



newsletter

Issue 15, Summer 2009

Welcome to the summer edition of your newsletter – a veritable smorgasbord of Manx organic inspiration. Highlights include news of another certified Manx organic farm, our new food gardening Q&A column, and a sensational wild garlic soup recipe. Enjoy!

The true meaning of healthy food By Janet Bridle

YES, I AM going to mention it. Swine Flu (or, as it is now called due to pressure from the food industry, 'H1N1 Type A Influenza'). I am not going to list ways to avoid catching it. Neither have I panic bought 200 face masks. But I do think it's important that we consider our part in it.

It is very easy to think we have nothing to do with outbreaks like this. They are things that happens in other countries where, let's face it, the rules and regulations aren't as comprehensive as ours. And look at the Isle of Man – no factory farming pig barns here.

Of course no one can deny that such factory farms are disgusting and dangerous, or that they're multiplying rapidly. As a matter of course, pigs are brutally crammed into warehouses and sprayed with a cocktail of drugs. It's these conditions that pose a risk to more than just the food itself – the resulting manure lagoons create the perfect environment for new viruses like swine flu to breed.

But what does that have to do

with us? A lot more than we might think. If we buy cheap food without asking where it comes from, we actively keep this cruel, dirty and potentially deadly system going. Which makes consumers just as responsible for disease outbreaks as factory 'farmers' (I use the word advisedly because I don't believe these producers are farmers in the true sense of the word).

About 12 years ago, at the height of the BSE crisis, I had an epiphany. I came across a small article in a Sunday paper which stated that the vacuumed-off remnants from animal carcasses were routinely used in both baby foods and school meals.

I had a toddler and a baby at the time and that statement shocked – no catapulted – me well and truly out of my 'safe place'. The place where I'd always assumed that there were well qualified, morally astute people legally required to make sure that the best ingredients went into our processed foods – baby foods in particular. They were there to protect us, because processed foods are now such a big part

of our diets; indeed, the mainstay of many families' lives. The article wiped out all these assumptions. I realised that I am the only one who can make sure my family eats safely and healthily; that the only way I can do this is by knowing where our food comes from, how it is produced and what it is fed and/or sprayed with.

This realisation marked the beginning of my journey to becoming an informed organic consumer. Now that I am one, I remain passionately convinced that by buying local organic food and supporting the farmers and growers who produce it, we can play our part in stopping these outbreaks before they spiral out of control.

And by the way Martin Clunes, the Isle of Man is about so much more than the financial sector and smugness. Such a shame you weren't able to explore all we have to offer before you left!

Thought for the season...

It is too late to start for destinations not of the heart

Isle of Man Meat extends certification By Kewin Kerruish

ISLE OF MAN MEATS are now accredited to supply retail pack organic meat to supermarkets. In the past we were able to sell organic beef and lamb in carcass form or as vacuum packed primals (supplied to butchers and wholesalers).

Now that we have the higher level of accreditation we can further process these products into retail pack form – giving us the ability to expand the customer base for Manx Organic beef and lamb both on and off the Island.

Gaining this certification involves complying with many different procedures in order to guarantee the integrity of

the organic product. Full factory audits are carried out by the certification body Organic Farmers & Growers. These include traceability exercises to ensure all products can be traced back to farm, as well as auditing our organic quality management system against OF&G codes of practice. You can find out more about this process at www.organicfarmers.org.uk

We are also certified to sell certified Aberdeen Angus beef and Halal lamb.

For more information, please contact Isle of Man Meats on 674346.

Visit to organic milk producers in Northern Ireland

By Kim Etherton

RECENTLY FOUR Manx dairy farmers visited three organic farms, a creamery and the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute in Northern Ireland. They were accompanied by Brenda Cannell MHK, Member for Forestry and a keen organic gardener; Chris Kneale, DAFF Agricultural Advisor; Janet Bridle, who needs no introduction in the organic world; and myself, DAFF Countryside Care Scheme Project Officer.

The visit was part funded by DAFF and its aim was to provide ideas, facts and inspiration for Manx farmers interested in the possibility of adopting organic farming principles.

The use of clovers instead of chemical fertilisers plays a key role in grassland management on organic livestock farms and was much discussed in fields, over a pint and while looking at clover trials at the Institute.

Other issues discussed included the use of homeopathic medicines, the production of organic feed for the cows, the best breed of cow to use (Holstein/Dairy Shorthorn

crosses are a popular choice), using slurry as a fertiliser, diversification into organic cheese and ice cream production and, of course, the all important question of the farm gate price paid for organic milk and the consumer demand for it.

The trip stimulated a great deal of thought, but also identified some of the challenges facing any Manx dairy farmer thinking about conversion to organic milk production. These points are being considered by DAFF and, as a first step, an additional amendment to the Organic Farming Scheme 2004 has been included, for submission to the July sitting of Tynwald. This will enable dairy farmers to claim a higher per acre rate for land in conversion than at present.

If you have any queries about this, please get in touch with me on 687343. It's too early to say whether or not locally produced organic milk will become available but DAFF is committed to doing what it can to make this a possibility.

Chicken beginnings

By Elaine Burton

WHY KEEP chickens? In a word, eggs! My husband Chris and I live in a detached house with a small garden. For the last 10 years or so Chris has been saying, "We must get some chickens." I wasn't so keen on the idea, mainly because I feared they would be noisy. However, in March of this year we finally began preparations for our very own birds.

True to form and in the spirit of recycling, Chris found a 'hen coop' at the Port Erin amenity site. This consisted of a very large and incredibly heavy box built onto a pallet base. We bought some roofing felt and plywood to make a secure waterproof roof, and chicken wire to complete the enclosed run. The wood we sourced from our stock of scrap firewood, while feed and bedding came from IOM Farmers Shop.

Finally, on Wednesday 18 March, we were entrusted with two 14-month-old hens. I couldn't believe how entertaining they were and couldn't stop going out to see how they were getting on. They settled in very quickly – out in the pen within five minutes, pecking away at the grass and the handful of feed we'd thrown in. My cats were also enthralled with the new arrivals – a television all of their own

How to describe the feeling when we discovered our

first two large, brown, perfect eggs hidden in the nesting box? Well, it was very much like the wonder of a child on Christmas morning. The first egg appeared on the Thursday, followed by two more on Friday – all with deep orangey coloured delicious yolks.

We have had the girls (christened Curry and Roast) for a while now and my noise worries have turned out to be unfounded. Except when they're laying or something startles them – usually a neighbour's cat – they are very quiet. They certainly know that I am the feeding lady, running over whenever they hear my voice. Whenever the sun is shining I sit out and have long satisfying chats with them. Now I wonder why we didn't do this years ago. I've been won over completely by the girls and hope they live for a very long time.

As far as I can see the only down side to hens is that you need a good neighbour to look after them when you are away. We are fortunate to have such neighbours as well as a very helpful mother-in-law. And one last thing – hens and pristine lawns are not compatible.

So what are you all waiting for?



Organic horticulture in the Island: so far, so good

By Ian Davies

IT IS ONLY TWO years since I met organic horticulture expert Alan Schofield, but it feels like much longer. Since DAFF were persuaded to invite him over to speak at one of their meetings, he has had a big impact on organic horticulture in the Island. For the last two years Alan has been contracted to support growers aiming to convert to organic certification – helping them put their plans into action, improve their techniques and grow better quality fruit and veg. We're now delighted to report that DAFF have renewed his contract for a third year, starting in July.

Gave us the confidence to become certified

How important have his visits to Manx growers been? I'll let those growers speak for themselves. For Dot and Robin Price of Andreas, "Alan has been nothing short of inspirational. He really gave us the confidence to become certified. We applied to Organic Farmers & Growers and have just had our first annual inspection which has been successful. We are well on the way and look forward to his continuing support and expertise."

Ken and Jenny Maynard of Bride echo this enthusiasm: "Alan's experience has been invaluable, particularly in helping identify deficiencies in our soil. He has guided us in the best ways to handle these in an organic way, through the widespread use of green manures. It has been very useful to have the support of someone who has done it rather than just thought it or taught it!"

When Alan appeared on the scene, Jenny and Stephen Devereau were already well on the way to conversion for their herbs and eggs, for which they now have full certification. But as Stephen says, "Alan has taught me a lot. His visits both help solve practical problems and inspire me to try different things. For instance, with some new land we're preparing for cultivation we have been persuaded

to take the longer but better route of progressively getting rid of the weeds organically and building long term fertility with green manures."

Alan's visits to individual producers have been supplemented by a series of six one-day workshops, covering everything from the basic requirements for organic horticulture to storage techniques and ways of extending the growing season.

We have been growing naturally for years

"We have been growing naturally for years," says Dot Price, "but through Alan's visits and workshops we've had excellent advice on improving the way we do things – for example, continuity planning and improved seed sourcing to boost our output."

Stephen Devereau sums up the feeling of this small but growing group of producers: "I often ask myself when faced with a challenge, 'How would Alan approach this?' I think that says a lot about his expertise and gift for communication."

While plans for the coming year are not yet finalised, it's likely that the programme of individual visits will be complemented by three one-day workshops covering such topics as composting, pesticide-free fruit growing, and machinery for small scale operations.

These growers are very important to us all. Together they form the backbone of organic growing on the Island; they are the new wave of pioneers who will inspire others to help meet the frustratingly unsatisfied demand for home grown organic produce.

As Dot Price concludes, "We are very, very glad Alan's contract has been renewed. With luck, hard work and his expertise on our side, we will be certified by the end of his third year with us."

The bigger picture

Obama administration pledges \$50M for organics

The U.S. Department of Agriculture plans to provide \$50 million to a new initiative to encourage more organic agriculture production, according to Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan who announced the move in May and said the funding will be of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

"Assisting organic producers is a priority of the 2008 farm bill as well as for Secretary Vilsack and the Obama administration," Merrigan said in a USDA news release.

MercuryNews.com (5 May)

Denmark to double organic farms

The Danish government has just launched a Green Growth plan that will ensure better conditions for the country's nature and environment while allowing agriculture to develop. The plan represents a 50% increase in investments compared with previous plans.

"Organic farming is Green Growth - a combination of green production and production with a sound economy," says Food Minister Eva Kjer Hansen. "We are now making it possible to double the area used for organic production through a massive effort amounting to almost Dkr 350 million a year. This will result in a greater Danish organic production of apples, carrots, milk and salami, to name a few products. And this will benefit consumers, exports, the environment, nature and animal welfare."

The pigsite.com (11 May)





From local organic food to local renewable energy, the rapidly growing Transition movement is all about creating a more secure, self-reliant future – something which is especially important for us as an Island. With MON playing a key role in the Island's food transition, here are some of the latest Transition-related developments in other areas...

Green groups clean up at HSBC awards

HSBC's recently announced environmental awards were a shining example of what can happen when like-minded groups pull together. Here are the highlights...

- Transition IOM West – £1,200 towards development of sustainable mixed woodland through the construction of 10 tree nurseries over three years.
- Native Oak Group/IOM Permaculture Association – £5,000 for a 1kw wind turbine at Jurby allotments to provide energy for polytunnels/electric bike, and educational use.
- Manx Energy Advice Centre – £700 towards an air heat source pump to enhance renewable energy demonstration equipment at the Green Centre.
- IOM Woodland Trust – £1,400 towards creation of mixed native woodland at Sartfell, with initial planting of 150 to 300 trees.

The Manx Foundation for the Physically Disabled and Colby Methodist Church were also awarded £500 each, towards a thermo compost bin and water butts, and development of a community garden in the church grounds.

JourneyMatch goes live

Launched this spring, the JourneyMatch website is a free and easy way to save money by sharing regular journeys with others. All you need to do is register at to www.journeymatch.im to get in touch with people making similar journeys at similar times to you.



The JourneyMatch calculator works out how much you can save on your regular car journeys, which could easily come to £5 a day for fuel and parking.

Peter Longworth, Government Energy Initiatives Officer, says, "I travel in from Ramsey to Douglas every day and share the journey with a colleague. The cost calculator works out I save over £800 a year, which pays for my annual skiing holiday."

Environment Minister John Shimmin adds, "JourneyMatch couldn't be simpler to use. You just put in your postcode to find potential partners. In this economic climate the cost saving aspect makes it especially attractive – someone commuting from Castletown to Ramsey could save more than £2,800 a year."

As well as cutting costs, journey sharing reduces traffic, carbon emissions and air pollution – and can make the daily commute a lot more enjoyable.

Journeymatch.im can also be used to find cycling or walking buddies, and links to useful travel information like bus and train timetables.

Bye bye plastic bags?

As reported in The Examiner in May, Castletown Commissioners are backing Transition IOM South's bid to ban plastic bags in the town.

And Zero Waste Mann are highlighting this increasingly controversial issue with their 'Morsbags' campaign to replace plastic bags with funky bags made from charity shop textiles. Even the prison is involved, with inmates having produced so many bags already that they've run out of material.

For your free bag-making kit or to donate fabric, call into the Green Centre next to Shoprite in Chester Street, Douglas – open Saturdays 10 to 2 and usually later.

To find out more about Transition Isle of Man, please contact Janet Lees on 844161 or Alice Quayle on 307842, email transitioniom@mac.com, or visit www.transitiontowns.org/Isle-of-Man

RECIPE

Seasonal, wild and wonderful – MANX WILD GARLIC SOUP

Ingredients

- 100g wild garlic
- 2 medium onions
- 700ml vegetable stock
- 300ml single cream
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil

Method

- Finely chop the onions and fry in the oil at a medium heat for 10 minutes.
- Wash and chop the wild garlic leaves (set a few aside if you want to use them for garnish).
- Add the wild garlic, then the vegetable stock to the onions.
- Leave on the heat for about 2 minutes.
- Blend the soup until the wild garlic pieces are fairly fine.
- Add the cream, mix well, leave for a few more minutes then serve.
- Optionally add small leaves as a garnish.

Eat Your Heart Out by Felicity Lawrence

By Janet Pilbeam

If ever a book was a ‘must-read’ it’s this one. Several years ago *Fast Food Nation* turned me off McFood instantly and permanently. Then Felicity Lawrence’s last book, *Not on the Label*, turned me onto independent alternatives to the big supermarkets. But *Eat Your Heart Out* has changed the way I look at food for ever.

Good food: the modern myth

In this meticulously researched, utterly compelling book, the eloquent, passionate and always engaging Lawrence takes us on a journey. On that journey we discover not only who dictates what we eat, but also how they conspire to make us consume such a breathtaking quantity of rubbish – while convincing us how good it is for our health.

The book is divided simply into chapters with one-word headings such as ‘cereals’, ‘milk’ and ‘soya’. Each chapter gives a brief but vivid history of these basic foodstuffs. From the appalling conditions of migrant workers producing cheap tinned tomatoes to the trashing of the rainforest in the name of lucrative soya production, it all adds up to a jaw-dropping, heartbreaking and anything but mouth-watering picture. An exposé of how, in just half a century, our diets have completely changed. And not for the better.

Some cardboard for breakfast?

One of the most arresting of Lawrence’s dizzying array of facts is the rats and cereal experiment. In lab tests a group of rats was divided into two sub-groups. The first was fed breakfast cereal with milk and raisins. The second was fed the ground-up cereal boxes with

milk and raisins. Guess which group thrived? Unbelievably it was group 2. That fact alone has freed up an entire cupboard in our kitchen.

And it’s not only our health as consumers that suffers. The modern industrialized food system routinely subjects the people and animals involved in it to degradation and cruelty. As Lawrence points out, ‘...dominant transnational food retailers, manufacturers and processors have created a system which is in my view dependent on exploitation – and at its worst new forms of slavery – even as their profits have risen dramatically.’

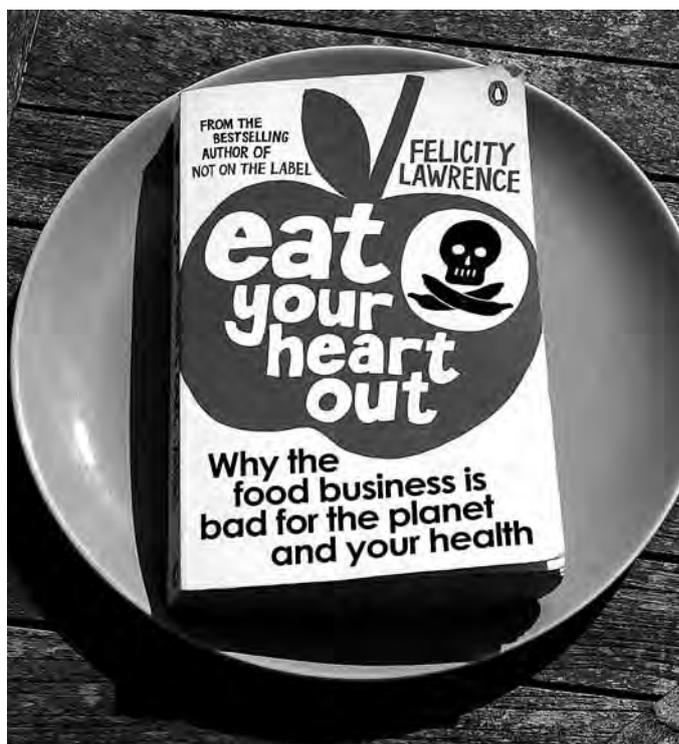
Our health – or corporate wealth?

From Unilever to Tate & Lyle, these transnationals pop up time and again throughout the book. The three that feature most frequently are names most of us will never have heard of: Cargill, Bunge and ADM. This trio of shadowy giants controls the lion’s share of the world’s food supply – grain, soya, animal feed, palm oil, chickens, cocoa and much more besides.

And boy, do they like to mess with our food. It’s down to the food giants, for instance, that we’re now facing up to the side effects of trans fats (also known as hydrogenated fats) which just a few decades ago were hailed as the healthy alternative to saturated fats. ‘In the early 1990s,’ says Lawrence, ‘evidence was suggesting that trans fats affected foetal and infant growth.’ Then in 1997,

after one of the world’s largest studies of its kind, Professor Walter Willett pronounced hydrogenation ‘the biggest food processing disaster in US history.’

There is so much in this book; far too much to convey here. But I can vouch for two things: how important



it is and how it has empowered me. Food is fundamental to all our lives; it’s one of the few constants we have and one of our greatest pleasures. For years I’ve been increasingly alarmed at what industrialized production and processing is doing to our food – and to us. Thanks to *Eat Your Heart Out*, I now feel informed enough to make the right decisions about what I eat.

After all, despite the mesmerizing TV ads, tempting packaging and cleverly worded descriptions of ‘added value’ ingredients, it is still our choice. Nobody is forcing us to buy the heavily processed stuff that masquerades as food today. And changing things can be as simple as using our buying power to show the food industry fat cats that we just won’t swallow any more of their nonsense.

Eat Your Heart Out is published in paperback by Penguin at £8.99

Vegementors: the new name for caring sharing growers

By Janet Bridle

WHEN WE first came up with the idea of garden sharing – ie, sharing some or all of your plot with someone who would like to grow food – we had no idea that this is something that's really gaining ground in the UK.

Lower incomes and concerns over pesticides and chemicals in industrialized food production have led to a huge increase in people registering with local authorities for an allotment. But there just aren't enough to go round. As in the UK, some Manx allotments have waiting lists of up to 10 years. So those

keen to grow their own are having to be a bit clever about finding land on which to do it.

That's why MON met Age Concern with the idea of matching people with land but without the inclination to people with the inclination but without the land. We're calling it 'Vegementors', and it really does represent a win-win situation. The growers get the benefit of land to produce fruit and veg, while the land-owners get a share of the produce – plus the satisfaction of knowing their garden is being looked after and put to good use.

While the idea is as yet in its infancy, MON and Age Concern have been working on producing a pilot scheme to team up six growers with six land owners. Overall the system will be a simple one, but some ground rules will need to be set so that everyone knows what's expected of them. For instance, how much time might be spent in the

garden, how much produce the garden owner can expect to receive, whether or not bonfires can be lit, where to store tools etc.

Of course, there are those who already do informal garden sharing. Among them is Phil Corlett, who has kindly written about his experiences in the following piece. As belts are increasingly tightened, it makes sense for many more of us to follow suit. Most gardeners have a surplus of something, whether it's seeds, land, produce or experience – and they don't usually like letting things go to waste. And there are other benefits as well as fantastically fresh and tasty food straight from the garden; new friendships and community spirit to name but too.

If you'd like to get involved in a Vegementors scheme, please contact Janet Bridle on 835436 or jbridle@manx.net - or call Age Concern on 613044.

Food gardening questions...answered!

BETTY AND CHRIS are mother and son. Mum has been growing vegetables for almost her entire life, but particularly since she retired from teaching some years ago. Son, although quite mature, has really just started to put fingers to mud and has quite got the 'growing your own' bug.

As a child, son was a little reluctant to venture into the vegetable patch, having much more interesting things to do like football, then the pub, then women...and now boats and motorbikes. Perhaps son should have taken more notice when he was younger as he is experiencing some conundrums in his vegetable patch. But luckily mum is on hand to offer timely advice and guidance (but only when asked – mum does not interfere!)

We thought you might find son's questions and mum's answers helpful. If you have any questions of your own, just email jbridle@manx.net and they will be passed on.

Q: What is a pH value? Why do I need to know the pH reading for my soil?

A: It is a measure of the acidity of your soil. Soil can be acid or alkaline – the ideal level for vegetables is pH 6.5 to 7.0, a neutral soil. You can test with an inexpensive soil testing kit from any garden centre. If your soil is too acid, add lime. If it's too alkaline, add material rich in humus, chicken manure etc.

Q: When can I plant my first potatoes.?

A: Traditional dates are St Patrick's Day or Good Friday, but a good rule of thumb is to wait until the soil has warmed up.

Q: What about onions?

A: February 17 is traditionally onion sowing day, but most people grow their onions from sets (batches of baby onions – growing onions from seed can be tricky)

Q: When I put in onion sets they end up all over the soil. Why?

A: Birds love pulling them out. It's worthwhile checking regularly that they are firmly in the soil until the roots have begun to grow and anchor them in.

Q: Why were my carrots so small and spindly last year?

A: You sowed them too thickly. Sow fewer seeds per row or block. As they grow you can take out the faster growing ones to use as baby carrots, leaving the others to grow on. To get large carrots later they need to be 3 to 4 inches apart.

Q: I start seeds off in my porch in unheated propagators. This year the compost has gone mouldy on some of them. Why?

A: You are keeping them too wet and not allowing enough ventilation in the porch. The seedlings need to be warm and moist, not wet. Don't forget to harden them off before taking them into the garden for planting. You can do this by leaving them out for longer periods each day and night until they are accustomed to the colder air.

Garden sharing – a novice grower's experience

By Phil Corlett

IT WAS LAST YEAR that I first noticed the bare garden just over the road and thought how perfect it would be for growing food plants. By luck it turned out to be owned by a friend of a friend, Roland Seaton. After a couple of phone calls Roland popped round for a cuppa and following a long chat agreed to try out a garden share. In return for letting me use it, I promised to grow him some of his favourite greens, runner beans.



Phil Corlett with mentor Edwin Kennaugh

The plot is a generously sized 17m x 4m. After spending many hours digging it over with some help from friends – including Nick Rice and my 70 year old neighbour Edwin Kennaugh – I've now planted the potatoes which had been 'chitting' in my garage for several weeks. Edwin, a lifelong gardener, showed me how to line out and plant them, and even brought me a couple of seed spuds of his own. I've also planted onion sets, as well as runner beans, peas and lettuce, which were originally planted

occasionally wondering what I'd taken on. But to my surprise it hasn't turned out to be too much hard work, as I tend to do a couple of hours at a time. Two books I've found particularly clear and helpful are *Allotment Gardening* by Su Berger and *The Allotment Specialist* by Alan Bridgewater.

As I may only have use of the plot for a short time, I've avoided getting too involved in major changes like digging in masses of manure or installing raised beds. I've concentrated on planting easy stuff – and, as the books recommend, stuff I like to eat.

Nothing has been grown in the plot for more than 10 years, and Edwin tells me the soil is acidic, so he's giving me some slaked lime to balance the pH levels. Roland has now very kindly let a young family use some of the plot too.

With my 'second early' potatoes now in and more veg to be planted as we go through the season, I hope to keep a photo record of how things progress – watch this space...



Preparing the plot

in seed propagators with the help of Amanda Griffin.

With virtually no previous experience of food growing, I can't deny

AS ANNOUNCED in March, following a thorough and wide-ranging consultation which looked at whether any changes are justified to organic animal feed standards in the current recession, the Soil Association's independent Standards Board has decided against making any changes. All food certified by the Soil Association and sold as organic will continue to be produced under full organic standards.

180 responses were received in the consultation, the majority from Soil Association farmers and growers. Three quarters of the respondents were opposed to allowing any changes to the standards covering animal feed.

Respondents noted the importance of retaining the integrity of Soil Association standards and expressed concern about the potential for damaging consumer confidence. They also pointed out that what might help livestock farmers could do damage to the organic feed market and the arable farmers who supply it.

Anna Bradley, chair of the Soil Association Standards Board, said, "The Board agreed that making ad hoc changes of this sort would damage the integrity of the standards and could rock consumer confidence. Consumers expect 'Soil Association Organic' to stand for the highest quality in organic food and that is a reputation the Standards Board wants to retain."

The Soil Association believes it is vital that organic standards are kept high and enforced effectively, and aims to ensure that its own standards meet consumer expectations, reflect the best sustainable practice and become a benchmark for organic production globally.

Soil Association standards deliver the highest standards of animal welfare, were the first to ban the use of GM, and the first anywhere in the world to ban the use of nanotechnology in food. The Soil Association led the way in developing standards to conserve water and encourage environmentally sustainable packaging, and to cover organic textiles, food served in restaurants, and health and beauty products.

Give yourself a REAL treat at Pomegranate



At Pomegranate in Village Walk, Onchan, we love our natural skin care, cosmetics and treats. We choose the very best products – and they're free

of man-made chemicals. Brands include Dr Hauschka, Jo Wood Organics, John Masters, PUREbliss and NEOM.

As a MON member you already care about all things organic, so you're probably aware that what you put on your body is just as important as what you put in it. Call in and see us soon or check out our website at www.pomegranate.co.im

In the meantime, share this Quick Quiz with friends and colleagues and help spread the word about the importance of good skin care.

1. To be legally called natural, products need to contain:

- (a) 100% natural ingredients?
- (b) 10% natural ingredients?
- (c) 1% natural ingredients?

2. How much of what you put on your skin may be absorbed into your bloodstream?

- (a) 10%? (b) 30%? (c) 60%?

3. How many tonnes of man-made chemicals are dumped into so-called 'natural' cosmetics every year?

- (a) 100kg? (b) 100 tonnes? (c) 100,000 tonnes?

Thanks to quiz providers Green People, pioneers of organic health and beauty (and stocked at Pomegranate of course!)

Answers: 1: C, 2: C, 3: C

Manx farm gets official organic status...

IN AN EXCITING development for Manx organic produce, the 837-acre farm Carnane Organics recently received its organic certification by the Soil Association.

Producing beef, lamb and animal feeds, the farm supports a 60-strong Aberdeen Angus herd, along with 700 Loaghtans and 150 Black Face sheep. Carnane also grows all its own certified animal feed in the form of peas and barley, oats and peas and straight barley. Surpluses of these will be available to buy from the farm after the harvest in September.

Having previously farmed conventionally, farm manager Adam Kelly saw the land and stock through the two-year conversion process.

As he says, "There have been some very good days and some very bad, but that is true of farming generally. However, it has not been as difficult as I thought it would be, and it's nice not going out with the chemical sprayer and the nitrogen fertiliser spreader. There have been some challenges with the livestock as medicinals cannot be used as a matter of course, but overall it has been a very positive experience."

"This is great news for the further development of a strong Manx Organic brand for both on and off the Island,"

adds Janet Bridle. "Continuity of supply has previously prevented Manx organic meat appearing on the shelves of the larger retailer so hopefully Carnane Organic beef and lamb will help address that."

...and yet another Manx farm undergoes conversion to organic

Also now on the path to organic certification with the Soil Association is Ballabrooie Farm in Patrick, the home of the Green Man Market (held every Thursday 11am – 3pm).

What is particularly exciting is that Ballabrooie's fruit tree orchard will be the first certified orchard on the Island. The orchard has around 200 apple trees and boasts 100 different varieties, including some old and rare Manx varieties which have been tended in harmony with nature for over 30 years. Certification of the orchard opens up a whole new range of potential Manx organic apple products such as juices, ciders, pickles and jams.

In going for full organic certification, farm owners Jimmy and Nadene are giving their growing customer base absolute confidence in the fact that they don't and never have used any chemicals or artificial inputs on anything they grow and produce.

Manx Organic Network in a nutshell

Aims and objectives:

- To promote awareness of the benefits of organically produced food and sustainable agriculture.
- To promote Manx organic farmers and growers by encouraging consumers to buy locally produced organic food.
- To create a network of local resources, information and advice.
- To encourage the Manx Government to continue and increase its support for organic production.
- To develop an identifiable Manx Organic brand.

Contact:

Janet Bridle, Chair, 835436 or jbridle@manx.net

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For more membership forms to pass on to friends and relatives, please get in touch with Membership Secretary Susie Watson on 825755.

