

PRESS RELEASE

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Facing up to farming's challenges: - conference to debate CAP Reform, ethical food marketing and innovations in farming practice

Organic and other producers interested in sustainable solutions to the economic and environmental challenges facing agriculture are coming together for a two-day conference at the Four Pillars Hotel, Cotswold Water Park near Cirencester, on 17–18 January 2011, on the theme of 'Facing Current and Future Challenges'.

"Today's farmers and growers face significant challenges, not only business and technical, but also future external policy and environmental challenges," says Nic Lampkin, director of the Organic Research Centre which is organising the conference.

"The issues and potential solutions we will explore at this year's Organic Producer Conference are of relevance to all farmers and growers – organic and non-organic alike. This two-day conference brings together forward-thinking farmers, growers, researchers, and consultants to discuss ways to improve the technical, financial and environmental performance of farms and businesses using the 'best practice' application of organic and agro-ecological principles."

"Above all, this is an informal and friendly event where farmers and growers can meet with each other, and with advisers and researchers, to debate ideas and be inspired."

Major themes of the conference include:

- CAP Reform and the potential for organic farming to deliver public goods
- Future prospects for the organic market after the recession
- Workshops challenging current limits of organic standards, including the future role of livestock in food production, the potential for recycling human sewage and other resources, the use of tools to support reduced carbon footprints and options to use biodiversity constructively to support food and fuel production.
- Technical workshops covering new ideas on maintaining soil fertility and crop productivity, producing milk and meat from forage, novel crops and breeding for growers, reduced tillage options for arable producers and much more.

(cont.)

Keynote speakers include Helen Browning, Director designate of the Soil Association, David Baldock, Director of the Institute of European Environmental Policy, John Bax, a leading dairy nutrition consultant, and Sophie Daranyi, Chief Executive of Haygarth, the advertising agency responsible for the EU and organic sector-funded promotion campaign for organic food that will be launched in this week.

Download the full conference programme (with topics and speakers) at www.organicresearchcentre.com. Day and full conference tickets are available for purchase online or call **01488 658279**.

Media contact:

Nic Lampkin, Executive director, Organic Research Centre:
Direct line: 01488 657646, Switchboard: 01488 658298,
E-mail: nic.l@organicresearchcentre.com
Mobile (outside normal office hours): 07771 961279

Notes to editors:

- The Organic Research Centre, established in 1980, is the UK's leading independent organisation dedicated to researching the development of sustainable food and farming systems based on organic/agro-ecological principles.
- The ORC's Organic Producers' Conference has been held annually since 2006 and attracts around 200 participants.
- The conference is jointly organised with organic producer and other groups, including the Organic Growers Alliance (OGA), the Institute of Organic Training and Advice (IOTA), Organic Arable, Organic Milk Suppliers Co-operative (OMSCo), Organic Centre Wales (OCW), Organic Farmers and Growers Ltd (OF&G), Graig Producers, Garden Organic, Duchy College, the Organic Trade Board (OTB) and the Soil Association.
- The conference is sponsored financially by Triodos Bank, Dove's Farm and Elsoms' Seeds.
- 50% attendance grants are available to South West England producers as the conference is a training event supported by the Duchy College Rural Business School through the RDPE Skills Programme, which is an SW RDA initiative funded by Defra and the EU through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

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