

The Future of Organic Ingredients – Availability & Consumer Demand

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Today

- **Introduction to the Soil Association and our work**
- **The organic market: past, present and future**
- **GM, relevance to organic food and farming and the problems surrounding GM**
- **Issues facing us all: Climate change, reducing oil supplies – and what we can do about it**



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What is the Soil Association?

**The leading environmental charity
campaigning for people & planet-friendly,
organic food and farming.**



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Why Soil Association?

Organic food and farming starts with the soil, from healthy soil comes healthy crops and livestock. That means healthy food for people.

Organic farmers avoid the use of artificial chemicals instead relying on rotations of crops and livestock to build fertility.

In particular, clover to fix atmospheric nitrogen naturally in the soil.



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What do we do?

- **Campaign for sustainable food and farming**
- **Provide practical ways for people to engage more directly with food production and farming**
- **Champion and set-up local food initiatives**



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What do we do?

- **Act as an independent watchdog ensuring organic standards deliver real benefits to people and planet**
- **Communicate those benefits to the public and press**
- **Challenge unsustainable farming practices and technologies – from excessive use of antibiotics and pesticides to GM**



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The organic market – the story so far

- **Between 2003-2008 there was the value of the market grew 16% per year on average**
- **In the last recession the organic food market ‘stood it’s ground’**
- **In January 2007, there were 4,639 organic producers in the UK, representing an annual increase of 7 per cent. Organic holdings now represent approximately 1.6 per cent of all farms in the UK.**
- **Organically managed land now accounts for approximately 3.5 per cent of the UK’s total agricultural land area. The area of in-conversion land in the UK increased by 40 per cent, with all countries seeing substantial growth**
- **The organic share of the total food market varies from approximately 4.5 per cent of total food sales in Denmark, Austria and Switzerland, 3 per cent in Germany compared to approximately 1.6 per cent the UK.**

Last year

- **Organic food and drink sales in the UK nudged the £2 billion mark for the first time in 2006**
- **Direct retail sales of organic products (organic box, mail order schemes etc) increased by 53%**
- **Retail sales of organic products through organic box and mail order schemes and other direct routes increased from £95 million in 2005 to £146 million in 2006 - a staggering 53 per cent growth, more than double that experienced by the major supermarkets.**



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Present

- **Definitive figures available in April on publication of the organic market report**
- **Peter Melchett, Soil Association policy director:**
“The idea there is going to be a complete collapse and the market has fallen of a cliff is rubbish. It's a complicated picture and much of the health of organic businesses depends on what they are selling and who they are selling to”
- **Mixed picture: ‘Lifestyle choicers’ downgrading**
- **80% of core purchasers are committed organic buyers**



Ethical Concerns remain strong

- **Number of shoppers buying ethical food has increased**
- **Shoppers looking for good value**
- **Observer columnist put it recently 'The credit crunch doesn't necessarily have to result in a morality coma'**
- **Consumers are voting with their wallets and showing that they want ethically and sustainably produced food.**



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GM

- **Media interest – but little substance**
- **Losing ground in the US (traditional strong hold)**
- **Exciting developments using conventional plant breeding**
- **Reliance on oil based agricultural methods**



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Future drivers

- **Fossil fuel depletion**
- **Climate change**
- **Health**



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A Secure Food Future

- **Organic by 2050**
- **The Soil Association has launched a campaign to mobilise the UK to change its food and farming system to a more resilient, climate-friendly, organic, local model, less vulnerable to external shocks and challenges.**
- **With 30% of an individual's carbon foot-print made up of their food choices, food is the single most important, everyday means for tackling the challenges of climate change, fossil fuel depletion and future security of our food supplies.**



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For further information

The Soil Association is a charity, we rely on the support of our members to carry out our critical work.

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