

ORC February 2017 Organic Producers' Conference: Full programme

WEDNESDAY 1st February 2017: ORGANIC PRODUCERS' CONFERENCE

10.00 – 11.00 REGISTRATION and refreshments

11.00 – 12.30 OPENING PLENARY

Organic farming's role in future food and farming policy

The Brexit decision opens up huge questions about food, farming and environmental policies in the UK. Can new UK policies respond better to addressing the big issues, including public health, climate change, soil and biodiversity conservation? What can organic food and farming, and the organic movement, contribute to this process? What issues should we be thinking about in developing future policy priorities, during this conference and beyond?

Chair: TBC

Tim Lang (Centre for Food Policy): **Food and Brexit: nightmare or nirvana for the UK food system?**

Heather Anderson (Whitmuir Organics): **Working for a Citizen's Agricultural Policy for Scotland**

Additional speaker TBC

12.30 – 13.45 Lunch

13.45 – 14.45 WORKSHOPS 1

Market overview (ORC)

How is the market doing and how can we improve the data available to producers?

Susanne Padel (ORC): **Chair**

Paul Moore (OTB): **Understanding the Organic Consumer**

Finn Cottle (Soil Association): **UK Organic Market performance - 'healthy growth'**

Farmer principles of health (ORC)

Our project has worked with farmer groups in Germany, Austria and the UK to establish what personal principles and strategies organic farmers have developed to increase the health of their farms. This session will present outcomes of the 2-year project and specifically discuss the importance of intuition, awareness and self-observation when managing healthy farming systems.

Anja Vieweger (ORC): **Chair**

Farmers: John Newman, Iain Tolhurst, Richard Gantlett, Adrian Steele, John Pawsey, Mark Measures

Crops meet livestock (IBERS/SRUC)

The workshop will explore the benefits and barriers to mixed farming emerging from recent EU-funded projects and discuss how mixed farming might be supported through research in the future.

Pip Nicholas-Davies (Aberystwyth University): **Chair**

Farmer TBC: Mixed farming in the real world

Christine Watson (SRUC): **What is needed to support increased mixed farming?**

Getting to grips with the cost of production (OGA)

An opportunity for growers to bring and compare their costs of production for planting, weeding, harvesting etc.

Ben Raskin (Soil Association): **Chair**

Facilitation: Roger Hitchings, Alan Schofield, Rob Alderson, Phil Sumption

Latest policy and regulation developments and future options(ORC)

The discussions over a new EU regulation have been continuing for several years with a poor (even possibly no result) in sight. Why was it needed? What has been achieved? Could we do a better in a UK framework post-Brexit, or should we stick with the EU regulation in the long-term to facilitate international trade?

Roger Kerr (OF&G): **Chair**

Chris Atkinson (Soil Association): **The EU organic regulation revision from an IFOAM EU/UK organic perspective**

Nick Turner (Defra): **A legislative framework that works for the UK - lessons learned and new opportunities.**

14.45 – 15.00 Tea/coffee break

15.00 – 16.00 WORKSHOPS 2

Funding new entrants – new opportunities for financial support (ORC)

Small-scale producers, including many new entrants to farming and growing, face challenges raising finance because of their lack of track record or sufficient scale to reassure lenders of financial viability. In many cases, small-scale producers are also not able to access government grants. Other funding options are becoming available.

Simon Crichton (Triodos Bank): **Chair (TBC)**

Ruth West (Fund for Enlightened Agriculture): **What the FEA, working with the A-Team Challenge, can offer**

Nic Lampkin (ORC): **The Dean Organic Fund – a new incarnation of the Dean Organic Trust**

Amy Willoughby (Plotgate CSA): **Making Plotgate CSA happen – how we got the funding**

Sharon Mears (Treddafydd farm):

Breeding for organic arable, which way forward? (ORC)

How to boost the availability of organic varieties in a sector reliant on varieties bred for conventional systems and inputs? New perspectives on the role of genetic diversity, the traits of interest and the involvement of farmers in organic breeding programmes.

Bruce Pearce (ORC): Chair

Gemma Cope (Cope Seeds): Our experiences with organically bred material and plans going forward

Edith Lammerts van Bueren (Louis Bolk Institute): Organic Crop Breeding: advances and challenges

Market opportunities for livestock sector (ORC)

Marketing of organic and pasture fed beef and lamb is challenging, with very low or non-existent premiums and significant proportions of certified product still sold as conventional. However, some producers have succeeded in breaking through to new markets. Can their experiences stimulate new thinking on how to address the challenges?

Jonathan Brunyee (PFLA/RAU Cirencester): Chair

Speakers TBC

GREATsoils (ORC/Soil Association)

Results from the first year of GREATsoils grower trials, comparing different soil assessment methods in 6 horticultural systems. A clear priority of the growers was soil organic matter improvement and increasing soil life through the use of green manure.

Anja Vieweger (ORC): Chair

Phillip Hubbert (JEPCO): How to measure soil health in intensive salad rotations?

Iain Tolhurst (Tolhurst Organic): Practical worm counts to monitor soil health

Re-thinking organic certification (ORC)

Certification provides a critical underpinning for the market for organic products, but is this enough? Should we be considering new models that encourage certified businesses to explore all options to deliver sustainability and other goals, building on minimum standards as a foundation, not a ceiling?

Susanne Padel (ORC): Chair

Markus Arbenz (IFOAM Organics International): Organic 3.0 – a new vision for the organic movement

TBC: A producer perspective on making the certification process benefit the business

16.00 – 16.30 Break

16.30 – 17.30 WORKSHOPS 3

The bread line; exploring food pricing (LWA)

In an age of cheap food, how does the cost of food reflect the true cost of production? How do we balance farmers' rights to earn a living from sustainable agriculture with everyone's right to affordable food?

Rebecca Laughton (LWA): Chair

Humphrey Lloyd (Edible Futures/ LWA): Exploring the Politics of Food Pricing

Lynne Davies (Open Food Network):

Arable weed surgery (OK-Net Arable)

A range of arable weed experts will be available to advise farmers about addressing weed problems. At the end we will draw together with the experts the key questions and potential solutions raised during the session.

Ambrogio Costanza (ORC): Chair

Katie Bliss (ORC): Facilitation

Panel: Jos Pelgröm (Man@Machine), Adrian Steele (farmer), Lynn Tatnell (Weed biologist, ADAS), Stephen Moss (Consultant)

Practical approaches to positive health planning (IOTA)

Healthy animals perform well; they will have high disease resistance as well as the absence of disease. We will discuss practical methods for the development of healthy livestock and the management of disease.

Peter Savidge (OMSCo): Chair

Tim Downes (Organic dairy farmer): Calf rearing for health and production

Peter Plate (Veterinarian): Reducing antibiotic use through mastitis testing; farm trials and experiences

Seed growing as an enterprise (OGA)

A look at the economics and practicalities of growing seed for sale and how best to fit seed production into your system.

Jason Horner (Leen Organics/Irish Seed Savers Association): Chair

Hans Steenbergen (Stormy Hall /Seed Co-op): Growing seed and maintaining open pollinated vegetable varieties.

Kate McEvoy (Real Seeds): Cleaning, drying and processing seed grown for sale - methods and equipment

Facilitating trade and export opportunities (ORC)

Details to be confirmed

17.30 – 17.45 Comfort break

17.45 – 18.45 Fringe workshops

IOTA Meeting future needs of advice for organic farming; a discussion. All advisers welcome.

The Muddy Boot Innovation Bar. Innovative Farmers/Agriculture

Research exchange for PhD/MSc students

A Matter of Scale: Short films

19.30 Conference dinner, bar and maybe entertainment... (bring your own instrument!)

THURSDAY 2nd February 2017

08.00 – 08.45 Registration

08.45 – 09.45 WORKSHOPS 4

Small is adaptable (LWA)

Are small farmers more resilient in hard times as more flexible, have lower costs and less capital invested in specialist systems? The session will scrutinise the argument, using a range of small farm examples.

Rachel Harries (Soil Association): **Chair**

Rebecca Laughton (Tamarisk Farm/LWA): **A matter of scale – What do the results of the LWA small farms productivity survey tell us about the adaptability of small farms?**

Ashley Wheeler (Trill Farm): **A one hectare livelihood**

Diversifying arable systems (ORC)

Diversity at all levels is key for resilient farming and food systems. How to translate this into practice? First results from the DIVERSIFOOD EU project on forgotten and underutilised species and on intercropping.

Sophie Alexander (Hemsworth Farm): **Chair**

Ambrogio Costanzo (ORC): **More crops in the farm, more diversity in the field: an update from DIVERSIFOOD**

Josiah Meldrum (Hodmedods): **Creating new routes to market for underutilised species and varieties**

Different feeds for improved production (IOTA)

Increasing the productivity and quality of feeds is essential for successful cattle and sheep nutrition; this workshop will focus on farmers' experience of new techniques.

William Waterfield (FGC): **Chair**

Tom Willoughby: **Experiences of growing and feeding simple and multi species leys**

Potatoes post-copper (OGA)

What is the future of organic potato production without copper? We look at the latest in potato breeding for blight resistance, plus cultural methods to minimise impact.

Tony Little (Sustainable Farming Consultancy): **Chair**

Edith Lammerts van Beuren (Louis Bolk Institute): **Transitioning to copper free production**

Public benefits of organic farming (ORC)

Organic food production has clear environmental benefits recognised through EU support for organic conversion and maintenance. But the details of these benefits are often poorly understood, by producers, policy makers and the general public. How can we ensure the achievements of organic producers are properly recognised and supported?

Joy Greenall (Cow Hall organic farm): **Chair**

Laurence Smith (ORC): **Carbon and nitrogen cycles: linking productivity, pollution and climate change**

Vicki Swales (RSPB): **Birds, bugs and bees: how organic farming benefits nature**

09.45 – 10.00 TEA/COFFEE BREAK

10.00 – 11.00 WORKSHOPS 5

The challenges of securing organic supplies in a growing market (ORC)

The Session will illustrate with practical examples how cooperation has helped a retailer to find solutions.

Bruce Pearce (ORC): **Chair**

Duncan Sinclair (Waitrose): **The challenge to secure livestock supplies**

Katharine Dennis (Dalehead): **Collaboration to secure feed supplies for organic pigs**

Silvo-arable agroforestry (Woodland Trust)

The latest practical guidance on setting up a successful silvo-arable agroforestry system.

Jo Smith (ORC): **Chair**

Stuart Holm (Woodland Trust): **Developing agroforestry systems to suit your farm**

Paul Burgess (Cranfield University): **The economics of silvo-arable agroforestry**

Sheep breeding and health (ORC)

The session will delve inside existing knowledge and innovative farm practices to facilitate deployment of sustainable parasite control strategies.

Phil Stocker (National Sheep Association): **Chair**

Tim White (Proven Shedding Sheep): **Genetic solutions to animal health and welfare**

Spiridoula Athanasiadou (Scotland's Rural College): **Evaluation of practices for parasite control in organic sheep**

Keeping the soil in organic (OGA)

Can hydroponic systems ever be compatible with organic growing? We explore the issues.

Roger Hitchings (OGA): Chair

Alan Schofield (OGA): The importance of retaining integrity with soil-based production

Dave Chapman (Long Wind Farm Vermont): A tomato grower gives the US perspective (video link)

Which way forward for UK agriculture now?

Since the referendum there has been a whirlwind of proposals from different organisations on what the priorities for future policy should be. While many share common perspectives, some have disagreed strongly. We ask the NFU and National Trust to present two different views of the future of UK agriculture.

TBC: Chair

TBC: Representatives of national farming and environmental organisations

11.00 – 11.30 TEA/COFFEE BREAK

11.30 – 12.30 WORKSHOPS 6

Concluding workshops in each strand to identify key action points - regulatory, financial support, markets, technical/quality issues and research/innovation – that should feature in future policies for organic food and farming in the UK.

Strand	Business and markets	Arable	Livestock/grassland	Growers	Policy post-brexit
Chair	Oliver Rubinstein (ORC)	Steven Jacobs (OF&G)	Mark Measures (IOTA)	Tony Little (Sust. Farming Consultancy)	Nic Lampkin (ORC/English Organic Forum)
Rapporteur	Roger Kerr (OF&G)	John Pawsey (Shimpling Park Farms)	Pip Nicholas-Davies (IBERS)	Alan Schofield (OGA)	Peter Melchett (Soil Association) (TBC)

12.30 – 13.30 LUNCH

13.30 – 15.00 CLOSING PLENARY

Envisioning the way forward

What could the future of organic food and farming in the UK look like and how do we get there? What are the priorities for action in the next 12-24 months? The closing plenary will feature feedback from the different strands (presented by the rapporteurs from the pre-lunch workshops), followed by:

TBC Chair

Nic Lampkin (ORC) Looking back and looking forward: a new vision for organic food and farming in the UK

15.00 – 15.30 REFRESHMENTS and CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Programme correct as of 08/12/16 May be subject to change.

More information and to book: <http://tinyurl.com/ORCOPC17>

ORGANIC RESEARCH CENTRE
ELM FARM

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