

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – CATTLE AND SHEEP

CATTLE

Can I use the herd currently on my farm?

The cattle on the land before conversion will never achieve organic status. In-conversion animals cannot be sold as organic. The cows currently on the farm may be retained for breeding purposes.

When will calves get organic status?

Calves born three months after you convert your land to organic will achieve organic status at the same time as your land. In-conversion animals cannot be sold as organic.

Can I buy in non-organic cattle?

In most cases the answer is no, however, there are some exemptions can be made if non-organic stock is not available you may be able to purchase up to 10% of your adult stock, please contact the Irish Organic Association for more information on this. Most farmers breed their own replacements.

Do I have to use an organic bull?

A bull from a non-organic farm can be bought by an organic farmer, and then managed according to the Organic Standards. Artificial insemination is permitted in organic production, sexed semen is permitted also however heat synchronisation is restricted. Non-organic male breeding animals may be purchased for breeding.

SHEEP

Can I use the flock currently on my farm?

The ewes on the land before conversion will never achieve organic status. Lambs born once the farm is converted will achieve organic status at the same time as land will, i.e., after two years. The ewes currently on the farm may be retained for breeding purposes.

Can you buy in non-organic sheep?

Organic farmers should try to source organic stock. If it is not available then you can receive a derogation to buy in 20% of your adult stock for replacements. Please contact the Irish Organic Association for more information on this.

Where can I sell my organic lambs?

Irish Country Meats in Camolin are currently the largest processor of organic lamb. Sheep can be sold to other organic farmers, if no organic market is available then sheep and lambs can be sold into the conventional market.