



**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM REGISTER OF
ORGANIC FOOD STANDARDS**

1999 – 2000

UNITED KINGDOM REGISTER OF ORGANIC FOOD STANDARDS
ROOM 118, C/O DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS
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CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

At the end of my first year as Chairman of the UKROFS Board, I am pleased to introduce this Annual Report and Accounts for 1999-2000. Three principal issues - resources, GMOs and standards for organic livestock - have dominated the work and thinking of the Board and the Secretariat throughout the year.

Even before I had assumed office it was clear that the issue of resources was a matter of major concern and that evidence was accumulating uncomfortably which indicated that both the Board and the Secretariat were struggling desperately to keep their collective heads above water. Soon after becoming Chairman I wrote to the Minister setting out my concern that as the organic sector grew further in the UK, both in terms of home production and the volume of imported organic foodstuffs, and as issues such as the interface between organic food production and the trialling of GM crops developed, burdens on the Board and Secretariat would become intolerable, despite best efforts to streamline procedures and to prioritise tasks.

Recently additional staff resources have been made available and will hopefully soon be in place¹. Further modifications to our working practices may also bring benefits and the forthcoming Quinquennial Review may help in this respect. However, I shall be keeping in close touch with Ministers during the coming year to ensure that real improvements are indeed achieved and that the present threat to the efficiency of UKROFS is removed as rapidly as possible.

The potential impact of GMOs on organic food production has occupied much Board time during the past year, including a special meeting of the Board in July 1999, which was devoted solely to this topic. A GMOs Working Group was established to consider necessary modifications and additions to UKROFS

Standards. It is clear that, to a large extent, the Board's freedom of action is greatly constrained by the wording on GMOs, which is contained in the EU Livestock Regulation. A report on the work of the GMOs Group appears later in this Report. Valuable progress has also been made towards an accommodation with DETR and others over the selection of plot - and farm-scale trial sites for GM crops.

Common standards for organic livestock and livestock products marketed in the European Union (Regulation 1804/1999) were agreed by the Council of Ministers in July 1999 and come into effect on 24 August 2000. The Board spent much time considering how best to put the new EU Standards into effect in the UK and in so doing has relied heavily on the recommendations put to it by the Organic Livestock Standards Liaison Group which comprised representatives of the six organic inspection bodies involved with farm livestock together with representatives of other bodies active in the organic sector such as the National Farmers Union.²

Professor Roy Ward

Chairman

United Kingdom Register of Organic Food Standards

¹ new member of staff now in place

² A consultation document setting out draft UKROFS Standards for Livestock and Livestock Products was circulated on 10 April 2000 and the Board completed its consideration of the new standards at its July meeting. The new standards were issued in August 2000.

REPORT ON UKROFS OPERATIONS

Functions of UKROFS

The UK Register of Organic Food Standards was set up by Agricultural Ministers in 1994 in order to: -

- enforce Community standards (as set out in EC Regulation 2092/91 (as amended)) for the production of organic food in the UK (and UK standards where EC legislation does not prescribe standards),
- monitor effectively and approve the work of the organic certifying bodies and to take any action necessary to ensure that the bodies are implementing correctly the requirements of EC legislation and the UKROFS organic standards and control manual; and if necessary to suspend or withdraw approval from any accredited certifying body found in breach of the requirements,
- operate an effective and responsive authorisation system for imports of organic produce from third countries,
- accredit new certifying bodies which meet the appropriate requirements,
- formulate standards for the production and control of organic products in the UK in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate legislation, in particular Council Regulation (EEC) 2092/91 (as amended),
- consider and evaluate proposals for amendments to standards or legislation and, where amendment of EU law would be required, to forward fully reasoned proposals for consideration,

- to advise sponsor Ministers or Departments on issues relating to the production and sale of organic food and on research and development,
- prepare each year an annual report describing its activities during the preceding year,
- prepare each year a Business Plan detailing the activities expected to be undertaken in the coming year,
- certify operators against the basic requirements of Council Regulation (EEC) 2092/91,

For the first four of these purposes UKROFS acts as the 'Competent Authority' which Member States are required by Community law to designate to ensure that these functions are carried out.

Fulfilling the first four of these duties will also contribute significantly to the Government's sustainable development objectives. An effective organic farming sector producing to the standards put in place in the Community provides benefits in terms of soil health and fertility, benefits for bio-diversity and wider landscape benefits resulting from the use of crop rotations, as well as from the absence of synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, UKROFS runs its own certification scheme for organic operators. The reason for this is that EC Regulation 2092/91 requires that anyone who produces to the standards it prescribes must be allowed access to the inspection system the regulation prescribes and consequently allowed to market produce as organic. However, arrangements permit the certification schemes operated by the private sector inspection bodies to apply additional

standards and most do. The UKROFS scheme is in place to provide for those who wish to produce to Community standards and no more.

Membership of the Board

The Board of UKROFS is an independent body, currently comprising 13 members plus the Chairman. (Details are at Annex 2.) In order to ensure that no one interest predominates and that there is a wide range of expertise amongst Board members, membership of the Board is drawn widely from within and outside the organic sector and includes 4 from the organic production sector, 2 from the organic processing sector, 1 from the retailing and distribution sector, 1 from the enforcement sector, 2 from consumer organisations and 3 independent members with particular and relevant expertise, e.g. in veterinary matters, agricultural economics, etc. All members of the Board work to a code of conduct setting standards of propriety and must declare any direct or indirect pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest. A record of such interests is maintained.

Staff and Resources

Secretariat

In addition to the Secretary, Peter Crofts, the UKROFS Secretariat comprised Lis Alcock³, Dawn Cottle, Lidia Pirroni and Hamba Wanzola. Andy Cooke, Ahmed Nawaz and Chris Jones supported the Board in respect of authorising imports. With other support provided from the Organic Farming Unit in MAFF (now DEFRA) support for UKROFS absorbed just over 6 staff years in 1999/00.

Inspectorate

Inspection of operators registered with the organic certifying bodies is carried out under a contract with ADAS. Audit inspections of processing establishments are undertaken by a contracted food technologist. Systems audits of the headquarters operations of the organic certifying bodies are carried out for UKFOFS by the Audit, Consultancy and Management Services Division in MAFF (now DEFRA). FRCA (now DEFRA's Rural Development Service – RDS) carry out inspection of operators directly registered with UKROFS.

Running Costs

The cost of meetings of the UKROFS Board and its Committees (including members' travel and allowances), the cost of audit inspection of organic farmers, processors and importers, and the cost arising from providing staff and resources for the UKROFS Secretariat are met from Exchequer funds and accounted for under the rules applying to public expenditure.

³ Alex Dasi-Sutton has since replaced Lis Alcock.

Fee income arising from UKROFS' certification activities, sales of publications etc is surrendered to the Consolidated Fund. The financial resources allocated to UKROFS for the financial year 1999-2000 were as follows:

£140k staff costs.

£75k secretarial costs (meetings etc).

£40k Inspection costs (producer inspections).

£18k Inspection costs (processor inspections).

£14k Technical Advice from Farm and Rural Conservation Agency (now RDS).

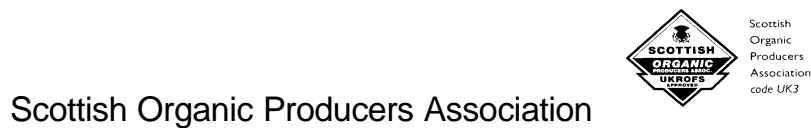
Total = £287k

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

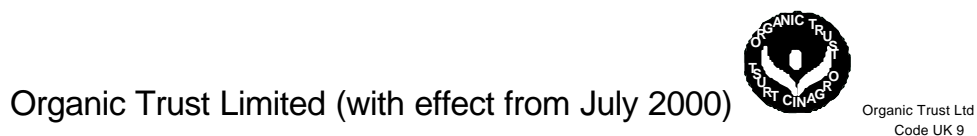
Supervision of the Organic Sector Bodies

The Board has approved eight bodies in the organic sector to operate schemes for the inspection and certification of organic producers and processors in the UK.

These are:



Food Certification (Scotland) Ltd (salmon products only)



The addresses of these bodies are at Annex 9.

In total there were at the start of year 2000, 2,538 organic farmers and growers registered with the inspection bodies accounting for 426,000 hectares of production – or 2.3% of the total UK land area. This is an enormous increase from the 51,000 hectares three years ago. There were also some 1160 processors and importers of organic products – a number which continues to expand rapidly. In order to ensure that approved bodies are properly applying the rules for organic production (as set out in EC Regulations and the UKROFS standards) UKROFS arranges check inspections of a proportion of the farmers, processors and importers registered with each body. The focus of these inspections is not on the individual operator concerned but rather on the way the organic body has enforced standards. Reports are made to the Certification Committee, who if necessary will call for other evidence from the body on how a particular issue has been handled.

A check is also made of the standards of record keeping, administrative competence etc operated at the headquarters of each body. Our inspectors check that the body complies with EN 45011, a European Norm on accreditation systems, including checks on impartiality, effectiveness and lack of commercial involvement in the certification process.

The performance of each body is reviewed annually by the Board on the basis of evidence from these inspections. If necessary a body will be given a programme for the correction of any non-compliances in its operation. The Board may withdraw the approval of a body at any time if it has sufficiently serious shortcomings or other shortcomings, which it fails to correct. A report on the work of the Certification Committee through which the Board conducts its monitoring of the work of the organic certifying bodies is at Annex 3

Import Authorisations and Ingredient Derogations

Except for those from six countries for which authorisation is handled by the European Commission, Regulation (EEC) no. 2092/91 requires imports of organic produce from countries outside the EU to be authorised by the Member States. Authorisation is granted only where it can be demonstrated that the produce to be imported was produced to standards equivalent to EU standards and in compliance with EN 45011. In the UK the UKROFS secretariat undertakes the task of assessing these applications and granting authorisations where appropriate.

The regulation also provides for certain food products not yet available in organic form to be used in limited quantities in the production of organic processed foods. If a processor wishes to make use of a product not on the EC list, he or she needs to apply to the authorities in the Member State concerned for authorisation to use it showing that it is not available organically. In the UK the UKROFS secretariat has the role of assessing these applications.

In the year under report, 161 import authorisations and 23 ingredient derogations were granted (an increase of 237% and 230% respectively over 1998/99).

UKROFS Certification Scheme



United Kingdom register of Organic Food Standards (Code UK1)

As mentioned above, UKROFS itself runs a scheme for the direct certification of those involved in the production of organic food.

At the time of writing 13 farms and horticultural holdings are registered in this scheme, accounting for some 1,483 hectares of organic production, a tiny fraction of the UK total. (There were no processors or importers.) The UKROFS scheme certifies producers to the standards prescribed by the EC Regulation and a number of research establishments have registered with it because it represents the EU norm.

Standards Issues

In the year under report UKROFS has considered

- requirements for the training and approval of inspectors for organic production;
- standards needed to give effect to Regulation 1804/1999, in particular whether additional or stricter standards for organic livestock and livestock products were appropriate;
- standards in relation to GMOs;
- standards for organic fish.
- the addition of chlorine to water for washing cut salads and similar products;

- the appropriate substrates for growing pot plants; and
- the availability of organic straw for mushroom production.

Standards for Organic Livestock and Livestock Products

The Board gave a great deal of time to considering the implementation of EC Regulation 1804/1999, which supplements Regulation 2092/91 to provide for livestock production. In particular, the Board considered the issue of whether, as Regulation 1804/1999 permits, stricter standards should be required of UK producers. A special meeting of the Board in February 2000 was devoted entirely to these matters. At that meeting the Board welcomed Christopher Stopes who had chaired the meeting of OLSLG (the Organic Livestock Standards Liaison Group), which co-ordinated the views of the organic sector on the implementation of EC Regulation 1804/1999. The Board expressed its appreciation of the enormous amount of work that the Group had done.

For the most part the Board accepted the recommendations of OLSLG, especially where these were unanimous. On issues where the Group were divided the Board tended towards the cautious approach of defaulting to the EC Regulation unless doing so would have weakened an existing UKROFS Standard. The final outcome will depend upon the consultation process, which is currently underway⁴. Throughout, the Board has been acutely aware of the great sensitivity (including commercial sensitivity) of many of the issues raised by the new Regulation and has recognised the desirability of achieving improvements to UKROFS Standards in a manageable, commercially viable and coherent way.

⁴ The new standards were issued in August 2000

GMOs

In January 2000 The Board set up a working group to advise the Board on the implications for producers, processors and organic inspection bodies of implementing proposed new standards on the avoidance of genetically modified material in agricultural products and organic food production. The working group has yet to conclude its consideration of the complex issues involved.

Fish

UKROFS has concluded that the organic certifying bodies might work together to agree a common private standard. Such an approach would legitimise existing activity in this area and encourage expansion of the sector without committing UKROFS to the setting of a national standard. This compromise was welcomed by those certifying bodies currently involved in the certification of organic fish as well as by the small but growing number of organic fish farmers active in the UK. The common private standard has now been drafted by the inspection bodies and is currently being reviewed by the Fish Working Group with a view to recommending it to the UKROFS Board ⁵.

Chlorine

The Board became aware of the use of chlorine and was obliged to point out to the industry and inspection bodies that it was not a processing aid permitted by Regulation (EEC) NO. 2092/91. The Regulation gives no powers to member states to derogate for additional processing aids. Since then the industry has sought various alternatives to chlorine although difficulties remain in finding processes or substances which are both effective and in accordance with the Regulation.

⁵ The Board accepted these as an industry standard

Pot Plants

For pot plants the Board reminded the industry that the principles of the Regulation are that organic farming is a soil based system and therefore growing media not including soil should not be used although it is understood that *some* other member states have allowed similar systems. The Board has asked MAFF (now DEFRA) to consider whether it is appropriate to take the issue up in Brussels in order to get an agreed EC view.

Mushrooms

For mushrooms, EU standards require that from 21 December 2001 all the straw and a high proportion of other inputs used in making the substrate on which organic mushrooms are grown must come from organic farming. The industry has made representations that the amount of organic straw available from that date will be insufficient to meet the needs of the UK industry. The Board has no powers to derogate from the requirements of the Regulation, but has requested further information from the industry and will consider if it is appropriate for the issue to be taken up in Brussels.

In the case of GMOs and fish, the work of UKROFS was informed by recommendations from Working Groups set up to advise it. Reports on the work of these Groups are attached to this report as Annexes 4 & 5. In the case of chlorine, mushrooms and pot plants, the work of UKROFS was informed by recommendations from the Technical Committee. A report on the work of the Committee is attached to this report as Annex 6.

Research & Development

As mentioned above, this Committee convenes on an ad-hoc basis to consider the need for research and development relevant to organic production and to make recommendations to MAFF (now DEFRA) and other interested parties. UKROFS itself has no funds for R&D work. The Committee has not met during 1999/2000.

THE FUTURE

11. *Objectives and targets for 2000-01*

The Board's plans for the coming year are set out in its Business Plan

12. *Quinquennial Review*

Regular reviews of Agencies and NDPBs take place at least every five years. The review of UKROFS is scheduled for 2000 and comes at a most opportune time in the light of the changing role of UKROFS and of the pressure on resources to which reference is made in the Chairman's Introduction.

Annex 1

Terms of Reference for the UKROFS Board

1. The Board of UKROFS shall be an independent body whose members are appointed, each in a personal capacity, by UK Agricultural Ministers. The composition of the Board will be maintained to include members with a wide range of interests in organic food such as producers, processors, distributors, consumers and enforcement authorities, but the chairperson will be independent of such interest.
2. The composition of the Board shall be maintained so that no one interest predominates.
3. UK Agricultural Ministers will appoint the chairperson and members for periods up to three years subject to termination at any time.

The UKROFS Secretariat

4. A Secretariat will be maintained by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to serve the Board in the discharge of its functions.

Functions

5. The UKROFS Board will be responsible for the discharge of UK Agriculture Ministers' responsibilities, in regard to the administration, execution and enforcement of the EC Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 (relating to organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs).

6. The responsibilities are defined in The Organic Products Regulations 1992 as amended by the Organic Products (Amendment) Regulations 1994 under which UK Agriculture Ministers are designated as:

i) the authority responsible for the reception of notifications under Article 8(1) of Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 and making available to interested parties the updated list referred to in Article 8(3); and

ii) the inspection authority responsible for the operation of the inspection system referred to in Article 9(1);

and

iii) the authority responsible for the approval and supervision of private inspection bodies in accordance with Article 9(4) to 9(7), 9(8)(a) and (b), 9(9)(a) and 10(3)(a).

7. UKROFS Standards (first published by the Board in 1989 and kept under review thereafter) conform to the Rules laid down by Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 for the production of unprocessed agricultural crop products and for processing them. The Standards also include rules for animal production and for processing animal products for human consumption and these will need to be modified as necessary when such products are brought within the scope of EC legislation.

8. The UKROFS Certification System is designed to ensure conformity with UKROFS Standards through approved Certification Schemes and it provides the means by which operators who produce, prepare or import from a third country, products covered by Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 may notify their activities to UKROFS as the authority for the reception of such notifications. The System also provides the means by which the inspection system defined in Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 is implemented in the UK and the framework for the supervision of the

Bodies which operate approved Certification Schemes.

9. Details of the financial arrangements between the UKROFS Board and the Agriculture Department are given in Annex 1.

10. The Board is responsible for:

10.01 Keeping UKROFS Standards under review to ensure they conform to the requirements of Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 as amended and other relevant EC legislation concerning organic production.

10.02 The formulation of policies relating to the operation of the Certification System and related activities and maintaining an overview of the implementation of its policies.

10.03 Authorising the approval of Certification Schemes and the registration of the Bodies responsible for the operation of the Schemes as UKROFS Approved Bodies.

10.04 Authorising the approval of operators participating in the UKROFS Certification Scheme and their registration as Approved Operators.

10.05 Authorising the approval of Inspectors and their registration as UKROFS Approved Inspectors.

10.06 Informing UK Agriculture Ministers of all incidents where a manifest infringement or an infringement with prolonged effects are found and for making a recommendation as to the length of time the operator concerned should be prohibited from marketing products with indications referring to the organic production method. (Reference Article 9(9)(b) and Article 10(3)(b) of Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91.

10.07 Authorising the withdrawal of a Certificate of Registration issued to an Approved Body, an Approved Operator or an Approved Inspector.

10.08 Ensuring that lists of Approved Operators as referred to in Article 8(3) of Regulation (EEC) NO. 2092/91 are published every six months.

10.09 Ensuring, each year, that UK Agriculture Ministers,

i) are informed before January 31st, of the Approved Bodies which held a valid Certificate of Registration on December 31st of the previous year, giving their legal status and operational structure, their standard inspection procedure, their penalty arrangements and, where appropriate, their Mark;

ii) are informed before April 30th, of the operators who, on December 31st, or the previous year had given notification under Article 8(1)(a) of Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 and who were participating in an UKROFS Approved Certification Scheme;

iii) are provided with a report before April 30th, for the previous year to December 31st, on the supervision of UKROFS Approved Bodies Pursuant to Article 9(6) of Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91.

10.10 Ensuring that UK Agriculture Ministers are informed of any irregularity of which the Board becomes aware in the application of Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 in a product coming from another Member State bearing the indication shown in Article 2 or Annex V of the Regulation.

10.11 Ensuring that provisions are made in accordance with Article 1 of Regulation (EEC) No. 2083/92 for importers to obtain authorisation to market under an organic designation products imported from a third country not listed in Annex to Regulation (EEC) No. 94/92 and subsequent amendments and for notifying such authorisations

to UK Agriculture Ministers.

10.12 Keeping current and proposed EC legislation on organic production under review and providing advice to UK Agriculture Ministers concerning the impact of such legislation on organic production in the UK and as appropriate making recommendations for the amendment of such legislation or proposed legislation.

10.13 Providing advice periodically to UK Agriculture Ministers concerning the research and development needs of the organic sector.

10.14 Considering and approving annual budgets of expenditure to be financed by a grant from MAFF (now DEFRA), the fees charged for certification services, the sale of UKROFS Standards and any other sources of income that may be identified.

11. These Terms of Reference may only be altered by the Board and with the agreement of UK Agriculture Ministers.

Annex 2

Membership of the Board

Chairman:

1. Roy Ward : Emeritus Professor of Geography at the University of Hull. Member of the Yorkshire Regional Flood Defence Committee and former Chairman of the Ministry's Regional Advisory Panel for the NorthEast Region.

Members:

2. John Barnard: a consultant and former Assistant Trading Standards Officer in Norfolk specialising in the enforcement of food law.

3. Jan Deane (until 31/10/2000): an expert on organic standards, acting as a representative for the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and partner in an organic vegetable enterprise.

4. Robert Duxbury: Technical Product Manager - Organic Foods, Primary Agriculture Dept., Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd.

5. Nigel Elgar: managing partner in an organic beef and sheep enterprise in the Welsh LFA.

6. Douglas Gray: Senior Veterinary Investigation Officer, Scottish Agricultural College.

7. John Hoey: management consultant and former organic farmer in Northern Ireland.

8. Andrew Jedwell: founder of Meridian Foods, Clwyd, specialising in organic processed products.

9. Susan Knox: Chairman of the Consumers in Europe Group, UK Alternate Member of the European Commission Consumer Committee and Chairman of Village Retail Services Association Educational Trust.
10. Diane McCrea: Consultant on food and consumer affairs, Commissioner of the Meat and Livestock Commission, Consumers International consumer representative at Codex Alimentarius and co-editor of The Handbook of Organic Food Processing and Production.
11. John McInerney: Glanely Professor of Agricultural Policy and Director of the Agricultural Economics Unit, University of Exeter.
12. Charlotte Russell: partner in an organic beef and sheep enterprise in Cornwall.
13. Christopher Stopes (from 1/11/2000): consultant in organic food and farming and a member of the MAFF Advisory Committee on Pesticides.
14. Charlie Wannop: farmer in Kirkubright also involved in developing training courses and lecturing.
15. Simon Wright: Consultant food technologist who helps develop organic food and drink: co-editor of The Handbook of Organic Food Processing and Production and Deputy Chair of the Processors Committee of the Soil Association.

Observers:

Peter Cleasby - MAFF

Andrew Eldridge - MAFF

Secretary

Peter Crofts

Annex 3

Certification Committee

The Certification Committee is a permanent standing committee of UKROFS. Members of the Committee (listed at the end of this Annex) are appointed by the UKROFS Board and the Committee is chaired by a Board member. During the year 1999/00, the chairmanship of the committee passed from Lawrence Woodward to Jan Deane. Besides the chairman there are 4 other members of the committee, all of whom have expertise in specific areas of organic productions and/or processing and good specific knowledge of the UKROFS standards and EU regulation 2092/91. All members sit on the Committee in their personal capacity and not as representatives of any organisation.

The Committee's main purpose: - is to review the functioning of organic inspection bodies. It does this by means of audit reports on farmers, processors and importers registered with the bodies. The focus of these reports is not on the individuals concerned, but rather on how well the bodies are undertaking their responsibility of implementing the requirements of the regulations and standards. A second function is consider inspection reports in order to make recommendations to the Board regarding the certification of those organic operators who are directly registered with UKROFS (currently 10? operators). Additionally the Committee may take a view on other matters referred to it by the UKROFS Board

UKROFS has directly contracted inspectors for its inspection work and inspector representatives are usually in attendance at the Certification Committee meetings to provide any necessary clarifications. Representatives of the inspection bodies are also invited to attend the meetings when surveillance reports of their operators are being considered.

The Committee meets at least every other month and in the year 1999/00 there were 10 meetings including meeting of the "Organic Forum" (see below). The increased frequency of meetings has been largely due to the rapid expansion of farmers and processors who have registered as organic during the year, leading in turn to an increased number of surveillance inspections. UKROFS has been carrying out oversight inspections of around 8% of the registered operators in the UK. This percentage is likely to reduce to 5% although the absolute number will increase.

As well as its routine duties, the Certification Committee considered a number of special issues during the year including the requirement of a BSE audit, to ensure that "at risk" cattle were eliminated from the national organic herd. This work is due to be completed in September 2000. The Committee also approves requests for shortening the conversion period as allowed for in the European regulation. Other special issues have been a review of the UKROFS Control Manual which is currently being revised and the consideration of new qualifications and training requirements of sector body inspectors who must be approved by UKROFS before they may do organic inspections.

The Committee received approval from the Board to set up a Certifier's Forum (its members are listed at Annex 7) to which all the UK inspection bodies are invited to attend. This Group meets 3-4 times a year and provides an opportunity for the bodies and the Certification Committee to discuss issues of mutual interest. The Forum has its own Terms of Reference.

As well as its regular duties and in the light of the continued growth of the organic sector, the Committee is planning to consider over the coming year how sampling techniques might be improved for the selection of the surveillance inspections. The Committee remains dedicated to continuing to uphold the quality and consistency of organic inspection and certification in the United Kingdom.

Chairman:

1. Jan Deane⁶

Members:

2. John Hassett
3. Clare Marriage
4. Christopher Stopes
5. Christine Watson

Observers:

Roger Unwin
Allen Greenhalgh

Secretary:

Peter Crofts

⁶ Christopher Stopes from 1/11/2000

Annex 4

GMOs

In January 2000 a Working Group (members listed at the end of this Annex) was established to advise the Board on the implications for producers, processors and organic inspection bodies of implementing proposed new standards on the avoidance of genetically modified material in organic food production.

The Group was charged with ensuring that the eventual UKROFS Standards adequately reflect the requirements in EC Regulation 1804/1999 that genetically modified organisms or their derivatives shall not be used in the production of organic agricultural products and the production of organic foods, and to present to the Board any amendments or additions as considered necessary to the UKROFS Standards. The Group was mindful that the resulting UK Standards should be practical and workable.

The Working Group was Chaired by Board Member Diane McCrea and comprised six additional members with expertise in organic agricultural production through to organic food production. The Group met three times in the first half of the year hoping to complete its task by the end of the year.

Amendment 10 to EC Regulation No: 2092/91 (Regulation 1804/1999) states that:

'Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and products derived therefrom are not compatible with the organic productions methods; in order to maintain consumer confidence in organic production, genetically modified organisms, parts thereof and products derived therefrom should not be used in products labelled as from organic production;'

The first meeting concentrated on identifying issues to be resolved and setting the list for matters to be addressed, such as: de minimis levels, veterinary products,

manures, record keeping, implementation of the EC Regulations in other Countries, and verification of GM free status.

It became necessary to investigate the legal position regarding the setting of UKROFS standards for GMOs stricter than those set out in Regulation 1804/1999. Legal advice was sought and it was clarified that standards must not be in excess of the EC Regulation and that the Working Group should pay attention to this in making amendments to the UKROFS standards.

The Working Group commissioned a study to investigate what procedures were in place with each of the inspection bodies to verify 'non-gm' status and what evidence was necessary to demonstrate this. Case studies from organic producers throughout the food chain were also investigated to ascertain the practical implications and adequacy of these different arrangements in the UK. This study and its conclusions were used as the basis for discussions of record keeping and verification of non-usage of genetically modified organisms in the organic food sector.

There was concern that UK standards should not be more onerous on UK producers than those applied in other member states and information was sought on how these matters were being dealt with elsewhere. In addition, the Group was sensitive to the needs and perceptions of organic food consumers in the UK and their demands for 'gm-free' organic foods.

The Working Group Chairman represented UKROFS and attended two meetings held between representatives of the responsible Government Departments, the organic sector and SCIMAC, to discuss GMOs and organic farming. Specifically issues of how organic farming and the planting of GM crops could coexist were discussed as were ways to identify what further research was necessary to clarify areas of concern and uncertainty when genetically modified organisms had been used in conventional agriculture and the possible implications for the organic sector.

The Working Group continues to discuss its proposed amendments to the UKROFS Standards and intends completing its deliberations, to present to the Board, as soon as possible and ideally by the end of 2000.

Chairman:

1. Diane McCrea

Members:

2. John Dalby
3. Douglas Gray (as consultant)
4. David Heaf
5. Michael Paske
6. Charlotte Russell
7. Craig Sams
8. Lawrence Woodward

Secretary:

Peter Crofts

Annex 5

Fish Working Group

In May 1999, the UKROFS Board convened the Fish Working Group (members listed at the end of this Annex) to explore the feasibility of setting national standards for organically farmed fish in the UK. The formation of this group was prompted by EC regulation 1804/1999 which stated the intention of setting standards for organically farmed fish within the European Union at a future date and allows member states to set national standards or to recognise private certification standards in the meantime. The Board was mindful that such private standards already existed in the UK and felt that some regulation of the industry would be desirable.

Members of the Group were named by the Board under the chairmanship of Jan Deane. The 7 members were drawn from those UK inspection bodies who had already approved standards for organic fish farming as well as consumer and independent representatives.

The Fish Working Group has met 5 times during the period covered by this annual report. The first meetings were dedicated to a consideration of whether fish farming was appropriate and consistent with organic principles and revolved around whether species such as salmonids had become sufficiently domesticated so as to successfully sublimate their migratory urge. To assist the Group, expert advice was sought and Professor Felicity Huntingford and Dr. Ted Potter kindly produced papers on this subject for the Group. Although existing research is not conclusive, members of the group were eventually satisfied that it would be appropriate to set organic standards and that these standards should be confined, in the first instance, to salmonids.

During the course of the year, the UKROFS Board independently came to the conclusion that the sector was not sufficiently developed for a national standard to

be appropriate. The Working Group then made an alternative proposal: - that the UK inspection bodies might work together to agree a common private standard. Such an approach would legitimise existing activity in this area and encourage expansion of the sector without committing UKROFS to the setting of a national standard. This compromise was welcomed by those inspection bodies currently involved in the certification of organic fish as well as by the small but growing number of organic fish farmers active in the UK. The common private standard has now been drafted by the inspection bodies and is currently being reviewed by the Fish Working Group with a view to recommending it to the UKROFS Board⁷.

Chairman:

1. Jan Deane
2. Chris Absolon
3. Francis Blake
4. Diane McCrea
5. Hugh Raven
6. Julian Wade
7. Lawrence Woodward

Secretary:

Peter Crofts

⁷ The Board accepted this as an industry standard.

Annex 6

Technical Committee

The Board of UKROFS has established a Technical Committee (its members are listed at the end of this Annex) which held its first meeting in November 1999. It was formed so that technical issues arising from the regulations, both established and prospective, could be given a more detailed consideration than was possible in meetings of the Board or Certification Committee.

The terms of reference have been drafted to allow the Committee to react to matters referred to it by, inter alia, the Board, Certification Committee or Secretariat of UKROFS, but also to be proactive and take initiatives where appropriate.

The initial membership is intended to encompass a wide range of backgrounds and experience and it is likely that it will need to be further augmented in due course. It is in the nature of the issues being addressed that recourse to outside expertise will need to be regularly employed either by co-opting members for a short period or commissioning work from technical specialists. Provision for the costs of such outside expertise will need to be borne in mind when drawing up the UKROFS budget in order that the Committee can function effectively.

The early meetings have benefited from the attendance, as observers, of Roger Unwin of Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (now RDS) and Andy Cooke of the Organic Farming Unit in MAFF (now DEFRA), with the latter providing useful insight into the practicalities and timescales of influencing the technical debates at Brussels. These initial meetings have provided a settling-in period as the new committee feels its way in to the large diversity of topics which it faces. It may perhaps be helpful to provide some examples: -

An examination (still continuing) of the possible use of ozone as a biocide in vegetable washing, following UKROFS confirmation of the prohibited status of chlorine.

A consultation exercise with the inspection bodies, and other interested parties, regarding issues within the processing standards that require clarification for the bodies and their inspectors and processors.

The preparation of a draft horticultural standards for presentation to the Board, in response to a request from the EU for proposals from Member States. Agreement on such a draft standard should help to ensure that the UK is well prepared to have an influential part to play in the eventual standards.

Chairman:

1. Andrew Jedwell

Members:

2. Anna Ashmole
3. Peter Hall
4. John Hassett
5. Susanne Padel
6. Alan Scofield
7. Alan Wilson

Observer:

Roger Unwin

Secretary:

Peter Crofts

Annex 7

Organic Forum

(The following are the responsible persons of the certification services of the bodies. They or their representatives are invited to attend the Forum together with the Certification Committee – see above)

1. Chris Absolon - Food Certification (Scotland) Limited (Organic Certification of Farmed Salmon in the UK)
2. Carolyn Beattie - Scottish Organic Producers Association
3. John Dalby - Organic Farmers & Growers Limited
4. Julia Feron - Soil Association Certification Limited
5. Noreen Gibney - Irish Organic Farmers & Growers Association
6. Fiona Mackie - Bio Dynamic Agricultural Association
7. Julian Wade - Organic Food Federation
8. Helen Scully - Organic Trust Limited

Secretary:

Peter Crofts

Annex 8

Statistical Information

Meetings

During the period 1 April 1999 to 31 March 2000 the following meetings have been held:

UKROFS Board	:	9 meetings
Certification Committee	:	7 meetings
Technical Committee	:	3 meetings
Fisheries Working Group	:	5 meetings
FM Working Group	:	2 meetings
UKROFS Forum	:	3 meetings
(meeting with inspection bodies)		
Chairman's Meetings on UKROFS business	:	6 meetings
Chairman's Public Speaking engagements	:	2
Secretary's meetings on UKROFS business	:	40
Secretary's Public Speaking engagements	:	2
Papers circulated to Board, Committees and Working Group	:	398

Annex 9

APPROVED SECTOR BODIES

United Kingdom Register of Organic Food Standards (UKROFS)

c/o MAFF
Room 114, Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

UK 1

☎ 0207 238 6004
Fax: 0207 238 6148
Email: peter.crofts@maff.gsi.gov.uk

Scottish Organic Producers Association

Suite 15
Software Centre
Stirling University Innovation Park
Stirling
FK9 4FN

UK 3

☎ 01786 458090
Fax: 01786 458091
Email: contact@sopa.demon.co.uk

Soil Association Certification Ltd

Bristol House
40-56 Victoria Street
Bristol
BS1 6BY

UK 5

☎ 01179 142400
Fax: 01179 252504
Email: info@soilassociation.org

Organic Farmers and Growers Ltd

The Elim Centre
Lancaster Road
Shrewsbury
Shropshire SY1 3LE

UK 2

☎ 01743 440512
Fax: 01743 461441
Email: john.ofg@mac-1.net

Organic Food Federation

Unit 1
Manor Enterprise Centre
Mowles Manor
Etling Green
Dereham
Norfolk NR20 3EZ

UK 4

☎ 01362 637314
Fax: 01362 637398
Email: organicfood@freenet.co.uk

Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association

17 Inverleith Place
Edinburgh
EH3 5QE

UK 6

☎ 01316 243921
Fax: 01316 243921
Email: fionamackie@ic24.net

**Irish Organic Farmers and Growers
Association**

Harbour Building
Harbour Road
Kilbeggan
Co Westmeath
Ireland
UK 7

yet

☎ 00 353 506 32563
Fax: 00 353 506 32063
Email: iofga@eircom.net

Organic Trust Limited

Vernon House
2 Vernon Avenue
Clontarf
Dublin 3

UK 9

☎ 00 353 185 30271
Fax: 00 353 185 30271
Email:

**Food Certification (Scotland) Ltd
(Organic Certification of Farmed Salmon in
the UK)**

Redwood
19 Culduthel Road
Inverness
IV2 4AA

**UK number not allocated as farmed salmon not
part of EC system – UK approval**

☎ 01463 222251
Fax 01463 711408
Email:

organic@iol.ie