

## Press Release – 4/12/13

### Intensive Sustainability or Sustainable Intensification - which way forward for organic farming?

**ORC's 8th Organic Producer Conference.  
Wednesday 22nd to Thursday 23rd January  
2014, Aston Business School, Aston University,  
Birmingham**

With the recent launches of Defra's CAP consultation and Sustainable Intensification Research Platform, as well as the government's Agri-Tech Strategy, is there any place left for organic farming and similar agro-ecological approaches to sustainable food production?

Are the concept of sustainable intensification and the new strategies broad enough to not only focus on techno-fixes or can we find better ecological and knowledge-based solutions to meeting sustainability challenges?

Is producing ever more food really the priority, or are the climate change, environmental pollution, soil and water degradation and biodiversity loss problems now too great? Should our real focus be on intensifying the sustainability of our food systems, rather than intensifying production with questionable sustainability benefits?

These are the issues that will be debated by farmers and growers at the 8<sup>th</sup> Organic Producer Conference at Aston Business School in Birmingham in January.

The challenges of creating sustainable food systems will be addressed by eminent speakers, including Professor Charles Godfray (director of the Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food), Gunnar Rundgren (author of Garden Earth – from hunter and gatherers to global capitalism and thereafter) and leading organic grower Iain Tolhurst.

We've restructured our traditional conference format to enable participants to debate these questions and help find real, innovative solutions to achieving sustainability in practice.



For the arable farmer there will be sessions on fulfilling the potential of growing oats; participatory plant breeding; the research needs of the sector; reducing the productivity gap in organic farming by balancing nutrients and controlling weeds.

The growers will focus on building resilient seed systems; making growing systems truly local and innovative marketing that goes beyond ‘posh nosh.’

Livestock farmers will have workshops on exploring the opportunities and bottlenecks in the beef and lamb market; liverfluke control and reducing antibiotic use. There will also be sessions on maintaining productivity from grassland; soft rush control and home-grown feed and forage – closing the system.

Other cross-cutting themes include the hot topics of CAP reform and its implications for organic producers; UK organic market prospects; planning succession of your farm; community woodfuel and agroforestry.

Nic Lampkin, Director of the Organic Research Centre organising the conference, said:

‘This conference will demonstrate why organic farming is still highly relevant to the development of a sustainable and productive UK agriculture. ORC’s annual Organic Producers’ Conference is the event where organic and other producers interested in ecological approaches to sustainable food production come together with researchers and advisers to share ideas on making agriculture perform better, for their businesses and society. Come and join like-minded people in a process of challenge and discovery!’

The full programme is available on-line and the early-bird booking deadline is 20<sup>th</sup> December.

**More information at [http://www.organicresearchcentre.com/?i=events.php&event\\_id=240](http://www.organicresearchcentre.com/?i=events.php&event_id=240)**

**ENDS.**

## 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](http://www.organicresearchcentre.com)

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.

Further information about this year’s conference can be obtained from [Nic Lampkin](#) or [Phil Sumption](#). Press passes will be available for the conference – if you would like to attend, please contact [Phil Sumption](#).

The conference can be followed on twitter [#ORC14](#) and [@OrgResCent](#).

The conference is organised with the active support of IOTA, , Organic Growers Alliance, Nafferton Ecological Farming Group, Organic Arable, OMSCo, National Sheep Association, Soil Association, Duchy College, National Trust, Pasture-fed Livestock Association, SRUC, Garden Organic, OF&G

The conference is sponsored by Triodos Bank with support for bursaries provided by the Organic Growers Alliance, Abbey Home Farm Organic Farm Shop, Gordon Palmer Memorial Trust and Dr David Gibbon.



Director: Prof. Nicolas Lampkin  
Council of Management: M. Turnbull (Chairman), V. Agrawal, A. Astor, D.R. Harrison, A. Jedwell, J. Longfield, J.S. Skinner, D. Wolfe, D. Wilson.  
Patrons: C.A. Bielenberg The Countess of March and Kinrara, Peter Kindersley, Juliet Kindersley, The Lord Poole, Yvonne Pye, Jan Sundt, Prof. Dr. Hardy Vogtmann.  
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