



Department  
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# A legislative framework that works for the UK - lessons learned and new opportunities

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# Why a reform of the current policy?

- sustainable development of organic production
- neither internal supply, nor the legislative framework have kept up with this market expansion
- risks limiting both the expansion of the organic market and the environmental benefits associated with organic farming

# What were the main outcomes of the consultations?

- mainly concerned with environmental and quality issues; want organic rules to be strengthened and wish to have uniformity of organic rules for farmers and other operators throughout the Union; the majority are in favour of putting an end to the exceptions to the rules.
- Consumers expect organic products to be free of pesticide residues.
- favour group certification for small farmers
- The need to improve the legislation on organic production is widely acknowledged in the organic sector. There is also broad agreement that organic production should remain close to its principles and objectives and that exceptions to the rules should be ended.

# So the new proposal sought to....

- Simplify and clarify the rules
- Ensure harmonisation across the EU to guarantee fair competition
- Remove obstacles to the sustainable development of organic production
- Maintain and improve consumer confidence

# Commission proposal production rules....

- Organic production must continue to adhere to a set of principles that reflect closely the **expectations of consumers**.
- Production **rules strengthened and harmonised** by **removing various derogations and exceptions** in the current rules.
- Organic agricultural **holdings will have to be entirely managed in compliance** with the requirements applicable to organic production and retroactive acknowledgement of the conversion period is not possible any more.
- system for improving **environmental performance**
- specific production rules are brought together in an Annex to the proposed Regulation, thus making the legislation **easier to read and to understand**.

# And control system...

- Removal of the requirement for a mandatory annual physical verification of compliance of all operators.
- A system of group certification is introduced for small-scale farmers in the EU to reduce inspection and certification costs
- The proposal requires all operators along the organic chain to be submitted to the control system. Currently it is possible for certain retailers to be exempted from controls. This exemption is used very widely.
- harmonise action to be taken when non-authorized products or substances are detected.

# And changes to trade...

- level playing field for the organic operators of the European Union and in Third Countries and to better ensure consumer confidence. Reciprocal trade agreements – no unilateral ones.
- recognition of control bodies shifted to a compliance regime, meaning that imported products will have to comply with the single set of EU production rules.

# UK position developed from consultation meetings...

- work constructively towards an amended proposal which has an overall positive impact on growth and trade
- reduces unnecessary administrative burdens
- delivers organic products at a fair price and reduces the impact on the environment.



# Things we wanted....

- retain the simple structure which has a core text and a series of annexes covering details such as production rules
- retain the move to a more risk based approach to controls ensuring low risk operators are rewarded with a more targeted inspection regime
- support measures to increase the number of smaller producers, in particular through allowing groups of producers to be certified as one single body
- support measures to create a level playing field in trade with 3rd countries by ensuring international trade agreements are reciprocal and there is a fair approach to trade outside such agreements

# And those we didn't...

- ending of all exceptional rules (including the proposal to ban parallel production of conventional and organic)
- inappropriate powers being delegated to the Commission by Delegated Acts
- the automatic prohibition of marketing products as organic when unauthorised substances above specified levels are found
- requirements for feed to be sourced from the farm itself which are impractical or impossible for UK producers to abide by
- the extension of control requirements to low risk retail outlets

# Presidencies during negotiations

Greece

Italy

Latvia

Luxembourg

Netherlands

Slovakia

Malta

# Council General Approach reached...

- June AGRI Council 2015 – last minute amendments on inspections and residues
- Our objectives met
- Trilogues commence some months later

# The four areas of debate...

- Seeds
- Glasshouses
- Derogations
- residues

“...we should continue our work to reach an acceptable compromise. We want to ensure that the integrity of the organic sector is maintained...”

“...we must take account of the concerns of consumers who are paying a premium..”



# Next steps and UK position...

- Malta bilaterals with all Member States
- Maltese Agriculture Minister – “recent contact with Member States has set the tone to ‘find a way forward’”
- Julie Girling MEP “this is a regulation for everybody”
- UK – residues issue key but need to step back and look at whole package

# What I want to get out of this workshop...

- Does the EU regulation work for the UK?
- What opportunities might there be once we are out of the EU?
- What appetite is there for change?