



# Aim for Organic

The newsletter of The Organic Targets Campaign

Issue 5 September 2001

## Minister for Rural Affairs supports organic action plan and targets!

**I**t's great news for the Organic Targets Campaign (OTC) that Rt Hon Alun Michael MP has become Minister of State for Rural Affairs, in the new Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). As First Minister, leading the Welsh Assembly, he introduced the Welsh Organic Action Plan and its target of 10%. It means that we have a Minister who has recognised the strategic advantage of setting a clear target for conversion of land to organic farming. Clearly it would be inconsistent if he did not now move to introduce the same policy of a firm target for England's organic farming - but he will need you to

convince him that this is a priority area and that he can go further than the 10% target set in Wales. Over 260 MPs have already supported a far more ambitious 30% target - as have most major supermarkets, trade unions and environment groups. Furthermore, since the Welsh target was set, imports of organic food have grown even more in the UK - from around 70% of food imported last year to 75% now.

**So to convince him of the need to do for England what he has already done for Wales, we need you to TAKE ACTION! See what to do overleaf.**

January 23rd 2002

### Make your voice heard in Westminster Rally for Organics & Lobby your MP

The OTC is organizing a high profile rally and lobby of Parliament. On 23rd January 2002 the campaign will be visiting Westminster Central Hall and we want as many of you there as possible.

We hope to have major public figures, including ministers plus a chance to buy organic produce and see organic cookery demonstrations. Once inspired we will head over to Parliament to explain to our MPs why we need organic targets and an action plan to help get farming back on its feet and meet the demand for organic produce in the UK currently met by imports.

This rally is the culmination of three years hard work. It follows a formula that has been used to great effect in the past with similar Bills becoming law. However it can only work if we have your support.

Please put the date in your diary, tell all your friends and fill in the form on the right if you are interested in becoming involved.

Name	[Redacted]
Address	[Redacted]
	[Redacted]
	[Redacted]

Email

(Please include only if you prefer to receive our information via email.)

**Please send me information on:**

- Being a steward for the rally
- Helping to fund the day
- Putting an article in magazine / newsletter about the day
- Distributing flyers / putting up posters
- Attending the rally

Fax or mail the form back to the address below, or fill in the on-line rally registration form at [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)

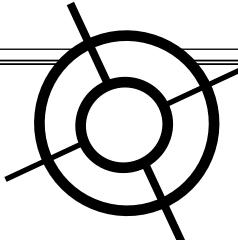
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# Aim for Organic

## Huge public support, but no MPs take up the Bill ... YET!

**D**espite intensive lobbying from thousands of individuals and over 50 national organisations supporting the organic targets campaign no high-placed MP from the ballot chose the Organic Targets Bill (OTB) to take through Parliament. However all the MPs targeted were impressed with the intensity of the lobbying and three out of the

top seven told us that the OTB came a close second to issues that they had long been working on. Thank you to all those who wrote letters or visited their MP. Your work was still crucial - it has shown the huge support that organic farming has in the UK.

The campaign will now capitalize on forthcoming events such as the

Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food in order to get the campaign's aims into Government policy. We will also expect supportive MPs to keep up the fight in Parliament, with a range of devices. The rally and lobby of Parliament planned for early 2002 will also help us to drive the "Aim for Organic" message home.

## How YOU can help the Organic Targets Campaign

### 1. Write to your MP about Minister of State for Rural Affairs Alun Michael MP

Write a letter to your MP (at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA) asking them to write to Alun Michael. Explain how pleased you are that the new DEFRA Minister introduced targets when First Minister in Wales. Ask your MP to write to Mr Michael to urge him to (a) commit to developing an action plan and target for organic farming for England as well and (b) to ensure the target for organics is more ambitious than that in Wales - ideally 30% which is what 268 MPs have previously supported.

### 2. Encourage more groups / businesses to sign up

There are lots of organisations who support organic food and farming but who have not yet signed up to the campaign. We need you to keep an eye out for any local organic businesses, whole food stores, local Woman's Institutes, farmers, suppliers and any

groups that may share our concerns. Ask them if they have signed up to the OTC, and if not, provide them with a form so they can join the growing list that is persuading the Government to back the OTC. Organisations can also sign up online at [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org).

If you don't have access to the web, please send an SAE or phone us with your details and we'll pop some sign up forms in the post.

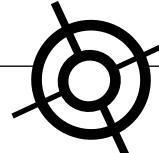
### 3. Write to your local paper

Write to local papers, either to the letters page or send a press release, pointing out the Government's lack of a coherent strategy hinders the development of a local organic food market. You could also mention that the introduction of the organic targets would help local producers and businesses and could provide much needed jobs. Try to include some of the objectives of the campaign (below). If your letter is printed or you get press coverage please send us a copy (our address is on the front).

### 4. Put the rally / lobby of parliament in your diary!

> January 23rd 2002 <

### Stop press



The Food Standards Agency is looking for consumers with an interest in food issues to sit on a new Consumer Committee which is being set up to help the Agency better understand and address consumer needs and views.

The application form and further details are available at: [www.foodstandards.gov.uk](http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk) or by calling 0207 276 8000.

This newsletter was printed with funding from Elm Farm Research Centre, an organisation working on sustainable organic food and farming.

## The Organic Targets Campaign calls for:

- an action plan for organic food and farming in England and Wales
- 30% of agricultural land in England and Wales to be organic by 2010

The achievement of the above objectives must be done in such a way as to:

- make organic food more accessible to more people
- increase the availability of locally produced organic food
- keep the organic market on a sustainable path of growth
- develop the supply chain and the capacity of the market

### Steering group

Elm Farm Research Centre ~ Friends of the Earth ~ HDRA - The Organic Organisation ~ Pesticides Action Network-UK ~ Soil Association ~ Transport & General Workers Union (RAAW) ~ UNISON ~ WWF-UK

**Secretariat:** Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming