

# NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2007



## The season so far...

It has certainly NOT been the summer we enjoyed in 2006. Regular rains have caused additional worry for all of us this year with late silage, a late harvest, not enough sunny days for hay and chocolate spot causing problems in beans.

Despite initial worries about forage supply, there appears to be quite a bit of hay and silage for sale.

With harvest just underway, it is too early to give indications of yield and quality of cereals so the next few weeks will be critical as to how much grain will be available and at what cost. We would urge farmers to be *level-headed during harvest trade—short term gains will have long term costs.*

2008 Organic livestock feeding plans are still very much top of the agenda. SOPA recognises that the Scottish climate does present different challenges to Scottish farmers and that some current practices will no longer be permitted. Although not environmentally sustainable, it does appear that imports of some products will be necessary because we simply cannot grow all feed requirements in the UK. We will be carefully inspecting paperwork for any imports to ensure organic integrity is upheld.

Good luck for the harvest, *Debs*

## Organic Feed

SOPA has been working with DEFRA, ACOS and other certifying bodies to develop solutions for 2008. The main concerns appear to be molasses and dark grains (draff etc) alternatives.

There are a few ways we can change livestock feeding and these will be covered at the SOPA/SAC Feed Seminars being held throughout Scotland in October—see the Diary for dates.



## winners

Congratulations to the three out-of-the-hat winners who responded to the Feed Intentions Survey in the Spring newsletter. Check the website **NEWS** section for the Survey Results.

**Andy Cadzow, Pencaitland**

**Andrew MacKay, Dumfriesshire**

**David Cash, Argyll**

£50 discount on 2008 membership fees.

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# CERTIFICATION CORNER

## Q & A

### I want to enter new land into conversion. What do I have to do?

Several enquiries have been received in the office about entering new land to your current certification.

Firstly, decide if the parcel of land is large enough to warrant entry to the SRDP organic funding. If you do not urgently require the land and if it is large enough, it might be best to wait.

Secondly, decide when you need it to commence conversion, SOPA needs your date of conversion to process the application.

Do you own the land? If not, you need the Landlord's consent for you to be the sole manager of the parcel of land. It is important that both you and the landlord understand that no other person can have operational input to the land without your knowledge and that any input is according to the organic standard.

SOPA requires a **conversion plan** for the parcel of land, no matter how small or large. Write to the office with:

1. Map of fields including FIDs and Holding Number
2. Start date of Conversion (or date of last prohibited input)
3. Landlord Agreement
4. Crop Rotation, or how the parcel of land will fit into your existing organic rotation



### Buying in-feed

Defra have indicated they will be scrupulous on traceability and audit trails for the paperwork of bought-in feed. To comply with the regulations, SOPA have to inspect all members thoroughly.

Please ensure you have current certificates for all purchased inputs such as bought-in feed. These must be available at your inspection.

### My Inspector mentioned Parallel Production—what is it?

It is important that SOPA is fully aware of all enterprises you are involved in. Unwittingly, you may be undertaking 'parallel production' and this may result in decertification.

**Parallel Production** refers to the farmer having the same variety or breed grown on organic and non-organic land at the same time. This could also apply to share-farming agreements.

There could be potential conflict during in-conversion periods and farmers should take care to ensure any in-conversion produce is clearly marked and separate from fully organic produce. This might apply to fodder or cereals. For instance, in-conversion silage should not be clamped in the same pit as fully organic — you could lose organic status on the whole clamp and animals which have been fed the silage.

### Why do I need a Farm Plan?

The Production Standards Section 1.4 states that successful organic farming is based on careful stewardship of available resources. The Farm Plan identifies the resources you have at your disposal and how you use them to maximum sustainability. If you need to review your Farm Plan, the Standards section 1.4.3 describes the elements required. Farm Plan Contents are:

- Farm Audit
- Enterprise Plan
- Soil and Nutrient Management Plan
- Environment and Biodiversity Plan
- Crop Management Plan
- **Updated** Livestock Management Plan
- Processing and Marketing Plan
- Complaints system

# SOPA SCHEMES

## Evaluation of Approved Products

Soil conditioners & fertilising materials  
Pest & disease control materials  
Animal feeds, vitamins, minerals and trace elements  
Disinfectants for livestock buildings

The Evaluation Scheme applies to products commonly referred to as **INPUTS**.

Inputs which carry the Approved Product logo have been approved by SOPA certification to be used in organic systems. Note however that some inputs still require prior approval from SOPA so check the company certificates.

If the input doesn't carry this logo, you should check with the SOPA office for permission to use.



## Sub Contracting

Would you like to be able to:

- Slaughter your own animals at a local abattoir rather than sending stock long distances to a certified abattoir
- butchering & pack your own meat at a local non-organic butcher for farmers market or farm shop
- smoked cheese
- Store crops such as potatoes or chilled vegetable store
- seed dressing
- grain cleaning
- grass/Lucerne drying

But cannot commit to the full Processing Scheme? Under Annex IIID of the Defra Compendium of UK Organic Standards, simple processing operations can be 'piggy-backed' onto producer organic certification under certain conditions.

Contact the SOPA office on 0131 335 6606

## SOPA CERTIFICATION TEAM NEWS

**We bid farewell** to Chris Atkinson, Technical Manager during August. After many years with SOPA, he is returning home to Cumbria to take up work with the North West Organic Producers Group. Needless to say, his expertise will be sorely missed and we wish him all the best.

We are delighted to welcome David Michie as Certification Officer. It has been a baptism of fire for David but he is enjoying the diversity of work. David is looking forward to joining some farm inspections and getting to meet SOPA members in the flesh, now that FMD Restrictions are lifted and Inspections will recommence.

## OTHER NEWS

### Organic Set Aside

Earlier this year, the rules for set aside and organic farming changed and, providing producers meet the criteria below, organic farmers now no longer have to set land aside. Therefore they can treat this land the same as any other land and there is no restriction on what can be grown.

Criteria:

- Be an organic farmer or in the process of converting to organic
- Manage the entire of their holding for the totality of its production in compliance with the obligations set out EU Regulation 2092/91
- Be registered as an organic producer with an approved Certifying Body.

**'Entire holding' means all the area making up the IACS business—if you need to check your organic fields contact SOPA.**

# Editorial

## *Rockdust is the New Organic*

**SEER Rockdust®** faces the challenge of being marketed as a 'new' product which in fact comprises totally natural, untreated 420 million year old volcanic rock particles. Cameron and Moira Thomson have championed its multiple benefits at the SEER Centre near Pitlochry in Highland Perthshire for the past 10 years.

The Thomsons first took up the cause when they heard a Radio 4 broadcast about the benefits of soil remineralization. Further investigation showed that this has long been practiced by farmers to improve crops in various part of the world, but had never been scientifically proven or marketed on a large scale. Cameron and Moira's work, now backed by testimonials from across the UK, is beginning to change all that. Recent approval of SOPA and OF&G certification for SEER Rockdust underlines their importance as inputs to organic farming. SOPA members can use SEER Rockdust without prior approval from the SOPA office. Rocksoil and Rockmix is permitted with prior notification to SOPA..

When the SEER Centre started, farmers said the local soil would never even produce tatties. The Thomsons set to and built terraced demonstration gardens using municipal compost and SEER Rockdust soil conditioner. On some of the terraces only SEER Rockdust has been added. Visitors today can see vegetable, fruit, herbs and flower crops flourishing in these terraces without any additional fertilisers or irrigation, thus confounding the sceptics.

In 2005 the SEER Centre Trust, a Scottish charity, established Rockdust Ltd to develop the commercial market for trademarked SEER Rock

dust, Rocksoil and Rockmix and, in turn, it has now appointed Angus Horticulture Ltd as sole marketing and distribution outlet. Forfar based Angus Horticulture Ltd is a well-recognised name in farming and amenity landscaping circles and their interest in SEER Rockdust products is an endorsement in itself. Alistair Ballantyne, its Managing Director states *"We first got in touch with the Thomsons after reading a newspaper article. From what we have seen we are sufficiently convinced to become involved. We don't think SEER Rockdust will ever totally replace fertilisers but we do think it will play a bigger and bigger part in the market place."*

Independent laboratory analysis of SEER Rockdust shows it contains over 50 minerals and trace elements. It is these which produce multiple long term benefits to the soil as evidenced at the SEER Centre and now testified by many users, including farmers buying in bulk. This year, overseas interest has led to the setting up of a Swedish distributorship through Wiksunds Tradgard near Stockholm.

Graham Harvey, who spoke at "The Secrets of Rockdust" conference hosted by SEER in Pitlochry Festival Theatre in 2005, has also written "We Want Real Food" which is essential reading for all organic producers. In his book Graham explains how modern intensive farming has depleted natural minerals in our soils so that today we mostly rely on fast grown food lacking in basic goodness that is totally dependant on fertilisers and pesticides, with significant implications for the nation's health.

Nick Cooke, Chairman of Rockdust Ltd states *"The strength of the UK organic movement depends on its ability to produce nutritious crops without pesticides and herbicides. Our strapline ...*

## Editorial cont

*ROCKDUST is the NEW ORGANIC! recognises that we go a step further. By using SEER Rockdust, farmers and growers can replace trace elements and minerals that millennia of weathering and decades of intensive agriculture have removed in order to enhance organic cultivation."*

SEPA's recent establishment of the Scottish Soil Remineralization Forum now allows proper scientific assessment of remineralization techniques based on field trials in different areas of Scotland, with the current focus on raspberries, strawberries, oats, turf, potatoes and compost. Measurement of carbon sequestration from the application of SEER Rockdust is another major potential area for new research.

Of the other products, **SEER Rocksoil**® is a complete growing medium as used at the SEER Centre. It is a mixture of SEER Rockdust and PAS 100 standard municipal compost made from 100% garden material that is guaranteed weed and pathogen-free. **SEER Rockmix**® is a different mix of the same materials which is used as a top dressing.

*"The beauty is that these products do work."* states Jennifer Cook, Angus's Marketing Manager. *"There is much we do not understand about the importance of soil condition, far less the role of different minerals and trace elements in SEER Rockdust, and Cammie and Moira's work highlights this. Scientific research has an important role to play here but there is nothing to stop us applying the benefits of these products while the empirical formulae are being identified."*

Bulk loads and 1 ton IBC enquiries to [sales@angus-horticulture.co.uk](mailto:sales@angus-horticulture.co.uk), Tel. 01241 829049, Fax 01241 829043.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### For sale *all organic unless stated otherwise*

**Breeding Heifers (7)** Luing X running with Short-horn bull. SOPA Member 135. Tel 01555 851 351 or Mob 07967 959 434.

**Lleyn X ewes (400)** with Texel X lambs at foot. Call 01464 841 274 or Mob 07876 147 196

**Shetland ewes (130)** with Suffolk X lambs at foot. Call 01464 841 274 or Mob 07876 147 196

**Haylage (200 bales)**, SOPA member 235. Tel 01241 430 730

**4x4 bales Hay (200)**, SOPA member 795. Tel 01896 860 262 or Mob 07746 550 531

**AAX bulling heifers (12)** SOPA member 263 Tel 01899 860 246 or Mob 07719 138 229

**BF Ewe lambs (100)** SOPA member 252, Tel 01659 50313

**BF Store lambs (300)** SOPA Member 252, Tel 01659 50313

**BF Ewes (50)**. SOPA member 252 Tel 01659 50313

**1 IC silage bales (130)**. SOPA member 194. Tel 01506 881 510 or Mob 07786 390 577

**TO LET** 80 acre organic (Soil Association) farm, nr Inverness. Tel 01349 882 226 or Mob 07739 667 673

**4x4 bales Hay (100)**, SOPA member, Tel 01361 882 074

**Carse of Stirling Timothy Hay 4 x 4 bales (90)** SOPA member. Tel 01786 850428 or Mob 07870 150 502

**Clover Haylage 4x4 bales (80)** SOPA member. Tel 01786 850 428 or Mob 07870 150 502

## WANTED

**Store lambs (350)** wanted from mid Sept to Oct, 20-30kg. Mob 07708 638 167

**ALL FEED CEREALS AND PULSES REQUIRED THROUGHOUT SCOTLAND—contact SOPA**

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**FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT JENNY:**

Tel 0845 017 6567      Email [jenny@caledonianorganics.com](mailto:jenny@caledonianorganics.com)

[www.caledonianorganics.co.uk](http://www.caledonianorganics.co.uk)  
[www.organic-stores.co.uk](http://www.organic-stores.co.uk)

## Training Courses for Food Processors



SAC offer a comprehensive range of Food Hygiene and Environmental Health Training courses, all approved by the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland. If you currently operate food processing premises, or are interested in doing so, for further information contact

*Iain McGregor, SAC Education and Training, SAC Ayr Campus, Auchincruive, Ayr, KA6 5HW Tel 01292 525 050*

### FOOD HYGIENE

Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Certificates

### HACCP

#### Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points

- What is HACCP?
- Why it is essential to your business
- Current legislation
- Practical Applications

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### **AVAILABLE NOW THROUGHOUT SCOTLAND**

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**Fyvie Depot                      01651 891 227**  
**Kirriemuir Depot                01575 572 252**



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Tel: 01464 831261 Fax: 01464 831400

email: [sales@norvite.com](mailto:sales@norvite.com)



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For further details:  
Andrew Hodsmen 07802 173242  
Or email us at [info@bocmpauls.co.uk](mailto:info@bocmpauls.co.uk)



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**Malcolm Johns, Kinnairdy Organics, Mains of Kinnairdy, Bridge of Marnoch, Huntly, Aberdeenshire, AB54 7RX**

Tel. 01466 780 856 Mob. 07803 142 167  
E-mail. [johns@kinnairdyorganics.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:johns@kinnairdyorganics.freereserve.co.uk)

# DIARY



## SOPA/SAC Organic Feeding Strategy Seminars

As of 1 January 2008, all ruminant livestock diets will have to be 100% organic. This series of seminars is aimed at providing producers with practical guidance on feeding options after this change comes into force. Sessions will be led by SAC, SOPA and local organic farmers.

Lunch will be provided. **This event is free of charge to SOPA members**; if you wish to attend but are not a SOPA member it will be possible to reserve a place for a nominal charge of £12.50. Booking forms from

Debs Roberts  
Tel 0131 335 6619

DATE	LOCATION	VENUE
Tues 2 <sup>nd</sup> October	PERTH	SAC office, Inveralmond
Thurs 4 <sup>th</sup> October	ABERDEEN	SAC Craibstone
Fri 12 <sup>th</sup> October	CASTLE DOUGLAS	Douglas Arms
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup> October	CARFRAEMILL	The Lodge
Fri 19 <sup>th</sup> October	ORKNEY	Auction Mart, Kirkwall



## SAC Organic Farming Events

### One Day Conference—Business Opportunities in Organic Farming,

17th Oct, 9.30am at Birmam Institute, Dunkeld, Perthshire. Cost £20.

### One Day Training Courses—Converting to Organic Farming.

Cost £50. Mon 8th Oct (Aberdeen), Wed 10th Oct (Perth), Thurs 11th Oct (Edinburgh), Tues 13th Nov (Dumfries), Thurs 15th Nov (Inverness), Wed 21st Nov (Kirkwall).



**BOOKING ESSENTIAL**  
contact **Caroline Bayliss**

Tel 01224 711 073

SCOTTISH FOOD  
FORTNIGHT 2007

[www.scottishfoodfortnight.co.uk](http://www.scottishfoodfortnight.co.uk)

1<sup>st</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> September  
2007

## FOOD HYGIENE COURSES

**BRC Awareness** 19 Sep  
**BRC Internal Auditing** 20 Sep  
**Intermediate HACCP** 22-23 Oct

Duncan Perry Training Consultant

Outsource Solution Ltd  
Tel: 01506 631 254



## Soil Association

Scotland's 2nd Organic Food Festival is scheduled for 13-14 October 2007. It takes place in the Old Fruitmarket and City Halls in Glasgow's Merchant City

Extending the season: focus on protected cropping  
Friday 14 September, Anam Cara Inverness & Natural Vegetable Company, Torbreck, Inverness

River Swale, Northallerton, North Yorkshire  
Thursday 11 October—Visit to Box Scheme

Contact Lynn Matheson for further information 0131 666 0847

*FMD Postponements—now that restrictions are lifted, rescheduled dates for cancelled events will be posted on the SOPA website*

### Scottish Food Quality Certification (SFQC)

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