

GUIDANCE ON ORGANIC CONVERSION PLAN

Conversion of a holding to organic management will vary from unit to unit according to individual circumstances.

Important influences on conversion planning will include the balance, complexities and intensity of farming practice, on the experience of the farmer, on the ecological situation and on finances.

The best conversion plans are usually written by the farmer.



Organic conversion must be effected using permitted materials and practices, with reference to the standards, and with monitoring by the certification body. You cannot start organic conversion without written approval from your organic certification officer.

The SOPA Organic Production Standards must be followed from the start date of conversion. Advice and guidance is available from SOPA Member Services.

The conversion plan must include the following aspects where applicable to the individual unit.

- 1) A map of the holding including field numbers/OS details and hectares (ideally an IACS map)
- 2) Holding number (County, Parish, Holding)
- 3) A sketch map of the steading, indicating the dimensions of the buildings, numbers of cubicles, capacity of silos/storage areas
- 4) Field histories and records, with up to date ids. Must include a four year history, where available, and a timetable for conversion. The previous history of your holding should include detail of previous chemical usage and indicate dates of last prohibited input and any intensive systems e.g. bull beef.
- 5) A five year forward cropping/ grazing rotation plan
- 6) A soil management programme including soil analyses where available (refer to the SOPA Sampling Service for discounted prices on soil samples).
- 7) Manure management, storage, handling and spreading of manures and slurries in dirty water.
- 8) Whole farm nutrient budget. As much detail as possible, but a least a farm gate budget.
- 9) An individual section for all main enterprises. This should include the following where applicable.

Livestock (refer to the SOPA template **Livestock Management Plan**)

- Breeds and breeding programme
- Conversion of livestock
- Housing or other wintering practices. Include details of cubicles, housing densities etc.
- Feeding regimes
- A detailed health and veterinary plan
- Any other management issues e.g. stocking densities, mineral supply, health and biosecurity issues. Furnish details of any blood and forage analyses etc.

Cropping (refer to the SOPA template **Crop Management Plan**)

- Crop programme with potential varieties
- Pest and disease control
- Nutrient supply
- Weed control measures

Grazing and grassland management

- Weed control strategy
- Ley details, including legumes
- Reference to manure and nutrient supply
- Clean grazing and parasites control practice
- Away wintering of livestock **MUST** source organic grazing

- 10) Environmental conservation measures- practice and policy. Detail membership of any other Agri-Environmental schemes, with any potential areas of conflict with organic conversion i.e. grazing rotation
- 11) Marketing plans. Detail any plans for marketing your produce.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE SOPA HELPLINE ON 0300 772 9795