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Newsletter

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General News

BLOG: Organic is a lighthouse for truly sustainable agriculture - Roger Kerr

How often recently have we heard organic and non-organic growers and businesses indicate that organic doesn't somehow go 'far enough'? That organic growers need other 'regenerative' elements to fill in the 'gaps'?

The reality is however that the organic principles set out by the pioneers of the organic movement nearly a hundred years ago mean that organic farmers frequently go far beyond the standards in their mission to secure the best outcomes they can.

And the organic movement aspires to go much further.

Organic agriculture is a lighthouse for truly sustainable agriculture and agricultural production systems. The IFOAM International Organic 3.0 strategy (developed in the middle of the last decade) expands the participation options and positions organic as a modern, innovative farming system that holistically integrates ecology, economy, society, culture and accountability.

Regeneration of resources, responsibility in production, sufficiency in consumption, and the ethical and spiritual development of human values, practices and habits are concepts that guide the building of a new organic culture that can drive societal development

The strategy for Organic 3.0 includes six main features, consistently promoting the diversity that lies at the heart of organic and recognising there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach:

1. A culture of innovation
2. Continuous improvement toward best practice
3. Diverse ways to ensure transparency and integrity
4. Inclusiveness of wider sustainability interests
5. Empowerment from the farm to the final consumer
6. True value and cost accounting

At its heart, Organic 3.0 is not prescriptive but descriptive: instead of enforcing a set of minimum rules to achieve a final static result, this model is outcome-based and continuously adaptable to local contexts.

This strategy demands integration of organic into the development of the planet and societies rather than concentration on the perfection of the niche.

The impact of the organic movement must also be measured in the increasing adoption of organic principles in mainstream agriculture to improve global sustainability. This is achieved through growing the organic sector (certified and non-certified) while continuing to make it increasingly sustainable.

OF&G Office Hours over the Christmas break

The office will be closed from 1pm on Friday 23 December to 9am on Tuesday 3 January.

The contact number - for emergencies only - outside of these hours is for Stephen Clarkson on **01939 292002**

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<https://ofgorganic.org/news/blog-organic-is-a-lighthouse-for-truly-sustainable-agriculture>

This post also appears on Roger's [LinkedIn](#) pages

Further reading: [Organic: the benchmark for truly regenerative farming](#)



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Genetic Technology Bill will cost us dearly

9 November 2022

In a letter issued to media our chief executive Roger Kerr criticises the government for an apparent lack of attention to vitally important detail at a critically important time.

This deeply troubling bill removes any labelling and traceability requirements for a hypothetical sub-class of GMO, the so-called 'precision bred organism' (PBO). These exempted organisms will effectively be hidden in the food system.

The Regulatory Policy Committee has already raised a red flag, stating that the bill fails to consider the impact of creating a new class of GMO.

To be absolutely clear-eyed, in its present form this bill will fail businesses; it will fail consumers; and it will fail the environment.

OF&G believes the Government must urgently make provision to minimise the financial impact to all food businesses by establishing a comprehensive co-existence regime.

The worrying alternative is that businesses would need to undertake their own traceability testing. A complex and expensive process adding an estimated cost of around £500,000 pa to SMEs.

Neither does the Bill address the implications to significant export markets, where GMOs are still regulated (including the UK's devolved nations). If the UK does not make adequate provision to ensure PBOs are identified, then critical markets will be lost to UK food businesses.

Hiding GMOs within the food system will have immeasurable long-term consequences on an already reeling UK food industry.

It also fails to safeguard our basic right as citizens to make an informed choice about what we consume.

Further reading: [OF&G Briefing Note - The Genetic Technology \(Precision Breeding\) Bill 2022](#)

Abuse of Patent Law in Plant & Animal Breeding

The member organisations of **NO PATENTS ON SEEDS!** are concerned about the increasing number of patents on plants, seeds and farm animals and their impact on farmers, breeders, innovation and biodiversity.

These patents are an abuse of patent law and put in danger the access to basic resources in agriculture and food production.

Therefore, they are calling for an urgent re-think of European patent law in biotechnology and plant breeding and for clear regulations that exclude conventional breeding, genetic material, animals, plants and food derived thereof from patentability.

A petition to the governments of the contracting states of the European Patent Office calls for a ministerial conference to stop patents on seeds!

The European Patent Office (EPO) has been discussing ways of effectively implementing the prohibition of patents on conventional plant and animal breeding for over ten years. The wording of the prohibition in the European Patent Convention (EPC) is not sufficiently precise. Its meaning needs further interpretation: the

wording in the EPC reads as follows: "essentially biological processes for the production of plants or animals" shall not be patented (Article 53b, EPC).

Even though a new rule (Rule 28 (2), EPC) for the interpretation of the prohibition was adopted in 2017, patents are still being granted not only on genetically engineered plants but also on those derived from random mutagenesis and conventional methods. Recent examples include patents on barley, bush melons and salad. So far, neither the EPO nor officials representing the contracting states, appear to be willing to solve this problem despite regular meetings at the Administrative Council of the EPO.

The use of new genetic engineering techniques is exacerbating the problem. Many companies are intentionally blurring the differences between conventional breeding and genetic engineering in their patent applications.

A closer look at the patents reveals that the corresponding technical processes were very often not used at all to achieve the respective breeding

goals. If these patents are granted, they can also cover plants and animals derived from conventional breeding and inheriting random mutations. This is a way for large companies, such as Bayer, Corteva, BASF and Syngenta, to gain more and more control of conventional breeding. To prevent the existing legal prohibitions from becoming meaningless, we need effective legal instruments to limit the scope of patents.

'NO PATENTS ON SEEDS' are calling for the governments of the contracting states to take their responsibilities seriously and organise an international ministerial conference. According to the EPC (Article 4a), such conferences should take place every five years to discuss questions relating to patent law. However, it seems that there have been no such conferences within the last 20 years. In any case, after many years of legal uncertainty, high level decisions now have to be taken. The prohibition of patents on conventional breeding can only be made effective by further political initiative of the national governments.

<https://www.no-patents-on-seeds.org/en/petition>



Sustainability Labelling and Planet-score

There has recently been an increased interest in sustainability labelling, driven by the development of the 'Product Environmental Footprint' (PEF) label by the EU.

While OF&G supports the development of environmental labelling for food and drink products as a way of helping consumers make better and informed choices, we believe any such label "should be as clear and transparent as possible ... and avoid any potential greenwashing that may mislead consumers".

The IGD (Institute of Grocery Distribution) is currently developing a UK label that will give products an environmental score but we recommend that any environmental labelling of food must adopt a "holistic product overview, with clear assessments of impacts external factors above and beyond any life cycle analysis including pesticides, biodiversity, climate impacts and animal welfare".

While a UK label is in development OF&G is seeking businesses who would be keen to trial the Planet-score® label, an internationally recognised environmental scheme that has been developed and trialled in the past five years by over 180

organic and non-organic companies and brands in over 11 countries.

Designed by scientists and experts concerned with making sure people are properly informed, and supported by a large body of civil society, the Planet-score® is an independent and transparent methodology for the environmental labelling of food. It uses French state databases (Agribalyse ADEME) and completes them with other indicators to reflect all issues, without taboos, without greenwashing, to a high level from the field to the plate. The Planet-score® includes impacts on the entire life cycle of food: from production to packaging, energy and transport included.

The labelling is clear and provides consumers with valuable information at the point of purchase.

We would encourage any operators who are keen to get ahead of the curve to trial Planet-score®, and so better understand consumers' reaction as well as have a clearer insight to this approach in the UK. Planet-score® has proven to be successful with brands and consumers in other countries and provides a good, clear visual assessment of the sustainable practices and benefits of organic.

If you are interested in learning more



it is very easy. Their freshly translated website is ready to welcome your request via the "Rate my products" or "Test my products" form at the bottom of the webpage. After requesting, you will receive a NDA to sign, a datasheet to fill in and return, and you will be asked for a logo of your brand to proceed. Usually within a month you will receive the scores and the web-labels (for e-shops). You can also ask for the graphical charter and the Illustrator kit if you are planning to display the score on packages or any printed medium. They however ask for scrutiny on the visuals before printing.

Alternatively you can register for their newsletter (the form is on their website).

The October edition is here <https://bit.ly/3hAwTEN>

Environmental Land Management - where are we with SFI and LNR

With another new minister - Therese Coffey - now leading Defra, there is continuing confusion for farmers on where ELM is heading. In a leaked report from the confidential Defra Future Farming and Countryside Programme Forum by Abi Kay in the Farmers Guardian stated that the ELM review, initiated by former Defra agriculture secretary of state Ranil Jayawardena, was to shelve the Local Nature Recovery scheme. It will be replaced with a scheme based on Countryside Stewardship (CS), referred to as CS+.

OF&G has co-operated with Defra in reviewing options under the LNR, noting that much of what was good in CS was being painfully and slowly revised and shoe-horned into the 'new' LNR options. So although there has been much wasted time, with more than 60 meetings since the beginning of 2020, Defra appears to have come to the conclusion that CS had many good features, so better to develop that rather than invent a new scheme.

There is a clear opportunity to update and improve CS, so the idea of CS+ is welcome. OF&G is eager to get a better offer for organic farming conversion payments that more fairly compensate the 'public goods' - the many benefits - that organic farming conversion provides. There are inconsistencies in CS that must be rectified and those

farmers that have been implementing good organic farming for years should be properly rewarded. As it is, those farmers who have depleted their farmed environment will be paid to attempt to restore it, whilst organic farmers could lose out.

Interestingly at the Environmental Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee hearing later that same day, Defra Minister Mark Spencer MP and Janet Hughes (Programme Director of the Future Farming and Countryside Programme) assured the Committee that the Local Nature Recovery Scheme was proceeding.

Following the ELM review by Defra, it seems that the Sustainable Farming Incentive will continue, although Abi Kay's report in the Farmers Guardian stated that new standards for nutrient management and integrated pest management may well be shelved.

OF&G looks forward to the promised meetings with Defra colleagues to start the process of 'co-design' of the organic farming standard for the SFI, which is expected to be launched in 2025. Meanwhile, the Organic Action Plan is still stuck in Defra, awaiting ministers' approval. The delay in this, since July, has prompted the English Organic Forum to get on with key actions in the draft plan. Watch this space!

Wales Real Food and Farming Conference - 23-25 November

<https://ofgorganic.org/events/the-wales-real-food-and-farming-conference-2022>

OF&G is once again a lead sponsor of the Cynhadledd Gwir Fwyd a Ffermio Cymru - Wales Real Food and Farming Conference held at Lampeter University 23-25 November.

OF&G's own Steven Jacobs, a co-founder of the WRFFC writes:

Let's talk about the buns

Appetite, flavour and nutrition are keystones for a good food business. Obviously, food is vital for all of us every day. But for many it is not simply about how much in quantity, or the price. A lot of people want to know how their food is grown or reared, how it is being prepared or processed and where the ingredients come from.

I understand why some purveyors of fine food, and 'fast food', are sensitive to criticism. I can relate to that. I appreciate the need to trumpet one's virtue and build a message of goodness and value.

But it must be an honest conversation. Nutritional science is starting to catch up with what some have known for a long time. Our digestive systems require our diet to contain diversity and whole fibre (less processed) to maintain good health.

So, I'm struggling with the concept where the values behind some elements of a meal are inferior to other elements, and nobody wants to talk about them.

Take the humble burger as a prime example. The meat is the key ingredient when described in promotional campaigns. The beef is '100% British', or the fish is 'sustainably sourced'. Or it is 'plant-based', suggesting that it is a good thing that yet another highly processed food product sets sail in a vast sea of highly processed food products.

What strikes me as really odd is that we never hear about the bread served up with the burger. Can we please talk about the buns? What's in the bun and how was it baked, where is the wheat from, how was it grown?



WALES
REAL
Food
& **Farming**
Conference

Wheat has come a long way from ancient varieties such as emmer or einkorn. And a long way even from landrace varieties such as the wonderful Hen Gymro which

".. clung on in cultivation into the 1920's – longer than any other British wheat landrace".

Wheat today is generally treated as a 'soft' commodity. A soft commodity refers to where the actuals are grown rather than extracted or mined. Wheat as a soft commodity is traded on global markets which offers a balance in quality and quantity all through the year.

Bakers and millers require consistency. The protein and gluten levels in wheat grains that help support bread texture can fluctuate, sometimes a great deal.

Those protein and gluten levels can be brought to a level to satisfy the large commercial bakers of light sliced loaves. To do this, key factors must come together. In the main, these are nutrient, moisture and sunlight. Chemicals are used in non-organic farming to boost the nutrient and stabilise the moisture. They generally succeed in that effort. But they also have seriously negative consequences to the ecologies they are grown in. I don't need to go into great detail on that here. Suffice to say the damage has been widespread and led to enormous harm for many species. Including humans.

To read the article in full: <https://wrffc.wales/2022/10/12/lets-talk-about-the-buns/>

New Entrant Scheme Pilot - could help develop an organic farming enterprise

Through the New Entrant Support Scheme, Defra is keen to nurture entrepreneurs to develop their business ideas, foster innovation and promote growth.

Defra is aiming to recruit 200 participants to pilot the new scheme. Open to individuals with some farming experience (but not with their own land-based business), and also to individuals with 4-10 years experience in running a land based farming business.

The pilot is for arable, animal farming, horticulture, agro-forestry and environmental service businesses, including organic farming. Defra have highlighted the scope for businesses providing livestock for arable farms, as part of an organic (agroecology) system.

The challenge is to develop business models that will be successful and resilient in the future. They may well not look like those of the past.

Participation in the pilot can go along with other farming schemes. Organic farmers may also want to act as a potential mentor, demonstrator of innovative business models, or as a landowner looking to work with new entrants.

For more information, and to apply through one of the pilot lead organisations see: <https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/24/new-entrant-support-scheme-apply-for-the-pilot/>

National Organic Conference 4 July 2023

OF&G's annual food and farming event will be celebrating its sixteenth anniversary next year on a site very close to our offices in Shropshire as guests of the Lea family at Green Acres farm.

Over the two decades since he first converted the farm to organic Mark Lea has continually worked to develop the business to remain both economically and environmentally resilient. The farm continues to produce high quality organic oats for Organic Arable, and retains a flock of New Zealand Romney sheep. Mark is also a specialist grower of organic pulses and milling wheat, looking for exceptional quality and gaining access to high value markets.



At Green Acres all the wheats are grown in field length strips with many different varieties growing side-by-side. While this approach involves additional work in sorting and drilling the seed, and ultimately in cutting each strip and cleaning the grain, the strips give Mark the advantage of developing and building knowledge and seed on his own farm, and now his own flour mill.

Plans for the 2023 event are building. An international soil health educator will join a top line-up of professionals from all corners of the food and farming world.

More details will be released early in 2023.

OF&G policy activity - what we have been up to

SJ - Steven Jacobs / CS - Christopher Stopes

NAME	ACTIVITY	DATE	COMMENT
CS	ELM LNR Grassland Options Workshop	27/9	In person
CS	Plant Breeding Fit for the Future Soil Association Conference	12/10	In person
CS	Organic Trade Board Sustainability Labelling	13/10	Online
CS	Organic Growers Association Organic Matters	18/10	In person
CS	ELM LNR Grassland Options Workshop	19/10	Online
CS	Sustain Farming Working Group	25/10	Online
CS	Organic Trade Board Action Day	27/10	In person
CS	ELM LNR Grassland Options meeting	1/11	Online
CS	ELM LNR Grassland Options Workshop	2/11	Online
CS	Defra Future Farming & Countryside Programme Forum	15/11	Online
SJ	Sustain: Land use framework 2023	12/09	Online
SJ	Defra Precision Breeding Organism (as defined in the genetic tech bill 2022) with OF&G & Soil Association	15/09	Online
SJ	RPA AESWG (Rural Payments Agency Agri-Environment Stakeholder Working Group) - representing the English Organic Forum	21/09	Online
SJ	DEFRA RPA Industry Partnership Group - Geospatial	22/09	Online
SJ	RPA Industry Partnership Group Meeting	27/09	
SJ	Building Better Food Systems Conference - Manchester	28-29/09	In person
SJ	Fruit & Veg Alliance - SJ	11/10	Online
SJ	NFU Organic Forum	17/10	Online
SJ	Organic Growers Alliance - Organic Matters conference, Birmingham	18/10	In person
SJ	Yorkshire Grain Changers	23/10	In person
SJ	Low input for maximum gain - National Sheep Association event in Rutland	7/11	In person
SJ	RPA AESWG (Rural Payments Agency Agri-Environment Stakeholder Working Group) - representing the English Organic Forum	9/11	Online
SJ	Shropshire Good Food Partnership meeting at Harper Adams University	17/11	In person
SJ	Wales Real Food & Farming Conference at Lampeter University	23-25/11	In person

Market Information

Grain Prices: Courtesy of Andrew Trump, Organic Arable

With the conventional wheat market losing about £29 since the start of November it is unsurprising that buyers see the organic wheat market as over-priced as premiums remain at around £150 for organic feed wheat. This is a higher level than has been the case for several years and is a level we need to seek to maintain. Stronger premiums will encourage more supply and conversion, especially while fertiliser prices remain high. The concerns raised previously about demand being negatively affected by anxiety around the wider economy are coming to fruition. The market is quiet with buyers comfortable with the level of cover they currently have making sales harder to come by. Avian flu is a concern in the poultry market and dairy farmers are seeking to keep feed costs down helped by a mild autumn. "One of the best autumns in many years!" was the way one dairy farmer described this year "A blessing given the cost of feed" he went on. It has been a benign autumn with grass growth strong and so the need to feed cattle reduced. We anticipate that straight sales will start to build from here on as cattle are housed and winter routines start in earnest.

The predominant demand is for wheat and with the change in approach at Hi-Peak Feeds reducing demand for feed barley and feed oats significantly it is time to consider rotations that rely heavily on these crops. If you haven't grown wheat for a while it is well worth referencing the data derived from the LiveWheat project when considering appropriate varieties. Although no longer funded by Defra,

Organic Arable are continuing to run these participatory trials to test how winter wheat varieties perform under organic conditions so data of available and near market varieties will continue to be available to growers.

At our annual members meeting this week we presented data on the market and it is interesting to note the way organic premiums have risen in recent months. This is a symptom of the UK organic cereal market's reliance upon imports which have been pushed higher through weak currency and freight costs. Feed buyers are experiencing higher costs now because domestic cereal production has been unsupported over many years. A concerted effort is needed by the whole industry to tackle the lack of UK organic cereal production to make the sector more resilient to supply shocks and this should be a key objective for the organic sector over the next few years.

see <https://www.organicarable.co.uk/arable> for more information.

Please keep an eye on our blog www.organicarable.co.uk/blog

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[@organicarable](https://www.organicarable.co.uk)

Organic Livestock Trends: OLMC

ORGANIC STORE REPORT

An increased number of barren beef cows have come onto the market this Autumn. This is an indication of a number of factors, firstly the barren cow price has been very strong and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the economics of small and sometimes inefficient beef herds is questionable and as a result producers have been offloading cows. This is particularly the case in

the organic sector. The ramifications of this are far reaching a reduced number of organic beef cows can only lead to one thing and that is reduced numbers of cattle and consequently reduced amounts of organic beef available to consumers.

The year continues to have very varied and mixed weather patterns. As I write this, flood warnings have been issued for some areas after a prolonged drought. Travelling around the country as I do I see a very different picture regarding forage stocks. Producers in the south and the east up to the M62 are still down on what they would expect to have in store for this time of the year while the rest of the UK have more than adequate supplies to hand.

Store cattle prices have, particularly for smaller cattle, eased back. Bigger and better quality cattle have held to last years price levels. Going forward I see nothing but strong demand for organic store cattle. In an environment where there are less cattle about and with a buoyant finished price we are already getting orders for store cattle after Christmas.

We are still looking for suppliers of store lambs particularly bigger groups of lambs. Organic dairy cattle are also required by producers.

We are always happy to discuss your marketing options for any class of stock.

**Contact 01829 730580 or:
Peter Jones - 07720 892922
David Bostock - 07734 808050**

OLMC FINISHED STOCK

Organic Prime Beef Cattle

Warm weather this autumn has stimulated grass growth and allowed many producers to leave cattle out later than most years. With forage

OLMC - Sheep

The sheep industry is currently facing many changes brought on principally by four influencing factors.

- The changes in the demand for sheep meat worldwide;
- The UK's decision to come out of the EU.

- The weather patterns in Australia and parts of Europe that are resulting in a serious lack of rain;
- Inflation that has particularly affected feed and transport costs.

In the face of this OLMC will be publishing fortnightly articles relating to the organic sheep industry written by Iain Turner. The introductory article will be a background/overview of

the sheep industry, and this will be followed by further articles covering the issues highlighted and broader sheep husbandry issues – feeding, management, market trends, case studies and issues 'of the day.'

The articles will be on the blog page of the OLMC website.

<https://www.olmc.co.uk/blog/>

stocks tight this has been a welcome scenario to the end of the growing season.

The flow of cattle coming ready for marketing has been steady. This has also been the case with regard to abattoir demand. From mid-October the trade has lifted and we have seen a greater demand from the processors as they put stock in the system for the Christmas period.

The more immediate outlook for December and early 2023 is one of slight over supply as we see more cattle coming forward and reduced kill days due to the Christmas and New Year holiday.

Average R4L Organic UTM in spec @ 500p/kg deadweight.

Organic Cull Cows

The cull cow price continues to weaken. With the concern of shortages of winter forage, many have decided to push cows off the farm, resulting in increased numbers week on week. The trade is still good for cows and abattoir demand remains fair for this processing meat.

Average R4L Organic OTM Cow in spec @ 380p/kg deadweight.

Lamb

Lamb prices have remained fairly static, we have seen a few fluctuations both up and down, but nothing significant.

Forage crops for hogget's look better than first anticipated and the lambs have done well for the most part from the autumn grass growth.

Prices should start to rise as we get toward the end of January 2023 and hopefully continue on from there.

Average R3L organic NSL in spec @ 550p/kg

Finished Stock Marketing office:
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Tim Leigh: 07850 366404

James Doel: 07741 248928

Organic Dairy Report: Courtesy of Rob Daykin, Daykin Partnership Ltd.

COP 27 has once again focussed the mind on all things environmental and climate. This year food and farming was better represented and respected than at COP26 according to some

of those present, and dairy wasn't perceived as the climate demon that some like to portray it as. A renewed focus and awareness of food security, or rather insecurity, has definitely played its part in that. Then there's the fact that agriculture is the only industry that is both an emitter and a sink for carbon, and maybe that message is getting across more, too. I hope so!

But we certainly can't relax and rest on our haunches as far as the environment and climate is concerned. Many dairy farmers are doing their bit on carbon, but experts say that not enough is being done nor at sufficient pace in order to meet our net zero aspirations. That is why we must applaud any initiative that accelerates this progress.

And none will do more to accelerate it than Arla's new "Sustainability Incentive" milk pricing model, for both its conventional and organic farmers. Arla says this new model is "ground breaking", and I agree with it! Because in effect, and for the first time, it rewards its EU and UK farmers for taking the right steps for the climate and environment. It works like this:

1. Arla is allocating around €500m per year (€270m in year 1) of the milk price to "climate sustainability";
2. It will allocate 100 "environmental points" across a wide range of different elements, with 80 points being available from the start, and a further 20 points built into the model within a few years;
3. Farmers will be paid 0.03 cents per kg of milk per point (plus the 1 cent the farmers already get for submitting their Climate Check data) for sustainability work across 19 'levers'. The levers with the biggest impact on climate mitigation will have the most points. Thus a total of 3 cents will be paid if all of the 100 points are secured.
4. There are five "big" levers that comprise the Sustainability model. These are: a. Feed efficiency; b. Fertiliser use; c. Land use; d. Protein efficiency and e. Animal robustness. Others include manure handling; the use of sustainable feed; investing in renewable electricity; engaging in biodiversity & carbon farming activities and knowledge building.
5. The environmental incentive will

correspond to around 7% of the milk price.

This is a radical new way to pay farmers for their milk, and when you hear of another major milk processor saying they think that one day all milk will be paid for on this sort of principle then you know Arla is on to something. What is hard to predict is the speed at which other processors will follow suit. Not for a number of years I suspect, because most are way behind Arla in the "green credentials" stake.

In the meantime, though, some organic farmers are still faced with getting through the here and now, and being paid a milk price that guarantees their own sustainability, let alone the planet's. The average organic price has been creeping up over the last few months with the latest positive move being Arla by 1.28p to 54.85p. The range is now from 51p at OMSCO to Muller at 56p, which is pretty much where I think the cost of production is.

The profitability challenge at the lower end of the price scale and the small differential between the conventional and organic milk price has also been such that several organic farmers have thrown in the towel, and have opted to leave the sector. But there are now the first signs that the conventional milk price will soon be falling as the commodity prices on which they are based are dropping markedly, and market analysts are warning of some pretty severe price drops to come.

Quite whether the organic milk price will drop as hard is difficult to say, as that will largely depend on what happens to liquid milk prices and sales. Back in the summer organic milk had seen a 3-6% increase in price to £1.80 for four pints, and was 'only' suffering a 2.0% volume decline. Now the price is up again to around £2.15, so a further 20% rise from that level. We don't know what effect that will have had on consumption, but we can guess as we all know that rampant inflation means consumers are trading down from high-cost products and brands to lower cost ones. Let's hope it can weather the storm and come out of the other side a stronger and more profitable sector, if not a larger one.

Because only with profitable businesses can farmers continue to improve their environmental credentials - be they on the new Arla model or not. We forget that at our, and ultimately the planet's, peril.

OF&G and Organics in the News

Pimhill Farm

A lovely article has been published in the Shropshire Star detailing the work and the history of **Ginny Mayall** and her family at their organic Pimhill farm, which is registered with OF&G.

Sam Mayall was very generous in helping our own chairman's father Michael Thompson when he started farming organically in 1949.

The full article is online:

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/features/2022/09/28/organic-pioneers-who-confounded-the-many-doubters/>

Sophie and Tom Gregory run an OF&G licensed organic dairy farm in Somerset. Last year Sophie won the award for Dairy Industry Woman of the Year. The couple work hard, not just to produce milk, but also in raising the awareness of people of all ages as to how organic dairy farming can be a force for good.

Sophie is active on social media with her own account on twitter - <https://twitter.com/sophieaplin> - and recently featuring in a short film created with the aim of 'capturing the connection between the farmer and their animals' - <https://vimeo.com/760632782>

Sophie also speaks in a podcast that was recorded to accompany the film - <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-dairy-farmer-episode-124-sophie-gregory/id1394864749?i=1000585621732>.

Creators of both the film and the podcast - <https://www.wemove.world/>

Lower Pertwood Farm, a place where nature dictates the rules.



<https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/blog/pertwood-organic-farm>

Lower Pertwood Farm is a 2600 acre mixed arable and livestock farm in

Wiltshire between Shaftesbury and Warminster. It was acquired by the present owners in 1996 but had been an organic farm for over 20 years before that. The present owners decided to continue to pursue the ideas of the original owner who is a pioneer in the organic sector.

The chalk downlands are kind to farmers in the sense that they hold moisture when it is dry and are still workable when wet. The organic farming side of the business has been increasing yields year on year and many new techniques are being trialled.

Lower Pertwood Farm is best known for its ecological programme, in particular for the way in which it nurtures wildlife. Approximately 40% of the farm is ancient farmland, woodland or pasture where a wide variety of different species from micro-organisms through to mammals can find their place in the sun.

Farmers should reach out to a very substantial body of qualified people who are keen to share their knowledge and to help guide them towards a more sustainable and nature friendly farming system. Entomologists, bee keepers, butterfly experts, owl and raptor enthusiasts, people who keep track of song birds and migrating birds are just a few of the many very specialised groups that take advantage of the fact that Lower Pertwood Farm does its very best to make sure that every living creature has an opportunity to flourish. Many of these people are retired and bring a huge amount of knowledge with them.

The farm employs a retired military officer who engages with the public, who are free to walk on the farm, and accompanies professionals who might want to create a wild bee hive for example high up in an Elm tree. Any farmer can make a difference at very little cost by simply recognising that there are areas on the farm, whether woodland, old barns or hedgerows, where nature can flourish, however there should also be adjustments to the farming timetable to accommodate the needs of key target species. In the case of Lower Pertwood Farm they have a very large and growing population of Corn Buntings. An expert advises

them when they may commence harvesting organic cereal crops i.e. when the chicks have fledged and left the field. Fortunately, organic crops are often harvested later than non-organic and so they have no difficulty in accommodating this requirement without compromising the harvest.

Lower Pertwood produce a very detailed newsletter ([Click here](#)) which goes to great lengths to expand on issues like fungi, wild flowers as well as many other categories, including some of those mentioned above. It may help in providing an on-going case study of the practical benefits of organic farming to those in promoting the benefits. They are also very receptive to sharing their knowledge and hope that together we can communicate the need for more farms will become safe havens for various species that may currently face a questionable future.

"The Dragon's Den of Farming" is back

Following the first ever *Pitch Up!* in November 2021 – which saw a wide range of entries from food, drink and farming to fashion, beauty and leisure businesses – the team at Kingsclere Estates' organic regenerative farm is pleased to announce *Pitch Up!* 2022.

The *Pitch Up!* application season, which runs from 1–30 November 2022 and is inspired by Kingsclere managing director Tim May's vision of building a circular community on the 2,500+ acre mixed estate in Hampshire.

Pitch Up! invites forward-thinking and environmentally-focused farmers, producers and enterprises onto the estate to make the most of its abundant resources – from fields, pasture and woodland to industrial units, offices and roadside retail space. But crucially it's also about creating a 'closed loop' system whereby these businesses can benefit from each other's raw ingredients, waste or by-products – a growing community that feeds itself.

For more details: <https://www.kingsclere-estates.co.uk/pitch-up/>
Tim May on twitter - https://twitter.com/Tim_kingsclere/

Technical Newsletter



November 2022 **Issue 144**

ofgorganic.org

General

If you have any concerns or queries please do not hesitate to contact your certification officer

Logo reminder

We would like to remind everyone that OF&G logos are only obtainable from OF&G and that all logos used need to be approved by your certification officer before use, whether in print, on labels or online - such as on your website.

There have been incidents of people downloading the logo from our website or elsewhere. We are happy to provide the correct logo in your preferred format on request. The OF&G logo is also our trademark and its use is restricted and requires prior approval by OF&G.

If you need logos for packaging etc, or a roll of sticky labels with the UK agriculture code, please contact your certification officer.



GB-ORG-02
UK Agriculture

Producers

Forage stocks

As reported in the September Technical Newsletter the summer months had been difficult for some farmers due to the extreme temperatures seen throughout much of the UK. Although temperatures have continued to stay warm leading to late grass growth we have experienced significant rainfall. Whilst many farmers have assessed their winter feed stocks and made provisions to ensure they have sufficient to take them through to turnout there still appears to be some who have not done this.

If you haven't already done so it is extremely important that you take the time to assess your forage stocks to

ensure you have sufficient supply of organic forages to take you through the winter to turnout in 2023.

If on doing this you feel you might have shortages you should speak to your certification officer to discuss the options available.

Red Tractor/NSF

Reminder for all those wanting joint RT/Organic inspections - you need to transfer your RT to NSF for any audits in 2023.

If you have any application queries, please contact Janet Palmer at NSF on 01993 885739 / jpalmer@nsf.org - for anything else please contact your certification officer.

Staff News

Jonathan Howe

At the beginning of September we welcomed Jonathan to OF&G as our newest Producer Certification Officer.

Jonathan comes to OF&G with many years practical experience working on a number of different farming enterprises, from dairy to arable production.

We wish Jonathan well during his training and will tell you more about him once he has settled into the role.

Processors

COIs prior to the Christmas break (emergency contact)

OF&G will close for the Christmas break at 1pm on 23 December so we strongly recommend that any COIs are submitted for validation by **4pm on Thursday 22 December**. This will allow your certification officer to check, sign and stamp them and, if necessary, allow for further information to be supplied. After 1pm on 23 December any COIs submitted are unlikely to be seen until 3 January 2023 when the office reopens.

For emergency contact only please contact Stephen Clarkson: 01939 292002.

Recognition for control body Biocert International Pvt Ltd removed from Annex IV

Recognition for the control body Biocert International Pvt Ltd has been removed from the Annex IV list of recognised third country control bodies as they are no longer accredited.

The removal of the recognition of Biocert International for products exported to Great Britain is effective from 23 November 2022. Organic products arriving in GB with a Certificate of Inspection (COI) issued by Biocert International on or after 23 November 2022 should not be approved.

The updated online list can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/organic-registers-lists-of-third-countries-or-territories-control-bodies-and-control-authorities>

Positive note regarding fraudulent certificates

As you will be aware OF&G notifies licensees of the details of fraudulent organic certificates in circulation via this technical newsletter. We are pleased to notify everyone that there have been no reports of fraudulent certificates for the last two newsletters.

Approved Inputs

A full list of approved inputs appears on our website <https://ofgorganic.org/useful-info/approved-suppliers>


Recently awarded approved inputs



SUPPLIER	WEBSITE / EMAIL	CATEGORY
Sipcam UK Ltd	https://www.sipcamuk.co.uk	Plant Health Product
Syngenta UK Ltd	https://www.syngenta.co.uk	Plant Health Product
Vita-Rhize UK Ltd	http://www.vitarhize.co.uk/	Plant Health Product
Insonso Salmarim LDA	https://www.salmarim.com/pt	Ingredients
Hub Pak Salt Refinery	https://www.hubpak.com/	Ingredients, Animal Feed Supplement
Gaiago S.A.S.	https://www.gaiago.eu/	Soil Conditioners



Updated approved inputs

SUPPLIER	WEBSITE / EMAIL	CATEGORY
Crowshall Veterinary Services LLP	http://www.crowshall.co.uk/	Animal Health Product
Westland Horticulture Ltd	https://www.gardenhealth.com	Pest Control, Plant Health Product
Law Fertilisers Ltd	http://www.lawfertilisers.co.uk/	Fertilisers, Plant Disease Control
Food Alive	https://naturesfoodalive.com	Ingredients
The Crop Smith Ltd	sam.brown@thecropsmith.uk	Plant Health Product
Central Pharma Biotechnica	https://biotechnica.co.uk/	Plant Health Product, Fertilisers
Salutaris, Unipessoal Lda	bsalvador@salutaris.pt	Ingredients
Dostofarm GmbH	https://www.dostofarm.de/	Animal Feed additive
Pack-It-Hereford Ltd	http://www.pack-it-hereford.com/	Ingredients
Nutrimate Ltd	andyhardie123@btinternet.com	Plant Health Product
EM Agriton Limited	https://www.agriton.co.uk/	Manure Treatment, Compost additive, Silage Additive, Animal Feed Supplement, Bedding Material, Soil Conditioners, Fertilisers
Intracare BV	https://www.intracare.nl/	Animal Health Product
Anpario plc	http://www.anpario.com/	Pest Control, Animal Feed additive
Greenaway Green Waste Services	http://www.greenawaycomposting.co.uk/	Soil Conditioners
Lallemand Animal Nutrition UK Ltd	www.lallemandanimalnutrition.com	Silage additive, Animal Feed Supplement, Slurry Treatment, Animal Health Product, Animal Feed Additive, Animal Feed Material
Biolevel Ltd	http://www.biolevel.net	Soil Conditioners
Tithebarn Ltd	https://www.tithebarn.co.uk/	Animal Feed Supplement, Vitamins, minerals and trace elements
Legume Technology Ltd	https://www.legumetechnology.co.uk/	Plant Health Product
Ball of Madley Ltd	https://www.ballofmadley-hereford.co.uk/	Vitamins, minerals and trace elements
Quality Liquid Feeds Ltd	https://qlf.co.uk/	Animal Feed additive
Volac International Ltd.	https://www.volac.com/	Silage Additive
Natural Feeds and Fertilisers Ltd	https://www.naturalfeeds-fertilisers.co.uk/	Animal Feed Supplement, Disinfectant/Cleaning Agent, Fertilisers, Vitamins, minerals and trace elements
Paddocks Farm Partnership Ltd	https://verm-x.com/	Animal Health Product
Crop IQ Technology Ltd	http://www.cropiqtech.com/#	Plant Health Product
GreenBest Ltd	http://www.greenbest.co.uk/	Fertilisers
E Marker A/S	https://grogreen.dk/	Foliar treatment
Crop Solutions Ltd	https://www.cropsolutions.co.uk	Weed Control



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