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Technical Newsletter



March 2019 Issue 122

General News

BREXIT update

Brexit update

Thirty Tory rebels voted against the government on 25 March condemning the UK Government to an historic 27-vote Commons defeat. Parliament's decision to back the radical amendment put forward by former Cabinet Minister Oliver Letwin meant that backbench MPs have now taken control of the Commons order paper for the first time in living memory. They initially used this new power to stage non-binding votes testing support for different Brexit outcomes on Wednesday 27 March. The outcome of this was that no single outcome gained a majority. On 29 March MPs voted on Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement for the third time and it was again defeated by 58 votes just hours before Britain was meant to leave the EU.

The question is what happens next? Backbench MPs are due to seize control of the order paper again on Monday, to have another stab at finding a majority for some sort of Brexit deal. The plan is to create a series of composite motions, tacking together some of the more popular Brexit options to try to hit the magic number of 326 votes. Top of the list is a plan to propose a customs union with a second referendum tacked on, which some backbenchers believe could secure a majority if the two voting blocs can be held together.

One source notes that "if all those who backed either proposal agreed to support both, there are a cushy 344 votes to be had." This "mainly comes from adding the SNP and Lib Dems to the Custom Union's 264 votes, and takes account of three absentees from Wednesday who would normally be supportive." Clearly there are plenty of Tory MPs who would back a customs union but would balk at a second referendum — the question is how many are prepared to compromise if it secures a soft Brexit majority.

By way of a recap the UK has been granted an extra fortnight to find a Brexit solution after a marathon eight-hour summit in Brussels on 21 March. At this summit EU27 leaders agreed to extend Britain's EU departure date by two weeks to Friday, 12 April — the legal deadline by which Britain must decide whether to take part in the forthcoming EU election. It was suggested however that if Theresa May was able to get her deal through the Commons, Brexit Day will be shifted back further to 22 May, to give her time to pass the necessary legislation. But if she cannot, Britain will have just those extra two weeks to either come up with a new departure plan — incorporating a long Article 50 extension and the EU election — or to prepare for a no-deal outcome.

All this leaves us with either leaving on 12 April, 22 May or sometime maybe

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in the future. The uncertainty rolls on but it is hoped that the now agreed indicative votes will begin offer some visibility as to the nature of the UK's final trade relationship with the EU and the consequent implications of this to business.

In preparation for a no-deal however three statutory instruments have been laid and passed by Parliament over the last two weeks – AG/02, AG/15 and AG/TF/02 meaning that the EU regulation will now legally be brought into UK law. OF&G are still working with UKAS, DEFRA and other CB's to overcome the impasse with exports to the EU. This remains a very real issue but as with so much of this we will ultimately be reliant on the EU Commission to expedite any solution.



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Safeguarding integrity of the sector

Safeguarding the integrity of the organic sector is a challenge. While concrete improvements to the certification regime are continuously being introduced, e.g. risk assessment inspections, fraud has not been prevented.

Improved technology has resulted in the better detection of residues and genetically modified products but reliable safeguards are, however, hard to establish and cannot be achieved by ever more detailed inspection and certification regulations alone. Precautionary measures on many levels, combined with strong political support for the whole sector are essential to attaining integrity. Maintaining integrity takes constant attention and engagement, but costs much less than the disaster of a scandal. If an individual company, or the sector at large, loses its credibility it also loses the trust of the consumer. Recent scandals in Europe (Germany, Romania, Italy, etc.) have had a profound impact on sales and the economics of affected supply chains. In Italy, for example, in 2013 a case of fraud in connection with organic

certificates was detected. According to reports, considerable amounts of conventionally-farmed maize, cereals and soybeans produced in Moldova and Ukraine and imported via Malta were falsely labelled and sold as organic. Italian tax authorities confiscated 1,500 metric tons of cereals, and a number of suspects were convicted subsequently.

As organic food is trusted more than non-organic food, the consequences of a scandal to the sector are much greater. The critical eye of the public and private organisations and the media thus result in loss of consumer confidence, trust in brands and the perceived reliability of the system as such.

As part of OF&G's on-going programme of improvement we have instigated a programme of additional testing over and above the regulatory

requirement which includes Stable Isotope Ratio Analysis (SIRA). SIRA is an additional analytical test that identifies the different nitrogen isotopes and provides insight into the production methods of a particular product. It is not a definitive test but it does provide a useful additional test to verify whether a product has been grown under organic conditions.

We have also recently begun to work with Organic Arable on a pilot project using the Check Organic System. Check Organic is a cloud-based supply chain integrity solution that brings together organic certification and supply chain data. Keying in on these two datasets brings greater transparency to organic supply chains and is unique to Check Organic. By bringing greater transparency to the whole supply in combination with independent verification will ultimately bring greater confidence in organic food and reduce the opportunities for fraud.

New organic support service OASIS launched

A support service has been launched to provide free advice and technical guidance to organic farmers and those considering organic conversion. The Organic Advice, Support and Information Service (OASIS) has been developed collaboratively by independent farm consultancy Abacus Agriculture and OF&G.

With 60 years' experience in the sector between them, Abacus Agriculture and OF&G are aiming to help farmers decide whether organic conversion is right for their farm business as well as providing existing organic farmers with the latest management and technical guidance.

Ian Knight, director at Abacus Agriculture, says a key objective of OASIS is to encourage farmers to carefully consider organic as a viable and sustainable option for future prosperity. "It's about making the conversion process a success and reducing commercial risk."

"Many producers and growers we speak to question whether organic is right for their business and want to know more about what it takes to successfully convert. We've created OASIS to help answer some of these

fundamental questions, allowing farmers to assess whether the changes required to become certified organic could suit their farm."

OASIS' new website offers accurate information about organic conversion, says Mr Knight. "We have a simple self-assessment questionnaire to help farmers decide if it's the right choice, along with a step-by-step guide to aid successful conversion. Technical resources are also available for existing organic farmers, to keep up-to-date with the latest research."

Alongside the website OASIS has a helpline to a team of advisors that farmers can call. "Qualified consultants are on hand to provide additional advice and talk through any queries. If organic production seems feasible, there's then the option to purchase an advisory package which includes a farm visit to consider feasibility and to develop an organic conversion plan."

Steven Jacobs at OF&G, said "there's huge opportunity for organic in the UK and globally and we'd encourage anyone thinking about converting part or all of their farm to organic to visit the OASIS website or to call the helpline for advice."



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CAP reform – update

As the UK teeters on the brink of a prolongation of the withdrawal process, the possibility of never leaving Europe is back on the agenda. Maybe Brexit will be as soft as melting ice cream. In view of this, unless we crash out with no deal, the reform of the CAP for 2021-27 could well become relevant again. So what is going on in Brussels and throughout the EU 27 on this vital policy for food and farming?

The latest round of CAP reform for the period 2021 – 2027 has been the subject of debate in Brussels since the publication of the EU Commission proposals in June 2018. There is some optimism amongst European environmental NGOs that the proposals may achieve more than the previous reform and help ensure that the environmental and climate objectives are more effectively met through CAP. The principle of public money for public goods has been well established as one of the guiding principles of CAP reform in Europe before it became the mantra of the Defra Secretary of State Michael Gove MP.

Obviously negotiations are dependent on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (the overall EU budget), and this in turn is will have to plug the budgetary hole that the UK's departure from Europe will leave. So with a smaller budget likely (CAP has been progressively reduced over recent years anyway), improving the environmental performance of CAP is under pressure.

The main feature of the new 'green architecture' of a reformed CAP is the so called 'eco-scheme'. This will replace the greening measures required in the direct area-based payments of Pillar 1 of the CAP. The question is whether it will be any more effective. Under this new policy, Member States will be required to put in place 'eco-schemes', designed to address regional or national environmental and climate needs, thereby contributing to the environmental and climate objectives of the CAP. In this new approach there is more autonomy for Member States to define the actual content of environmental and climate actions supported under Pillar 1 and this is welcome. Unlike the current greening measures, which are mandatory on all farmers if they wish to receive direct payments, the eco-scheme would be voluntary for farmers to enter into, so there would be no automatic entitlement.

A recent report^[1] from the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) has looked in detail at this and outlined how the eco-scheme can be used to maximise the environmental and climate benefits of the new CAP. Let's hope that this way of implementing CAP will stick! However, the proposals from the EU Commission do not state any minimum spending requirement for the eco-scheme, removing the ring fenced 30% of the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) dedicated to the greening measures. This leaves Member States to decide the amount to devote to the eco-

schemes and may well significantly reduce the potential environmental gains that might be expected.

IFOAM EU Group published their position paper on the CAP post-2020^[2] in October 2018. They are calling for the overall CAP budget to at least remain at the current level and for there to be a mandatory minimum expenditure of 70% in the CAP Strategic Plans dedicated to the environment and climate outcomes. Because of the flexibility given to Member States IFOAM EU is clear that strong governance rules must be in place to facilitate the delivery of public goods. Payments for public goods under both pillar 1 and 2 should provide an incentive for good and best practice and not as a payment for income foregone. They are also clear that the eco-schemes must be better defined, both as regards their ambition and eligibility criteria.

So, whatever the ongoing outcome of Brexit, the organic sector and Defra should keep a close eye on what happens to CAP.

[\[1\] Institute for European Environmental Policy \(2019\) CAP 2021-27 Using the eco-scheme to maximise environmental and climate benefits. IEEP January 2019. Click here](#)

[\[2\] IFOAM EU \(2018\) Towards a post-2020 CAP that supports farmers and delivers public goods to Europeans. Avoiding a race to the bottom – An ambitious and better targeted CAP. IFOAM EU Brussels. Click here](#)

Martin Wolfe

We are deeply saddened to hear of the death of Professor Martin Wolfe.

OF&G have worked alongside Martin for many years and his work in agro-ecological innovation has been groundbreaking and inspirational. His vision, design and implementation of agroforestry at his Wakelyns farm in Suffolk, with arable alley cropping, was nothing short of revolutionary and the Wakelyns Population wheat variety that he so painstakingly developed has succeeded in reframing cereal variety development. For too long zero and low input farming systems have struggled with current mainstream wheat varieties and so the development and marketing of the Wakelyns Population, with its many on-farm benefits alongside its acceptance now amongst millers and bakers for its ability to make a really good loaf of bread, has opened up new opportunities for farmers and breeders. We hope that part of Martin's legacy is to build on his vision and commitment and continue the development of similar initiatives.

Our thoughts are with Martin's family and friends and we are honoured to have had the opportunity to work with this wonderfully warm and generous man.





Open Farm Sunday

farmsunday.org

Are you opening your farm for this year's event?

The NFU is offering host farmers a range of resources, from children's activity booklets to information leaflets and stickers that communicate the NFU's flagship campaign Back British Farming. **The closing date for orders is Thursday, 5 May.**

<https://www.nfuonline.com/news/latest-news/order-free-resources-for-open-farm-sunday/>



Wake up to Organic 2019

www.wakeuptoorganic.co.uk

On 12 June 2019 independent retailers across the UK will be dishing up free organic mini breakfasts as part of their Wake Up To Organic events. The aim is to show how easy it is to switch to an organic breakfast, and to showcase the fabulous range of organic food and drink that your local independent stores and cafés offer. **If you are interested in registering your store go to the website above - deadline for sign ups is 30 April.**

BioFach 2019

In February Roger Kerr and Steven Jacobs went to Nuremberg to meet with traders, scientists and policy makers.

BioFach is the largest organic trade event in Europe and an annual institution, and with the conference alongside, it brings together some of the world's most active and most interesting proponents of sustainable and agro-ecologically innovative development with highly advanced scientific research.

BioFach Europe takes place over four days of exhibition and conference with more than 50,000 visitors attending from 143 countries.

Conference sessions are arranged with the support of IFOAM International and the German organic federation Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (BÖLW).

The conference programme covers a wide range of topics from discussion on food networks and markets to regulatory processes.

OF&G licensee Rude Health had one of the most colourful stands at the exhibition



Food networks

The University of Copenhagen led a session called Organic diets for a [green planet - http://ofng.me/px](http://ofng.me/px)

Discussion took in detail on a number of studies and projects where production systems such as organic can be bolstered when sympathetic dietary approaches are used alongside.

For instance one of the projects presented at this session was the Nordic Diet. This is an approach similar to the mediterranean diet and it looks in detail at local and seasonal and food but from Nordic region. There is a focus on nutrition and on reducing red meat consumption and increasing whole grains, oily fish and legumes.

Global Organic

At this ever popular session the Swiss organic institute, FiBL, presented the detailed annual statistical report on [global organics - http://ofng.me/py](http://ofng.me/py)

- Headlines

Global organic area reaches another all-time high.

A total of 69.8 million hectares were organically managed at the end of 2017, representing a growth of 20 percent or 11.7 million hectares over 2016, the largest growth ever recorded.

Australia has the largest organic agricultural area (35.6 million hectares), followed by Argentina (3.4 million hectares), and China (3 million hectares).

Due to the large area increase in Australia, half of the global organic agricultural land is now in Oceania (35.9 million hectares).

Europe has the second largest area (21%; 14.6 million

hectares), followed by Latin America (11.5 %; 8 million hectares). The organic area increased in all continents.

Globally, 1.4 % of the farmland is organic. However, many countries have far higher shares.

The countries with the largest organic share of their total farmland are Liechtenstein (37.9 %), Samoa (37.6 %), and Austria (24 %). In fourteen countries, 10 % or more of all agricultural land is organic.

In 2017, 2.9 million organic producers were reported.

India continues to be the country with the highest number of producers (835,200), followed by Uganda (210,352), and Mexico (210,000).

"The World of Organic Agriculture" with infographics is available to [download - http://ofng.me/pz](http://ofng.me/pz)

- Organic legal framework

The person responsible for leading on organics within the European Commission, Nicolas Verlet, took part in the BioFach congress.

M. Verlet is the European Commission's Head of the Organic Unit of the Directorate-General AGRI and it is he who leads on the drafting and implementation of organic rules within Europe's legislature.

Generally people have found his approach to be both intelligent and open. And with the new EU Organic Regulation will come into force at the beginning of 2021 there is still much to discuss with the EU Commission and member states needing to agree on the detailed rules that will support the regulation.

One of the press reports on this sessions can be found via this [link - http://ofng.me/q0](http://ofng.me/q0).

Save the Date - 3 July 2019

The annual combinable crops event for all those interested in growing cereals and pulses under organic cultivation will be held at York Grounds, Raywell, Cottingham, East Yorkshire HU16 5YL.



Richard & Sue Thompson have kindly agreed to host this year's event. Richard's father Michael took the farm into organic production in 1949 and so this year will be the 70th anniversary of organic food production on the farm.

The Trial crops are: -

- 1 - Revelation
- 2 - Evolution
- 3 - Siskin
- 4 - Crispin
- 5 - Ehogold
- 6 - The Wakelyns Population - AKA 'the YQ'.

On the day, visitors will be able to hear from experienced members of the organic supply network and will have an opportunity to look in detail at the crops being trialled on the farm.

The seed in trials are a part of the **Liveseed project** - and are provided through that project and the generosity of Cope Seeds.

For event trade opportunities, sponsorship and general enquiries please contact Steven Jacobs at OF&G on 01939 292009.

Gemma Clarke of Cope Seeds said -

"Organic cereal seed is vital to properly building development in UK organics.

A popular variety with organic growers Revelation is a reliable tall wheat resistant to lodging and with an exceptional disease resistance profile.

Ehogold is another tall wheat. We brought it over from an organic breeder in Austria along with Edelman. They both can achieve very good milling quality when grown in organic production systems."

Organic Arable will be assisting OF&G on the day. They are an independent farmer-controlled business specialising in marketing organic grains and pulses. This year they are celebrating their 20th Birthday and are restructuring their business.

Andrew Trump said, "We have two key objectives for our anniversary year. Firstly, 'Farmer Focus', upgrading our service to our farmers in order to bring them closer to the heart of our business. And secondly, 'Differentiation' - better explaining to producers, customers, the organic community and organic consumers the reasons why Organic Arable is different and how this difference benefits the organic sector as a whole.

OTB event plus new campaign

The 2019 OTB annual briefing, took place at Farmers & Fletchers on 6 March and was attended by representatives from across the membership, from certifiers to brands and producers and retailers as well as representatives from the Department of International Trade and the Food and Drink Federation.

The day began with a review of the success of the 2018 Organic. Feed Your Happy campaign by Aileen Nicol, OTB Campaign Director who later laid out the plans for 2019 including information on how members can support and engage with the activity.

Melanie Cherchian from Sainsbury's and Lorenzo Fiorletta from i-2-c

shared impressive results from the activation of the **Organic. Feed Your Happy** campaign in store and online in September 2018 alongside other speakers.

The day concluded with Paul Moore, Executive Director from OTB sharing proposals and plans for an exciting 2020-2023 industry-funded campaign, with the aim of continuing to build on the successful work of the previous 9 years of campaign activity.

OF&G is an active supporter of the OTB as it brings together the whole sector and provides a unified platform for the promotion of organic to key consumer groups. Roger Kerr, Chief Executive of OF&G, and



Martin Sawyer, Chief Executive of Soil Association Certification, have recently been appointed as Directors, highlighting and consolidating the strength of the organisation.

Technical News

Producers

Slaughtering of livestock without pre-stunning

The Court of Justice of the European Union recently released a statement regarding the marketing of meat from animals that have not been stunned prior to slaughter.

The court noted that in several locations the organic regulation declares the need to observe a high level of animal welfare in the context of that production method. Whilst discussing the issue the court recounted studies that have shown that pre-stunning compromises animal welfare the least of time of slaughter.

The court goes on to say that ritual slaughter, in which an animal may be slaughtered without first pre-stunning, is insufficient to remove all the animals pain, distress and suffering as adequately as slaughter with pre-stunning.

Therefore, the Court concluded that particular methods of slaughter prescribed by religious rites are not seen as serving the same high level of animal welfare at the time of killing as pre-stunning.

Finally, the Court points out that the objective of the EU's rules on the labelling of organic products is to maintain and justify 'consumer confidence in products labelled as organic' and notes that it is important to ensure that consumers are reassured that products bearing the Organic logo of the European Union have actually been obtained in observance of the highest standards, in particular in the area of animal welfare.

Consequently, the Court finds that the rules of EU law do not authorise the placing of the EU logo on products derived from animals which have been slaughtered in accordance with religious rites without first being stunned.

Seeds

At a meeting of the Grass Seed Working Group in 2018 the group made control bodies aware of a potential shortage of grass seeds for the coming year (spring 2019). At that time the seed suppliers did not feel that a reduction in the percentage of organic content for forage seed mixtures would be required but that CBs should be kept informed of likely shortages. A number of the forage seed suppliers have contacted OF&G and noted that they are running short or have already run out of certain varieties, making it difficult to produce a 70% organic mixture.

If you are having difficulty obtaining a grass/forage mixture containing at least 70% organic content you should speak to your certification officer before purchasing and sowing a mix with less than 70% organic.

Processors

Sampling & Testing

For some time now we have been asking our farm inspectors to take samples of products at the annual inspections they undertake. This process is working well, with samples tested using various methods depending on their risks to the integrity of organic production.

Now the process is well bedded into the farming inspections we (OF&G)

think it is time to open the process up to our processor inspections as well. Over the coming weeks we will be speaking to our processing inspectors about the procedures for obtaining samples, the type of products we expect samples to be taken from and the type of testing we will be undertaking. Three separate samples of each product must be taken with one of these being left with the operator in case of an issue. It should be noted that not all samples will be tested as it will be done on a risk/random basis. If a product has been tested you will be notified of the results by your Certification Officer.

Fraudulent Certificates

We have been alerted by the EOCC (European Organic Certifiers Council) to the presence of the following fraudulent ECOCERT and IMO Organic certificates that purport to have been issued to the following;

- **NUTRICARE HOLDINGS PTY LTD** in Australia under the US NOP program to produce bamboo products for wound care.

- **SHENZHEN JIACHEN BIOTECHNOLOGY CO., LTD** to produce, process and export fruit powders, superfoods and freeze-dried protein powders.

- **SEEK BIO-TECHNOLOGY (SHANGHAI) CO., LTD** to manufacture and trade a range of bamboo-based products.

If you receive or have received a certificate in any of the above names please contact your Certification Officer.

Market Information

Grain Prices: Courtesy of Andrew Trump, Organic Arable

The market remains well supplied with buyers reporting good levels of cover until late spring/early summer. There remain some unsold parcels of feed wheat and these are likely to be challenging to place in the short term as buyers

are comfortably covered. There has been some buying interest from livestock farmers. Recent currency strength has put some pressure on values and £280 - £285 is the value that can be achieved if sales can be made. There are some new problems with certification for grains coming in from Russia, Moldova, Turkey, Kazakhstan and UAE and this could create shorts in the market moving forward if

scheduled supplies from these countries cannot be replaced.

Feed barley remains very short little available. Feed Oats are available and are finding some favour on farm at a discount to wheat as benign grazing conditions are allowing some daytime turnout.

Milling oats and malting barley is largely sold out with odd spare loads coming available.

Proteins are very tight with soya prices spiking due to a shock in supply of soya. Values well over £600 delivered are being reported. It is anticipated that this will be alleviated when new shipments arrive in May. There are some beans available and values remain around the £385 ex farm level.

The seed supply situation has once again been problematic this spring. For a second seed supplies have been held supplies from the market and then released once the supply has tightened. It is then available at much higher values using the certification requirement for organic seed to be used as an excuse to inflate prices. This is a practice should be investigated as it is not fair on growers that a seed supplier is allowed to act in this way.

Spring drilling conditions are good for most and a lot of crop is being planted and will hopefully emerge well with the current warmth. Winter crops have come through the winter well and are also enjoying this current warm spell.

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Organic Livestock Trends: OLMC

Despite the chaos and uncertainty that surrounds Brexit and the subdued finished price, demand for organic stores remains good. At the time of writing we are enjoying a mild run up to Spring and this is on the back of a very mild and pleasant Winter. The lack of rain since last May is a concern as we go into Spring and Summer. The deluge of rain we had in mid March seemed to succeed in lifting river levels but ran off the fields very quickly without really penetrating the ground. The water table in most areas is very low and this will be a concern for grass and crop growth going forward.

Some of the stock we have seen over the last few months have been below the normal weight for age that you would expect. This is due to lack of grass last summer making suckler cows short of milk, grazing cattle short of grass and leaving forage and feed for cattle over

the winter in short supply. This is something producers need to bear in mind for the future as cattle need to achieve a 260 – 400 kgs carcass weight within 30 months for most major organic finished cattle outlets. A period of poor growth for 8 – 10 months could mean that cattle will not achieve that potential. Cattle that don't fit that weight for age specification as stores are likely to be discounted by buyers.

Prices so far this Spring have been slightly lower than last Spring but demand is strong and I would expect that if the finished price eases up we will reach last years level.

The organic dairy cattle numbers that we market continue to grow with demand out stripping supply by a long way. If you have, or are thinking of selling organic dairy cattle please give David Bostock a ring. Mobile 07734 808 050 / Office 01829 730 580

Peter Jones: Store cattle - Mobile 07720 892 922 / Office 01829 730 580

www.peterjoneslivestock.co.uk

Organic beef demand has continued to slow as the year has progressed and whilst we expect a shortfall in supply no one can seem to come up with a definitive answer of "when". Thankfully, after the unusual weather in February we have returned to what seems to be more normal weather patterns. The dry period has given way to some wet weather which for many will be welcomed as we push on into Spring.

Placement of cattle is still causing a few issues and it is of increased importance to keep on top of your ages ensuring that both finished steers and heifers are being moved before they go over 30 months of age.

The demand for organic cull cows seems to remain stable with enough coming forward for the processors' requirements. This mostly means that prices have remained capped and look like they will remain such until one side of the scale tips.

Average R4L Organic UTM in spec @ 400p/kg deadweight

Average R4L Organic OTM Cow in spec @ 260p/kg deadweight

With regard to organic lambs predictions for the year mostly remain accurate with the uncertainty as to the arrangements for Brexit continue to provide challenges to agriculture and has impacted in some areas regarding price and numbers coming forward.

However, the demand for organic lamb remains strong and movement and prices are of a reasonable level. Although we are seeing some mixed carcass results due to producers coming to the end of their groups it is worth making sure that you know what the penalties are for out of spec lambs as the deductions can be quite large.

Average R3L Organic OSL in spec @ 450/kg deadweight

For further information on the marketing of finished stock please call Tim Leigh on 01763 250313 or mobile 07850 366404.

Organic Dairy Report:

Courtesy of Sara Ogborne, OMSCo:

With the UK organic dairy market growing at just 1.9% year on year (Soil Association Market Report 2019), but individual farm output typically far exceeding that, exports and new markets remain a critical part of the industry's strategy going forwards. The lack of clarity of post Brexit trading however continues to hold uncertainty and frustration, further amplified by the announcement that there will be no tariff at all on inbound milk, ingredients or yogurt, and cheese and butter would be tariffed at less than a quarter of the rate that will be applied to UK dairy exports.

On a more positive note, the spring-like weather we have experienced in the last 6 weeks or so has enabled many producers to stretch their fodder stocks when most needed and hopefully assisted many in working through the tribulations of storm Gareth. Conversely the storm was a welcome sight for some who've remained in drought since May 2018. Grass growth throughout the country is now averaging well, with reports ranging between 18 - 26 kg DM / Ha.

Staff Profile - Christopher Stopes

I work as the Policy Advisor for OF&G CIC, supporting the organisation by making clear what better policy and practice for organic farming and food looks like, and what we need to do to get there. This involves working with other organic organisations, as well as environmental NGOs and with Defra. Brexit, and its implications are a prime concern so lobbying on the Agriculture Bill, alongside others with the same interests, is really important. OF&G is actively helping to shape the way the Environmental Land Management schemes will operate. The ELMs are at the centre of the proposed legislation. Just as important is ensuring as best we can that organic standards and regulation will enable trade, rather than Brexit representing a critical risk for organic businesses.

Underlying much of my work is showing how an organic systems-based approach can really help enable us to live within planetary boundaries. I am confident that a big increase in organic food and farming – in the UK and around the world – can make a really valuable contribution to the much-needed transformation of food and farming.

After taking degrees at Manchester and Reading Universities, I ended up at Organic Research Centre, Elm Farm where I stayed for 13 years during which time we developed and established the research and advisory work. Focussing on organic crops and livestock R&D, I was always



particularly interested in work on nitrogen cycling and losses from the organic system (and comparing this to the non-organic).

Leaving ORC as Head of Research in 1997, I went on to establish myself as a free-lance consultant (EcoS Consultancy). I have been working across organic food, farming and textiles with many organisations, businesses and government in the UK and beyond.

I have worked on many committees for more than three decades (including for the government), from the origination of the first government standards and European organic regulation to the England Organic Forum, which I have recently been asked to Chair. I am on the Council of Sustain (the Alliance for Better Food and Farming) on behalf of OF&G and am a Trustee of Pesticide Action Network (PAN UK). I have been proud to serve as President of IFOAM EU Group for nine years, stepping down last year. The international scope and reach of the organic sector, represented by IFOAM Organics International, is an important force for good.

My real drive for all this has been my love of good food and good cooking – I focus on this as a source of nourishment and a foundation for my commitment to organic food, produced by organic farmers and growers. With a bouncy dog called Roger and 3 granddaughters there is always a meal to cook and enjoy together!

OF&G licensees in the news

These reports are in the main farming press and are focusing on OF&G licensed organic farmers and their organic farm businesses -

A farmer from Lancashire has been honoured at this year's NFU Conference for his commitment to the union and the farming industry.

https://www.farminguk.com/News/Lancashire-farmer-honoured-at-NFU-Conference_51382.html

Launched last year, the Meurig Raymond Award – named after the NFU's former President - has been presented to NFU North West member **John Alpe**.

He was presented with the award on Tuesday (19 February) at the NFU Conference dinner held at the ICC, Birmingham.

The livestock farmer from Clitheroe was selected for his work in engaging with schools to raise the profile of food and farming.

Mr Alpe, a supporter of the NFU's education team, is an ambassador for the union's Farmvention initiative and encourages farmers nationwide to get behind the campaign.

He also sits on the organic forum and national dairy board, supports campaigning events and promotes farmers' interests with a wide range of stakeholders.

He said: "It's a complete shock to be presented with the award but I am thrilled as the NFU is a great organisation to be a part of.

"Whatever you get involved in as a member of the NFU

there are plenty of opportunities if you're prepared to put the time in and you meet some fantastic people."

How a farm gets 8,000 litres a cow from 94% home-grown feed

<https://www.fwi.co.uk/livestock/livestock-feed-nutrition/how-a-farm-gets-8000-litres-cow-from-94-home-grown-feed>

A combination of persistence, innovation and working with nature has helped one organic dairy farmer achieve averages of 8,000 litres a cow from an almost entirely home-grown ration.

John Pitts had a long-held interest in environmental issues and switched to organic production 20 years ago when he saw a market opportunity to produce food for consumers who were not solely focused on price.

But he was also convinced that the true path to sustainability was through profitability.

"If farms are not profitable they will go out of business so they will never be sustainable," Mr Pitts says.

"Just like all successful businesses, we have to optimise our output and control our costs."

One of the big costs for organic farms is feed. To meet Organic Farmers and Growers' (OF&G) standards, feed must be grown organically.

That has driven the team at Woodhorn Farm, Chichester, West Sussex to produce as much home-grown forage as possible.

The farm is now 94% self-sufficient in feed ...

Farmers Guardian - Dairy special: British Friesians at heart of family's farming business - by Olivia Midgley

<https://www.fginsight.com/vip/dairy-special-british-friesians-at-heart-of-familys-farming-business-81061>

Sam Howarth farms with his wife, Wendy, son Jack, and daughters Sally and Rosie near Pickering, North Yorkshire, running 550 British Friesian cows and 900 followers, currently across two holdings.

"We are looking to grow more brassica crops in the future to contain costs, as it is easier on labour and straw which is one of our biggest costs, although all the muck goes back on to the land and is the main source of potash and phosphate and we can grow 10-12 tonnes of dry matter to the hectare.

"A mixed farming system works because the muck is returned to growing crops.

"We have grown more grass since we became organic than we did before, which is down to better management, more cows and more muck, which has improved the structure of the soil.

"Normally, we take three cuts of silage, but for the last two years, we have been experimenting with four cuts to improve quality."

Farm profile: Organic poultry production supports family farm

<https://www.fginsight.com/vip/farm-profile-organic-poultry-production-supports-family-farm-80458>

Producing organic chickens for Moy Park has allowed Northern Ireland poultry farmers **Joel and Sinton Kerr** to maintain the highest welfare standards for their birds while ensuring the family farm remains profitable and sustainable for the future.



And with Brexit on the horizon, Joel says having assurances in terms of how the farm's poultry is produced is going to become increasingly important.

"With Brexit, there's potential for low-quality meat to come into the country, but with organic we know there's an

established customer base who want to buy meat that they know is high quality," he adds.

"They want to know where their food has come from, what it's been fed, and that it has had a good life.

"As a farmer, that brings us a certain amount of security. We know there will always be a market for the type of bird we are producing, and that gives us confidence to continue farming this way."

Farmers Weekly - Farmer Focus: Choosing the right mixes for short-term leys

<https://www.fwi.co.uk/arable/farmer-focus/farmer-focus-choosing-the-right-mixes-for-short-term-leys>

John Pawsey is an organic farmer at Shimpling Park in Suffolk. He started converting the 650ha of arable cropping in 1999, and also contract farms an additional 915ha organically, growing wheat, barley, oats, beans and spelt.

Successful establishment - "I have struggled in the past to establish leys in the autumn, favouring sowing them in the spring when we can get them into a finer tilth, with a nurse crop of barley when the weather is getting warmer rather than colder. Successful establishment is also helped by under-sowing them at the last hoeing pass with our System Cameleon, which sows seeds at an accurate depth into moisture and presses them into the soil for good contact."

Fertility leys - "Our fertility leys are made up of just over 50% red clover, with the remaining mix consisting of meadow fescue, timothy, crimson clover, lucerne and birdsfoot trefoil. The grazing leys are a mixture of grasses, white clovers, trefoils, ribgrass and chicory, with the latter two species mainly added to increase rooting depth."

Also on a poultry theme in February the Ranger magazine ran a piece looking in detail at a farm business in Wiltshire - An Organic Venture at Pyt House Farm

John Sycklemore and Ivan Hayward started organic egg production two and a half years ago. Building up production steadily and converting a meat chicken house for pullet rearing, has given them an economic advantage.

Later in the article John talks about the OF&G organic standards - "As it was built in line with OF&G standards, increased perching requirements were met from day one. And as we keep hens at a much lower stocking density there is much more room for the equipment, so us and the birds can move around easily."

The Ranger is available for download via the members area at the BFREPA website -

<https://www.bfrepa.co.uk/members-area/magazines/>

Organic in the news

Organic Forum - On Farm events - Gain a wealth of organic insight within your sector

<https://www.nfuonline.com/sectors/organics/organics-must-read/gain-a-wealth-of-organic-insight-within-your-sector/>

The NFU Organic Forum is hosting a series of free on-farm events open to both conventional and organic farmers. These events offer a great opportunity to explore different production systems and gain a better understanding of organics.

Each day includes lunch, a tour of the host farm, access to leading industry speakers as well as panel discussions and Q&A sessions with local MPs.

Horticulture - Pollybell Lincs 14 May 2019

Crops - Sandringham Estate Norfolk 14 June 2019

Dairy - Strictly Cumbria, James Robinson 25 June 2019

New OF&G website to be launched soon

The team at OF&G have been busy working with a technical design agency to build a new website fit for the 21st Century that takes all the good elements of the old one and will, we hope, bring more clarity, less clutter, and also generally make things much easier for you to find. We intend to upload the new site very soon. As a taster of what to expect here is a screenshot of what the front page will look like.



Recently awarded approved inputs

A full list of approved inputs appears on our website <http://ofgorganic.org/approved-input/>

SUPPLIER	TELEPHONE	CATEGORY
CEG Technology UK Ltd	01332 767340	Soil Conditioners
Bio Ag Ltd	01366 384899	Soil Conditioners
Aquavial Sarl	+33 2 96 61 67 04	Animal Feed Supplement
Gwen's Den	07798 638892	Fertilisers

Updated approved inputs

A full list of approved inputs appears on our website <http://ofgorganic.org/approved-input/>

SUPPLIER	TELEPHONE	CATEGORY
Pensia Ltd	01706 343661	Fertilisers
Volac International Ltd	01639 814344	Silage additive
Improcrop Limited t/a Alltech Crop Science	+353 860 264954	Fertilisers
Thomson & Joseph Ltd	01603 781217	Fertilisers
W Neudorff GmbH KG	0049 5155 624126	Pest Control, Insect Control, Fertilisers
Institute of Cellular Pharmacology	00 356 21438458	Animal Feed Supplement
The Fertiliser Company Ltd	01749 841146	Soil Conditioners
Soil Fertility Services Limited	01366 384899	Plant Health Products, Pest Control, Fertilisers, Soil Conditioners, Slurry Treatment
ADM Protexin	01460 243230	Animal Health Product
Strathclyde Nutrition Ltd	01555 820627	Vitamins, minerals and trace elements
Advetec Holdings Limited	01761 433434	Additives
Seasol International Pty Ltd	+61 (0)3 9729 6511	Fertilisers
Mineral Guard Europe SP.zo.o.	48 601 26 11 88	Additives
PCS Poultry Services Ltd	01386 701812	Insect Control
Microferm Ltd	01684 568434	Animal Feed Additives, Silage additive
Anpario PLC	01909 537380	Animal Feed Additives
Chamcotec Ltd	01352 730198	Disinfectant/Cleaning Agent

Classified Advertisements

Items for sale

Note: Purchasers 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. Advertisements are accepted at OF&G's discretion.

CATTLE FOR SALE				
14 H.F. in-calf heifers	Calving to pedigree easy calving Aberdeen Angus bull. 10 calving April/May, 4 calving Aug/Sept.	Mr Evans	01994 230250 /07508 103363	Meidrim, Carmarthenshire
Angus Cross Calves	We will have around 30 Angus cross calves for sale within the next 6 weeks. They are TB free, we have good herd health status and colostrum and calf rearing protocols.	Jeremy Dale	07946 591636	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
9 Belted Galloway Bullocks	Organic Belted Galloway cross bred bullocks born May & June 2018. TB clear herd, tested in February, 2019. Excellent strong x bred, out of small quiet herd.	Sue & Steve Fowler	01335 310116	Ashbourne, Derbyshire
Pedigree Hereford Heifers	10 Pedigree organic Hereford Heifers for sale, top quality, for sale only due to a change in circumstances. Shraden Sires and dams viewable.	Mark Steele	07717 366560	Pershore, Worcestershire
Aberdeen Angus Cross Calves TB Restricted	50 Feb Born Aberdeen Angus Calves, TB Restricted. Will split into batches if required. All had good colostrum and well established on milk. Named Pedigree Sires.	Jaci Dale	07967 553414	Church Stretton, Shropshire
Store Cattle	25 Hereford X 16-21 months Heifers and Steers. 25 Hereford X 9-12 months Heifers and Steers	Andrew Rogers	01989 740256	Hereford, Herefordshire
Organic Heifers/Breeding	30 organic heifers/breeding. LR/BSHX & AAX POA	Glen Shaw	07584 376185	Louth, Lincolnshire
Beef Shorthorn Organic Store Cattle	Up to 35 Beef shorthorn store cattle. All Steers. Approx 10 months of age. Born April & May 2018. Single Suckled. TB4. All Registered named sires. Outwintered. Well grown cattle. Approx weight 350-400kg. Soil association. West Sussex. 850 per head.	Paul Crawley	07970 149467	Arundel, West Sussex
Dispersal of Suckler Herd	We are selling our suckler herd at Frome Market on 17 April 2019. 40 Hereford and Simmental cross cows with their Simmental and Limousin calves at foot, 4 - 6 weeks old. There will be a further sale on 1 May. Please telephone for more details.	Martin Brown	01985 844236	Warminster, Wiltshire

DAIRY CATTLE FOR SALE				
Bulling heifers Jersey/KiwiX	55 Organic Bulling heifers spring 2018 born JerseyX/KiwiX Type. Been outwintered on grass all year round. Willing to split if needed	Llewellyn	07917 458286	Liskeard, Cornwall
10 Bulling heifers	10 organic yearling bulling heifers. BF and xbred types. Great condition. £600 each	Toby Ansdell	07785 397678	Barnstaple, Devon
Calved and Springing Organic B.Friesian Heifers	Pedigree, by 'high daughter fertility' sires. In-calf to B.Fr and ped A/ Angus sweeper bulls. IBR and Lepto vaccinated. 6000ltr [305] 4.1% and 3.5% block calving closed herd. Select approx. 15, @ £1500 ono	David Moreton	07836 769853 /07834 765730	Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire
Cows for sale	10 April/May calving organic cows. Mainly young with one ICH. Suitable for PWAB herd. Crossbred cows. From block calving herd. Lepto and BVD vaccinated. 5800 lts of grass and .8ton of cake. Incalf to AA. £1100 each.	Toby Ansdell	07785 397678	Barnstaple, Devon
30-40 Jersey and Kiwi cross cows	30-40 July-September calving Jersey & Kiwi X cows incalf to Blue & Angus.	Llewellyn	07917 458286	Liskeard, Cornwall
30-35 1st-3rd lactation cows	30-35 1st-3rd lactation cows calving 20th March to mid April Jersey X Incalf to Blue/Angus.	Llewellyn	07917 458286	Liskeard, Cornwall

SEED FOR SALE				
Organic Westminster Seed £600/ton	3Tons of Organic Westminster spring barley seed. Excess to requirements after cropping plan change. Purchased from Robin Appel. £600/ton.	Mike Sainsbury	07818 405001	Badminton, Avon

MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE				
Organic Smallholding for sale	Organic Smallholding, County Clare, Ireland. Renovated Stone cottage on 11 acres, polytunnels, lots of fruit trees, grassland. Price: 240,000 Euros. For further details contact Pete.	Pete	00353 65 6835924	Tulla, Co. Clare

FORAGE & FEEDSTUFFS FOR SALE				
Round Bale Silage	Up to 100 bales, depending on length of winter.	Philip Wadsworth	07974 387663	Thirsk, N Yorks
Top meadow hay	Top quality meadow hay in 6 string bales, 3 to the tonne so dense bales. All made good June and July 2018. Good loading available. One lorry and drag load available (roughly 72 bales).	jamie cullimore	07717 534933	Gloucester
Hay, 2019	We have approx 200 acres of organic grass available for 2019. We would like it to go to an Organic farmer.	Stewart Bell	07941 339709	Moreton in Marsh, Gloucestershire
Organic Hay & Silage	4ft round bales 2018 organic hay. 50 bales 2nd cut organic silage. can load	Jay Wilde	01335 370238	Ashbourne, Derbyshire
Top quality Haylage	Up to 150 bales of Top quality Haylage, Bale size 3x3x5. Red Clover and ryegrass ley, made in July 2018	Jon Lewis	07970 947582	Ludlow, Shropshire
Organic Meadow hay for sale	Available summer 2019. We will have up to 90 bales for sale. we normally cut to 4 string large square bales but can discuss other sizes and shapes by prior arrangements.	Farokh Khorrooshi	01296 711107	Buckingham, Bucks
Silage	Round bales and small bales of silage for sale.	Steph Wilson	07921 928897	Antrim, Co Antrim
Organic Big Bale Hay	2017 Big Bale Hay Good Quality	Paul Phillips	07971 184580	Wincanton, Somerset
Hay and 1st Cut Wrapped Silage	Organic hay and first cut wrapped silage. Please contact for more info.	Peter Rhodes	01759 318230	York, East Yorkshire
Organic haylage	130 organic haylage bales Excellent quality. Loading available	Richard	07753 670922	Wrexham
Organic Silage	35 Round Bales of Silage for sale. Please phone for further details.	Mr Hamnett	01978 710323	Wrexham
Organic Hay	Organic hay for sale. Good meadow hay 2017. John deere dense round bales. £110 per ton loaded. Good lorry access.	Henry Nicholls	01403 820068	Billingshurst, W Sussex

Items wanted

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FEEDSTUFFS AND FORAGE WANTED				
Wanted Organic Hay	Organic & Conventional Hay in square bales. Will collect.	David Thorley	07973 860211	Doveridge, Ashbourne
Wanted Organic Hay	We are looking to purchase organic hay, haylage and silage, red clover mix if available. Also, organic straw all types and bale sizes. We will collect.	David Thorley	07973 860211	Ashbourne, Derbyshire
SHEEP WANTED				
Organic Herdwick	Organic herdwicks, wethers (store) lambs or shearlings.	James Irving	07579 009490	Wigton, Cumbria
LAND & GRAZING WANTED				
A small piece of organic land	We're looking to rent a small piece of organic land, around 1/2 acre, near Brighton, East Sussex.	Gabriella Harman	01273 329774	Brighton, East Sussex
MISCELLANEOUS WANTED				
Organic Poultry Manure	Poultry manure wanted, transport can be arranged to most places in the UK. Looking to establish regular supply for right material. License number with the SA is G8684.	Peter Bull	01829 260242 / 07581 083698	Tarporley, Cheshire
JOBS WANTED				
HGV Class 1 or Class 2 driver	We are a family run hay and straw merchants business. We are seeking a full or part-time HGV class 1 or 2 driver to carry out deliveries of hay and straw. No nights out. Good rates of pay. Full training given.	Jean McCann	07976 921775	Ashbourne, Derbyshire
Field veg /farm manager	We are looking to dramatically expand our organic production and livestock activities. Currently we grow mostly salads in 3/4 acre of polytunnels, turkeys and laying hens; and we sell through our own farm shop in Bristol as well as several other restaurants, etc. in Bristol and Glastonbury. We have 40 acres of under-used south-facing medium clay soil. We need an experienced person (or two?) to bring these fields into full production. Please contact for further information richardrmf@hotmail.com or http://www.radfordmillfarm.com	Richard Fox	01761 479391	Bath, Somerset