

ORC January 2016 Organic Producers' Conference: Full programme

TUESDAY 26th January 2016 Sustainability of organic/low-input dairy (SOLID)

WEDNESDAY 27th January 2016: ORGANIC PRODUCERS' CONFERENCE

9.30 – 10.30 Lessons from SOLID - Sustainability of organic/low-input dairy

A Discussion Workshop on practical ways forward for organic dairy farming and cow nutrition

10.00 – 11.00 REGISTRATION and refreshments

11.00 – 12.30 OPENING PLENARY

A shared vision for future – bringing different traditions together

The movement for change in agriculture embraces a wide range of agroecological traditions, from integrated pest/crop management to permaculture, from organic farming to agroforestry and holistic management. Are they really all uniquely different, or is the common ground they share, in terms of ideas and history, more important?

Lawrence Woodward (ORC Policy Adviser): **Chair**

Producer panel:

Phil Jarvis (Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, Loddington)

Christine Gosling (Organic dairy farmer: Berkeley Farm, Wilts)

Jyoti Fernandes (Land Workers' Alliance and organic smallholder Fivepenny Farm, Dorset)

Jonty Brunyee (The Pasture-Fed Livestock Association and Cotswold organic farmer)

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 15.30 WORKSHOPS 1

Business tools and support for new entrants/converters (ORC)

Ensuring financial viability is crucial for new businesses and for those entering conversion. What tools are available for planning/benchmarking and how can the support mechanisms available be used best for business success?

Susanne Padel (ORC): **Chair**

Phil Sumption (ORC): **Business tools for growers, including horticultural costings**

Tony Little (Sustainable Farming Consultancy): **Support mechanisms for conversion in England and Wales**

Laura Creen (School Farm CSA): **Struggles and successes of a new grower**

Eyes on the prize: the long view on weed control and soil maintenance (OF&G/ORC)

An interactive workshop looking at new options for mechanical weed control and ecological strategies, focusing on farmer experience.

Steven Jacobs (OF&G): **Chair**

Jon Storkey (Rothamsted Research): **Why the world needs weed biologists**

Nicholas Corp (Shimpling Park Farms): **Controlling blackgrass on an organic arable farm: our approach**

Tim Chamen (CTF): **What role can controlled traffic farming play in a low input ecological production system?**

Forage production for improved animal performance (IOTA/SOLID)

The aim of the workshop is to draw on research and practical experience of multi-species leys to improve forage species selection and management to maximize animal production and building soil fertility.

Mark Measures (IOTA): **Chair**

Ian Wilkinson (Cotswold Seeds): **The benefits of complex mixtures for livestock farmers**

William Waterfield (FCG): **Managing multi species leys (Herbal / Diverse Swards) for dairy, beef and sheep**

Wil Armitage (Organic dairy farmer at Keythorpe Farms): **Rotational grazing and soil management**

Which soil test for my system? (SA/ORC)

First results from the GREATsoils project and farmer/grower views on different soil assessment options.

Ben Raskin (Soil Association): **Chair**

Anja Vieweger (ORC): **GREATsoils – Project introduction and outcomes of four grower consultations**

Paul Smith (Loddington Farm): **A fruit grower's experience with different tools for practical soil assessment**

Simon Gardner (G's) – **A veg grower's experience with different tools for practical soil assessment in the field**

Food Sovereignty: Linking the global and local (LWA)

This workshop aims to demonstrate how the Food Sovereignty Movement is bringing democracy to the global food system, and explore what a UK National Food Policy based on Food Sovereignty Principles would look like.

Josh Brem-Wilson (CAWR): **Chair**

Patrick Mulvany (former Chair of UK Food Group): **Food Sovereignty: from concept to reality**

Adam Payne (European Co-ordination of Via Campesina, LWA): **A European Perspective**

Rebecca Laughton (Landworkers' Alliance): **Food Sovereignty for UK Farmers**

15.30 – 16.00 Tea/coffee break

16.00 – 17.30 WORKSHOPS 2

Succession and innovative land access schemes (LWA)

Three models of succession will be examined from the perspectives of a retiring farmer, a land trust and a new entrant with a lifetime lease on a smallholding.

Rebecca Loughton (Landworkers' Alliance): **Chair**

Ed Goff (A retiring dairy farmer): **The ingredients for a successful share farming arrangement**

Adam Reid (Farm Step, The Earth Trust): **Land access for new entrants: the nuts and bolts**

Helen Kearney (Ecological Land Co-operative Lessee): **A new entrant's perspective**

Finger on the Pulse (ORC/CAWR/Garden Organic)

As 2016 is the FAO International Year of Pulses, this workshop will include speakers highlight the practicalities of developing, growing and marketing novel legume crops in the UK.

Margi Lennartsson (CAWR/Garden Organic): **Chair**

Josiah Meldrum (Hodmedod): **The growing potential of the UK market for organic pulses**

Mark Lea (Green Acres Farm): **Give peas a chance! A farmer's experience of growing organic pulses**

Georg Carlsson (SLU) and **Per Modig** (Fagraslätt Farm/HIR, Skåne, Sweden): **Swedish production of organic grain legumes for food – insights from research and practice**

Minerals: can they be too much of a good thing? (IOTA/SOLID)

There is evidence (some) organic livestock are being supplied with excessive levels of trace element minerals and in other cases are under supplied, with potentially serious effects on animal health and human nutrition. This workshop will endeavor to quantify the extent of the problem and identify the best strategies to deal with it.

Mark Measures (IOTA): **Chair**

Liam Sinclair (AHDB Dairy): **Are conventional and organic dairy cows provided with optimum minerals?**

Gillian Butler (Nafferton Ecological Farming Group): **Investigation into mineral levels in organic dairy herds**

Mette Vaarst (ICROFS): **The organic approach to ensuring optimum minerals for animal health and product quality**

Tackling the challenges of organic fruit and viticulture (OGA)

This workshop will look at some of the challenges that face the organic fruit and viticulture sector in the UK and some potential solutions.

TBC: Chair

Martin Soble (Whitethorn Farm): **Challenges of organic fruit production – Ten things I'd do differently**

Will Davenport (Davenport Vineyards): **The challenges of growing organic outdoor grapevines in the UK**

Lucius Tamm (FiBL): **CO-FREE: four crops, four years – where are we now?**

Agroecology and organic action plans – time for England to catch up? (ORC/APPG Agroecology)

Scotland is launching a new organic action plan. France has had an agroecology action plan since 2014, embracing pesticide and antibiotic reduction, pollinators, organic farming and agroforestry. Many other EU countries have similar action plans, some like Denmark closely integrating them with their Rural Development Plans and pursuing ambitious targets for school food and public procurement. Could a new action plan for England make a difference?

Ruth West (Senior advisor, APPG on agroecology /The Real Farming Trust): **Chair**

Wendy Seel (Scottish Organic Forum): **Building an Organic Action Plan for Scotland – process, progress and insights**

Eric Giry (French Embassy): **The French agroecology action plan: goals, process and results**

Susanne Padel/Nic Lampkin (ORC): **Review of European organic action plans and best practice examples**

17.30 – 17.45 Break

17.45 – 18:45 Fringe session(s)

Organic pulses - how do we increase production? (GO/CAWR)

A stakeholder discussion to explore opportunities and challenges for expanding production of organic pulses in the UK. Farmers and researchers from Sweden will join us to share what they have learnt.

Skilled workers, apprentices and volunteers (OGA/LWA/Groundspring)

The pros, cons and ethics of various types of labour: Should organic holdings should rely on the voluntary sector?

Innovative Farmers (ORC/SA)

Come and discuss field lab results with the farmers that took part.

17.30 – 19.00 Poster session/bar open

19.30 Conference dinner, bar and maybe entertainment... (bring your own instrument!)

THURSDAY 28th January 2016

08.30 – 09.00 Registration

09.00 – 10.30 WORKSHOPS 3

Can Technology and very short supply chains transform local food availability

A plethora of new digital tools for food producers and retailers promise much, but what is the real potential. Are they the most effective way of shortening supply chains?

Ben Raskin (Soil Association): **Chair**

John Cant (Marumarket): **Results from the UK Veg Box Survey and tips for improving your online marketing**

Carolin Goethel (Food Assembly): **The Food Assembly: How can you sell directly in the digital age?**

Holly Tiffen (Transition Towns Totnes): **Grown in Totnes – How Local are your Grains, Peas and Legumes?**

More feed from our own resources (Organic Arable)

Joint arable and livestock producers session. Short introductions to the issues from an arable and dairy perspective will be followed by a facilitated discussion to discuss solutions/way forward.

Andrew Trump (Organic Arable) , **Neil Rowe** (OMSCO) and someone from BQP (tbc)

Protected cropping in organic systems (OGA)

Results from the international BioGreenhouse project and different perspectives from research and practice on the sustainability of protected horticulture production.

Roger Hitchings (OGA): **Chair**

Rob Meijer (Wageningen UR): **Biogreenhouse COST Action: Knowledge on organic protected cropping**

Lucia Foresi (CAWR): **The sustainability of organic greenhouse production**

Pete Dollimore (Hankham Organics): **Bringing in the Bugs: Harnessing local biodiversity for our greenhouses?**

Homoeopathy at Welly Level - unrecognised success (HAWL)

Farmer's experience of using homoeopathy - as a treatment and an approach to managing livestock health.

Lawrence Woodward: **Chair**

Three farmers (TBC)

Making seed sovereignty happen in the UK

This workshop will look at the future of organic seed production in the UK. What can be done to ensure resilience, diversity and security in our seed systems? We look at initiatives and networks working towards change.

Neil Munro (Heritage Seed Library, Garden Organic): **Chair**

Tom Brennan (Gaia Foundation): **Enabling a UK & Ireland seed programme in support of biodiversity and resilience**

David Price (Seed co-operative): **Resilient seed for sustainable farming**

Bruce Pearce (ORC): **Population Growth: A good thing?**

10.30 – 11.00 TEA/COFFEE BREAK

11.00 – 12.30 WORKSHOPS 4

Customer satisfaction. Ensuring consistent supply and quality of organic food (OGA)

This workshop looks at the elements of keeping your customers happy. How to plan your cropping schedules to produce quality and continuity/variety? Getting the basics of soil fertility and agronomy right and storing, packing and presenting for optimal freshness and appearance, while minimising waste.

Kate Collyns (Grown Green): **Chair**

Alan Schofield (OGA): **Variety is the spice of life!**

Roger Hitchings (OGA): **The importance of the soil for consistent quality crop production**

Adam York (Glebelands Market Garden): **Grading and presentation**

Better soil management (ORC/SRUC)

Soils are the foundation of agricultural production but also inextricably linked to food and culture. In this session we explore some of those links and also explore tools and methods to improve soil structure and crop nutrition.

Christine Watson (SRUC): **Chair**

Bruce Ball (SRUC): **Soil: connecting land, people and food**

Sally Westaway (ORC): **OSCAR Cover Crop and Living Mulch Toolbox**

Mark Measures (IOTA): **Legumes and legume mixes**

How to sequester more carbon on your holding (OGA)

Overall aim: to enable farmers/growers to have the knowledge of how to build carbon in their soils, both improving their farms and sequestering atmospheric carbon.

Francis Rayns (CAWR): **Chair**

Laurence Smith (ORC): **Soil carbon sequestration and organic farming – a review of the evidence**

Iain Tolhurst (Tolhurst Organic): **Building soil carbon at Hardwick – an interaction with biodiversity**

Ed Revill (Swansea Biochar): **Soil carbon regeneration through agroecology and biochar**

Can tree planting on livestock farms lead to a net increase in productivity and profit? (Woodland Trust)

Hear from a vet, farmer and an academic how trees can help support sustainable livestock farming and explore whether you feel this is credible, what questions remain to be answered and what the barriers to implementation are.

John Tucker (Woodland Trust): **Chair**

Emily Gascoigne (Synergy Farm Health): **Flocks and foliage**

Tim Downes (Organic dairy farmer): **Trees provide fodder and boost production**

Andy Smith (Bangor University): **Enhancing agricultural productivity and ecosystem service resilience in multifunctional landscapes**

Farming for food quality

The aim of this workshop is to look at farming systems with a view to the finished product on the retailer's shelf. And to discuss the importance or otherwise of the impact of farming systems on the food we eat now and in the future.

Steven Jacobs (OF&G): **Chair**

Geoff Bowles (Ivy House Farm): **Soil, grass, cow and milk: a producer's view of health**

Carlo Leifert (Newcastle University): **Can composition differences between organic and conventional be linked to beneficial health impacts?**

Bennan Tong (FiBL): **Is organic better?**

12.30 – 13.30 LUNCH

13.30 – 15.00 CLOSING PLENARY

Making change happen globally – how can organic/agroecological approaches deliver?

Nic Lampkin (ORC) **Chair**

Charles Arden-Clarke (UNEP) **The UN 10YFP and Sustainable Consumption and Production programmes**

Dr Samer Jarrar (Canaan Center for Organic Research & Extension): **Canaan model for a sustainable crop value chain approach in Palestine**

15.00 – 15.30 REFRESHMENTS and CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Programme correct as of 08/01/16 May be subject to change.