

# Thinking of going **ORGANIC?**

Photo: Jeremy Moore

## Here is a step-by-step guide



The Centre is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the EAGGF. It is based at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth and run jointly by ADAS, Elm Farm Research Centre, the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER), the Institute of Rural Sciences (IURA) and the Soil Association.

**Together we can make a difference**



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As part of the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to organic farming, financial and technical support is available to all farmers converting to organic systems. Organic farming is good for the countryside, with benefits to biodiversity, animal welfare, water quality, public health and local economies. The market for organic produce in the UK is growing, and at the moment much of it has to be imported. This leaflet provides an introduction to the advice and information available to help you decide if organic production could be for you, and to support you through the conversion process.

## **I Ring the Organic Conversion Information Service (OCIS Wales) on the Organic Centre Wales helpline – 01970 622100**

The Organic Conversion Information Service is a free service funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. It provides farmers and growers with an information pack and up to two on-farm advisory visits from an experienced advisor from ADAS or the Organic Advisory Service.

After these two visits you may be ready to decide whether to go ahead with the conversion. If so, you may want further advice and help with conversion planning as part of Farming Connect (see step 2, below).

*Organic*

CONVERSION

INFORMATION

SERVICE

Helpline

Tel: 01970 622100

Email: [organic-helpline@aber.ac.uk](mailto:organic-helpline@aber.ac.uk)

Calls may be monitored for training purposes

*Organic Centre Wales is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government to disseminate information on organic food and farming in Wales.*



Working together



## 2 Get further advice

Contact Farming Connect for further technical and business advice on conversion. You can use the 'Farm Business Development Plan' (FBDP), an additional day of technical advice and the Environmental Opportunities Review (EOR), to draw up a detailed organic conversion plan. For more information contact the Farming Connect Service Centre on 08456 000813. Technical information on grass, forage and manure management is available to small groups of farmers through the Grassland Development Centre at IGER. Contact Heather McCalman on 01970 823026.

Specialist organic consultants, accredited by Organic Centre Wales, are available to deliver Farming Connect advice. For further details on the advisory services available to organic farmers, contact Tony Little (01970 622248).



## 3 Visit organic farms and talk to other organic farmers

You can meet experienced organic farmers and those in various stages of conversion through organic discussion groups. A range of activities can be supported through the groups including on-farm visits, seminars, evening meetings, small development projects and so on. Membership is free and provides an opportunity for farmers with similar interests to devise their own programme of activities with financial support from Farming Connect.

Organic Centre Wales also manages a Demonstration Farm Network, representing the major sectors, and covering the key enterprises in Wales and all aspects of organic management. For more information, contact Philip Jones on 01970 622248. Elm Farm Research Centre (01488 658298) runs a similar network in England, and the Soil Association (0117 929 0661) has a network of organic farms open to the public in both England and Wales.



## 4 Read about it

A range of publications are available from Organic Centre Wales, including technical guides and factsheets. Information on all aspects of food and farming is also published on the Centre's website at [www.organic.aber.ac.uk](http://www.organic.aber.ac.uk), and two free regular e-mail bulletins are available (see website for details). The Soil Association publishes a quarterly magazine, *Organic Farming*, which contains technical items and news. Organic Farmers and Growers provide an information pack for farmers and regular newsletters. Elm Farm Research Centre publish a bi-monthly technical Bulletin.

## 5 Attend training courses, conferences and seminars

Organic Centre Wales can organise training events and one-stop shops on demand, and Lantra can support pay 50% of costs to farmers provided they have completed a Farming Connect Skill Check. The Soil Association and Elm Farm Research Centre also run technical events on farms around Britain.



In addition, Organic Centre Wales organises an annual conference, focusing on key political, developmental, marketing and technical issues for organic producers in Wales. The Centre also co-ordinates an organic display in the Countryside Care Area at the Royal Welsh Show and attends major events such as the RWAS Winter Fair and county shows.

## 6 Find out how to market your produce

There are many opportunities for marketing Welsh organic produce, through farmer cooperatives, supermarkets, direct sales to the public and so on. OCW operates an organic market information service under Farming Connect, with information on the website and a regular e-bulletin. The Food and Market Development Division of the Welsh Assembly Government also offers support for the development of organic marketing and processing – contact OCW.

## 7 Get your farm certified



Minimum organic standards are set by the European Union and interpreted by DEFRA under the guidance of the Advisory Committee on Organic Standards (ACOS). They are implemented at farm level by a number of certifying bodies, listed below. In order to sell your produce as organic you must register with one of these organisations.

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Code</i>	<b>Contact details</b>
	<b>UK 15</b>	<b>Ascisco Ltd</b> Bristol House, 40-56 Victoria Street, Bristol, BS1 6BY T: 0117 914 2406 <a href="http://www.soilassociation.org/certification">www.soilassociation.org/certification</a>
	<b>UK6</b>	<b>The Biodynamic Agricultural Association,</b> Demeter Scheme Coordinator, 17 Inverleith Place, Edinburgh EH3 5QE T: 0131 624 3921 <a href="http://www.anth.org.uk/biodynamic">www.anth.org.uk/biodynamic</a>
	<b>UK10</b>	<b>CMi Certification Ltd,</b> Long Hanborough, Oxford OX29 8LH T: 01993 885610 <a href="http://www.cmi-plc.com">www.cmi-plc.com</a>
	<b>UK2</b>	<b>Organic Farmers &amp; Growers Ltd,</b> Elim Centre, Lancaster Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 3LE T: 01743 440512 <a href="http://www.organicfarmers.uk.com">www.organicfarmers.uk.com</a>
	<b>UK4</b>	<b>Organic Food Federation,</b> 31 Turbine Way, Eco Tech Business Park, Swaffham, Norfolk, PE37 7XD T: 01760 720444 <a href="http://www.orgfoodfed.com">www.orgfoodfed.com</a>
	<b>UK13</b>	<b>Quality Welsh Food Certification Ltd,</b> PO Box 8, Gorseland, North Road, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 2WB. T: 01970 636688 F: 01970 624049
	<b>UK5</b>	<b>Soil Association Certification Ltd,</b> Bristol House, 40-56 Victoria Street, Bristol, BS1 6BY T: 0117 914 2406 <a href="http://www.soilassociation.org">www.soilassociation.org</a>

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## Register with the Organic Farming Scheme Wales

There is a grant available to support the conversion period and on-going organic farming through the Organic Farming Scheme for Wales. Payments over the first 5-year period amount to £480/ha for land receiving Arable Area Aid payments and permanent crops, £390/ha for other enclosed land and £65/ha for unenclosed land or grazed woodland. After 5 years there is an option to extend for a further 5 years at £35/ha for enclosed land and £10/ha for unenclosed land or grazed woodland. For more information contact the Organic Centre Wales Helpline (01970 622100) or call your divisional office of the Department of Environment, Planning and Countryside in Caernarfon (01286 674144), Llandrindod Wells (01597 823777) or Carmarthen (01267 225300).

### Organic Centre Wales

This booklet is published by Organic Centre Wales, which is a partnership between ADAS Wales, IGER, Elm Farm Research Centre, the Institute of Rural Sciences (UWA) and the Soil Association. Contact the Centre for information on any aspect of organic farming. OCIS and technical helpline 01970 622100  
General enquiries 01970 622248



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