

Envisioning a future for organic food and farming in the UK

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Ecological

- Diversity (functional biodiversity)
- Complexity (trophic relationships)
- Symbiosis
- Coevolution
- Communities
- Co-operation or competition
- Habitat
- Microbiome

Agroecological approaches (ecofunctional intensification) need more than improved efficiency or substitution – system redesign is fundamental

Creative/Innovative

- Varieties
- Biological controls
- Machinery
- Marketing
- And much more

**Ecological
as well as
technological
perspectives,
enabling farmers
get better, not
just new products
to sell to them
- good science is
key**

Sustainable

- **Resource conserving**
 - ◆ Soil
 - ◆ Water
 - ◆ Energy
 - ◆ Minerals
- **Biodiversity enhancing**
- **Pollution/emissions reducing**
- **Welfare friendly**

Multi-objective, system-based approach, not perfect in every aspect, but delivering overall improvements in sustainability

Productive?

- Yields per ha
- Used for livestock
- Food waste (from farm to consumer)
- Net system output
- Land equivalent ratio (polycultures)
- Humans fed/ supported per ha

New perspectives needed, but challenges to be addressed

Quality, healthy food

- Fewer residues
- Better nutrient content in specific cases
- Some negatives
 - ◆ Wheat protein?
 - ◆ Mycotoxins?
- Way food is produced does impact on quality
- What about health?

How does engagement with organic food impact on dietary choices, cookery and food waste?

Marketable

- Demand is there
- Availability is poor
- Choice is poor
- US, Danish, German models show much more possible

Are consumer expectations reconcilable with organic values and principles?

Is the organic market a means to an end or an end in itself?

Profitable

- Reduced costs
- Reduced yields
- More labour?
- Higher prices
- Higher support
- Similar profitability
- Premium prices and support payments necessary
- Regulation/certification a necessary evil?
- Who pays for public goods?

Socially responsible

- Affordable
- Sufficient
- Fair trade
- Equitable
- Safe & healthy
- Job security
- Equality
- Career development
- Rewarding
- Community engagement
- Is meeting minimum legal requirements enough?
- Can we do more?
- Should there be more emphasis in organic standards?

What do we need to do?

As an organic movement:

- Emphasise our values and principles
- Be proud of our achievements
- Recognise scope for improvement
- Learn from others
- Be imaginative – anything is possible!

With others:

- Don't just talk to ourselves!
- Build bridges, recognise common ground
- Engage with citizens and related interest groups
- Be united and coherent

What support do we need?

- Public support for delivery of public goods by organic
- Research, innovation and knowledge exchange
- Regulation improvement – seeds, organic
- Recognition of the continuing importance of trust-based organic market and business engagement and support to build on it
- Inform market actors about organic values and achievements (education, promotion) and understand them/ their priorities better

Next steps (this year)

- Continue building English, Welsh, Scottish organic forums (NI?)
- Joint/wider membership meeting mid year?
- Build links with farming, food and environment groups/coalitions
- Prepare discussion papers and policy briefings – including radical alternatives?
- Respond to Defra Green Paper and devolved administration consultations
- Engage with Food Act(s) and similar