

NORTHERN ORGANIC NEWSLETTER

December 2007

INSIDE:

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| NWOC News | 2-4 |
| Horticulture | 5 |
| Food For Life | 8 |
| Events | 13-14 |
| Markets | 15-16 |
| Trading | 17-18 |

Growing Together in the North—Helping you to grow and source organic cereals and pulses

The recent surge in the price of organic cereals and pulses will have brought home to everybody just how short the UK supply is for these commodities. There is no getting away from the vital role that imports play in ensuring that the markets for animal feed and processing for human consumption can be supplied. I am sure that we all know that this needs to change if businesses are going to feel confident about an organic future and those important consumer expectations about the origins of their organic purchases are going to be met. So what can we in the North do about this? Pasture based farms need to look again at what crops can be grown and how best to use these. Cropping and mixed farms need to maximise their output and understand what the needs of the market are. So, if it's all so simple then what's stopping this from happening? Well, we do know that life is much more complicated and that it is never easy to weigh up the balance between seemingly contradictory options. How can a dairy farmer choose between the demands of the under supplied milk market and de-stocking to free up land for more home grown cereals? Can cropping farms really risk becoming more adventurous in their rotations or will they risk producing things that nobody wants or run into problems with weeds and disease?

These are the types of questions that the Northern Organic Centres want to answer with your help. We have arranged to bring together a panel of experienced producers and technical specialists to answer your questions on 12 February 2007 at Boroughbridge. We want to bring together producers from both sides of the Pennines and to hear your questions and ideas on what needs to change and what technical advice is required. We want to have your thoughts about ways of improving supply and marketing to inform the debate. I know that the panel will have many of the answers that you are looking for, but all of the Northern Organic Centres will be looking to follow up any issues that need longer term work. So February 12th is also your chance to give us a steer as to where to focus our resources. I look forward to seeing you in Boroughbridge.

Chris Atkinson, Northwest Organic Development Manager

Northern Arable seminar
Coronation Hall, Boroughbridge
Tuesday 12th February 2008

£55+VAT, second place offered at a discounted rate

The northern Organic Centres (Northwest Organic Centre, Yorkshire Organic Centre and North East Organic Programme) are planning a seminar aimed at getting producers to maximise the production of arable crops in the north of England. The event will be aimed at existing producers rather than new entrants. We will be looking to help producers to improve their technical efficiency and think about trying new crops or introducing cropping on livestock farms. Confirmed panellists for this event include Stephen Briggs, Nigel Gossett, Mark Exelby and Stuart Hyslop.

To register your interest please contact the Northwest Organic Centre on 01995 642206 or email lkirby@soilassociation.org

Northwest Organic Centre News

Northwest Organic Centre

Northwest Organic Centre
Rural Business Centre
Myerscough College
Bilsborrow
Preston
PR3 0RY

T: 01995 642206
F: 01995 642107

enquiries@nworganiccentre.org

What we do:

The Northwest Organic Centre supports the development of organic food and farming in Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside.

We are there for producers considering organic conversion, retail owners looking for new products and for consumers looking for places to buy organic produce.



Soil Association



WORKING TOGETHER FOR
englandsnorthwest

Old Holly Farm—conversion story update

For the last year we have been following the conversion story of David Pye at Old Holly Farm, Cabus. We are delighted to report that the new farm shop, cafes and play barn are now open.

Brothers David and Ian Pye are the latest in a long line of Pyes to work the land as well as run an organic dairy herd at Old Holly Farm at Cabus and now they are offering the public a unique glimpse into their way of life.

The original courtyard buildings of the farm have been converted into a traditional farmhouse café, specialising in home-cooked food using local ingredients, and a farmshop and deli selling a wide range of organic and regional produce.

The old hay barn now houses a soft play area where children can enjoy endless fun, supervised by play barn staff, whilst their parents look on from a second café upstairs.

New residents at Old Holly Farm include two ponies, rabbits and guinea pigs, lambs, calves and piglets as well as a Vietnamese Pot-Bellied pig called Lucy.

Rosemary Surtees, the manager of Old Holly Farm, says *“David and Ian are very aware that farming has to move with the times if it is to survive and this development has been driven by their passion to help the public understand farming and the countryside, as well as to promote local produce.”*

“We see education as one of Old Holly Farm’s key roles, especially informing the younger generation. Children will be able to handle some of the small animals in the courtyard, watch the cows being milked from a specially-made viewing gallery and learn about farming, the origins of some of our foods and the environmental advantages of buying fresh, local food.”

Old Holly Farm is open 7 days a week – from 9am to 5pm weekdays and 9.30 to 5pm at weekends. For more information visit www.oldhollyfarm.com or telephone 01524 791200.



North West Organic Milk Producers Update

At this moment in time, the organic milk market is undersupplied, and what's clear is that there won't be much growth in supply until early next year, when the spring flush and the start of new conversions takes effect. In the meantime, the deficit can only be plugged in one of two ways – by asking farmers to produce more, or by importing organic milk from Europe – solutions that are both fraught with obvious cost and organizational implications.

These new conversions were predicted to bring 90 million litres into the market place in 2008, but with the increase in the conventional milk price, and the increase in organic feed costs, these predictions are not as clear cut as we would have envisaged, even as little as 2 months ago. Not only are we seeing converters now delaying the process, there are also some farmers considering abandoning the conversion process altogether. Within the current situation, a figure of 70 million new litres is more likely. And, while this increase represents a 25% rise in the UK market, it is felt by the coops and processors in the North West, that this milk will easily be utilized.

The dilemma facing organic milk at the moment is how does it adjust its price, in light of the increase in the conventional price. While this gap, on an annual average, is currently sitting at about 6p, it is believed by the producers that there needs to be at least a 10p difference. It is important to know that both coops and direct suppliers fully appreciate this figure and are doing everything they can to substantiate another round of price increases early in the New Year.

And although it is important to ensure a premium price is paid for organic over conventional, we do need to be wary of index linking to the conventional price. Already, we are seeing signs that the boom in the conventional marketplace is slowing, and very early indications are that this price will drop. Naturally, in such a situation, index linking would work against us.

The other inherent problem with organic farming is the process of gathering information to calculate exactly the costs involved in producing a litre of organic milk. Various industry sources indicate that there is as much as a 10ppl variance in the costs of organic farmers producing a litre of milk, and it is very difficult to try to take this variation to the marketplace when negotiating price increases.

Another key indicator coming from the supply chain is that the price of organic milk at retail level is not as “inelastic” as once was thought. The rise in inflation is making consumers worry about their spending habits, and question those more expensive items; and as organic milk gets more popular (now approximately 6% of UK milk sales), we are selling to a wider customer base, and they are questioning the price difference. So, while the market is aware that the price needs to go up, balancing that in a way to justify it to the processors, supermarkets and consumers is a delicate process.

While chasing contracts for financial gain is understandable and indeed tempting in the current climate, this process has an adverse effect long term on the market place. The current undersupply situation, the movements in the conventional milk market, coupled with the fact that the face of the UK co-operative structure could be changing mean there are lots of possibilities for the future. We would advise farmers to sit tight and see what is happening in the marketplace early next year before making any broader decisions about their future. No one could have foreseen the way the market is reacting today and there are likely to still be many twists and turns ahead.

Stuart Martin, Marketing Manager North West Organic Milk Producers
stuart@nwomp.com



Riverside Organic Starting Sept 07

An interactive countryside group for parents
& toddlers.

Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Fridays
10am - 11.20am

Ask for details at the shop
or ring 01606 46258

Market needed for soft fruit— summer 2008

400kg of blackcurrants, 150kg goose-
berries. Ready June -July. Certified or-
ganic with Soil Association.

Contact Ellen at Jigsaw Environmental
on 01200 415979.

Are you looking for somebody to butcher, process and pack your organic carcasses to a very high standard in Mid Lancs?

Marketing your own organic meat and meat products can be very rewarding and profitable. However, finding a good reliable processor that can work with an organically certified abattoir can be difficult. There is nothing more disheartening than paying somebody to spoil all your hard work and undermine the confidence of your customers! NWOC has been approached by a well-established business in Galgate that is willing to register as a processor with an Organic Certification Body if there is sufficient demand for their services. They are used to working with the easily accessible organic abattoir in Bamber Bridge and are able to collect carcasses from there for processing. The highly experienced butchers have been with the company for many years and guarantee a personal service that is now often very hard to find. They can cut to your specification and produce burgers, sausages and cured meats. The final product can also be delivered back to you. The NWOC Team was impressed by the high standard of the facilities and friendly, skilful staff when we visited recently.

If you would consider using this business to handle your organic meat then please contact Lucinda at NWOC on 01995 642206 so that we can see if demand is sufficient to justify the cost of organic certification.

Energy Saving Conference for Farmers and Land managers

Cheshire, venue to be confirmed
week commencing 26th February 2008.

The aim of the event is to provide up to date information and helpful practical steps for land managers and farmers to save energy in a climate of ever rising costs.

To register your interest please contact Sue Steer on sjs@steerethelston.co.uk or 01477 532188.

Riverside Organic
Presents a
Christmas Market

- Christmas trees
- Father Christmas
- 15+ stalls selling top quality gifts and crafts.

Beer in the Barn!

- Live Music from Breadbasket
- Organic Beer & Wine Bar
- Organic Steak Burgers, Hot pot, mince pies, cakes

Shipbrook Hill Farm, Manor Lane,
Wharfedale, Northwich, CW9 7RH
01606 46258

**Sat 8th Dec
from 12pm**

and of course the finest organic produce in the area!

Horticulture update from the Northwest

Since I wrote my last Horticultural report we have had one of the kindest Autumn's since I started growing. Many of the late planted crops have grown well and many local growers are telling me that although it has not revived any of those crops that died in the summer floods it has allowed those that were planted late to develop. Both the sites I grow on have suffered from a lack of late fertility due to the waterlogging during summer and whereas the leeks and carrots have grown well (my best carrot harvest since 1984 the last really wet summer !) the brassicae have all struggled for fertility and are small. But small is better than none at all and we must be grateful for what we have got.

Our box scheme is down about 15% on 2006 figures and there is a slow down to the response rates of all forms of advertising. I am calling this box scheme fatigue as our once innovative marketing system is taken up by national schemes and supermarkets alike and all of my customers have received information on at least 5 other box schemes this year. Clever wording of advertising literature saying things like "our produce is locally sourced where possible" does not do any favours to those of us who run true local box schemes. As stated last time the future does not look as bright as it has for last 10 years or so. Roll on the \$200 barrel of oil and we will come into our own once again.

As UK growers we have always been in awe at Dutch efficiency , I was fortunate enough to be invited by Bejo seeds (through their UK agents Elsoms) to attend their open day in late September. We visited the trials ground at Warmenheisen and toured the seeds cleaning and grading site. We then went on to visit three large scale organic growers the following day.

The trials ground and seeds facility was outstanding; always good to see various organic varieties of the same crop type growing next to each other under the same conditions. We have few facilities like that left in the UK. Comparison of vigour and market size is then easy to appraise. It is also good to hear what is in the pipeline for the future and see the latest innovations in seeds handling. The exclusion by organic standards of any chemical seeds treatment can leave commercial organic growers open to all sorts of seed borne diseases of their crops. In the late 50's and 60's before chemical seed treatment hot water treatment was the order of the day and worked well. As organic growers we have campaigned for over 20 years for hot water treatment to be used on susceptible organically grown seed. So you can imagine my joy at seeing a state of the art computer controlled hot water treatment plant taking pride of place in the Bejo facility. Not only that but to then be told that it is used on all organic and conventional seed to reduce their reliance on chemicals was music to my ears! Organic methods can be used successfully and do have a place in the world as a whole.

On the growing front the next day we saw 50 ha plots of carrots being harvested at the rate of 1 ton every 3 minutes. To hear life long conventional carrot growers explain that their yields had gone up since their conversion to organic, by approaching 10 tons per ha, was interesting. Pity they are all grown for our supermarkets and even though only returning 25 cents per kilo to the growers they looked far from poor to me. Their major advantage (apart from reclaimed land with no perennial weed bank, perfect carrot and brassica land with a depth of over a metre and a government that encourages horticulture) is the fact that their banks offer money to horticulture at 0.5% flat rate. This leaves even the largest UK growers at a severe disadvantage.

Locally produced food is under attack on all sides and yet we know it is the only form of food production that will survive a future of climate change and very expensive oil. Let us just hope that enough of us can survive the present environment of industrialised organic production.

Alan Schofield , November 2007.

Organic Market Report 2007

The Soil Association's Organic Market Report, published in the autumn, confirmed what many of us already suspected—that sales of organic produce had risen dramatically. Organic food and drink sales were close to the £2 billion mark during 2006, with a sustained market growth of 22% throughout the year.

The Market Report showed that there is strong public support, not only for organic food and drink, but that the market for organic textiles and health and beauty products is experiencing particularly impressive growth.

An average of £37 million per week is spent on organic produce in the UK, with most organic food being bought by people living in London, the Southeast, Southwest and Wales.

Sales of organic products through organic box and mail order schemes and other direct routes, increased a staggering 53%, from £95 million in 2005 to £146 million in 2006. These figures confirm that people are keen to buy local, seasonal and organic produce. Buying direct from the producer provides a fair return to farmers, boosts the local economy and also helps reduce the carbon footprint.

That's the good news; however the Report also warns about the forthcoming rises in feed and fuel prices. The organic livestock sector is dependent on supplies of organic feed for their stock. But during 2006 UK self-sufficiency in organic cereals fell below 50%, increasing our reliance on imported organic grain. The cost of livestock feed, be it organic or non-organic, is rising as a result of recent poor global harvests, increasing diversion of cereals into biofuel production and rapidly rising demand from countries like China and India. Helen Browning, head of the SA's Food and Farming Dept, said, "While this year's Report confirms a positive future for organic food and farming, the organic movement faces challenges in the long-term from climate change and rising oil prices, as do all farmers and growers. The rise in production costs will need to be reflected in food prices at the check out, so that producers receive a fair return."

Joyce Brocklebank

Standards changes—air freight

The Soil Association's Standards Board has announced proposed changes to the Soil Association's standards to ensure that organic food is only air freighted to the UK if it delivers genuine benefits for farmers in developing countries.

In future, air freighted organic food will have to meet the Soil Association's own Ethical Trade standards or the Fairtrade Foundation's standards. The new air freight standards will also require licensees to develop plans for reducing any remaining dependence on air freight. The details of the proposal will be open to further consultation during 2008, and will begin to take effect from January 2009.



Howard Wass—Newfields Organics



It is with great sadness that we must report the sudden death of Howard Wass from Newfields Organics, North Yorkshire. He suffered a major heart attack on the evening on 10th October 2007, aged 61.

The 3 Northern Organic Centres were privileged to hold their Northern Horticultural Seminar at Fadmoor Village Hall last September. Howard gave up his time to help us with the planning and on the day took the delegates on the farm tour. Seeing rows upon rows of beautiful looking vegetables as far as the eye could see gave many of us a new wave of enthusiasm for doing what we do.

A full tribute to Howard will be published in the next Northern Organic Newsletter. However, we have permission from Ryedale table tennis league, of which Howard was a member, to reproduce one of the comments that has been left as tribute.

Sincerity and honesty are the words that come to mind when thinking of Howard. He seemed to epitomise the organic farming movement with his ruddy cheeks, easy smile and acceptance that life means hard work so you might as well get on and enjoy it. It was typical of him that in his shop he would sell only what he grew. It would have been easy to have increased turnover by offering a wider range of bought in produce, as so many do, but that was not his way. So I can add another descriptive noun – authenticity. Howard was in all things authentic. (John Gascoyne)

Our deepest sympathies go to his wife, Rosemary, his family and friends.

Hurrells

specialist seeds



- **Free advisory service available**
- **Yorkshire based and family owned specialist organic forage seed company**
- **Stockist in Yorkshire of extensive range of organic seeds**
- **All mixtures include 60% organic seed inclusion**
- **Fertility Building leys**
- **Herbs and forage crops a speciality**
- **Grass seeds for soil improvement and quality forage**
- **Bespoke mixtures to suit your needs**
- **A range of clovers and green manures**
- **Range of certified organic wheat/barley/beans/peas/triticale and oats**

Call 01377 271400 for advice, orders or our new organic 2007 catalogue

Beverley Road, Cranswick, Driffield

Food For Life Project—update



Food for Life Partnership is a National Lottery funded joint initiative between four organisations all working together to improve school and community food culture. We plan to work intensively with 20 selected Flagship Schools and Communities in each region to show how they can transform their food culture and influence the wider community. We will provide guidance and resources to Flagship Schools and communities to enable them to make sustainable changes in 16 months, in order to demonstrate to other schools what could be achieved over a few years.

We will work with Flagship Schools towards achieving the Food for Life Partnership Mark at Bronze, Silver and Gold. This will include helping schools to increase uptake of school meals, develop cooking and growing activity in the school and the community, and support schools in making links with local farms. The Partnership will also work with school cooks and caterers to develop new menus that meet nutritional standards and include some local and organic food.

At present the **North East** have been working with 6 schools since June 2007 and are just about to embark on the second phase of recruitment in January 2008. The schools are enthusiastic and enjoying the experience.

In the **North West** the Food For Life team will be visiting 9 schools that have gone through the FFLP application process and reached the final selection stage. This will be reduced to six for the first phase in the NW and we will be actively working with these schools from January 2008. A further application process will take place next year where another 6 schools will become part of the Flagship schools from January 2009.

In **Yorkshire and Humber** the Food for Life Partnership is at present reading through the Expressions of Interest forms, from all over the region. The response has been overwhelming, making the selection process extremely difficult, all the while using Big Lottery criteria. In this region work will begin in schools in April 2008, with a further 6 taken on in April 2009.

More general information can be found on the website at www.foodforlife.org.uk.

Key contacts for the regions;

Sharron Rourke, Northern Regional Manager, is your first point of contact for the Food for Life Partnership. Call; 07900683956 or e-mail; srouke@soilassociation.org

Paul Flynn, Regional Co-ordinator North East, call 07899902352 or e-mail; pflynn@soilassociation.org

Amanda Donnelly, Regional Co-ordinator Yorkshire and Humber, call 07824635810 or e-mail; adonnelly@soilassociation



Our bread bags will be rotten—says Village Bakery

The Village Bakery has become the first UK bakery to package its breads in completely biodegradable and compostable bags. The bread bags are made from Mater-bi film that will break down to carbon dioxide, water and organic humus with no toxic residue.

“The compostable bags are a natural step for us,” commented Lindsay Williams, Village Bakery Melmerby marketing manager. *“Our entire range is organic and we are working hard to make all our cardboard packaging recycled and recyclable, so we are delighted to now have compostable bread bags. It is a big step forward and will have a positive environmental effect.”*

The Mater-bi film contains raw materials from both renewable and sustainable sources and contains non-genetically modified starch.

Along with the new bags, the Village Bakery bread packaging will also be given a fresh new look and two new breads will be added to the range: Honey and Sunflower Bread and Spelt Bread. Williams added: *“The new bags will have greater on shelf presence and will bring the bread bags in line with the rest of the new look Village Bakery range.”*

“The Village Bakery packaging is currently under-going a revamp and while most of the products are already in the new packs, we wanted to have our compostable bags ready before changing the bread bags. The new packaging clearly communicates the organic values of the brand and that the bags are compostable, while retaining the windows so consumers can see the type of bread they are buying.”

Initially, five breads in the Village Bakery range will be packaged in the compostable bags with plans to extend this across the range. The two new breads, along with Organic Rye, Organic Rye with Coriander and Organic Country bread, will be packed in the compostable bags.

With over 30 years' experience in baking organic artisan breads, the Village Bakery only uses simple natural organic ingredients and makes its products without any of the additives other bakers say are essential. A minimum of processing is used to create the range of cakes, biscuits and breads. Products are baked using renewable energy and all cardboard packaging is recycled/recyclable (the boxes are printed on 95% recycled board; the remaining 5% is made up of virgin fibres which are sourced from a mill which supports responsible forest management). The range is suitable for vegetarians. Further details can be found on the web site: www.village-bakery.com

The
VILLAGE
BAKERY
MELMERBY



Making Local Food Work Project

'Making Local Food Work' has received £10 million from the Big Lottery Fund. It is a partnership project on local food and social enterprise, led by the Plunkett Foundation.

The project is designed to run for 5 years from October 2007 to March 2012 in England only. The partnership is made up of The Plunkett Foundation, Soil Association, Food Links UK/Sustain, CPRE, Country Markets Ltd and Co-ops UK. The overall objective is to 'reconnect people and land through local food - increasing access to fresh, healthy, local food with clear, traceable origins'. For further information on the collaborative programme see www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk

The Soil Association's role will be to develop more Community Supported Agriculture initiatives and organic buying groups through providing information, guidance and practical help. This work will be done by the Soil Association's Food and Farming Dept with the involvement of established CSA initiatives and will be delivered by a small team of project workers, some based in Bristol and some based in the regions. The project will be fully up and running from Spring 08 following a six month set-up phase. We will be seeking out interested communities and farms to work with. Please do contact us at any time to let us know of your interest, needs and ideas. If you have any questions about CSAs in England, please contact: Food and Farming Dept on 0117 914 2400 or email ff@soilassociation.org

Off the Wall

My contribution is entitled 'Off the Wall', mainly because I have been given the freedom to seek inspiration from wherever it might be found. In this case; news stories from 'Google Alert' and 'Today's News' from the Soil Association.

It's a bit like 'Have I got News for You'. You know, the bit where they take partially blacked out quotes from a guest magazine like 'Pigeon Fancier's Monthly', and invite the panellists to guess what the story is. Here goes!

"Forum to focus on ——— agriculture"

"Buying ——— is set to be the big trend this year"

"——— set to go mainstream"

The Forum in question took place in Snohomish County, Washington State, USA and focussed on the redirection of farming away from commodity crops to more specialised, niche products-most importantly, that can be sold into local markets.

The second quote refers to a possible trend in the UK, for shoppers to move towards local outlets for their Christmas food purchases, rather than go like lemmings to the major supermarkets for everything. Well, maybe... maybe not?

The third refers to an article in 'Stackyard' on the same subject, which reported on a Chartered Institute of Marketing Event; "Local food is set to move from a niche marketing opportunity to the mainstream of weekly shopping as major supermarkets embrace it with real commitment."

My point (at last) is simply this; these small incidences from around the world are maybe no more than kite flying: on the other hand, the almost imperceptible movements could build into an unstoppable trend, should circumstances change only a little.

Put in the perspective of climate change, the peak oil debate, price rises and sudden shortages of commodity produce this season and the increased cost of conventional inputs –and we could very well be on the verge of a fundamental change in attitudes, behaviour and practice.

May you live in interesting times.

Nick White. Organic Development Manager, Yorkshire Organic Centre

So, in case you didn't guess them; the two shorter words are 'local'. The third one is 'local food'.



Holistic Trading

For UK Certified Organic Products

- **Independent producer / retailers can advertise their products FREE OF CHARGE with a small commission payable for orders received via Holistic Trading.**
- **Consumers can review UK Certified Organic Products from a range of independent producers on one site thus significantly reducing time spent searching for the individual web sites.**
- **Consumers, look out for the imminent launch of www.holistictrading.co.uk**
- **Independent producer / retailers, if you wish to advertise your products free of charge then please contact Trevor Drew at Holistic Trading.**

Also available through Holistic Trading :-

- **organic farming advice;**
- **assistance with applications for registration with certification bodies;**
- **help with producing conversion plans and OELS applications.**

trevor@holistictrading.co.uk Tel 01377 270051

Mob 07956058921 

Growers needed to trial novel legumes for building soil fertility

Fertility building strategies are one of the most crucial aspects of organic production systems and have been identified as a priority for research. However, the range of leguminous species currently used for fertility building in the UK is very restricted, and it is unusual to see anything other than red or white clover used. Although a wide range of species exists, the main reason they are under used is a lack of information on their agronomic performance and nitrogen fixing potential under UK conditions.

As part of a three year Defra funded project led by Garden Organic (formerly HDRA) growers are trialling a range of the more novel legumes for building soil fertility on their farms. We are interested in hearing from growers in the north of England that would like to participate. The trial would be sown in Spring 2008 and a subsequent test cash crop grown in 2009. Some support is available to go towards growers time or seeds.

If you are interested, please contact Anton Rosenfeld telephone: 024 76 303517 or email arosenfeld@hdra.org.uk

Opportunities for organic farmers to help meet grain demand

The Traditional Cornmillers Guild represents wind and watermills across the UK who, between them, have a reasonable throughput of specialist wheat, rye, spelt, as well as some barley, maize and other grains. Members are always interested in good quality organic and biodynamic standard grain. If you would like to investigate this market opportunity Nick Jones could facilitate more information please contact him direct on 01768 881047

EVENTS

Forage Workshop

Nafferton Farm, Stocksfield

10th December 2007

The event will start at 12.30 p.m. with a light lunch, during which there will be a discussion on maximising the benefits of feeding your own forage. There will then be a chance to examine forage samples and look at the forage system at Nafferton. The aim of the workshop is to help farmers not only to make the best of this year's forage, but also to plan ahead for subsequent years with a view to meeting the new feed standards and keeping costs under control. If you are interested in attending please let Ian Sutherland know by ringing him on 07891 245870

Third IOTA Conference,

Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester

10 December 2007

The Institute of Organic Trainers and Advisers is pleased to announce that it will hold its conference at the same time as Elm Farm's conference at the same venue. For more information contact Sarah Jameson, 01547 528546 or email iota@organicadvice.org.uk

The Organic Research Centre's Producer Conference

Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester

Monday 10 December 2007 to Tuesday 11 December 2007

The programme is producer focused and the parallel workshops are mainly planned and organised by producers themselves. There will be the same five strands to the workshops – growers, poultry, arable, dairy and beef & sheep – and these may combine to run joint sessions on matters of common interest. Some of the topics to be covered are feed availability, its price and the pros and cons of increasing on-farm production as well as issues relating to energy and energy use, carbon foot-printing, arable crop production, composting and recycling, two tier standards, equivalence & level playing fields, antibiotics, etc.

In order to reserve your place, please complete a booking form as soon as possible. For more details please contact Gillian Woodward 01488 658279 gillian.w@organicresearchcentre.com,

The Effects of the Environment on the Nutritional Quality & Safety of Organically Produced Foods

University of Reading

18 and 19 December 2007.

The purpose of the Workshop, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council as part of their Environment and Human Health programme, is to address the following questions:

Are there quantifiable effects of organic rather than conventionally produced food on human health?

How does the environment impact on these possible health benefits?

How do the public perceive these benefits?

and to define the current state of understanding and outline future research possibilities.

Information regarding the Workshop, along with registration details, can be found at [http://](http://www.apd.rdg.ac.uk/organicfoods/)

www.apd.rdg.ac.uk/organicfoods/

Food Environmental Efficiency Day (FEED) 2008

East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham

5th February 2008

Event for food, drink, hotel and catering businesses helping them to become more sustainable. Workshops include resource efficiency, energy efficiency, water minimisation, packaging optimisation and transport and logistics.

For more information visit www.envirowise.gov.uk/feed or telephone 01635 280302

EVENTS—continued

Northern Arable seminar

Coronation Hall, Boroughbridge

Tuesday 12th February 2008

£55+VAT, second place offered at a discounted rate

The northern Organic Centres (Northwest Organic Centre, Yorkshire Organic Centre and North East Organic Programme) are planning a seminar aimed at getting producers to maximise the production of arable crops in the north of England. The event will be aimed at existing producers rather than new entrants. We will be looking to help producers to improve their technical efficiency and think about trying new crops or introducing cropping on livestock farms. Confirmed panellists for this event include Stephen Briggs, Nigel Gossett, Mark Exelby and Stuart Hyslop.

To register your interest please contact the Northwest Organic Centre on 01995 642206 or email lkirby@soilassociation.org

An Energy Saving Conference for Farmers and Land managers

Cheshire, venue to be confirmed

week commencing 26th February 2008.

The aim of the event is to provide up to date information and helpful practical steps for land managers and farmers to save energy in a climate of ever rising costs.

To register your interest please contact Sue Steer on sjs@steerethelston.co.uk or 01477 532188.

North West Food & Drink “Meet the Buyers” Event

Tatton Park, Cheshire

Tuesday 4th March 2008

The main aim of this event is to introduce North West food and drink producers to key international buyers, to enable them to present their products and services directly to customers, develop new sales leads, and win new business.

The cost of attendance is £125 per delegate (discount of £30 is available for North West companies booking before 31st January 2008). This includes all Pre-Event Training, sales meetings, and networking.

Companies can receive further information and reserve their place at this event by contacting Amanda Nichol on 0191 281 5777 or by email at amanda@business-business.co.uk

Farming in Cheshire Past & Present -A Special Exhibition

The Salt Museum, 162 London Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 8AB

11 April – 6 July 2008

The exhibition will be a celebration of farming in Cheshire past and present. It will examine trends in farming in the county over the centuries and will make the exhibition relevant to today by taking a ‘snapshot’ of farming activity for the year 2007-08. This material will not only provide a unique record for the future but will also raise awareness of the importance of farming to the economy and its place in the heart of Cheshire life. For more information email matt.wheeler@cheshire.gov.uk

MARKET REPORT

The fat lamb market has been badly hit since the last report. In August for a number of reasons. Foot and Mouth has caused the conventional market to be very depressed, due to lack of exports, and the poor summer has resulted in lambs fattening later coinciding with the 'glut' time. This has had a knock on effect on the organic price.

Currently lamb producers have to wait for a slot, which doesn't always happen, resulting in lambs sometime being out of size specification and the usual associated penalties. Naming and shaming I give the prices for fat lambs for the week commencing 12/11/07:- Dunbia, Wales £2.65, St. Merryn Meats, Wales £2.45 and Welsh Country £2.20 per kilo deadweight. Not many of us are in a position to refuse these prices at the moment but perhaps we should 'log' the prices we've had to take and when they phone looking for lambs, in the future, find out the current going rate and remember they have contracts to fulfil. Earlier in the season the producers in Cumbria/Lancs did just that and the price went up 10p in a few days.

Store lambs and breeding stock have fared rather better as most moved before the impact of the fat price was realised.

Store cattle have remained stable at approximately £1.40-£1.60 per kilo and fat at approximately £3-£3.10.

Due to the poor conventional cull cow price I am looking into sending a load of fully organic cull cows to ABP, Shrewsbury in mid December. From the enquiries I've had the initial load will be from the Kendal area but if anybody else from other areas are interested please contact me. Definite numbers would be required by 1 December.

Good news – at least milk prices are rising. Trying to cheer everybody up I perhaps shouldn't say that most of it will be going out to the feed merchants!!

I know quite a few producers are concerned about losing sugar beet from their diets from the end of the year. A new product has just been launched by BOCM called Natural Organic Sugar Green which in a 6mm nut, 15% protein and it is for feeding to ewes from tugging to 6 weeks pre lambing. It will be in the region of £340 per tonne bulk and £375 in bags. If you need any more details contact Andrew Hodsman 07802 173242.

Best wishes for Christmas and let's hope for better things in 2008.

Sue Woof 015396 21343

Share rearing

With an increase in feed prices being a considerable concern to many producers we have been looking at possible options. We heard about a conventional model, for shared rearing of cattle, which took place in the Borders some years ago. Some of the details are not relevant to organic producers but it does show what could be achieved.

MARKET REPORT—continued

Case Study

A store producer ran one hill farm and one upland farm where the majority of his stock used to be finished. The farm was not best suited to finishing cattle and he decided to send a number of his forward stores to an arable farmer who he knew well who had access to cheaper feed and bedding .

The AAX stores were transferred to the finishing farm at 450kg and were finished at 625kg. The farmers agreed that they would be paid on the basis of the weight gained on their farms – 450kg for the store producer and 175kg for the finisher. The store producer retained ownership of the beasts through to sale. The finisher was responsible for feeding and selling the animals and a legal agreement was signed by both parties covering other terms and agreements. The financial returns were of benefit to both the store and finishing producers.

I'm sure this will raise many 'what ifs' but if there is enough interest we will look at this option in more detail.

Contact Sue Woof on 015396 21343

MARKET PRICES

| ARABLE | | HORTICULTURE | | HORTICULTURE | |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Feed wheat | 290-295/tonne | Apples | £1.65/kilo | Leeks | £2.10/kilo |
| Milling wheat | 320-330/tonne | Cabbage (red) | £1.09/kilo | Parsnips | £1.22/kilo |
| Feed barley | 275/tonne | Cabbage (white) | 90p/kilo | Onions | 78p/kilo |
| Feed oats | 280-290/tonne | Carrots | 70p/kilo | Pears | £1.75/kilo |
| Milling oats | 280-295/tonne | Cauliflower | 90p/head | Potatoes | 54p/kilo |
| Beans | 300-320/tonne | Courgettes | £1.37/kilo | Spring onion | 65p/kilo |
| Feed peas | 250/tonne | Beetroot | 80p/kilo | Swede | £1.04/kilo |
| Triticale | 240-250/tonne | | | | |

FOR SALE & WANTED

FOR SALE – LIVESTOCK

- Organic Limi X bull - 17 months old (5/7/06) - Mrs G Ward, Boroughbridge, Yorkshire, Tel: 01423 323 564 Mob: 07834 955959 - Fully Organic OF&G
- Calves- 5 Angus X, 2 Hereford X, 1Belgian Blue X - Mrs Else, Nr Scarborough - Tel: 01723 871310 Fully Organic Soil Association
- 200 store lambs - Continental X born April / May - Steven Peirson, Nr Northallerton, Tel: 01609 748977 Mob: 07974 405565 Fully Organic Soil Association
- 30 saddleback X store pigs—Jo Cartwright, Swillington Leeds, Tel 07974 826876 - Full Organic Soil Association
- 200 store lambs Suffolk and Texel X - David Neave, Nr Rochdale Tel - 07967 209987 Fully Organic OF&G
- 80 store cattle Charolais X aged between 6 - 12 months - David Neave, Nr Rochdale Tel - 07967 209987 Fully Organic OF&G
- 50 Suffolk X Ewes varying ages, not put to tup - Sue Steer, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire - Tel 01477 532188 / 0772992777—Fully Organic Soil Association
- 3 suckler bulls, 8-9 months, AAX SimentalX - Stan Atkinson, Milnthorpe - Tel:015395 63664 Fully Organic Soil Association
- 100 TexelX breeding lambs - Stephen Marsden, Windermere Tel: 07950 918378 Fully Organic OF&G
- 30 North of England mule ewe hoggs. Jake Elder, Northumberland. 01830520042 Fully Organic Soil Association
- 15 Store lambs Texel X—6 months old, Richard Hirst, Burnsall 07808 613026—Fully Organic Soil Association

FOR SALE - FEED & FORAGE

- 100 large square bales red clover hay—Mr Barmby, Near Bridlington - Tel 01262 678286 Mob 07900 114689 - Fully Organic Soil Association
- 250 round bales good quality haylage - can try before you buy - Richard Hudson, Nr York Tel: 07737 757830 Fully Organic Soil Association
- 25 large square bales good quality hay - Richard Hudson, Nr York Tel: 07737 757830 Fully Organic Soil Association
- 200 large round bales haylage - buyer to collect - Martin Stone, Nr Bingley, West Yorks - Tel 07854 536136 - Fully Organic - Soil Association
- 100 large square bales good quality haylage - Mrs G Ward, Boroughbridge, Yorkshire, Tel: 01423 323 564 Mob: 07834 955959 - Fully Organic OF&G
- 100 large square bales good quality hay - Mrs G Ward, Boroughbridge, Yorkshire, Tel: 01423 323 564 Mob: 07834 955959 - Fully Organic OF&G
- 4 - 5 tonnes Oats - Steven Snowden, Harewood Nr Leeds - Tel 0113 288 6254 - Fully Organic Soil Association
- 550 large round bales haylage, first cut, good quality - Chris Forster, Nr Wigan - Tel 07831 419325 Fully Organic Soil Association
- 72 round wheat bales (2006) Bill Taylor, Nafferton Tel: 07802 922112 Fully Organic Soil Association
- Variable amounts of beans / wheat available - Bill Taylor, Nafferton Tel: 07802 922112 Fully Organic Soil Association
- 10 T oats, 10T barley and 30T wheat available - Mr Blair, Redcar, Tel: 01287 622881 - Fully Organic OF&G
- 400 Hesston bales of haylage. Rising Sun Farm, Benton, Newcastle. 01912340114 Fully Organic Soil Association
- 100% organic straight and blended feeds. Northumbrian Organic Feeds. 07050103528

FOR SALE & WANTED

WANTED—FEED & FORAGE

- 20 Tonnes Feed Wheat wanted—Andrew Dennis, Ellerbeck, Nr Northallerton Tel: 01609 883763— Fully Organic

FOR SALE - POULTRY

- Mobile hen houses. 24 x 8 ft. c/w nest boxes, feeders, drinkers etc. Hold 107 birds. Laying hens also available. Andrew Forster, Berwick on Tweed. 07970 158263

GRAZING AVAILABLE

- 20 acres red clover / rye grass re-seeds available for winter grazing—no hill sheep Contact Andrew Dennis, Ellerbeck Nr Northallerton—01609 883763 - Fully Organic

SITUATION VACANT

- Growing organic business requires a pasteuriser operator who would have the opportunity for management - early starts and shiftwork - starting salary £18000.00 - Acorn Dairy, Nr Darlington. Contact Graham Tweddle on 01325 466999.

FOR SALE—MACHINERY

- Cabbage Planter, Side Hoe and Potato Ridger - Mrs Gillian Duffield, Garforth, Leeds, Yorkshire - Tel: 0113 286 2771

WANTED

- Approx 40 acres of land wanted - organic, in conversion or willing to convert, - suitable for planting crops, ideally fenced and suitable for stock. For more information please contact the Northwest Organic Centre on 01995 642206.
- Yorkshire Organic Millers are looking for more Yorkshire farmers to grow milling wheat . Excellent prices paid for small or large quantities. Please phone to discuss: 01751 417351
- Organic pig finishers wanted in North of England - Contact Nick Wright, Elgin, Tel: 649806
- Organic store cattle. Anything considered. Richard Ward. Phone 01833 660376 Mobile 07710754505

While every effort is made to ensure that the information listed is accurate and up to date, it is the sole responsibility of the individual producer to check the organic status of all livestock, forage and grazing when ordering, and upon delivery to the farm, as appropriate.

When buying forage or utilising grazing, producers should be fully aware of the potential differences between the organic feed standard requirements of the different certification bodies, and should always confirm the status of feeds and grazing to ensure compliance with organic standards. If you are in any doubt contact your certification body.

Always ensure that all vendors' organic certificates are current. All organic certificates must also list the appropriate livestock type, forage and grazing. Please note that you are required to hold copies of organic certificates for all brought-in livestock and feed materials for your organic inspection.

organic marketplace online

A free website for buying or selling organic livestock, grazing and forage

search online today at www.soilassociation.org/organicmarketplace



Don't explain
what you do.
Just tell us what
you need.



"From the word go, we were impressed by Triodos Bank's understanding of the challenges we faced, which was a whole new experience for us."

Peter Kindersley, Sheepdrove Organic Farm

Triodos Bank was set up solely to support people who are committed to respecting the world we share. And because we only work with inspiring organisations, you'll find we have the expertise and practical connections to help you succeed.

To find out more about working with us
call free on 0800 008 720 or visit
www.triodos.co.uk

Triodos  Bank