

June 2015

WELSH ORGANIC SCHEME



Newsletter

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Sheep farmers urged to look out for Nematodirus

Sheep farmers have been warned in the farming press over the last few weeks to be aware of **Nematodirus**.

Nematodirus is a disease which affects young lambs managed on pasture grazed by young lambs the previously year .

Signs that lambs are infected includes profuse diarrhoea during the late spring /early summer months, and in more serious cases– death.

Lambs which do survive often have compromised growth.

It is important to be aware that only lambs are affected by

nematodiasis, ewes do not show disease.

For updates on parasites in sheep, visit the SCOPS website- www.scops.org.uk

If you think your lambs may be showing signs of nematodiasis, seek advice from your vet.

However, remember that in organic systems, routine use of anthelmintic drugs is prohibited.



Dear Members,

We hope that you have had a good Spring– the grass is starting to grow, albeit a little slow!

We are pleased that the Welsh Government has announced that the window for Glastir Organic 2015 will open on the 20th of July (the Monday of the Royal Welsh Show), and will close on the 2nd of September. We hope that this will give those of you who missed out on the last window an opportunity to take advantage of the available funding.

As normal, QWFC will be present at the Royal Welsh Show in July in the WAOS building near the main ring– stand number E378. Please find enclosed your invitation to the breakfast, which will be held on the 20th of July. We look forward to seeing you there!

Regards

Carys Jones, Organic Scheme Certification Officer

BOBL Conference review

On 21st May, 2015 Better Organic Business Links (BOBL) closing conference took place at the Royal Welsh Showground in Builth Wells. The main aim of the conference was to look back on the development of the organic sector in Wales, and to how this development has led to sustainability and resilience in the industry.

The theme of the conference was

“Resilience and Opportunities: Sustainable Organic Marketing and Production in Wales”- a report on the organic retail market within Wales was presented by Susanne Padel, and discussed the data.

The morning session kicked off with an introduction from Dafydd Owen, Director of the BOBL project, supported by Professor Nigel Scollan, IBERS, with some great guest speakers on different areas within the organic sector.

Duncan Sinclair, Agricultural Manager for Waitrose confirmed that organic meat is still in demand and producers should “... maximise opportunity to sell organic produce”.

Susanne Padel, Senior Programme Manager at Elm Farm Organic Research Centre gave a talk on the organic market in Wales. She noted that although the availability of data is poor, there was a strong sense that the organic sector

may be picking up, following the recession. Susanne believes that “Organic remains as something that needs to be sold!” and urged that more needs to be done to market organic produce. It was interesting that 18.6% of horticulture land in Wales is organic, and perhaps

livestock farmers should diversify their businesses by converting a part of their land to horticulture production.

On promoting the sales of organic products:

“Organic remains as something that needs to be sold!”

Susanne Padel, Elm Farm Organic Research Centre

On the future success of the organic sector:

“Understanding the marketplace will be key”

“Producers should maximise opportunity to sell organic produce”

Duncan Sinclair, Agricultural Manager for Waitrose

Following presentations by the guest speakers, there was an opportunity for participants to visit 3 workshops. At the “Building Resilience into Supply Chains” led by Tony Little, Organic Centre Wales.

There was a positive sense that organic is on the up. Jon Morgan, Livestock Marketing noted his opinion on the organic market- “there is a great opportunity for the future” and added

“Understanding the market place will be key”. Many of the participants believed that producers should keep in mind that as the number of organic producers in Wales has dropped over the past 18 months, there is a positive outcome as the supply of organic produce will now equal the demand.

Dai Miles, Director of Calon Wen gave a talk on how Calon Wen have developed. They strongly believe that the branding of organic products plays a key role in sales.



Potash in organic systems

Over the past few weeks, we have received a number of enquiries regarding the use of potash on organic land. We hope this guide will be of use to you:

The principles of organic farming aim to work within natural cycles and systems and maintain long term soil fertility. Careful attention needs to be paid to minimise nutrient loss from the soil, and the careful, well planned use and application of manures is key.

If a deficiency of potash does arise, you must go through the process of carrying out a soil analysis and applying for a derogation. See below for more details.

Potash is found in plant-available form as potassium (K) salts such as potassium chloride, sulphate and nitrate. These natural deposits are generally the result of the drying out of seas which occurred millions of years ago. In soils and plants these salts, which are all water soluble, separate into the potassium cation K^+ and the relevant anion Cl^- , SO_4^{2-} , NO_3^- etc. Potash in manures is mainly in water soluble form, around 70 to 90%. A small amount is bound into the organic material which is released into the soil solution as the organic matter is mineralised.



The potassium salt– better know as potash

Manures contain useful amounts of potash - the amount of potash varies according to the type of livestock and type of system the manure has derived from. The storage of manure is important, as if it is not stored adequately, potash can be lost.

Soil analysis, which includes clay content, is required in order to measure the amount of potassium (K) present in the soil. If you believe you have a K deficiency in your soil, carry out a soil analysis. If there is a deficiency, contact QWFC to apply for a potash derogation.

The Do's and Don'ts of using Potash!



- DO aim to recycle potash within your farming system
- DO apply for an RS8
- DO have a soil analysis carried out which includes clay content
- DO have a look at Annex F in the QWFC standards for permitted potash sources
 - approval will need to be granted prior to application



DON'T apply potash products without prior approval



DON'T apply potash products unless your soil needs it!

If you would like any further information on using potash, please contact us on 01970 636688

Potash derogation sheets (RS8) can be found on our website www.welshorganic.co.uk

Want to diversify your organic business?

Why not grow fruit and veg?

The Welsh Organic Producer Survey 2014, carried out by Organic Centre Wales, IBERS & Organic Research Centre estimated that approximately 77000 hectares of land in Wales in November 2014 was certified as organic. Permanent pasture/rough grazing made up 8.3% of Welsh organic land from 2011-2013. It may come as a surprise that during that period, 18.6% of Welsh organic land was horticultural (excluding potatoes).



The Glastir Organic Scheme shows that the Welsh Government are committed to encourage organic horticultural production in Wales by offering substantial support payments for horticulture.

With the recent poor market for organic livestock, which most believe will pick up following a decline in organic producers, have you considered diversifying

your business and growing organic fruit and vegetables?

Organic fruit and vegetable sales have increased, according to the Soil Association Market Report (2014). The report noted that there was an increase of 11% in box schemes and home delivery of organic produce. Box scheme businesses predict that their businesses will keep growing!

If you would like more information on how to diversify into horticulture, please contact us for a copy of the horticulture standards.

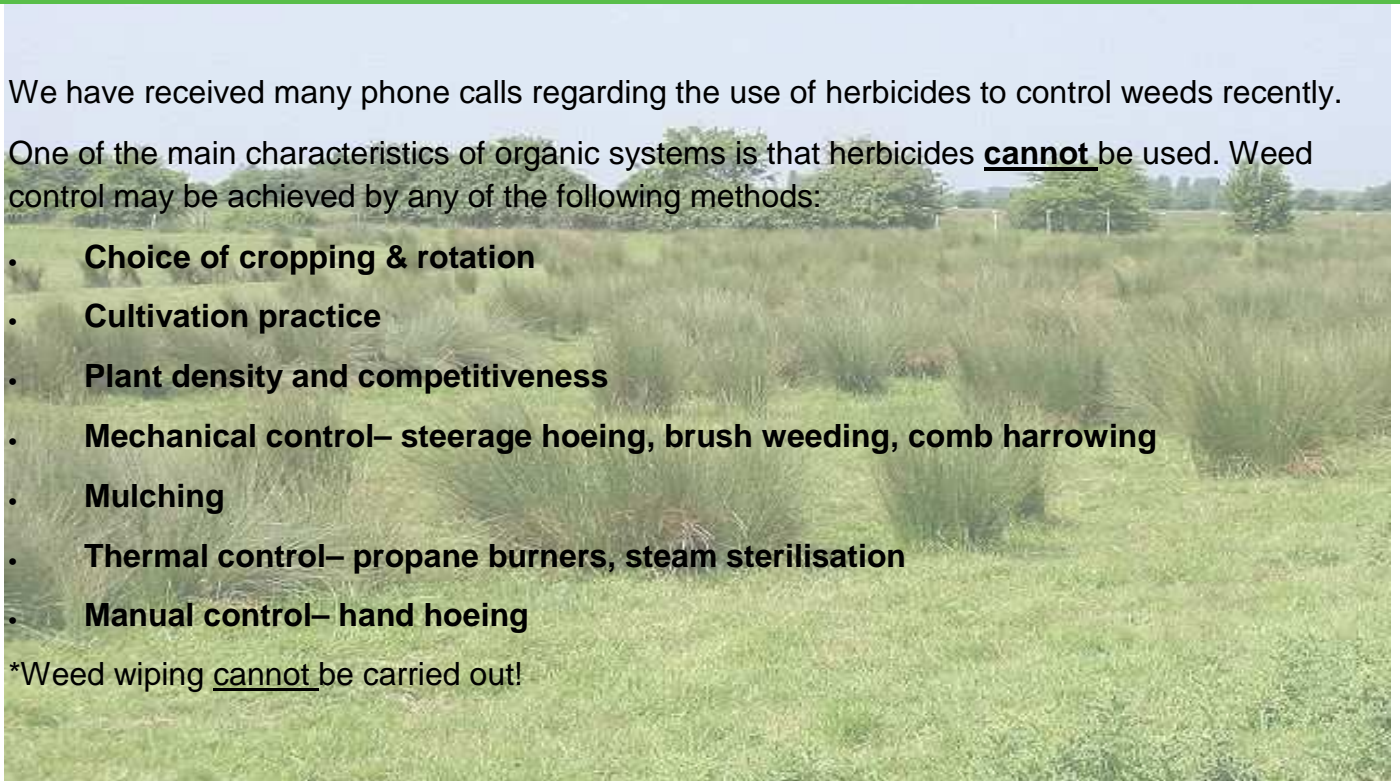
Weed control

We have received many phone calls regarding the use of herbicides to control weeds recently.

One of the main characteristics of organic systems is that herbicides **cannot** be used. Weed control may be achieved by any of the following methods:

- **Choice of cropping & rotation**
- **Cultivation practice**
- **Plant density and competitiveness**
- **Mechanical control– steerage hoeing, brush weeding, comb harrowing**
- **Mulching**
- **Thermal control– propane burners, steam sterilisation**
- **Manual control– hand hoeing**

*Weed wiping **cannot** be carried out!



Glastir Organic Application Window

We are happy to hear that the Welsh Government have announced that the window for 2015 Glastir Organic applications will open on the **20th of July** until the **2nd of September**.

More information will be available at the Royal Welsh Show.



In conversion land- feeding rules

Many of you that have been organic for a number of years have decided to convert new land. In-conversion feed may be fed to organic livestock however, the amounts vary.

Year 1 in-conversion feed- Wheat, barley or other crops that come from first year conversion land are considered to be non-organic.

Up to 20% of the annual or lifetime intake of the animal (on a dry matter basis) may originate from land in the first year of conversion, be it harvested forage or grazing of permanent pasture or perennial forage parcels. The 20% rule applies to land that is part of your own holding, or a linked holding.

This rule, however, does not apply to annual forage such as stubble turnips



grown on year 1 conversion land.

Year 2 in-conversion feed- You may feed your livestock 100% year 2 conversion feed, as long as this is from your own

holding. This only applies if you already have land which is fully organic.

If the second year conversion feed is produced on another holding, or a linked holding, the maximum amount that can be fed is 30% (on an annual dry matter basis).

If you have any questions or queries regarding these rules, please contact us.

Please note, these rules only apply to producers who already have land which has attained full organic status!

For information...

Wales Veterinary Science Centre up and running!

QWFC'S parent body, Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers Ltd, a consortium of vets and Aberystwyth University, have been working to keep the veterinary testing laboratory at Aberystwyth open. Designed to support vet practices in Mid and South Wales, the centre will contribute to the UK wide scanning surveillance network and provide a service for the APHA's Farming community.



We enclose for your interest the first newsletter prepared by the Centre. Although targeted at veterinary practices, it still contains a background to the work being done – even though some of the solutions offered would not be available to organic farmers.

USEFUL CONTACTS:

- Organic Centre Wales: 01970 622248 organic@aber.ac.uk
- The Organic Research Centre: 01488 658298 elmfarm@organicresearchcentre.com
- Rural Payments Wales– Customer Contact Centre: 0300 062 5004

Welsh Organic Scheme non-conformance update

We are pleased to announce that analysis of non-conformance data shows that the overall compliance of organic producers is improving! No or very few non-compliances are being raised at the annual assessments.

Here are the 3 most common non-compliances raised:

1. **Land schedule inaccuracies./ changes** - Historically, this has been the most common non-compliance raised. You must inform QWFC if there are any land schedule changes i.e new land taken on, area changes etc..
2. **No derogation for 70% grass seed mixture**– Please remember to submit a derogation for seeds (record sheet 13). If you need a copy of the record sheet, contact QWFC or alternatively download from the website www.welshorganic.co.uk
3. **No derogation for non-organic breeding livestock purchased**– Please see previous Newsletter for rules on purchasing non-organic replacement livestock. The livestock derogation (record sheet 9) should be submitted completed in full prior to the purchase of non-organic livestock

