



## **FUTURE FOR UK ORGANIC FARMING DEBATED AT CONGRESS IN RUGBY**

**Press release, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018**

Issued jointly by: The Organic Research Centre, the Soil Association and Organic Farmers and Growers

“Going for Growth” is the theme of this year’s UK Organic Congress held in Rugby on 15-16 November.

At the Congress delegates will hear from experts on what change is needed to ensure the UK organic food and farming market continues to prosper after Brexit.

The UK organic market is growing year on year, but is still lagging behind many other countries in Europe. This creates opportunities for producers to convert to organic production, supported by a food industry responsive to consumer demand, delivering environmental, health as well as economic gains.

Sue Hayman, MP, shadow secretary for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will be speaking about the challenges and opportunities within future agricultural policy after Brexit and the role of organic farming on the opening day.

Other speakers include Paul Holmbeck, from Organic Denmark, who will be explaining how organic farming became successful in his country, and the lessons to be learnt in the UK.

Delegates will also hear from Philippa Mansfield who is speaking on Catchment sensitive farming.

In the parallel sessions the challenges for the organic sector from Brexit will be debated and there are also many sessions focusing on technical questions, such as agroforestry opportunities, the meaning of the concept of organic health from soil to man and opportunities in the growing UK market.

Other technical sessions focus on seeds and breeding, coping of livestock farming under climate change, feeding of pigs and poultry and rotation planning.

“The Congress is taking place at just the right time for organic businesses to come together to hear from experts and to be challenged on how the sector should take the opportunities offered by the consistent growth in UK demand for organic food,” said Liz Bowles, Head of Farming at the Soil Association.

Organised by all the leading organic organisations the Congress is aimed at farmers, growers, food businesses in organic supply chains, professionals that work with the sector, Government agency officials and policy-makers, and anyone who hopes to develop an organic business.

**Director:** Prof. Nicolas Lampkin

**Council of Management:** M. Turnbull (Chairman), V. Agrawal (Treasurer), A. Astor, T. Bennett, A. Blackshaw, D. Peck, A. Stewart, M. Wagner, C. Watson, N. Westaway

**Patrons:** C.A. Bielenberg, The Duchess of Richmond and Gordon, Peter Kindersley, Juliet Kindersley, Yvonne Pye, Jan Sundt

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“With an excellent line up of speakers, the Organic Congress provides a great opportunity to debate the contribution organic food and farming systems can make to simultaneously delivering a number of key public benefits,” said Steven Jacobs, Business Development Manager at the Organic Farmers & Growers which is one of the organisers.

Nic Lampkin, CEO of the Organic Research Centre and chair of the English Organic Forum said the Congress “will highlight the innovative nature of the organic sector leading change for sustainable food systems.”

“It will feature the new industry-led organic action plan in England and similar initiatives in other parts of the UK and many examples of working together that make real change happen,” he added.

The Congress is being held at Dunchurch Park Hotel just outside Rugby. Book your place for £75 per day via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/uk-organic-congress-2018-tickets-48905810596) <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/uk-organic-congress-2018-tickets-48905810596>

Accommodation can be booked at the hotel at a special rate of £65 a room (please quote ref 366431 when booking). To contact the hotel ring 01788 810656 or visit [www.signaturegroup.co.uk](http://www.signaturegroup.co.uk)

Press passes are available for all journalists able to attend, to request a pass contact Gillian Woodward at [Gillian.w@organicresearch.com](mailto:Gillian.w@organicresearch.com)

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#### Notes to editors:

For further information please contact Susanne Padel, [Susanne.p@organicresearchcentre.com](mailto:Susanne.p@organicresearchcentre.com).

The Organic Congress 2018 is organised jointly by Organic Research Centre, Landworkers’ Alliance, Organic Arable, Organic Farmers & Growers, Organic Growers Alliance, Organic Trade Board, Soil Association and Whole Health Agriculture. Further details of the event can be found on the websites of all partners organisations and at <https://tinyurl.com/OrganicCongress2018>

The UK organic food market is growing fast, at 6-7% annually, as part of a global movement for change, but trails behind the European neighbours, opening opportunities for UK farmers and food businesses. <https://www.soilassociation.org/certification/market-research-and-data/the-organic-market-report/>

The Organic Research Centre (ORC), established in 1980, is the UK’s leading independent research charity for the development of organic/agroecological food production and land management solutions to key global issues including climate change, soil and biodiversity conservation, and food security. [www.organicresearchcentre.com](http://www.organicresearchcentre.com)

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