

Outcome of Consultation on amendments to The Organic Farming Scheme 2004

Few responses were received to the consultation process probably because the amendments had been discussed at length with the organic sector, via the Organic Working Party. The two responses received pointed out that dairy farmers were only entitled to claim the rate applied to improved land and this was seen to be unfair, given the costs of conversion for a dairy farmer. Accordingly, the Department amended the Scheme so that dairy land was included at the same rate as is paid on arable, fruit growing and horticultural land.

The amended Scheme was presented to Tynwald in July and approved at that time. The full list of changes to the 2004 Scheme is as follows:

- The Scheme includes horticulture as a supported sector for conversion and organic production.
- Dairy land now qualifies for the higher payments per acre for converted or in conversion land. These are:

Land in conversion

Arable, dairy, horticulture and fruit growing:

- (a) in the first year; £95 per acre
- (b) in the second year; £95 per acre
- (c) in the third year; £55 per acre
- (d) in the fourth year; £30 per acre
- (e) in the fifth year; £20 per acre

Land already in organic production

Arable, dairy, horticulture and fruit growing: £20 per acre for 5 years

In addition, the payments made to the organic unit as a whole have been greatly increased and extended for two additional years. This recognises the costs associated with accreditation etc. The rates are now:

- (a) in the first year; £1000

- (b) in the second year; £900 and
 - (c) in years three, four and five; £600
- There is now a requirement to provide a business plan which demonstrates that there is an adequate and viable route to an organic market for the outputs from the farm.

A new guidance note and application form is now available from the Department. For further information, please contact the Support Schemes team on 687304.