

SELECTING ORGANIC CONVERSION DATES



Depending on the type of enterprise, farmers must consider a number of things when selecting the date to commence conversion. Gaining organic status is critical to selling produce with the organic market premium.

When considering organic conversion, farmers have to consider the key dates of the organic conversion funding scheme as well as when the farm produce will attain full organic status. To keep things simple, remember that the soil has to undergo two years of conversion but the following organic regulations apply to livestock and cereals production.

Definitions:

Simultaneous conversion (SimCon) is an important principle which applies to converting the livestock on a holding. This means that the livestock are converted (treated organically) at the same time as the soil and therefore can be certified as organic from the day the soil attains full organic status provided that the following conditions are met. Holdings in SimCon are able to feed all home-produced forage, fodder and supplementary feeds (cereals, pulses) to SimCon livestock. Any bought-in feed must be 100% organic.

1/C refers to land which is in the first year of conversion

2/C refers to land which is in the second year of conversion

Cereals

The crops must be sown into fully organic land (this must be 24 months after the last date of use of a prohibited substance). There is currently a strong premium for organic cereals and pulses.

Suckler cows

Calves will be fully organic if the dam is managed organically 12 weeks prior to calving in SimCon. The cows will never gain organic status, but will be Converted Breeding Stock.

Ewes, Goats or Sows

Progeny will be organic if the dams are mated on organic/2/C land if in SimCon. Breeding ewes will always be Converted Breeding Stock. Only ewes born on organic land will have organic status.

Dairy Cows

Milk will be fully organic if the animals are managed according to the SOPA organic standards, for 6 months prior to the day full organic status is achieved.

Poultry and Pigs

If the farmer can prove that no prohibited substances have been applied for twelve months, the conversion period for pasture, runs and exercise areas may be derogated to twelve months on application.

Sheep and Goats for milk

Milk will be fully organic if animals are treated organically for six months prior to the day full organic status is achieved.

Poultry for Meat

Chicks must be purchased at less than 3 days old AND be reared organically on organic/2/C land for ten weeks prior to the day full organic status is achieved.

Poultry (eggs)

Pullets must be purchased at less than 18 weeks old AND be reared organically for 6 weeks on fully organic land. There is currently no market for 2/C for egg production.

SELECTING ORGANIC CONVERSION DATES



SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSION OF LIVESTOCK

If SimCon is elected rather than a Standard Conversion, all livestock enterprises are included in the conversion i.e. all species must convert from the same date as selected by the producer. Once the date of SimCon is nominated, it cannot be changed except in exceptional circumstances and with approval from SOPA. For different enterprises please contact the office for further explanation.

EXAMPLES:

SIMCON	SHEEP	<i>If ewes are tupped under organic management, the progeny will be fully organic.</i>
01/09/2016 Soil & animals start conversion		Lambs will be certified organic after 2nd Sep 18
SIMCON	SUCKLER CATTLE	<i>If suckler cows are managed organically for twelve weeks prior to calving, the progeny will be fully organic.</i>
01/01/2016 Soil & animals start conversion		Beef will be certified organic after 2nd April 2018

Alternatively,

Standard Conversion 01/09/2016	Ewes start conversion on 01/09/2018	After 2/09/2018 the land is organic but the ewes are in conversion.
Soil starts conversion but animals do not	Animals start conversion before the tup goes in	Lambs born in spring 2019 will be certified organic.
Standard Conversion 01/4/2016	Spring calving cows (non-organic) 01/4/2018	Land is organic from 2/4/2018 but the animals are not.
Soil starts conversion but animals do not		Start conversion of the cows on 1/1/2018 for progeny born after 1/4/2018 to be fully organic

Scottish Organic Producers Association, Acoura, West Edinburgh Business Park,
6 Redheughs Rigg, South Gyle, Edinburgh, EH12 9DQ

www.sopa.org.uk info@sopa.org.uk

Tel 0131 335 6606