



Organic Centre Wales
Canolfan Organig Cymru

Response from Organic Centre Wales, IBERS, Aberystwyth University,

SY23 3EBto the DEFRA consultation on:

**National listing and marketing of conservation and amateur varieties
of vegetables**

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/veg-variety/index.htm>

Background

Organic Centre Wales (OCW) was established in 2000 as a focal point for the dissemination of information on organic food and farming to producers and other interested parties in Wales. In 2003 the focus was extended to include public education, public procurement, policy and strategy development, thus providing support to the whole of the organic community in Wales. It is based at Aberystwyth University.

OCW is run by a partnership of three organizations actively involved in organic farming research and knowledge transfer in Wales: ADAS, The Organic Research Centre Elm Farm (ORC) and Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) at Aberystwyth University.

The funding for OCW comes from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to carry out the co-ordination functions, with additional funding through a separate WAG contract for delivery of the Organic Conversion Information Service. Additional support from the European Union EAFRD provides the Farming Connect Organic Development Programme and the Better Organic Business Links Supply Chain Efficiencies project for the organic sector.

Response

We support the general approach to regulation which strikes a balance between recognising the importance of maintaining these non commercial varieties on the one hand and reducing bureaucracy and associated costs on the other. However there are some points we feel need further consideration/ clarification:

- It is not clear from the consultation documents how the authenticity and adequacy of the descriptions of the varieties will be guaranteed. In addition to the varietal description outlined, we suggest that information on the agronomic characteristics of varieties, such as resistance to key diseases, would be useful to facilitate the identification of useful genetic traits that could benefit commercial breeding programmes.
- It is unclear how the system will be coordinated to ensure the same variety does not receive multiple names.

- If SASA are to assume the above roles, presumably additional funding would need to be identified to enable them to fulfil this function, but this not clarified in the consultation documents.
- We understand that Birmingham University and Garden Organic in association with a wide range of other organisations partners have proposed the creation of a Vegetable and Fruit Landrace Register. Consideration should be given to whether this could act as a primary on-line reference for both record keeping and scientific benefit.