

## Bluetongue – an update

As Defra extends the protection zone for Bluetongue to cover all of England as far north as North Yorkshire and west to the west Midlands and Staffordshire, there are signs that official confidence in the voluntary approach to vaccination is flagging.

Keepers of rare and traditional breeds of susceptible animals in the Bluetongue Protection Zone in England and Wales are now being urged to contact their vets to arrange urgent vaccination of their animals.

Meanwhile, two key livestock scientists - Dr Chris Oura (Institute for Animal Health) and Dr James Wood (University of Cambridge) have embarked on a new study to investigate the effectiveness and application of Bluetongue vaccination in Britain. The researchers are keen to involve farmers, particularly in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk to assess how well vaccination is working and what reasons underlie decisions to vaccinate. The research will also attempt to quantify the animal health, welfare and financial benefits associated with vaccination.

Full details on the extension of the Bluetongue zone and contact information for Dr Oura and Dr Wood are on [Organic Inform](#)

## GM co-existence in trouble in Spain



A new study from the UAB Institute of Environmental Science and Technology in Barcelona finds that the structure of the agricultural supply chain in Spain is not conducive to GM co-existence.

Cereal co-operatives cover the entire production chain from the sale of seeds and inputs through to grain storage and feed manufacture. This system makes it difficult and expensive to segregate GM from organic and conventional production.

Equally important are the social structures. The study highlights difficulties faced by organic farmers in claiming compensation for GM contamination and suggests that many farmers do not sue for damages to avoid serious local confrontations in small villages.

Read more at [Organic Inform](#)

## Forthcoming Events:

### **OGA: Tozers seeds and organic plant breeding**

Farm walk.  
17th July 2008, Cobham, Surrey

### **New Marketing Initiative for Organic Beef & Lamb**

Open farmers' event to present details of a new initiative to provide intelligence and marketing to small producers.  
17th July 2008, Catterick, N Yorkshire

### **Farm Walk at Tolhurst Organic Produce**

A Mercia Organic Producers event touring a stockless horticultural system.  
21st July 2008,  
Whitchurch-on-Thames, near Reading

### **OGA Farm Walk**

The first OGA farm walk in Scotland will be at Vital Veg.  
2nd August 2008  
Midmar Inverurie, Aberdeenshire

### **Improving life in your soil**

Two days of seminars with Dr Elaine Ingham of the Soil Food Web.  
4-5th August 2008,  
Laverstoke Park Farm, Hampshire

### **OGA Farm walk**

A tour of Riverford Organic Vegetables.  
5th August 2008, Buckfastleigh, Devon

### **Thinking of going organic?**

Soil Association organic conversion event at Riverford Organic Vegetables .  
6th August 2008, Buckfastleigh, Devon

### **Sherbourne Processing Company Organic Seed Trials**

Demonstration of Organic seeds being grown for Autumn and Spring .  
9th August 2008, Sturminster Newton, Dorset

Event listing continued on Page 2

For full details on these and other events, visit:  
[Forthcoming Events](#)

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## Sources of information

### Biomass boilers: Chips with Everything!

A recent event on biomass boilers gave farmers and small businesses the opportunity to learn from those who already use the technology.

Notes from the event as well as links to further sources of information are available online.

Read more at [Organic Inform](#)

### DairyCo: latest dairy statistics pocketbook

Dairy statistics: an insider's guide 2008 provides revised information for the UK and also highlights quantitative data for the EU and the world.

Read more at [Organic Inform](#)

### Leatherjacket management

The University of Plymouth has published information on predicting and managing leatherjacket problems in organic crops.

Written by Rod Blackshaw, Professor of Agricultural Zoology at the university, the leaflet summarises what leatherjackets are, why they are a problem, sampling techniques and how they can be dealt with.

The information leaflet, available to download from Organic Inform, is published with support from Defra, South Devon Organic Producers and The Perry Foundation through the Sustainable Arable LINK programme.

Read more at [Organic Inform](#)

### Organic fruit & vegetable production guide

Organic Centre Wales has produced a new technical guide for farmers on organic fruit and vegetable production.

The guide is aimed at farmers who are considering diversification into horticulture. It assumes a sound understanding of agricultural systems, but limited knowledge of fruit and vegetable production.

The guide introduces the principles of horticultural production including soil fertility, pest and weed control, machinery and equipment, varieties, harvesting and storing, and energy and greenhouse gas emissions as well as a financial section.

Read more at [Organic Inform](#)

### Forthcoming Events (continued):

#### **Machinery for the Intensive Organic Producer**

OGA full day event at Tolhurst Organic Produce  
11th August 2008,  
Whitchurch-on-Thames, near Reading

#### **Bioselect UK: variety open day**

Event to demonstrate their new blight resistant potato variety Toluca.  
12th August 2008, Cullompton, Devon

#### **Finding Information on the Internet Workshop**

If you have a computer but are unsure how to make best use of the internet or send emails then this is the course for you. For Warwickshire based farmers or rural businesses.  
9th September 2008, 11th September 2008  
Warwickshire

#### **Farm Walk at Canalside Community Foods**

A Mercia Organic Producers event.  
14th September 2008  
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire

#### **Homoeopathy at Wellie Level**

Teaching the responsible use of homoeopathy on the farm. Four day course, first date:  
16th September 2008  
Tetbury, Gloucestershire

#### **Growing your own feed workshop**

A Cumbria Organics event to share experiences of growing feed crops this year.  
25th September 2008  
Helsington, Kendal

#### **Welsh Organic Producers' Conference**

Conference for organic producers in Wales.  
Note the new date:  
23rd October 2008  
Builth Wells

### Advertise your event here

If you have an event you would like advertised (for free!) online or in our newsletter, let us know.

Telephone 01488 657600 or e-mail us:

[organicinform@organicresearchcentre.com](mailto:organicinform@organicresearchcentre.com)

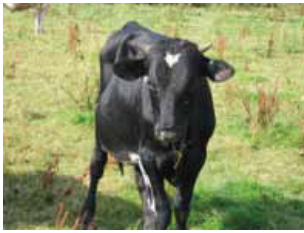
## Is it organic?

Isotope test from NZ to catch fertiliser cheats.

A new way to determine the “organicness” of vegetables has been developed. The method verifies the organic status of vegetables by distinguishing between those grown with organic and artificial fertilisers. The test can identify the different isotope signatures of animal manure and industrial fertilisers.

Read more at [Organic Inform](#)

## BSE risk downgraded



The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has declared that the UK can be classified as “Controlled risk” for BSE.

Confirmation of the UK’s ‘controlled risk’ status will support the opening of more international markets for the export of UK cattle and beef. However, the UK is some years from achieving ‘negligible risk’ status for BSE as this requires a period of at least 11 years since the birth of a BSE case – currently that extends to 2014.

Read more at [Organic Inform](#)

## Organic boxes an unaffordable luxury?

As finances become tighter, sales of weekly organic vegetable boxes suffer. Seen as an “unaffordable luxury” by some, a number of box schemes are reporting a loss of 10-20% of customers since the beginning of the year.

Organic delivery companies are facing triple challenges at the moment: rising fuel prices, falling customer numbers and the rising value of the Euro.

Read more at [Organic Inform](#)

The Organic Inform project is supported under the England Rural Development Programme by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund.



## Market updates

### Eye on the market: Horticulture

Latest prices from the Soil Association and HDRA (Prices collated May 2008).

### Kingshay: Organic Dairy Production

Organic market and yield information from Kingshay have been published by DairyCo (July 2008).

### Livestock, dairy and eggs

Latest prices from the Soil Association (Prices collated May 2008)

### Organic Grain Market Update

Prices and commentary on the organic grain market, from Organic Grain Link (July 2008).

### OMSCo market report released

The Organic Milk Suppliers Co-operative releases its report on the current state of the market, its future development and challenges.

### Welsh organic land area increases

Wales’ organic land area increased by 22% during the year ending January 2008, reaching 6.4% of the total agricultural area.

## OCIS: free advice for organic conversion

Free Organic Conversion and Information Service (OCIS) helpline number: **0800 980 0048**

The service is delivered by Natural England (NE) on Defra’s behalf via the Organic Research Centre – Elm Farm and includes a national helpline, an information pack, a website and a free on farm advisory visit .

Read more at [Organic Inform](#)

## And finally...

Following the success of the last two years, look out for our third Organic Research Centre Conference.

6th and 7th January 2009

To register your interest, contact Organic Inform. Programme and booking form available shortly!

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