

Latest EU organic regulation developments and future options (ORC)

**Chris Atkinson (Soil Association), Nicolas Turner (Defra)
Chair - Roger Kerr (OF&G)**

- 1. Question whether the review is necessary. The expert review suggested resources would be better spent improving the existing regulation.**
- 2. The Commission consultation implied a public desire for stronger, harmonised, simplified rules (including fewer exceptions). However, uniformity across diverse geographic locations has its own problems.**
- 3. Who owns 'organic'? Civil society and the organic movement, or legislators and enforcers? How can we reclaim 'organic' – principle-based organic – back from the legal regulation?**
- 4. Need sector engagement to ensure regulation returns to its core principles and a focus on what it can achieve (environmental and social goods etc.).**

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Developing Organic (ORC)

Markus Arbenz (IFOAM Organics International), Stephen Meredith (IFOAM EU)
Chair - Lawrence Woodward

1. **The UK is still part of Europe post Brexit vision for the future!**
2. **Need to be patient: The “healthy soil” message from Lady Eve from 1946 reappeared in an FAO report only in 2015.**
3. **Clear definition (standards/certification) and value of the market is an asset of ‘organic’: gives us a seat at tables of power (e.g. FAO Codex rules) and opens the opportunity to be recognised in policy making.**
4. **IFOAM advocates a new public goods based payment for the CAP. Would highlight the common value BUT need to avoid commodification and retain a system perspective.**
5. **Good congruence between the global (Organic 3.0), European (Directive) and UK (CAP) vision for what farming can contribute, but the organic sector has to become an organic movement involving the citizens and consumers.**



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Shining a light on the supply chain and looking at export opportunities (OTB)

Lee Holdstock (Soil Association), Andrew Trump (Organic Arable)
Chair - Adrian Blackshaw (OTB)

1. **Export offers opportunities: spreads risk and could drive economies of scale domestically. There are markets abroad growing rapidly (China, CH, etc.).**
2. **Brexit provides new opportunities for export via new bilateral agreements.**
3. **UK has a great business reputation for integrity, as does the organic label BUT this could be damaged if producers do not take responsibility for the integrity of their imports and downstream supply chains. If it's cheap, ask why.**
4. **Healthy exports need healthy supply chains; currently, much organic production relies on imports from abroad.**
5. **There is an imbalance in organic production area between crops and grassland, driving a worrying shortage of grain on a global scale; plan for price increases!**

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Public benefits of organic farming (ORC)

Laurence Smith (ORC), Vicki Swales (RSPB)

Chair - Joy Greenall (Cow Hall organic farm)

1. **Clear evidence of biodiversity and GHG benefits of organic systems – biggest benefits in arable systems. But how to get message across?**
2. **Need to use the right language for the audience and to adapt according to their associated filters (anti-farming, anti-science, elitist etc.).**
3. **LCA needs developing for systems and landscapes instead of products.**
4. **We need to be able to demonstrate multiple benefits – e.g. spider diagrams**



Which way forward for UK agriculture now? (ORC)

Diane Mitchell (NFU), Tom Lancaster (RSPB)

Chair - Peter Melchett (Soil Association)

1. For both and NFU and RSPB trade policy and its impact on farming and domestic agricultural polices significant.
2. Need consistency of import/export standards and transition from CAP to ease uncertainties.
3. Debate requires greater stakeholder engagement from all angles to secure funding levels for agri-environment.
4. Confusing policy messages coming from within Defra
5. Climate change is elephant in the room not addressed by both NFU and RSPB?
6. Audience consensus of a need for a more radical 'Food Act' incorporating issues such as community land ownership and moving support to labour rather than land, but still a challenge to communicate the role that organic can play here
7. Are the Government and environmental movement in its current form able to deal with this level of transformational change?

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Policy post-Brexit – concluding workshop

Chair - Nic Lampkin (ORC/English Organic Forum)

Rapporteur - Wendy Seel (Vital Veg/Scottish Organic Forum)

- 1. Regulation** Opportunities for a new Citizens AP More supportive seeds regulations and certification that recognises the differing strands of horticulture
- 2. Support** Continued funding for OP seeds Funding for the costings project Who leads on these ?
- 3. Markets** We need to maintain our integrity on production systems Support Keep the soil in Organics
- 4. Technical** research into tillage equipment for green manure based systems Great soils 2 to continue the work
- 5. Research** Costings project who leads ?



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- 1. Diversity of voices with similar message – identify common goals/outcome**
- 2. Contribution of organic to these goals can then be highlighted**
- 3. Mechanism of conversation – policy commission or coalition?**
- 4. Change existing decision-making institutions**
- 5. Build UK initiatives taking best examples from individual nations**

