

# Technical Newsletter

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Welcome to the first OF&G newsletter of 2004. We hope you find it useful. All of the information in this issue will be important to some if not all licensees, so please read through carefully to see what affects you. We're always keen to hear from you (see the article about our new PR man!), so don't hesitate to talk to us if you need to.

## GENERAL NEWS

### Residue Testing Reports to DEFRA

Defra is setting up a confidential information-gathering exercise to establish the UK level of residue testing of organic products and the results of that testing. This information is intended to provide the basis for a risk-based approach to residue testing in the future. This will, in turn, help to identify challenges to the organic system of production and provide a better informed basis for addressing those challenges.

In order to facilitate this we are required by Defra to send all our licensees a Residue Testing Form (RTR1) that should be used to record a summary of any residue tests carried out during 2002. If you have not carried out any residue tests you must still complete the form. These forms will be sent out to you all shortly, we need to have these back as soon as possible and no later than 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004. We realise that you are all very busy but we would appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

### Organic Farmers and Growers Licensees requiring combinable crops assurance

Combinable crops producers are reminded that the closing date for new applications to be farm assured (FABBL Crop) is the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2004.

If you are growing organic grain for feed mills, OF&G would like to make you aware of the fact that as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004, all UFAS (United Kingdom Feed Accreditation Service) registered feed mills will have to source organic grain from a combinable crop assured producer. In most circumstances, OF&G can arrange for you to have a FABBL crop inspection with your annual organic inspection. If you need FABBL crop assurance, you will need to be inspected before the 2004 harvest. Applications for FABBL crop must be received by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2004 at the latest.

### OF&G Northern Ireland Conference

The recent OF&G Producer conference was held at Loughry College, Cookstown, Northern Ireland on the 10<sup>th</sup> February. The event was well attended with over 30 delegates. We enjoyed excellent presentations from a variety of speakers: Charlotte Moore from DARD provided information on the services available to producers in Northern Ireland. These include advisory visits under the OCIS scheme, grants towards buildings costs and training courses for organic producers; Caroline Cheyne, OF&G Processor Certification Manager gave a very helpful presentation on the requirements for any producer considering diversifying into on-farm processing; Liam McCarthy of ABP Newry provided a very interesting and useful insight into the situation regarding the requirements for slaughter stock in Northern Ireland; and Richard Jacobs, OF&G Producer Certification Manager (cont)

## Hints & Tips

Have you got your OF&G gate sign on show at your farm?

If you don't have one just give us a call and we will send one out to you.

## Contact us

Phone:  
0845 330 5122

Fax:  
0845 330 5123

E-Mail:  
info@organicfarmers.uk.com

Website:  
www.organicfarmers.uk.com





## OF&G Northern Ireland Conference (cont)

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gave a presentation detailing amendments to the standards due in the next two years.

The college provided an extremely good organic lunch that was heartily enjoyed by all those attending. OF&G would like to thank all those that took time out from their busy schedules to attend and we would particularly like to thank Loughry College for providing an excellent venue and organic lunch and the speakers for providing a lot of useful information.

## Sell organic livestock, forage and grazing via the internet at the Soil Association's new Organic Marketplace

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The Organic Marketplace is open to all organic farmers; regardless of certification body. You can access the service at any time at [www.soilassociation.org/organicmarketplace](http://www.soilassociation.org/organicmarketplace)

The Soil Association's 'Organic Marketplace' was launched at the Soil Association's annual conference at Herriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. Producers can search for livestock, grazing and forage by livestock type, forage type or grazing, as well as by country or region. Alternatively, enter your own livestock, forage or grazing for sale.

This online project builds on the Soil Association's National Organic Livestock Database (NOLD) and National Organic Forage and Grazing Database (NOFAG). NOLD and NOFAG were set up to increase inter-farm sales and encourage long-term links between organic farmers. These services are still available to producers who do not have access to the internet.

The Soil Association wanted to make these databases available online, as many producers don't have time to contact them during office hours. Now these popular services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For more information contact Soil Association producer services on 0117 914 2400 or [ps@soilassociation.org](mailto:ps@soilassociation.org)

# TECHNICAL NEWS FOR PRODUCERS

## Purchasing Animals whilst in Simultaneous Conversion

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Recently a couple of OF&G producers have lost the simultaneous-conversion (sim-con) status of their land and livestock because they brought in adult non-organic suckler cows that were not nulliparous (this means they had previously given birth).

In each case the producer failed to seek a derogation from us to buy in the non-organic livestock. If they had contacted us they would have been told that they could not buy in non-organic animals that had previously given birth.

Please note the following important points:

1. If you want to bring in non-organic animals you must contact us for a derogation first;
2. We will only approve the derogation if organic animals are not available and the non-organic animals that you want to bring in have not previously given birth (nulliparous);
3. You will not be allowed to bring-in animals that have previously given birth (non-nulliparous);
4. The EU Regulation has been amended recently and we are now able to allow the bringing in of non-nulliparous animals (animals that have given birth) where a breed is in danger of being lost to farming.

Whether you are in-conversion or fully organic, if you are in any doubt about buying in livestock please contact your Certification Officer.



## Bovine Mastitis

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OF&G have received a letter from the Veterinary Laboratories Agency regarding the use of unauthorised herbal products in cases of bovine mastitis, which includes the following paragraphs:

'It has come to the Central Mastitis Review Group's (CMRG) attention that a number of unauthorised herbal products, including aloe vera and tea tree oil based products, are currently promoted for use in cases of bovine mastitis, particularly to organic dairy herds. There appears to be considerable confusion on the use of these products with respect to their efficacy, their safety and the withdrawal period to apply.'

'The CMRG strongly recommends that all dairy farmers, organic and conventional, consult their private veterinary surgeons for advice on the treatment of mastitis in their herds.'

## Organic Seed Availability

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Please be aware that [www.cosi.org.uk](http://www.cosi.org.uk) is now the website to use to search for organic seed availability and for listing organic seed available. This website replaces the organicXseeds website previously used.

## Home Saved Seed

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All licensees should note that with the introduction of the new regulation on seeds we will not be able to issue derogations for non-organic home-saved seed if the variety requested is available as organic on the organic seeds availability database (COSI). This means that we will not be able to give a derogation for a seed crop produced from crops grown on non-organic, or first/second year conversion land, if the variety requested is available as organic.

If you need more information regarding this please contact your Certification Officer.

## Compendium of Organic Standards

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In May of 2003 we wrote to all OF&G licensees regarding the consultation over the proposed Defra Compendium of Organic Standards, which is due to replace the existing UKROFS Organic Standards. The completed Compendium has now been published and is expected to become law by March or April of this year. If you wish to look at the Compendium a copy can be downloaded from the Defra website at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/legislation-standards/index.htm> If you do not have access to the internet we can provide a paper or CD copy.

OF&G will be looking closely at the Compendium over the next few weeks before we decide how to proceed with regard to any changes to the OF&G standards. If you have any comments regarding this please contact Producer Certification Manager, Richard Jacobs, on Tel: 0845 3305122 ext. 226 or by email at [richard.jacobs@organicfarmers.uk.com](mailto:richard.jacobs@organicfarmers.uk.com)

## Synthetic Vitamins

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All producers should be aware that synthetic vitamins can only be given to livestock if their use can be justified. The Animal Health Plan must detail the reasons why synthetic vitamins are required and you must obtain a derogation from OF&G before using any feed or mineral that contains synthetic vitamins. This requirement was first announced in our February 2002 Newsletter.

Please check your feed and mineral labels carefully; if they contain synthetic vitamins and you don't have a derogation to use them you must contact us for a derogation to do so.

The following amendment to the OF&G standards will be included at the next publication. If you need to apply for a derogation to use synthetic vitamins for sheep or cattle please provide the information listed below:

Synthetic vitamins may be given to monogastric or non-ruminant animals such as pigs and poultry. Synthetic vitamins must not routinely be given to ruminants. However, the certification body may approve the feeding of the synthetic forms of the vitamins A, D & E to ruminants during the winter and by special dispensation at other times, following receipt of the following:

- i) A completed Record Sheet 9 - Restricted Practice & Material Derogation Application Form;
- ii) The relevant sections of the Health Plan demonstrating the need for the vitamins;
- iii) A letter from the veterinary surgeon confirming the need for vitamin supplements.



## TECHNICAL NEWS FOR PROCESSORS

### Food Standards Agency Seminar on Sprouted Seeds and their Safety – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2004

This seminar will look at the Microbiological safety of sprouted Seeds and look at the production of an industry guide to Good Hygiene Practice, and is being held at the London headquarters of the FSA. Anyone interested should contact Ms Narriman Looch on Tel: 020 7276 8410 or e-mail: [narriman.looch@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:narriman.looch@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

### Animal Feed Labelling

We are reliably informed that the Food Standards Agency is enforcing EU regulation 1334/2003 over the labelling of copper levels in animal feeds. This means that the phrase dictated by 1334/2003 should appear wherever appropriate. i.e. the declaration of potential danger to sheep where levels of copper exceed 10mg/Kg and the declaration of potential danger to Cattle where Copper levels are below 20mg/Kg. We understand that ACI (formerly UKASTA) are challenging this and anyone requiring further information should contact the Food Standards Agency or ACI.

### Staff Profile – Mark Waugh, PR & Media Manager

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Raising profiles – ours and yours!

OF&G has welcomed a new addition to the team as part of its plan to continue building the profile of the organisation and its licensees.

Mark Waugh has been appointed as PR & Media Manager and will be working at the OF&G offices in Shrewsbury for two days each week.

Mark said: "I'm really delighted to be with OF&G. There is a lot of positive work to be done on behalf of the organisation, the producers and processors it works for and the organic industry as a whole."

Do you have any news about your business?

Have you got a success story on your hands? Or is there an issue that's causing you concern? Do you have advice to share with your organic colleagues through OF&G?

We want to hear from any of our licensees with a story to tell, be it good or bad. Mark and the team will look for ways of sharing information with your peers, the industry and the public through our own communications, your local media and, where possible, through the wider media and industry.

You can contact Mark on Wednesdays and Thursdays at the OF&G offices on 0845 330 5122 ext 234 or email him: [mark.waugh@organicfarmers.uk.com](mailto:mark.waugh@organicfarmers.uk.com)

And finally... We're delighted to end this newsletter on a romantic note.

OF&G Business Manager, Steve Belton, and Certification Support and Seed Derogations Administrator, Jools, surprised their colleagues by announcing they had tied the knot while on a trip to Ullswater, in the Lake District. The couple did the deed on Valentine's Day with just close friends in attendance.

Everyone at OF&G would like to pass on their congratulations and good wishes to Mr and Mrs Belton!

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