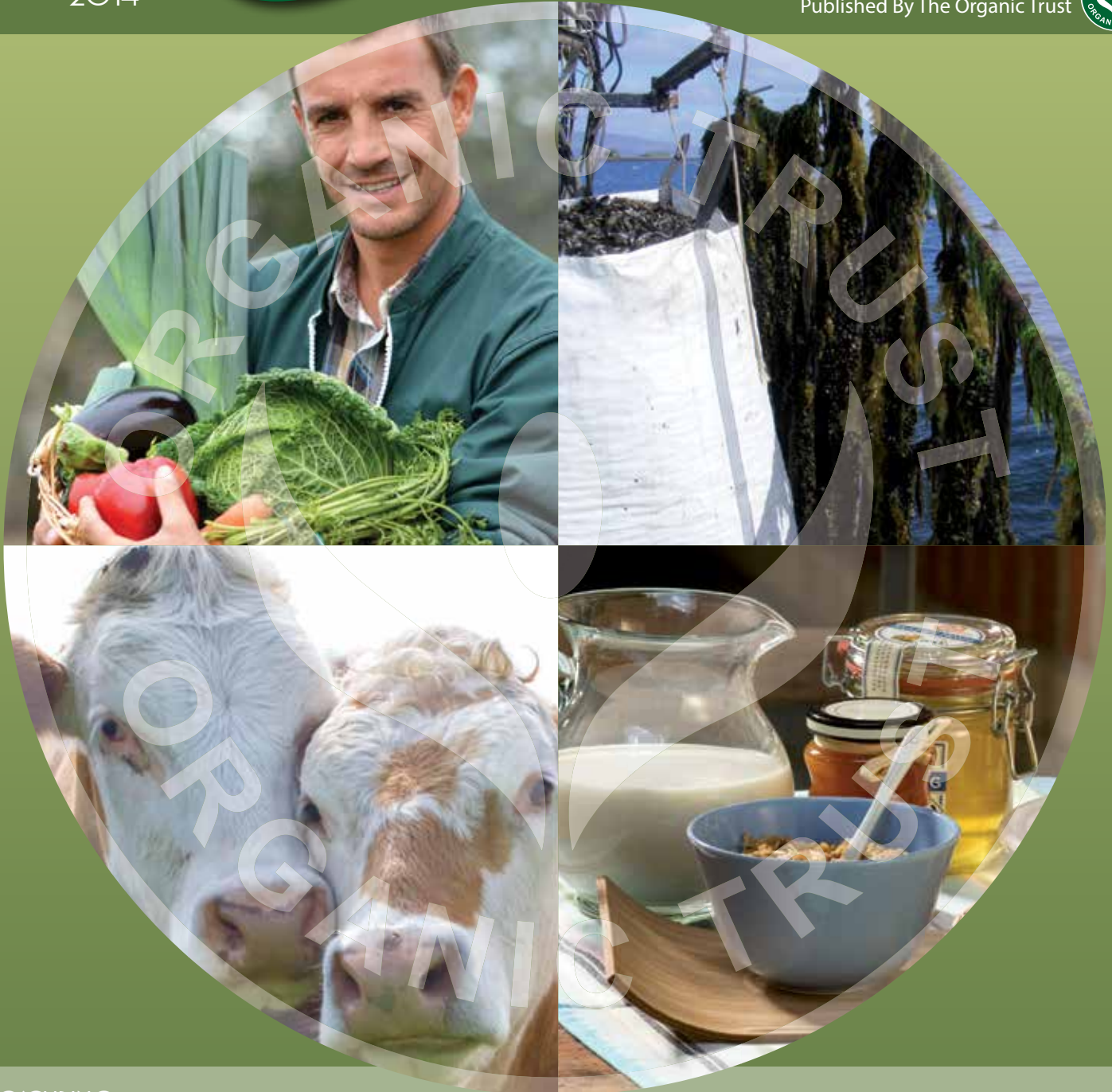


Cl^{over}

ISSUE 33
2014

JOURNAL FOR
ALL THINGS ORGANIC

Published By The Organic Trust



FEATURING

NEWS | ORGANIC PRODUCER / PROCESSOR PROFILES | RULES FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTION
ORGANIC SUCCESS STORIES | CONSUMER UPDATES | RETAILER PROFILE | VIEWS

Always
Striving...

...to be
the best!



ORGANIC TRUST LIMITED

- Organic Inspection • Certification • Education •
- Advisory Services • Publishing •

If you're thinking of:

- Converting to organic production
- Processing an organic product
- Importing, storing or distributing organic produce...

*...then call us today for our FREE INFORMATION PACK or
ON-THE-SPOT INFORMATION.*

Department of Agriculture, Food & The Marine, DEFRA (UK) and EU approved organic inspection and certification organisation.

ORGANIC TRUST LIMITED- Serving the Organic Community since 1992

ORGANIC TRUST LIMITED, Vernon House, 2 Vernon Ave, Clontarf, Dublin 3, Ireland.
Tel / Fax: 01 853 0271 Email: organic@iol.ie Web: www.organictrust.ie

JOURNAL FOR ALL THINGS ORGANIC



published by Organic Trust Ltd –
providing organic inspection and
certification to the organic community
since 1992

www.organictrust.ie

Editorial Team

Colin Keogh
Gavin Lynch
Helen Scully

Designer:

Michelle Jones O'Donnell,
Peter O'Donnell Photography
061 372277

Printing

Clover is printed by Ecoprint Ltd,
341 Griffith Avenue, Drumcondra,
Dublin 9. 086 2633091 or
ecoprint@iol.ie

Contributors & Photography

Grateful appreciation to all of our
contributors

Advertisers

For information on advertising in
Clover, please contact the office on
01 8530271 or email organic@iol.ie –
very competitive advertising rates apply

Publisher



Clover is published by the
Organic Trust Limited,
Vernon House,
2 Vernon Avenue, Clontarf,
Dublin 3. Telephone/Fax: 01 8530271.
organic@iol.ie www.organictrust.ie

Disclaimer

The material contained in Clover does
not necessarily reflect the views of the
Board of Management of the Organic
Trust Ltd except where specifically
stated. Whilst care has been taken to
ensure the correctness and accuracy
of the information in Clover, the
publishers cannot take responsibility for
any errors, either in the content of the
articles provided or in the advertising
material. The opinions expressed in
Clover are not necessarily those of
the Editorial team or the Publisher.
Material in this magazine may not be
reproduced without prior permission.
Clover © - all material is copyright and
all rights are reserved.

EDITOR'S LETTER

Welcome to the new format for the Organic Trust's iconic magazine Clover. The Clover Annual, coupled with the monthly e-newsletter, Organic Trust News, aims to keep our members and consumers informed of events happening in the world of organic food and organic food production.

This issue contains something for everybody! Producer profiles cover a range of organic enterprises and entities; technical information; nationwide retailer focus; news items and much much more.

The Organic Trust has been providing organic inspection and certification services to Ireland's organic community since 1992 – our aim is excellence; our rates are competitive and we certify the widest possible range of organic enterprises.

We hope that you enjoy our magazine and if you feel you would like to contribute material for the next issue, we would be delighted to hear from you. Simply email the Organic Trust at organic@iol.ie and we'll take it from there!

Helen Scully
Editor

CONTENTS

Editorial	2
Good News for Organic Food	2
Meet the Organic Trust team	3
Farm Profile: Beef, Turkeys, Hazelnuts & Fruit	4
National Organic Food Fair	5
Farm profile: Field Scale Vegetables & Sheep	6
National Organic Training Skillnet	7
Organic Trust Website	7
Farm Profile: Organic Dairy Farming	8
Opportunities in Organic Dairying	9
Farm Profile: Tillage/Cereals/Animal Feeds	10
Clover Crossword	11
Producer Profile: Organic Mussel Production	12
Organic Aquaculture – Market Opportunities	13
Organics around the World	14
Family Run Organic Farms	15
News, Dates, Events	16
Organic Food Processing	17
Top of the Shops	19
Reap the Rewards from Reseeding	22
The Importance of Lime Use on Organic Farms	26
Organic Demonstration Farms	27
An Insider's View of Organic Farming	29
Organic Kids' Corner	30
Harvest Festival at Slí Eile Farm	31
Organic Vs Free Range Eggs & Poultry - is there a difference?	32

EDITORIAL

We are delighted that the Clover Annual goes to print at a time when there is a wealth of good news stories for the sector. The organic market in Ireland has returned to growth after a modest decrease in sales over the past couple of years. Some mainland European markets such as France are witnessing almost double digit growth in organic sales and huge numbers of farmers are converting to organic production. Also, the latest research from Oxford and Newcastle Universities reiterates that organic food is indeed 'good for nature and good for you'.

The new 2015 Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) announced by Minister Coveney offers a high degree of optimism for organic farmers and will allow them to plan well into the future. Organic farming now offers one of the most stable economic environments for new entrants into farming or for conventional farmers considering converting to the organic production system. The Scheme is due to open for new entrants early in 2015 and full details will be published on the Organic Trust website as soon as they become available www.organictrust.ie

The Clover annual covers a broad range of topics and we feel sure everyone will find a number of items of interest in this and future issues. Looking back on our humble beginnings, we need to celebrate what we have achieved in a relatively short time. Apart from the fact that organic food is now mainstream and can be found on all of the supermarket shelves when once it was only found gracing the shelves of specialist food stores, the organic movement has had a major effect on the way consumers look at the food in their basket. The notions of sustainability, animal welfare and food quality were not in the vocabulary of food producers at the start of the green revolution. Now these words adorn a huge percentage of even the most conventional food products on the market today.

We realise that these words are used for commercial reasons and many of the claims made do not stand up to scrutiny, but the fact that the consumer now seeks out products fitting the profile of the green agenda is a major achievement. The next stage for the organic sector is to equip the consumer with the knowledge to weed out the unregulated accreditations for those that have genuine controls and certification in place.

The Organic Trust works tirelessly to get the message out there, but we cannot do it alone. This editorial is a rallying cry to all members of the Organic Trust and consumers who care to spread the word.

Many of the issues addressed by organic farming systems are now reaching their tipping points at a global scale. Climate change threatens every aspect of our lives and is already impacting on the poorest and most vulnerable around the world. On biodiversity loss, it is said that we are living through the first mass extinction of species since the time of the dinosaurs. Rates of antibiotic resistance have spiralled in the past few decades yet occasions can still arise where farm animals managed conventionally can be kept in conditions which necessitate the routine use of antibiotics. Resources are being depleted at alarming rates; water; phosphorous and potassium for fertilisers, fossil fuels and rainforests to mention but a few. These issues are of growing concern to society and cannot be ignored by our policy makers any longer. Organic farmers have proved that tackling these challenges head-on can bring significant benefits and opportunities to the individual and to society as a whole.

Organic production systems don't just make common sense for the consumers of today but they offer the only plausible, sustainable system of food production into the future.

Organic food is not a lifestyle choice, it is a choice for life!

ORGANIC FOOD IS
NOT A LIFESTYLE
CHOICE, IT IS A
CHOICE FOR LIFE!

Good news for organic food !

2014 has been a good year so far for advocates of organic food and farming. First there was the research published back in February in the Journal of Applied Ecology showing that organic farming is better for biodiversity. This study led by scientists at Oxford University and entitled 'Land-use intensity and the effects of organic farming on biodiversity: a hierarchical meta-analysis', found that organic farms had on average 34% greater species richness than their conventional counterparts and when it came to pollinator species, the difference was as much as 50%. With the global decline in biodiversity and in particular, pollinator species, results such as these will help to reinforce the case for a shift towards organic, agro-ecological farming practices.

Then, in July we had the results of the Newcastle University Research published in the British Journal of Nutrition. The authors carried out an analysis of 343 peer-reviewed studies looking at the composition of crops and foods. The study directly compared the nutrient content of organic and conventional foods and showed that organic food had much higher levels of antioxidants and other key nutrients and far lower contamination rates from pesticides and heavy metal residues. Lead author Prof Carlo Leifert of Newcastle University said "this study demonstrates that choosing food produced according to organic standards can lead to increased intake of nutritionally desirable antioxidants and reduced exposure to toxic heavy metals".

Studies such as these continue to provide strong scientific reinforcement to the message that organic food is indeed 'good for nature and good for you'

Meet The Organic Trust Team

For the benefit of existing Organic Trust Members and for new entrants to the organisation (welcome!), we are putting faces to those people who form the "public face" of the Organic Trust.

This team is strongly supported by many people who work tirelessly in the background – people whose names you may

not recognise and people you may never get the opportunity to meet. Therefore, we feel that this is also an opportune time to acknowledge the work and commitment of this group which includes the Organic Trust Board of Management (who work on a voluntary basis), plus the Organic Trust Certification Panel and other ad-hoc Committee Members - thank you!!



Helen Scully is the National Co-ordinator and Certification Manager of the Organic Trust and is responsible for the operational management of the organisation. Helen has represented the Organic Trust on a wide range of forums over the years including the National Steering Committee for the Development of Ireland's Organic Sector and at international meetings of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements). Helen played a major role in the development of the organic standards culminating in the publication of the current standards manual titled Organic Food & Farming Standards in Ireland. Since joining the organisation in 1995, Helen has overseen the transformation of the organisation from its very humble grassroots beginnings to the strong professional entity it is today



Colin Keogh is the Senior Processing Inspector and Quality Assurance Manager with Organic Trust. Colin has also represented the organisation on a wide range of Committees including the Organic Marketing Development Group. Colin has demonstrated a level of innovation and creativity which has proven a major asset to every project with which he has been involved.



Brian Maguire worked for many years as a Producer Inspector with the Organic Trust. However due to his vast knowledge and aptitude for IT projects, Brian is now employed as the Database Administrator for the Organic Trust



Gavin Lynch joined the Organic Trust as PR and Development Officer in 2012. An organic farmer himself, Gavin has a deep understanding of issues effecting organic producers and has been published in all major media in Ireland. Gavin is an extremely gifted writer and his unique style and unassuming manner have benefited the Organic

Trust since taking up this position.



Eveline Gill has been a member of the Organic Trust Inspectorate since 2003. Due to the fact that Eveline holds professional qualifications in both Agriculture & Organic Food Processing, she holds the unique position of being a Producer and Processor Inspector. Eveline's wide range of knowledge and experience of the organic sector also makes her a much sought-after Trainer and Organic Advisor.



Aine Gordon graduated in Agricultural Science from UCD and is an experienced farmer in her own right. Aine was appointed as Producer Inspector to the Organic Trust Inspectorate in 2008 and also carries out Organic Advisory work. Aine's practical farming experience, together with her personable nature, combine to make her a 'natural' when it comes to inspection activities.

Fergal Guilfoyle is the most recent appointee to the Organic Trust inspection team. Fergal is a recognised expert in all aspects of aquaculture and joined the Organic Trust as Aquaculture



Inspector in 2014. With extensive experience working in the aquaculture sector within both State and private industry, Fergal is a valuable addition

to our team.



Helen Harty is a graduate of Harper Adams Agricultural College which is renowned for its commitment to organic agriculture and has worked as a member of the Organic Trust Inspectorate in the capacity of Producer Inspector since 2006. As a keen supporter of equestrian events, Helen has an in-depth knowledge of the equine industry and organic livestock generally.



Klaus Laitenberger joined the Organic Trust Inspectorate in 2012 as Producer Inspector. Whilst Klaus is knowledgeable in all aspects of organic production, he is a recognised expert in organic horticulture and has published a number of books and articles on this subject. Klaus also lectures on the MSc in Organic Horticulture Program at UCC.

FARM PROFILE – BEEF, TURKEYS, HAZELNUTS & FRUIT

Hell's Kettle Organic Farm, Co. Wicklow

Main enterprises; Beef, Turkeys, Fruit and Hazelnuts.



Pictured: Gavin and Pat with some of their cattle at Hell's Kettle Farm.

Gavin Lynch farms near the village of Donard in Co. Wicklow along with his father Pat. The main enterprise on the farm is suckler beef, but they also produce turkeys for the Christmas market and grow some fruit and hazelnuts.

The Lynch family were involved in dairy farming up until 2005 when the poor milk price and falling returns meant that dairying was no longer a viable option on their upland farm. They sold off the dairy herd and bought a herd of suckler cows with the aim of selling spring calved weanlings in the autumn. In 2009, Gavin gave up his off-farm work with the aim of trying to make a viable income from the farm alone. "I had been interested in organic farming for a while as we have a good few neighbours involved in organics. It was a great help to us to go and talk to people already in organic. We were able to discuss the requirements of organic farming and get a fairly good idea of how things work"

So, having made a decision to convert in 2009, Gavin began to make the necessary changes to animal housing, attended the Teagasc course

on organic farming and applied for organic certification with Organic Trust which began in early 2010. "The changes to the animal housing were fairly straightforward really" according to Gavin. "We had a cubicle system in our main cattle shed with a slatted feeding area. The slatted area is fine as long as it doesn't comprise more than 50% of the shed area. We removed and sold the cubicles which paid for the load of hardcore and readymix to fill in the channel. That was it really". Housed cattle require 1m² of floor area per 100kg of liveweight and that at least 50% of the available floor area is bedded with straw or other suitable bedding.

"The other big change that came with conversion was cutting out synthetic fertilisers and creating our own fertiliser through composting FYM. As we were not heavily stocked at the time of conversion, this didn't have too much of an impact on the farm or stock numbers. We managed to maintain our herd, stocked at around 1.2lu/ha and still produced a surplus of fodder to act as a buffer in the case of getting a bad winter, which came in 2012-13". Gavin has been slowly increasing the stocking rate on their farm over the

past 3 years and says he intends to build up cattle numbers until a good balance is reached with grass grown per hectare. The Lynch's have also changed from a suckler to weanling system, to a suckler to finished beef system with most of their cattle being sold to Slaney Meats. However, they are butchering some of their heifers on-farm and selling the beef direct from the farm gate. "The on-farm processing of our own beef has required a significant investment in facilities etc. but we wanted to have complete control over what we were producing" according to Gavin. "There is a bit of paperwork with the processing but once you're in organics for a few years, good record keeping becomes second nature anyway. Because we are making organic beef burgers, any ingredients need to be fully certified and approved by the Organic Trust. We also send any product labeling to Organic Trust for approval before printing".

Gavin is farming alongside his father, Pat, who has farmed full-time for the past 35 years. Gavin says it took a little bit of convincing to convert Pat in the beginning but that he loves this method of farming now. "I think the

change to organic farming has been great for us on many different levels" says Gavin. "We're both much more observant of and more interested in exactly what's going on within the system, from the smallest level to the biggest. Your thinking totally changes when you view the farm holistically and even though organic farming is more challenging, I think it's also more rewarding. It was a great feeling to bring the first of our beef heifers to the abattoir, having never been dosed or injected with anything, and seeing good clean liver and lungs coming back. Of course it may not always work out that way and derogations are there in the cases where you do need to resort to a dose but whether by design or by luck, we've managed to get by without dosing

so far".

When asked what advice he might have for someone considering getting into organic farming, Gavin relays what he says is the most valuable advice given to him when he was starting out: "One of my neighbours who is an experienced organic livestock farmer told me to start out under-stocked and gradually increase numbers until we found the carrying capacity of the land. His theory was that a system under pressure or a farmer under pressure will crack from the beginning and I think he's right. If things start to go wrong, then it's easy to be overwhelmed and that doesn't make for a good state of mind or good decision making". Gavin admits that there were

occasions where he was unsure of what to do or how to do it but that help was never too far away. "Going organic can be a steep learning curve but there's a great community of organic farmers out there who I've found really helpful to me whenever I need advice. Organic Trust were also really good when any certification issues needed clarification or for putting me in contact with other organic farmers who could help"

Gavin's ultimate message "I think there are great opportunities out there for farmers who are thinking of going organic. Market growth in Europe is huge; government supports are improving; I'd say the future looks bright for organics".



National Organic Food Fair.

Open to the public and free entry to all.

A new and exciting development in the promotion of the organic sector is the National Organic Food Fair. The inaugural fair took place on the 13th October 2013 and was a great success. The date of the 2014 Fair is September 14th.

The National Organic Food Fair is the result of a collaboration between the Organic Trust Ltd and IOFGA with the support of the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine.

Set in the beautiful grounds of Marlay Park, Rathfarnham, the fair has a festival atmosphere reminiscent of village fairs and farm shows of yesteryear.

With free entry to all to the fair, there is something of interest for everyone amidst the hustle and bustle of the marquees - face painting, balloon artists and a petting farm for the children, whilst the adults are given the opportunity to sample and purchase from the largest selection of Irish Organic produce available on one site. Visitors have the chance to meet and talk with the producers of these exquisite organic products ranging

from meat, dairy, ciders, oils, breads and a whole plethora of other food items too many to mention individually.

For those who wish to learn more about organic food and how to cook it, a series of lectures on various subjects related to the organic sector are available and two cooking demonstrations given by renowned chef and noted supporter of organic food Clodagh McKenna.

As indicated earlier, the 2014 National Organic Food Fair is scheduled for the 14th of September from 10.30 am to 4.30 pm - the venue once again in Marlay Park and the plans for the 2015 event will probably commence the day after that!!! A great day is guaranteed for all so why not join us in a celebration of everything that is great about Irish Organic Food!!

For further information please contact Pivotal Communications on 01 6681314 or info@pivotal.ie or Colin Keogh - Organic Trust at 01 853 0271 or organic@iol.ie

Strange Food Facts

The Popsicle was invented by an 11 year old who kept it secret for 18 years.

The inventor was Frank Epperson who, in 1905, left a mixture of powdered soda and water out on the porch, which contained a stir stick. That night, temperatures in San Francisco reached record low temperature. When he woke the next morning, he discovered that it had frozen to the stir stick, creating a fruit flavored ice treat that he named the epsicle. 18 years later he patented it and called it the Popsicle.

Strange Food Facts

The most expensive coffee in the world comes from civet poop

Kopi Luwak are coffee beans that come from Civet (a cat sized mammal) poo. The animals gorge on only the finest ripe berries, and excrete the partially-digested beans, which are then harvested for sale. Kopi Luwak is the most expensive coffee in the world, selling for between \$120 and \$600 USD per pound, and is sold mainly in Japan and the United States, but it is increasingly becoming available elsewhere. My question is: who the hell discovered that it tasted good?

FARM PROFILE: FIELD SCALE VEGETABLES & SHEEP

Oliver Kelly, Kiltegan, Co. Wicklow

Main enterprises; Root and winter vegetables, Sheep.

From Gavin Lynch

PR & Development Officer Organic Trust



Pictured: Oliver Kelly with some recently sown leeks.

Oliver Kelly farms approximately 17 hectares organically, near Kiltegan in West Wicklow. We visited Oliver on a beautiful June day and dragged him away from his tractor for a few minutes to talk organics.

Being based just a stones throw away from the farm of Denis Healy, one of Ireland's longest established organic growers, has brought some advantages for Oliver. He began working part-time for the Healy's at the age of 13 while still at school and on finishing school, began working there full time. It was here working with Denis, that Oliver learned about and became interested in organic growing. Around the time Oliver's father and mother were retiring from the home farm, Oliver had to make some decisions on how best to manage the farm going forward. He knew that to continue with livestock-only on their small farm would not provide him with a viable income and so he decided to put into practice, some of what he had learned with his neighbours. Oliver registered with Organic Trust in 1996 and soon began growing his first crops

Typical crop rotation on Oliver Kelly's Farm:

Year 1	Year 2	Year3	Year 4	Year 5
Grass	Potatoes	Carrots / Parsnip	Leeks / Brassicas	Grass

of organic vegetables.

Oliver now works full-time on his own farm and combines the vegetable growing with a small flock of sheep which help to tidy up the fields between crops. Concentrating mainly on root and winter vegetables such as carrots, parsnip, leeks, beetroot and potatoes, Oliver sells the majority of what he produces wholesale, to a handful of loyal customers including his old boss, Denis Healy. "I have about 6 or 7 good customers who buy from me and it works well for us this way" says Oliver.

One of the principal requirements of any successful organic growing operation is having a good crop rotation in place, both to maximize the efficient use of nutrients and to reduce

or eliminate any pest/disease burdens that would arise with continuous cropping. "Our typical rotation starts with a field in grass. After tilling, potatoes are the first year's crop, followed by a root crop such as carrots or parsnips in year two. After this, we go in with leeks or a brassica crop and then back to grass". According to Oliver, his options for purchasing certified organic seed have improved dramatically over the past couple of years. "It's becoming much easier to get what you want in organic seed than it was a few years ago, the selections are really improving. We source most of our seed from a company called Europrise and also from Fruit Hill Farm who are based in Cork". Derogations are available (subject to approval by Organic Trust) for the use of untreated non-organic seed in the event that

producers are unable to source organic seed, but Oliver says he uses this option less frequently nowadays.

In 2008, Oliver sought and received funding through the Scheme of Grant Aid for the Development of the Organic Sector, for construction of a shed and dungstead which now allow him to store and compost farmyard manure for spreading on his fields. "We buy in FYM from a couple of neighbouring farms which we store and compost here for about 9-10 months and then spread on the fields in the spring. Importing FYM from other farms is permitted under organic regulations as long as it comes

from extensively managed farms". The 40% capital grant has also allowed Oliver to purchase many specialist pieces of equipment for his farm. "I have found the capital grants really useful when I need to invest in new machinery. It just helps to get you through that financial hump when you buy a new machine".

Asked what advice he would have for anyone considering going into organic production, Oliver says it's important that people are aware of the potential markets for whatever they're intending to produce and they should spend some time doing a bit of research on the requirements etc. Also, when starting

out, people should be careful not to take on too much as small problems can mount up when they're new to the organic system and under pressure. "It's important to keep things manageable" says Oliver, "and keep a close eye on cash flow too, don't put yourself under too much pressure – get to know the system and your markets on a step by step basis".

It would be apparent to anyone visiting Oliver's farm that he has managed to create a highly viable and successful business. On a beautiful summer's day, working the land, among the Wicklow mountains, there's no better place to be.

National Organic Training Skillnet



The Organic Trust are very pleased to be involved with the National Organic Training Skillnet which provide a range of courses for new and established organic producers. NOTS is managed through a Steering Group which has representation from a number of entities including the Organic Trust. These courses range from the Introductory Course in Organic Production to a MSc PG Dip in Organic Farming. NOTS provides high quality, low cost training for the expanding organic sector throughout the Republic of Ireland. The NOTS training programme is available to farmers, growers, processors, food businesses, and consultants working in the organic food sector.

In addition to training, NOTS are keen to facilitate organic producers and processors into networks which can address issues and opportunities for the sector as a whole. Further details are available from www.nots.ie

Organic Trust Website



The Organic Trust website provides a huge range of information for both current and potential organic producers. Our Classifieds advertisements section provides real-time opportunities for organic producers to sell and buy products and services; application forms for grant and government schemes are available to download; the up to date organic standards manual plus amendments are available to download in searchable format; every Organic Trust member is

afforded the opportunity to formulate their own web page (free of charge) and the website also provides a huge range of up-to-the-minute news, event and other information of interest to those within the sector; those who are thinking of becoming involved or consumers who wish to know more about organic food and farming. We suggest that you see at first hand all that the website has to offer www.organictrust.ie

FARM PROFILE:

Gerard Grennan, Lismoyney, Clara, Co Offaly

Main enterprises; Milk, Dairy Offspring

From Eveline Gill



Gerard Grennan farms 158 acres near the village of Clara in Co. Offaly along with his son Darren. The main enterprise on the farm is organic milk which is sold to a local organic processor for organic yoghurt production.

Prior to conversion to organic farming, they milked 60 spring calving cows but the volatility in milk prices made Gerard look at other options. He attended the FETAC level 5 course on Organic Farming and found that the course made his decision for him. He said that to support two families after 2015, his options were to milk 100-120 cows as organic or have the headache of milking over 200 cows as conventional. The decision was a no-brainer and the farm entered conversion with the Organic Trust in 2010.

The farm was well set up with winter housing and no adaptations were needed as cows have access to cubicles

and a loose bedded shed. Gerard says when he finds that the cows prefer the cubicles, it is time to renew the straw in the loose bedded shed! However some slatted sheds are also partially bedded to meet the organic standards. One lesson learnt is that the more you invest in straw as bedding, the more FYM you have to spread on silage ground as slurry is only good for early grass. The farm has the option to import nutrients but at present the 400 bales of non-organic straw they buy in as bedding is balancing the nutrients sold out the gate in milk each day.

The organic production course showed him how valuable clover is in reducing costs, so he set about reseeding the farm. This also allowed him to build up a considerable silage bank on the holding. 25 acres are now in a 3 cut red clover silage with another 25 acres of white clover used for 2 cuts of silage and grazing. The farm has 18 paddocks with the aftergrass in the

white clover fields strip grazed. The plan is to always have an extra 4-5 months of silage in the pits for poor summers or long winters. This extra silage was invaluable during the 2012/2013 winter and they are building up this extra reserve again by sourcing extra red clover silage from a local organic cereal producer. Gerard also contracts out the rearing of heifers to a local organic farmer, with an additional 45 home bred heifers entering the farm next year.

The cows on the farm are British Friesians with an average milk yield of 5,750 litres per cow. The farm is 80% winter calving with stragglers in spring. The change to winter milking meant selling some of their spring calving cows and replacing these with autumn calving heifers.

The farm has 79 cows due to calve between the last week of September and the end of November and 16 in spring. In 2013/2014 the farm received a

flat winter milk price of 55 cent per litre plus VAT for the six months of October to March. Summer milk prices are currently 38.1 cent plus VAT. Gerard has the cost of sourcing c 7kgs of organic meal per cow which is fed only during winter housing- this is costing €470-€600 / ton depending on quantity and delivery method.

Herd health has never been better. There are no problems with Somatic cell count, fertility has improved along with cow weights. Gerard puts this down to the reduction in chemicals used on the farm. Cows are dried off by reducing the milking to once a day and then skipping days while the cows are out on a paddock with very little grass and some hay. Sealant is used and close monitoring is done for any signs of mastitis.

In the early days, they found the biggest hurdle was sourcing information as the nearest organic dairy farmer at the time was located in Roscommon. The 2012 Organic Farm Survey states that there were only 28 organic dairy farms in Ireland with just over 1,500 organic dairy cows. Gerard and Darren talked with as many local organic farmers as they could prior to entering organic production.

While they were very fortunate not to have to invest heavily in the farm, they are currently awaiting news on their organic grant aid application for 40% funding for a new meal bin, auger and feeding system. They are also planning on increasing cow numbers to 120 and are investigating combi-crops and zero grazing for the months of December and February to reduce reliance on bought-in feed.

They have found out that the farm is now profitable and able to support 2 families. There is strong demand for their product and bills to agri-suppliers have reduced. There is hope that a local organic processor will be providing farmers with a formal contract in the near future and this will allow for further investment in the farm with the use of grant aid schemes available under TAMS II.



Opportunities in Organic Dairying

From Gavin Lynch

The abolition of milk quota in 2015 could bring significant opportunities to those seeking to get into organic dairying, whether they are converting from conventional dairying or coming from within the organic livestock sector. While much of the current cheerleading for dairy farming is focused on scale and expansion, the organic option offers a viable alternative to farmers who are seeking to avoid the hype and cost of expansion and may be looking to put some distance between themselves and the conventional milk market post-quota.

An added benefit of organic dairy production is that it can open lots of doors in terms of on-farm processing, both big and small scale. From liquid milk sales to yoghurt and cheese-making, there are endless possibilities to add value to organic milk and a huge appetite (excuse the pun!) among the public for organic dairy products. According to the latest figures from Bord Bia (April 2014), almost 25% of organic purchases were yoghurt.

Existing organic farmers will have the opportunity to enter into milk production from next year onwards. In general, the returns from dairy farming are much better than most other livestock enterprises. Farmers will need to consider the suitability of their farm for dairying, i.e. if they are set up for rotational grazing and have sufficient land in one area for a viable grazing platform. Perhaps the biggest deliberation for organic farmers thinking of going into dairying is the level of investment required in terms of infrastructure and equipment. This can be significant depending on the farm situation and realistic figures allowing for price volatility must be used when calculating the cost of this investment.

For those who are currently involved in conventional dairying and are considering their options in the post-quota environment, the organic option is certainly worth some serious thought. It presents a realistic alternative to the 'get big or get out' paradigm which has come to dominate the conventional dairy sector of today.

TILLAGE/CEREALS/ANIMAL FEEDS FARM PROFILE.

Alan Jackson, Lacka, Co. Tipperary

Tillage, beef and animal feeds.

From Gavin Lynch

PR & Development Officer Organic Trust



Pictured: Minister of State, Tom Hayes (left) with Mel O'Rourke, Chairman of Organic Focus (back) and Alan at the launch of the Department of Agriculture's Organic Action Plan which took place on Alan's farm.

Alan Jackson farms 120 acres in Lacka, Co. Tipperary, about 6 miles outside of Birr in Co. Offaly. Originally run as a conventional store to beef system, Alan decided to convert to organic production back in 2010, with his farm achieving full organic status in May 2012. "The main reasons for choosing the organic option were to increase the profitability of the farm and to farm in a more sustainable way".

Currently there are 3 main enterprises on Alan's farm.

1. Store to beef system – Finishing in excess of 100 cattle.
2. Spring oats – Growing in excess of 40 acres of oats for Flahavans organic porridge production.
3. Buying in wheat and maize to process and sell as animal feed.

"We have roughly 47 acres of grassland, 45 of spring oats, 20 acres of red clover and about 8 acres of habitat area. Beef is the main enterprise on the farm. Currently store cattle are bought in from organic marts and privately from organic farms in

the autumn. These cattle are finished and sold directly to an organic processor. Half of the cattle are sold in January/February and the other half are sold off grass in the Autumn."

Currently, Alan is growing over 40 acres of oats. This is sold directly to Flahavans for their organic porridge. All oats are planted in the spring. "I believe that there will be less disease pressure and pest problems the shorter the crop is in the ground. All planting took place in April this year and crops are looking very promising especially where new ground has been planted."

The final element of Alan's farming activities is his feed processing business.

"In 2012 I purchased a corn roller which was grant aided. This allows me the option of treating and rolling all the grain together at the beginning of the season. Last year I bought in and treated over 60 tonnes of wheat. Approximately 40 tonnes of this was sold and the rest

was fed to my own stock. Last season I purchased 30 tonnes of maize. This had to be rolled twice to get the maize fine enough for the cattle to digest it properly. I believe that maize was extremely good for the fattening cattle as it is very high in energy."

Back in 2009, Alan reseeded 17 acres of grass that is now used for silage and grazing during the shoulders of the season. This was reseeded with the most up to date high yielding varieties including Aston Energy and Tyrella. White Clover varieties of Barblanca and Chieftain were also incorporated into the mix. In the past two years, Alan has sown 20 acres of red clover and grass sward (Merviot, Carrig and Rosetta) for use as silage and potentially, grazing also. He has also been reseeded some of his grazing ground, "There were different reseeded methods carried out. One part was sown after winter rape using a grass box and the other part was grazed off and sown with a



Pictured: Alan's wife Lucinda with their daughter Sienna and dogs. Some of Alan's recently built grant aided sheds are visible in the background.

grass tine harrow and spreader". Under organic regulations, producers must use certified organic seed where available. In the event that suitable organic seed is unavailable, a derogation can be sought to use untreated (undressed) non-organic seed.

The fertiliser requirements on Alan's farm are met with cattle slurry and farmyard manure. Dairy sludge is also supplied by Glanbia in Ballyragget (which is approved for use in organic production systems by the Organic Trust under their Certified Products Scheme). All of the sludge is spread in January and the farmyard manure is spread in the autumn.

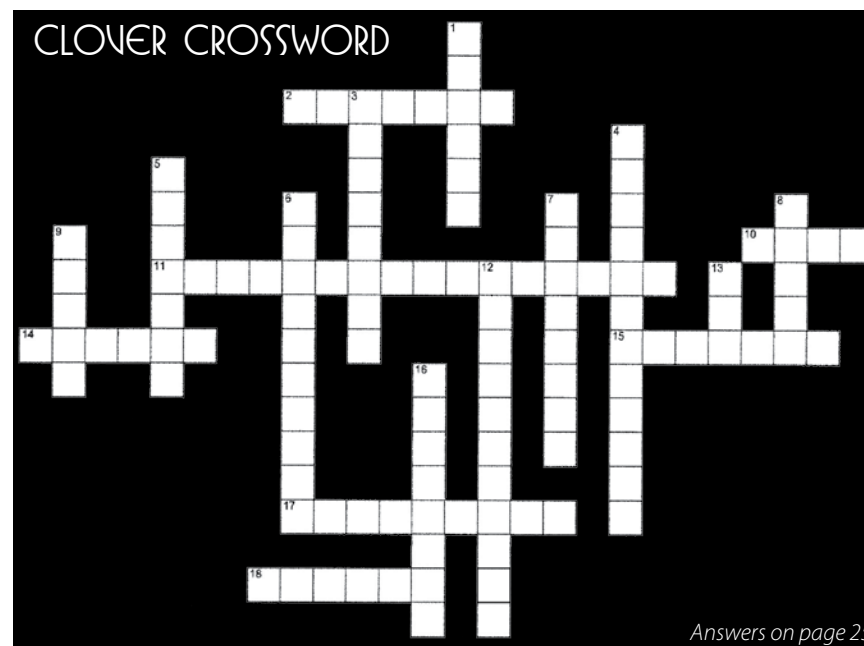
Speaking of his experience of the organic conversion process, Alan is quite positive. "I had very few difficulties

in converting to organic farming. The original existing cattle shed already had a straw lie back so this met the organic standards. I was already an Bord Bia approved and using a farm software program to record all cattle details so most of the paper work was already recorded. In my opinion there is very little additional paper work involved. When selling cattle to the factory all historical medical data from birth of every animal is required. This is time consuming but is extremely important as it provides complete traceability for every animal. In my opinion organic farmers need to plan their grass/crop nutrient requirements months or even years in advance as no artificial chemical fertiliser can be used. Soil tests are a must and then a strategy can be developed to bring field nutrients up to the required level. Once soil tests

are obtained, certain fields can then get priority when slurry and farmyard manure are being allocated. I believe that grass swards must contain a good portion of clover to get satisfactory yields. Over the last four years I have encountered very few problems converting and maintaining my organic license but I have had loads of questions. The Organic Trust was and is very helpful and is always on hand to answer any question I might have."

Like many others in the organic sector, Alan has made good use of the Scheme of Grant Aid for the Development of the Organic Sector. "Since 2010 I have invested a considerable amount of money in machinery, sheds, reseeded and fencing. In 2012 I built a 3 span shed. 2 spans for grain and 1 span for hay/straw. In 2014 I built a 4 bay slatted shed with a 16 foot slat and a 40 foot lie back. Between 2010 and 2013 I bought a bailer, corn roller, shear grab, silage fork, bale handler, grain bucket and a hay turner. All of these were bought under the organic scheme and I received a 40% ex VAT grant."

We asked Alan what advice he would have for someone considering getting into organic farming. "I believe that organic farming is a lot more technical than conventional farming. Soil and crop nutrients need to be examined in greater detail as it takes longer to build up soil fertility in an organic system. Farmers should not be afraid of the tighter regulations or the increased paper work."



ACROSS

- 2 Gather in the ripened crop
- 10 This group could train you to tie ropes or laces
- 11 Low input traditional agriculture system
- 14 A popular magazine and nitrogen fixer
- 15 Decomposed organic matter that makes good fertiliser
- 17 Year Organic Trust was established
- 18 Feed for livestock

DOWN

- 1 Mytilus edulis this Irish shellfish is very strong
- 3 Moving your crops reduces disease
- 4 Ireland's premier organic certification body
- 5 Strangely Minister for Defence as well?
- 6 St Paul's didn't take 2 years!!
- 7 Our community hosts for the last Organic Trust AGM
- 8 You have to concentrate to get onto this Ministerial appointed group
- 9 A hardy ancient grain grown mainly in Europe
- 12 Farming in water?
- 13 Keeping a lid on EU funding
- 16 Brian Boru, Brian O'Driscoll and our own Brian Maguire fought, played or worked here

Answers on page 25

ORGANIC MUSSEL PRODUCTION – PRODUCER PROFILE

Blackshell Farm

from Fergal Guilfoyle,

Organic Aquaculture Inspector with Organic Trust



The Blackshell mussel farm is nestled into the deep water between the islands of Clew Bay in County Mayo. The clean Atlantic Ocean flows into Clew Bay and provide ideal growing conditions for the small, bivalve molluscs which we call the blue mussel (*Mytilus edulis*). The farm was set up in the early 80's and has been happily producing over 250 tonnes of mussels per year since then.

The mussels are naturally seeded, by placing ropes in the water which then become settlement areas for the free floating larvae of the mussel. When the larvae feel that the time is right they will seek out a suitable area to settle and stick themselves to these ropes (and everything else they can find). These seeded ropes are then divided around the farm to grow into the mussels that you eat on a plate, which usually takes between 18 months and 2 years.

That's it - there is nothing else required to grow delicious, healthy mussels. The attached mussels will filter the seawater and remove the tiny plants and animals which float by. This food, which we call plankton, forms the

basis of the mussels diet and a single mussel can filter the food from 250l of seawater per day.

The Blackshell farm uses the most up to date and efficient production method, a system of continuous rope which is tied to floats at the surface. This rope is what the mussels are attached to and gives the mussels the space to grow and thrive. Michael Mulloy runs the business and is one of the original founders. The farm converted to the continuous rope method in 2004 as a means of reducing the waste associated with less efficient growing methods. Having always had an environmental awareness they wanted to continue to improve their environmental management and environmental credentials and saw the organic certification process as a natural fit.

"The conversion from standard to organic production was not a complicated task", says Michael Mulloy. "It was mainly about setting up the systems within the company that were required to ensure traceability and quality assurance. We had some of these systems already in place from previous quality assurance schemes

and this just needed to be modified to fit the organic production. The Organic Trust helped us every step of the way, they were easy to deal with and have been great to work with since. The conversion process doesn't take long, once the systems are in place the process is relatively quick and hassle free. Once we were certified, the surveillance is a single, annual audit and the odd spot check. As long as we keep the Organic Trust notified of any significant changes in our supply chain that's it, no hassle and we can then use the organic label on all of our products".

"The real advantages to us are twofold. It gives the management and staff a system to ensure that environmentally safe production processes are at the core of what we do. This gives the staff real motivation throughout their work and a feel-good factor as well. However it has to be cost effective, which it certainly is and it has to benefit the business from a sales point of view. Originally our clients were not 100% supportive; at the time there was no commercial sense in it for them to become organic. However since then they have rowed right in behind the organic certification and they see it as a real marketing success. It doesn't necessarily

mean more money for every batch of mussels but it makes them easier to sell and the demand for organic produce is growing. It helps to differentiate our product in the market place and gives the consumer the confidence to buy our mussels, knowing that they have been produced under certified organic principles in one of the cleanest parts of the world, Clew Bay on the wild Atlantic Coast of Ireland".

Market Conditions

The overall demand for organic products is growing. European organic sales grew by 6% in 2012 and this is expected to continue. Sales of organic products in the US grew by 12% in 2013 and a similar growth rate is expected in 2014 and 2015. The UK market has returned to growth in 2013 with a 3% rise. The future of organic production is sustainable and makes business sense. For more information contact the Organic Trust on 01 8530271 or www.organictrust.ie



Organic Aquaculture – Market Opportunities

from Mary Ferns

Most of the Irish Aquaculture & Shellfish production, both in its primary & final processed state is destined for the Continental market & in more recent times the Asian market. These markets are discerning regarding sustainability & animal welfare issues, environmental credentials and in more recent years such products must comply with eco/green & organic status / labels if they are to secure supermarket shelf space. Hence the logical way forward for Irish producers & processors, to remain in the marketplace and gain a competitive advantage, is to embrace organic certification.

Aquaculture producers and processors already comply with regulatory standards (water quality testing, stocking density, treatability, EIS, H&S, HACCP etc) for conventional production and a number of these

standards cross over with the standards for organic production. Hence the transition from conventional farming to organic farming & processing in a number of cases requires a limited number of specific changes to current practice both in production and administrative terms. Yet the advantages, in the longer term, should far outweigh the cost and time involved in switching to organic certification. The regulations should present no problems to Irish farmers and processors in all the major species i.e. mussels, oysters, salmon, trout etc in converting to organic status. The Organic Trust approved organic logo is a recognisable logo throughout the EU and further afield. Therefore, the future looks very bright for all aspects of Irish organic aquaculture production.

Strange Food Facts

Worcestershire sauce is made from dissolved fish

Worcestershire sauce, the popular English sauce, is made from dissolved anchovies. The anchovies are soaked in vinegar until they have completely melted. The sauce contains the bones and all.

Strange Food Facts

The largest food item on a menu is roast camel

The camel is stuffed with a sheep's carcass, which is stuffed with chickens, which are stuffed with fish, which are stuffed with eggs. This feast is sometimes featured in Bedouin weddings.

Organics around the World

Zimbabwe: It's an unlikely location for an organic success story given the constant political turmoil but Zimbabwe's organic sector seems to be thriving. Having struggled along without any government support for a number of years, the Zimbabwe Organic Producers and Promoters Association (ZOPPA) now certifies over 3,600 organic smallholders producing mainly horticultural crops. A huge step in this journey was the development of a set of national organic standards for Zimbabwe which ZOPPA helped put in place. Achieving a premium for organic produce in a country where, understandably, the only selection criteria at a food market would be the price, has not been an easy task. However, ZOPPA has managed to broker a deal with one of Zimbabwe's leading supermarket chains where their producers can supply produce directly to the supermarket and dedicated shelf space is given to organic food. As part of this, ZOPPA has trained supermarket staff on the differences between organic and conventionally produced food allowing them to advise customers accordingly. The supermarkets also pay the producers within 24 hours of delivery which is a huge bonus in a country where payment terms are often between 30 and 90 days.

Brussels: The proposed European Soil Framework Directive, after spending years in political and bureaucratic limbo has finally been shelved by the European Commission. The proposal had been the subject of fierce lobbying by certain member states, agribusiness and farming organisations throughout Europe since its inception in 2006. It was viewed by many to be yet another level of bureaucracy and red tape to be dealt with at farm level and many argued that existing national regulations were enough to protect European soils. While there may be some merit to these arguments, the fact remains that annually, European farmland is losing topsoil through erosion, and degrading it through poor management practices and pollution. Existing laws and regulations have proved to be absolutely inadequate to halt this degradation and loss of soil throughout Europe. It still remains to be seen what, if anything, will be done by the EU to act on soil protection.

Interesting Fact: One hectare of healthy soil contains approximately;

1.3 tonnes of earthworms
1 tonne of arthropods
3 tonnes of bacteria
4 tonnes of fungi

India: India's newly elected Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has indicated that he would like to see more organic farming in India. With the small north-eastern state of Sikkim about to become India's first fully certified organic state, Mr. Modi has indicated that his government will support organic farmers in accessing global markets.

Elsewhere, the government of the Indian state of West Bengal has constructed no less than 775 vermicompost units in 2013/14 in an attempt to meet the increasing demand from organic cultivation. West Bengal Food and Horticulture minister, Krishnendu Narayan Chowdhury said nowadays health conscious people were demanding organic products.

"Organic certification is an essential criteria for organic farming. Planning is going on to produce organic products including certification". The minister said adding vermicompost would help improve soil health and production of organic crops.

Fiji: The remote Fijian island of Cicia has launched a new business in organic produce that could prove to be a template for other developing communities around the world. The island declared itself chemical free and fully organic eight years ago and is now producing food that's attracting the interest of foreign buyers. Certifying organic produce in such a remote location brought a specific challenge to these Fijian islanders due to the cost of bringing inspectors to the island. With the help of the UN and POETCom (Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community) the Cicians set up their own certification panel which meets on a fortnightly basis and maintains a complete and auditable record trail. The certification model developed for Cicia has since been emulated by 5 more remote Pacific islands.

USA: With negotiations on the TTP (Trans-Atlantic Trade Partnership) in full swing, any development on US organic standards has the potential to impact

organic producers here in Europe. Recent protests by organic associations and consumer groups in the US against what they perceive to be an attempt by the USDA to dilute the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and hence, organic standards will be watched closely on this side of the Atlantic. Among the contentious issues at hand are how the 'National List' of permitted inputs for organic agriculture is controlled. Some organisations believe that larger food companies who have come into the organic sector through their acquisition of successful organic businesses are trying to weaken organic standards to suit their own interests in the sector. In somewhat related news from the US, the USDA has finally moved to restrict the use of antibiotics in organic apple and pear production.

Chile: Back in March, the European Union responded to the request made by Chile to be included in the European list of third countries recognised as being equivalent in organic farming; a process in which Chile has been working towards for several years. The European Commission will now move to carry out a field audit in order to verify in practice, the effective application of ecological rules by the domestic industry.

If Chile gain acceptance onto this list it will simplify the entry of Chilean organic products into the EU.

United Arab Emirates: In news that should be music to the ears of our Minister for Agriculture and Biodiversity, demand for organic produce in the UAE is growing rapidly. If this news were not enough to light a fire under our food marketing board, apparently consumers in the United Arab Emirates trust organic products from the EU more than they do products from Asia or the Middle East. Research by 'Euromonitor International' shows that the UAE consumers have a propensity towards European organic products.

The demand for organic product in the United Arab Emirates continues to grow. Strong economic growth will increase the purchasing power of UAE citizens and a widening middle class will seek out foods of high quality. Greater than 30% growth is expected by the year 2018 just for packaged organic foods.

"Why do farmers farm...?"

Always the answer is: Love. They must do it for love"

by Gavin Lynch,

PR & Development Officer Organic Trust Ltd

These words of renowned conservationist and farmer, Wendell Berry, really resonated with me upon reading them recently. As a young farmer myself, I often feel that any justification for doing what I do tends to defy all logic. Some people say that farming is a lifestyle. Well, yes it is; it's a lifestyle that often demands 80-90 hour work weeks, where things like weekends and holidays are something that other people enjoy. Some would say that it's nice to work outdoors. This can be true but during a long Irish winter, there are many days that no reasonable person would consider putting a dog outside, and yet Irish farmers will, day in - day out, don a hat, tell themselves they're not made of sugar and plough on, herding, hoeing, feeding, forking.

This may sound like a complaint but I can assure you, it is not. I wouldn't change what I do in a million years. In fact it is a testament to a deep love of farming that Ireland still has so many farmers, approximately 140,000. They most certainly don't do it for the money. The most recent figures from Teagasc (Ireland's agricultural research institute) put Ireland's average farm income at €21,500. This compares rather unfavourably to the average Irish industrial wage of €43,100.

And so we come back to Wendell Berry's assessment; "They must do it for love". Although this is a very abstract concept, I believe it encompasses some very real aspects of a farmer's outlook. A connection with the land and with nature, a sense of stewardship, taking

pride in producing quality food. These notions are enshrined in the principles of organic farming and have particular resonance in the case of the family farm. The idea that the land you farm isn't yours as such, that you are merely a caretaker for future generations is essential in encouraging ecological and responsible practices. Conversely, if we fail to protect the family farm model of agriculture, environmental stewardship and food production will increasingly fall into the domain of corporate agriculture. Motivations become purely financial, short term gains trump all other concerns. The emphasis turns to quantity of production rather than quality.

While the vast majority of the world's food is produced by peasant farmers within the family farm model, in Europe, we are seeing a gradual shift towards agriculture dominated by a corporate paradigm, increasingly viewed solely in terms of efficiency and commodity price. This 'efficiency' is measured using the sole metric of yield or output, disregarding inputs, environmental impacts and societal impacts also - the cheaper you can produce it, the more efficient you are. In the words of the American sustainable agriculture advocate, Tom Philpott, this is akin to determining the health of a steroid addled bodybuilder simply by measuring the girth of their biceps.

To safeguard the future of rural societies, families and indeed, quality food production we must seek a new definition of efficiency. It is difficult to say exactly how we will define it but

perhaps a good starting point would be to point out what 'efficient' agriculture will NOT be. Efficient agriculture will NOT rely on the exploitation of farmers/labour. Efficient agriculture will NOT necessitate the damage and destruction of the natural world. Efficient agriculture will NOT pride itself on how cheaply it can produce food. Efficient agriculture will NOT justify the loss of thousands of rural jobs and family farms every year as being 'necessary consolidation'. Efficient agriculture CANNOT be attained through policies designed to maximise corporate profit. Efficient agriculture CANNOT be sustainably intensified. The reward for being an efficient farmer should be more profit and/or a better quality of life, not merely staying in business for a few years more.

A key tenet of organic farming is that through diversity, we build resilience. A pasture of 30 different grasses and herbs is better for animal and environment than a monoculture with no variety. This concept would hold equally true for Ireland's rural communities. To ensure food security, we need to protect the small farmers, the market gardeners and the artisans. From shops to suppliers, schools and services; the rural economy hinges on the strength of the farming sector. We have a wealth of farmers and we must protect this diversity.

Thriving rural communities will not be built or maintained by businesses producing commodities; they will be built on family farms, producing quality food.

Next Issue of Clover watch out for...



Mossfield Organic Farm which produces the now famous range of **Mossfield Handmade Organic Farm Cheeses**, plus milk, yoghurt and buttermilk is a real organic success story. The farm is located six miles from Birr in County Offaly at the foot of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. The majority of the farm consists of limestone pasture which produces lush grass interwoven with wild herbs and clover which provides ideal grazing for the herd of eighty cows. Ralph Haslam has been farming at Mossfield since 1970 and in 1999 converted to organic farming. This inspirational success story will be profiled in the next issue of Clover www.mossfield.ie



Another similarly successful organic entity is **Kilbeggan Organic Foods** which includes the renowned Kilbeggan Organic Porridge Oats – again, we will highlight the very real success story associated with this entity through a profile of its owner Pat Lalor <http://kilbegganorganicfoods.com/>

The next issue of Clover will also contain further producer profiles to include **Organic Egg and Table Bird Production** which will feature both large and small entities.

Date for your diary – Organic Trust AGM

The Organic Trust AGM will be held on Sunday October 19th 2014 and will very kindly be hosted by Rod & Julie Calder-Potts of Highbank Organic Farm & Orchards (www.highbankorchards.com) The morning session is confined to Organic Trust licensees but the afternoon session – which will feature a keynote address from renowned organic advocate Anya Hultberg from Denmark – will be open to the public (prior booking essential!).

Anya Hultberg is an inspirational speaker from the Copenhagen House of Food (CHOF). The CHOF was set up as an independent non-commercial foundation by the City of Copenhagen in 2007; their mission was to create a nourishing, sustainable and joyful food culture in the public domain. Organic food was identified as fitting the mission criteria and CHOF are aiming to have all of Copenhagen's 900 public kitchens convert to using

90% organic ingredients by 2015. They are well on their way to reaching this target as all public kitchens were using an average of 75% organic ingredients by the end of 2013. All those who attended Anya's presentation at the 2013 National Organic Food Fair were inspired by her enthusiasm for the project. Her keynote speech at the Organic Trust AGM on 19th October 2014 is one speech not to miss from this green public procurement expert!!



Anya Hultberg and Helen Scully

Organic Census

A picture of organic production in Ireland was undertaken by Dan Clavin of the Teagasc Rural Economy and Development Programme, Athenry, Co Galway. This resulted in the publication of the 2012 Organic Census (most recent information available) and provides an interesting picture of the

area converted to organic production in Ireland, together with a county by county breakdown. The main organic enterprises and associated statistics are dealt with in detail in this very informative paper which is available from the Organic Trust office – simply email organic@iol.ie

Upcoming Events

The Organic Trust, in collaboration with IOFGA and supported by the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine are rolling out a series of promotional events for the Organic Sector later in the year. These include:

- The National Organic Food Fair – detailed article included in this edition of Clover
- Networking Event for producers, processors and retailers
- Forums to explore "The Economics of Organic Production"
- A programme of Organic education for Transition Year Students
- Organic Food Awards

Details of the dates, times and venues for these events will be provided to Organic Trust members as soon as they become available – watch for details on www.organictrust.ie

ORGANIC FOOD PROCESSING Adding value to your produce

With pressure still on farm incomes, we see more and more farmers seeking to supplement their earnings through taking up off-farm employment. This move towards "part time" farming is not sustainable in the long run. Part-time farming inevitably leads to a drain of skills from the land and a greater dependence on external income. If Ireland is to develop its artisan local food sector and protect our emerging food culture, we need these farming skills to remain on the land and indeed to develop new skills to add value to our produce.

There is no sector of food production that is greater suited to on-farm processing than the organic sector. Organic certification, often seen as a chore, offers a business template for any new entrants into food processing. The requirements for organic processing certification are the very foundations of the requirements to setting up a good business.

GETTING CERTIFIED

Meeting the requirements of organic processing certification is straightforward and encourages good practice within your company. There are basically 5 requirements to achieving certification:

Verification of ingredients – organic processors are required to verify that the ingredients they are using are authentically organic; this achieved by obtaining an up to date organic licence from the supplier of each of the organic ingredients they use.

Segregation – Organic food producers are required to demonstrate that there is clear segregation of organic food items from non-organic food items, both in storage and in process. This requirement usually does not apply to on-farm organic processing as these producers generally only use organic produce in their business.

Traceability – organic regulations require that the producers of organic food have full traceability for all the ingredients used and all of the food items produced. As we have seen from the recent horsemeat scandals and dioxins in pork (both scandals did

not involve any organic products), a lack of traceability can bring a food sector to its knees. Organic food has a proud record in this area through the sensible application of the traceability requirements. Organic Trust inspectors are well qualified and experienced in the area of traceability to recognise that simple but clear systems work best.

Mass Balance – this requires organic processors to demonstrate that they have only produced the quantity of organic finished goods for the quantity of organic ingredients they have used. Whilst the main function of this requirement is to ensure that no accidental or intentional substitution of organic ingredients with conventional ingredients takes place, it also serves to making a business more efficient in ingredient usage and reduction of waste. For many small manufacturing companies the very first time they take a critical look at items such as yields, waste levels and other inefficiencies is when they sit down with their inspector at their first organic inspection. The number of processors who are shocked when the inspector identifies waste levels and associated cost of waste is huge. Generally at the second inspection we see waste levels plummet and in many cases the savings outweigh the cost of certification.

Labelling – an area of the regulations that appears to frighten processors most. The requirements for the labelling of organic produce are quite simple and straightforward. The Organic Trust have produced easy to follow guideline documents for labelling of organic produce and all labels are required to be submitted to the Organic Trust for review prior to printing. This review will inform the processor of any amendments required to make the labelling compliant with organic regulations.

There are of course a number of other requirements but these are generally in line with standard food regulations. Some examples of these other requirements are:

- Registration of your food production with the HSE
- General requirements for hygiene and pest control

- Appropriate handling, storage and distribution practices.

The Organic Trust strongly feels that a confident, personable and well informed inspectorate are key to instilling confidence in the system from our members. Our inspectorate team constantly achieve excellent reports from independent assessments of their work. A programme of ongoing training and review ensures the highest quality of service to our members in this area.

CASE STUDIES

The demand for local, sustainable food has remained steady even through the recent recession. The Soil Association records that sales in organic locally produced food have risen by 3% in the first half of this year – this is against a backdrop of falling food sales in other areas. The Irish market is underdeveloped in this area so the time is now right to consider entering this sector.

To provide a flavour of the potential in this market, we look at a small selection of successful practitioners – this is just a beginning – future issues of Clover will continue to explore the potential in this market by profiling others who have also proven their entrepreneurial credentials in this value-added area.

DUNANY FLOUR



Andrew Workman has grown organic cereals for many years at his farm in Co. Louth. Looking at the offerings for flour in the shops, Andrew identified a niche in the market for a high quality organic flour that was grown, milled and packed on the farm.

This unique selling point offers the consumer complete confidence in the quality and provenance of the product. No one cares more about the quality of the flour than the person who has toiled in the fields to produce the grain

from which it is made.

The Workman's specialise in growing old and traditional varieties of grain to produce their range of wholemeal, rye and spelt flour as well as their renowned extra coarse wholemeal flour ideal for producing delicious soda breads. Dunany will soon commence growing organic buckwheat to produce a totally gluten free organic flour.

All of Andrew's organic flour is produced on stone mills to make a soft, fine flour.

The offering from Dunany is simple and as such is appealing to the consumer. They grow it, mill it and pack it. The simplicity of the offering is communicated through the uncomplicated clean packaging. In a world of faceless companies where you find that your flour is full of improvers, raising agents and bulkers Dunany Organic Flour is a truly refreshing product on the market.

The innovation shown by Andrew and his family has turned the farm into a hive of activity. Their achievements are an example to any farmer considering how to develop a value added product on their farm.

HIGHBANK ORGANIC ORCHARDS



Highbank Organic Orchards in Cuffesgrange Co Kilkenny has become a by-word for innovation and enterprise. The heritage organic orchards produce the perfect organic fruit for the products Julie and Rod Calder-Potts have brought to the market.

Apart from their renowned range of organic apple juices, Highbank now offer high quality traditional organic proper cider and medieval honeyed cider fermented by the natural yeasts that occur on the farm. The organic cider range includes an Organic Drivers Cider which offers all the taste and refreshment of standard cider without the alcohol!

As well as the organic beverages, Highbank's latest addition to the family of apple based products is their show stopping Organic Orchard Syrup. Made solely with organic apples, this versatile product works as a healthy alternative to the heavily processed sugar-based syrups on the market. Equally as good on sweet and savoury foods, it has excellent potential as an import replacement for maple syrup. When you

consider that each bottle of Organic Orchard Syrup contains 25 plus organic apples, it represents excellent value for money.

The farm itself with its beautiful outbuildings has become a centre for promotion and education. Through a series of events hosted by Highbank, artisan food producers get an opportunity to promote their products and get valuable feedback from the general public. One of the most popular of these events is "Meet The Maker" which gives food producers and the public a rare opportunity to interact with one another, not just on their own food products but issues facing the sector as a whole.

Julie and Rod's work in this area is creating an awareness and interest in organic food from which the whole sector benefits.

SECOND NATURE OILS

You could say Kitty Colchester's



love for great organic food is in her blood! Well considering her parents Charlotte and Ben Colchester were two of Ireland's organic pioneers, this comes as no surprise.

From the farm in Urlingford, Co Kilkenny Kitty has developed an exciting range of culinary organic oils. For many years Rapeseed Oil has been under appreciated. Apart from the clean fresh flavour and versatility in cooking, the oil matches and in many areas outperforms olive oil when it comes to health benefits.

The Colchester's grow, harvest, cold press and bottle the oils - all at the farm. Cold pressing preserves many of the health benefits found in the oil. To get more information on the specific health benefits of organic rapeseed oil visit <http://secondnatureoils.com/health-benefits/>

Apart from the straight Organic Rapeseed Oil which is available in 250ml, 500ml and 5L sizes, Kitty has developed a range of flavoured Organic Rapeseed Oils - Mandarin Infused, Chilli Infused, Rosemary Infused and Lemon Infused all are available in 250 ml bottles.

It is heartening to see the next generation of organic producers keeping the tradition of great organic

food going and injecting their own innovative ideas which ensures fresh and exciting offerings in this expanding market.

CONCLUSION

Organic producers are in a unique position to add value to their produce. Recent surveys show that local food and the provenance of that food is becoming more and more important to the consumer.

There is a generous Capital Grant Scheme available from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine specifically for certified organic operators (please contact Helen Scully 01 8530271 or organic@iol.ie for details) or visit the Organic Trust website for full details - Home page under 'Grant schemes' www.organictrust.ie

As you will see from the case studies indicated earlier, there are opportunities to develop a business from your own farm. There are many advantages for the producer, consumer and the community generally from this system of food production such as:

- Extra income for the farmer
- Shortening of the manufacturing chain
- Potential employment in rural communities
- Increasing organic agricultural production protects rural environments
- Knowing the provenance of the food is important to consumers
- Revenue earned at local level gets spent at local level which has a positive effect on services and enterprises in the locality
- Food processing in the locality creates an interest in food generally

Trust in our food has been dented by recent food scandals. The organic movement has its roots in communities approaching farmers to produce food in a way that was not available to them from the supermarket shelves. This demand from the concerned consumer has developed to requiring processed foods that they know and trust. Organic on-farm processing ticks all the boxes to fill this consumer demand and the lack of development in the Irish market offers an opportunity to organic producers to create a business that benefits the producer, consumer, environment and economy all at the same time.

For enquiries about organic processing please contact Helen Scully on 01 8530271 or at organic@iol.ie

Top of the Shops Focus on retailers

A couple of years ago the Organic Trust Limited made a concerted drive to encourage retailers into the organic system through offering excellent value-for-money certification.

The policy was rolled out to extend consumer confidence and to encourage retailers to look at the value in stocking organic produce.

Today the Organic Trust is the recognised go-to certification body for all retailers serious about attracting organic consumers to their business - just look at how the family of organically certified retailers has grown over the last few years!!!

THE ORGANIC SUPERMARKET MAIN STREET BLACKROCK CO DUBLIN



Ireland's first organic supermarket offering the widest range of organic produce that can be found under one roof in Ireland. Darren Grant and his team have worked tirelessly to bring together a complete range of organic food that includes fresh organic fruit and vegetables, dairy, bread, meat, confectionary, wine and much more. The good news is that you don't have to live near the Organic Supermarket to try their excellent range of organic products as they now offer a nationwide delivery service! For full details visit www.organicsupermarket.ie

THE HAPPY PEAR

GREYSTONES CO WICKLOW



The Happy Pear in Greystones is a must for all food lovers. The brain child of brothers Stephen and David Flynn, the shop offers a huge range of organic fruit, vegetables and dried goods. The shop also has an excellent café attached which offers a great range of salads, soups, mains and cakes - many made from organic ingredients. If you wish to order on line or just check out the shop

and café visit www.thehappypear.ie

O'CONNOR'S SUPERVALU

SHOP STREET, WESTPORT, CO MAYO



The Kavanagh family have retailing in their blood. The Kavanagh Group are Ireland's largest independent retail

company with sixteen stores across Ireland and the UK. The supermarket in the picturesque town of Westport has an award-winning fish counter that offers a wide range of local produce including organic salmon. There is plenty of other organic produce on offer throughout the store.

MANNA ORGANIC SHOP

KILCULLEN CO KILDARE



The Manna Organic Food Store is part of The Bridge Community in Kilcullen. The Camphill Communities across Ireland provide an integrated community life for adults with special needs and their co-workers. The shop which is run by Pauline Fagan and her support team, offers fresh organic fruit, vegetables, eggs and an array of organic dried goods. The cabin style shop is a real treat to visit, not only for the unique and attractive lay out but for the friendly and welcoming atmosphere you receive from all of the staff. Well worth a visit!

SELECT STORES

DALKEY CO DUBLIN



The award winning Select Stores is the "Hub" of Dalkey town when it comes to good food and healthy eating. Customers can get lots of advice on optimum nutrition in a friendly atmosphere. The store

offers a large range of local organic produce. Oliver McCabe has a passion for good food which can only truly be appreciated by a visit to the store in Dalkey; failing this you should visit their very active and informative website at www.selectstores.ie - we feel a visit will quickly follow!

ORGANICO HEALTH FOOD SHOP, BAKERY & CAFÉ

BANTRY CO CORK



What can only be described as a one stop shop for good food, the Organico Shop, Bakery and Café is a Valhalla for food lovers. A sister team of Hannah and Rachel Dare ably supported by a friendly and enthusiastic team provide an excellent range of fresh organic food in their shop with many organic ingredients used in their bakery and café produce. Organico offer an online facility as well as an informative blog at their website www.organico.ie

FARRELLY'S BUTCHERS

DELGANY CO WICKLOW.



Farrelly's butchers on the Main Street in Delgany Co Wicklow is one of the few remaining family-run butchers that slaughter their own produce. The brother team of Padraic and Anthony Farrelly primarily source their organic beef and lamb from the Emmet family at Altidore Organic Farm in Kilpeddar in Co Wicklow which must make it the shortest route-to-market in the country. Farrelly's stock a wide range of 'good food' items in their shop, which is well worth a visit.

THE FARM SHOP

MOVILLE CO DONEGAL

The Farm Shop in Moville is Ireland's most northerly good food store. The



shop which is run by husband and wife team Jo & Geoff Fowler, is a showcase for many local and organic growers. Jo & Geoff also farm organically on the peninsula and have a deep understanding of what good food really means. Whilst all of the produce available in the shop is excellent, a special mention has to go to the range of the fruit preserves made by Jo – the strawberry jam is a personal favourite and worth the three and a half hour drive from Dublin to taste!

THE FOOD STORE CLAREMORRIS CO MAYO



The Food Store is a comprehensive culinary destination in the County Mayo town of Claremorris which goes the extra mile when it comes to providing its customers with an exciting range of foods. A family-run business owned by Niall Heffernan, The Food Store offers an excellent range of fresh and dried organic and local foods. The Food Store was the winner of the coveted Retail Excellence Ireland Award for National Retail Store 2012.

NESTORS SUPERVALU ORANMORE CO GALWAY



Galway natives Tom and John Nestor started their retail business with a fruit & vegetable shop in Fr Griffith Road in the late 1980's. Now some 34 years later they have taken everything they learned about fresh produce over the years and applied it to their excellent SuperValu store in Oranmore. Upon entering Nestor's, the senses are hit with the colour and smells of fresh produce including bakery, fruit & vegetables, fish and meat. Local certified organic salmon is available from the fish counter along with a myriad of other organic fresh and

grocery products.

TESCO IRELAND LIMITED STORES NATIONWIDE TESCO IRELAND

Tesco Ireland is one of Ireland's largest retail chains. Employing over 15,000+ staff in its 142 stores around the country. Tesco sell a large range of organic fresh and grocery products and in selected stores they offer freshly baked organic bread from their in-store bakeries.

THE MUSGRAVE GROUP STORES NATIONWIDE



The Musgrave Group are well known to us through their various brands such as Supervalu, Centra, Londis, Daybreak, Mace and others. This Cork based family business is renowned for their support for local producers. The Musgrave Group commission a number of organic products in Ireland for their own brand lines. Many Supervalu branches have taken up Organic Trust membership in their own right.

NOLAN'S SUPERMARKET VERNON AVENUE CLONTARF DUBLIN 3



Nolan's of Clontarf is a name synonymous with good food for many years in Dublin. One of the capital's best known and successful independent supermarkets Nolan's have a long history of supporting Irish organic food producers. Outside dedicated organic shops Nolan's offers the most comprehensive range of organic produce and products that can be found anywhere in the country.

CAVISTON'S FOOD EMPORIUM GLASTHULE VILLAGE CO DUBLIN

The Caviston Family have been purveyors of fine foods since the 1940s. Peter Caviston will be familiar to most food lovers through his many published



articles and appearances on television regarding gourmet foods. This family run store in the heart of Glasthule provides a wide range of artisan food from their cheese counter, home bakery, fish counter, fresh fruit and vegetables and delicatessen products. The family team at Caviston's have long been devoted to organic food and offer an excellent selection in many departments.

COUNTRY CHOICE KENYON STREET NENAGH CO TIPPERARY



Country Choice delicatessen, café and supply business has been the life's work of Peter and Mary Ward for over 30 years. Peter and Mary's passion for great food is legendary. The Country Choice store is an Aladdin's Cave of excellent food offerings from Ireland and beyond. The delicatessen counter is packed with cooked meats and salads that will have you drooling from the moment you set eyes on it. Peter has sourced some very special organic produce from Irish and Continental sources that are available all year round in the store

BESHOFF'S THE MARKET CAFÉ AND TAPAS BAR

WEST PIER HOWTH CO DUBLIN



The Beshoff's store and café is located on the beautiful West Pier of the harbour in Howth. Like all busy markets there's always a wonderful buzz of expectancy and activity at 'The Market' at Beshoffs. It's a lovely place to be and over the years it has developed a warm welcoming atmosphere that everyone enjoys. Shoppers enjoy it for its enticing displays and magnificent selections of fish, organic fruits and vegetables, organic meats, poultry and

wonderful gourmet foods.

THE BRIDGE STREET CO-OP KENMARE CO KERRY



The word co-operative is bandied about so much in relation to businesses these days that it is hard to know the true meaning anymore. Well a good example of a true co-op can be found at Bridge Street Co-op in Kenmare. The aims of the co-op are to reduce whole food prices by side stepping traditional trading routes by forging relationships with other co-ops and dealing directly with producers. This is a genuine worker's co-op owned and managed by its workers. The co-op offers a large selection of organic produce both loose and pre-packed. It is a genuine aim of the co-op to make good food affordable to all and this is reflected in the very good value offered in the store.

EATS OF EDEN THOMAS STREET, LIMERICK



Eats of Eden now Limerick's premier health food store was ahead of its time when it began trading in Limerick in the early 80s. Whilst the awareness of herbal remedies and food supplements was quite low back then, their perseverance has paid off. This bright and friendly store offers a full range of organic wholefoods and supplements.

THE HOPSACK THE SWAN CENTER LOWER RATHMINES ROAD DUBLIN 6



Fin and Kate Murray have followed in their parents footsteps with a love of great food and a dedication to informing the public in the way in which good nutrition can benefit their lives. A friendly and informed staff are always on hand to offer advice from how to prepare meals from the array of whole foods in store to how to deal with ailments. The shop was extended in the recent past and always

has a good range of fresh organic fruit and vegetables in stock.

HUDSON'S WHOLEFOODS BALLYDEHOB CO CORK



Hudson's Wholefoods is a family run business established over 25 years ago. The shop that now contains an in-store bakery and vegetarian café has become a focal point for organic food lovers in West Cork. Gillian Hudson and her team offer a friendly and welcoming service and the range of freshly prepared organic foods is second to none. Keep an eye out for the online shop coming soon to their website at www.hudsonswholefoods.com

MEANWELL WHOLEFOODS ENNIS & KILRUSH CO CLARE



Meanwell Wholefoods are family run wholefood stores located in Ennis and Kilrush Co Clare. The shops offer a vast array of wholefoods and related products. The shops carry a selection of organic seeds, nuts, dried fruit and cereals as well as some local fresh organic vegetables. The staff at the Meanwell shops are very friendly and well informed regarding nutrition and healthy living. They have an active facebook page which keeps customers informed of new products and offers being run in the stores.

THE QUAY CO-OP SULLIVAN'S QUAY CORK CITY



The Quay Co-op is a worker's co-operative based in the heart of Cork City. The Co-op has a vegetarian restaurant, in-house bakery and shop on the site. The shop sells a large array of organic fruits, vegetables and grocery items as well as organic wine, seaweed products, health supplements and organic and natural cosmetics. The convenient location of the shop coupled with the opportunity to sample the delicious vegetarian food

from the restaurant makes the Quay Co-op a must see for anyone visiting or living in Cork.

THE ORGANIC STORE BIRR, CO OFFALY



Jonathan Haslam was no stranger to organic food when he opened his Organic Good Food Store in Birr Co Offaly. His allegiance to organic food stems from the fact that he was raised nearby on his parents renowned Mossfield Organic Farm who are artisan producers of award winning organic milk, cheese and yoghurts. Jonathan's love and appreciation of good organic food is evident from the vast array of fresh and ambient organic products crammed into the store. Well worth a visit!!

Summary

All of the retail members of the Organic Trust have continued to show a strong commitment to organic produce even through difficult economic circumstances. The organic producers rely on the commitment of these retailers to get their produce to the general public. Recent reports from Bord Bia and from our neighbours in the UK show growth once again in the organic market and this would not have been possible without the belief retailers continued to show in the sector.

In tandem with these stores, we must not forget the direct retailers at farmer's markets who brave all kinds of weather to promote organic produce and communicate the message directly to the public.

CERTIFIED Organic Compost
Cabry
Quigleys Point
Co. Donegal
Ph. 087 950 9598

The only certified organic compost produced in Ireland. Stockists nationwide.

www.livinggreen.ie

REAP THE REWARDS FROM RESEEDING

Dan Clavin¹, Paul Fox² and Mark Coyne²

¹Teagasc, Rural Economy and Development Programme, Athenry, Co. Galway

²Teagasc Advisory Service, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

Permanent grass clover leys are a vital component of productive organic grassland farms. In all, there are 3 main ways to re-seed - full reseeding of permanent pastures, under-sowing with a cereal crop and thirdly over-sowing onto an existing sward. In this article aspects of full reseeding of permanent pastures will be discussed.

The objectives of reseeding permanent pastures with grass clover swards are to:

1. Increase the overall productivity of the farm
- Increase the carrying capacity (stocking rate)
- Increase the quality, utilisation, palatability and mineral content of the sward
2. Create a sward that is responsive to soil nutrient inputs
3. Allow white clover to establish and be maintained

How will you gain?

Grass-clover swards are the cheapest source of feed for ruminant animals. Well established grass-clover swards can produce up to 40% more dry matter compared to old permanent pasture even with zero N application. This additional grass yield is particularly noticeable in the Spring and Autumn. If well managed, these grass-clover swards can last up to 15 years. Despite this, reseeding levels in Ireland are low. Less than 2 per-cent of our annual grassland area is reseeded annually. Nationally there is huge potential to increase output of organic beef, lamb and milk from cheap grass-clover swards.

Principles of re-seeding with grass-clover swards

The objective must be to achieve by the Spring of the first year after sowing, a full dense ground cover of grass and clover such that the sward is capable of full productivity in the first harvest year, including the Spring growing period.

In order to do this, special emphasis needs to be placed on:

1. Soil fertility - eg. FYM and slurry

- "feed the soil to feed the plant".

2. High levels of white clover in the grass-seed mix
3. Correct timing of sowing
4. Good levels of management pre and post-sowing to control weeds and create a dense sward.

Which re-seeding method to choose?

A common question asked by many farmers who decide to reseed is 'What is the best method of reseeding to establish a good grass-clover sward?'

Recently reseeding methods demonstration for both conventional and organic farmers was organised by the authors in Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath to address this question.

Farmers have a wide range of establishment methods to choose from, whether they be plough-based or minimum cultivation. The demonstration in Kilbeggan examined a range of reseeding methods, using machines which were available to local farmers in the area.

Benefits of Ploughing for Reseeding

Some farmers choose to plough when reseeding, as it provides an opportunity to level fields, particularly after land reclamation work. Ploughing can also help to improve land drainage. A fine firm seedbed is essential in establishing a good grass-clover re-seed, and ploughing will help achieve this, together with burying older grasses and weeds. Ploughing reduces the risk of a reseed failing to establish, due to a high level of soil to seed contact in a fine seedbed, more available moisture. In addition ploughing aids the release of natural nitrogen from the soil organic matter.

Benefits of Minimum Cultivation for Reseeding

In circumstances where ploughing is not suitable this is where minimum cultivation methods has a role. Minimum cultivation is an ideal method where ground contains a lot of stone or where

there is rock near the surface. As there is minimum ground disturbance, a return to grazing is possible within 60 days in ideal conditions. Minimum cultivation is generally cheaper than ploughing, and the most fertile soil remains at the surface where nutrients are needed. However, in the organic situation where herbicides are not permitted special care must be taken to ensure that weeds are controlled effectively through grazing management as initially weeds may not be controlled satisfactorily.

Reseeding Demonstration

The following were our own observations of the pros and cons of each of the reseeding methods used for the Kilbeggan event.

The site chosen for the reseeding demonstration was a field which had been cut for hay and/or silage continuously over the past number of years, with the sward containing old grasses, plantain and buttercup. The field had not been reseeded for decades. The field was soil sampled to establish the P, K and Lime status.

Half the site was ploughed and the remainder was left uncultivated. All plots were sown in mid-June using seven different treatments, as outlined in Table 1.. Farmers visited the site on 1st August when the results of each of the reseeding methods were clearly visible. Although this trial was not carried out under organic conditions, many of the observations and lessons derived were important and relevant to organic farmers. An organic demonstration plot was also established which will be discussed later in the article.

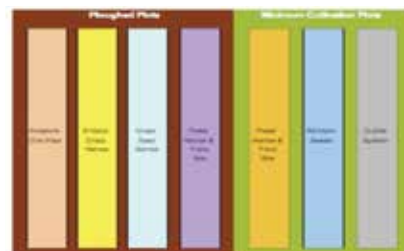


Table 1: Site layout of the reseeding method demonstration

Ploughed Plot Observations Amazone One-Pass.



Figure 1 Amazone One-Pass

For: Created an excellent seedbed with one pass. Grass was sown with the tilling operation and avoided further tracking. The machine was easily and accurately calibrated.

Against: Grass established in rows, similar to a cereal crop. However this can be addressed with good post grazing management to promote tillering and improve ground cover. Care needs to be taken not to bury the seed too deep - small seed such as clover and timothy should be at or near the surface. However this can be achieved by setting the coulters on the machine to trail on or near the soil surface.

Einbock Grass Harrow

For: We observed that grass seed was very evenly and widely distributed and the tines gave seed sufficient cover to aid germination. This method is ideal for spreading small seeds such as timothy and white clover which are



Figure 2 Einbock Grass Harrow

commonly found in organic seed mixes.

Against: The seedbed has to be fully prepared prior to using this machine. This means that there is an additional sowing cost and there is additional driving over tilled seedbed which may lead to tracking.

Grass Seed Barrow:



Figure 3 Grass Seed Barrow

For: The grass seed barrow is available free of charge to farmers from local merchants.

Against: We found it very difficult to calibrate the seed barrow for even seed distribution. We had to use a ring roller to give sufficient soil to seed contact.

Power Harrow & Fiona Grass Seed Box - both on ploughed and unploughed plots



Figure 4 Power Harrow and Fiona Seed Box

For It is a specialised one-pass machine for sowing grass-clover mixes. We used this machine on both ploughed and unploughed plots. We found that

the best results were seen where this machine was used on the ploughed area, but sward establishment was quite satisfactory on unploughed plots also. We found it easy to set the seeding rate and calibration was accurate.

Against: We had to use a ring roller on the ploughed area to give sufficient seed cover for better germination.

Unploughed Plot Observations Aitchison Grass Sticher



Figure 5 Aitchison Grass Sticher

For: This was the cheapest reseeding method we had on demonstration. We found it to be a very simple grass seed sowing machine with limited ground disturbance.

Against: With drilling, the seed is placed in lines, leaving bare space between the rows for possible weed invasion - potentially more of an issue for organic farmers than for non-organic farmers, who can resort to herbicides. The grass could potentially be slow to establish full ground cover. Good tight grazing after establishment is thus key to the success of this method.

Guttler Grass Seeder:

For: We observed that this pneumatic seed distribution machine sowed a ley that established evenly. It was the second cheapest method of reseeding at our demo.

Against: Post sowing there was quite a lot of dry weather which did not suit this method. We conclude that this method requires plenty of moisture after sowing as there is minimum soil to seed contact for germination. Similar to the other minimum cultivation techniques, tight grazing post emergence is vital to its success.



Figure 6 Guttler Grass Seeder

Organic demonstration

At the Kilbeggan event, a separate demonstration showed how grassland swards could be re-seeded under organic conditions. There are many methods for establishing good grass clover pastures under organic conditions. Regardless of the method used, clover seed or other small grass seeds such as timothy must not be sown deeper than 1 cm. This is because unlike larger seeds such as ryegrass, such small seeds do not have the reserves to support the seedling while it is trying to reach the surface.

Seedbed preparation

Prior to re-seeding, the plot was mowed tightly and 10 tonnes per acre of FYM was spread (Figure 7). The plot was ploughed and cultivated using a power harrow. With very good ploughing old grasses and weeds were successfully buried. The demonstration plot received 1 ton per acre of ground limestone. The plot was then rolled prior



Figure 7 10 tonnes/acre FYM was applied prior to ploughing

to sowing to consolidate the seedbed and avoid burial of the clover seed. Ploughing aids in the release of natural soil Nitrogen in an old permanent sod but it should not be deeper than 15cm (Figure 8). Deeper ploughing will bury any available nutrients out of the reach of the new emerging seed.



Figure 8 Ploughing depth should be less than 15cm

Seeding method and rate:

In the organic demonstration, the seed was sown using an Einboch grass harrow. The Einboch avoids burying the seed too deep yet the tines gave the seed sufficient cover to aid germination. Organically certified grass seed with 20% white clover in the mix was sourced from a local merchant. One of the key factors in achieving good levels of production on grassland organic farms is the introduction and maintenance of white clover into the new reseed. Seeding rate for new organic grassland swards should be approx. 10 kg of grass seed and 1.5 to 2kgs of white clover seed per acre. In fields where there is a known high weed seedbank, increasing the seed rate will increase the competitiveness of the sown species and may reduce weed ingress. Organic farmers must make every effort to use organically certified seed in accordance with organic standards.

Time of sowing:

Organic swards should be sown in Spring or before late August. The main advantage of sowing in this period is that the soil is warm, and providing there is sufficient soil moisture, germination is rapid. Clover germinates and grows from seed more slowly than ryegrass and other grasses and therefore a

later Autumn sowing may result in poor clover establishment. Given the importance of clover to productivity in organic systems, and the need to ensure a full establishment of clover in the sward by the following Spring, as indicated earlier, ensuring a sufficiently early sowing date is very important.

Post emergence management:

80% of the success of getting grass-clover swards established is in the post-sowing management. Well managed grass-clover swards can last up to 15 years. To achieve this, emphasis needs to be placed on:

1. Maintaining soil fertility
2. Good post-emergence grazing and weed management

Soil fertility:

Clover requires good levels of soil fertility (pH levels 6.5 to 7.0 and Index 3 for P and K). As mentioned before, many grass and clover seeds are small, as are their seedlings and root systems. During establishment, the ability of the root to find nutrients is therefore limited. Thus it is important that soil nutrient status is satisfactory for the major nutrients lime, phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) ideally before or if not at the time reseedling takes place. According to soil test results, phosphorus (P) was Index 2 and potassium (K) was Index 2 for the demo plot. Watery slurry was spread at a rate of 2,000 gallons/acre, approximately 4 weeks after sowing. This along with the FYM spread before ploughing met the NPK requirements of the new organic re-seed in full.

Grazing and weed management:

The aim in organic grassland re-seeding is to produce a uniform, well tillered, dense sward of grass and clover. New swards should be grazed as soon as the new grass and clover plants are strong enough to withstand grazing (ie. roots stay anchored in the ground when pulled between the finger and thumb). Grazing also encourages branching of clover stolons and tillering of grass which increases ground cover, further helping to control any emerging weeds. Grazing with calves or sheep would be preferred initially as ground conditions may be fragile depending on the re-seeding method used. Frequent grazing of the re-seed in the first year post establishment

will have a beneficial effect on the sward long term but it is important to avoid poaching which will increase the possibility of weeds and may effect stolon development.. New organic re-seeds ideally should not be closed for silage in their first year of production as the shading effect of heavy covers of grass will inhibit clover and tillering of the grass plant resulting in a more open sward which would be liable to weed ingress. The following grazing heights showed be used as a guideline:

1. Down to 4 cm between turnout and mid-April.
2. Down to 5 cm during the main grazing season.
3. Graze the sward to 4 cm before it is closed for the Winter.
4. Avoid heavy covers over the Winter- if you do get them grazed by early March conditions permitting.

Cost of organic re-seeding:

In general, the overall costs of organic re-seeding are similar to that of conventional but with a focus on different input costs. In organics, there may be higher costs associated with more expensive organic seed (+30% more expensive approx.) and possible extra contractor costs for spreading and sourcing slurry and FYM but these are off-set by no costs for artificial sprays and fertilizers. Table 2 and 3 show the material and machinery costs of the organic demonstration plot in Kilbeggan. It is important to remember that extra costs may be incurred where slurry and FYM have to be sourced off-farm.

Table 2: Material costs of organic re-seed demonstration

Material Costs per acre	
FYM 10 T (sourced on farm)	0*
Organic grass seed	90
Organic grass seed	25
Slurry 2,000 gallons watery - post emergence (sourced on -farm)	0*
Total Materials	€115

*Note: extra costs may be incurred if slurry and FYM are imported onto the farm or if commercial organically approved mineral fertilizers are used)

Table 3: Organic re-seed machinery costs per acre

Organic re-seed machinery costs per acre	
FYM spreading	25
Ploughing	30
Rolling	7
Power Harrow x1	30
Einboch Grass Harrow	20
Rolling	7
Slurry spreading	20
Total Materials	€139

Conclusion:

Organic farmers face challenges in terms of increasing output and maximising their returns. Grazed grass is the cheapest feed available to increase live-weight gain for grassland farmers. In grassland based organic farming systems, re-seeding with grass-clover swards plays a vital role in achieving higher margins. There are many methods available to establish successful grass clover pastures under organic conditions. Every field and farm situation is different, so there is no 'one size fits all' in terms of methods of reseedling. All methods have their advantages and disadvantages, as outlined above, but the key is choosing the right method for your own farm situation. Regardless of the method chosen, good management (slurry and FYM for NPK, regular grazing and avoiding poaching) are especially important to produce a long lasting successful organic re-seed.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS	DOWN
2 Harvest	1 Mussel
10 NOTS	3 Rotation
11 Extensive Farming	4 Organic Trust
14 Clover	5 Coveney
15 Compost	6 Conversion
17 Ninety Two	7 Camphill
18 Fodder	8 Focus
	9 Spelt
	12 Aquaculture
	13 CAP
	16 Clontarf

Strange Food Facts

Dynamite is made with peanuts

Peanut oil can be processed to produce glycerol, which can be used to make nitroglycerin, one of the constituents of dynamite. Note however, there are other processes that can be used to make dynamite without using peanuts at all..

Strange Food Facts

Coconut water can be used (in emergencies) as a substitute for blood plasma.

The reason for this is that coconut water (the water found in coconuts – not to be confused with coconut milk, which comes from the flesh of the coconut) is sterile and has an ideal pH level. Coconut water is liquid endosperm – it surrounds the embryo and provides nutrition.

Strange Food Facts

The FDA allows you to sell bugs and rodent hair for consumption

The FDA allows an average of 30 or more insect fragments, and one or more rodent hairs, per 100 grams of peanut butter. I will certainly think twice before buying my next jar!

Strange Food Facts

The first soup was made of hippopotamus

The earliest archeological evidence for the consumption of soup dates back to 6000 BC, and it was hippopotamus soup!

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIME USE ON ORGANIC FARMS

Courtesy of Eveline Gill

Grassland management has advanced from traditional extensive grazing systems to intensively managed systems with farmers commencing the year with a spring rotation planner to budget early season grass, followed by a carefully managed paddock rotation during the summer period, and finished off with the autumn rotation planner to ration autumn grass and set up the grazing programme for the following spring and ensuring light into the base of clover. Productive soils are the foundation of successful organic production. Basic soil fertility information on the nutrient status of each field on the farm is essential to making appropriate and cost effective decisions on and judicious use of nutrients available to the farm and their distribution around the farm. When a crop, either tillage or pasture, is harvested from a field, a portion of the soils nutrients is taken away, resulting in fertility depletion. Lime is continually being lost from the soil and needs to be replaced as part of a nutrient management programme. A crop of first cut grass silage removes approximately 190 kg ha yr of lime equivalent. Under Irish conditions lime is also lost through drainage. For example, drainage water can remove approximately 250-625 kg depending on the soil type, of lime equivalent each year. Light free draining soils will lose lime more quickly than heavier soils. Therefore light land may need extra attention; particularly in areas where limestone is not present in soil parent material or bedrock. A soil test will determine the pH of your soils and how much lime is needed.

pH is a measure of soil acidity or alkalinity. A soil having a pH value of 7.6-8.3 is moderately alkaline; pH 7.1-7.5, slightly alkaline; pH 7.0, neutral; pH 6.6-6.9, nearly neutral; pH 6.0-6.5, slightly acid; pH 5.3-5.9, moderately acid; pH 4.6-5.2, strongly acid; and pH below 4.5, very acid.



Figure 1: Soil pH range

Maintaining the soil pH at the optimum level will increase the microbiological activity of the soil, and result in better soil nutrient recycling and release. Soil pH should be the

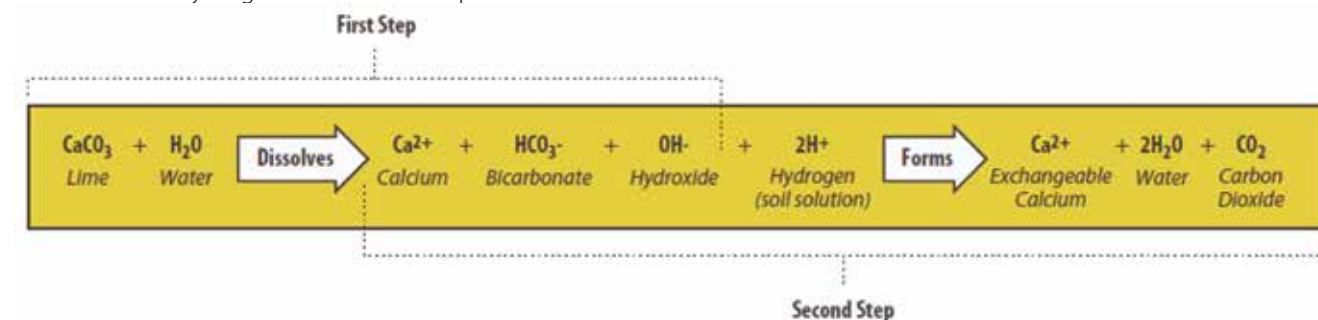


Figure 4 The chemical reaction that occurs when lime is added to an acid soil.

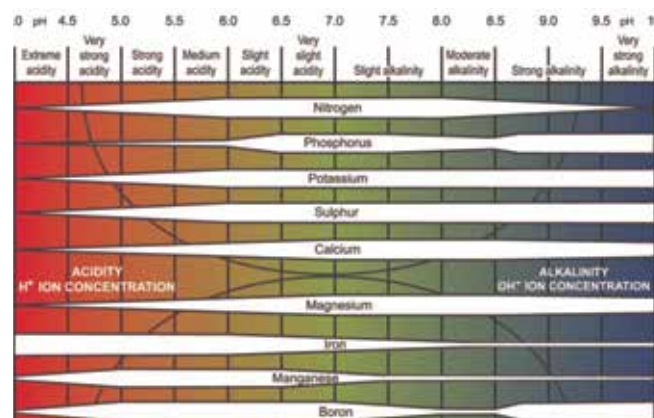


Figure 2: Nutrient availability at different pH levels Source: (Trouw)

first thing to get right where soil test results indicate that lime is required. Lime should be applied to neutralise acidity and raise the pH. The availability of soil nutrients is greatest at around pH 6.5. Most field crops perform best at a soil pH between 6.0 and 6.8. This pH range provides the best balance of available nutrients.

When soil pH is below this range (Figure 2), some nutrients become less available (i.e., phosphorus, molybdenum). Some elements, such as manganese and aluminum, become toxic in highly acid soils (< 5.0). With continuous cropping, soil pH can decrease (i.e., increase in acidity) because of various factors, including crop removal and leaching of basic cations, and organic matter decomposition.

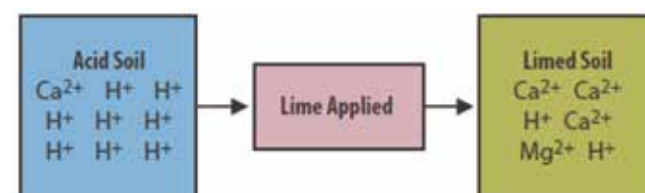


Figure 3: Liming acid soils increases exchangeable Ca and Mg

Agricultural limestone is needed to neutralize soil acidity and maintain crop productivity. Lime replaces exchangeable acidic ions, such as hydrogen ions, with calcium (Ca^{2+}) and some magnesium (Mg^{2+}) ions (Figure 3).

The chemical reactions that take place in soil when lime is applied are shown in Figure 4 below.

The lime dissolves to form calcium, bicarbonate, and hydroxide ions. The hydroxide neutralizes soil acidity by combining with hydrogen ions to form water. As the concentration of hydrogen ions decreases, the pH increases.

Currently, over 60% of grassland soil samples are below soil pH of 6.0, with 25% below a soil pH 5.5 (Source Teagasc). Adding lime or other materials can raise soil pH to the ideal range for crop production, creating an environment for a healthy function of microbes, and increase the levels of calcium or magnesium ions. If ground limestone is delivered and spread this cost is anywhere up to €22-30/ton depending on the distance from the quarry.

Where lime advice exceeds 7.5 t/ha it is recommended to split the application; apply no more than 7.5 t/ha in the first application, and the remainder after two years. This approach will help avoid trace element imbalances occurring due to high lime application rates and excessive and rapid changes in soil pH.

In grassland soils that are high in molybdenum (Mo), it is recommended to maintain the soil pH at or below a pH 6.2. Increasing the soil pH above 6.2 increases the availability of Mo which reduces the availability of Cu in bovines. Where there is either a history or a risk of soils or herbage being high in Mo, it is recommended to reduce the lime recommendation by 5 t/ha. Problems with high Mo tend to be more common on wetter soils (or in wetter years); in swards with low ryegrass and/or high clover content; and where annual rates of N fertilizer application are low. Where high Mo is an issue, it is best to apply lime on a rotational basis - for example 20% of the farm each year rather than the whole farm. Therefore, elevated Mo in herbage in a section of the farm due to lime may be somewhat diluted across the whole farm.

The optimum soil pH is 6.5 for most cereals. Potatoes and oats are more tolerant of low pH and pH 6.0 is adequate to produce a good crop. Lime should be applied to tillage soils based on the most sensitive crop to lime in

the rotation. Where potatoes are grown in rotation, it is best to apply lime after the potato crop, as the risk of common scab is increased where lime is applied within the previous two years. For cereal ground lime should be applied prior to soil cultivations.

Lime can be applied at any convenient time of the year for grassland fields. However it is preferable to apply to fields with very little grass cover, and to avoid grazing or cutting until sufficient rainfall has occurred to wash the lime off the herbage. For silage swards, apply lime before mid-march for first cut or within one week after cutting on land being closed for a second cut. Applying lime to heavy covers of grass intended for silage can reduce the silage quality if the lime is not washed off the grass by rain.

To use lime on your farm the Organic Trust will require you to have a soil test verifying the need for lime. The soil sample must have been taken within the last 5 years.

Organic Demonstration Farms



Helen Scully and Pat Lalor, together with an international group from IFOAM visiting Pat Lalor's Ballard Organic Farm – home of Kilbeggan Organic Foods and the now famous Kilbeggan Organic Porridge <http://kilbegganorganicfoods.com/>

The Department of Agriculture, Food & The Marine, in conjunction with Teagasc, organise a series of Organic Demonstration Farm Walks or Open Days every year. These events include farms on a nationwide basis and offer everyone interested in organic farming the chance to view a very wide range of organic enterprises at first hand. Opportunities to ask questions

from current organic practitioners are available at each event and these open days provide a very real opportunity to see organic production on the ground; to provide valuable insight into the application of the organic rules and to see the possibilities inherent in conversion to organic production.

An experienced and knowledgeable

Organic Trust Inspector attends every open day and is available to answer any technical questions which participants may have.

Full details of the farm walks are published on the Organic Trust website www.organictrust.ie

An Insider's View of Organic Farming – challenges and remedies!

from Ben Colchester,

Drumeen Organic Farm, The Islands, Urlingford, Co Kilkenny

I think the major challenges I have had to face in my endeavours to farm organically (apart from paperwork issues) have been:

1. Weed control in tillage
2. Parasite control in sheep
3. Maintaining nutrient levels in the soil

Weed Control in Tillage

The camera-vision-guided-hoe has been a great help with the first problem, as every time you go through the crop, you are not only killing the weeds that are present, but you are germinating more weed seeds and reducing the seed bank in the soil. However it is an expensive piece of equipment and does not suit very stony soils. Leaving aside the more obvious remedies like false/stale seed beds, appropriate seed rates, use of long straw varieties, stubble cultivating, roguing, and combi-cropping, I feel the best approach is to start with a sound rotation. A poor crop is most susceptible to weeds so having a good clover ley in the rotation is important as well as having a break crop in the middle of the arable years. Only certain crops are suitable to suppress weeds (oats, triticale and oilseed rape come to mind) but the most important aspect, which is the point I am trying to make, is that if one can include a crop somewhere in the rotation that is harvested early (like rye or winter oilseed rape) or failing that a crop which is sown late (like turnips or you could even put in a year of Italian ryegrass sown late or broken early), then one has an opportunity to hit the weed seeds over a period of time and if the weather is right you can reduce the seed bank substantially.

Parasite Control in Sheep

The second problem involves round worms in sheep which should be managed by a clean grazing system. Ideally having a ratio of 60% to 40% sheep to cattle and having the tillage



land reseeds entering the grazing area as well as the sheep alternating the grazing with the cattle so that sheep only graze land that has been rested from them for 12 months. Creep feeding the lambs is probably not an option because of the price of organic rations, but it would help. My suggestion though is to consider growing Tyfon. If you reseed an area towards the end of April and include Tyfon with the grass seeds, then when you wean you could give the lambs a strategic worm dose and move them onto this clean land. If the land is divided up into 3 or 4 divisions and you move the lambs on before they have grazed into the bulb of the plant, then you will get regrowth and the lambs can be finished on this area whilst resting the rest of your grassland. Any lambs not finished on this area should ideally be sold as stores so that they do not infest the grassland. This might not work for someone who is well stocked and is a specialised sheep farmer - another thing to bear in mind is that if you lamb your ewe lambs at 12 months, you are exacerbating the problem many fold. Also this would have no effect on reducing an outbreak of nematodirus because they hatch in the spring from eggs dropped the

previous spring. However it is a plan that would reduce the round worms on the farm to a manageable level, and would give the lambs great thrive at a time when you need to get them off to market. However, it would not suit someone who is short of grass at the end of April because that is when you are taking the land out for reseeding.

Maintaining Nutrient Levels in the Soil

It is important to maintain P and K levels because if these nutrients leave the farm (in the form of livestock and crops), at some stage something will need to be brought back to replace them. So how do we bring them back? The more obvious methods are by buying in straw and/or meal. Straw is high in K and to meet the organic housing standards livestock need to be well bedded. That is one of the main reasons organic farmers receive a premium and an area payment in order to compensate for the extra cost so it is important to keep them well bedded which will then ultimately increase soil fertility.

Most farms will be able to maintain nutrient levels when buying in straw and meal with good manure management,

but holdings producing a lot of crops for sale will need to import some nutrients. If both P and K are low then bringing in some dung (FYM) would make the most sense. If just P is low then one of the dairy sludges approved by the Organic Trust would be a good and cheap option and I think you might be surprised to discover just how far the creameries are prepared to travel to you. Failing that rock phosphate could be used but has to be justified under the organic regulations by means of a soil test. K is a more expensive element to replace but PatentKali could be considered - again with justification.

Overall

Some of the less positive issues in converting to organic farming include situations where rushes prove to be a major problem. The only option when organic, is through draining, adjusting the pH, then tilling (especially through the month of August) and then reseeding with aggressive grasses. However some land does not lend itself to tilling and stones can be a major problem.

For farmers hoping to enter conversion to organic farming, it is essential that all adjustments to animal housing to meet the requirements of the organic standards are completed before the stock need to be brought in for their first winter within the organic system. In my experience, some farmers don't realise that these changes must be in place by the time stock need to be housed to avoid any regulatory issues arising.

As record-keeping is an intrinsic part of organic farming and cannot be avoided, it can become a stumbling block to some farmers. The only thing I can say in defence is that these days this probably applies to conventional farming also. Generally it does not work to expect to solve this problem by paying someone else to do the farm record-keeping for you, because they can only record the information you give them. In my experience, using the very well-designed record book produced by the Organic Trust and keeping it up to date on an on-going basis, means that your record-keeping requirements become very manageable as the record book contains a template of all the information you are required to keep



under the organic regulations – so a readymade solution is available to you!

On the positive side, I think I can say that most people who convert to organic production benefit from the following:

- Receiving a payment €106/ha/pa (being increased to €170/ha/pa from 2015) for organic land and a higher payment during the conversion period under the Department of Agriculture Organic Farming Scheme.
- Having access to a 40% capital grant scheme (being increased to 60% from 2015 for young farmers, i.e. under 40 years old) for capital investment in machinery and buildings related to organic production and processing.
- Receiving a premium from most markets in which their organic produce is sold
- Being given priority access to GLAS on foot of their organic licence
- Benefitting from a direct market to consumers
- Achieving a more rewarding farming system which is less onerous on the environment, giving a 'feel good' factor
- Discovering a more challenging and interesting method of farming which enhances enthusiasm for their work.
- Adopting a low input method of farming which can result in less borrowings.

I hope that sharing these experiences with potential and current organic producers will prove helpful in formulating their own organic management strategies.

Ben Colchester

Bord Bia 2014 Organic Consumer Research Study

In July 2014, Bord Bia published their very informative Organic Consumer Research Study 2014. The report examined the organic market primarily from a consumer perspective and was based on a programme of research developed between Bord Bia and Ipsos MRBI. The report built on two previous consumer studies carried out in 2008 and 2010, as well as a qualitative review of trade attitudes to organic conducted in 2012/2013. This report indicated that the market for organic produce has, in some ways, bucked the recessionary trend. It indicated that activity in the market has grown, due to a number of factors, such as greater availability in stores, wider availability of a range of products combined with recent issues surrounding non-organic produce. This informative report is available from www.bordbia.ie

Jokes Corner

Q: What do you call two rows of vegetables?

A: A dual cabbage way

Q: Why did the banana go to the doctor?

A: Because it wasn't peeling well

Q: What is small, round and giggles a lot?

A: A tickled onion

Q: What's the strongest vegetable?

A: A muscle sprout

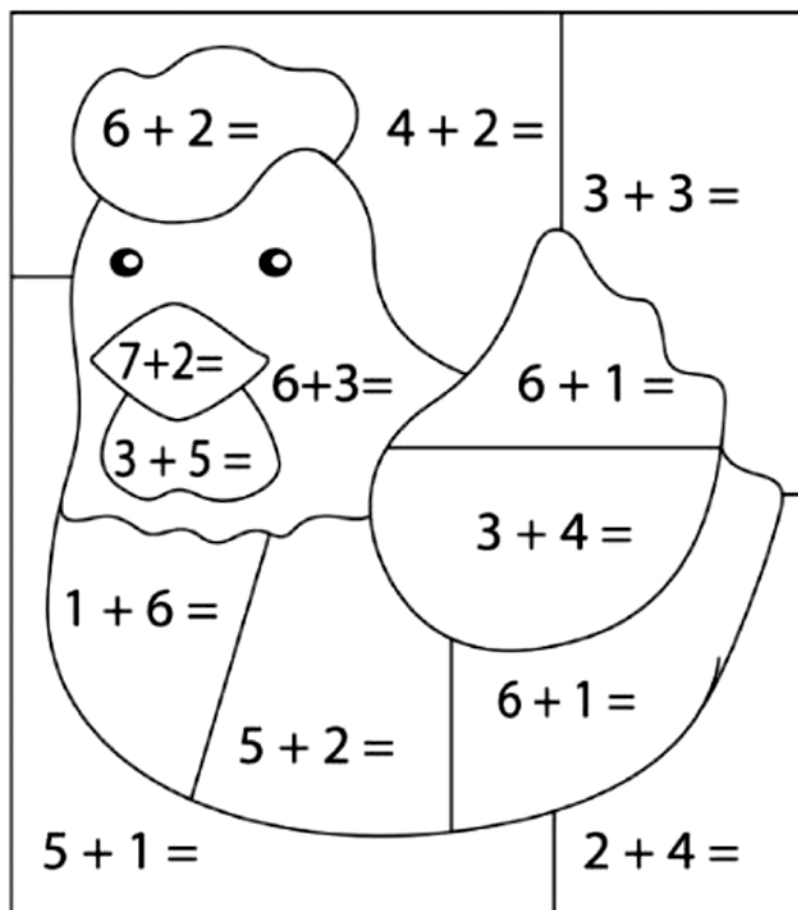
Q: What did the father tomato say to the baby tomato whilst on a family walk?

A: Ketchup



Solve the simple sums and then colour in the picture using the key below

6 - Blue | 7 - Orange | 8 - Red | 9 - Yellow



Did You Know?

Chickens are able to remember and recognise over 100 individuals; they can also recognise humans.

The chicken is the closest living relative to the great Tyrannosaurus-Rex

Cattle like to sleep close to their families, and sleeping arrangements are determined by individuals' rank in the social hierarchy

Cattle have almost 360° panoramic vision. This helps them to see predators coming from any direction

Pigs are very clean, keeping their toilet area far away from where they lie down and eat. Even new born piglets will leave the nest to go to the toilet within hours of birth

Pigs are extraordinarily intelligent. They are curious and insightful animals who are widely accepted as being smarter than young children of at least 3 years of age, dogs, and even some primates

Sheep are known to self-medicate when they have some illnesses. They will eat specific plants when ill that can cure them

Contrary to popular misconception, sheep are extremely intelligent animals capable of problem solving

COMPETITION

Name our little pig!



In 2013 The Organic Trust Ltd adopted this adorable little piglet as our mascot for the organisation. Can you help us by suggesting a name for the piglet?

The competition is open to children up to twelve years of age and entries can be made by e-mail to organic@iol.ie or by post to Organic Trust Ltd, Vernon House, 2 Vernon Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3.

Entries close on November 30th 2014

The winning entrant will receive a €50 book voucher!!

ANIMAL FACTS

Chickens have over 200 distinct noises they can make for communicating.

Pigs are considered the 4th most intelligent animal (after chimpanzees, dolphins, and elephants).

Cows can recognize their names (though they rarely come when called!).

Cows have a memory of about three years.

Pigs don't have sweat glands, so they must roll in mud to stay cool and prevent sunburns.

Turkeys have a large vocabulary. Yes that's right! Wild Turkeys have been found to have twenty distinct and specific vocalisations.

A pig can run a 7 minute mile

Sheep have an excellent long term memory, they can remember as many as fifty faces for up to two years.

Cattle have an incredible sense of smell, they can detect odours up to five miles away and they can hear low and high frequency sounds better than humans.

Chickens enjoy dust bathing and become frustrated if they are prevented from doing so, such as in the close confinement of factory farmed battery hens.

In their natural environment, Chickens are fastidiously clean and preen their feathers everyday.

Harvest Festival at Slí Eile Farm, Burton Park, Churchtown, Mallow, Co Cork

from **Eveline Gill**,
Organic Inspector & Advisor



In glorious sunshine, well over 700 people turned out for the first annual Slí Eile's Harvest festival to watch Jim Cronin's beautiful horses harvesting crops from the land. Slí Eile is a community farm located on the organic farm at Burton Park which is certified by the Organic Trust. Slí Eile's mission is to provide a supportive, recovery-focused living environment for people experiencing mental health difficulties.

The event was opened with a very emotive speech from George Hook who shared his own personal experiences of how mental health issues impacted on his own life and how important facilities like Slí Eile are in aiding recovery to good mental health.

There was plenty to see and do for every member of the family including house tours, music and dancing, dog show, pony rides and chain saw sculpture. A table devoted to donated handbags resulted in people carrying a new handbag or two on their way out, together with pestos, apple juice and vegetables - all produced on the farm. The BBQ was kept busy all day with everyone enjoying the Burton Park's own Aberdeen Angus burgers. However I personally was extremely disappointed that when I finally got a

chance to make my way to the ice cream stand, they were sold out- I've learnt you don't wait until the queue dies down! However my disappointment was short lived as there were some cakes left...

It was a great day and the whole team at Slí Eile should be very proud of themselves. Hopefully this will become an annual event, so we would urge everyone to keep a close watch on the Organic Trust website for future similar events www.organictrust.ie



Eveline Gill, Organic Inspector with Organic Trust, manning the stand at the Slí Eile Organic Farm Harvest Festival.

Organic Vs Free Range Eggs & Poultry - is there a difference?

Confusion can arise amongst the food-buying public in relation to claims regarding nutrition, fat content, good/bad carbohydrates - even complex carbohydrates - it can all be too much to digest! At times the consensus would appear to be that one would need a degree - just to read the ingredient listings for some products!

There are, however, genuine misconceptions when it comes to choosing between **certified organic** eggs and poultry, and **free-range** eggs and poultry. This leaflet aims to assist the consumer in making an informed choice when buying poultry and poultry products - we aim to inform you of the difference between a **certified organic product** and a **free range product** - and the differences are significant!

ETHOS

Whilst free-range production is a method of food production, organic farming is part of a complete farming ethos whereby participating organic producers use a total production system which works in harmony with nature and with our environment. Food production is an integral part of the farming calendar or cycle, so a certified organic producer must think about the effects their work has on the welfare of the animals on their holdings and on the wider environment as a whole.

Management of hedgerows to encourage wildlife and the provision and maintenance of habitats for helpful predators like birds and insects are just some of the things organic farmers consider when producing food and this in turn enhances and protects our countryside.

The 'Organic Principle' might, therefore, be described in the following way:

"organic farmers believe our environment is not something we inherit from our parents, but rather something we borrow from our children"

FEED

In general, **free range producers** feed their flocks with standard feeds such as those used in conventional battery production units and factory farms, including caged systems and barn rearing systems, the main stipulation being that such feeds at the fattening stage contain at least 70% of cereals - there are no requirements regarding the GM status of such feeds; their origin; their method of production or the type of seed used - whereas in certified organic production, all of these areas are of primary concern.

Additionally, certified organic producers have a legislative obligation to use **certified organic** grain-based feeds free from specific additives. Organic producers are prohibited from using feeds or substances containing synthetic amino acids and are prohibited from using any feedstuffs which have been solvent extracted. The Organic Food & Farming Standards in Ireland stipulate the specific list of feedstuffs permitted for use in organic production systems and organic producers must adhere strictly to this

listing. A small % of non-organic feedstuffs may be used by organic producers on an annual basis, however, such feedstuffs must be guaranteed to be free from genetically modified organisms - in general this precludes organic producers from using any of the conventionally-produced concentrate feedstuffs. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are prohibited throughout the organic food chain - this is not a requirement of free range systems.

So if 'we are what we eat', then one can readily differentiate between free range eggs and poultry and organically certified eggs and poultry. The organic products have been produced using only the highest quality strictly controlled naturally produced feedstuffs - of which at least 95% has been sourced from **certified organic raw materials**. The cost of these feedstuffs has a direct bearing on the price of the end product as organically certified feedstuffs can cost up to 100% more than conventional feedstuffs.

VETERINARY PRACTICES

Organic systems are designed so that the living conditions of the birds, the stocking rate, the feed and the rate of growth all assist in drastically reducing or avoiding the use of veterinary inputs. The habitual treatment of healthy animals through the use of antibiotics in feed is prohibited under organic systems.

Organic producers, on the other hand, are prohibited from administering antibiotics to healthy birds and prohibited from the use of any routine or preventative veterinary treatments. Of course in cases of specific illness, organic birds may need some veterinary interventions, however, these must be prescribed by a veterinary surgeon and their use is strictly controlled by the Organic Standards. Any use of veterinary medicines in organic production is subject to the implementation of withdrawal periods which are twice the statutory periods recommended for the specific product being used - this ensures that treated birds or produce from that bird may not enter the organic food chain until this additional withdrawal period has been fully observed.

Routine mutilations such as beak trimming are not permitted in organic production. Free-range production on the other hand actively encourages de-beaking and also permits practices such as clipping of claws at chick stage in order to distinguish one breed from another or even to distinguish the sexes among particular flocks

LIFESPAN

The average lifespan of a conventional or free range bird for the table is circa 56 days for a chicken and 70 days for a turkey. Alternatively, an organic bird will, on average, live on an organic farm for almost twice that time - circa 81 days for chickens (table birds) and 140 days for turkeys (table birds).

The added length of time results in a slower

REMEMBER - All organic birds are free range, but not all free range birds are organic.

growing bird which dramatically reduces the pressure placed on the younger birds' legs and this in turn results in less injuries and ailments such as those associated with conventional rearing systems - the organic system, therefore, results in a natural rearing regime.

HOUSING DENSITIES

The static housing density for free range poultry is 27.5kg/sq m whereas under certified organic conditions the birds may only be stocked at densities comprising of 21 kg/sq m. In addition, the number of birds in a housing unit under certified organic conditions is a maximum of 4800 broilers, however, under free-range conditions 10,000 birds per housing unit would be commonplace.

INSPECTION AND AUDIT

While free-range producers are inspected to ensure they have adequate conditions to facilitate a free range enterprise, organic poultry farmers are mandatorily inspected at least once annually and quite a few will receive other unannounced spot-check inspections. **Organic inspections audit the entire production system from feed to animal welfare** - all of which are fully prescribed in The Organic Food and Farming Standards in Ireland, i.e. all aspects of the production system from farm to plate are subject to the inspection system and must comply with the rigorous standards for organic food and farming laid down under Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/200 (i.e. the Organic Farming Regulations).

CONCLUSION

So back to the original question:

Organic or free range is there a difference?

Clearly the difference is obvious. Whilst free range production systems do offer the opportunity to birds to access open air runs, in essence this is the only significant difference **between free range production and conventional production.**

On the other hand certified organic poultry producers are subject to a strict production regime based on sound organic principles which cover the whole farm system - all with the aim of protecting our fragile environment; maintaining a respect and concern for the welfare of our animals through strictly controlled rearing conditions and the use of high quality certified organic feedstuffs; an avoidance of contamination from antibiotic residues and GMOs - all of which results in wholesome and nutritious end-products produced under conditions which nurture a respect for the sustainability of the land we live on.

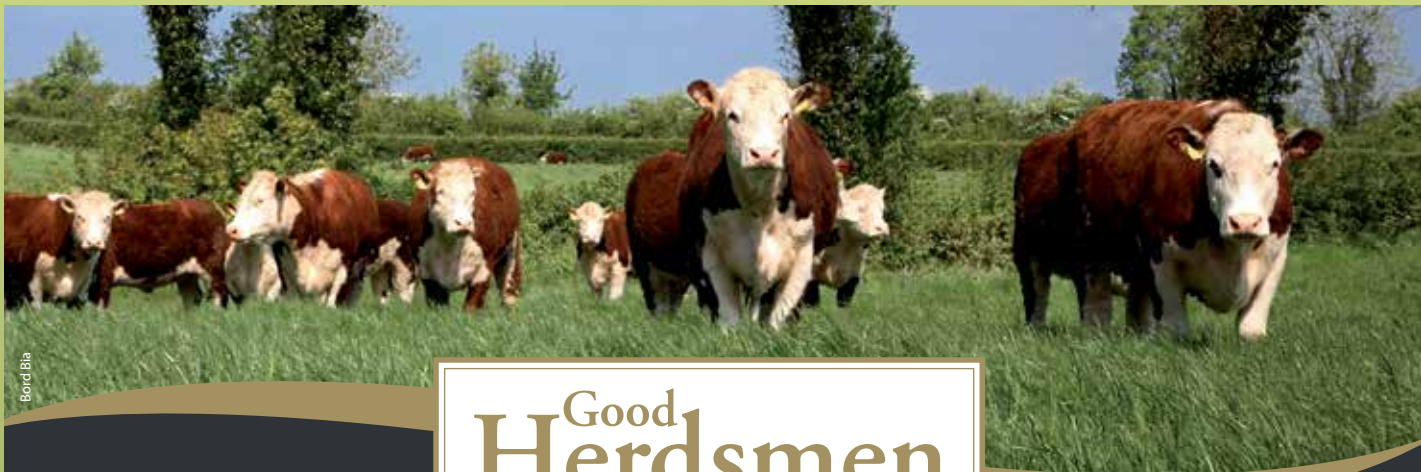
Passionate about Organics

Organic seeds, composts, fertilizers and soil improvers

FRUIT HILL FARM

www.organicfarmandgardensupplies.ie

Bantry, Co. Cork 027 50710 fhf@eircom.net



Good
Herdsmen
O R G A N I C M E A T S

Supporting Irish Organic Farmers Since 1989

**"Growing Demand in Europe for Irish Organic Beef and Veal.
Be part of this expanding market and enjoy the financial benefits."**

**- WANTED -
2,000 organic calves (bulls & heifers)
under 8 months old.**

Currently Good Herdsmen are paying €3.00 / kg for organic calves under 8 months old, over 230 kgs liveweight. Please make sure your organic calves did not receive medication, if they did, you must double the withdrawal period before selling. All calves will be tested for medication residue.

Also Good Herdsmen are continuing to purchase finished cattle for slaughtering. 4,000 organic finished cattle required for 2014.

Good Herdsmen wish each and every organic farmer success in their enterprises, if we can be of any help to you please don't hesitate to contact us.

*Yours sincerely,
John Purcell.*

**Office:
052 744 55 00**

**John Purcell:
086 253 51 87**

**Mary Flynn:
086 811 54 82**

Ireland's largest dedicated Organic Meat Processor.
www.goodherdsmen.com