

Guidelines for completing an

Organic Conversion Plan

For the Irish Organic Association,
IOA



Note: the organic Standards referred to in the attached plan are the *IOFGA Food and Farming Standards in Ireland – Edition 1 January 2012 plus amendments*.

Historical Data (ie the holding as managed 'conventionally', that is, prior to its entry to conversion to organic production)

a) Physical Characteristics of Holding

Give a description of the holding and its physical characteristics - soil type, drainage, fencing, etc. Outline the positive and negative qualities of the holding including known farm problems such as Blackleg, etc. Describe the exact size of the land area; whether in one or more parcels; whether there are any sites on the land which are deemed to be of archaeological interest or areas of conservation value, e.g. woodlands, wetlands, archaeological sites etc.

b) Current Cropping, Soil Fertility & Weed Control

Describe the current cropping plan on the holding. Indicate the types of all crops currently produced on the holding. Describe current soil fertility levels and attach the most recent soil analyses for the holding. Explain how soil fertility has been maintained to date. Explain how weed control has been handled to date.

c) Livestock Enterprises

Indicate the types/numbers of conventional livestock enterprises **currently** on the holding and describe in detail the **current** type of animal housing/outdoor shelter in place. Give the length of overall winter housing period if appropriate. Give details of current stock including breed and system (e.g. sucklers - weanlings, stores - finishers etc.) Describe the current average annual veterinary routine including names of products used. Please describe the manure management systems which you operate.

d) Conventional Enterprises

If there are conventionally managed enterprises on the holding which **are to be maintained** (*i.e. after the holding has entered formal conversion to organic production*), these must be specified in detail, e.g. conventional mushroom enterprise; conventional nursery enterprise, etc. There are specific conditions pertaining to the maintenance of conventionally managed enterprises on an organic holding which will be outlined at the time of the physical inspection of the holding by the Authorised Inspector.

Future Management (ie how the holding will be converted to Organic Production and the Organic Management Practices which will be utilised)

- a) **General.** The Plan must demonstrate how a **sustainable** organic unit will be achieved. Give a brief overall outline of the proposed organic enterprises for the holding.
- b) **Crop rotation/cropping plan** - outline a proposed crop rotation/crop plan for the holding, as appropriate. Supply a rotation for a three year period for **each** field, indicating the crop type (e.g. alliums, brassicas, etc). Ensure a programme for the supply of nutrients to the plants is included.
- c) **Soil Fertility Maintenance.** Explain how soil fertility levels will be maintained using organic management methods. Outline a plan for spreading manure together with a full description of areas given over to crop production.
- d) **Grazing rotation.** Outline a clean grazing policy which is demonstrated by a system of rotating animals to avoid re-infestation of stock. Field boundaries and access to water may need to be improved to achieve this.
- e) **Weed, pest and disease control** in cultivated areas and grassland. Describe how these elements will be handled on the organic unit in both cultivated areas and grassland.
- f) **Livestock management system** - outlined proposed stock type/s, numbers.
- g) **Feed** - how winter feed requirements will be met vis-à-vis the requirements of the *Organic Food and Farming Standards in Ireland* during the Conversion period (i.e. set out a proposed feed regime to include type, anticipated source and status [status = certified organic; certified in-conversion; conventional] of feedstuffs to be used); type of system proposed, e.g. Stores - Finishers, etc. Describe the proposed manure management system in detail including a description of installations for storage of livestock manure.
- h) **Animal Housing Plan** - all applicants who in-winter must supply a detailed sketch map of proposed Animal Housing as detailed in the Application Form and must provide a full description of the installations for the storage of livestock manure (as above). Applicant must also supply a plan for spreading manure, together with a full description of the areas given over to crop production and - where appropriate - as regards the spreading of manure, the written arrangements with other holdings complying with the provisions of Regulations 834/2007 and 889/2008 as amended. Plans for animal housing must include the exact dimensions of all housing units together with an indication of proposed numbers of stock to be housed.
- i) **Animal bedding** arrangements/materials. Specify exact materials to be used which must be in conformity with the requirements of these standards.
- j) **Fencing** - Describe adjustments which will take place to fencing if required (i.e. to ensure that all farm boundaries are stockproof). Outline a timescale for such adjustments.
- k) **Water** - Explain sources of water for irrigation and for watering stock.
- l) **Outline management plans** for areas of conservation value, e.g. woodlands, wetlands, archaeological sites etc. on the holding.
- m) **Restricted practices** – List all restricted practices for which permission will be required, e.g. non-organic seed, veterinary inputs.