

THURSDAY 7TH JANUARY 2010

09.00-09.45 REGISTRATION and TEA/COFFEE

09.45-11.00 OPENING PLENARY

Sustainable food security

Food security is increasingly on the political agenda, with potential to herald a new era in agricultural research. Frequently, however, increasing production, supported by GM technology, appears to be the favoured solution, with limited reference to the potential for increased damage to soil, water and biodiversity resources, and the depletion of non-renewable resources including oil and phosphates. And do we really need to produce more, or use what we currently produce better? Organic farming, with lower yields in a northern, industrialized agricultural context, apparently has only a limited role to play in this new agenda. Or is it one of the few options to ensure human food security needs can be met sustainably?

Chair: Nic Lampkin (Organic Research Centre)

Prof. Terry Marsden (Cardiff University): Contribution of agro-ecological approaches to food security

Prof. Niels Halberg (Aarhus University, Denmark): Organic farming and food security – an international perspective

Lawrence Woodward (Organic Research Centre): Organic farming and food security – a UK perspective

11.00 – 12.30 WORKSHOPS

Participatory research: making research relevant, practical & applicable

A workshop for farmers and growers, advisers and researchers. Help develop new research methods which build on your solutions, involving us all in undertaking research and ensuring that results are widely adopted.

Mette Vaarst (Aarhus University): Farmer field schools

Bruce Pearce (Organic Research Centre): Participatory research - a researcher's perspective

Gareth Davies (Garden Organic): Experiences with the participatory weed control project

David Wilson (Duchy Home Farm): A farmer's perspective on participatory research

Institute of Organic Training & Advice

Growers update and new initiatives

To report on the activities of the OGA and external influences, to launch the new website and to update growers on organic seeds issues.

Alan Schofield (Growing with Nature): Review of the season and the OGA year

Pete Dollimore (Hankham Organics): Live launch of the OGA website

Prof. Edith Lammerts van Bueren (Louis Bolk Institute, Netherlands): Organic vegetable seeds



Feeding livestock from the farm, on-farm feed processing

Importing feed onto the farm and from across the world is not only expensive but has a high carbon footprint and does not meet organic principles. Alternative approaches to importing feed from around the world as well as what can be produced in the UK and on-farm will be presented and discussed.

Martin Humphrey (Humphrey Seeds Ltd): Working together to resolve feed issues

Nicola Cannon (Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester): Forage lupins and spring-sown cereal mixtures

Becky Nelder (Organic Research Centre): Feeding monogastrics from the farm

New approaches to nutrient management in organic farming

How new research results can help address on-going problems of supply of nutrients for food and feed crops

Francis Rayns (Garden Organic): Fertility-building strategies for organic field vegetables

Liz Stockdale (Newcastle University): The story of Cinderella – potash in organic farming

Robin Walker (Scottish Agricultural College): New approaches to improving the supply of phosphorus



Food quality: which production practices make a difference?

Whilst the FSA report on organic food has many flaws it does indicate some things of which the organic sector would be sensible to take note. At the top of this list is the range of variation in some of the characteristics measured in the studies. There are very sound explanations for some of this variation and some of it is due to the dynamics of a living biological system. Other factors though – such as variety choice, position in the rotation, manure or compost management, ration composition and feeding regimes and harvest dates – can be managed by the farmer. This session aims to explore and draw attention to some of these.

Speakers to be confirmed

12.30 – 14.00 LUNCH

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14.00 - 15.30 WORKSHOPS



Making organic farming work financially

Institute of Organic Training & Advice

This workshop is for farmers and advisers and is aimed at improving the profitability of organic farming. It will report on current financial performance of organic businesses, provide access to benchmarking data and show how profitability can be improved by targeted changes in management.

William Waterfield (Consultant): Financial benchmarking and management changes to improve profitability

Simon Moakes (Aberystwyth University): 2007/08 financial performance of organic and conventional farms

Andrew Trump (Organic Arable): Money recycling and closed organic financial systems

Simon Crichton (Triodos Bank): Experiences of the financial performance of commercial organic production

New crops, new varieties, new directions

Introducing some novel crops, updating on potato varieties and discussing the effect on the market of the grow-your-own tendency

John Samuels (Incredible Plants): Novel solanaceae

David Shaw (Sárvári Research Trust): New Sárpo potato varieties

Laurence Hasson (Bioselect UK): Progress in potato breeding

Jill Vaughan (Delftland Nurseries Ltd): Selling to the grow-your-own market



Animal health and welfare planning for livestock producers

Based on experiences from the CORE-Organic ERANET funded AniPlan research project, this session will present and discuss issues associated with animal health planning focusing on dairy systems but including beef and sheep.

Mette Vaarst (Aarhus University) The AniPlan Project

Lesley Whistance (Aarhus University): Positive welfare: understanding cow behavior

ANIPLAN

Peter Plate (Damary Vet Practice): Positive health planning

Will Best (Manor Farm, Dorset): Managing cow welfare

Cereal breeding: new approaches

Cereal varieties grown in organic systems have been overwhelmingly bred in, and for, high input non-organic systems. There is a need to breed and use cereal varieties that are more suited for and perform better in organic systems. New breeding methods and approaches will be presented and discussed.

Prof. Edith Lammerts van Bueren (Louis Bolk Institute): A European Consortium for Organic Plant Breeding view

Thomas Doering (Organic Research Centre): Developments in population breeding

Michael Marriage (Doves Farm): A farmer and processor perspective



Biodiversity and ecosystem services

Organic farming promotes the idea that a healthy ecosystem is needed to support healthy crops, animals and people. This session considers the role of organic farming in protecting biodiversity and delivering ecosystem services. It will also discuss how we place a value on biodiversity. The workshop session will discuss current issues such as what policy changes are needed to increase support for biodiversity protection, and how to resolve the conflict between food production and biodiversity.

Nick Cooper (Natural England): Use of the CALM tool to calculate GHG balances for Environmental Stewardship

Laura Hathaway-Jenkins (Cranfield University): Management impacts on soil structure and infiltration rates

John Bacon (Values in Nature and the Environment): Maintaining our own inspiration and infecting others!!

16.00 – 17.30 Plenary

Organic farming and climate change

Much is claimed about the impacts of organic farming on climate change, both positive and negative – the evidence is mixed and a real understanding depends on looking in more depth at the impacts of specific organic management practices on key components of climate change.

Chair: Prof. Hardy Vogtmann, President, Organic Research Centre

Nic Lampkin (Organic Research Centre): Impacts of management practices on energy use and carbon dioxide

Christine Watson (Scottish Agricultural College): Impact of management practices on nitrous oxides

Prof. Jamie Newbold (Aberystwyth University): Impacts of management practices on methane

Andreas Fliessbach: Impacts of management practices on soil carbon

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17.30 – 18.30 Sessions organized by external groups

Open advisory clinic for all organic issues

Institute of Organic Training & Advice

A team of organic advisers on hand to help answer your own technical and management questions. Growers, farmers and others join us with challenging questions for some interesting discussions and hopefully solutions.

Homoeopathy at Wellie Level (HAWL)

HAWL was founded in 2001 to teach and promote the responsible use of homoeopathy on the farm. Since then nearly 300 farmers have attended HAWL courses and a recent survey has shown significant improvements in things such as reduced culling rates, reduced antibiotic use, better calving intervals and increased lambing percentages on their farms. This workshop will explain the HAWL approach and canvass the possibility of setting up local groups for mutual support, information gathering and exchange.

The threat of GM to organic animal feed supplies *Martin Humphrey (Humphrey Feeds Ltd)*

The threat of being overwhelmed by GM feed through contamination of feed supplies is a threat to organic systems. A leading organic feed producer will air his concerns and this session will discuss what the organic sector might do to protect itself.

Legume LINK managing legume mixtures – Pros and cons

First impressions from a major new project started in 2009, looking at the potential of a wide range of legumes as fertility building break crops in arable systems, discussed by researchers and practitioners involved in the project.

Climate Friendly Food *Jonathan Smith*

We are an organisation dedicated to reducing carbon emissions from food and farming, and work very much from a bottom-up perspective. We have launched what we believe to be the UK's most comprehensive carbon calculator for farmers and growers: <http://www.climatefriendlyfood.org.uk/carboncalc>. It is free to use and is aimed specifically at organic producers. The farmers that have used it so far have found it a fascinating tool. We are also offering (we think!) the world's first low-carbon food certification scheme, which is directly linked to the carbon calculator. We believe there is a strong market for low carbon food and that smaller producers in particular will benefit from using it.

19.30 – 22.00 Conference Dinner followed by Ceilidh

FRIDAY 8TH JANUARY 2010

09.00 – 10.30 WORKSHOPS

Understanding market trends

The aim of the session is to get below the surface of headline news about trends in the organic market. We want to bring together reports on market trends with a better understanding of the organic consumer and of the situation in specific sectors

Ed Garner (TNS): Trends of the organic market based on panel data

Nigel Gosset (Organic Grain Link): Market perspective from the arable sector

Hugh Bowles (OMSCo): Market perspective from the dairy sector

Bob Kennard (Graig Farm): Market perspective from the red meat sector

Geoff Mutton: Market perspective from the horticultural sector

Susanne Padel (Organic Research Centre): Research perspective on consumer trends

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Innovative models for producer co-operation

New developments in producer co-operation both in marketing and in joint buying of inputs

Andrew Trump (Organic Arable): Producer marketing and links with OMSCo

Peter Savidge (OMSCo): Producer marketing and links with Organic Arable

Clare Ferguson (Close to the Veg, Thames Organic Growers): Collective buying of inputs

Poultry breeding and pullet/turkey poult production/sourcing

Bringing producers together to discuss solutions to the early problems of poultry production

Phil Stocker (Soil Association): Sourcing turkey poults and pullet rearing issues

Mike Gooding (FAI): New breeding initiatives for chickens

Speaker tbc: Ethical issues relating to use of turkey breeds requiring AI

Challenging GM

The UK has not seen commercialisation of GM crops but after being quiet for a number of years the issue and role of GM in agriculture is again raising its head. There is a need to challenge the perceived role of GM in food systems and counteract the messages that it is safe, increases yield and has been a success where it has been grown.

This workshop will present the German experience of coexistence and GM free zones, problems associated with growing GM crops as well as presenting alternative approaches to sustainable agricultural systems and what positive actions can be taken.

Pete Riley (GM Freeze): The problems with GM – weed resistance

Julia Wright (Garden Organic): Alternative routes to sustainable farming

Ian Price (Triodos Bank): What positive action can be taken

Beatrice Tappeser (Federal Agency for Nature Conservation): GM free zones & coexistence – a German experience



Energy self-sufficiency/renewable energy opportunities on farms

How we can create more energy self-sufficient systems by better design and management of the farm's own resources, and a look at renewable energy generation opportunities.

Laurence Smith (Organic Research Centre): A systems perspective of energy efficiency

Nick Maskery (Heartwoods): The opportunities for on-farm wood fuel

Sam Usisken (Segen Microgeneration): Renewable electricity generation for agricultural businesses

Richard Tomlinson: Anaerobic digestion: the costs and benefits

10.30 – 11.00 TEA/COFFEE BREAK

11.00 – 12.30 WORKSHOPS

Pigs: developing organic systems/ producer links

Examining opportunities to build networks between organic pig producers, to share knowledge, develop systems and markets, and ensure profitability

Discussion led by Tim Finney (Eastbrook Farm) and Becky Nelder (Organic Research Centre)

Protected cropping: new EU standards

A range of perspectives on the development of new standards in this area – this will include input from the industry, certification bodies, advisers and researchers

Roger Hitchings (Organic Research Centre and ACOS): Threats and misinterpretations

Jill Vaughan (Soil Assoc Horticultural Standards Committee): Protected cropping and the existing standards

Roger Hitchings (Organic Research Centre and ACOS): New developments with the EU Regulations



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11.00 – 12.30 WORKSHOPS (continued)

Cattle and sheep: health issues

Looking at specific health and welfare issues from new perspectives

To be confirmed: System perspectives on sheep scab control

Anna Jonas (Soil Association): New regulations for disbudding and castration

Lawrence Woodward (Organic Research Centre): Homoeopathy – new results from HAWL survey of producers



Agroforestry: Integrating trees with crops and livestock

Agroforestry, a land-use system that integrates trees and shrubs with crops and/or livestock production, has the potential to meet the multiple demands of sustainable food production. However, in the UK, agroforestry is rarely practised. This session aims first to discuss the advantages of agroforestry, and looks at a couple of examples of agroforestry systems. The workshop will then discuss and identify barriers to wider adoption of agroforestry in the UK, and knowledge gaps that may inform future research plans.

Jo Smith (Organic Research Centre): Temperate agroforestry – a research perspective

Andrew Joret (Noble Eggs): Woodland eggs

Stephen Briggs (Abacus Organic and Bluebell Farm): The practicalities of trees and combinable crops on 125 acres



Communicating the organic message

Calls for a more unified approach to communicating the organic message have been growing as the organic market responds to the recession. But who should we be talking to, about what and how? Has the focus on marketing organic products, on the consumer rather than the citizen, led to the dilution of organic principles and a loss of focus on key issues like agricultural sustainability and health? Does this explain why significant barriers remain with other parts of the farming community and why organic farming is not (yet) seen as a key contributor to policies for climate change and food security? How can we get the communication right?

Finn Cottle (Soil Association): Organic Trade Board initiatives and the EU promotion bid

Tara Munday (Haygarth Group): Focussing the message for the EU promotion bid

Steven Jacobs (Organic Farmers & Growers): OF&G initiatives – a certifier's perspective

Matt Reed (Countryside and Community Research Institute): Communicating with citizens, not consumers

12.30 – 14.00 LUNCH

14.00 – 15.30 PLENARY

Identifying key actions to help develop each sector

This session will be introduced by three short presentations to help identify key questions and stimulate ideas for potential future development. This will be followed by round-table discussions in small groups with a sector focus (arable, horticulture, dairy etc.) led by producers. The aim will be for each table group to identify key actions needed for the future, which producers, and the organizations that support them, can use to help develop their activities.

Chair: Bruce Pearce (Organic Research Centre)

Christine Watson (Scottish Agricultural College): Research perspectives

To be confirmed: Knowledge exchange perspectives

Susanne Padel (Organic Research Centre): Market development perspectives

15.30 – 16.00 CLOSING PLENARY

Facing the future with confidence

Chair: Prof. Hardy Vogtmann (President, Organic Research Centre)

Keynote speaker to be confirmed

16.00 – 17.00 TEA/COFFEE and DEPART