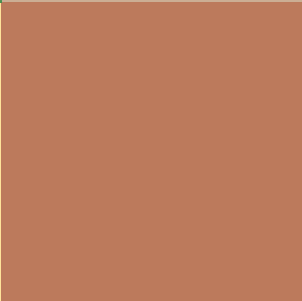
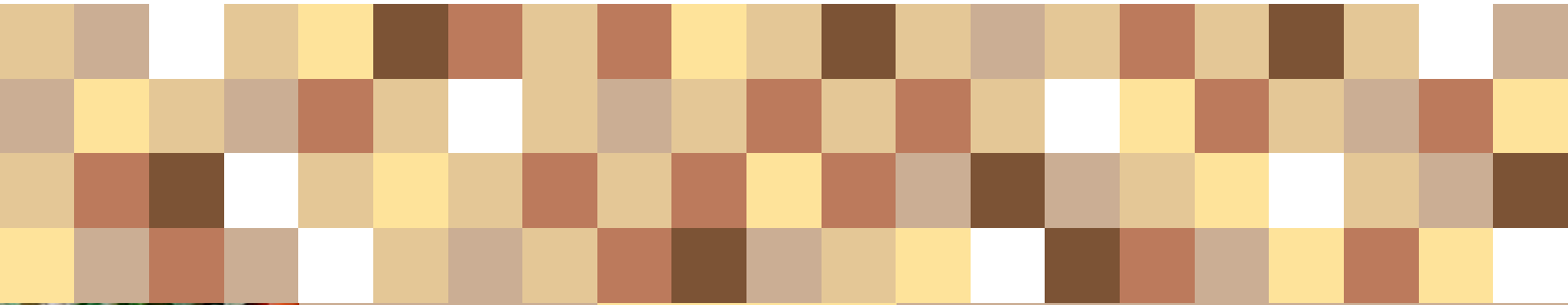
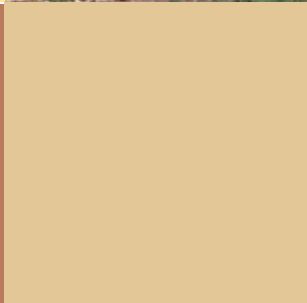
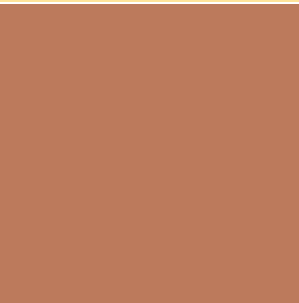
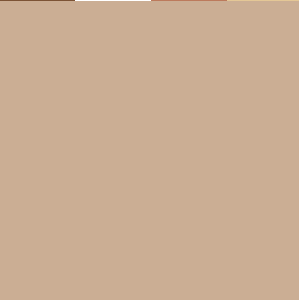
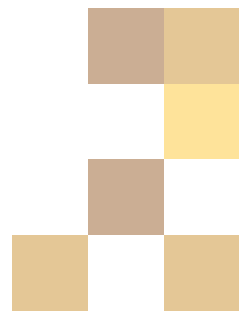
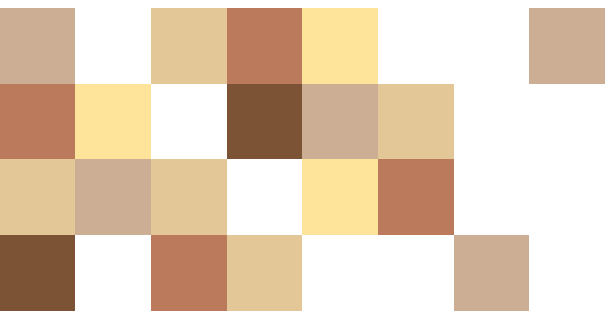


Organic Farming Scheme

Explanatory Booklet

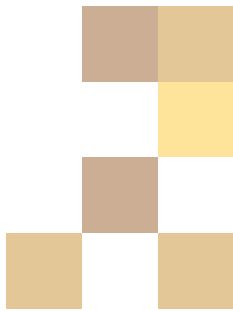
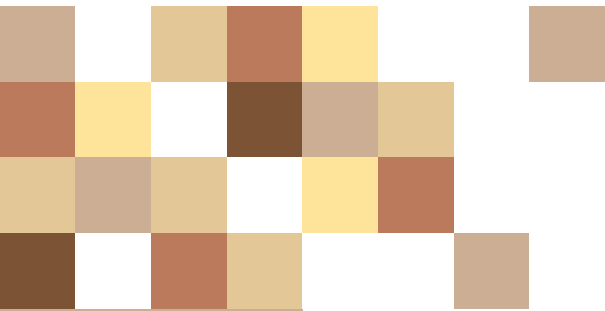


Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



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Section 1

Introduction

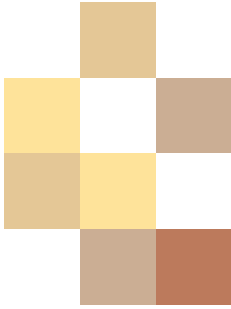
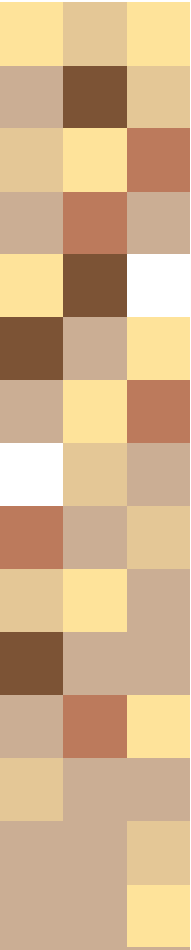
The Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) is a 5 year scheme provided for under the Rural Development Programme for Wales 2007 to 2013. It is jointly funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the European Commission. It is a key part of the Organic Action Plan for Wales and aims to encourage the expansion of organic production in Wales in order to help meet the increasing demand for organically produced food.

This booklet provides guidance for farmers who intend applying to the scheme. It is not exhaustive and may be updated or amended during the lifetime of the OFS to take account of any scheme developments.

The OFS is governed by The Rural Development Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2006 ((Statutory Instrument) 2006 No. 3343 (W.304)), Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005 and Commission Regulations (EC) No. 1974/2006 and (EC) No. 1975/2006 (all as amended from time to time). Copies of these Regulations are on the Welsh Assembly Government web site at www.wales.gov.uk or copies can be requested from Welsh Assembly Government Divisional Offices.

Scheme objectives

The Welsh Assembly Government values the contribution that organic farming can make to environmentally sensitive food production. Organic farming seeks to work with natural processes using methods which are designed to achieve a sustainable production system with limited use of external inputs. The potential for pollution and other environmental damage is lessened as organic farming avoids the use of artificial fertilisers and synthetic pesticides. Instead it emphasises the



role of crop rotation in helping to maintain soil fertility and to combat pest and disease problems and relies on the use of fertility-building crops and natural fertilisers, such as animal manure.

Organic Standards

All food sold as 'organic' must be produced according to European laws on organic production. These laws require food sold as 'organic' to come from growers and processors who are registered and approved by Organic Certification Bodies (OCB), which are in turn registered by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Farmers who register with an Organic Certification Body whose standards go beyond the European law will have to follow their requirements in order to be registered with that body.

Further Information

The Welsh Assembly Government runs a service called the Organic Conversion Information Service (OCIS). This service aims to ensure that farmers who choose to go organic, do so based on a sound understanding of the implications for the business.

To take advantage of this service, farmers should telephone the Organic Centre Wales help line on 01970 622100. It will provide advice and information on organic farming and, if appropriate, arrange for a free visit by an advisor experienced in organic production and marketing who will provide impartial information relevant to the business.

Organic farming is not an easy option. Farmers should consider very carefully the financial implications of an organic conversion and may well need training in organic husbandry if their enterprise is to succeed. A number of colleges offer courses in organic agriculture and horticulture. Details of these can be obtained from the Organic Centre Wales help line.

Further information on organic standards can be obtained from the Organic Certification Bodies listed in Annex 1.

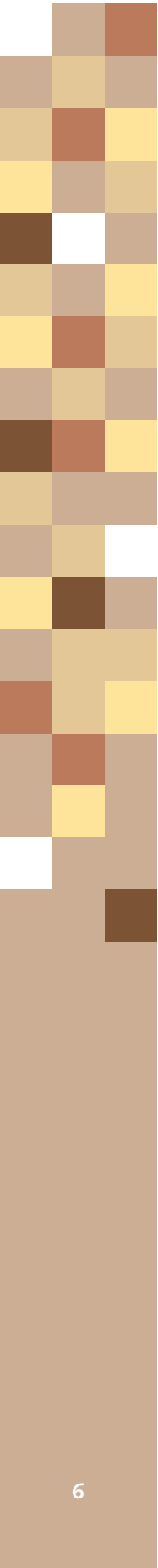
Section 2

Organic Farming Scheme eligibility

General Requirements that farmers will need to meet to receive payments under the Organic Farming Scheme

They must:

- Have entered into an OFS commitment.
- Submit an annual Single Application Form (SAF) claiming their payment and declaring all of their agricultural and non agricultural land on their holding.
- Ensure that each parcel is registered with an Organic Certification Body continuously during the lifetime of the commitment.
- Be a registered customer with the Welsh Assembly Government and have been issued with a Customer Reference Number.
- Ensure that all land is registered with the Welsh Assembly Government.
- Comply with the scheme rules.
- Have full management responsibility and control over the land that is brought into the scheme for the duration of the commitment.
- Not make a false or misleading statement or declaration or furnish false or misleading information intentionally or as a result of negligence.
- Comply with cross compliance.
- Not artificially create the conditions required to obtain the payments.
- Allow the scheme land to be inspected at a time notified by the Welsh Assembly Government or other authorised persons.



and provide any document or record that the Welsh Assembly Government or other authorised persons may require.

- Notify the Welsh Assembly Government within 21 days of the event of any changes to their commitments or land managed under this commitment scheme.

To apply under the Organic Farming Scheme farmers must meet all of the scheme criteria set out below for the duration of the scheme:

Eligible land

- Land must be located in Wales.
- All land that is fully organic or in conversion is eligible subject to being continuously registered with an Organic Certification Body.
- All land that is in conversion must be subject to a conversion plan before being in the scheme.
- If a statutory designation, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), applies to your land you may need consent from the relevant body before you enter a commitment.
- Land entered into the scheme must be farmed in accordance with the requirements of the approved Organic Certification Body.

Ineligible Land

- Common land.
- Land not located in Wales.
- Ungrazed Woodland.
- Woodland which is ungrazed/ stock excluded under an Agri Environment Scheme.
- Land under Farm Woodland/ Farm Woodland Premium and Improved Land Premium Schemes.

Minimum Area Requirements

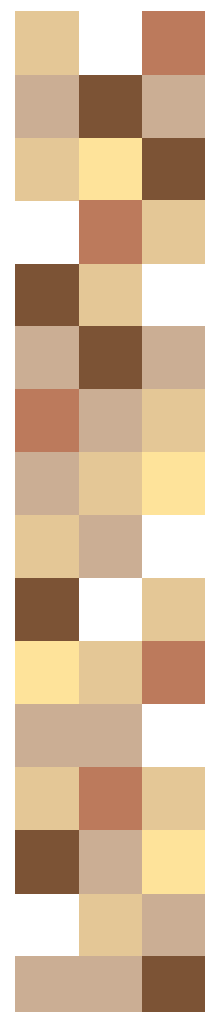
- Farmers must have whole field parcels for the purposes of the OFS.
- A minimum of 1.00 hectare must be entered into the scheme and the minimum eligible size of a field parcel to be entered into the scheme is 0.10 ha.
- Reductions and recoveries may be applied to land which does not remain throughout the lifetime of the commitment.

Cross Compliance

Farmers must comply with the requirements of Cross Compliance, which is a set of Statutory Management Requirements and Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions set out in the “Farmers’ Guide to Cross Compliance” issued by the Welsh Assembly Government in December 2004, with updates issued in January and December 2006 and amendments made from time to time. Farmers who do not have this guide must notify their local Divisional Office to obtain a copy and ensure a full understanding of what is required of them.

Certification with an Organic Certification Body

- Farmers that are the beneficiaries of any other Agri Environment schemes, such as Tir Gofal, must ensure that any works e.g. bracken spraying, due to be carried out under those schemes are compatible with the rules set out by their Organic Certification Body. Failure to ensure this could place OFS payments in jeopardy.
- Farmers must comply with any additional environmental standards required by their Organic Certification Body.
- The Organic Farming Scheme will be terminated on land for which the Certification Body has set the period of conversion back to the beginning due to a breach on that land.





Organic Certification Certificate

Farmers must have current original Organic Certification Certificates and land schedules certified by their Organic Certification Body for all their organic land.

Land Identification

Land in the Organic Certification Body's certificate land schedule must use the sheet and land identification as registered with the Welsh Assembly Government's Land Parcel Identification System.

Bringing in additional land into the scheme

Additional land parcels in conversion or fully organic may be brought into the scheme. Such land will need to satisfy all the eligibility criteria including being supported by an Organic Certification Body certificate and listed on the land schedule.

The additional land may receive 5 annual payments under the scheme and will be bound under the terms of the commitment for 5 years.

Transfer/ Sale of Land

Beneficiaries may sell or transfer land under their commitment, but in order to avoid scheme payments being recovered, the new occupiers must agree to take over the organic commitment relating to this land. Beneficiaries must tell the new occupiers about the commitment before the change of occupancy and get them to seek registration of the land with an Organic Certification Body. Failures of the new occupiers to take over the commitment may result in recovery and or penalties being applied.

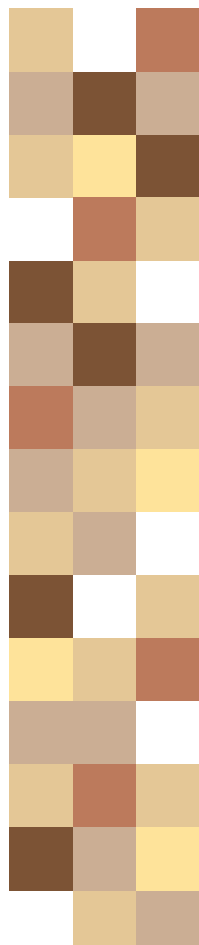
Beneficiaries must inform their local Divisional Office within 21 days of the event of any changes to their commitment or land managed under the scheme. Should this not happen, the beneficiary will be in breach of the commitment and may be liable to reductions and exclusions, together with interest.

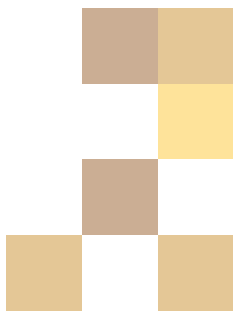
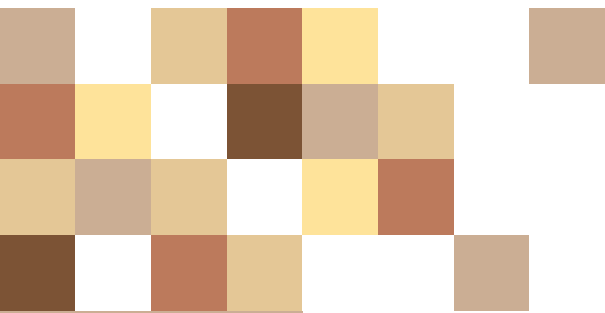
Making an Application

Application forms are available from Welsh Assembly Government local Divisional Offices at the addresses listed at Annex 2.

Farmers must return their completed application to the address on the form by 15 May in order to be eligible to make a claim for payment on the next Single Application Form (SAF).

- Farmers who are new to organic farming should not delay submitting their application if waiting for an organic certificate from an Organic Certification Body.







Section 3 Payment

Payment will be calculated annually in respect of each organically certified field claimed on the Single Application Form taking into account the organic status, eligible area and land use.

To benefit from the 2 years conversion rate, beneficiaries must ensure that their claim is submitted within the first year of conversion.

The land use is grouped into 6 categories as follow:

Horticultural crops

Land used for cultivating fruit and vegetables.

Fruit Trees

Arable crops

Land used for cultivating crops such as wheat, beans or maize.

Grassland

Land used for permanent and/or temporary grass lays.

Extensive Grassland

Areas of coastal belt/ salt marshes, bracken/ scrub or permanent grassland, which are over 25ha in the Severely Disadvantaged Areas.

Grazed woodland

Woodland used for grazing stock.

The list of eligible crop codes will be set out in the Single Application Rules Booklet.

Annual Payment Rates (£/ha)- These figures are currently under review with the European Commission and may be subject to amendment.

	In conversion £	Fully Organic £
First hectare of land entered into scheme	1,000	500
Horticultural crops	150	200
Fruit Trees	200	200
Arable crops	150	60
Grassland	150	40
Extensive Grassland	20	10
Grazed woodland	20	10

Payments will be restricted to 20 ha on Horticultural crops and 300 ha on Arable and Grassland. This includes any horticultural crop payments. For example if you receive 20ha payment for horticulture the maximum payment eligible under the arable & grassland combined would be 280ha.

Payment Claims

Farmers must submit payment claims annually on the Single Application Form. Claims for payments must be received by the Welsh Assembly Government no later than 15th May each year to avoid late claim penalties.

Farmers will be paid following successful validation of:

- All Single Application Forms.
- All land declared under all Rural Development area based schemes.
- Compliance with all Rural Development area based scheme rules.

The Welsh Assembly Government may following the completion of the administration checks authorise the annual payment in two instalments.

Payment by BACS

The Welsh Assembly Government will only make payments by BACS.

If you already receive any agricultural support you will be receiving payment by this method and will therefore not need to do anything else.

If you are a new customer to the Department, you will be required to complete a BACS form which is available from Divisional offices.

Appeals

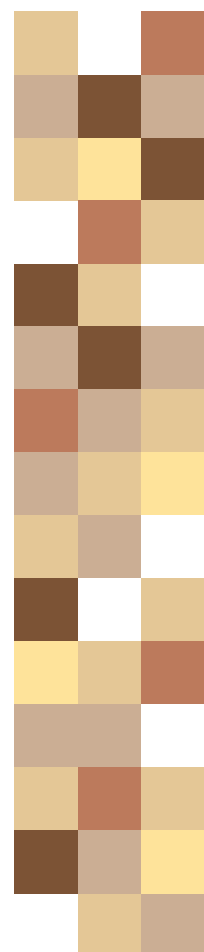
The Welsh Assembly Government will try to work through any disputes that beneficiaries may have. However, if the Welsh Assembly Government cannot do this and beneficiaries wish to challenge a decision, they can apply to have their case reviewed under the two-stage appeals process for farmers in Wales.

Further details of the appeals process can be obtained from the Welsh Assembly Government Divisional Offices.

Farmers should be aware that the Organic Farming scheme is subject to approval by the European Commission. Until such approval is received, the details contained within this booklet may change.

Legislation changes

European Regulations (including controls) may change from time to time. Beneficiaries must abide by any changes imposed following notification by WAG.





Annex I

List of Organic Certification Bodies

The Biodynamic Agricultural Association

Demeter Scheme Co-ordinator
17 Inverleith Place
Edinburgh
EH3 5QE

Tel/Fax: 01316 243921
www.biodynamic.org.uk/demeter

The Organic Food Federation

31 Turbine Way
EcoTech Business Park
Swaffham
Norfolk
PE37 7XD

Info@orgfoodfed.com
Tel: 01760 720444
Fax: 01760 720790

Organic Farmers & Growers Ltd

Elim Centre
Lancaster Road
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY1 3LE

info@organicfarmers.org.uk
Tel: 01743 440512
Fax: 01743 461441
www.organicfarmers.or.uk

Quality Welsh Food Certification Ltd

PO Box 8
Gorseland
North Road
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 2WB

Tel: 01970 636688

Fax: 01970 624049

Soil Association Certification Ltd

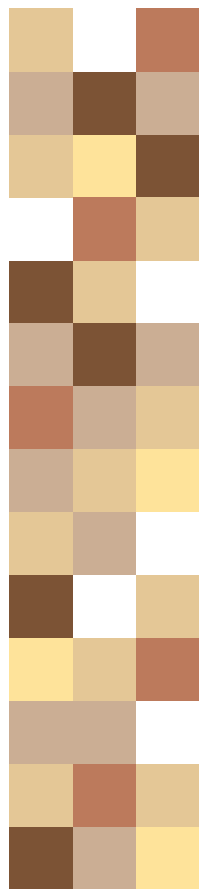
PO Box 805,
Cardiff,
CF11 1FD

wales.cert@soilassociation.org

Tel: 0845 121 2321

Fax: 0845 121 2322

www.soilassociation.org/certification



Annex 2

Welsh Assembly Government: CONTACTS

Website: www.wales.gov.uk/environmentandcountryside and the GWLAD magazine contain key information on the Organic Farming Scheme and other schemes covered by the Single Application Form.

Staff are on hand to provide information and answer queries. Farmer's first point of contact should be the offices in Carmarthen, Llandrindod Wells, and Caernarfon which are open to telephone callers between 08:30 and 17:00 and to visitors between 09:00 and 16:30 Monday to Friday. Contact details are as follows:

Caernarfon Divisional Office

Government Buildings
Penrallt
CAERNARFON LL55 1EP

Tel: 01286 674144
Fax: 01286 677749
E-mail: agriculture.caernarfon@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Carmarthen Divisional Office

Government Buildings
Picton Terrace
CARMARTHEN SA31 3BT

Tel: 01267 225300
Fax: 01267 235964
E-mail: agriculture.carmarthen@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Llandrindod Wells Divisional Office

Government Buildings
Spa Road East
LLANDRINDOD WELLS
LD1 5HA

Tel: 01597 823777
Fax: 01597 828304
E-mail: agriculture.llandrindod@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Rural Payments Division

Ffynnon Las
Tŷ Glas Avenue
Llanishen
CARDIFF CF14 5EZ

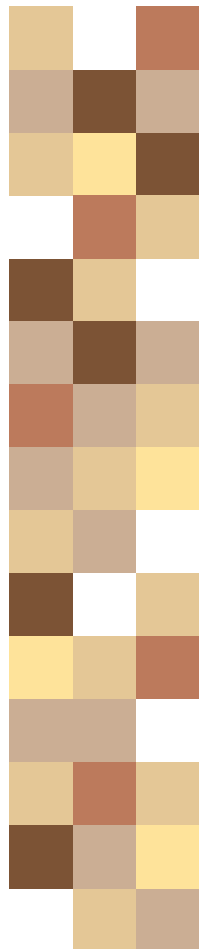
Tel: 02920 752222

Fax: 02920 681381

Aberystwyth Area Office

Old Welsh School
Alexandra Road
Aberystwyth SY23 1LD

Tel: 01970 621440





Annex 3

Simplified Step by step guide to the OFS application and claim process.

Please refer to guide for full eligibility criteria.

Step 1

Complete Application form by 15th May if you want to claim on the next Single Application form.

Step 2

Receive Invite to join scheme from Divisional Office.

Step 3

Sign & return (to Divisional Office) the terms & conditions commitment

Step 4

Claim against each eligible field parcel on SAF & submit copy of OCB certificate with parcel schedule to Divisional Office by 15th May.

Step 5

Repeat step 4 each year by the 15th May for the duration of the scheme.