

The Organic Food and Farming Targets Bill Campaign

Sustain, The Alliance for Better Food & Farming
94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF
Tel: (020) 7837 1228; Fax: (020) 7837 1141
organictargetsbill@sustainweb.org

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release, December 20th 2000

SIMON THOMAS MP TO TARGET ORGANICS

Ceredigion MP to introduce new law setting targets for organics

Organisations supporting the Organic Targets Bill today welcomed the announcement by Simon Thomas MP for Ceredigion that he would adopt the Organic Food and Farming Targets Bill, following his success in the annual Private Member's Ballot last week. Simon was drawn 15th in the Ballot, and his decision guarantees the Bill will be brought before Parliament this session.

Simon Thomas MP said

"My constituency is home to an international centre of excellence on organic farming, which is leading the way in showing the benefits organic farming can bring to the environment, to the rural economy and to farmers themselves. This Bill would ensure we make the most of these benefits, and prevent the ridiculous situation where 70% of the organic food eaten in the UK is imported from overseas when our own farmers could be growing it."

Catherine Fookes, Co-ordinator of the Organic Food and Farming Bill Campaign said

"Simon's decision to adopt the Bill will be welcomed by over a hundred organisations backing this Bill, from small farmers groups to supermarkets, and from consumer groups to trade unions. The wide range of organisations backing the Bill is a demonstration of the wide ranging benefits to boosting organic farming."

Martyn Williams, Senior Parliamentary Campaigner at Friends of the Earth said "Promoting organic farming would cut the use of chemicals in our countryside, and has been shown to have real benefits for our wildlife in farming areas."

Harry Hadaway, spokesman for the Soil Association said

"We are delighted that Simon Thomas has given this Bill priority in the next parliamentary session. A significant increase in organic production in the UK will give British farmers the boost they need, regaining consumer trust and securing a fair price for their produce. The countries in Europe that have made most progress on organic farming are those that have set targets and deliberately planned ways to make the shift easier for their farmers. It is time we did the same here."

ENDS

CONTACTS

Catherine Fookes, Campaign Co-ordinator, Sustain: 0207 837 1228 / 07979 534050

Alun Shurmer, Office of Simon Thomas MP: House of Commons: 0207 219 6422