

When considering an organic start date, there are two types of organic conversion that need to be considered for organic livestock enterprises: Standard Conversion or Simultaneous Conversion. Generally, the operator wishes to become organic as soon as possible but each holding is different and the business aims and different enterprises on the farm need to be part of this decision.

Your organic conversion will not commence until your organic Conversion Plan and Start Date are approved by your Organic Certification Officer (CO). This will be recorded in writing and becomes your reference date for achieving full organic status. Non-compliances during the organic conversion period may mean the conversion period is extended and a postponed date for achieving full organic status. Your choice of Standard or Simultaneous conversion would usually be documented in your Conversion Plan (see our Conversion Plan Technical Guide).

In this Technical Guide we give you examples of both Standard and Simultaneous conversions to help you decide which suits you best. For generic purposes, we have selected the arbitrary date 1st January as the start date of conversion. It is important to remember that **from your start date, the land must be managed according to the SOPA Organic Standards.**

If you have an AECS contract for conversion funding, the scheme dates always start on January 1st. However, your organic conversion should usually start within six months of the date of the SGRPID Authority to Start letter.

Organic Dairy or Poultry Enterprises—special rules

Organic dairies should undertake simultaneous conversion with a start date for organic cow management **6 MONTHS** prior to the end of the land conversion period.

Organic poultry (table bird) enterprises should undertake simultaneous conversion with a start date for organic hen management **10 WEEKS** prior to the end of the two-year land conversion period.

Organic poultry (laying hens) enterprises should undertake simultaneous conversion with a start date for organic hen management **6 WEEKS** prior to the end of the two-year land conversion period.

Special Note on Breeding Females

Ovine and bovine breeding females on the holding prior to conversion or born during the conversion period and retained for breeding replacements, will be given Converted Breeding Stock (CBS) status on the completion of the two-year conversion period. This applies to both Standard and Simultaneous conversions. Females classed as converted breeding stock can produce organic progeny and be sold onto another organic producer but will never be eligible for organic status nor can be sold as such.

Buying replacement breeding females

Wherever possible organic replacements must be sought. If this is not possible a derogation must be sought. It is only permitted to purchase nulliparous (maidens) non-organic replacements. Derogation forms are available on the SOPA website.

Standard Conversion Example

Key Points to remember:

Calves born 2 years +12 weeks from conversion start date will be organic.

Lambs and piglets will be organic 3+ years from start date.

A Standard conversion with a start date of 1st January will suit a spring calving suckler or spring cropping enterprise better than a sheep enterprise.

First Year In-conversion (C1)	Second Year In-Conversion (C2)	Fully Organic from 1st January 2022
1st Jan 2020 – 31st Dec 2020	1st Jan 2021 – 31st Dec 2021	1st Jan 2022 onwards
<p>All aspects of land management must be in keeping with the organic standards e.g. cropping, field inputs, seed.</p> <p>Livestock e.g. cows, store cattle, ewes, sows, do not have to be managed in accordance to the organic standards yet. Although any feedstuffs (concentrate or feed/mineral blocks) used needs to be non-GMO & documentation available to support this. Avermectins should also be avoided as a vet/med treatment.</p> <p>If any C1 crops sold off farm in this time period will need to be sold as non-organic.</p>	<p>All aspects of land management must be in keeping with the organic standards e.g. cropping, field inputs, seed.</p> <p>Livestock do not have to be managed in accordance to the organic standards yet. Although any feedstuffs (concentrate or feed/mineral blocks) used need to be non-GMO & documentation available to support this. Avermectins should also be avoided as a vet/med treatment. We recommend this conversion period should be used as a transition period in preparation for the livestock moving to fully organic management practices.</p> <p>Remember to review and follow your approved Organic Livestock Management Plan.</p> <p>Crops are eligible for C2 status if harvested 12 months after start of conversion, and sown prior to land gaining full organic status.</p>	<p>All aspects of land management must continue in keeping with the organic standards e.g. cropping, field inputs, seed.</p> <p>From 1st Jan 2022, all livestock enterprises must start to be managed in accordance to organic standards e.g. feeds, vet/med, housing, replacement policy.</p> <p>Any calves born 12 weeks after the 1st Jan 2022 (26th March 2022) can be given organic status.</p> <p>When ewes are tupped or sows mated on fully organic land after 1st Jan 2022, the progeny will be eligible for organic status.</p> <p>Crops sown after 1st Jan 2022 are eligible for organic status e.g. spring cereals.</p>

Simultaneous Conversion Example

Key points to remember:

Land, crops & all livestock must be managed to the organic standards from start date of conversion.

Provided all organic standards have been complied to, progeny born during the conversion period will achieve organic status at the end of the two-year conversion period. This includes any lambs still on farm that were born in 2021.

First Year In-conversion (C1)	Second Year In-Conversion (C2)	Fully Organic from 1st Jan 2022
1st Jan 2020 – 31st Dec 2020	1st Jan 2021 – 31st Dec 2021	1st Jan 2022 Onwards
<p>All aspects of land management must be in keeping with the organic standards e.g. cropping, field inputs, seed.</p> <p>Livestock husbandry must also be in accordance to the organic standards from the start of conversion e.g. housing, feeding, vet/meds, replacement policy, calf rearing, stocking rates for all groups of stock on farm.</p> <p>If any C1 crops sold off farm in this time period will need to be sold as non-organic. C1 crops can be used to feed your own converting livestock.</p>	<p>All aspects of land management must be in keeping with the organic standards.</p> <p>Livestock husbandry must also be in accordance to the organic standards e.g. housing, feeding, vet/meds, replacement policy, calf rearing for all groups of stock on farm.</p> <p>Crops eligible for C2 status if harvested 12 months after start of conversion, and sown prior to land gaining full organic status.</p> <p>C2 crops be used to feed your own converting livestock as well as sold to another organic producer although there is a restriction on the % of bought-in C2 feed that can be fed to fully organic stock.</p>	<p>All aspects of land management must continue in keeping with the organic standards.</p> <p>For stock to remain eligible for organic status all aspects of their management must comply with the organic standards from the start date of conversion onwards.</p> <p>Any calves, store cattle or replacements heifers born 12 weeks after the start of the conversion period (from 25th March 2020) and still on farm on 1st Jan 2022 will gain organic status on 1st Jan 2022.</p> <p>Any lambs/piglets born since the start of conversion & still on farm on 1st Jan 2022 or born after 1st Jan 2022, can be sold as organic.</p> <p>Crops sown after this date are eligible for organic status. Organic crops can be used to feed own livestock as well as sold to another organic producer or onto the organic grain market.</p>