and exploring how to assess those additional aspects including carbon and climate friendly labels. We are having conversations both with GOTS and ROA. This is a very attractive, reasonable cost venue with a stunning view of the mountains and non-chlorinated natural geothermal pools that should be attractive to traveling members from outside the US. The closest airport is Bozeman, just under an hour away.



HERE IS WHERE YOU COME IN...

IOIA IS SEEKING PROPOSALS FOR ADVANCED TRAINING CONTENT, both for the session IOIA will deliver in Virginia, and for the advanced training in Montana. All proposals, regardless of length and complexity, will be considered. We want you, your ideas, and proposed costs. We believe that within our membership there is a wealth of technical content and experience to share.

Please submit proposals to Margaret Scoles, mscoles@rangeweb.net or Drew Gourdie, bizdev@ioia.net as soon as possible, but **no later than July 5**.



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David Letourneau

1942-2024

Longtime organic farmer and inspector David Letourneau passed away on May 28, in Nampa, Idaho. Dave was very active in CCOF in the 1980's thru the 1990's, inspecting and serving on CCOF's Certification Standards Committee and as a representative for their North Coast Chapter.



Phil Hale and David Letourneau,
Florida, 1994

KEEP IOIA STRONG – LEND YOUR STRENGTH AND GET INVOLVED!

2024 Calendar

[Organic Academy Road Show \(OARS\) Transition-to-Organic Workshops](#)

June 13 -14 Powell, Wyoming

July 15 - 16 Carrington, North Dakota

July 17 - 18 Madison, South Dakota

July 10 & 11 [Organic Produce Summit](#) Monterey, CA.

July 23 IFOAM North America Annual General Meeting

Time: 9am PDT (10am MDT-CST; 11am CDT; 12noon EDT)

Online - [Info and Agenda Here](#)

September 1 -30 [Organic Month](#), Canada.

The annual celebration of organic food, farming, and products.

October 22 - 24 [Fall NOSB meeting](#), Portland, OR.

November 6 & 7 [Organic Connections](#) Conference & Trade Show, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

November 30 - December 6 21st IFOAM [Organic World Congress](#),
preconference sessions, and General Assembly, Taiwan.

January 28 - 30 Accredited Certifiers Association Conference, Richmond, VA. See page 19 for more info.

March 25 [IOIA AGM and Advanced Training](#), Chico Hot Springs, Montana. See page 19 for more info.

June 2 - 4, 2025 [Biofach America](#) - Atlanta, GA.

*PLEASE SEE PAGES 2 & 3 FOR THE CURRENT LIST OF
IOIA LIVE ONLINE, ONSITE, WEBINAR AND SELF-PACED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES*