

# ORC November 2014 Organic Producers' Conference: Full programme

## TUESDAY 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014 National Soil Symposium

19.30 Conference dinner, bar and entertainment from Canalside Kaley Band

## ORGANIC PRODUCERS' CONFERENCE

## WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014 Diversity in practice

The first day has a producer-focus with technical and business workshops

08.30 – 09.30 REGISTRATION and refreshments

09.30 – 11.00 OPENING PLENARY

### Organic farming and sustainable intensification?

What is sustainable intensification? A ruse for corporate techno-fix interests to regain to the political high-ground or a serious attempt to address future food needs sustainably while respecting the environment? And what contribution can organic food and farming make, if any, to delivering sustainable intensification? Leading agricultural and food policy speakers will present contrasting perspectives to stimulate debate.

**Nic Lampkin (ORC): Chair**

**Emeritus Prof Allan Buckwell (Institute for European Environmental Policy): What is sustainable intensification – does organic farming fit the bill?**

**Patrick Holden (Sustainable Food Trust): Thoughts on True Cost Accounting, biological intensification, soil and ruminants**

11.00 – 11.30 Tea/coffee break

11.30 – 13.00 WORKSHOPS 1

### Making money out of growing fruit and vegetables (Organised by ORC/OGA)

How to best calculate the real costs of production? This will be an interactive workshop looking at different scenarios; field-scale production for wholesale/packers, CSA schemes and growing for veg boxes/direct marketing.

**Susanne Padel (ORC): Chair**

**Roger Hitchings (OGA), Ben Raskin (Soil Association), Tony Little (OCW): Facilitation**

### The GM threat: time to take action (Organised by GM Education)

The session will outline the imminent threats to farmers, growers and consumers from the government and research establishment who are acting as the industry vanguard. The discussion will focus on new initiatives for action, tackle the GMO push and highlight alternatives.

**Pat Thomas (Beyond GM): Chair**

**Bruce Pearce (ORC): Current EU position – impacts for the UK**

**Lawrence Woodward (GM Education): How GM has adversely affected farmers on the ground**

**Claire Robinson (Earth Open Source): The evidence of health risks from GM**

### Breeding for organics – new populations and varieties (Organised by ORC)

Session explores the opportunities for exploiting heritage varieties, composite cross populations (now marketable as part of an EU-wide marketing experiment) and organically bred European varieties for use in UK organic agriculture.

**Martin Wolfe (ORC): Chair**

**Andrew Whitley (Bread Matters): 'Scotland The Bread' – a people-centred grain economy**

**Andy Mitchell (Defra): Cereal populations – relaxing of EU rules to allow marketing of seed**

**Dr Edwin Nuijten (The Louis Bolk Institute): Variety breeding for organics: experiences from the Netherlands**

### Securing the future: making succession work (Organised by Soil Association)

When succession works well it brings fresh ideas, energy and innovation into a farming business. When it doesn't another family farm is potentially lost. This session will look at some examples of farms and farmers that have succeeded in bringing the next generation on board and how they did it. It will also look wider afield, explore some structural changes and look at what the organic sector as a whole can learn about supporting generational renewal.

**Haydn Evans (Penrhiw Farm): Chair**

**Michael Mack (Smiths Gore): Managing a family business through succession**

**Polly Davies (Slade Farm): Boom, bust & babies**

**Tony Evans (The Andersons Centre) and Gareth Taylor (Red Deer Farm): Bringing new people into a family business**

## EU organic regulation (Organised by Soil Association)

Aims: 1) improving the evidence base that Defra can use to reject or propose amendments to the proposal and 2) managing and supporting change and transition through better regulation (drafting of the text) and better support.

**Chris Atkinson** (Soil Association): **Chair**

**Christopher Stopes** (IFOAM EU): **New regulation - threat or opportunity? What's happening in Europe**

**Nick Turner** (Defra): **UK position on the new EU organic regulation – an update on negotiations**

**13.00 – 14.30 Lunch**

## 14.30 – 16.00 WORKSHOPS 2

### Keeping growing: ensuring success (Organised by OGA)

In recent years with the success of the CSA movement and the apprenticeship schemes there have been many new growers and growing enterprises started. How do we ensure their success once the funding has finished?

**Alan Schofield** (OGA): **Chair**

**Simon Crichton** (Triodos bank): **Financing a growing opportunity - a bank's perspective**

**Alice Holden** (Growing Communities): **Setting up an urban farm in Dagenham - the benefits and shortfalls**

**Jon Goodman** (Ragmans Lane Market Garden) : **Setting up a cooperative share farming business**

### Designing agroforestry systems – sponsored by the Woodland Trust

A practical workshop in which participants will gain a good understanding of how to design farm tree planting schemes and work in small groups to design agroforestry systems for four case study farms.

**Mike Townsend** (Woodland Trust): **Chair**

**Jo Smith** (ORC): **Design considerations for agroforestry systems**

**Stuart Holm, Emma Mayo, Hamish Thomson** (Woodland Trust) and **Jo Smith** (ORC) **facilitators**

**Hamish Thomson** (Woodland Trust): **Support available for tree planting**



### Emerging opportunities in organic supply chains (Organised by OCW)

The growth of the Catering Mark could mean significant and exciting opportunities for organic producers, and how farmers and growers can get involved. New platforms such as 'Farm Drop' and a growing Community Supported Agriculture movement are also opening up new possibilities for innovative short supply chain systems.

**Tony Little** (OCW): **Chair**

**Emma Rose** (Soil Association): **Food For Life Catering Mark – A growing opportunity for organic producers**

**Ben Pugh** (Farm Drop): **New platforms for marketing organic food**

**Gareth Davies** (CSA Network UK) : **Short supply chains - Growing the CSA movement in the UK**

### Micro-dairies (Organised by National Trust/ORC)

The session will explore issues associated with economic viability as related to herd size and the pros and cons of direct marketing and/or on farm processing (e.g. raw milk, dairy products) as well as impact on costs of production.

**Mark Simmons** (National Trust): **Chair**

**Josh Healy** (North Aston Dairy): **Making a micro-dairy work. 20 cows and a milk round in Oxfordshire**

**Tom Tolputt** (South West Farm Consultants): **Reflections on using a robot for a small number of cows**

### Policy/CAP implementation (Organised by ORC)

The debating is at an end and the process of launching schemes and inviting applications is underway. This session will explore what is being implemented and see clarification of open questions.

**Trevor Mansfield** (Soil Association): **Chair**

**John Place** (Defra): **Overview of CAP and RDP implementation plans in England**

**Naomi Oakley** (Natural England): **NELMS organic options**

**Nic Lampkin** (ORC): **RDP and organic support in Wales**

**16.00 – 16.30 Refreshment break**

## 16.30 – 17.30 Plenary

**Christine Watson** (SRUC): **Chair**

**Prof. Pablo Tittonell** (Wageningen University): **Agroecological solutions for future farming**

**17.30 – 18:30 Fringe session(s): Introducing Groundspring Network: for new growers & farmers / SRUC drop-in session / Tracking the UK organic market**

**18.00 Poster session/bar open**

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

## THURSDAY 27th NOVEMBER 2014 Practical research and innovation

The second day has a specific focus on current research and innovation activities, with the aim of bringing producers, researchers, advisers and students together to make change happen!

**08.30 – 09.00 Registration**

**09.00 – 10.30 WORKSHOPS 3**

### **Postgraduate research in organic farming** (Organised by SRUC)

This session provides an opportunity for current research students (MSc and PhD) and others interested in research to come along and discuss the challenges of doing research within the context of organic systems. We will also discuss the potential for developing a UK wide network of organic research students.

**Robin Walker (SRUC): Chair**

**Laurence Smith (ORC): Modelling the effects of a large scale conversion to organic farming in England and Wales**

**Federico Filippi (Coventry University): Investigating the potential of applying permaculture principles to UK arable farming**

**Muhammad Shahid (Coventry University): The social dimension of sustainability in organic food supply chains**

**Stephen Meredith (IFOAM EU): Leading discussion on networking**

### **Conversion planning and organic farm management** (Organised by IOTA)

Workshop for advisers, Control Bodies and converting farmers. 30 years of organic conversion planning in the UK! With the likelihood of conversion/business planning being a requirement for participation in organic support schemes in future, how can we use that experience to make these plans worth doing?



**Mark Measures (IOTA): Chair**

**Ed Goff (Hindford Grange), Stephen Briggs (Abacus Organic Associates), Nic Lampkin (ORC), Iain Tolhurst (Tolhurst Organic): Experiences and needs of conversion and management planning (panel).**

**Discussion: what conversion and management planning services should be provided in the future**

### **Dairy research and innovation: breeding choice** (Organised by NEFG)

Overall aim of deconstructing the choices that are open to the farmer and explaining how genomic breeding is particularly relevant. Using input from Low input Breeds and Sustainable Organic Low-input Dairying (SOLID) projects.

**Gillian Butler (NEFG): Chair**

**Conrad Ferris (AFBI): Alternative breeds and crossbreeding – their role in organic and low input systems**

**Gillian Butler (NEFG): What has genomic breeding got to offer the low-input and organic dairy cows?**

**Gordon Tweddle (Acorn Dairy): Cross breeding that works: what and why**

### **Make legumes do the leg work** (Organised by ORC)

Legumes are extremely versatile and valuable components of sustainable farming systems. Current research and best practices for fully utilising legumes on the farm will be presented and discussed by researchers and farmers.

**Henry Creissen (ORC): Chair**

**Hannah Jones (Reading Uni): Legumes leys: improving fertility building, forage quality and biodiversity**

**John Newman (Abbey Home Farm): Fertility building ley field labs: A farmers perspective**

**Christine Watson (SRUC): Legume Futures: exploring the value of legumes to European agriculture**

### **Mary Langman memorial workshop on Organic food quality and health**

Recent research has once again opened the question of whether organic food quality is better than non-organic, but what difference does this make to health (what is health?) and how do the food and other choices made by organic consumers also influence health?

**Lawrence Woodward (ORC): Chair**

**Peter Melchett (Soil Association): Organic farming and growing impacts on food quality – the Newcastle study**

**Anja Vieweger (ORC): Health concepts in food and farming**

**10.30 – 11.00 TEA/COFFEE BREAK**

## 11.00 – 12.30 WORKSHOPS 4

### **On-farm trials: Learning from the horticultural field labs** (Organised by OGA)

In this session we will reflect on the lessons learnt from the growers field lab trials and provide growers and researchers a chance to share experiences of conducting small-scale trials. What has worked well and what hasn't?

**Phil Sumption** (ORC/OGA): **Chair**

**Ben Raskin** (Soil Association): **Field labs - running effective DIY trials and sharing best practice**

**Iain Tolhurst** (Tolhurst Organic Produce): **A grower's perspective of running on-farm trials**

**Anja Vieweger** (ORC): **A researcher's perspective of running on-farm trials**

### **Organic business management - tools and approaches** (Organised by IOTA)

Workshop for advisers, farmers and researchers. How to improve the sustainability of your farm. This workshop will explain what sustainability really means, look at some useful farm assessment tools and identify some practical actions on farm.

**Mark Measures** (IOTA): **Chair**

**William Waterfield** (Waterfield & White/Farm Consultancy Group): **Assessing farm sustainability**

**Bill Grayson**: **Farmer experience of using sustainability assessment to develop their farm**

**Practical steps to improve farm sustainability – two examples:**

1. **Energy and emissions. Facilitator Laurence Smith** (ORC)
2. **Nutrient management. Facilitator Richard Harding** (Procam)



### **Improving the nutrition, health and welfare of organic pigs and poultry**

This session will bring together researchers from a number of pig and poultry research projects to discuss findings with a view to how these can inform best practice.

**Bruce Pearce** (ORC): **Chair**

**Jason Gittins** (ADAS): **100% Organic diet mixes for monogastrics – impacts on UK production**

**Catherine Gerrard** (ORC): **100% organic feed for pigs and poultry – results of an EU-wide project**

**Gillian Butler** (NEFG): **Lessons from LowInputBreeds and ProPIG projects**

### **Diverse legumes and grass mixtures for forage production and grazing** (Organised by NEFG)

The main aim is to explore opportunities that including a wider variety of legumes and grasses can bring to dairy producers.

**Tim Downes** (Shropshire farmer): **Chair**

**Rob Richmond** (Manor Farm, Glos): **Tall grass grazing**

**Konstantinos Zaralis** (ORC): **Review of research on legumes and grasses for forage and grazing (Leg-Link /SOLID).**

**Angus Gaudie** (Stamfrey Farm): **My new experience - measuring what cows are grazing and seeing things differently**

## 12.30 – 13.30 LUNCH

## 13.30 – 15.00 CLOSING PLENARY

### **Farmer groups leading innovation and research** (Organised by ORC/Soil Association)

Innovation Clubs and Operational Groups allow producers to take control of improving their own businesses. This session will set out the opportunities and provide inspiration from those that have already done it.

**Bruce Pearce** (ORC): **Chair**

**Victor Leforestier** (BASE, France): **Experiences of BASE as an operational group – lessons learned**

**Marc Duponcel** (DG Agri): **EIP/Operational Groups. What we expect and want?**

**Helen Browning** (Soil Association/Eastbrook Farm): **Experiences of field labs as operational groups – lessons learned**

## 15.00 – 15.30 REFRESHMENTS and CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Programme correct as of 18/11/14. May be subject to change.