

Technical Newsletter

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Technical News for Producers

NIAB Organic Vegetable Handbook

NIAB Cambridge will be publishing the second edition of the Organic Vegetable Handbook at the end of March. The booklet extends to 80 pages and covers the broccoli, brussels sprout, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, celery, leek, lettuce, onion, oriental vegetable, parsnip, potato and swede crops.

Data from over 150 NIAB and HDRA trials over 13 years have been used to describe 332 varieties in all and the publication reports on their strong and weak points when grown under organic conditions.

The handbook costs £15, inc postage & packing for UK addresses, and can be ordered by post from NIAB Publications, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0LE, or by credit card over the telephone on 01223 342344.

Information for Poultry Producers

Changes to standards for non-organic pullets.

We recently sent out to all poultry producers registered with us, important information regarding changes to the standards for non-organic pullets. If you did not receive these or are not clear on what they mean for you please contact your Certification Officer to discuss.

OF&G Partnership Programme

We will shortly be launching our 'OF&G Partnership Programme', this is a new set of standards designed for those OF&G pig and poultry producers that supply Soil Association Certification Ltd (SA Cert) registered processors. SA Cert requires that all pig and poultry products used by their processors are produced to a standard equivalent to theirs.

If you want more information about this please contact your Certification Officer.

FABBL Crop Expiry Dates

Over the last 18 months the number of producers requesting FABBL/FABBL crop inspections has increased dramatically this has led to concern that over the coming months due to increased pressure some producers may miss the deadline for FABBL Crop 2005 harvest.

Please note that as FABBL Crop inspections have to be completed before the combines start to work in the fields the final closing date for harvest 2005 applications is 31st May.

OF&G Evaluation Scheme products

The following product has recently been accepted into the OF&G Evaluation Scheme as 'Product Approved for Use in Organic Systems' or 'Product Approved for Restricted Use, Derogation Required'

Category	Name	Supplier	Telephone	OF&G Eval Scheme Status	Certificate Expiry Date
Animal Health Product	Thermovite Plus	Probiotics International	01935 822921	Approved	28/02/2006

Contact us

Phone:
0845 330 5122

Fax:
0845 330 5123

E-Mail:
info@organicfarmers.org.uk

Website:
www.organicfarmers.org.uk





Technical News for Processors

For processors and on-farm processors

1) RECORDS FOR MASS BALANCES & TRACEABILITY

OF&G certifies many different types of organic food & feed production & processing enterprises. We try to be as practical & helpful as possible & keep the paperwork to a minimum, but we do need to see records.

In order for us to certify a processing enterprise as organic, we have to see proof that everything sold as “organic” has been made from organic ingredients. So we have to see organic certificates for all suppliers. We also need to see records so that we can correlate quantities of organic ingredients bought in (or produced on the farm) with quantities of finished products sold.

This isn’t so much of a problem with large operations that buy huge quantities of raw materials, so need to have good records in place. It’s the smaller enterprises, where one or two people are trying to do every job, that struggle to keep up with their paperwork.

The most difficult areas tend to be with mass balances & traceability, so we have written a leaflet to explain which records are needed & how to keep them as simple as possible. This is Technical Leaflet 217 & will be sent to all Processors & On-farm Processor Licensees. If any Producer Licensees would like a copy, please contact Chris on ext.221 or your Certification Officer

Mass Balance: A Mass Balance form RD73 (see example below) is sent out to all processors, 2-3 weeks before the inspection, to give an idea of the information we require. It’s important that sufficient records are kept to enable our Inspector to complete the form whilst he/she is on-site.

A	B	C	D	E	F
Opening Stock Date/quantity	Raw material in Date/quantity	Finished product out Date/quantity	Waste material out Date/quantity	Theoretical closing stock Date/quantity	Actual closing stock Date/quantity

In the table above, (A + B) minus (C + D) equal E (Theoretical Closing Stock). The Inspector will check to see how this compares with the Actual Closing Stock (F)

Further details are given in Technical Leaflet 217

2) BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ON-FARM PROCESSOR CERTIFICATION

- The operation must be registered with the appropriate statutory authority and comply with statutory legislation. In most cases this will be your local Environmental Health Officer.
- On-farm processing activities need to be covered by an on-farm processing licence, so contact your OF&G Certification Officer early on to check requirements – don’t wait till the last minute. Your premises will need to be inspected before you can market processed food as organic. It is worth trying to time your start date to fit with your next annual farm inspection, or you will need to pay for a separate inspection.
- You must have proof of organic status for all organic produce. Ask for current certificates of compliance with the organic regulation (EC2092/91) for all bought-in produce.
- If your enterprise is not dedicated to organic products, you must segregate and clearly label organic and non-organic produce at intake and during all stages of storage, processing, packing and display.
- Your staff must be trained to understand organic requirements. (These are detailed in Section 11 of the OF&G Control Manual)
- Mass balance and traceability – you must be able to reconcile quantities of organic produce brought in against quantities of finished products sold. (See article in this Newsletter & Tech Leaflet 217)
- Recipes/processes used must comply with organic regulations and must be approved by OF&G first. (See Section 10 of the OF&G Control Manual)
- Labelling must comply with the organic regulations (Ask your Certification Officer for a copy of Tech Leaflet 212 on Labelling Organic Products). The operation must be certified before you have the right to use the word “Organic” on any product label or marketing literature.



Cont/...

- Cleaning routines. Wet or dry cleaning can be used, as appropriate. Cleaning should ensure there is no possibility of contaminating the organic produce with traces of non-organic produce or chemicals of any kind. Food-industry approved cleaning chemicals can be used as long as there is a final rinse with clean water.
- Pest control - Licensed rodent poisons in wax bait form and electronic fly killers (EFKs) or sticky fly paper can be used. If spray pest control is required, Aquapy is the preferred chemical, but this must not contaminate products or packaging. (Ring your Certification Officer to discuss.)

Important News for Importers

EC Certificates of Inspection must be signed by Port Health Authority

Importers must ensure that each consignment of organic produce brought into the UK from outside the EC is accompanied by an EC Certificate of Inspection & that this is signed by the Port Health Authority (PHA), at the port of entry into the UK.

These certificates need to be kept by the Importer & will be checked by the OF&G Inspector at the Annual or Spot Inspection.

If the certificates are not available or have not been signed by the PHA, the goods should not be traded as organic & we have been specifically instructed by Defra to check this.

Please contact OF&G for a copy of the **Importer Technical Leaflet TL202** if you have any questions about the correct procedures to follow.

Miscellaneous

FSA Comment on Organic Milk Research (Omega-3 Fatty Acids)

Defra has asked us to circulate the following Food Standards Agency announcement

The Food Standards Agency is aware of the recent research indicating that organic milk has higher levels than conventional milk of omega-3 fatty acids. Consequently claims are being made that organic milk is an alternative to oily fish as a source of beneficial omega-3 fatty acids.

The Agency does not support such claims. The forms of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid found in milk are not the same as those found in oily fish that have been shown to be protective for cardiovascular disease and which may also have beneficial effects on foetal development. The form in milk is a short chain fatty acid (alpha-linolenic acid), while the forms present in oily fish are long chain fatty acids (eicosapentaenoic (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acids (DHA)). Research has shown that the short chain type found in plant and dairy sources does not appear to be as beneficial as those found in fish. Furthermore the conversion of the short chain omega-3 fatty acids to the long chain ones in humans appears to be limited at best. Therefore, dairy sources of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids do not provide a viable alternative to eating oily fish, and it is wrong to present organic milk in this way.

Licensee offer – raise your profile with PR

OF&G has agreed a special offer for licensees with its Public Relations provider, Waugh Communications. For a limited period licensees are being offered the chance to have a press release written and issued to the media (local, national, trade press, as appropriate) for just £135 - less than half the normal cost for the service.

PR is often much cheaper and more effective than advertising. If you have launched a new venture, expanded your business, won an award, created a new product or any other potentially newsworthy activity, this is a great way to get publicity for it. OF&G has worked with Waugh Communications for more than a year, with great results.

To find out more, visit the OF&G page on the Waugh Communications website at www.waughcomms.co.uk/ofg or call Mark Waugh on 01952 507633 (offer open until May 31, 2005).

Organic Weed Management

HDRA has organised two events in the Midlands as part of its organic weed management project. The first, on May 10, will be at Hindford Grange Farm, near Oswestry, offering the chance to view weeding machinery and share ideas. The second event will be at the Holme Lacy College organic farm, Hereford, on May 25, to focus on the management of annual weeds. Places should be booked in advance by calling Gareth Davies on 024 7630 8200 and the cost of each is £10, including lunch. Details of these and other events can be found at <http://www.hdra.org.uk/organicweeds/events>



Cheshire Angus herd takes show accolade

OF&G licensees Mary Hamnett and Gordon Oliver (Upper Waterside Farm, Disley, near Stockport) have won the title of Best Cheshire Breeding Herd for their pedigree organic Aberdeen Angus cattle – beating all comers, not just organic herds.

Mary and Gordon have a very traditional approach to their cattle, which they take from birth to finishing at 29 months and aim to make their 43-strong herd the best possible example of the Angus. The couple have also won prizes in the past at Smithfield.

The prize-winning herd will be part of four-day Aberdeen Angus showcase to be held across Cheshire, Cumbria Lancashire and Yorkshire from September 29 to October 2, which will be open to anyone keen to learn more about moving into the breed. Details on the event are available from Mary on 01663 767877.

Classifieds

For Sale: 8 well bred registered pedigree Aberdeen Angus heifers, 22 months old. Also 4 registered pedigree Aberdeen Angus heifers 1 year old.

Contact: Mr McKechnie. Tel: 01242 673132 Gloucestershire (posted 18/02/05)

For Sale: Organic Poultry Manure in Soham, Cambridgeshire

Contact: Mrs Pittam Tel: 01353 624197 or 07951 876928 Cambridgeshire (posted 01/03/05)

For Sale: 25 in calf organic Friesian heifers. June/July/August calving to Friesian bull.

Contact: Ian Bowman. Tel: 01892 824778 or email ian.bowman@ukgateway.net Kent (posted 02/03/05)

For Sale: Organic dairy shorthorn bulls, some Aberdeen Angus.

Contact: Mrs Robinson. Tel: 01200 445312. Lancashire (posted 07/04/05)

For Sale: Organic haylage/silage, big bales at £14.50 per bale, about 60 available. Also good quality organic hay, small bales at £2.00 per bale, discount for large orders.

Contact: John or Michelle Roberts Tel: 01647 252774 Devon (08/04/05)

For Sale: Weaned calves – Aberdeen Angus, Hereford, Limousin, Belgian Blue from all round calving British Friesian herd.

Contact: Robert Fear Tel: 01545 570251 Lampeter (posted 12/04/05)

Wanted

Wanted: Organic feed Wheat or Barley cereals (but would consider Triticale), within a 30 mile radius of Warwickshire.

Contact Joe Brandreth Tel: 07968 818944 (posted 18/02/05)

Wanted: Up to 15 yearling Hereford x Friesian heifers or similar. Must be well reared and suitable for calving at 2 years old. Contact: Charles Moore. Tel: 01805 601319 or 07796 306879. North Devon (posted 25/02/05)

Wanted: Organic store cattle wanted for finishing. Store lambs for finishing. Contact: Andrew or Allison Tyrrell. Tel: 01792 386222 or Email: lowerhardingsdown@fwi.co.uk Swansea (posted 08/03/05)

Wanted: Good quality strong organic store cattle, aged from 15 months onwards, any area considered. Contact: Mrs Mellor Tel: 01889 504235 or 07971 813217 Staffordshire (posted 12/04/05)

Wanted: for Christian rehabilitation centre, quiet cow preferably red devon, dairy shorthorn or red poll that can be hand milked. Dorset

Contact: Brian Button. Email highgrovebeef@aol.com Dorset. (posted 20/04/05)

Wanted: Organic silage or hay. Contact: Mr Fish Tel: 01548 550197 South Devon (posted 23/03/05)

Miscellaneous

50 acres organic grass available (Soil Association). Automatic water, well-fenced and sheltered with established hedgerows, cattle preferred, but silage, hay and sheep considered. Experienced keeper.

Contact: Edwina Le May. Tel: 01892 783240 / 01892 784915. East Sussex/Kent borders (posted 10/03/05)

Natural gardening and animal feed products from natural seaweed (approved by SOPA). Visit the website at www.seaweedproducts.co.uk. Please note that the shop prices on the site are RRP – we have pledged to sell to all farmers at the wholesale price plus delivery. Bod Ayre Products Ltd, Shetland. Tel 01806 577328 (20/04/05)

I am a PhD student at Cambridge University and currently researching into pig producers attitudes towards animal welfare. I would like to send the same survey to organic pig producers. If any organic pig producers would be willing to take part in this survey please contact Elizabeth Genever by email on eg261@cam.ac.uk (4/4/05)

Organic Farmers and Growers

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**The Practical
Organisation for
Organic Certification**

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