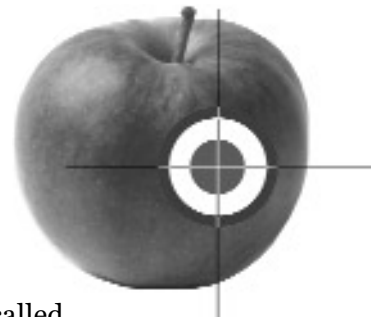


# Aim for Organic

The newsletter of The Organic Targets Campaign

Issue 7 August/Sept 2002

## Campaign hits target



### Government publishes Organic Action Plan with target.

**I**t's been a roller coaster ride, but finally we have what we have all been calling for during the last three years – an organic action plan, with an all important target so that we can judge its success. An extremely **big thank you** to all our supporters for your **perseverance**, your **time** and your **enthusiasm**. This success really shows the power of the pen and that people working together can make change happen – all those letters from all the supporting organisations and individuals to MPs and Ministers, the huge lobby of Parliament in January 2002, really made a big difference.

It's been a long, hard six months working on the Government's Organic Action Plan team, but it was worth it. Our key points are in the action plan: **a target, payments continuing after farmers have converted, more support for direct retailing and local food, encouragement for public bodies such as schools and hospitals to buy organic food.** The plan is a huge step forward for British organic farming. As Patrick Holden, Director of the Soil Association, said: "This is a major breakthrough for organic farmers in England."

However, there is still work to do. The target Government has set is for the **market share of British organic produce to increase from its current lowly 30% to 70%**. Instead of all that imported organic produce you see on some

supermarkets' shelves, you should gradually see more British produce instead. Although the campaign had originally called for a target for 30% of land to be farmed organically by 2010, the main aim of the campaign was for an action plan that included clear targets for making real progress. The market share target adopted by Government will make a good alternative, if it is met by 2010. It would ensure our farmers can meet far more of the UK demand.

Currently, though, the target has no date, and there are other aspects of the plan which fall short of what we think is needed. For example payments after conversion are still low compared to other EU countries, and there could have been a greater commitment to local organic food systems. We also need to make sure that similar measures are introduced in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland so that farmers in these areas are not disadvantaged.

This first action plan is just the start, and work will continue in the Autumn. Please help us to

keep the pressure on so that the action plan results in real change for UK organic farming.

**See What you can do on page four for how you can help us build on our success.**

See page two for our analysis of the plan. The full Action Plan is available free from DEFRA Publications: 08459 556 000 and [www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/actionplan/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/actionplan/index.htm)

### Campaign gets Ministerial approval!

*"All credit to the Organic Targets Campaign for raising the profile of organic issues. My arm is aching with signing letters from MPs about it."*

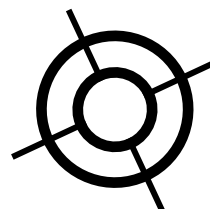
Elliot Morley, Minister with responsibility for organic farming  
(Thanks to Organic Business, June 2002)

## The Organic Targets Campaign

c/o Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming

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## The Government's Organic Action Plan for England – our analysis of the main points

Area	Government action	Our analysis
<b>Setting a target</b>	UK organic market share to increase from 30% to at least 70%	Excellent that target made it into the action plan. Needs a date of 2010
<b>Financial support</b>	Payments continuing for 5 years after the farmer has converted to organic farming. Top payment is £30 / hectare. Available 2003	Great that this concept accepted. Now need to ensure the money is enough to compete with other EU countries
	Top fruit (apples and pears) to receive increase in payments from £70 to £600 per hectare in years 1-3 and £30 in years 4 and 5	As above
	£5 million extra on Research and Development over next five years	Excellent news!
<b>Supplying of organic food</b>	Clarification that public bodies can buy organic food based on environmental benefits it can provide	Excellent news!
	DEFRA will get organic meals into government staff canteens	Excellent news!
<b>Super-markets</b>	Supermarkets committed to <i>"increasing proportion of organic food which they source within the UK"</i>	Will only buy from UK <i>"where it is feasible ... at acceptable levels of quality and price"</i> This gives retailers a get out clause
	Will provide information on organic and conventional imports and <i>"seek to support producers to increase their share of the organic market"</i>	Good that they will provide information but rest is very woolly. Wanted all retailers to agree to set targets for UK supplies once information gathered. Sainsbury's and Waitrose are the only two supermarkets who have so far, and Marks & Spencers has a good track record in UK sourcing
<b>Organic standards</b>	States that Ministers support high standards	Excellent news!
	Consumers to be more involved in setting standards	Excellent news!
<b>Information</b>	More market information available	Very good news for farmers and processors thinking of going organic. Could help us avoid an over-supply situation in the future if market predictions available
<b>Research</b>	New Research Committee on organics to advise on organic research	Excellent news!
	Food Chain Centre will analyse organic red meat sector and identify best practice	Good start but would like to see this extended to other sectors too in near future
<b>Local food</b>	Attempt to raise skills levels in small organic food processing and manufacturing businesses by securing changes to Vocational Training Scheme	Urgently needed and welcome!
	Will develop strategy for regional food sector, including local food marketing	Great potential to help small and medium sized enterprises but needs a commitment to put funding into local food economies from, for example, Regional Development Agencies

# Aim for Organic ~ Aim for Organic ~ Aim for Organic

## Organic imports in supermarkets

An enormous 70% of the organic food sold in the UK is imported. So, the Organic Targets Campaign is delighted that Government has set a target in the new organic action plan to replace these imports with homegrown organic produce.

But what if the supermarkets choose not to buy UK because it is cheaper to buy abroad? Supermarkets all say they are committed to UK food suppliers but are they in practice? Some are better than others.

Marks and Spencer imports only 40% over its whole organic range (including groceries). Waitrose too are doing well, importing only around 15% of their fresh organic produce. Sainsbury's have a target to reduce their organic imports from 60% currently to 40% by 2004. But Tesco now imports between 70% and 80% of its organic produce, and, along with many other supermarkets would not commit to setting targets for buying home-grown organic produce in the action plan.

The OTC believes that if some supermarkets can do it, they can all do it and **we need your help to encourage supermarkets to set targets for buying UK organic produce.**

**Organic milk producers** are having a hard time at the moment. The *British Dairying* magazine (June issue) states that the cost of producing organic milk is around 22 – 24 pence per litre (ppl) without margin for reinvestment. Below are the prices organic dairy farmers are paid by milk co-ops who in turn supply the supermarkets.

First Milk	16.91 ppl
Milk Group	26.74 ppl
Milk Link	19.50 ppl
OMSCo	18.73 ppl
Zenith Milk	19.96 ppl

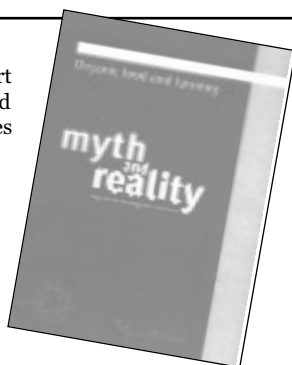
As you can see, most of the co-ops are not even paying farmers the price of production, so many farmers are losing money. The Organic Targets Campaign had hoped the action plan would address the issue of supermarkets paying farmers a fair price for the food they produce. The milk example above shows just how urgent this is.

See **What you can do** and take action to help farmers receive a fair price for their produce.

**Langmead Farm** in West Sussex was forced to plough in 50% of their organic Romaine lettuce crop in 2001 when they were let down by Tesco, who had agreed a program with the farm for 1.2 tons of lettuce to be grown. In the end, Tesco did not need the lettuce. Langmead had no option but to plough it in. Because most supermarkets do not enter into written contracts with farmers, this wastage can happen often, and the farmer has absolutely no right of redress.

Myth and Reality – a must have for all those interested in organics! This report examines some of the key issues around organic food and its production. It takes up the challenge of answering the critics. It exposes the misleading and erroneous statements made against organic food, and provides the facts that prove them wrong.

Order a copy from Sustain for just £10 (inclusive of postage and packing – address on front page).



## Supporting Organisations

**A big thank you to the organisations supporting us. Especially those who have given time, money (and food – organic of course!) to the project. We haven't room to list all the supporting organisations, but you can find the full list at [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)**



## 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

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

### 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

# What you can do



## 1. Write to your MP. You may like to include some of the points below:

- If your MP was supportive and signed Early Day Motion (EDM) 366 supporting our campaign **thank them** for their help in encouraging Government to put in place an action plan for organic farming with a target of 70% of the UK organic market to be met by UK produce.
- Ask all MPs to write to Elliot Morley MP (the Minister with responsibility for organic farming) to request that:
  - a date of 2010 be set for the 70% market share target in the organic action plan. Without this date, the Government may be tempted to let the plan slip down the priority list.
  - he continues to work with retailers to encourage them **all** to commit to setting targets for buying organic UK produce
  - the positive work of the organic action plan is not undone by allowing the commercial growing of GM crops in the UK. This would make it impossible to grow some organic crops here, due to contamination.

**Please remember to send us copies of all your correspondence so we can monitor our progress (address on front page)**

## 3. Buy British organic produce

- Fruit and vegetables that can be grown in this country should be available in UK supermarkets when in season, so try and choose home-grown organic food. To check what's in season, look at [www.sustainweb.org/london\\_eel1.shtm#4](http://www.sustainweb.org/london_eel1.shtm#4) and scroll down to the bottom of the page.
- Tell your supermarket manager (most supermarkets have a comments box) that you do not want to buy organic fruit and vegetables when it is imported from foreign markets. Ask the manager what he/she is doing to buy more UK organic produce and increase UK production.

### Write to your MP!

You can write to your MP at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

### Who is my MP?

Find out by calling  
House of Commons Info Line 020 7219 4272  
or visiting [www.locata.co.uk/commons](http://www.locata.co.uk/commons)

### Did my MP sign EDM 366?

Find out by calling the Info Line above or visit  
<http://edm.ais.co.uk/>

## 2. Write to the supermarkets and the British Retail Consortium (the umbrella organisation for supermarkets) Addresses on the right

- Ask them to set a target, or targets for different produce sectors (e.g. dairy, meat, vegetables) for buying organic produce from the UK. Remind them that two supermarkets (Sainsbury's and Waitrose) have already done this. Why can't they do the same?
- Collect your receipts from purchasing organic milk, and send them to the Chief Executives (including Sainsbury's and Waitrose), or to your local supermarket. Ask them how much they are paying the farmer per litre of milk
- Remember to congratulate the supermarkets who support the Organic Targets Campaign (they are the ones who have a tick against their name in the box on right)

### Supermarkets names and addresses

Carlos Criado-Perez  
Chief Executive  
**Safeways Stores Plc**  
6 Millington Road  
Hayes, Middlesex  
UB3 4AY

Terry Leahy  
Chief Executive, **Tesco**  
Tesco Head Office  
Tesco House  
Delamare Road  
Cheshunt, Hertfordshire  
EN8 9SL

Steve Esom  
Chief Executive  
**Waitrose** ✓ Head Office  
Doncastle Road  
Bracknell, Berkshire  
RG12 8YA

Sir Peter Davies  
Chief Executive  
**Sainsbury's** ✓  
33 Holborn, London  
EC1N 2HT

Luke Vandervalde  
Chief Executive  
**Marks and Spencer** ✓  
Room 101, 27 Baker Street  
London W1U 8EP

Sir Kenneth Morrison CBE  
Chairman  
**Morrisons**  
Hilmore House, Thornton  
Road, Bradford BD8 9AX

Graham Melmoth  
Chief Executive  
**Co-operative Group** ✓  
PO Box 53  
New Century House  
Manchester  
M60 4ES

Alan Smith, Chief Executive  
**Somerfield Stores Ltd**  
Somerfield House  
Whitchurch Lane  
Whitchurch, Bristol  
BS14 0TJ

Tony Denunzio  
Chief Executive, **Asda** ✓  
Asda House, South Bank  
Great Wilson Street  
Leeds LS11 5AD

William Moyes  
Director General  
**British Retail Consortium**  
21 Dartmouth Street  
SW1H 9BP

✓ = supporters of the Organic Targets Campaign