

IOIA Town Hall is Back! May 29, Mark your Calendars

IOIA is resuming Town Hall after a hiatus of a couple years. It was born in a pandemic, in 2020, when inspectors were stuck at home. As inspectors went back on the road, mid-week meetings were impractical. Participation dwindled. Inspectors felt less isolated and things went back toward a post-Covid 'normal'.

The board of directors has made a decision to resurrect the Town Hall, aiming for one in the spring and one in the fall. Terrance "T" Layhew, former IOIA board member and emcee extraordinaire, has agreed to return to kick us off in style. The date will move to Friday, a more workable day for inspectors, but the format will be the same - 90 minutes, with an introductory presentation and/or panel, followed by Q&A and discussion.

Executive Director Margaret Scoles will share a condensed version of "How Much Organic Workforce do we Need? – Do the Math" which she prepared for the ACA Conference in January in Albuquerque. For the past several years, there has been an industry-wide push to train more inspectors, mentor more inspectors, retain inspectors. IOIA fell in with that thinking too. But how many do we actually need? The number of certified operations and the number of

acres, by some reports, are going down. IOIA is re-thinking the 'More, more, more' mentality. How do we produce enough inspectors and lift quality of those inspectors and of inspections, while advocating for sustainable pay, inspector retention, and professionalism?



Guest panelists will be IOIA inspectors Robertson "Rob" MacDonald of Colorado and Demetria Stephens-Hill of Kansas. Rob has been conducting organic and animal welfare inspections for about 10 years. He holds a Ph.D. in Animal Science and a M.S. in Dairy Science and became PAACO

certified as an animal welfare auditor in 2018. He sees one significant gap between the two types of audits. He says his animal welfare training focused a lot more on calibration of the auditors and questions why we are largely ignoring this in organic. Demetria Stephens-Hill, a fifth-generation farmer, has also been inspecting for about 10 years. She responded to the dearth of inspectors in her region by developing an inspector mentorship program with TOPP funding. (Please see [page 14](#) for her full guest article).

Please plan to join in for a robust discussion!
Inspector members only.

Notes from the Chair by Joseph Ward

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the IOIA Board of Directors for their unwavering commitment to upholding the high standards and values of our mission. Special thanks to Margaret Scoles, IOIA's Executive Director, and our dedicated staff for their tireless work and leadership. It has been an honor to serve as IOIA's Board Chair. Together, we continue to lead the organic industry with integrity, providing exceptional inspector training and advancing the credibility of organic certification worldwide.

As the professional organization for organic inspectors, IOIA represents a talented group of individuals who are passionate about organics. Our members provide essential, unbiased observations and insights,

See Notes, page 8

Welcome New Members!

New Inspector

Dana Ford, Colorado Springs, CO

Returning Inspector

Susanna Dzejachok, Cleveland, OH

Supporting Individuals

Joel Brown, Corvallis, OR

Kelly Filon, Tafton, PA

Melissa Jones, Fairfield, IA

Steve Marty, OH

Iris Rendon, Port Colborne, ON

Brian Rooney, Berwyn Heights, MD

Ellen Stephenson, Houston, TX

Edgar Torrico, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Supporting Business

EarthClaims LLC, Alexandria, VA

Accreditation News

Kymerley Snarr, ON, CANADA accreditation renewal in all 3 scopes (Crop, Livestock, Processing).

The next deadline for renewals is October 1.

IOIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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](#)

2026 Webinar Training Schedule

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

May 1, 2026

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). \$275

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific

Experienced OMRI Trainers: Tina Jensen Augustine and Jacky Castañeda.

Register and
Pay Here

May 12 & 15, 2026

100 Level NOP Crop Standards

The webinar is a 100-level course will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Crop Standards. \$350

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific

IOIA Trainers - Garth Kahl and Margaret Scoles.

Register and
Pay Here

June 2 & 5, 2026

100 level NOP Processing Inspection Standards

The webinar is a 100-level course that will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Processing Standards. \$350

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific

IOIA Trainer - Garry Lean.

Register and
Pay Here

August 4 & 7, 2026

100 Level NOP Crop Standards

The webinar is a 100-level course will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Crop Standards. \$350

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific

IOIA Trainer - Garry Lean.

Register and
Pay Here

September 1 & 4, 2026

100 Level NOP Processing Standards

The webinar is a 100-level course that will prepare participants to verify compliance with the NOP Processing Standards. \$350

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific

IOIA Trainer - Garry Lean.

Register and
Pay Here

Webinar Discount Reminder

All inspector members are entitled to take 50% off any webinars during 2026

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

200 level IOIA/American Grassfed Association Grassfed Dairy

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

Online and Onsite Basic Courses 2026 - [see the IOIA website for full details](#)

June 1 - 5, 2026 | In-Person - IOIA / FOG Basic Crop Inspection Training - South Miami, Florida

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements.

Your Cost: FREE (supported by Florida Organic Growers (FOG) and funding from the Southeast Transition to Organic Partnership Program – TOPP, a USDA-AMS program)

Participants must be located in the United States. Priority will be given to participants who reside in the Southeast United States.



June 22 - 26, 2026

Online - NOP Basic Processing Inspection Training

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements. Registration and Application is a 3-step process. Deadline to Register and Apply is , May 11, 2026

[Click here for course and registration info](#)

July 6 - 10, 2026

Online - COR Basic Crop Inspection Training

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training to Canada Organic Regime standard follows IOIA's curriculum requirements. Registration and Application is a 3-step process. Deadline to Register and Apply is Tuesday, May 26, 2026

[Click here for course and registration info](#)

August 17 - 21, 2026

Online - NOP Basic Crop Inspection Training

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements. Registration and Application is a 3-step process. Deadline to Register and Apply is Monday, July 13, 2026

[Click here for course and registration info](#)

September 21 - 25, 2026

Online - COR Basic Processing Inspection Training

The 4 ½ -day Basic Inspection Training follows IOIA's curriculum requirements. Registration and Application is a 3-step process. Deadline to Register and Apply is Monday, August 3, 2026

[Click here for course and registration info](#)

Notes from the Executive Director

by Margaret Scoles

January - The ACA event in Albuquerque came earlier than ever. IOIA had proposed to give a presentation, and it was accepted. I found myself taking a deep dive into the TOPP Workforce Development Needs Assessment, published in 2025. Another great resource was a presentation prepared by Mallory Krieger of OATS. The title of my presentation was **"How Much Organic Workforce do we Need - Do the Math"**. Although many participants left early to get ahead of a massive winter storm, there was a delightfully diverse audience of IOIA inspector members (Wendy Paulsen, Leonard Pollara, Raymond Yang, T Layhew, Andrew Black, and others), beginning inspectors participating in the Southwest TOPP Fellowship Program, friends from certification agencies, and some new faces. The more I crunched the data, the more I learned and the deeper I found myself in the topic. Some of what I was "sure" I knew turned out not to be true. There were new and unusual findings. Join us at IOIA Town Hall on May 29 to see what we learned and where IOIA is headed! The 20 or so "fellows" were apprentice inspectors embarking on a working relationship with mentors. IOIA invited the fellows to join the IOIA Inspector Meet & Greet at the Sawmill Market. The idea of IOIA social events in conjunction with major conferences and events focuses on ways for inspector members of IOIA to get together. Would the camaraderie still exist if new inspectors were included? Any early hesitation quickly dissipated with the noisy and joyous conversations over appetizers and beverages. Board members Justin and Wendy, plus Raymond, helped keep food and beverage flowing. We were about half IOIA inspector members and about half ACA



Inspector Social in Albuquerque

fellows, plus a few friends. About 25 in all. ACA fellows seemed to really appreciate the mixer. Some are already IOIA supporting members. People trickled in. I snapped a few photos of the social and entered them into the photo contest. Next day was - NOP Training Day. Justin and I skipped out for 1 session to serve on a panel for the ACA fellows, along with Brenda Gross of NICS and Darren Maum, IOIA inspector member. The two day ACA Training was great. There are always sessions that seem more relevant for certifiers than inspectors, but that's what it is - a certifier training. Also a networking opportunity extraordinaire. I went to two sessions on Fraud, one on measuring pasture with Mary Capeheart, and one on food safety.

February went by in a blur - A trip to the High Plains Conference Feb 9-11 in Cheyenne, Wyoming, organized by IOIA member Nate Powell-Palm. I went as a speaker on Introduction to the Organic System Plan. The annual meeting followed a week later, and then a week later, we kicked off an innovative new format advanced training, with a series of five Friday afternoon *Ask me Anything* sessions. Although uptake

Notes from the ED continued

modest (average about 15 for each session), it covered our costs, created membership value, and provided participants with a certificate to document up to 10 hours of affordable continuing ed. I also worked as Trainer Assistant to PJ Wiebusch for a live online basic crop inspection training, my first such assignment for a while. I am very proud of how ably PJ has stepped into Lead Trainer role. It was my first time to deliver a training with the new NOP Crop Inspection Training video and companion OSP. A huge update and asset to our basic crop inspection training program!!

In March, I found myself stretching outside my comfort zone. Within one week, IOIA received two inquiries for trainings for engineering firms in Minnesota. Minnesota historically required IOIA training for on-site agriculture monitors for pipelines crossing organic farms. This training was developed by IOIA Inspector member Joyce Ford and delivered multiple times by her. However, it had been many years since the last one. Joyce, now retired as an IOIA trainer, lives in New Hampshire, not Minnesota. I studied her materials and pulled together some additional materials more relevant to transmission lines as opposed to pipeline construction. I traveled to Minneapolis for about a week, delivering a full day of training for each company. The quality and interest of the participants was a pleasant surprise. Most were enthusiastic young environmental engineers who really wanted to learn the content. That all of the 30 participants passed was a testament to their diligence. Each participant received a hard hat sticker with the IOIA logo and "Ag Monitor Organic Training". I'm not sure who learned more - them or me!

I'm looking forward to a summer with an apprentice – I have a total of 5 inspection assignments, so it is a bit tricky to accommodate an apprentice. But with strong support from certifiers and willing operators, we are making it happen. Buzz word for 2026 is definitely "Mentorship". **And now it is Spring and Earth Day, Best wishes to you for both!**

New Webinars Under Development in 2026 - in Partnership with the Organic Integrity Cooperative

In 2026, IOIA will partner with the Organic Integrity Cooperative to offer two membership benefit webinars, at a significant discount for IOIA inspector members:

Supply Chain Traceability Audits in June - with Garth Kahl and Angela Wartes-Kahl. Garth and Angela's presentation delivered in-person at the advanced training in Montana earlier this year was very well-received. The topic is an essential one, given the requirement in Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) for certifiers to do SCTAs and the limited expertise available to conduct them.



Inspecting Transloaders, port facilities and bulk ships will be scheduled for this fall- with Garth Kahl. Increasingly, organic commodities are moving around the world in bulk ships and passing through large port and transloading facilities in the process. At the same time, few inspectors are trained in the relevant organic control points and terminology, understand nature of these complex supply chains or are prepared to perform these kinds of inspections. Training will focus on specific OCPs for these kinds of inspections as well as involve realistic trace back exercises drawn from recent work the members of the OICG have been performing in this sector over the last six years.

The Organic Integrity Cooperative is a cooperative of organic inspectors, trainers, and consultants. They specialize in tailored compliance consulting and investigation, training, and internal audits that strengthen certification and quality systems. For more info, see <https://www.organicintegrity.coop/>

Watch for more information and registration links coming soon at [Webinars](#)

Sector News

Spring NOSB meeting, Omaha NE, May 12 - 14

The Spring NOSB meeting will be happening in Omaha, May 12–14. The NOP website has been updated to reflect this long-awaited meeting.

The formal announcement can be found [here](#).

Meeting Details

Online Comment Webinars (2 days): May 5 & 7, 2026, 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm Eastern Time

Public Meeting (3 days): May 12, 2026, 9:00 am – May 14, 2026, 3:00 pm Central Time

Please visit the Spring 2026 Meeting webpage to view the agenda and Board proposals, to register for oral public comments or submit written comments, and to access the public comment webinars and live meeting webcast.

Stakeholder Engagement Encouraged

The Board invites both oral and written public comments on its Spring 2026 agenda topics. Registration for oral comment speaking slots is now open through April 27, 2026, or until capacity is reached. Written comments may be submitted via Regulations.gov through May 4, 2026 (docket number AMS-NOP-25-0914). Interested parties are encouraged to review the online meeting materials and provide feedback on topics included on the agenda.

Visit the [Spring 2026 Meeting webpage](#) for meeting materials.

Deadlines: To be considered during the meeting, written comments must be received by 11:59 pm ET, May 4, 2026. Requests for oral comment speaking slots must be received by 11:59 p.m. ET, April 27, 2026. Details on how to register and submit written comments are available on the Spring 2026 Meeting webpage.

Proposed Changes to the National List for Organic Crops and Livestock - 4 interesting new materials

Open for Public Comment | Docket Number: AMS-NOP-22-0029; NOP-22-02

Dates: Public Comment Period Closes May 22, 2026

On March 23, 2026, the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) National Organic Program (NOP) published a proposed rule in the Federal Register to amend the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List). The National List is a section of the USDA organic regulations that identifies synthetic substances that are allowed, and natural substances that are prohibited, in organic production and handling.

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (OFPA) prohibits synthetic substances in organic production unless they meet specified criteria, are recommended by the NOSB and are added to the National List. This rule would implement several recommendations from the Board from their public meetings, held in October 2021, October 2022, and October 2024:

- Allow carbon dioxide in organic crop production.
- Allow meloxicam as a pain treatment in organic livestock.
- Remove restrictions on the use of methionine in organic poultry feed.
- Affirm that natural sodium nitrate is allowed in organic crop production, with certain conditions to protect soil quality.

A complete description of the proposed amendments to the National List is available in the Federal Register proposed rule. IOIA's Policy Comment Committee is preparing a comment on these materials.

2026 Annual Meeting Highlights

Dr. Jenny Tucker – USDA NOP, kicked the event off with “*From National Policy to Local Oversight: The Critical Role of Inspectors in the Organic System*”. She asked questions and listened to what inspectors had to say. Sherry Aultmann joined her and helped field the chat. After a break, we joined former three term US Senator **Jon Tester** – organic farmer, “*Why are Inspectors Important*” in his office on his 3rd generation farm in Big Sandy, Montana. His audience found him informal and approachable while grappling with really big topics such as consolidation and corporatization of our food system.



2026 AGM Keynote Jon Tester

A two-hour business meeting followed. The meeting was lively and kept the audience to the very end, an accomplishment in itself, after several hours on Zoom. Registrants included 50+ inspectors, supporting members, certifiers, and friends of IOIA. Thirty IOIA inspector members (voting members) attended. The Zoom venue kept the meeting inexpensive and accessible. It also allowed bringing in top-notch speakers. The meeting went so well that the board has decided to do it again next year. However, the plan is to work toward an in-person meeting in 2028.

Joe Ward, Chair, gave the annual report Overview. See pages 15, 16 and 17 for highlights. He Commended the Executive Director’s efforts towards 2025 training outcomes include 46 events, 551 people trained, with 13 partners and co-sponsors. Training initiatives included expanding the number of IOIA trainers and updating content for both in-person, webinar and online training. Two new training videos were completed. Isidor Yu was commended for long term association with IOIA and delivery of IOIA training in Korea, extending the mission of international influence for IOIA. Full Annual Reports are posted to the IOIA website.

The three board candidates were invited to speak. Margarito Cal – Three years as current Board member. Proposing that IOIA partner more with ACA & USDA NOP and making sure we are collectively heard as inspectors. Mark Novak – Experience in relevant industries (logistics/supply chain) and as an organic handler inspector. Entering a time of change, we need to have good, grounded values to support members and foundational principles. Leonard Pollara – Committed to saying a “few” words. Engaged with IOIA and inspecting since 2011 across multiple scopes. When voting closed, Leonard was our new board member.

Allan Benjamin, Treasurer, presented the 2025 financial reports for a vote and presented the 2026 budget, noting the positive net income in 2025. Assets grew, and equity grew.

The meeting closed with a robust discussion of future AGMs, including discussion on possibly combining with Regenerative, Marbleseed, NOFA, etc. events. We could have a booth; someone suggested an “Ask Me Anything” booth there. Another suggestion was to make an advanced training in Hawaii and another virtual general meeting for 2027 with more regional meetups at events. Central America, Caribbean or off-shore that includes non-US location would aid non-US members.

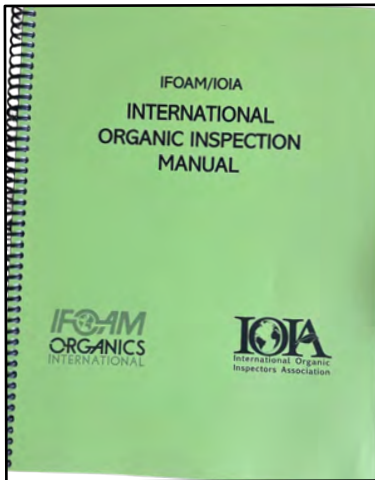
Door Prizes - Al Johnson won the autographed book **Grounded** by Jon Tester. Chris Fanta and Sean Mulla won IOIA caps.

	Dec 31, 25	Dec 31, 24
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
Certificates of Deposit	183,309.53	206,586.72
Stockman MM Savings	92,454.07	52,495.02
Total Checking/Savings	275,763.60	259,081.74
Accounts Receivable	50.92	50.92
Other Current Assets	26,094.26	35,372.64
Total Current Assets	301,908.78	294,505.30
Fixed Assets		
Total Building	38,768.86	38,768.86
Other Assets		
Accumulated Depreciation	-23,099.20	-22,732.20
TOTAL ASSETS	317,578.44	310,541.96
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Equity		
Contributed Property-FMValue	29,031.80	29,031.80
Total Restricted Scholarship Funds	19,798.17	19,171.97
Res Asia Pacific Committee Training	2,074.00	2,074.00
Retained Funds	260,264.19	332,439.81
Net Income	6,409.28	-72,175.62
Total Equity	317,578.44	310,541.96
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	317,578.44	310,541.96

IOIA announces publication of new Organic Inspectors' Manual

In 2025, IOIA (IFOAM member 30+ years) published a significant update to the IFOAM/IOIA International Organic Inspection Manual. The first edition was published in 2000.

The manual continues to provide the most comprehensive text on organic procedures and protocols written to date. It aims to improve the quality and consistency of organic inspections worldwide and is the basic textbook for all IOIA basic organic inspection trainings. This edition includes IFOAM's definition of Organic Agriculture and highlights the IFOAM Principles of Organic Production.



Funding for the initial project came from a grant from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Department for International Development Cooperation. Jim Riddle and Joyce Ford, then coordinators of the inspectors' organization, were the original co-editors. The 2025 update was edited by Kathleen Purvis, past IOIA board member located in Western Australia.

As a highly international organization with members in 14 countries, typically training in at least 4 languages each year, IOIA has always valued the cooperation and membership in IFOAM Organics International. IOIA led this update initiative, while IFOAM's head office in Germany provided key edits and essential review. IOIA and IFOAM jointly share copyright. Each year, IOIA sends a royalty payment to IFOAM for manuals printed. Since 2000, this contribution raised \$59,000+ for IFOAM, with 4000+ manuals printed.

If you are interested in learning more or purchasing a copy of the manual, contact IOIA at 406-436-2031 or email ioia@ioia.net

A Must-have for every organic inspector. If you have a copy of the previous edition and are wondering if you really need a new copy – the answer is “yes”! This 223-page edition is significantly modernized and streamlined, with updated IFOAM content, and more concise (221 pages total). Cost \$75 each plus \$10 shipping/handling in the USA. Actual shipping cost elsewhere. IOIA is working with IFOAM to make digital copies available through unique URLs.

2027 AGM will be virtual - on Zoom and plans are underway for in-person AGM in 2028

Notes from the Chair, from page 1

serving as the foundation for organic certification agencies. Your dedication and integrity are vital to maintaining the trust and transparency that define the organic industry. Each inspector's work is a testament to the importance of our mission and the value we bring to the global organic community.

Looking ahead, we will continue to face challenges such as long workdays, extensive travel, and time-sensitive reporting. By supporting one another and promoting consistency and integrity in our practice, we strengthen our profession and the standards we uphold. Remember, IOIA is your professional voice—advocating for excellence in training, mastery of the National Organic Program, and ongoing education. We invite all members to actively engage, share their expertise, and champion the importance of organic inspection. Together, we can advance the standards and reputation of organics worldwide.

News from Canada

The 2026 Canadian Organic Standards are published!

After 189 meetings of the working groups and task forces, the review of more than 300 proposed amendments, five meetings of the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture, and the resolution of 900 comments submitted during the public review, the FBC is proud of the work accomplished!

The new editions of the National Standards of Canada for Organic Agriculture have now been published. They are available at no cost on the Government of Canada Publications website as follows:

CAN/CGSB-32.310-2026:

[CAN/CGSB-32.310-2026 English](#) General Principles and Management Standards

[CAN/CGSB-32.310-2026 Français](#) Principes généraux et normes de gestion

CAN/CGSB-32.311-2026:

[CAN/CGSB-32.311-2026 English](#) Permitted Substances Lists

[CAN/CGSB-32.311-2026 Français](#) Listes des substances permises



General link to Government of Canada Publications website: [Government of Canada Publications - Search](#)

The Organic Federation of Canada sincerely thanks the Standards Council of Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the 120 members of the working groups and task forces, the members of the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture, the sponsors supporting the revision work, and the dedicated project team—the chairs and managers of the working groups/taskforces and of the Technical Committee, as well as the researchers and communications officers.

What does this mean for organic verification officers?

by Lisa Pierce, course instructor, IOIA Self-Paced Training Program

1. There will be a 1-year implementation period. Producers will have a full year, from the date of publication of the standard, to meet any standard changes. This means for the first year, producers will be in compliance if they meet the 2020 version of the Canada Organic Standard (COS) and/or the revised version of the COS.
2. *Organic inspectors and certification bodies will need to be proficient with **both** the 2020 version of the Canada Organic Standard and the revised version.*

The Canada Organic Standard is an evolving document and organic verification officers should be prepared for continuous learning throughout their career. To keep up to date with the status of the new standard and training opportunities, go to the Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) website (get on their mailing list) and keep in touch with your certification body. Many producers will already be familiar with the proposed changes in the Canada Organic Standard as several presentations were held across Canada during the 60-day public comment period that started May 20, 2025. Some of the changes include certain conditions that permit operators to alternate between organic and non-organic production, strengthening of standard around crop rotation, and the addition of struvite as a soil amendment.

The new standard will remain in effect for 5 years. The standards are routinely reviewed by the organic industry during this 5-year period. The standard revision process is currently lead by the Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) and conducted according to the procedures prescribed by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB)

CHANGE IN CANADA ORGANIC REGIME The final version of the new standard will be published by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB). As part of budget cuts and restructuring, the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) has recently been eliminated by the government of Canada. The Standards Council of Canada (SCS) will become the new owner of the Canada Organic Standard (COS) when the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) winds down its operations. The revised COS, which is referenced in Part 13 of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations, will be valid for five years.

SENASA fortalece el sistema de control de la producción orgánica con el apoyo de Suiza y certifica a 40 inspectores especializados

por Blgo. Gabriel Vizcarra, director de la Subdirección de Producción Orgánica del SENASA

Capacitación de alto nivel busca elevar estándares nacionales en un contexto de creciente demanda global por productos orgánicos

En un paso clave para elevar los estándares de fiscalización y unificar los criterios técnicos en la producción orgánica peruana, el Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Agraria (SENASA) culminó con éxito un programa de capacitación especializada que permitió certificar a 40 inspectores de finca a nivel nacional, fortaleciendo así el sistema de control y fiscalización del país.

Esta iniciativa se desarrolló en el marco del Programa SeCompetitivo, con el apoyo de la Cooperación Económica de Suiza e implementado por Helvetas Perú, y responde a la necesidad de armonizar criterios técnicos y elevar la rigurosidad de las inspecciones frente a mercados internacionales cada vez más exigentes.



El programa formativo se desarrolló en dos niveles —básico y avanzado—, ambos bajo la metodología de la International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA). Este enfoque permitió estructurar un proceso de aprendizaje progresivo, orientado a fortalecer y alinear las competencias técnicas del personal del SENASA con estándares internacionales. De esta manera, se promovió una mayor rigurosidad y consistencia en las inspecciones de campo, así como en los procesos de verificación de las prácticas de producción orgánica.

Asimismo, la formación contribuye directamente a mejorar la competitividad de cadenas productivas emblemáticas para el Perú, como el cacao, café, banano, quinua y mango, entre otros. Al contar con profesionales mejor capacitados, se fortalece la confianza en los sistemas de control y certificación orgánica, facilitando el acceso a mercados exigentes y promoviendo el posicionamiento de estos productos en el ámbito internacional.

Entre los principales resultados destaca la participación de profesionales del SENASA, responsables de las actividades de control de la producción orgánica en sus direcciones ejecutivas a nivel nacional. Asimismo, se logró la certificación de 40 profesionales que culminaron satisfactoriamente el proceso formativo. El programa incluyó, además, el desarrollo de módulos que abordaron desde fundamentos normativos y manejo documental hasta temas de mayor complejidad como el análisis de riesgos, balance de masas y la evaluación integral de unidades productivas.



El programa fue ampliamente valorado por los participantes, quienes destacaron la aplicabilidad de los contenidos y el enfoque práctico basado en situaciones reales de inspección. Esta formación fortalece el rol del inspector, potenciando su capacidad para identificar hallazgos, sustentarlos con evidencia técnica y comunicar resultados con transparencia. El proceso concluyó con un conversatorio el 4 de marzo y una reunión de retroalimentación el 13 de marzo de 2026, espacios que permitieron recoger aportes clave para seguir mejorando el sistema.

Con este esfuerzo conjunto, el SENASA reafirma su compromiso de elevar los estándares del control de la producción orgánica, en beneficio de productores, operadores y consumidores, y en línea con las exigencias del comercio internacional.

SENASA strengthens the organic production control system with the support of Switzerland and certifies 40 specialized inspectors

High-level training seeks to raise national standards in the context of growing global demand for organic products

In a key step to raise inspection standards and unify technical criteria in Peruvian organic production, the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA) successfully completed a specialized training program that allowed the certification of 40 farm inspectors nationwide, thus strengthening the country's control and inspection system.

This initiative was developed within the framework of the SeCompetitivo Program, with the support of the Swiss Economic Cooperation and implemented by Helvetas Peru and responds to the need to harmonize technical criteria and raise the rigor of inspections in the face of increasingly demanding international markets.

The training program was developed at two levels — basic and advanced — both under the methodology of the International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA). This approach allowed for structuring a progressive learning process aimed at strengthening and aligning the technical skills of SENASA personnel with international standards. In this way, greater rigor and consistency were promoted in field inspections, as well as in the verification processes of organic production practices.

Likewise, the training directly contributes to improving the competitiveness of emblematic production chains for Peru, such as cocoa, coffee, banana, quinoa, and mango, among others. By having better-trained professionals, trust in organic control and certification systems is strengthened, facilitating access to demanding markets and promoting the positioning of these products internationally.

Among the main results, the participation of SENASA professionals stands out, who are responsible for the control activities of organic production in their executive directorates at the national level. Likewise, the certification of 40 professionals who successfully completed the training process was achieved. The program also included the development of modules that covered everything from regulatory fundamentals and document management to more complex topics such as risk analysis, mass balance, and the comprehensive evaluation of production units.

The program was widely appreciated by the participants, who highlighted the applicability of the content and the practical approach based on real inspection situations. This training strengthens the role of the inspector, enhancing their ability to identify findings, support them with technical evidence, and communicate results transparently.

The process concluded with a discussion on March 4 and a feedback meeting on March 13, 2026, spaces that allowed the collection of key contributions to continue improving the system.

With this joint effort, SENASA reaffirms its commitment to raising the standards of organic production control, for the benefit of producers, operators, and consumers, and in line with the demands of international trade.

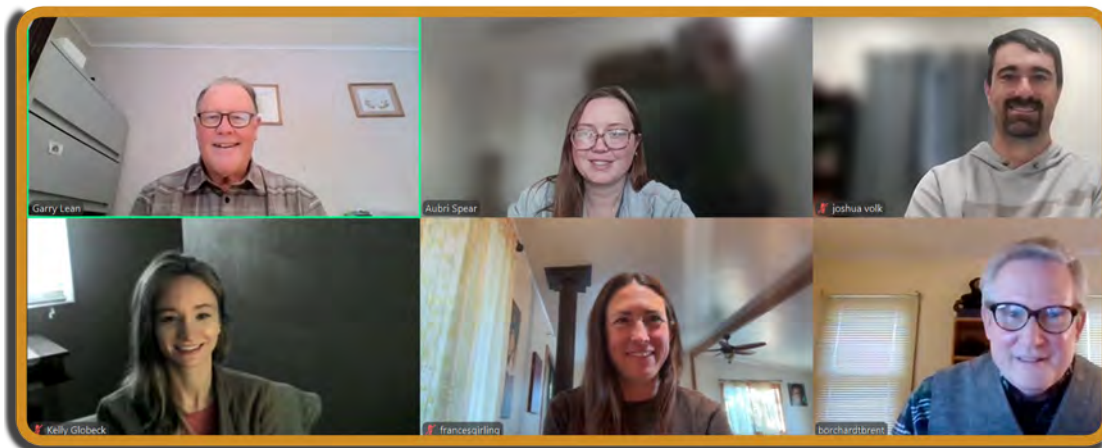


Lead trainer Luis Brenes



Participación de los profesionales del SENASA que ejecutan actividades de control de la Producción Orgánica en Perú.

Live Online Basic Courses 2025 - 2026

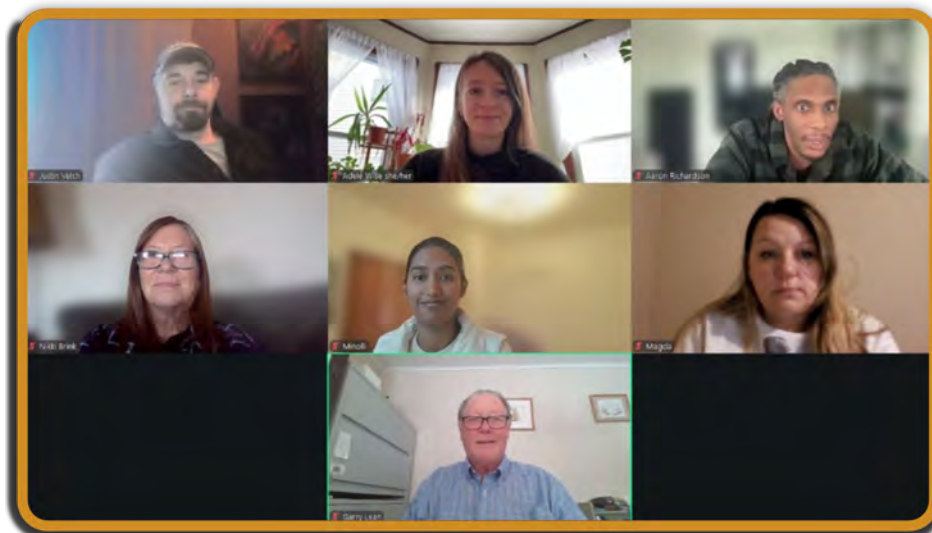


Online Basic NOP Crop Inspection Training
December 8 - 12, 2025 | Trainer: Garry Lean



Online Basic NOP Crop Inspection Training
February 23 - 27, 2026
Trainers: Patrick Wiebusch and Margaret Scoles

Online Basic NOP Processing
Inspection Training
February 2 - 6, 2026
Trainer: Garry Lean



Ask Me Anything - Advanced Training Sessions

Trying a new approach to Advanced Training, this year we offered a series of 5 online sessions over a 5 week period with experts on specific topics, inviting attendees to bring their questions.

The Global Landscape of Organic



Bo van Elzakker (The Netherlands)

Alliance for Organic Integrity
30+ years of experience in all aspects of organic agriculture. He is a member of the board of directors of Alliance for Organic Integrity.



David Crucefix, England

Alliance for Organic Integrity
He has a degree in agricultural sciences and a PhD in plant pathology from the University of London. Former executive director for IOAS.

Inspecting Producer/Grower Groups (EU and NOP)

Luis Brenes, Costa Rica

An organic inspector, IOIA lead trainer, post-grad professor and organic compliance consultant. Luis has presented training for IOIA on the Inspection and Certification of Grower Groups.



Kathe Purvis, Western Australia

Kathe has extensive experience in training, facilitation, and auditing. developed and delivered training on inspection of grower/producer groups both online in webinar format and in-person.



Organic and Biodynamic Winery Q &A (panel)

Pam Sullivan, New Hampshire, USA

Pam has been inspecting full time since 2005, specializing in wineries. She has mentored many new inspectors and developed IOIA's 300-level Winery Inspection webinar.



JJ Mack, Oregon, USA

JJ is the Senior Quality Assurance Specialist at Oregon Tilth. He was a full-time inspector for nearly 20 years. JJ mentored with Pam Sullivan in 2016 and has reviewed and inspected many vineyards and wineries since then.



Stephen Webber, Oregon

Winemaker has been involved in the production of fine Organic and Biodynamic certified wines since 2008. His professional training includes a Wine & Spirits Diploma from the Wine & Spirit Education Trust, United Kingdom.

Livestock Feed

Joseph W. Ward, Ph.D., Iowa, USA

As an animal nutritionist, he has consulted, published, and lectured in Europe, the Far East, Australia and South Africa. Since 2001, he has conducted over 2500 crops, livestock, and processor inspections. He currently serves as Chair of the board of directors.



Kim Pohle, Michigan, USA

Kim has bachelor's and master's degrees in animal science from Purdue University. Her experience includes 26 years in laying hens overall; compliance manager at 3 separate organic layer companies; 20 years in auditing; and 13 years in research laboratories.



Inputs - Ask OMRI anything

Peter Bungum, Oregon, USA – OMRI Research and Education Manager

Since 2014, Peter has helped the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) fulfill its mission to provide expert input material review and industry education. Peter is a key OMRI presenter for the collaborative OMRI/IOIA webinar inputs series.



Kelsey McKee, Oregon, USA – OMRI Review Program and Quality Director

Kelsey oversees OMRI's input review program and its ISO 17065 accreditation.



Guest Article - The Next Generation

by Demetria Stephens-Hill, Jennings, Kansas

I want to talk with you about trends in agriculture.

This can become a debate, so let's start our discussion by agreeing that we must eat food to live and so we're in this together. Then, we can jump right in to the "meat and potatoes" of what makes food better quality: Do you grow the best food because you certify organic, or are you certifying because you grow the best food? The former is you as a student of agriculture and the latter is you as a teacher. Agriculture will nurture you to become a master of nature and yourself.

I want to inspire the next generation of organic inspectors, even if they don't have any experience with agriculture. This is why I'm creating a new way to train apprentices, with one method being streaming playing games on YouTube once a month and talking about farming. And for a limited time this year, my apprentices can receive travel reimbursement under the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP).

Have you noticed a shortage of inspectors?

From meat inspectors to Biodynamic inspectors, we do not have enough in my region, the plains states. I work as an inspector for several organic certifiers, along with being a certification reviewer for the Demeter Association. My family's farm has been certified organic for 30 years, and we've never had an inspector from my state. I have conducted inspections in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas in the last decade.

The National Organic Program (NOP) is actively encouraging more farms to transition to organic certification by providing funding for consultants and mentors through the TOPP. If there are more organic operations, there should be more inspectors, too, right? To address this, a key TOPP initiative focuses on Workforce Development, aimed particularly at inspectors and reviewers.

If the movement continues and is successful, we will see an increase in the number of organic farms. I hope we'll see more of them convert to Biodynamic certification as well. And if we do, we will also need more Biodynamic inspectors! It is clear we need to encourage more individuals to fulfill the requirements to become qualified.

As of 2024, the NOP requires new inspectors to complete 2,000 hours of related experience and 50 hours of training. Returning inspectors must complete up to 20 hours of training annually, for all scopes. While professional development is important in any field, these increased requirements provide an additional challenge for those who seek to motivate more people to pursue a career as an inspector.

Currently, there is one official NOP resource for training called the Organic Integrity Learning Center. Beyond these approved online courses, organic certifiers are the gate keepers who decide what qualifies for training hours to meet the new annual requirements.

We can do more individually, to inspire people to become inspectors, especially in underserved areas. I am doing my part by developing an online and in-person training, supported by TOPP until November 30.

So, join my livestream. Or send me an email. Let me know if you have suggestions or contacts for the next generation of inspectors.

Here's my business Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090349877443>



Demetria Stephens-Hill is an inspector member of IOIA and a fifth generation farmer. She has been inspecting since 2015.

Annual Report 2025 Highlights - Membership



**AGM and Advanced Training
Chico Hot Springs, Montana**

- IOIA attended and represented YOU... as the voice of inspectors at – Guelph Organic Conference, CHFA in Vancouver, Organicology in Oregon, Expo West in California, High Plains Organic Conference in Wyoming.
- We renewed regular meetings with Dr. Jenny Tucker, NOP.
- Our BOD researched membership benefits including car rental benefit and affordable insurance.

Two of the Best Benefits of Membership

Newsletter - including technical articles such as:
Maple Syrup - Key OCP's, by Claire Ackroyd
Synthetic Biology - by Alan Lewis

IOIA Forum - Inspectors Only
Decades of experience in a safe discussion setting.

Member Benefit - New Specialized Webinars

In 2025 IOIA delivered 3 unique webinars with deep membership discounts:

Maple Syrup Inspection



Farm Fraud



Conservation on organic farms



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Ethics

The Ethics Committee reviewed all IOIA Complaint Investigation Procedures.

Policy

The Policy Comment Committee met on Risk-based Inspections and other topics.

Bylaws

IOIA's Bylaws Committee completed a modernization of our Bylaws which was overwhelmingly supported by our membership.



Al Johnson, Bylaws Chair

284 members - 14 countries



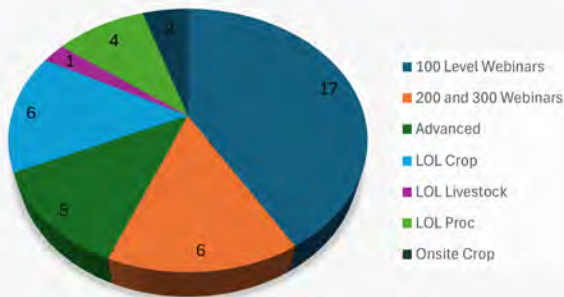
IOIA was one of many organizations and individuals who wrote letters in solidarity urging management to voluntarily recognize the Oregon Tilth Workers United (OTWU).



IOIA was one of many partners in a USDA-funded TOPP project with Organic Farmers Association to develop an exciting new resource, the **Organic Career Network**. IOIA contributed **key content** and **many photographs** that illustrate the diversity of our membership and course participants.

Annual Report Highlights - Training

IOIA 2025 Training Events



*Training -
It's What We Do!*

46
Events

551
People Trained

13
Partners &
Cosponsors



IOIA finalized an agreement with Isidor Institute as IOIA's official representative in Republic of Korea. Isidor Yu, front row 3rd from right, at advanced training.



APC/IOIA Training Proposal

IOIA worked with the Asia Pacific Committee to achieve a training agreement by which the APC can develop and deliver trainings other than organic, i.e. sustainability, climate-smart agriculture, with IOIA endorsement.



IOIA worked with AgriVita and SENASA to develop Spanish language training for the Peruvian government, funded by Switzerland through its Economic Cooperation.



Collaboration with Rodale Institute
- In person training in California

IOIA filmed two crop inspection training videos to update its highly popular live online training program. When IOIA trainers and staff made a herculean effort in 2020 to convert long-respected in-person courses to online learning, the change was never expected to be permanent. Five years later, however, demand for live online trainings remains strong, with courses filling quickly and generating waiting lists. All 4.5-day basic courses include either a field trip (for onsite trainings) or video inspections (for live online courses), creating a need for updated crop inspection videos covering both NOP and COR standards.



Annual Report Highlights - Governance & Operations

Career Development Awards

aka Scholarship Awards



Rutherford Award
Moetaz Mahdy, Egypt



Organic Community Initiative Award
Ricardo Tapia, Mexico



Ana Gabriela Calderón
Directora del Mercado el 100

Reynaldo De la Rosa Award
Mexico

New Scholarship Committee Chair –
Verónica Marquez
Ledesma, Mexico. Thank you to Arthur Bassett for years of dedicated service!



Bob Durst, a former IOIA Board Chair, endowed a **Organic Processing Inspector Apprenticeship Award** in 2024. The Award launched in 2025 with IOIA's first recipient – Cody Gieselman of Missouri. This award recognizes the challenge of finding mentorship for processing inspection. Durst is a retired food technologist who specialized in processing inspections and assisted in training processing inspectors.



2025 IOIA Board of Directors



Thank you to outgoing board member Kathe Purvis, Western Australia, for 3 years of service.



Remembering Anne Amsden, 97, Broadus Montana. IOIA benefactor, environmental and social justice advocate. Her family gifted IOIA our office building in 2007.



IOIA wrote a draft Mentorship Guide for ACA which will be co-branded, also helped promote and support an ACA Fellowship Program for new inspectors, funded by Southwest TOPP.

We received a modest grant from the Powder River Community Fund and used it to refinish the historic hardwood floors and the trim in the office, and painted the entire interior.

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights - *(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website)*

Board of Directors/Full Board Meeting for Strategic Planning – Dec 11, 2025 (all BoD present)

The board met for Strategic Plan review and strategic planning.

Board of Directors/Full Board Meeting – Dec 18, 2025 – 6-9 p.m. EDT by Zoom

Members Present: Joe Ward (JW), Chair, Justin Hurley (JH), Kathe Purvis (KP), Margarito Cal (MC), Rhea Epp (RE), Wendy Paulsen (WP), and Janine Gibson, Special Past Chair (JG) **Others Present:** Margaret Scoles, ED (MS). Alan Benjamin, Treasurer (AB) joined at 7pm. Guest Nate Powell-Palm 6:40 to 8:05.

Financial: MS presented the good news that IOIA is moving towards a positive bottom line for the year. MS request to adjust the budget to reduce MS salary by one month to allow MS to take time off as needed, using increased vacation benefit as a type of “sabbatical”.

Meeting with Nate Powell-Palm (NPP): Discussed fund development. NPP enquired on progress of the IOIA strategic plan and IOIA BOD recruitment, noting that IOIA will need dynamic ambassadors in 2026. NPP asks where does IOIA stand in regard to company sponsored training. NPP proposes that IOIA form a “deeply dynamic cohort” to pursue the funding opportunities articulating:

- Value of the profession
- Value of IOIA
- How we can be useful
- Are we supporting inspectors in earning a decent income?

NPP suggests identifying and tasking competent, prominent members of the organic community with specific tasks in promoting the values of IOIA. NPP notes a gap in IOIA being a complete apprenticeship program from initial training to complete skillset/ready to work. WP notes the challenges of continuity of training for non-staff inspectors. MS raises the option of selling IOIA staff inspector membership to the certifier rather than the individual staff inspector. Action Points: IOIA to develop a one-page summary of how IOIA would conduct company sponsored training. IOIA to develop one page summary about IOIA’s value proposition. Research with recent IOIA trainee graduates – did you /would you join IOIA? Why/ Why not? The BOD thanks NPP for his time and contributions to discussions.

Annual Meeting and BOD election: MC agreed to run as a candidate for the IOIA BOD in 2026 to support the process but notes disappointment in the industry direction regarding fairness. KP will not stand for the IOIA BOD in 2026 but will continue to contribute via IOIA APC. MS will directly approach IOIA APC members to check for other possible nominations. Discussion ensued regarding a nominated candidate who has affiliations with a certifying body, comparing the role against Board policy. MS notes that the original intent of the policy was to rule out certifying body inspector managers o i.e. a conflict of interest. However, the wording seems to rule out all personnel in management positions, including those other than managing inspectors. JG notes that a person who is engaged with inspectors is a positive. WP notes that while it is positive the number of this type of candidate should be limited. The policy amendment could be

- Limited number of inspectors being supervised
- Limited number of inspector coordinator at any one time on the IOIA BOD
- Requirement continues that this candidate must also be a current inspector

Request for Lower Member Rate for Africa: The IOIA BOD confirmed that the reduced IOIA membership fee applied to Asia Pacific and Latin America be extended to African member fees.

Staff Bonuses: MS stepped out of the meeting to allow BOD discussion on staff bonuses for 2025. The BOD acknowledged the hard work the staff have done in this fiscal year. Bonus amounts approved.

Board of Directors/Full Board Meeting – January 16, 2025 – 6-8:10 p.m. EDT by Zoom

Members Present: 6 Directors, Special Past-Chair Janine Gibson (JG). **Others Present:** Margaret Scoles, ED (MS). 7pm
Regrets: Wendy Paulsen (WP)

Board of Directors Minutes Highlights - *(full minutes available to inspector members on the IOIA website)*

Financial: The 2026 budget reflects MS time off (1 mo. Executive Director sabbatical) and some funding towards the position of Operations Manager. Budgeting for a conservative \$6000 profit. BOD voted to accept the 2026 budget for IOIA as presented and amended during the meeting and approve the 2025 IOIA balance sheet and the 2025 budget vs actual reports.

2026 AGM: USDA NOP address - Jenny Tucker to speak first, Jon Tester to speak as keynote. Two-hour business meeting. The IOIA AGM 2026 agenda was approved as presented and amended.

ED Report - Accreditation - BOD action is needed for Accreditation Review Panel (ARP). Mariann Holm has agreed to fill one of the 3 inspector member seats. JG has offered to serve as Alternate. BOD approved the 2 appointments (Mariann Holm and Janine Gibson). MS notes also that we need a non-IOIA member and a certifier representative.

No Board Meeting in February, 2026 Annual Membership Meeting held instead.

Board of Directors/Full Board Meeting – March 19, 2026 – 6-8:10 p.m. EDT by Zoom

Attendance: 6 Directors, Joe Ward Chaired. Others: Margaret Scoles, ED Regrets: Allan Benjamin (AB)

Review of 2026 AGM Draft Minutes: approved for posting to IOIA website.

Discussion on Jenny Tucker Meetings: MC: would be great if we could have input into common OSP's. Supplemental documents will be key and distinct between certifiers (e.g. Livestock List). IOIA should be part of drafting them. WP – is there any discussion of creating supplemental documents? General agreement to meet with NOP (similar to ACA) if there is a clear purpose / agenda.

Elect Officers: Elected JW – Chair; JH- Vice chair; AB – Treasurer; Wendy Paulsen - Secretary; MC - Executive committee at large; RE and LP – Directors

Monthly Meeting Date and time: Kept at third Thursday, 6 pm Eastern

Communications and Outreach Strategy: MS presented Georgina Thomas (GT) proposal. She is working on Executive MBA, works part time for IOAS and the Alliance for Organic Integrity. Maybe one day per week available for IOIA to work on Communications Strategy and Certifier Cohort. Advantage is she has done inspection, communication, accreditation and she is neutral because she is in the UK. MS proposes contract for 6 months with potential to renew. No need to amend budget. Motion to establish 6-month contract approved. Certifier Cohort: to launch as soon as possible after GT is on contract.

Results of Officer Elections

At their first meeting the board elected members to the following roles:

Joe Ward – Chair
Justin Hurley - Vice chair
Allan Benjamin – Treasurer
Wendy Paulsen - Secretary
Margarito Cal - Executive committee at large
Rhea Epp - Director
Leonard Pollara

Welcome Leonard Pollara, newly elected board member! Congrats to re-elected board member Margarito Cal!



Leonard Pollara

"Some new challenges are emerging that will impact IOIA's future, particularly competition in training services for inspectors, and inspector development.

We should focus on expanding training, mentoring, membership recruitment, collaborations with institutions of higher education, and exploring and continuing to build upon collaborative relationships that further support inspectors."

- Leonard Pollara



Margarito Cal, Hawai'i



IOIA
PO Box 6
BROADUS, MT 59317 USA
WWW.IOIA.NET
IOIA@IOIA.NET
406 - 436-2031

KEEP IOIA STRONG – LEND YOUR STRENGTH AND GET INVOLVED!

2026 Calendar

April 30 Tariffs, Turbulence & Truths. What You Need To Know Now
[Free webinar](#) hosted by Wolf & Associates

May 11 [NOC Pre-NOSB Meeting](#)

May 12 - 14 [NOSB Spring Meeting](#), Omaha Nebraska

May 21-22 [ACA AcaDEMY Live](#), Ann Arbor, MI

June 1 IFOAM [Extraordinary General Assembly](#) - Online

June 1 - 5 IOIA/FOG In-person training, see [page 5](#) for details

10-13 June [BIOFACH Brazil](#), Sao Paulo, Brazil

August 17-18 [ACA AcaDEMY Live](#), Atlanta, GA

August 19 - 20 [Midwest Organic Seed Summit](#), University of Minnesota

September 24-25 [ACA AcaDEMY Live](#), Holyoke, MA

September 25 - 27 [CHFA NOW Conference & Trade Show](#), Toronto

January 26-28, 2027 ACA annual meeting, , Louisville KY

TRAINING - IT'S WHAT WE DO!

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