

UK Organic Congress 2018

**Going for Growth:
Transforming organic food and farming in the UK**

Summary programme Version 1 28/9/18

15-16th November 2018, Dunchurch Park Hotel, Rugby



Sponsored by
Triodos Bank

Join us for:

- Talks, debates and workshops for all farm types
- Final consultation on the English Organic Action Plan
- Chance to network with farmers and professionals from across the country
- Sessions designed specifically for new entrants and farms in conversion
- Dinner & entertainment
- Poster display
- Trade stands

Book via <https://tinyurl.com/UK-Organic-Congress18>



UK Organic Congress



@CongressOrganic #UKOrganicCongress

The UK Organic Congress is a joint initiative between:



organic
arable



Organic
Growers
Alliance



Going for growth

The UK organic food market is growing fast, at 6-7% annually, as part of a global movement for change in what we eat and how it's produced. But we trail our European neighbours, many achieving over 20% growth and food market shares of 10%. Big opportunities exist for producers to convert to organic production, supported by a food industry responsive to consumer demand, delivering environmental as well as economic gains.



Transforming UK organic food and farming

Reaffirming the potential of organic food and farming in the UK needs fresh approaches to ensure core organic principles and the expectations of citizens can be delivered. Enhancing the environmental and other public benefits of organic production while ensuring fair incomes for farmers and affordable prices for consumers is critical. As we contemplate leaving the EU, what transformations should we be seeking to make the UK an organic world leader again?



New vision

Underpinning organic food and farming are some big ideas about how to make a better world. The organic approach cares about things that affect us all – health, welfare, the environment, fairness, quality and sustainability. Communicating this needs a focus on real benefits, while building bridges with others. The Congress will feature a new, positive vision for the contribution that organic can make to UK food and farming, including an aspiration to be up there with the best in terms of production and market shares.

Making change happen

The organic sector is well placed to take a lead in the future development of UK food and farming. Organic food standards, the dynamic organic market, Food for Life, the OTB Promotion Campaigns, Innovative Farmers and the Agricollogy on-line information hub have shown what can be achieved collectively. The Congress will highlight the role of the new industry-led organic action plan in England and similar initiatives in other parts of the UK in making real change happen.

Who should come?

The UK Organic Congress 2018 is a unique event organised jointly by leading organic organisations aimed at all involved in or interested in the business of organic food and farming. The Congress has been organised for:

- Farmers, growers and land managers
- Food businesses in organic supply chains, including input suppliers, retailers and caterers
- Professionals that engage with the sector, including consultants, land agents, bank managers and researchers
- Government agency officials and policy-makers
- Farming, environmental and food NGOs work with producers and food businesses
- And many more!

The Congress is not only for those already engaged – if you are exploring organic as an option for your future business, then this event is also for you.

All are welcome!

Contact us

The Organic Research Centre is leading the organisation of the Congress. For

- Programme queries and speaker suggestions, contact Anna Sellars anna.s@organicresearchcentre.com
- General enquiries and sponsorship/trade stands, contact Gillian Woodward gillian.w@organicresearchcentre.com

Tel: 01488 658298

www.organicresearchcentre.com

Venue

Dunchurch Park Hotel (Rugby Road, Dunchurch, Rugby CV22 6QW) is located in the heart of Warwickshire, with modern conference facilities, set in 72 acres of gardens and grounds. It is just outside Rugby, with free parking and good train connections to London, Birmingham and beyond.

Book early for best prices!

	Early bird	Full rate
Day tickets (members)*	£40	£60
Day tickets (non-members)	£50	£75

a) Early bird prices are for a limited number of tickets and will expire as soon as tickets are sold
b) VAT is not included

* Members of partnership organisations. (Organic Research Centre, Landworkers' Alliance, Organic Arable, Organic Farmers & Growers, Organic Growers Alliance, Organic Trade Board, Soil Association, Whole Health Agriculture – please check event details on partner websites to confirm eligible membership categories)

Registration

Registration is only possible online via the event pages on partner websites or directly via Eventbrite:

<https://tinyurl.com/UK-Organic-Congress18>



Accommodation

Accommodation in these and other hotels is not included in the price or the registration process. Accommodation can be booked directly with Dunchurch Park Hotel at the conference rate of £65 per room including breakfast (double and twin bedded rooms available). Please quote reference no. 366431 when making your booking.

Tel: 01788 810656

Email: info@dunchurch.co.uk

www.signaturegroup.co.uk

If sold out the venue will arrange rooms in the neighbouring Draycote Hotel at £75 per room including breakfast. Accommodation in these and other hotels can also be found on Booking.com and similar websites. Early booking is strongly recommended.

THURSDAY 15TH NOVEMBER: Day 1

10:00 – 11:00 Registration and refreshments

11:00 -
12:30
Opening
plenary

A new vision for organic food and farming in the UK

Our impending departure from the EU has generated a lot of fresh ideas about what UK food, farming and environmental policy might look like post Brexit. The Government in its Health and Harmony consultation and more recently the Agriculture Bill has emphasised greener approach focusing public money on public benefits. What does this mean in practice and how can the organic movement respond? In the opening plenary we will explore ideas from Government, the international organic movement and UK organic producers and food businesses, including an introduction to the English Organic Action Plan currently under development.

Featuring: Government representative (TBC), **Louise Lutikholt** (Executive Director, IFOAM Organics International), **John Pawsey** (Chair, NFU Organic Forum), **Organic food business representative** (TBC). **Nic Lampkin** (Chair, English Organic Forum)

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

Workshop block themes	A. Maintaining organic integrity	B. Brexit challenges	C. Arable opportunities and challenges	D. Small-scale production systems	E. Trick or Tree – don't get spooked by agroforestry	F. Meat and livestock marketing
	<p><i>With strong global growth, increasing levels of consumer mistrust and increased scrutiny of supply chains, maintaining the integrity of organic presents an ongoing challenge. What can organic businesses, certifiers and their partners do together to ensure confidence in organic is maintained.</i></p>	<p><i>Brexit will present us with many challenges: trade with the EU, compliance with EU or UK organic regulations, international equivalency agreements, access to research and knowledge exchange funding, future support for organic systems... But there are also emerging opportunities – how can we best engage with and make the most of them?</i></p>	<p><i>These two sessions will look at ways to expand the organic arable sector, through addressing technical challenges on-farm, to negotiating dynamics of supply, demand, and growing business opportunities in the marketplace; this will include experts from both farming and industry.</i></p>	<p><i>Small-scale systems run at high efficiency with short supply chains but are ignored by support schemes. They can offer opportunities for new entrants but finding such opportunities can be a challenge. This block addresses these key questions for present and future small-scale productions system operators and potential workers.</i></p>	<p><i>Whether you are teetering on the brink of agroforestry or already immersed this session is for you. We'll hear about opportunities for new entrants and get tips and tricks on what to do and what not to do from practitioners.</i></p>	<p><i>The current marketing is seeing changing consumption patterns, both in what consumers buy, and how and where they buy it. This block will look at implications for the production and marketing of livestock products, from short supply-chains to collaborations with national retailers.</i></p>
14:00—15:30	A1. Supporting organic integrity	B1. Public money for public goods	C1. Expanding UK organic arable: the ups and downs	D1. EOAP theme: initiatives to support small-scale production and short supply chains	E1. Agroforestry: the do's and don'ts	F1. How to succeed in red meat marketing
Workshop 1	<p>With strong growth in organic markets across the globe comes the increasing challenge of maintaining the integrity of organic products. What are the threats and what tools or approaches might be available to businesses, to support better control of integrity in future, maintaining confidence in organic in a climate of increasing scrutiny of both the organic sector and certification?</p>	<p>Public Money for Public goods is the oft repeated and welcome new approach to farm support payments post Brexit. This workshop will lay out the detail of what is meant by this approach; what the government and environmental groups are hoping for, and the latest evidence on what organic food and farming can contribute.</p>	<p>This session will explore the business opportunities for organic arable production, discussing the role of developing markets and factors influencing cost, price and demand. This will include experiences of organic and in-conversion farmers as well as views from industry experts on the need for organic arable expansion and adaptation of practices at both farm- and market-level.</p>	<p>This workshop will discuss policy proposals based on the work and experience of small scale growers- including the LWA' Horticulture programme, proposals for a New Entrants Scheme, and promotion of a national Local Food strategy. This workshop is designed to gather inputs and ideas from participants to inform the English Organic Action Plan.</p>	<p>Agroforestry systems are more complex to manage, and there's no rule book to follow. Many of our agroforestry pioneers have learnt 'on the job' and this session will feature a panel of agroforesters sharing their experiences (good and bad!) and taking questions from the audience.</p>	<p>Despite the success of independent retailers, organic red meat sales are still relatively lagging supermarket shelves. What are the factors that lead to consistent success in organic red meat marketing? For this session, we have brought together representatives from leading organic red meat businesses with proven track records to share the secrets of their success.</p>
	<p>Featuring: Alison Johnston (Food Forensics), Giles Chapman (FSA NFCU), Ronald van Marlen (Biotrust), Lee Holdstock (Soil Association) as Chair</p>	<p>Featuring: Defra (name TBC), Emma Hockridge (Soil Association) as Chair and others.</p>	<p><i>Speakers to be confirmed</i></p>	<p>Featuring: Rebecca Laughton and Jyoti Fernandes (Landworkers' Alliance), Ellen Rignell (Organic Growers' Alliance)</p>	<p>Featuring: Farmers Ross Dickinson, Harriet Bell and Charlotte Steel, and Ben Raskin (Soil Association) as Chair</p>	<p>Featuring: Ben White (Coombe Farm Organic), Anna Bury (Eversfield Organic), Matt Gorman (Daylesford Organics), Liz Bowles (Soil Association) as Chair</p>

Break: *Grab some refreshments and take the opportunity to browse the wide range of trade stands and posters on display*

Workshop 2
16.00—17.30

A2. Business models and product integrity

The way we trade and relationships we form between businesses can significantly influence the products we bring to market. How could the structure of supply chains change to better inform participants of the roles and actions of others, and how can we encourage better information flows, strengthening integrity and ultimately supporting further market growth?

Featuring: Nick Saltmarsh (Hodmedods), Ronald van Marlen (Biotriust), Suranga Herath (English Tea shop), Andrew Trump (Organic Arable) as Chair

B2. EOAP theme: UK organic regulations and equivalence

This session will debate recommendations for regulation and equivalence. The UK Government has indicated that the EU organic regulation will be brought into UK law when we leave the EU and that certain contingencies around equivalence and practicalities around the implementation of the organic regulation within the UK have been decided. The session will look at what we know in detail and consider what further will need to be confirmed and by when in preparation for Brexit.

Featuring: Roger Kerr (Chair UKOCG), Susanne Padel (ORC), Defra TBC

C2. Improving crop productivity through soil, nutrients & crop rotation

Organic crop yields in the UK are static, or even declining and are significantly lower than elsewhere in Europe. This session will discuss the latest ideas on soil analysis, use of manures, fertility building crops and mineral fertilisers. It will consider the use of nutrient budgeting, including the use of self-use tools, to help plan and refine crop rotations for improved productivity.

Featuring: Mark Measures (Organic Consultant), Samantha Mullender (ORC), Christine Watson (SRUC)

D2. New entrants: Making ideals a reality

This session will give an overview of current opportunities and next steps available for new entrants to organic farming and growing. It will cover sources of professional training, advice and mentoring in addition to opportunities for accessing land and/or funding, as well as a Q&A on the key challenges faced by new entrants within the organic sector. This will be followed by a New Entrants fringe session.

Featuring: Kate Collyns (Grown Green at Hartley Farm), Kai Lange and Alysoun Bolger (Biodynamic Agricultural College), Laurence Smith (ORC)

E2. New opportunities in agroforestry

Diversifying the farming system through agroforestry can open up a range of new opportunities. In this session speakers will present their experiences ranging from establishing new tree crops leading to new markets, to new business partnerships, to identifying new products from existing woody resources on the farm.

Featuring: Jo Smith (ORC) as Chair, and others

F2. How can producers respond to changing diets?

The changing climate is a hot topic, and meat and dairy production is increasingly under fire for its associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This panel will debate how organic farming already meets some of the challenges of mitigating climate change, and how new technical innovations and practices can help us to better respond to this challenge.

Featuring: Liz Bowles (Soil Association), Richard Young (Sustainable Food Trust), Iain Tolhurst (Tolhurst Organics) and Helen Browning (Soil Association) as Chair

**From 17:45
Fringe Events
and Break**
Catch up with other delegates on their thoughts from the day and take the last opportunity of day 1 to browse the wide range of trade stands and posters on display

B3. EOAP theme: Co-ordinating organic information and advice

Several organisations and individuals are providing information about converting and organic farming. There is more interest in organic conversion. How can information and advice for organic farming and conversion be better co-ordinated in future.

Featuring: Susanne Padel, Mark Measures, William Waterfield

There will be a range of fringe events on areas of interest including:

Decision support tools for agroforestry
Building markets for diversity: from genes to cropping systems
Organic advisory services and education for crop diversification
New entrants to organic farming—ask an expert!
Soil Association reception
Agricology surgery

Sponsorship & trade packages available

A number of trade stands and sponsorship packages are available on a workshop, block or event basis.

Please contact gillian.w@organicresearchcentre.com for more details

Call for posters!!

Scientific posters are invited on any subject related to the Congress. The presentations will be a great opportunity to network with others present and to get their feedback/ideas on the development of research in a real world context.

You **must** be registered at the Congress to present a poster. There will be a small prize for the best student poster.

Please contact christine.watson@sruc.ac.uk for more details

Deadline for applications 31st October 2018

8:30 - 9:00 Registration and refreshments

Workshop block themes	G. Market opportunities	H. Organic management on a landscape scale	I. Breeding for organic crops	J. Organic herbs, seeds and soil health – new insights	K. Farm system health	L. Meat and livestock production
	<p>When compared with equivalent EU economies, the UK has only a retail market share of 1.5% against an average of 3.43%. What is happening elsewhere, in the UK market and with UK organic consumers? How do we secure markets and help UK businesses maximise their opportunities across the supply chain?</p>	<p>Organic farming has often been thought of as an activity for individual farms, but the opportunity for clusters of organic farms to make significant changes at local or regional level is significant. Explore how group initiatives can generate more environmental benefits, while at the same time opening economic opportunities for local organic food markets and processing, agri-tourism and more.</p>	<p>The need for organic plant breeding and variety testing has been talked about for a long time but little has been done. We will investigate what is needed from organic plant breeding, the threats and opportunities that the so called 'novel breeding techniques' might offer as well as look at an innovative and novel approach to variety testing.</p>	<p>The over-riding theme of these 3 sessions is improvement to organic horticultural systems, whether through diversification into herb production, taking control of organic seed production or using the rotation to improve soil health. These sessions are aimed at all growers and small-scale producers and are intended to generate productive discussion.</p>	<p>Throughout the Organic movement, health is described as a process, not a state; more than just the absence of disease. But what do Organic Health Concepts mean for the quality of products or the health of the wider ecosystem? How can we measure health in organic food systems?</p>	<p>From changing consumer behavior—preferred diets and increasing recognition of the importance of animal welfare standards – to increasingly variable and difficult climatic conditions, being a livestock farmer has perhaps never been so challenging. Join us as we consider some of these challenges and the options to help address them.</p>
9:00-10:30 Workshop 1	<p>G1. Supporting organic integrity</p> <p>A review of the current organic markets, UK and worldwide, current consumer thinking and an analysis of future opportunity for market growth.</p> <p>Featuring: Roger Kerr (OF&G) on the world market, Finn Cottle (Soil Ass. Certification) on the local market, OTB on consumer trends, Lee Holdstock (Soil Association) as Chair</p>	<p>H1. Eco-regional development: examples from abroad</p> <p>Where agriculture support is to be based on the provision of environmental goods and services, local and regional diversity will increase in importance. Diversity might seem complicated but it can be also offer a powerful marketing opportunity. We will explore several highly successful examples of this in other European countries.</p> <p>Speakers to be confirmed</p>	<p>I1. Approaches to variety testing</p> <p>This session will focus on the results from the 2017/18 organic winter wheat LIVESEED trials. We will discuss opportunities and challenges presented by a participatory model, how we envisage the approach expanding and options for on-going funding.</p> <p>Featuring: AHDB (speaker TBC), Ambrogio Costanzo (ORC), Andrew Trump (OA) as Chair</p>	<p>J1. Encouraging organic herb production in the UK</p> <p>In this participatory session, we discuss how organic herb production in the UK can be increased through for example better technical support networks, local processing co-ops or improved access to markets. The newly formed Organic Herb Growers Alliance leads through the talks and discussions; come ready to get involved!</p> <p>Led by Helen Kearney (Organic Herb Growers Alliance)</p>	<p>K1. EOAP theme: Public engagement—routes to future success</p> <p>Expanding access to and engagement with the benefits of organic food for people and the environment is a huge opportunity post-Brexit. Three approaches to achieve this are outlined in the Organic Action Plan. Come and join our inspirational feet-grounded experts and hands-on professionals to debate the opportunities ahead.</p> <p>Convened by: Lynda Brown (Demeter UK & BDA Cert), James Campbell (Garden Organic) . Speakers to be confirmed</p>	<p>L1. Under the spotlight: Dairy cow health and welfare</p> <p>Expanding access to and engagement with the benefits of organic food for people and the environment is a huge opportunity post-Brexit. Three approaches to achieve this are outlined in the Organic Action Plan. Join us as inspirational feet-grounded experts and hands-on professionals debate the potential opportunities with you.</p> <p>Featuring: Peter Plate (Royal Veterinary College), David Maine (University of Bristol), Paul Redmore (Neston Park Home farm), Marion Johnson (ORC) as Chair</p>

Break: Trade stands and posters open for viewing. Refreshments will be available.

11:00-12:30 Workshop 2	<p>G2. EOAP theme: Actions to develop the UK supplies and trade</p> <p>This session will review and discuss the current recommendations for regulation and equivalence that are to be included in the English Organic Action Plan. We will look at what we know in detail and consider what further will need to be confirmed.</p> <p>Featuring: Paul Moore as Chair</p>	<p>H2. Catchment sensitive farming</p> <p>Catchment sensitive farming has focused on reducing pollution of watercourses in a region, but so far limited attention has been paid to the positive contribution that organic land management might make, but also to some of the risks that organic producers need to be aware of. This workshop will look at the opportunities for greater engagement of organic producers in catchment sensitive farming initiatives and the support available.</p> <p>Featuring: Philippa Mansfield (Natural England) and others.</p>	<p>I2. Seed breeding: How will varieties fare in the field, mill and bakery?</p> <p>This session on organic plant breeding will investigate two areas: what approaches are desired and possible for organic plant breeding; and what traits do we most need and want in field and in processing?</p> <p>Featuring: Dr Edward Dickson (Harper Adams; TBC), Andrew Wilkinson (Gilchesters Organics) and others</p>	<p>J2. Seedy business: Meet the seed producers</p> <p>We all know that resilient food systems begin with a healthy seed industry. Hear from two of the seed companies and two of their producers who have successfully integrated seed crops into their existing veg businesses. Find how it works for all involved, in terms of time, space and money.</p> <p>Speakers to be confirmed</p>	<p>K2. Organic health: From soil to man</p> <p>This session will highlight that health is more than the absence of disease. Explore how farmers see health and what some are doing practically and look at comparative research evidence from long running trials.</p> <p>Featuring: Anja Vieweger (ORC) on 'How farmers approach health', open discussion with John Newman (Abbey Home Farm), Iain Tolhurst (Tolhurst Organics) and others</p>	<p>L2. Coping strategies for livestock farmers under climate change</p> <p>Come and hear three talks on options for sustainable and resilient forage production. The topics will include diverse leys, forage crops during and after hot, dry summers and trees as browse and fodder.</p> <p>Featuring: Lindsay Whistance (OTC) on tree fodder, Ian Wilkinson (Honeywell Farm) on diverse leys, Sam Lane (Cotswolds Seeds) on options for forage crops. William Waterfield as Chair.</p>
12:30—13:30 Lunch						
13:30-15:00 Workshop 3	<p>G3. O is for Opportunity: Business models with a difference</p> <p>A practical session for all parts of the supply chain, learning from businesses who are taking organic to the market successfully. Hear how different businesses successfully sell organic products into a broad range of markets - from farm gate and independents to supplying the large multiple retailers and direct to consumer.</p> <p>Speakers to be confirmed</p>	<p>H3. EOAP theme: Making it happen at home</p> <p>After examining the purpose and outcomes of the England Organic Action Plan, a panel of policy makers and farmers debate what this means for the organic sector—and future government policy.</p> <p>Featuring: Maggie Charnley (Defra), Tom Rigby (Johnson's Farm), Liz Bowles (Soil Association) as Chair</p>	<p>I3. Novel breeding techniques: do they have a role?</p> <p>A practical session reviewing the outputs of a workshop on what opportunities and threats the new gene-editing technologies pose for the UK organic sector. Discuss the implication of these techniques to help form our outlook going forwards</p> <p>Featuring: Mark Lea (Green Acres Farm)</p>	<p>J3. Rotation planning for 'min-till' and improving soil health</p> <p>The session will begin with an introduction to soil health principles followed by several examples of field scale horticultural minimum tillage systems/tools. There will then be a chance to put these principles and examples into practice to radically redesign your rotations. Bring along your rotations to redesign!</p> <p>Featuring: Niels Corfield (Soil Health Advisor), Adam Keeves (Organic Growers Alliance)</p>	<p>K3. Observing health in soil, crops and animal</p> <p>We can identify disease but if health is more than the absence of disease how do we identify health? Through research findings and farmer experience, explore what we know and don't know about observing the process of health in soil, crops and animals.</p> <p>Featuring: Iain Tolhurst (Tolhurst Organics), Lawrence Woodward (Whole Health Agri), Mark Measures (Organic consultant) as Chair</p>	<p>L3. Pig and poultry protein for a growing sector</p> <p>Producing and sourcing quality organic protein for pigs and poultry is a long-standing problem. This session will discuss improving the quality of available grain, alternative feed sources and alternative treatments of feed .</p> <p>Speakers to be confirmed</p>
Break: Last opportunity to view trade stands and posters before the congress closes.						
15:30 - 17:00 Closing plenary	Details to be confirmed					