

Technical Newsletter

General News

Contents:

Graig Farm Organics and OF&G licensees	2
Abattoir Technical Leaflet	2
Changes to labels etc	2
Changes to formulations	2
Updated OB8, OB8b and OB9 application forms	2
OF&G licensees in the news	3
OF&G in the news	3
New OF&G Leaflet	3
Evaluation Scheme Products	4

Advance Notice of OF&G office hours over Christmas

The office will be closed from 5pm on Friday 22nd December 2006 until 9am Tuesday 2nd January 2007.

New Control Manual

OF&G has updated its Control Manual (it's organic standards) to reflect changes in regulations and requirements over the last year. Copies of the new manual are in the process of being sent out either on CD-ROM or in hard copy, depending on the preference licensees have expressed. To cut down on paper use, the hard copy updates are on yellow pages, allowing them to replace the appropriate parts of the existing manual and making the new versions distinctive. The CD version contains the complete revised manual. Please ensure you work from the new manual from the day you receive it. If you have not received your new copy by 1st December please contact the OF&G office.

Free Classifieds on OF&G website

OF&G have a free classified ads service for licensees on the website. Go to www.organicfarmers.org.uk and click on 'Submit a classified ad' in the Useful Links box. Complete the form, remember to tick the terms and conditions box and click submit. The ad will not appear online until it has been approved by OF&G.

UKAS Audit

Further to our recent UKAS audit, it is now a requirement that all licensees and applicants inform OF&G of any current, recent (within the last 12 months) or pending investigations or prosecutions which may have a bearing on their certification. We have amended our Declaration and Licencing Agreement to reflect this. If you require further information please contact your Certification Officer.

Technical News for Producers

Buying/Selling Organic Ewe Lambs

OF&G have been informed that some producers wishing to buy ewe lambs as replacements may be delaying buying organic animals in the hope that they will be granted a derogation for non-organic later in the year. Please note that if organic ewe lambs were available earlier in the year we may not be able to issue a derogation for non-organic without adequate justification.

Please note that when selling organic ewe lambs it is vitally important that you use terms for these animals that will be common to producers all over the country, for instance an expression used in Cumbria like 'theaves' will not always be understood by farmers in Wiltshire (or by us in the office!). OF&G can not be held responsible for any livestock not sold due to the term being used to identify them not being recognised by a producer in a different part of the country.

Contact us

Phone:
0845 330 5122

Fax:
0845 330 5123

E-Mail:
info@organicfarmers.org.uk

Website:
www.organicfarmers.org.uk

Organic Farmers and Growers
Elim Centre
Lancaster Road
Shrewsbury
SY1 3LE

**The Practical
Organisation for
Organic Certification**





Graig Farm Organics and OF&G Licensees

Following discussions with Graig Farm we are now aware that there are occasionally problems with the status of livestock sent to slaughter. To assist Graig Farm in ensuring that only stock covered by a valid Certificate are presented for slaughter we will now be informing them of any members, that supply Graig Farm, that have been decertified.

Abattoir Technical Leaflet

OF&G regularly hears from licensees who cannot get their organic animals slaughtered locally to their business. This forces them either to sell as non-organic or to transport the animals longer distances than are preferable for their welfare.

We would like to try and change this situation wherever possible. OF&G has just published a new Technical Leaflet about organic certification for abattoirs, explaining how simple the process of becoming licensed for organic processing can be for them. We are also willing to offer them reduced cost certification where there will be a clear benefit to our licensees.

The new Technical Leaflet will be sent, with a covering letter, to abattoirs across the UK and supported by a publicity campaign. But we would also like to hear from licensees who are struggling to find a nearby organic abattoir. We would like to know how far you currently have to send your animals and whether there is an abattoir nearer to you that you think we should approach regarding certification.

If we can identify areas of the country where there are a number of organic farmers facing a serious lack of abattoir facilities, we may be able to offer a suitable abattoir free certification for its first year of accreditation.

Please tell your Certification Officer if you are facing problems of this kind and suggest abattoirs we should approach, for everyone's benefit.

Technical News for Processors

Changes to labels, packaging, brochure and sales literature including websites

May I remind you that any changes to labels, packaging, brochures or sales literature must be submitted to OF&G for approval. This is in addition to any approval from your customer or external body such as Trading Standards.

Changes to formulations

Please ensure that you submit any new or revised formulations on the correct record sheet. Blank copies of record sheet 42 (Multiple Ingredient Product Specification) for any food or beverage with more than one ingredient, additive and/or processing aid and record sheet 43 (Compound Animal Feed Product Specification) can be found in Section 14 of the OF&G Control Manual. These record sheets need to be completed fully and be dated and signed before sending a copy to OF&G. Wherever possible please also send a copy of the (proposed) label or packaging bearing in mind that the product name on the record sheet and the label must match. You must also include copies of supplier certificates and any schedules or appendices for each organic ingredient in the formulation and a full product specification for any non-organic ingredient, additive and processing aid in the product.

Once this information has been assessed, if found to be satisfactory, the product will be added to your Certificate and it will be re-issued. If the information is not satisfactory, you will be notified accordingly.

Updated OB8, OB8b and OB9 Application Forms

DEFRA have notified the Certification Bodies that they have updated the above application forms. If you wish to apply for or renew an import authorisation or apply for a derogation then you must ensure that you use the revised forms, copies of which are available on the DEFRA website. Links to these pages can be found below:-

www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/regulat/forms/organics/ob8.pdf

Link to OB8b (annual renewal) -

www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/regulat/forms/organics/ob8b.pdf

Link to OB9 (ingredient derogation) -

www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/regulat/forms/organics/ob9.pdf

We have also been asked to remind you that payment should not be made to DEFRA until they issue an invoice.



OF&G licensees in the news

Fresh from the Side Oven

Licensee Caroline Sellers' Side Oven Bakery, in Melmerby, Cumbria, achieved huge publicity with a full-page article and pictures in a September issue of the Farmers Guardian. The piece tells the story of how the business developed from Caroline's Aga, to the old bread oven in the farmhouse (which gave the business its name) and then on to a full-scale bakery in a converted 300-year-old barn. Mouthwatering stuff!

And the winner might be...

Martin and Gundrada Hole were profiled in Farmers Weekly after judges for the Farmers Weekly Awards 2006 had paid them a visit. The magazine reports that the judges were impressed with their 'inspiring' plans to make a living while enhancing the environment on their Montague farm, at Hankham, near Pevensy, East Sussex. We wish them luck in the awards, to be announced on November 30...

A prime example

Farmers Weekly turned to Jeremy Burdett's Cockhaise Farm, at Lindfield, Sussex, as a case study as part of its focus on converting to organic dairying. Jeremy, who is pictured with the article, explains how "conversion" is a good name for the process, given that you have to change both your farm and your mindset. His account of the process is encouraging for newcomers to organic as he explained that on a well-managed unit the lean couple of years of conversion will turn around into good levels of production with time.

Milking the angles

Farmers Weekly again went to an OF&G licensee for its look at the on-farm processing of milk. This time featured were Geoff and Kim Bowles, of Ivy House Farm, Beckington, near Frome, Somerset. They took the plunge into on-farm processing in 1995 and now process 1500 litres a day of their own milk, with a further 300 litres a day coming in from neighbouring farms, the magazine reports. Geoff is pictured with his Jersey herd.

Winning cheese secures Tesco contract

Licensee Graham Padfield struck gold with his 'Wyfe of Bath' soft cheese when it won the award for the country's best undiscovered cheese in the Cheese Challenge 2006 – a national competition. On the back of that win, Bath Soft Cheese, based in Kelston, near Bath, has landed a national contract that will see the 'Wyfe of Bath' go into Tesco stores throughout the UK (BBC Somerset). The cheese is an organic, handmade, semi-hard cheese which Business Manager Alex Dunbar describes as 'not dissimilar to Gouda', but which is not pressed. Our congratulations to Graham and Alex and wining cheesemaker James Ellis.

Buttercup the cow in moo-ving plea to MP

Shrewsbury MP Daniel Kawczynski came face to face with licensee Andrew Bebb's cow Buttercup when she wanted to make her point in the battle for fairer milk prices. Mr Bebb, of Cruckton, near Shrewsbury, stunted up the photo opportunity for Buttercup to 'hand over' a letter detailing her concerns to the MP, who is the chairman of the All-Party Dairy Group. Mr Kawczynski has pledged to do all he can to support the battle for better prices, the Shrewsbury Chronicle reports.

OF&G in the news

Since the last newsletter OF&G has, as ever, been busy representing its own and licensees' concerns about all things to do with organic certification. Chief Executive, Richard Jacobs, took part in an hour-long debate on BBC Five Live's Simon Mayo show about the growth in organic food and whether it's leading to a dumbing down of standards – of course, we know it's not! Richard also took part in filming for BBC TV's Country File, adding to the discussion on poultry standards and what the organic label means to shoppers. His comments were also included in a front-page lead story in the Guardian, again about standards and the supermarkets.

Other titles we've been featured in include Organic Life Magazine, Poultry World (quoted in its 'Organic Focus' as well as a separate 'Soapbox' piece), Shropshire Relish Magazine, The House Magazine, Sustainable Development UK, Organic & Natural Business (two issues), Farming in the North, The Grocer, Health 24 Magazine, and The Ranger.

As ever, if you see any mentions of OF&G that we miss, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

New OF&G Leaflet

As part of our ongoing efforts to support our licensees we have produced a leaflet that can be given to your visitors or customers (maybe put on the counter or dropped into boxes and bags?). The A5 leaflet spells out the benefits of organic food and farming on one side while the other side explains what your OF&G certification means to your customers. We hope this will be of benefit to you and us. The leaflets are available free by contacting our Office Manager, Angela Liebich, by email (angela.liebich@organicfarmers.org.uk) or by phoning the office number and extension 222. Please let us know your registration number and how many leaflets you think you can use. We will send them to the address we have on file for you

OF&G Evaluation Scheme products

The following products have recently been accepted into the OF&G Evaluation Scheme as 'Product Approved for Use in Organic Systems' or 'Product Approved for Restricted Use, Derogation Required'

Category	Name	Supplier	Telephone	OF&G Status	Evaluation Scheme Cert Expiry Date
Insect Control	Hemexsan	Heaton Export & Marketing Ltd	01422 822308	Approved	31/5/07
Animal Feed Additives	Hemexsan	Heaton Export & Marketing Ltd	01422 822308	Approved	31/5/07
Animal Feed Supplements	Ecoblock	Minsups Ltd	01606 556161	Approved	30/4/07
Animal Feed Supplements	Ecoblock Extra	Minsups Ltd	01606 556161	Approved	30/4/07
Compost	Earth Cycle Compost	The Woodhorn Group	01243 789284	Approved with Derogation	30/4/07
Compost	Earth Cycle Compost	The Woodhorn Group	01243 789284	Approved with Derogation	30/4/07
Compost	Earth Cycle Compost Mulch	The Woodhorn Group	01243 789284	Approved with Derogation	30/4/07
Compost	Root Zone	The Woodhorn Group	01243 789284	Approved with Derogation	30/4/07
Compost	Earth Cycle Cow Compost	The Woodhorn Group	01243 789284	Approved with Derogation	30/4/07
Compost	Earth Poultry Manure	The Woodhorn Group	01243 789284	Approved with Derogation	30/4/07
Compost	Earth Top Soil Supreme	The Woodhorn Group	01243 789284	Approved with Derogation	30/4/07
Fertilizer	Extensive Turkey Litter	Bioganix Ltd	01568 619122	Approved with Derogation	31/5/07
Fertilizer	Bioganix Standard Fertiliser	Bioganix Ltd	01568 619122	Approved with Derogation	31/5/07
Fertilizer	Bioganix Anglian Fertiliser	Bioganix Ltd	01568 619122	Approved with Derogation	31/5/07
Fertilizer	Extensive Turkey Litter	7Y Services Ltd	01568 619102	Approved with Derogation	31/8/07
Plant Health Products	Bactolife	Biotechnica Services Ltd	0118 951 5605	Approved with Derogation	30/9/07
Plant Health Products	Mycortex	Biotechnica Services Ltd	0118 951 5605	Approved with Derogation	30/9/07
Plant Health Products	Bioflo	Biotechnica Services Ltd	0118 951 5605	Approved	30/9/07
Bedding Materials	Easichick	GI Hadfield & Son Ltd	0161 370 2360	Approved	31/7/07
Bedding Materials	Easibed	GI Hadfield & Son Ltd	0161 370 2360	Approved	31/7/07
Bedding Materials	Easiplay	GI Hadfield & Son Ltd	0161 370 2360	Approved	31/7/07
Bedding Materials	Easicattle	GI Hadfield & Son Ltd	0161 370 2360	Approved	31/7/07
Bedding Materials	Easiride	GI Hadfield & Son Ltd	0161 370 2360	Approved	31/7/07
Bedding Materials	Easibed plus	GI Hadfield & Son Ltd	0161 370 2360	Approved	31/7/07
Fertilizer	Orgo Neem Seed Fertiliser	Millenia Agricultural Inputs Ltd	0208 970 2199	Approved with Derogation	30/9/07
Fertilizer	Orgo Neem Cake	Millenia Agricultural Inputs Ltd	0208 970 2199	Approved with Derogation	30/9/07
Disinfectant Cleaning Agent	Aquaform	Aquatec Chemical Services Ltd	01942 603268	Approved	31/10/07
Fertilisers	TTL Plus	Nutrimate Ltd	01772 641181	Approved	31/8/07
Fertilisers	Organimate	Nutrimate Ltd	01772 641181	Approved with Derogation	31/8/07
Fertilisers	Nutrimate	Nutrimate Ltd	01772 641181	Approved	31/8/07
Fertilisers	Nutrimate Gold	Nutrimate Ltd	01772 641181	Approved	31/8/07
Plant Health Products	Legume Fix	Legume Technology Ltd	0115 966 3679	Approved	31/10/07
Plant Health Products	Nature's Nitrogen	Legume Technology Ltd	0115 966 3679	Approved	31/10/07
Soil Conditioner	Seer Rockdust	Rockdust Ltd	01877 382926	Approved Restricted use.	31/10/07
Compost	Seer Rocksoil	Rockdust Ltd	01877 382926	Approved Restricted use.	31/10/07
Soil Conditioner	Seer Rockmix	Rockdust Ltd	01877 382926	Approved Restricted use.	31/10/07
Fertilisers	Greenit	Mistry's Organic Ltd	020 7431 1796	Approved	30/9/07
Disinfectant Cleaning Agent	Sipeco L	DB Ecosystems Ltd	0131 315 4200	Approved	30/9/07