

The Organic Food and Farming Targets Bill Campaign

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PRESS RELEASE

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CO-OP'S COMMITMENT TO UK ORGANIC FARMERS WELCOMED

A new report released today (July 2nd) pledges the Co-op's full backing for the Organic Food and Farming Targets Bill. [1]

"The Organic Targets Bill campaign welcomes the Co-op's support and its commitment to agricultural reform, and urges all other retailers to follow suit. The new Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs should take Co-op's report seriously. They must start reversing the trend of intensive farming in the UK and implement an action plan with targets for organic farming."

said Catherine Fookes, the Organic Targets Co-ordinator at Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming.

Green and Pleasant Land reveals the extent of consumer concerns about the safety of food grown using synthetic pesticides, and the huge scale of public support for home grown organic produce.

The Co-op report also reveals how EU quality standards discriminate against organically grown produce, which is often of a smaller size and irregular shape. For example, EU regulations demand that carrots must have a minimum diameter of 20 mm across the top. The Organic Targets Bill "Organic Action Plan", to be released later this month calls on the UK government to lobby the EU to change the quality standards of all fresh produce to allow for the more irregular shape and size of organic produce. [2]

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. In the last parliamentary session, the Bill was the second most supported Bill in Parliament, with 268 supporting MPs. The Organic Targets Bill campaign will be aiming to get the Bill back into Parliament via an MP drawn in the Ballot for Private Members' Bills on June 28th 2001. For more information see

www.sustainweb.org

2. The outline Action Plan will be released later this month

3. Only two major retailers do not support the Organic Targets Bill: Safeway and Tesco

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