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 Minster 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 absentee 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 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.
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.”
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 in this 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:


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.
Food networks
The University of Copenhagen led a session called Organic diets for a green planet - 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

- 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

- 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.
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.

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."

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.

Save the Date - 3 July 2019

For your Organic Business

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 2019 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.

Tel: 08456 521706
www.organicarable.co.uk

**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 striping 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 as to the arrangements for 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.
For your Organic Business

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


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/
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://oforganic.org/approved-input/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPLIER</th>
<th>TELEPHONE</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEG Technology UK Ltd</td>
<td>01332 767340</td>
<td>Soil Conditioners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bio Ag Ltd</td>
<td>01366 384899</td>
<td>Soil Conditioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquavial Sarl</td>
<td>+33 2 96 6167 04</td>
<td>Animal Feed Supplement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gwen’s Den</td>
<td>07798 638892</td>
<td>Fertilisers</td>
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Updated approved inputs

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>14 H.F. In-calf Heifers</th>
<th>Calving to pedigree easy calving Aberdeen Angus bull. 10 calving April/May, 4 calving Aug/Sept.</th>
<th>Mr Evans 01994 230250/07508 103363</th>
<th>Medrim, Carmarthenshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angus Cross Calves</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Jeremy Dale 07946 591636</td>
<td>Shrewsbury, Shropshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Belted Galloway Bullocks</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Sue &amp; Steve Fowler 01335 310116</td>
<td>Ashbourne, Derbyshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedigree Hereford Heifers</td>
<td>10 Pedigree organic Hereford Heifers for sale, top quality, for sale only due to a change in circumstances. Shraden Sires and dams viewable.</td>
<td>Mark Steele 07717 366560</td>
<td>Pershore, Worcestershire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen Angus Cross Calves TB Restricted</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Jaci Dale 07967 553414</td>
<td>Church Stretton, Shropshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Cattle</td>
<td>25 Hereford X 16-21 months Heifers and Steers. 25 Hereford X 9-12 months Heifers and Steers</td>
<td>Andrew Rogers 01989 740256</td>
<td>Hereford, Herefordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Heifers/Breeding</td>
<td>30 organic heifers/breeding. LR/BSHX &amp; AAX POA</td>
<td>Glen Shaw 07584 376185</td>
<td>Louth, Lincolnshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispersal of Suckler Herd</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Martin Brown 01985 844236</td>
<td>Warminster, Wiltshire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 Anisdell 07785 397678 | Barnstaple, Devon |
| Calved and Sprouting Organic B.Friesian Heifers | Pedigree, by ‘high daughter fertility’ sires. In-calf to B.Fr and ped A/ Angus sweepers bulls. IRR and Lepto vaccinated. 6000lt [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. £1000 each. | Toby Anisdell 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 £500/ton. | Mike Sainsbury 07818 405001 | Badminton, Avon |

**MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE**

| Organic Smalholding for sale | Organic Smalholding, 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).
  - Janie 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 Khorooshi
  - 01296 71107
  - 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 Hannett
  - 01978 710323
  - Wrexham

- **Organic Hay**
  - Henry Nicholls
  - 01403 820668
  - Billingshurst, W Sussex

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**Items wanted**

**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.

**FEEDSTUFFS AND FORAGE WANTED**

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<tr>
<td>Wanted Organic Hay</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>David Thorley</td>
<td>07973 860211</td>
<td>Ashbourne, Derbyshire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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: richardmf@hotmail.com or http://www.radfordmillfarm.com | Richard Fox | 01761 479391 | Bath, Somerset |