

## General News

### A bid to promote us all

Organic Farmers & Growers has revealed that it is the first certifier to add its financial backing to a UK-wide initiative to boost consumer understanding of organic food.

A core group of industry bodies and leading companies have come together under the co-ordination of *Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming*, to support plans for a consumer-focused marketing campaign that could attract match funding from the EU. Other European countries have been making use of this money since 2004, though no similar programme has yet been undertaken in the UK.

Organic Farmers & Growers has committed to financially backing the project and has called on companies and organisations from across the organic sector to also pledge their support and share the burden of funding. The aim is to raise £500,000 per year over three years which would be doubled by the EU and used to run an advertising campaign for organics. The target for that campaign is to achieve 15 per cent volume growth in each of the three years.

Encouragingly more than £150,000 has already been pledged, but it will need as many licensees as possible on board, offering whatever they can, to make this a reality.

Our view is that such an initiative is long overdue and will be of huge benefit to everyone in the sector, be they farmers and growers, wholesalers, processors or retailers. Please do take a look at the dedicated website at <http://www.organicuk.org> and think seriously about adding your support.

## National Organic Cereals 09

It is with great pleasure we can report that our National Organic Cereals 09 event was a tremendous success. More than 190 people were present for the day, at John and Alice Pawsey's Shimpling Park Farm, in Shimpling, Suffolk, and there were representatives from farms, processors, retailers, buyers and support organisations from across the sector.

The speakers were very well received and the information imparted was right on-topic, making the day the practical, warts-and-all look at organic arable we intended it to be. The wide array of exhibitors added to the overall usefulness of the event and the caterers laid-on a superb lunch of organic beef, followed by afternoon tea and cake. The weather even played its part by staying dry until the tail end of the packing up!

To us, there was a discernible buzz around the day as old acquaintances were renewed and new ones made. John Pawsey's farm walks were a highlight of the day, with seemingly everyone wanting to go along on one of the two outings. We must pass our thanks on once again to John and Alice for being the perfect, accommodating hosts for whom nothing was too much trouble.

You can find a large selection of pictures from the day, plus downloads of some of the key presentations, on our website at

<http://www.organicfarmers.org.uk/events/noc09>.

A big thank you to everyone who attended or supported the event in any way.

## Selling Organics: What's the Story?

OF&G is delighted to announce a new conference that will put the spotlight on the selling of, and communication about, organic food.

We have teamed-up with Organic Conferences Ltd to pull together key people in the organic sector who will share their knowledge and insight of what it takes to create and promote an organic brand. But it's not just about individual brand marketing. Our speakers will be taking a close look at what the organic sector needs to do to *explain* itself to its consumers.

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The message has come across loud and clear in recent months that promoting the benefits of organic food is not something the sector has done well. Even Sainsbury's boss, Justin King, has felt moved to comment on this. Initiatives are beginning to emerge to try and address the problem, but it's going to take a change in thinking and approach from everyone to help shoppers realise why they should buy what you produce. It seems that, at the moment, many are confused about why they would buy organic, or do so for perhaps one headline reason that may be personal to them.

Some will buy free-range eggs because they think that's better for chickens than organic, without knowing that free-ranging is a core and essential part of the organic regulation. It is this kind of misconception we need to address.

So, on October 8, at London's Southbank University, we will be joined by no less than: Craig Sams, founder of Green & Blacks; Steve Clarke, marketing director at Rachel's; Dom Lane, associate director of Bray Leino PR, which is working on a number of promotional projects around organics; Lawrence Woodward, director of Organic Research Centre - Elm Farm; plus fascinating academic research into branding and consumer perception presented by Professor Andrew Fearn and Dr Matt Reed, as well as many other speakers.

It's going to be an excellent day and the places are strictly limited to around 200, with bookings already being taken. It's going to be a fascinating day.

If you'd like to come along please visit the Organic Conferences website at

<http://www.organicconferences.co.uk> to find out more and secure your place.

OF&G licensees are entitled to a discount of £10 and they will need to enter a discount code of OFG99 where prompted on the Organic Conferences registration login page.

## Funding pledge for organic arable

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Triodos Bank, a long time friend of organic farming, used our National Organic Cereals 09 event to announce a new initiative to provide extremely preferential funding to new entrants to organic arable production. The bank has made available a fund of £5 million at rates not to be found anywhere else in the market with the aim of supporting up to 10,000 acres of new organic arable land.

This is a very welcome development an extremely forward-looking approach which we're very pleased to see, particularly in these times of very tight credit. You can get more information on the loan package directly from Triodos. Contact [business@triodos.co.uk](mailto:business@triodos.co.uk), call 0500 008 720 free or visit [www.triodos.co.uk](http://www.triodos.co.uk).

## A consolidated voice for organics

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The Organic Trade Board has been established by leading players in organic food and farming as a single voice for the industry. It has a key objective: to "double the value of the market for organic products in the UK within the five years from 2008 to 2013".

If that can be achieved it will be a bonus to everyone in the sector. An organisation to expound the core messages of organics is something that we've been missing and which is sorely needed. We've been talking to the OTB recently to find out more and we back its objectives. But for an initiative like this to work it needs a critical mass of members.

At the moment there are around 60 supporting companies and bodies, many of them very influential and important to the sector, but there are more than 7,000 organically registered businesses in the UK. We believe they could all benefit from having a representative voice and would urge everyone to take a closer look at the OTB and its work. We have included a copy of the OTB application form for all processors and on-farm processors. Please take a look and contact the OTB if you are interested in more information.

## Trade event 2010 - an opportunity?

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OF&G will again be hosting trade space with some of our licensees at the Natural & Organic Products Europe event at London Olympia, 11th & 12th April 2010. This event is a very good way to get products under the noses of buyers from wholesalers to independent and multiple retailers inside the UK and across the EU. If you are interested in showing product at the event you may want to consider coming onto the OF&G stand. We can offer a discounted stand price and specialist support with our team of certification officers, who will be on the stand for the entire two day event. There will be promotional opportunities leading up to, during and after the event through resources such as the OF&G website, facebook and twitter accounts.

For more details or just a chat about this or other events please contact Steven Jacobs at the office by telephone or [steven.jacobs@organicfarmers.org.uk](mailto:steven.jacobs@organicfarmers.org.uk).

## New EU Regulation

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With the adoption of the new EU Organic Regulation (EC No. 834/2007) at the beginning of this year, some key changes to the standards are being introduced. After much examination and clarification, it has become clear that the main changes will apply to the processing sector. OF&Gs' Processing Department team has now carried out a gap analysis of the changes which should help all processors identify areas of the

regulation that have been altered. These changes will be incorporated into the forthcoming update to the OF&G Organic Standards Manual, so all processor licensees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with any new requirements as soon as possible.

We will also be highlighting any variations in the standard which apply to producer licensees, though these are not substantial nor time critical.

You can view the gap analysis, and any other updates as they become available, by visiting [www.organicfarmers.org.uk/regulation](http://www.organicfarmers.org.uk/regulation).

<b>SUMMARY OF THE CHANGES</b>	
<b>Food Processing</b>	<b>Food ingredients</b> - The changes with permitted ingredients and additives, see gap analysis.
<b>Labelling</b>	<b>EU Logo</b> - The new EU Organic logo will be introduced from July 1 <sup>st</sup> 2010 and will be mandatory on all packaging for organic products labelled within the EU.
	<b>Control body codes</b> - All organic products labelled and/or sold within the EU must carry the code of the relevant control body. For Organic Farmers & Growers this is 'GB Organic Certification 2'. The new control body codes must be used from July 1 <sup>st</sup> 2010.
	<b>Product composition rules 95% and 70% rule</b> - The changes with composition rules. The 95% composition rule still remains. The 70% 'made with' category has been removed under the new regulations. This related to the former practice whereby products made with at least 70% organic ingredients could specify this in the ingredients panel on the back of the label but could not label the product 'organic' in its own right, i.e. the only reference to 'organic' could appear in the ingredients panel of the product label. As the minimum 70% organic ingredients requirement has been removed any product containing organic ingredients at less than 95% can label the ingredient as organic but not label the product as organic. Although not sold as organic, this product would still have to be certified with an organic certifier such as OF&G.
	<b>Place of origin for agricultural ingredients</b> - Where a product labelled within the EU, contains agricultural ingredients originating from within the EU, it must be labelled as 'EU Agriculture'. Where ingredients originate from outside the EU they must be labelled as 'Non-EU Agriculture'. Where a product contains ingredients originating from both inside and outside the EU the product must be labelled as 'EU/Non-EU Agriculture'.
	<b>Transitional measures</b> Due to issues with the changes in packaging, with regard to the mandatory EU logo, new Control Body codes and Place of Origin designation, the Commission have allowed a transitional period to use current stocks of packaging. Packaging material that complies with the Defra Compendium of Organic Standards may continue to be used for products marketed as organic until 1st January 2012, provided that the product itself also complies with the requirements of Regulation (EC) 834/2007.
<b>Storage and wholesale</b>	Wholesale and storage operations selling prepackaged goods are now subject to the control system. However, they are not to be subject to the annual verification required to be applied to all other operators. These operators must be registered and, as a minimum, be subject to an initial physical inspection, followed by a physical inspection at least every three years.
<b>Import Commission Regulation</b>	Covered by EC 834/2008 and Commission Regulation 1235/2008. Can be imported by Direct access, Equivalent countries, Equivalent operators and also by Defra authorisation. Currently a transitional period is in place to permit Defra to continue issuing authorisations until the control body lists of third countries and recognised third countries have been drawn up and made available to the Port Health Authorities.

Either follow the link on our website above or contact us for a hard copy of the gap analysis.

# Licensee News

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## Public Lists

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Due to developments with the EU Organic Reg and EN45011 we are now not able to offer our licensees the opportunity to opt-out of a publicly available list which is included on the RD90 Declaration and Licensing Agreement. This means that if we are asked to provide a list of names and addresses of our licensees we will have to do this.

However, licensees will still be offered the opportunity to opt out of any list provided for marketing and research purposes. You can view or download a copy of the new form from our website by putting RD90 into the search box on the home page and clicking 'search this site'.

If you have any queries about this please contact the office.

## Livestock housed in the summer

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During June and July we have received a number of inspection reports where the inspector has noted that the livestock are still being housed during the day and night. As would be expected this has resulted in a number of non-compliance's being highlighted. We understand that the date of turnout will vary depending on your location within the county. However, we would not expect to see livestock still being housed during June and July unless the weather conditions were extremely poor. The only exception to this would be calves still suckling milk and up until weaning. The standards require livestock to have access to pasture whenever the weather conditions permit and in addition to this 50% of the forage intake must come from grazed grass during the summer period.

## Tunisia is accepted as an equivalent country

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### **Importing update:**

'Tunisia' has been accepted under the EU third country list as an equivalent government system under Commission Regulation (EC) No. 537/2009.

Tunisia is added as an equivalent country alongside the existing countries Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, India, Israel and New Zealand for inspection and certification of organic production. Tunisia's acceptance covers plant production and processed products. There are four control bodies who can inspect and certify in Tunisia these include Ecocert SA Tunisie, Istituto Mediterraneo di Certificazione IMC, BCS (Öko -Garantie) and Lacon. For details of the updated EC- Equivalent Countries (EC Approved third countries), authorised product and control bodies please see table insert (included for processors only)

Switzerland is also included and as announced earlier this year, from June 1 2009, organic imports from Switzerland are to be treated as if they were from an EU Member State, and that Port Health Authorities/Local Authorities will not require a Certificate of Inspection from this country.

The other amendment noted in Commission Regulation (EC) No. 537/2009 is that the duration of India as an equivalent EC approved third country is extended from 30 June 2009 to 30 June 2014.

# Licensees in the News

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## Marketing on your strengths

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Successful farmer, miller and marketer, Rebecca Raynor, featured strongly in the July 3 edition of Farmers Guardian as the paper took a close look at capitalising on the provenance of food. This is something Rebecca has long been aware of and has used to build her Glebe Farm brand of flours, as well as cake and bread mixes to the point where they are in outlets across the country, including leading multiple retailers. Rebecca talks about identifying opportunities and capitalising on them - a lesson many people can learn and benefit from.

## Strong showing in environmental awards

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The finalists for the FWAG Silver Lapwing environmental awards have been announced and it's great news for TWO of our licensees.

Henry Edmunds, of Cholderton Estate, Wiltshire, and Ian Boyd, of Whittington Lodge Farm, Gloucestershire, have made it into the final six for this prestigious award, beating off record numbers of entrants in what is

the competition's 40th year.

This award is aimed at farmers and landowners who demonstrate outstanding commitment to conservation and can show a track record of successful environmental projects over at least three years. Judges said this year's standard of entries was higher than ever and the winner will be announced at an award ceremony at the House of Commons in October. Congratulations to Henry and Ian for getting this far and good luck both for the next round. You can read about the finalists' entries at [www.fwag.org.uk](http://www.fwag.org.uk).

## Giving something back

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OF&G licensee Mark Lea, who farms in Shifnal, Shropshire, was featured in The Times at the end of July in an article about businesses that give something back to their communities. Mark's work with a local school as part of a Food for Life partnership was highlighted. As well as providing organic veg to the school and hosting farm visits, Mark is a governor and supports the organic gardening club. Mark says this is a very rewarding part of the business, not for any financial reward, but for a sense of satisfaction and working to re-connect children with the source of their food.

## Homegrown alternative as feed costs rise

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The Bennett family, of Upper Hall, Meifod, Powys, were the subject of a feature in the Farmers Weekly early this month examining how they handled rising organic feed costs by turning to home-grown alternatives. For the first time this year the farm will harvest 28ha of cereals for crimping. The piece also looks at how the family have developed the business, including by growing organic vegetables which are retailed through local shops and a third-party box scheme.

## OF&G licensees amongst Great Taste Awards 2009 winners

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OF&G licensees were among the winners announced at this year's Great Taste Awards 2009 from the Guild of Fine Foods.

**Bolling Coffee Ltd** won an award for its Organic Brasil Fazenda Santa Terezinha Coffee, meanwhile Caroline Sellers at **The Side Oven Bakery** won awards for her Organic Wholewheat Spelt Flour and Organic Honey Roasted Raisin and Hazelnut Muesli

**Slade Farm Organics** took home two awards, one for their Organic Green Back Bacon and another for their Organic Green Streaky Bacon

**Jess's Ladies Organic Farm Milk** was another multiple winner, picking up an award for her Organic Semi-Skimmed Milk and her Organic Double Cream

The Awards are nationally recognised as the independent benchmark for fine foods, and each of the gold winners were blind tasted by a minimum of eight experts.

## Send us your news

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We love to be able to share information on what our licensees are achieving, but inevitably we don't see all of it. So if you have news to share, please do email [mark.waugh@organicfarmers.org.uk](mailto:mark.waugh@organicfarmers.org.uk) with any details or a web link and we'll be glad to take a look.

## OF&G in the news

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It's rarely quiet when it comes to news relating to organic food and farming, but the last few weeks have once again seen the glare of the spotlight turned fully on the sector by a contentious Food Standards Agency commissioned report. While it was bad enough that the report somehow managed to reach the conclusion that there were no nutritional benefits to organic food, the way it was reported in large sections of the media gave an even worse perspective to the story.

Many talking heads crawled out of the woodwork ready to damn organic food and farming for years of deception, even though they clearly had no concept of what organics actually stands for, did not question the FSA-sponsored study and probably had not read it.

As you would expect OF&G reacted to this story by publishing responses in both news release and blog form. You can read both of these on our website, just follow the 'news' and 'blog' links. We provided comment to many publications, ranging from Farmers Weekly to The Ecologist to regional daily papers. Our CEO, Richard

Jacobs, gave interviews to BBC regional radio stations (he was unable to meet a request from the BBC News Channel) and we provided a number of background briefings to the journalists who wanted to find out the real facts before publishing. As part of a robust response from across the organic sector, it seems the tide has been somewhat turned and much discussion has followed in the less shrill media about what organic food and farming really stands for and its real strengths and benefits.

That said, it has also provided a platform to highlight the five-year Quality Low Input Foods study run from Newcastle University by Prof Carlo Leifert, which is likely to report early next year and be able to show clear nutritional benefits in some organic foods...

In other news: OF&G received widespread coverage for its backing of the OrganicUK initiative (mentioned previously in this newsletter), as the first certifier to commit financially to this excellent plan; Farmer's Guardian ran three stories over half a page about our National Organic Cereals 09 event (although failed to mention who had organised it!) on July 17; Richard Jacobs delivered a view on Radio Four's Farming Today on why organic farming should be a key part of the Government's recently announced consultation on a future food strategy; Richard was quoted in a Farmers Weekly piece discussing the use of fish meal in organic poultry rations; and the list goes on...