

PRESS RELEASE – 25/11/14

Release: Immediate

ORC welcomes Defra's proposed organic conversion and maintenance payment rates

New Countryside Stewardship Scheme support rates for organic farming in England have been announced today. The Organic Research Centre, which played a significant role in securing a review by Defra of its original proposals, says the new rates represent a significant improvement on the originally proposed maintenance payment of £17/ha and come closer to the rates already announced in Wales and Scotland.

Defra's [announcement](#), which coincides with the Organic Research Centre's [Organic Producer's Conference](#) starting in Solihull tomorrow (Wednesday), comes after a lot of hard work behind the scenes. Defra has recognised the role that ORC staff Nic Lampkin and Mark Measures played in the process of developing the new support options.

Nic Lampkin, Director of the Organic Research Centre said: 'The new rates announced today represent a significant improvement on the originally proposed maintenance payment of £17/ha and come closer to the rates already announced in Wales and Scotland. They also represent a better balance between support for the conversion period and maintenance, but farmers need to be realistic about the real costs of conversion and plan carefully as the payments only partly compensate for the costs.'

Organic farm income data analysed by Aberystwyth University and the Organic Research Centre over many years has shown that, with the help of premium markets and agri-environmental support of this type, organic farms once converted can perform as well as non-organic financially while delivering significant environmental benefits. With the market recovering, and improved support including automatic qualification for Greening, the organic option deserves a fresh look. The Organic Farm Management Handbook, published by the Organic Research Centre, provides detailed enterprise costings for organic crops and livestock that can be used to help evaluate the options.

The following Table and Charts provide relevant example data with further information in the editorial notes.

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Table: English conversion and maintenance payment rates now approved by the EU Commission

Organic conversion		Description	Pounds
OR1	Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland	Offering support to those who wish to convert to an organic system.	75
OR2	Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland	Offering support to those who wish to convert to an organic system.	50
OR3	Organic conversion – rotational land	Offering support to those who wish to convert to an organic system.	175
OR4	Organic conversion – horticulture	Offering support to those who wish to convert to an organic system.	400
OR5	Organic conversion – top fruit	Offering support to those who wish to convert to an organic system.	450
Organic maintenance			
OT1	Organic land management -improved permanent grassland	Offering support to those who wish to maintain their organic system	40
OT2	Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland	Offering support to those who wish to maintain their organic system	20
OT3	Organic land management - rotational land	Offering support to those who wish to maintain their organic system	70
OT4	Organic land management - horticulture	Offering support to those who wish to maintain their organic system	200
OT5	Organic land management - top fruit	Offering support to those who wish to maintain their organic system	300
OT6	Organic land management (including land in conversion) - enclosed (<15 ha) rough grazing	Offering support to those who wish to maintain their organic system	8

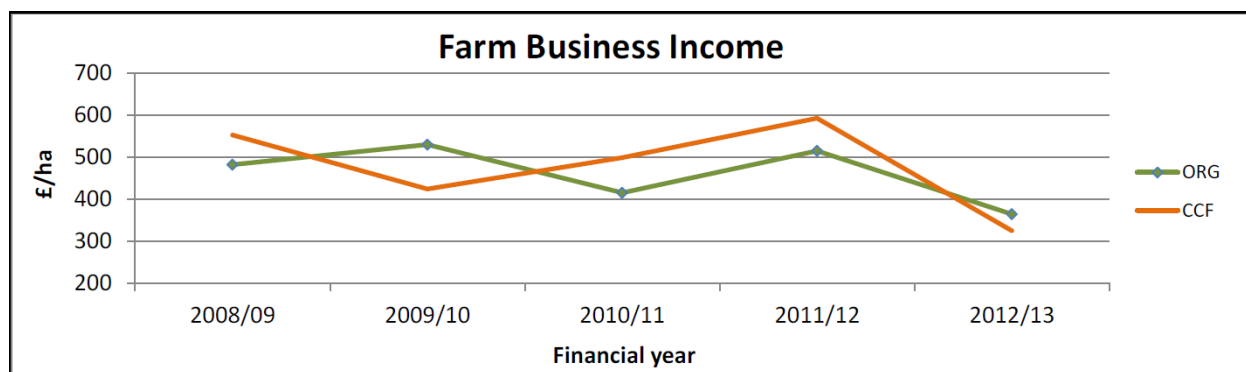


Figure 1: Farm business incomes on organic and comparable conventional (CCF) dairy farms in England and Wales

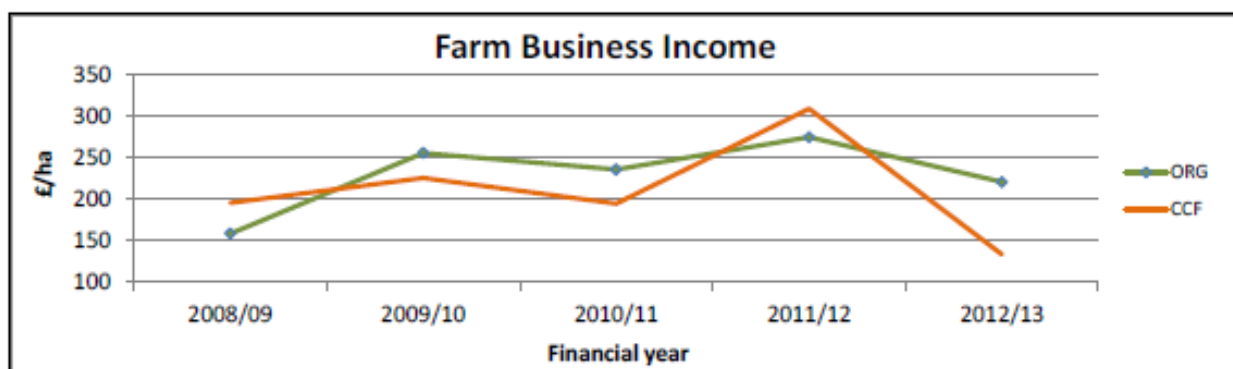


Figure 2: Farm business incomes on organic and comparable conventional (CCF) lowland beef and sheep farms in England and Wales

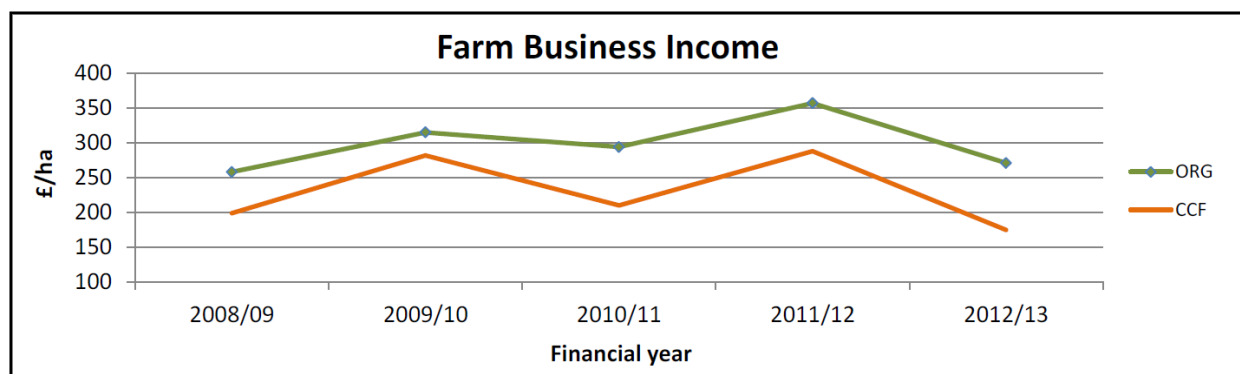


Figure 3: Farm business incomes on organic and comparable conventional (CCF) LFA beef and sheep farms in England and Wales

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Notes for Editors

The Organic Research Centre based at Elm Farm near Newbury is the UK's leading independent research centre dedicated to the development of sustainable food systems based on organic/agro-ecological principles. Further information on our activities can be found at www.organicresearchcentre.com

For interviews contact: [Nic Lampkin: nic.l@organicresearchcentre.com](mailto:nic.l@organicresearchcentre.com) 07771 961279

This series of Organic Producers' Conferences was initiated at the end of 2006 with financial support from Defra and the EU for the Organic Inform project. Since 2010, the conference has been self-financing and attracts 200+ participants annually. Further details can be found following the links from our website homepage.

There will be a workshop on Policy/CAP implementation at The Organic Producers' Conference on 26th November. Naomi Oakley of Natural England will give an overview of what will be available under the new RDP and talk on the 'Organic options available in Countryside Stewardship.'

The Organic Producers' Conference can be followed on twitter [#ORC14](https://twitter.com/ORC14) and [@OrgResCent](https://twitter.com/OrgResCent).

For more information on the Conference or to request a press pass contact: [Phil Sumption: phil.s@organicresearchcentre.com](mailto:phil.s@organicresearchcentre.com) 07759 318942

Details on the financial performance of organic farms over several years can be found in a review report produced by the Organic Research Centre:

http://www.organicresearchcentre.com/?i=articles.php&art_id=704&go=Information%20and%20publications

The most recent organic farm income results for 2012/13 are available in an Aberystwyth University Report:

http://www.organicresearchcentre.com/?i=articles.php&art_id=719&go=Information%20and%20publications

Further information on the Organic Farm Management Handbook can be found at:

<http://www.organicresearchcentre.com/?go=Information%20and%20publications&page=Organic%20FM%20Handbook>