

Technical Newsletter

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Christmas Office Hours

The OF&G office will be closing for the Christmas break at 1pm on Christmas Eve. It will re-open on Wednesday 29th Dec 2004. The office will also be closed for the Bank Holiday on 3rd Jan 2005.

Contact us

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General News

Organic Farmers & Growers AGM

The OF&G AGM will be held on 17th February 2005 in the Temperton Room at Harper Adams College, Newport, Shropshire. The meeting will start at noon and lunch will be provided. Further information will be mailed separately in January.

Organic Weeds Website

At the HDRA, as part of the Defra funded 'Participatory Investigation of the Management of Weeds in Organic Production Systems' they have been developing a project website that they think is a useful tool for farmers, growers and advisors. The website holds all information gathered on weeds and their management, including literature from science, the farming press and practical strategies from organic farmers. It is at:

www.organicweeds.org.uk

They would like this resource to be as widely available as possible. All the information contained on the website is for free distribution and is regularly updated. Contributions to it are also welcome!

Marketing Materials

At present OF&G supply small logo labels for use by licensees at a cost of £6.50 + VAT per 1000 label roll. If you require any of these please telephone or email us at the OF&G office. We are also looking into the possibility of producing paper bags with the OF&G logo at a reasonable price and welcome your comments on this, again, at the OF&G office.

Annual Inspection Cancellation Charges

Where an Operator cancels an inspection with less than 5 days' notice OF&G reserves the right to charge a cancellation fee as per the published Inspection and Certification Charges.

Evaluating vegetable varieties – calling growers for trials

Organic growers will have an opportunity to evaluate new varieties under field conditions in collaboration with NIAB, HDRA and the Soil Association

NIAB and HDRA have been testing varieties of field vegetables and potatoes for organic production and marketing through this DEFRA-funded programme since 1991. This new development will allow 5 groups of growers to host their own trials. Growers will be able to choose from a list of varieties that are currently in the trials programme and the seeds will be free of charge. Some funding is available to pay growers for hosting the trials.

HDRA, NIAB and the Soil Association will provide technical back-up to growers and groups, offering advice and support on how to set up and run the trials. Information from the different growers will be pooled to give an overall assessment of variety performances across a wide range of conditions.

For further information please contact Phil Sumption at HDRA on 024 7630 8200 or email psumption@hdra.org.uk





Technical News for Producers

Non-Organic Seed Derogations for 2005

Once again we strongly recommend that you order your seed early to ensure your first choice in seed variety. Non-organic transplants, hedging plants and trees fall into the same category as other non-organic seed and must also be derogated.

We are still receiving incomplete seed derogation forms, derogation requests on the incorrect forms and occasionally derogation requests not making use of a form at all! In future all non-organic seed derogation applications MUST be on the correct form, if they are not they will be returned for completion, which will result in a delay in processing the application. To assist you with this we have enclosed a copy of the seed derogation form.

Non-organic seed derogations will only be granted for certain crops and only if you can explain why each of the organic varieties available will not suit your need. The website www.organicXseeds.co.uk provides information on organic seed availability in the UK. You can also ring the office for information about the availability of organic seed. The Centre for Organic Seed Information's website www.cosi.org.uk provides valuable information on: organic seed performance, updates on standards, news from the Sector Body Seeds Working Groups, and a forum for discussion.

Grass & Forage mixtures

Please note that as of 01/01/2005, the amount of organic seed needed in a grass/clover or forage mix to allow you to purchase and sow a mix before obtaining derogation has been raised from 50% to 60%.

Despite what you may have been told by others working in the seed industry 60% Organic grass/clover and forage mixes do require derogation. This is because the remaining 40% of seed is non-organic. Whilst you can sow these seed mixes before getting approval YOU MUST complete Record sheet 4 and get approval before your next inspection.

Seed derogations received after purchase

OF&G continues to receive seed derogations after seed has been purchased and/or sown. With the exception of 60% grass/clover or forage mixes, which can be sown before the derogation has been obtained, purchasing/sowing non-organic seed before a derogation is issued is a major non-compliance.

All non-organic seed derogations received after purchase or sowing will result in the derogation NOT being approved and the crop may be decertified.

Seed for seed production

If you apply for a derogation to plant non-organic C1 grade seed for seed production you must supply documentary evidence of your seed contract before we will approve a derogation. If this is not sent with the application (Record sheet 4), we will request it and this will delay the time it takes to process your application (see note above about decertification of crop if sown before derogation is approved).

Potato Seed

As the organic seed potato suppliers assure us that there will be ample quantity and variety this year, during 2005 100% organic potato seed must be used.

Please be aware that if you are intending to produce organic potatoes next season you should order your organic potato seed in good time in order to ensure that you get the best quality of organic seed available.

Home Saved Seed

Defra have now confirmed that we can grant derogations to use home-saved seed from land in the second year of conversion. If you are intending to use home-saved seed please send in a derogation application and get this approved before sowing.



Technical News for Processors

Sausage Casings

The availability of organically produced sausage casings still remains very limited. EC Regulation 2092/91 has been amended to allow the use of casings not produced according to the organic farming method without any limit in time. There are, however, some organic casings available. For further information please contact Nicky Strudwick on extension 230 or nicola.strudwick@organicfarmers.uk.com

Labelling of Imported Products

Organic goods packed & labelled abroad, must carry the identifying mark of the organic certifier in the exporting country. (This mark may be the name &/or logo &/or code as appropriate). In addition, the goods may carry the code number (eg Organic Certification UK2 &/or logo incorporating this statement) of the UK Importer as long as it is clear that the UK certification body is certifying the import only, not the production or processing of the goods.

Details of the Importer's certifying body may only appear on the label with the written agreement of the Exporter's certifying body & should not be more prominent. We now have a logo incorporating the statement 'Import Certified By' which is available on request from Nicky Strudwick (details above).

Licensees in the News

Scaffold-loving turkeys hit the nationals

OF&G licensees Tony and Sally Herdman made the pages of the Telegraph this month when feature writer Judith Woods went to see them.

Judith was doing a follow-up article to one she wrote in November questioning the reasons for buying organic food. After being contacted by OF&G she agreed to look more closely at the issue. As a result she spoke to OF&G's Processing Certification Manager, Gabrielle Lanceley, and at our suggestion went to see the Herdmans' turkeys, so that she could do a comparison of organic and non-organic Christmas lunches.

Judith had a great time at the Herdmans' Clyro Hill Farm, on the Welsh borders, and was clearly taken with the tale of the time all 200 turkeys decided to perch themselves on the scaffolding that had been put up on the family's new house – which made it into print.

'Outstanding' farm wins grassland award

Tom and Tara Morris, who farm just outside Taunton, Somerset, have scooped the British Grassland Society's National Grassland Management Award.

The Morris's East Lydeard Farm, where they run an organic dairy operation, was soundly praised by the judges as a good example of a family-run business. Particularly mentioned was their attention to detail and innovation in maximising milk production from grass.

Staff News

A quality job for Andrew

Andrew Withington is the latest addition to OF&G, as Quality Systems Supervisor and Administrator. Although you may not have day-to-day contact with Andrew, he's working hard in the background to ensure that the systems that are crucial to maintaining standards in our work are protected and improved.

Andrew also has responsibility for the OF&G Evaluation Scheme, which enables pre-approval for non-organic products in organic systems. He can be contacted at andrew.withington@organicfarmers.uk.com or by phone on extension 225.



For Sale:

Please note that purchasers of stock advertised by OF&G should always check the current certificate and the status with the vendor. OF&G cannot take responsibility for any stock, items or services sold through this service

For Sale: **Organic Montpellier** cross heifers & bulls over 3 months old. Contact Mr Alvis. Tel: 01242 621215. Worcestershire (posted 03/11/04)

For Sale: Large round bailed **silage**, large round bailed hay & small bailed hay, all organic. Contact: Richard Grey, Greys Organics Ltd. Tel: 07979 597112. South Glos (posted 12/11/04)

For Sale: 2 **organic suckler** cows with bull calves at foot and 10 **organic bulling heifers Aberdeen Angus** and **Limousin crosses**. Contact: Mr Ellis. Tel: 01691 650450 Oswestry (posted 18/11/04)

For Sale: Fat welsh organic **mountain lambs**. Contact: Mr Pugh. Tel: 07747 000246. Gwynedd. (posted 10/12/04)

For Sale: Organic **Texel and Texel cross** ewe lambs. Contact: Nicky Berry Tel: 01342 826752 West Sussex (posted 16/12/04)

For Sale: We have now combined our **organic maize** and now have useful quantities of **crimped organic grain** maize for sale. This is available in high density wrapped bales (weigh c.1.25 tons each) which makes transport easy and the buyer does not require any special storage. Price will vary according to location. Contact: David Chandler Tel: 07967 803032 West Sussex (posted 16/12/04)

Wanted

Wanted: **Organic Suffolk Sheep** within a 50 mile radius of Leicestershire. Contact: Mr Osborne Tel: 01455 822837 (posted 28/10/04)

Wanted: Organic farmer in Herefordshire or surrounding counties that has **Beef Type calves** for sale, that have been weaned. Contact: Dave Niblett. Tel: 01568 780269. Herefordshire. (posted 12/11/04)

Wanted: **Organic milking cows** or in-calf heifers due to calve between mid February and the end of March 2005. Any milking breed but not over 3 calvings. Any area if there is a truck full. Contact: Piers Dutton. Tel: 01244 321731 or email piersdutton@farming.me.uk Cheshire (posted 18/11/04)

Wanted: **Organic store lambs** for finishing. Contact: Andrew or Allison Tyrrell. Tel: 01792 386222 or email lowerhardingsdown@fwi.co.uk nr Swansea, South Wales. (posted 22/11/04)

Wanted: Local organic farmers in Lincolnshire willing to supply **new organic farm shop** enterprise. Opening Spring 2005 near Grantham. Contact: Diane Tel: 0798 505 56 59. (posted 06/12/04)

Wanted. **60 organic/CBS cows**, spring calvers for delivery in late winter. Contact: Mr Rawson. Tel: 01924 461541 or 07778 742676. West Yorkshire (posted 06/12/04)

Wanted: **Devon or Angus x Friesian heifers** any age considered but preferably 8 to 18 months. Contact: Mr Cowling Tel: 01398 371215. Somerset. (posted 10/12/04)

Wanted: **To rent - one or two acres** of farmland for organic vegetable production. Preferably in the Dorset/Wiltshire area. Contact: Polly Strauss Tel: 01273 279 210 or email driscoll.strauss@btinternet.com (posted 16/12/04)

WANTED: **organic welsh black steers/heifers** 20-30 months old. Contact: Mr James Tel: 01267 290 537 Carmarthen (posted 16/12/04)

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**The Practical
Organisation for
Organic Certification**

www.organicfarmers.org.uk

Miscellaneous

For an art performance project in Liverpool in May 2005 we are looking to hire 6 dairy cows for 14 days. We would also like to hire a cow handler for the duration of the project. For more information and to agree the price and conditions please contact: Ulrike Steven Tel: 020 7684 8232 or e-mail ulrikesteven@web.de (posted 18/11/04)

Problems concerning hedgerow generation when an organic grower? I am currently studying for a MSc in Environmental Management and am particularly interested in hedge regeneration and ecology. If there are any farmers/growers that have had any good or bad experiences with hedge regeneration in the last 6 years, please could they contact Philip Sellick on lgxps@nottingham.ac.uk; or write to Chitcombe Fm. Bungalow, Woolland, Blandford, Dorset, DT11 0EW or Tel 01258817565. I am trying to find out what management practices (or other factors) distinguish successful from unsuccessful hedgerow establishment on organic farms. (posted 18/11/04)