

NE Organic Discussion Group

Newsletter



January 2021

Welcome to the first edition of the Newsletter for 2021. I hope you all had an enjoyable festive season despite the restrictions.

In this edition of the Newsletter, I have included a bit about the AECS scheme and links to various sites, podcasts and publications.

In March I hope to have the first online event of the year. There will be two sessions one on the crop side and one on livestock. I am still working on the details so if you have any suggestions for topics you would want covered, topical issues or speakers please let me know? Later in the year I hope to have another virtual farm tour so if you have any suggestions of organic farms you would like to visit but never had the opportunity also please let me know. Online presents an ideal opportunity to see somewhere we could never go for an actual visit in a half day.

AECS

You will probably have read or heard elsewhere that the 2021 AECS will be open for both organic conversion and maintenance applications. The scheme will be open for applications from 25th January till 30th June. The options are available throughout Scotland and as previously contracts will be for 5 years. For the organic options the payment rates and requirements look the same as in the previous scheme although the inclusion of capital costs for conversion (capital costs under maintenance are not eligible as previously) is now very restricted.

[Organic Farming: Conversion](#)

[Organic Farming: Maintenance](#)

New Publications

I would like to draw your attention to a couple of new publications which were just written in December and uploaded recently to the FAS website.

<https://www.fas.scot/downloads/grassland-and-herbal-leys-species-guide/>

<https://www.fas.scot/downloads/organic-conversion-step-by-step-guide/>

2020 Podcasts

The 2020 podcasts can be found at: -

[Podcast: NE Organic Discussion Group with Mary Young and David McClelland | Information helping farmers in Scotland | Farm Advisory Service](#)

[Barnside Farm - Becoming Organic, Rotational Grazing, and Mob Grazing | Information helping farmers in Scotland | Farm Advisory Service](#)

<https://audioboom.com/posts/7755774-organic-market-trends-and-outlook>

<https://audioboom.com/posts/7753510-converting-to-organics-david-younie>

ReMIX Intercrop You Tube Channel

Some interesting content.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRxVldHWHJAoU8xHNZ0efCQ/videos>

Other Meetings

Sorry about the short notice but some of you might be interested in the following: -

Interested in feed sustainability and animal welfare?

IFOAM Organics Europe will host the online joint conference “Improving sustainability and welfare in organic poultry and pig production” on the 25th & 26th of January 2021.

Organic farming leads the way in sustainability and animal welfare and is ready to improve even more. Four research projects, [OK-Net EcoFeed](#), [PPILOW](#), [Freebirds](#) and [POWER](#), are ready to contribute to this. They will share the latest solutions such as ration-planning tools, sustainable and regional feed sources for pigs and poultry, welfare self-assessment tools and the Organic Farm Knowledge platform. Several farmers will testify on their efforts to improve animal welfare. Finally, we will host a policy debate with policy makers, and organic farming and animal welfare associations.

Check out the programme (attached) and register [here](#).



The soil Association have asked us to publicise the following, but they have a wide range of events available and they can be contacted directly for more details.

Mob Grazing Q&A: Outwintering in wet conditions, Thursday 4 February, 7–8.30pm

[Book online](#)

Is it possible to successfully mob graze in very wet areas of Scotland, like the west coast, or in the uplands? Hear from farmers and crofters who are making outwintering work and ask your questions at this Q&A chaired by agricultural consultant and farmer Emily Grant. Hear from:

- Heather and Philip Close of Balsar Glen, Girvan, South Ayrshire, on outwintering their cattle, bale grazing methods, automatic gates and breeding and infrastructure
- Katharine Sharp of Achpopuli Farm, near Inverness in the Highlands, on mob grazing with sheep, managing foot health and fluke, enhancing biodiversity and dealing with wet pasture
- Roger Dixon-Spain of the Sailean Project, Lismore, on managing the water cycle, grazing planning, using a ram pump, winter stockpiling and reducing rushes

The farmers have been sharing short videos on their outwintering practices throughout January. You can find them on Twitter and Facebook under the hashtags #MobGrazingScot and #outwintering; you're welcome to join our [Mob Grazing Scotland Facebook group](#).

FREE and open to all. [Book online](#)

For more information contact Clem on csandison@soilassociation.org or Jane on 0131 370 8150; jdingwall@soilassociation.org

Save the date > Thursday 4 March, 7pm – Mob Grazing Q&A: More outwintering!