

General News

Last chance to sign-up for the year's biggest organic arable event

National Organic Cereals 2009 takes place on July 9 on John Pawsey's organic farm, Shimpling Park Farm, near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, and is the key event in the calendar for anyone looking at entering, or expanding in, organic arable production.

The limited places are now filling fast for this year's event, organised by OF&G and Abacus Organic Associates, so if you would like to attend, or know anyone else who might benefit from a close look at the rewards and challenges of organic arable, please visit www.organicfarmers.org.uk/events to book as soon as possible.

This is the event's second year, following a very successful day in 2008 and will be attended by buyers, advisors and other experts from across the industry. New features have been added this year, including breakout advice clinics. The £8 ticket includes an organic lunch.

If you prefer not to book online, please contact: Steven Jacobs, Development Officer, at OF&G on 01939 291800 or email steven.jacobs@organicfarmers.org.uk.

We are very grateful to all the backers of this year's event, which include: Norton Organic Grain; Triodos Bank and HGCA.

OF&G Chief Executive to address EU Commissioners

Richard Jacobs, OF&Gs' CEO, has been invited to address the EU Commissioners at a special reception being held for them by Defra at the Royal Show, on July 8. Richard will be using the opportunity to remind the commissioners that organic has a huge role to play when they are considering sustainability issues across the EU - a topic that is only going to keep moving up the agenda.

Free Guide to Organic Processing Certification

Our 'Guide to Organic Certification: Food Processing' has been going down a storm and has now been downloaded more than 250 times from our website, in addition to many orders for hard copies.

If you haven't seen it yet you can download a version or order a free copy from our website at www.organicfarmers.org.uk/guide or call us to order a copy.

The 24-page booklet spells out the process of getting a product certified as organic with OF&G, the key considerations when approaching certification and even includes examples of the key forms and how to complete them. We couldn't make it any easier! And we think it's the most comprehensive guide of its kind available. It's also printed on quality, tough paper to ensure it can survive the rigours of the regular use it's bound to get.

Interactive abattoir map launched

One of the challenges facing our livestock producers is tracking down a geographically suitable abattoir. We have published a comprehensive list of all organically certified abattoirs in the UK for a number of years. Now we've harnessed the power of the internet to plot these sites on a map, giving you an at-a-glance guide to sites near you.

You can follow a link to our map from the Home page on our website. Click in the section >>Information for - Farmers and Growers and you'll find a link in the middle of that page. This will take you to a Google Map we've built which contains a list of all the abattoirs we are aware of that do private kills, as well as a graphic representation of them on the map. Simply clicking on the map markers will open up more information,

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including types of kills carried out, who certifies the site and telephone number so you can give them a call.

We'll be looking to add further details as time goes on, including web addresses, etc, where possible. If your site is listed and you would like to give us more information to include, or you are not listed and would like to be, please contact Joanna Gleeson in our Processing Department (joanna.gleeson@organicfarmers.org.uk).

List of Technical Leaflets

Many of you regularly contact OF&G to get information from your Certification Officers. However, did you know that OF&G have a wide selection of Technical Leaflets that are available free of charge covering a wide range of topics?

Listed below are the Technical Leaflets which can either be downloaded from our website http://www.organicfarmers.org.uk/licensees/tech_leaflets_select.php or sent to you on request.

Producer Technical Leaflets	Processor Technical Leaflets
TL101 Introduction	TL201 Processor Introduction
TL102 Advisory Services	TL202 Importer Introduction
TL104 Animal Feed	TL204 Seeds, Transplants etc
TL105 Animal Health Plan	TL205 Evaluation Scheme – Farm
TL106 Seed and Growing Media	TL206 Guidance for Animal Feed Mills
TL107 Permitted Fertiliser	TL208 USDA-NOP - Processor Certification
TL108 Abattoir List	TL209 Red Meat Cutting
TL110 Fast Track Milk	TL210 Poultry Slaughter
TL111 Self Assessment Manure	TL211 Egg Grading and Packing
TL114 Potash Fertiliser	TL212 Labelling
TL120 Green Waste Compost	TL213 Evaluation Scheme – Food
TL121 USDA-NOP - Producer Certification	TL215 Exporter Introduction
TL122 Poultry Requirements	TL217 Mass Balance
TL123 Horses on Organic Land	TL219 Organic Procedure
TL124 Feed Guidance for Farmers	TL220 Slaughter of Organic Livestock
TL126 Organic Grain Buyers List	TL221 Cosmetics and Bodycare
TL127 Use of Organophosphates	TL222 Food Service
TL128 Organic Arable Farming	TL223 Product Recertification
	TL225 Timetable for Organic Control Body Transfer
	TL226 BRC and Organic Audits

2009 Events - National Shows OF&G attending

Royal Highland Show, Ingliston, Edinburgh, EH28 8NB - Thursday 25th - Sunday 28th June 2009
4th Avenue, Stand 480

National Organic Cereals 2009, Shimpling Park Farm, Shimpling, Nr Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP29 4HY.
For further details call the OF&G office or visit our website as detailed above.

Great Yorkshire Show, Harrogate, Yorkshire, HG2 8PW - Tuesday 14th - Thursday 16th July
Avenue S Stand 262

Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells, Powys, LD2 3SY - Monday 20th - Thursday 23rd July
Organic Food and Farming Centre, Countryside Care Area

Royal Manx Show, Staward Farm, Sulby, Isle of Man, Friday 7th - Saturday 8th August 2009.

Producers

Forage Mixes for 2010, 2011 and 2012

Various members of the Control Bodies (previously known as Certification Bodies), seed industry and advisors met in Bristol in May to discuss the state of affairs with regard to organic grass/clover development and the future requirements for organic seed in forage mixes. After lengthy discussions a proposal has been put forward for approval by Defra. The proposal put forward requests that approved grass/clover mixes and arable silage mixes continue to be made with a minimum 65% organic ingredients until the end of 2012. As stated, at this stage, this is only a proposal put forward to Defra for approval, as soon as we have

confirmation from them we will let all producers know via this newsletter.

Please note that with regard to arable silage mixtures if you are planting a mix for arable silage you may sow a 65% organic mix prior to obtaining the derogation from your certification officer. If you plan to harvest the dry grain, 100% organic seed must be used where available.

Could you use certified green waste compost?

For a couple of years now, OF&G has been operating a composting certification scheme on behalf of the Association for Organics Recycling (formerly the Composting Association). The scheme allows commercial composters to be inspected and licensed to the PAS100 standard and Quality Protocol for compost. With this certification, approved compost no longer has to be treated as a waste and can be freely moved to farms, horticultural sites and landscaping projects. The good news for organic farmers is that they can use compost from green waste with a derogation from us, and if it is PAS100 and Quality Protocol certified, a heavy metal analysis of the compost is not required.

Average nutrients in compost applied at 30t/ha are: Nitrogen - 250kg/ha, 1st year availability 25kg/ha; Phosphorous 100kg/ha and 10kg/ha; Potassium 200kg/ha and 160kg/ha.

If you want to learn more about PAS100 and the Quality Protocol please contact the office and ask for Katie Owens or Roy Lawford.

Herbicides

We have received a number of calls from licensees who would like to know what they can do to deal with weeds, most of these calls have centered around the use of herbicides. A herbicide is defined as a substance or preparation for killing plants, especially weeds and as such is **NOT** permitted on organic farms, this also includes many naturally based products that you may think would be OK to use. For example salt, plant oils and creosote are all products that are **NOT** allowed to be used.

If you are finding problems with weeds these can be controlled by the following methods:

- i) Choice of appropriate species and varieties of crops - selecting crops and varieties which will compete with weeds;
- ii) An appropriate rotational programme - alternating weed suppressing with weed susceptible crops;
- iii) Mechanical cultivation procedures - traditional ploughing, fallowing, bastard fallows and stale seed beds, tined weeders, tractor hoes etc;
- iv) Cultural practices - chitted vegetable and potato seed, transplants, higher sowing rates, etc;
- v) Thermal processes - post emergence flame weeding field crops such as carrots using propane burners and other thermal activity;
- vi) Manual control - hand weeding, roguing, hoeing, etc.

Processors

New EU Regulation

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 <http://www.organicfarmers.org.uk/regulation>.

SUMMARY OF THE CHANGES	
Food Processing	Food ingredients - The changes with permitted ingredients and additives, see gap analysis.
Labelling	EU Logo - The new EU Organic logo will be introduced from July 1 st 2010 and will be mandatory on all packaging for organic products labelled within the EU.
	Control body codes - 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 st 2010.
	Product composition rules 95% and 70% rule - 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.
	Place of origin for agricultural ingredients - 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'.
	Transitional measures 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.
Storage and wholesale	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.
Import Commission Regulation	Covered by EC 834/2007 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.

Licensees in the News

Fodder

Fodder is a new concept food shop and café set up and championed by the Yorkshire Agricultural Society (YAS). The aim of the venture, which opened on 3rd June, is to inject new life into the rural economy and

support farmers and producers, while offering consumers the best food and drink from the region.

The Yorkshire Agricultural Society is a registered charity which runs the annual farming and rural events, the Great Yorkshire Show and Countryside Live. Fodder is also supported by Yorkshire Forward.

According to Heather Parry, deputy chief executive of the YAS, 85% of the produce will be sourced directly from Yorkshire and the Humber, which will directly benefit the local community. Heather personally visits each producer to ensure that the products meet the high Fodder standards.

One OF&G producer who has passed the Fodder selection process is Caroline Sellers, of the award-winning Side Oven Bakery in Foston on the Wolds near Driffield, East Yorkshire. The Side Oven Bakery was given a £4,000 grant in 2004 by the Yorkshire Agriculture Society's initiative Growing Routes, which supports small rural businesses.

Caroline produces a range of artisan breads, flours and mueslis primarily using home-grown produce from their farm. The 190 hectare farm converted to organic production in 1999 and produces a wide range of grains that are milled in a traditional stone ground mill for use in the bakery. They farm using traditional crop rotation methods and produce juices and cordials from apples, elderflowers and soft fruits grown in their three hectare orchard.

Other OF&G licencees whose products are being sold through Fodder include Langthorne's in Northallerton who make buffalo burgers, and Stamford Farm, who make Yorkshire Clotted Cream .

If you have a product you'd like to see on the shelves of Fodder contact Heather Parry on 01423 546253 or email: heatherp@yas.co.uk

Tom in line for Farmers Weekly accolade

Our increasingly well-known licensee, Tom Rawson, has been shortlisted for the title of Young Farmer of the Year in the Farmers Weekly Awards 2009. Tom and his wife, Catherine, run a 300-cow dairy herd and are part of the family business behind the Clever Cow Organics brand. Based in Thornhill, West Yorkshire, Tom is also a contributor to the regular FW Farmer Focus series of columns. Tom was one of three farmers to make the shortlist in the 2007 Farmers Guardian awards as well. The results will be announced at an awards bash in October and we wish Tom every success.

New poultry co-op on track

Poultry World magazine (part of the Farmers Weekly stable) highlighted the formation of a new poultry co-operative which involves three OF&G licensees; two producers and one processor. The Northumberland Poultry Group has been backed in its formation by Made in Northumberland, an initiative from the area's tourist board, which has provided project funding and capital to buy bird housing.

The farmers in question are Angus and Duncan Nelless and Graham and Michael Rutherford, with the processing to be carried out by Richard Tolson.

The group is aiming to supply the product direct from the farms and has already received interest from restaurants and food retailers in the area. This kind of collaborative arrangement, using public money to seed it, seems to be a great model and you can't help but think that there are more opportunities out there to meet a market, with some co-operation and a supportive backer.

We wish them every success and hope that there might be an opportunity for any lessons they learn through their experience to be shared with the wider organic community.

Twin surprise

Maybe it's down to the the organic land, but OF&G licensees Tony and Sally Herdman got something of a shock when their mare Aerial produced a double delivery. The twin foals, who are both doing fine but have yet to be named, were pictured with their mum in the Shropshire Star newspaper at the start of June.

Sally told the paper: "We wondered why Aerial was looking a bit uncomfortable before she gave birth but she is looking a lot happier now.

"It is absolutely amazing."

The new arrivals, a filly and a colt, are now getting used to life at the Herdman's Clyro Hill Farm, near Newchurch, Powys.

Going organic for the profit

It's not the first time we've heard it said, but it's good to get a reminder every now and again that choosing to farm organically can actually make sense for the bank balance as well as all the other benefits.

OF&G licensees, Jimi Collis, and his mother, Sarah Worrall, were highlighted in a Business in Dorset piece that reinforces the point, particularly as Mr Collis used to work in business banking, specialising in farming. He must know what he's talking about!

He told the reporter that this this year the farm will be about £90,000 better off for being organic, due to a better price for the crops and vastly reduced input costs.

Their Launceston Farm, in Tarrant Launceston, has also been featured in The Guardian's travel section for the charm of its B&B.

And finally...

Mark Gorton, of Traditional Norfolk Poultry, rounded out the last page of the 28th March edition of The Grocer magazine, answering questions for its 'Alternative CV' section. Mark unveiled quite a few insights into his life, including: the fact that he always wanted to be a farmer; the person he'd most like to sit next to on a plane is Bruce Willis (handy if there was a problem!); the super power he'd like for a day would be the Midas touch!

OF&G in the News

A number of issues have reared their heads since the last newsletter and it's pleasing to say that OF&G has been leading from the front in all cases. Our visit to the Natural and Organic Products show at Olympia was the perfect opportunity for us to call for better co-operation in the organic sector on marketing the concept and ethos of organic as a whole, rather than as disparate efforts with mixed messages. We agreed with Sainsburys boss, Justin King, who said the organic sector had failed to get its message clearly across to the consumer. Our comments were reported in a number of places, including the *Natural Products* magazine following the show. Natural Products even quoted OF&G CEO, Richard Jacobs, in its editorial. Since then a number of other individuals and organisations have made the same call (including the Soil Association's Peter Melchett).

Moving on a few weeks, an industry-wide initiative, co-ordinated by *Sustain; the campaign for better food and farming* has been launched to gain funding which can be matched by an EU grant to promote the sector. OF&G has been the first UK certifier to pledge its financial support to this (by redirecting a significant portion of its marketing budget over three years). We announced this news immediately prior to sending this newsletter, so you are likely to see it reported in a number of places, but already the announcement has been covered by *Agra-net.com* and *FoodProductionDaily.com*.

The last couple of months has also seen much discussion on how healthy or otherwise the market for organic food is. We've had plenty to say on the topic (as in, don't write us off yet, by any means!) which has been widely reported.

Major industry publication *Food Manufacture* picked up on the launch of OF&Gs' *Guide to Organic Certification: Food Processing*, carrying a description and picture of this handy new booklet. The guide has already been downloaded from the OF&G website more than 260 times, with many hard copies also despatched.

You can always find more OF&G news on our website (organicfarmers.org.uk/news) and in our regularly updated blog (organicfarmers.org.uk/blog). As well as covering general news about the organic sector, the blog gives a light-hearted insight into who we are and what goes on at the OF&G offices. It also allows anyone to comment on what they read and have their own discussions. Why not take a look?

Competition Results

We had a great response to our competition and would like to congratulate Geoff Sayers, Sam Bradford, Charles & Jane Moore and Joyce Humphrey for being the lucky winners out of the hat for a copy of the 'Organic Places to Stay' directory. The answer was July 9th 2009.

Additional Items

New funds to support the organic sector

Press release FROM OCW website: <http://www.organic.aber.ac.uk/news/280509.shtml>

Organic Centre Wales (OCW) has succeeded in securing nearly £2M over three years for work to support the development of organic businesses in Wales.

"We are delighted to have this opportunity to do this much-needed work," said Sue Fowler, Director of OCW. "The organic land in Wales now approaches 10% of agricultural land area, which brings many biodiversity benefits, but to ensure profitable businesses we also need inform customers what organic means. Recent market research confirms that those customers that understand the benefits of organic production are more likely to stay loyal even in hard times."

"Organic farming is leading the way in environmental performance, but many consumers have very high expectations of organic businesses and supply chains, so this project will both help improve the environmental performance of the organic food chain and improve customers' understanding of some of the issues."

This project is funded through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 which is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and will run over three years.

"We have done extensive market reviews and held many meetings with businesses to identify different elements that need work, but the success of the project will depend on the continued involvement of the organic businesses – we will form a Steering group for the project to ensure the funds are used in the most effective way and so that the project responds to the situation as it changes over time."

OCW will be recruiting marketing expertise and a field officer, but many elements will be delivered on a project basis including: reducing energy use and the carbon impacts of organic supply chains, promoting ethical and fair trading, consumer information and media relations, improving product quality, developing new markets and addressing technical problems.

More information:

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