

HGCA R&KT Strategy Review Consultations 2014

This is a summary of discussions held at the meeting

Name of group: Organic Growers	Meeting date: 22 January 2014
HGCA lead: Vicky Foster	Approx. no. attendees: 15

What are the main challenges facing the industry?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate – dealing with changes & extremes, resilience, alternative crops, adaptive genetics & populations • Weed control in general • Weed control – need new research in low value crops • Edible oils – establishing markets & suitable varieties • Overcome marketing issues e.g. small v large producers • Soil fertility – in particular lack of potash • Mobilising P & K reserves • Fertility – cover crops, mychorhizae • Cultivation systems – reduced tillage that works for organics, low-till that works for weed control • Yield stability – in particular wheat (organic oats are good) • Stable qualities e.g. hagbergs etc. • Red clover – increasing pests e.g. nematodes • Lack of funding for organic R&D • Lack of relevant trials work e.g. variety trials • Cost:benefit analysis for short and long-term studies
What priority research could be done to address these challenges?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VARIETY TRIALS – this is the number 1 priority for organic research • Need organic benchmarks for varieties <p>NB. There is currently more support for oats than wheat so wheat would be the main focus.</p> <p>Q. can HGCA have some ‘no input’ trials as part of RL (no PGR/herbicides)?</p>
Are there any communication gaps that need addressing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of an organic specific KT hub • Loss of relevant information
Any other comments raised
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern there are too many new varieties coming onto the market too quickly and then they’re gone again before growers really get time to understand them and use them. Pearce Seeds have some good varieties that aren’t being picked up by the seed merchants. • There’s a BIG disconnect between HGCA RL and organic growers. • Yield trends are often the opposite on the RL and NIAB variety list to what organic growers tend to see on farm. • ORC have developed an RL type list for the organic sector based on the QUOATS project which is generating valuable additional variety information for oats.