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Developing the Infrastructure for Organic Farming in Wales

*-Project Evaluation –
January 2000 – December 2001*



Canolfan Organig Cymru
Organic Centre Wales



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales



THE NATIONAL TRUST



Sefydliad Astudiaethau Gwledig
The Institute of Rural Studies

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Objective 5b project 'Developing the Infrastructure for Organic Farming in Wales', of which the Cambrian Organic Group (COG) is a major component, has been running with European financial support for two years. It continued the work of the original Objective 5b project 'Developing Organic Farming in the Uplands of Wales' which ran from October 1996 to September 1999. The present project has communicated, consulted and worked with its 2,700 members through organic producer – led committees, events, representation at events, questionnaires and a bi-monthly newsletter.

On behalf of the membership, around 70 evening meetings and farm walks have been held, by COG alone, throughout Wales. These have covered many subjects – technical and subjective, from pigs to permaculture, managing grasslands to marketing organic produce.

Other projects have also provided, and continue to provide opportunities for farmers to learn more about organic farming. These include the Organic Centre Wales who run the Organic Demonstration Farm Network as part of the WDA Objective 5b project and Technical Training Day initiative on behalf of both the 5b projects. Other activities in Wales include Organic Conversion Information Service (OCIS). COG and projects such as these have worked closely to provide relevant information on organic farming and a comprehensive, on-going diary of events.

This report details feedback from a questionnaire, and 'Focus on the Future' meetings held with COG producer members on the support available to them in Wales. The questionnaire involved working with the Organic Centre Wales to include questions on other support projects, run by the Centre. At the same time a questionnaire on the Organic Conversion Information Service (OCIS) was conducted.

Results of the COG questionnaire survey show that farmers whatever their stage of interest in organic farming, appreciate the range of opportunities offered to them. They hope to see many of the projects continue in some form, and for new support to be established.

As producers, members would like to see more localised events, with a smaller 'group focus'. Events not only provide information, they also act as places to exchange ideas, experiences and develop farming relationships.

There is strong support for the continuation of the only Wales-wide organic information Newsletter – The Cambrian Organic Group Newsletter. This provides up-to-date information on organic standards, support and developments, as well as the ONLY organic -Wales-oriented resource for organic farming adverts and event information.

Members would like guidance on, and financial investment into developing organic processing facilities and marketing opportunities in Wales. This will add value to Welsh produce, in Wales and provide producers with opportunities to sell their food locally. Members would also like administration support and advice on where to go for information and grants.

On the consumer side farmers want to encourage and support the raising of public awareness of the value of organic farming.

There is a need for support to maintain and develop Wales' already strong organic -producer voice. Wales is clearly valued for its distinct culture and physical attributes, and this, with its strong organic voice should be appreciated and cultivated.

As the following report demonstrates those interested in organic farming are considering the support they require, and also looking at the whole picture of organic production, this is literally from farm, to fork - from producer to processor to retailer to consumer.

INTRODUCTION

The Cambrian Organic Group (COG) grew from a single organic farmer group based in Newcastle Emlyn, South West Wales. This group met regularly for three years to discuss and utilise key speakers on organic farming issues. The Newcastle Emlyn meetings were well attended with up to 100 people attending a single meeting.

In parallel with increasing interest in organic production in Wales, ADAS with other bodies, secured 5b funding from Europe to develop COG into a Wales – wide project. Under its new support, the project, managed by ADAS employed two co-ordinators to work with 6 organic producer groups throughout the 5b area of Wales. The 5b project formally began in January 2000.

The project aims to ‘*Develop the infrastructure for organic farming in Wales*’.

The co-ordinators work with 6 regional organic producer groups to build a network of opportunities for organic farming through:

- **Providing a focus for other interested groups, producers and bodies**
- **Adding to the calendar of events that deals with the on-farm, and wider-based issues that are raised by in-conversion and organic farmers (primary aim).**
- **Increasing contact between producer and consumer.**
- **Promoting and representing organic farming and the COG groups at shows and fairs, etc.**
- **Working with others to develop a stronger, unified voice for organic farming in Wales.**

In order to establish the organic producer groups inaugural meetings were held in January 2000 in the 6 regions. The meetings brought together those interested in organic farming, identified areas of interest and formed the groups’ committees. Issues that the producers raised included local food marketing, sourcing organic feed and parasite control.

The 6 Cambrian Organic Groups consist of in-conversion and organic producers, farmers considering organic conversion and representatives from bodies such as LEADER, the Agri-Food Partnership and local groups. The committees had their first meetings in February/March 2000. The first events were talks on Organic Grassland Management in March 2000.

There have been alternating regular events and committee meetings on a monthly basis.

The project has also worked to build communication with other initiatives so that developments can complement each other where possible and provide maximum benefit to the producer.

The bi-monthly Cambrian Organic Newsletter and event sheet are a focal point for information and events relating to sustainable agriculture in Wales. The newsletter includes details on opportunities for all levels of organic farming. The Cambrian Organic Group has a section on the Organic Centre Wales website <http://www.organic.aber.ac.uk/cog> . This facility has developed through consultation with Cambrian Organic Group members.

The COG membership consists of over 2,500. The project is managed by Richard Collyer, with assistance from David Frost, Organic Advisor, ADAS and Newsletter Editor, James Oswald, Administrator, Colin Porter, COG Co-ordinator South & Mid East Wales and Jenny Lampard, COG Co-ordinator North & Mid East Wales.

1. Evaluation aims & feedback

The aims of the evaluation are to:

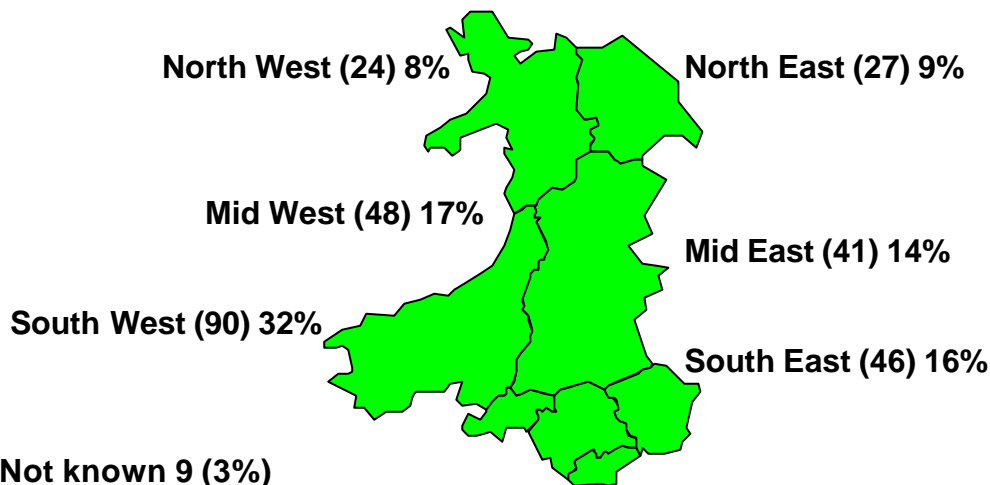
- identify people's opinions on COG and Organic Centre Wales - OCW (including Welsh Development Agency 5b) projects in Wales.
- identify people's requirements for future support.

The COG project has been based around making contact and working directly with farmers. This enabled a variety of approaches to gain feedback. Two main approaches were utilised:

1. The bilingual questionnaire ^(Appendix 1) was sent to 2475 COG members in September 2001. Members were asked to return the questionnaire's within one month.
2. Eleven 'Focussing on the Future' meetings were also held. Members were asked to comment on COG and OCW activities to identify what support they would like to see continuing, or in addition to existing support ^(Appendix 2). Representatives from OCW attended all meetings and provided the groups with an overview of the support they will provide. The representatives were also present to hear, first hand, the farmer's future requirements.

The questionnaire response was 11.40 % (285/2500).

Those who responded were divided into the six regions, depending on their address. The map below shows where the responders live in Wales.

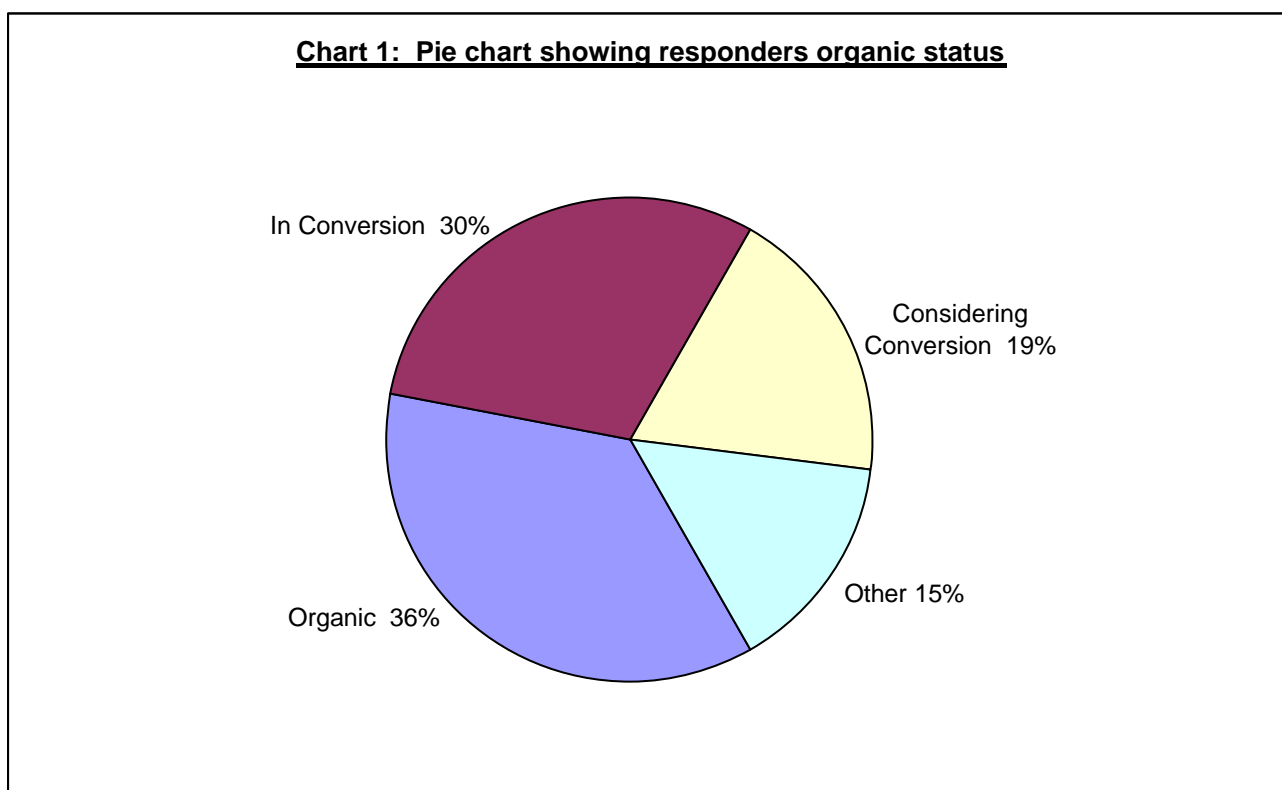


The high percentage of returns received from the South East includes farmers outside of the 5b area. They attended some events held around the Brecon area. Their comments were specifically identifying the need for the COG project to expand further South, (i.e. out of the 5b area). The South Groups Co-ordinator was able to advise farmers in the far South East of how the COG groups are managed. This enabled them to consider establishing an independent group.

The response distribution does reflect the distribution of organic farmers / COG members in Wales, with the majority being in the South and fewer in the North.

1.1 Responders' details: organic status & farm enterprises

As the pie chart below shows the majority of responders are organic (36%). This is followed closely by in-conversion farmers at 30%.



The 'other' category includes processors, organic advisors, some who feel that it is un-economic for them to convert (9 % of 'other') and those that practise organic farming but are unregistered (14% of 'other'). In most cases those in this category stated that they do not have formal certification because of certification costs. Others stated that they do not have formal certification because they do not farm commercially

Almost two thirds of responders farm with beef and sheep, plus arable or other enterprise such as potatoes. 7% (20) of responders farm poultry for table-birds, with almost double this percentage (13% = 38) in egg production. Of those responding 8% (23) have pigs on their farm.

A similar percentage of responders produce vegetables (17%), and dairy (16%). Fruit production is carried out by 8% (24) of respondents; 8% of farmers also have pigs on their farm. Around 13% of responders identified an 'other' production type, e.g. timber, goats (including dairy goats), horses, herbs and honey.

Organic Farming Events

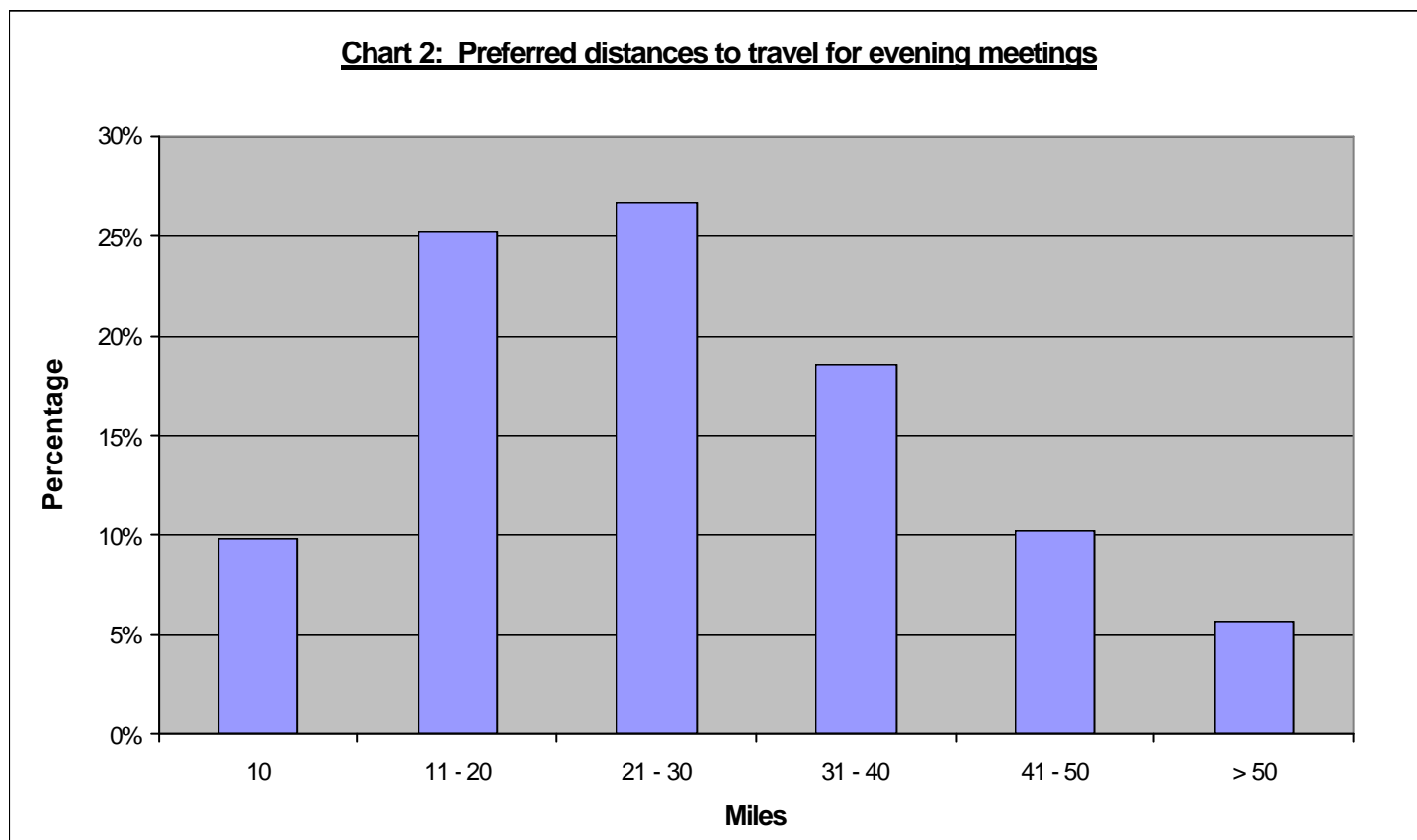
2. Cambrian Organic Group – evening meetings

The two Co-ordinators worked with the 6 regional groups to hold around 6 events per group, per year (subject areas are discussed in **Section 2.2 / 2.2.1**). The following Section discusses distances farmers are prepared to travel subject area and overall opinion of the meetings held.

2.1 Distance farmers will travel to evening meetings

Chart 2 shows that an almost equal number of people are prepared to travel 11-20 and 21–30 miles - round trip - (25% and 27% respectively) to evening talks.

Only 6% are prepared to travel 50 miles or more to an evening meeting.



(please see Section 3.1 for a comparison with travelling to farm walks)

2.2 Subjects for evening meeting

Responders were asked to identify subjects of the meetings they had attended. This question aimed to encourage responder to remember events they had been to. It does not accurately represent preferred subjects as, for example 6 grassland meetings have been held, but only one on processing and adding value. However, records from the attendance sheets from each event do give some idea of popularity.

The most well attended evening events are:

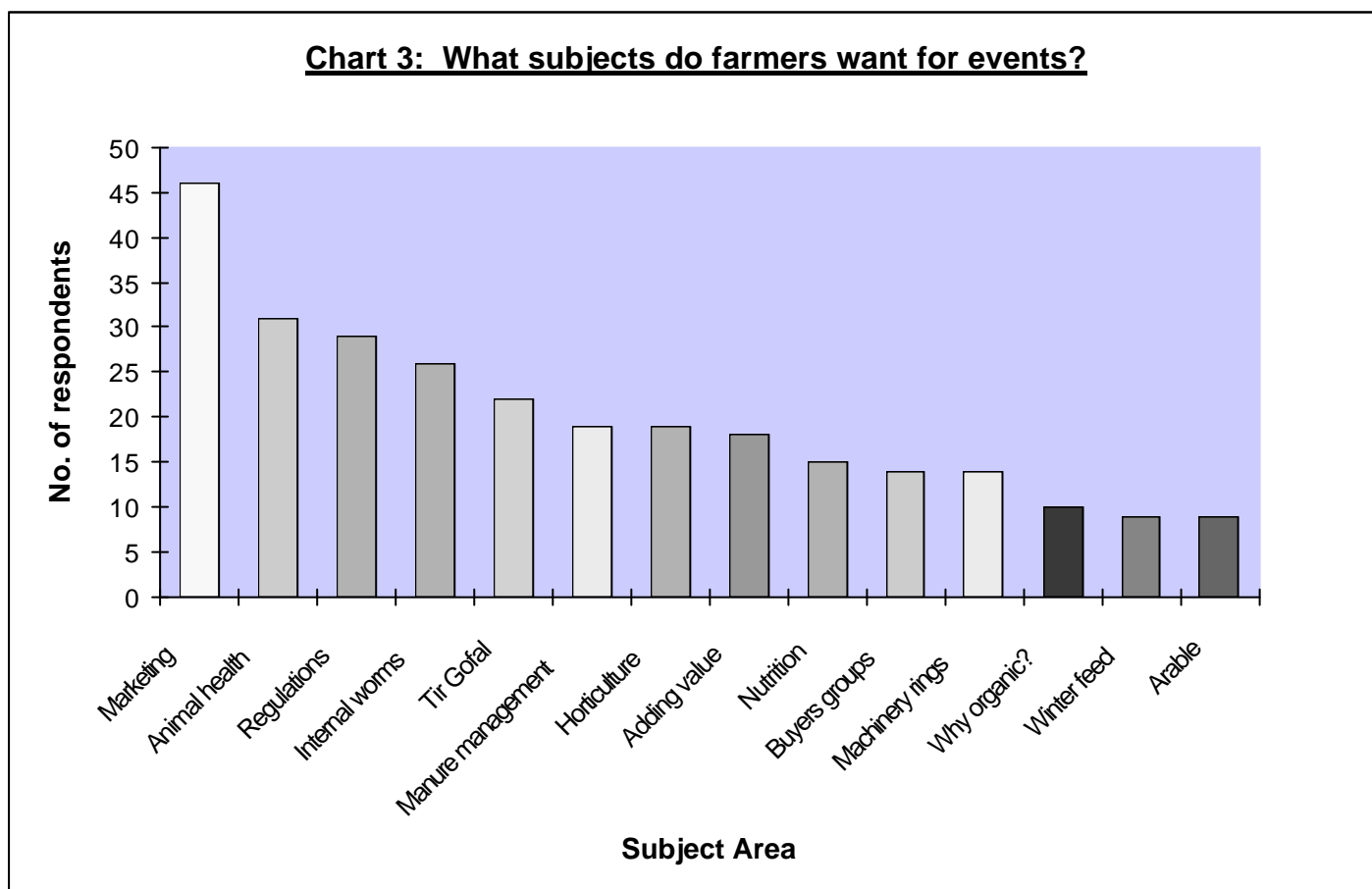
- Grassland management (45 people attending)
- Introduction to Organic Farming (42 -- --)
- Crop varieties (38 -- --)
- Tir Gofal (38 -- --)

This does not take account of time of year, venue, or distribution of organic producers.

Taking averages from attendance numbers identified on event attendance sheets (i.e. where there was more than one event on the same subject) 'grassland management' is fourth (mean = 25), superceded by 'homeopathy' coming third with a mean of 29.75 people attending ^(Appendix 3).

2.2.1 Evening meetings – subjects to repeat & new ideas

The most favoured subject identified for event coverage is marketing, including co-operatives, (46% of responders). This reflects comments from farmers, particularly in recent months. **Chart 3** shows subject areas identified as key choices for events. The three most popular are Marketing, Animal health and Organic Standard Regulations.



2.2.2 Improvements to evening meetings (or “free beer and food please”...)

The most common suggestion for improvements to evening talks, both within the questionnaire and at the Feedback meetings (October 2001) was that evening talks should be held ‘closer to where we live’, so providing more opportunity for people to make a meeting.

People also seem to favour smaller discussion groups, which also provides an opportunity for farmers to exchange experience as well as discuss issues with formal speaker(s).

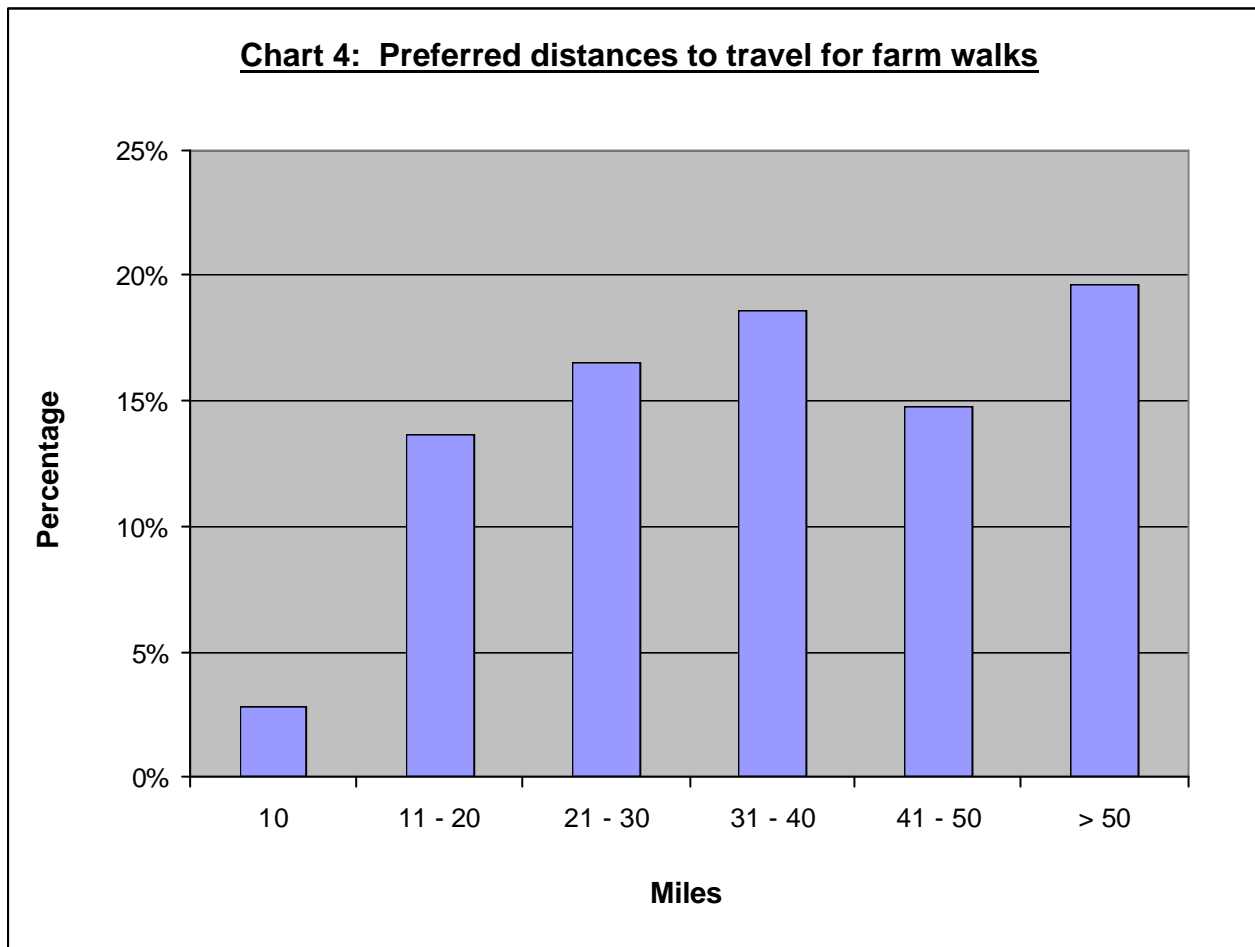
The complete list of suggested improvements is in **Appendix 4**.

2.3 Farm Walks

COG and the Welsh Organic Demonstration farm Network have run farm walks since their inception in Spring 2000. There have been no farm walks with these projects in 2001 due to Foot and Mouth Disease. There are other organisations that also hold organic farm walks in Wales such as Graig Farm Producer Group and Calon Wen, for producers, and the Soil Association (for consumers).

2.3.1 Distance farmers will travel to farm walks.

Chart 4 shows that members are prepared to travel various distances to farm walks. Only 16% of the sample would want to travel up to only 20 miles (round trip). The remaining responders are fairly evenly distributed between the remaining choices. Almost 20% (56) of responders are prepared to travel 50 miles or more for a farm walk (round trip).



This is comparable with miles responders are prepared to travel to evening talks (Section 2.1). Far more people are prepared to travel greater distances to farm walks than evening meetings. Responses clearly show preference to travel between 21-30 miles for an evening meeting (27%), followed closely by a preference to travel only 11-20 miles (25%). Only around 6% of responders suggested that they are prepared to travel 50 miles or more for an evening meeting (compared with 20% for farm walks).

Farm walks are also valued as an opportunity to see the practical application of organic farming and meet other farmers to discuss issues. Please see Sections 6 and 7 regarding responses to 'Farm Walks' as favoured services for organic and in-conversion farmers.

2.4 The Organic Demonstration Farm Network (OCW)

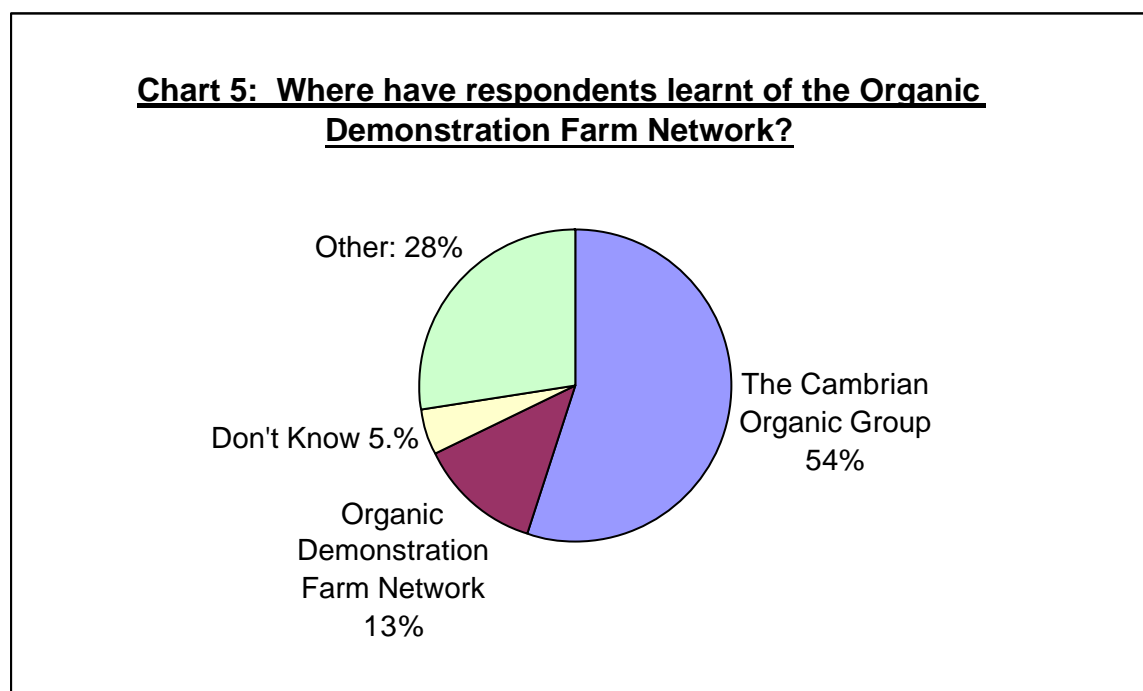


Chart 5 shows over half of the respondents learned of the Organic Demonstration Farm Network (the Network) through the Cambrian Organic Group (COG). At least 25% of those who learnt of the Network through COG identified the newsletter as the information source. Others identified 'COG events' and some, just 'COG'.

The COG Co-ordinators have distributed information on other organic projects at events. The COG newsletter editorial group comprises of a number of organisations, including Organic Centre Wales (OCW), which manages the Network. This has ensured that information from bodies such as OCW has been expressed accurately through the newsletter.

The 'Organic Demonstration Farm Walk' category includes mailings from OCW and courses held at Frongoch (including Planning the Conversion).

The 'other' category included learning of the Network through IGER, Graig Farm, the Royal Welsh Show and the television program, 'Countryfile'. Word of mouth, the Soil Association and the Press provided 15% of our responders with their information.

2.5 Attendance at COG farm walks

Of the responders, 41% have attended 1 or more farm walks. Of 167 farm visits 55% of have been to COG farm walks. COG has held 12 farm walks since January 2000. Average attendance at COG farm walks is 32 (ranging from 12 (field scale horticulture), to 87 (mixed organic farm & soil testing). Other bodies hosting farm walks include Calon Wen, Graig Farm, IGER, AXIS / OMSCO, Lantra, ADAS, Pembrokeshire College and the Organic Demonstration Farm Network.

2.6 Provision of services from the Organic Demonstration Farm Network (OCW)

The Organic Demonstration Farm Network (the Network) is funded by European 5b monies, and managed by the Organic Centre Wales. Around 38% (108) of responders commented on what they think the Network should provide. Of these, 15% (16) feel that the Network should provide practical demonstrations, techniques and standard interpretation. 5 % would like to see some comparison of conventional to organic farming profitability and financial advice. Other suggestions include marketing information, specialist speakers, seed production, slaughter and processing demonstrations and a chance to see working organic farms. The complete list of comments can be found in **Appendix 5**.

3. Other events

A number of other organisations stage organic events, these include projects within the Organic Centre Wales (OCW), the Institute for Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER) and Graig Farm Producer Group. The following section discusses 'Planning the Conversion Courses, run by ADAS, and a number of event types / projects run by OCW.

3.1 'Planning the Conversion' course (ADAS Objective 5b)

This one-day course, funded by a separate 5b project, is held for farmers who have received the half-day OCIS visit. It provides them with an opportunity to look closely at conversion, with other farmers in similar situations. Except for the most recent courses (due to foot and mouth) it is held at Frongoch Farm, Aberystwyth. This provides an example of a working organic farm for the course.

A report reviewing OCIS has been carried out by and is available from, the Organic Centre Wales.

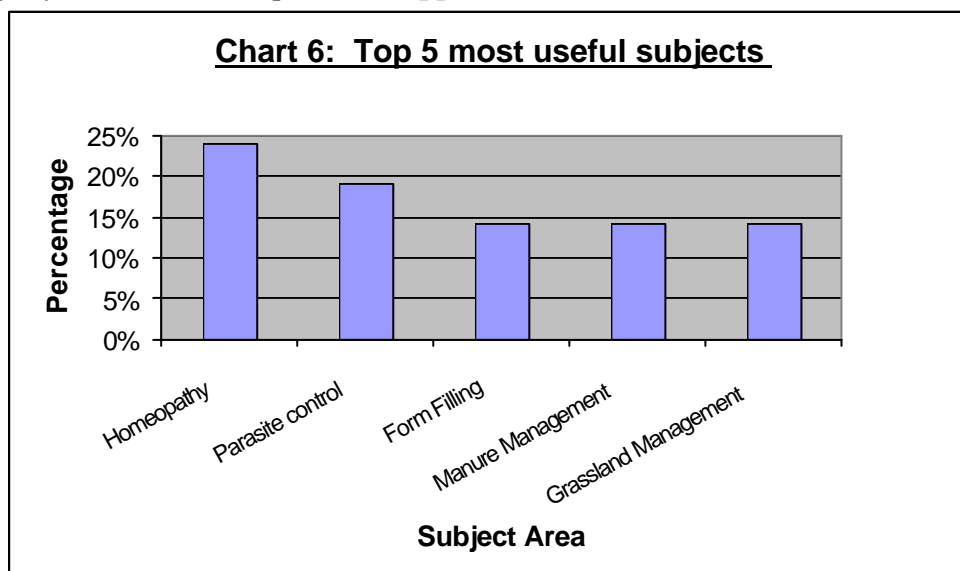
Of the 35% (99) of responders have attended a 'Planning the Conversion' Course, 29% rate the course as excellent, 62% as good, 7% rate the course as average, and 2% as poor.

3.2 Technical Training Days (ADAS 5b & WDA 5b / OCW)

Technical training days, managed by OCW, and funded through ADAS Objective 5b and the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) Objective 5b. Twenty-two courses have been held since 2000, with 262 people attending. Of the responders who have attended one of the Day's (21% = 60) 18% rate the training day as excellent, 63% as good, and 7% as average (12% did not provide a rating for this question).

Of those that said they attended one or more training day, 50% classed themselves as organic, 37% as in-conversion, and 13% as considering organic farming, or otherwise interested.

Chart 6, below, identifies the top five choices for the most useful aspects and subjects for technical training days. For the full list please see **Appendix 6**.



3.3 One-Stop-Shops (WDA / OCW)

Of the sample, 14% (40) have attended a One-Stop-Shop. Of this response, 23% rated One-stop-shops as excellent, 50% as good and 5% as average (22% did not provide a rating).

Of those that attended, 40 % classed themselves as in-conversion, 38% as organic and 23% as considering organic or otherwise interested.

Those respondents that talked to advisors and certification bodies found them most useful, with 60% identifying these as 'very helpful'. Around 34% found talking to these bodies as 'fairly helpful'. No one identified these bodies as being unhelpful.

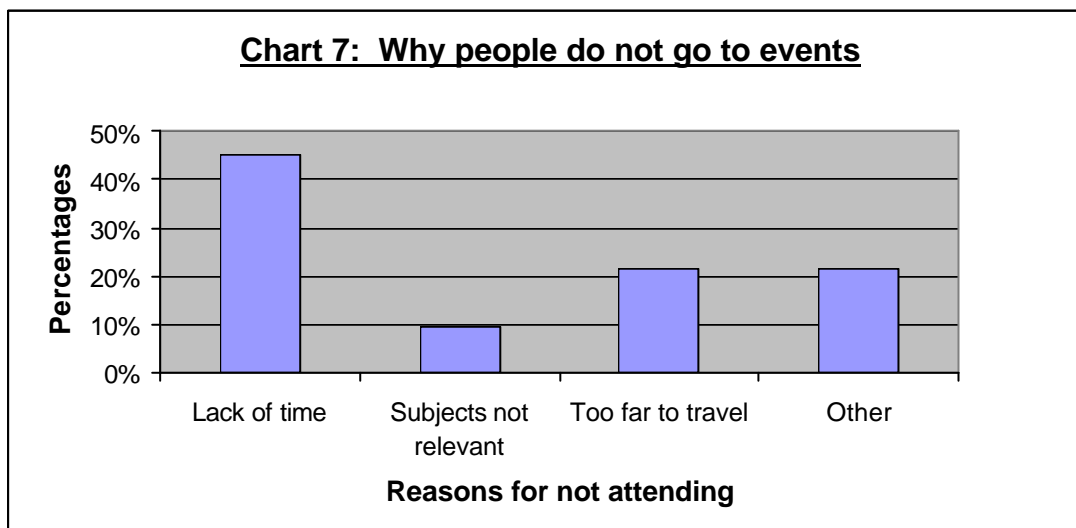
Three quarters (76%) of responders who utilised form filling services at the One-stop-shops found the associated bodies 'fairly – very useful' (38% and 38% respectively).

Of those who utilised the National Assembly 35% found them 'fairly useful'. 27% found them of limited use and 23% found them unhelpful.*

(*The questionnaire did not ask for visitor expectations of the One-Stop-Shops nor why responders found bodies helpful or unhelpful.)

4. Why farmers do not attend events

Chart 7 shows that lack of time is significant in why people do not attend events with almost half (45%) identifying this as a limiting factor.



The 'other' reasons included issues such as no car, children, illness and milking in evenings. Some people have begun conversion recently and had no opportunity to attend any events.

In addition, almost a third (19 = 31%) of 'other' identified Foot and Mouth Disease (February – September 2001) as the reason for not attending events.

Publications & Communications

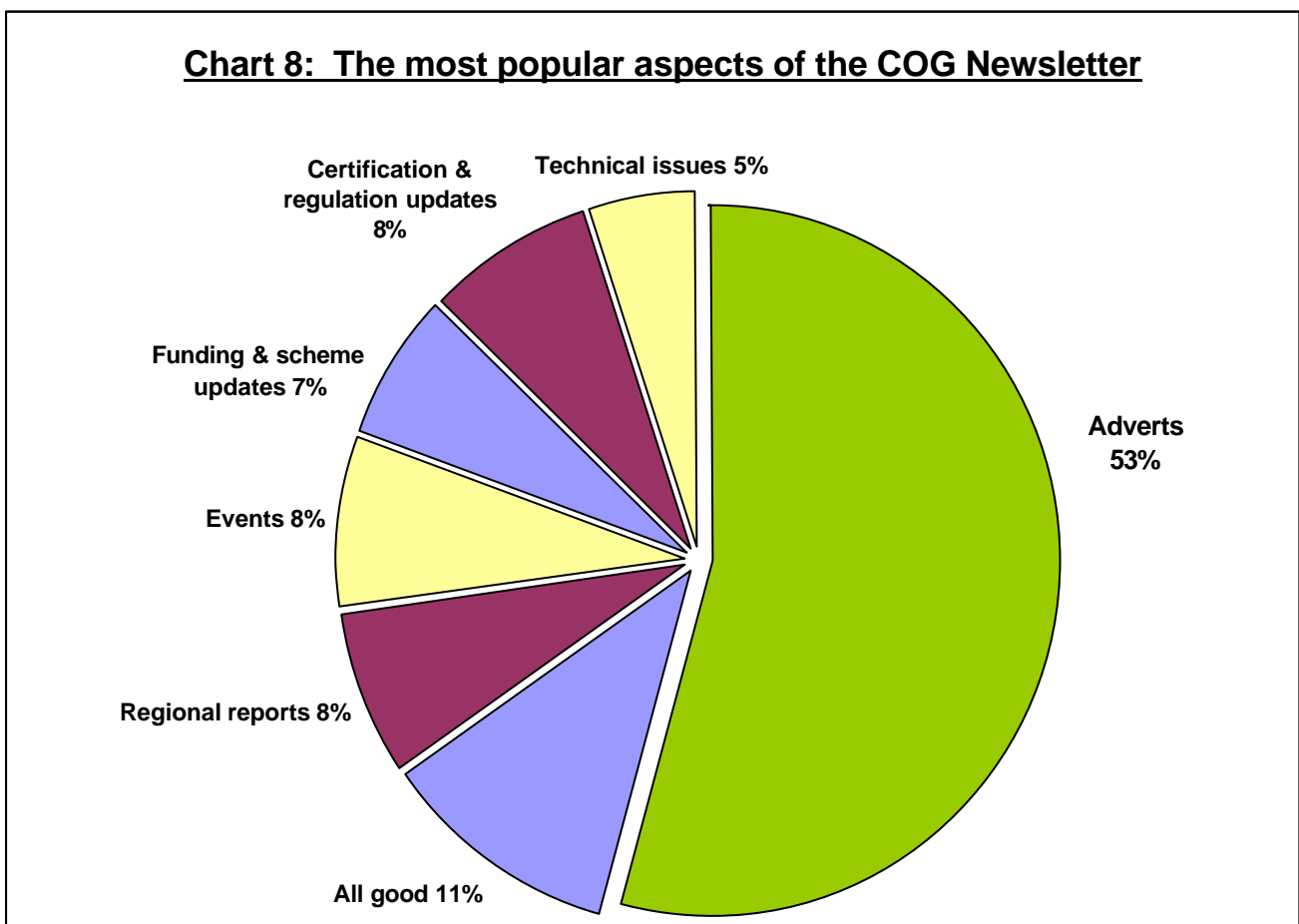
5. Cambrian Organic Group Newsletter

Almost all those (97%) that received a questionnaire receive the bi-monthly COG newsletter. Of this figure 94% find the COG newsletter 'interesting', and 82% find it 'useful'.

5.1 Feedback and Comments

Throughout the questionnaires and feedback meetings, responses to the Cambrian Organic Group newsletter have been positive. The following identifies particular aspects of the newsletter that are well liked, and suggestions for additional information.

Thirty five percent (35%) of responder's (100) commented on the Newsletter. **Chart 8** shows the parts identified as 'most useful'.



The following subjects were suggested to add to/ improve future newsletters:

- Profile of individual farms / farmer of the month.
- More adverts.
- Local marketing (prices, opportunities, sales co-ordination, etc).
- Technical issues & seasonal advice.
- More farmer-contact information to encourage communication.
- Legislation, regulations and standard updates.
- Letters from members and farmer comments.
- Gross margin information.
- Tax and book keeping advice.
- Information on buyers and sellers of grain.
- More information on horticulture.
- More information on bio-dynamics.
- More information on dairy.
- Information on Welsh organic marketing, organic slaughter and processing facilities.
- Updates on relevant Welsh food initiatives.
- Dates & venues of farmers markets.
- 'More anarchy'!

5.2 The Organic Farm Management Handbook (WDA 5b)

Of those responders (55%) that have a copy of the Organic Farm Management Handbook 15% find it 'extremely useful' and 43% find it 'very useful' and 29% find it 'slightly useful'.

There is no significant relationship between opinion of the handbook and organic status.

Almost 40% of those who rated the handbook as 'extremely useful' are *considering* organic farming; and 42% of those rating the handbook as 'very useful' are organic.

42% of those rating the handbook as 'slightly useful' were also organic.

Comments regarding improvements to the handbook include more financial advice, how to market organic products and horticultural information, including that for small-scale producers.

5.3 Internet Services

Over half (59% = 167) the responders stated that they have Internet access. Of these, 22% have visited both the OCW and COG site, 28% have visited the OCW website only, and 26% have visited the COG website only.

Most visits were just for a 'general' look. Some visited the sites to look for research, the COG newsletter, and future events. Additional comments suggested that people will look at the sites, and also that they are classed as 'new sites' and will improve.

Future Support

As Objective 5b funding is ending in December 2001 the Organic Centre Wales will be the body providing support for organic farmers in Wales, in the future. Examples of support are in **Appendix 7**.

6. Resources for organic, in-conversion & other farmers

The Organic Centre Wales (OCW) provides information in a number of ways, including a website and telephone help-line. The Cambrian Organic Group newsletter always includes an 'events list' which identifies most organic, and related events taking place in Wales.

(References A – O on the charts in this section relate to the Chart on page 16, Question 28 of the questionnaire)

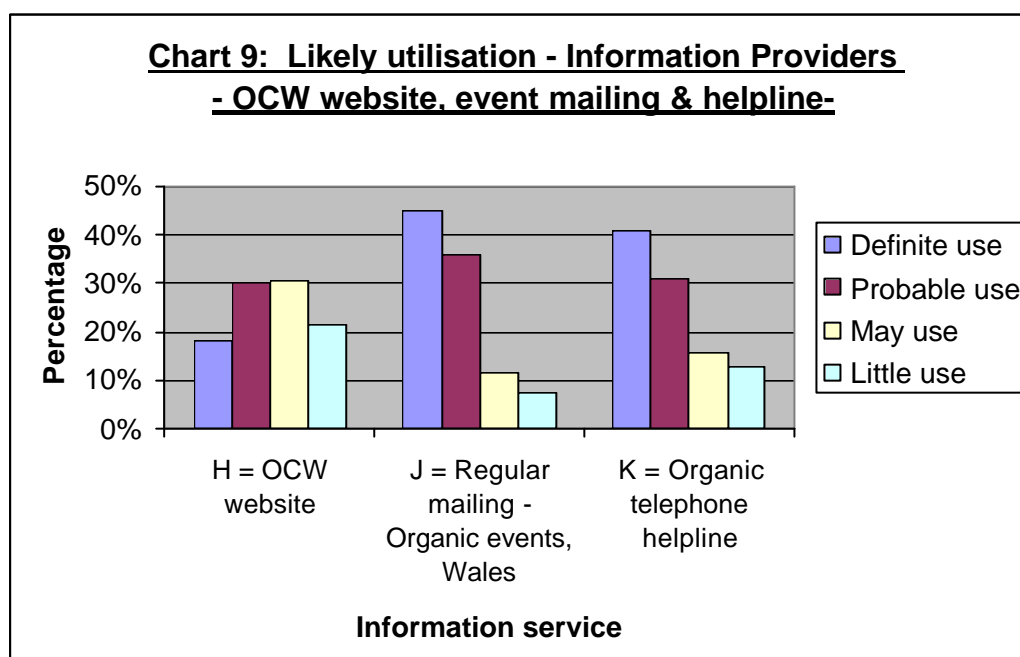


Chart 9, above shows that half of those with Internet access would 'probably – definitely' use the **website**. Around one third suggest that they 'may' make use of the website.

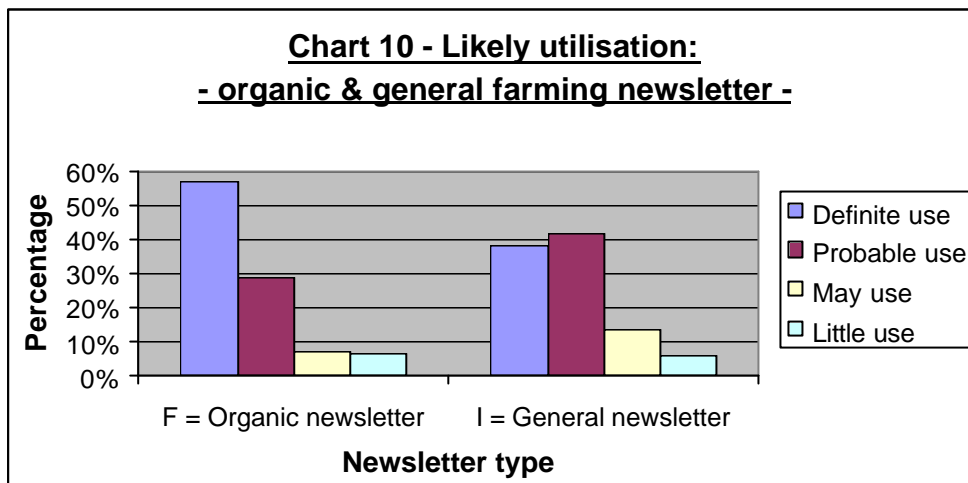
Around 72% of people said they would 'probably – definitely' (41% & 31% respectively) make use of an **events list**. Of those who responded to this question (86%), 35% were organic and 35% were in-conversion; 18% were considering conversion. Events are therefore of value to both in-conversion and organic farmers.

This is also reflected with the 'probable – definite' use of the organic **telephone help-line** (of the in-conversion farmers at 26% and organic producers at 41%).

In relation to Section 7 (Question 29 -What 4 services are 'Most Useful') the website, event mailing and telephone help-line are eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth respectively

Chart 10, below shows the comparison between use of an organic newsletter and general newsletter. Overall the response is in favour of an organic newsletter, with 55%: 38% for definite - probable use (total = 93%), compared with the general newsletter at 80%. Of these responders, nearly a fifth more indicated that they would 'definitely' use an organic newsletter, compared with a general newsletter.

In question 29 the **ORGANIC NEWSLETTER** is identified as third of the 'Top 4' preferences as a *most* useful service. The 'general newsletter' option came ninth.



Events

Farm walks are very popular, with 80% indicating a probable (28%) to definite (52%) use of farm. The Demonstration Farm Network walks provide a focus to explore on-going projects as well as technical issues and an opportunity for farmers to meet socially. The COG walks have provide a range of one-visit, one-off walks at farms in each area, covering a range of farm types and subjects. For more details on 'farm walks' please see **Sections 2 & 7**.

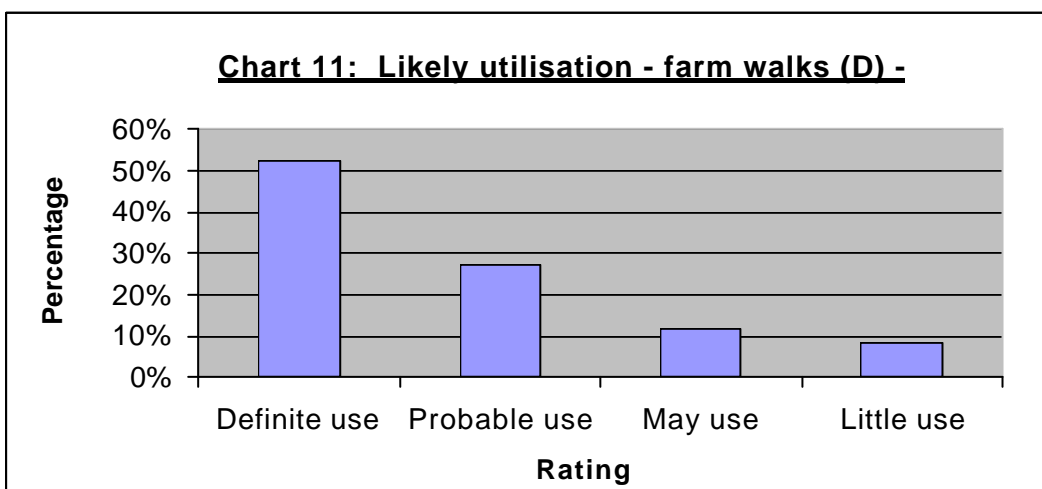
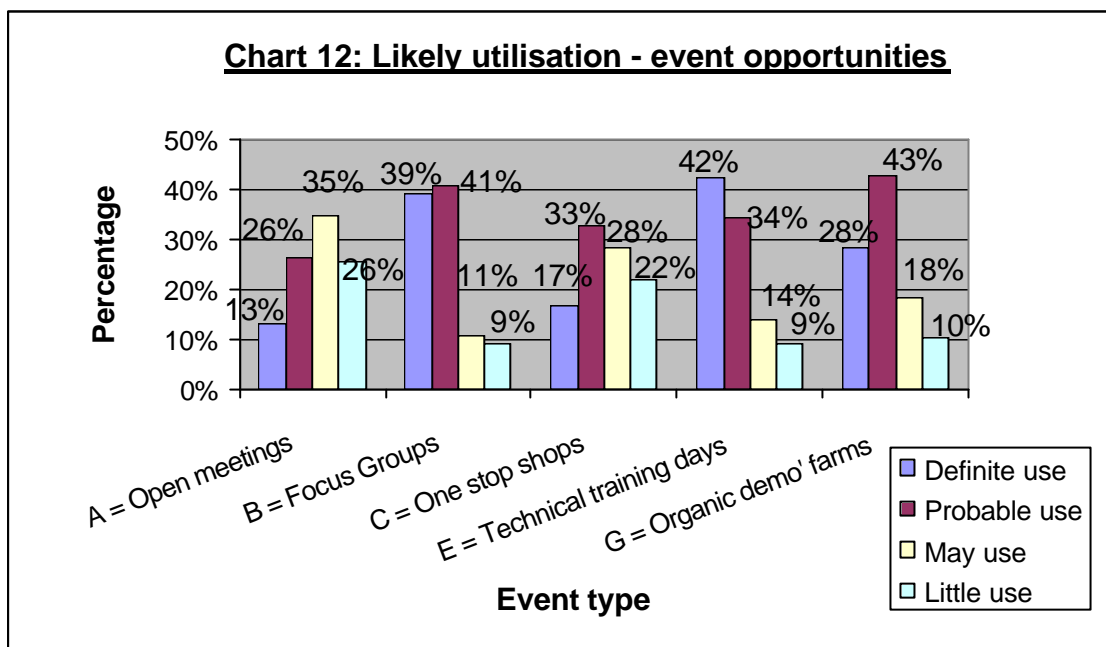


Chart 11 and 12 show people’s responses towards event types. All types of events identified have been held over the past two years. Therefore, many are have answered from their own experience. In regard to Chart 12, the general feedback from ‘Focussing on the Future’ meetings was in favour of both technical training days and One-Stop-Shops. People welcomed the open meetings, run by COG but would like them to be smaller, and more of them over each area. Larger meetings were recognised for their value in introducing organic farming and general issues such as homeopathy, for example.



Comments from 7 of the 11 ‘Focussing on the Future’ meetings reflect the clear preference for focus meetings shown in **Chart 12**. These involve a small group of people who are each able to express their queries and develop discussions more than they might in a larger gathering.

Questionnaire responses show an 80% probable – definite use (41 & 39% respectively) for focus groups. Overall, the highest percentage of responders (42%) stated that they would make ‘definite use’ of technical training days. However, 43% stated that they would ‘probably use’ the Demonstration Farm Network (the Network), with 28% saying they would definitely use the Network.

The responders valued the services of focus groups, technical training days and the Network fairly equally at 80%, 76% and 71% respectively (totals of probable - definite use).

In relation to Question 29 (What 4 services are ‘Most Useful’) the above event services are prioritised as follows:

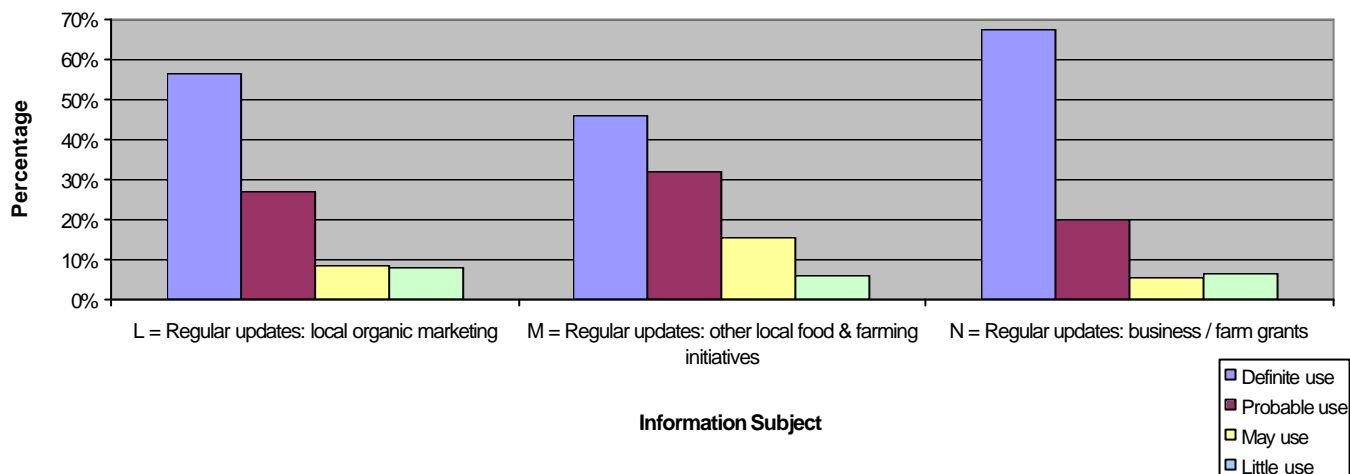
- Focus groups = 6th
- Technical training groups = 7th
- Organic demonstration farm network = 10th
- Open meetings = 14th
- One stop shops = 15th

When it comes to choice do they prefer one to one and small group / direct training events compared to open, general ones?

In comparison, the general option of ‘farm walks’ was well received with 86% of respondents suggesting a probable (27%) to definite (59%) use. **Farm walks are identified as the second most favoured support option in Question 29.**

Chart 13 shows a desire for regular updates on support issues, in particular business and farm grants'. In **Section 7**, this preference is slightly different with 'regular updates on business and farm grants' coming 5th, reflecting the interest shown in the chart below. Regular updates on other local food and farming initiatives' came tenth, and information on local organic marketing' is the fourth most favoured option overall.

Chart 13: Likely utilisation: - Information & Advice - Regular updates -



Interest and concern to develop practical marketing, associated support, as well as lobbying, e.g. the National Assembly continues to be highlighted at events. Most COG meetings (including 'Focussing on the Future') highlighted these as essential issues to develop. Following, are typical comments reflecting the interest and need:

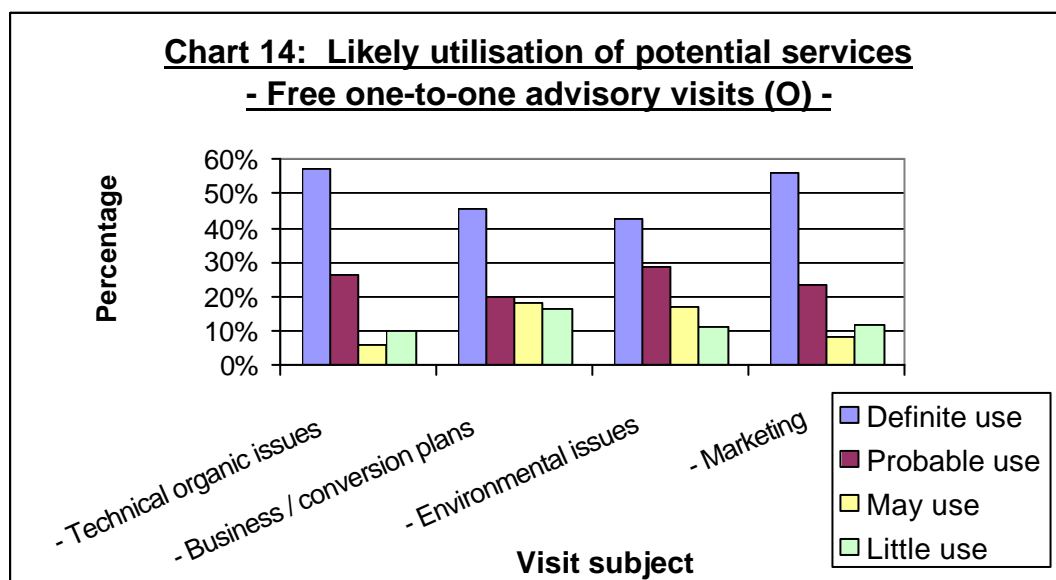
'More marketing officers should be employed to work locally and on a more one-to-one basis with producers. This along with more information on marketing aspects.'

'...more involvement in market development, the importance of growing market, encouraging abattoirs and butchers to apply for organic status and educating the public.'

One to one visits

The 'one – to – one' options identified in **Chart 14** below show a 'definite use' for more than 40% in each option. Overall, all the options received 70% or more positive response for a probable - definite response. This is the **top** service identified as 'most wanted' in **Section 7, Question 29**.

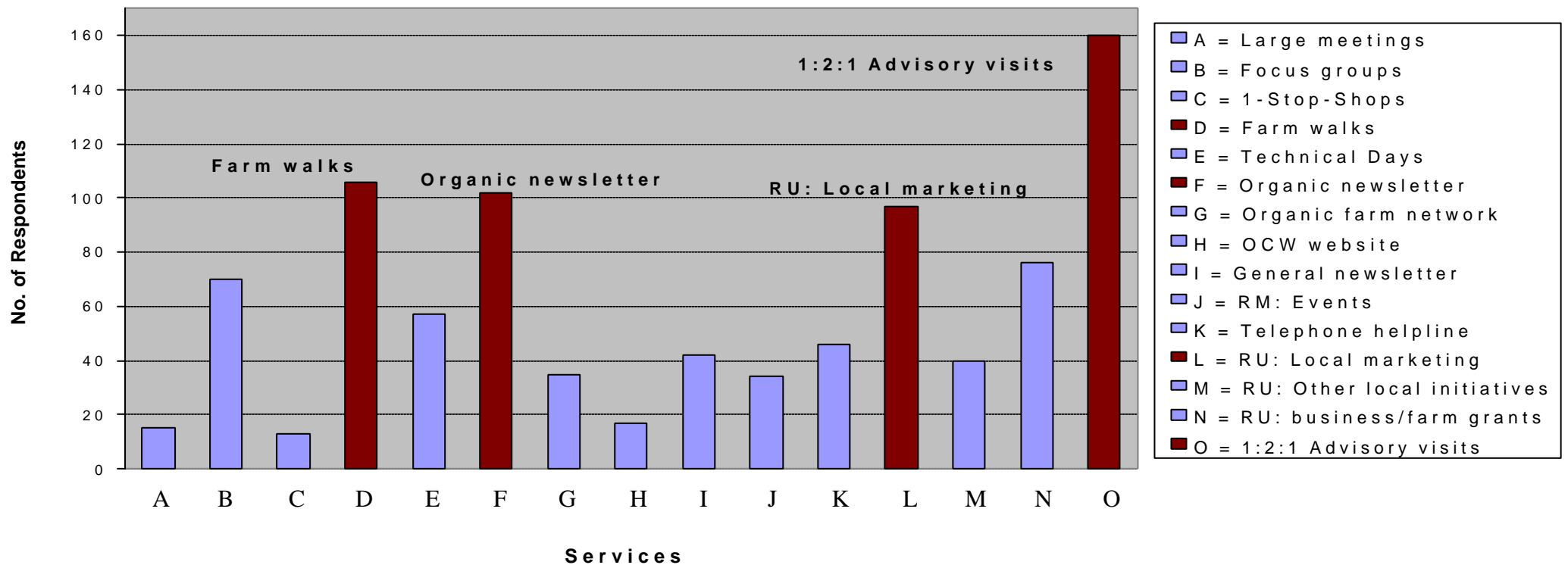
Chart 14: Likely utilisation of potential services - Free one-to-one advisory visits (O) -



7. Events and provision of information & advice

Chart 15 represents Question 29. Members were asked to identify which 4, of the support options would 'be most useful to them'. The four chosen (highlighted and identified) are followed by 'N = Regular updates on business and grant information' and 'B = Focus groups'. Comments from members who have attended meetings highlight the value of smaller discussion groups to allow more communication between farmers and speaker.

What are the 4 services identified as 'Most Useful'?



CONCLUSIONS

- Questionnaire feedback represents a good cross-section of members. Roughly a third were organic (36%), a third were in-conversion (30%) and a third were considering conversion or in the 'other' category (34%).
- The Cambrian Organic Group has been an effective tool in providing and disseminating information at shows and events, e.g. on the Organic Demonstration Farm Network.
- A number of approaches are required to meet the needs of farmers:
 - Established organic farmers more appreciate detailed information.
 - Technical Advice Days are favoured by organic farmers, over in-conversion farmers.
 - One-stop-shops attract all farmers – from those considering conversion to those fully organic.
 - Both organic and in-conversion farmers would make use of an organic 'telephone helpline'.
- More farmers are prepared to travel a greater variety of distances, and to travel further to farm walks than to evening meetings.
- Members would like to see more localised events. While COG, and related events have been held throughout the Wales 5b area, there are regions which feel neglected, e.g. Newtown / Welshpool. This provides an opportunity for future support to continue to work with Graig Farm producer group to provide more events in this area.
- Members require information, primarily, on animal welfare (nutrition & health), farm-resource management, practical application of organic standards and marketing.
- Members want to see the organic processing and marketing sector develop. Many are taking the initiative by establishing direct sales, attending farmers markets, encouraging local abattoirs and butchers to apply for organic certification and forming their own co-operatives, e.g. Cambrian Organics (*a marketing co-operative in West Wales*). The overall consensus from farmers is to supply locally and regionally first and then national. However, the success of this is, in part, determined by people's perception of organic produce and what they are prepared to pay for food.
- Consumer education continues to be an on-going and vital element for the development of organic production and consumption.
- The projects discussed in this report have played, and continue to play an important part for in-conversion and, organic farmers in Wales.
- The contacts made between farmers and formal bodies should be maintained wherever possible.
- There is a growing emphasis towards local marketing of regionally produced [organic] food. This includes labelling of authentic Welsh organic produce, e.g. a Welsh dragon label that distinguishes food that has been produced in Wales, from products purchased elsewhere and simply packaged and, or processed in Wales. Some would like to see marketing/commercial bodies at events such as One-Stop-Shop's to enable them to speak to potential buyers of farm produce.
- The website and e-mail facilities are important for sharing information. Many farmers have internet access, and see sites, such as OCW, as another way to communicate with other producers
- The newsletter plays a vital role in disseminating information to organic and in-conversion farmers. The adverts page is very popular, and the ONLY one of its kind in Wales. As well as providing up-to-date information, the newsletter is a method of communication between farmers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **To continue the newsletter - This is a key issue and every effort should be made to find funding to continue the newsletter in its familiar format.**

The Cambrian Organic Group members strongly support this unique service. They have expressed disappointment that it may not continue and feel strongly that it should remain. It is recommended that, to meet demand, this service include:

- **A regular advert sheet for organic and in-conversion farmers and other in Wales.**
- **A regular event sheet for organic and in-conversion farmers, and others in Wales.**

“The newsletter is very well received...If it is lost then there must be a way of continuing to produce and disseminate small ad’s, event listings and specialist articles” (COG members)

- To develop and maintain contact with other related initiatives, SUCH AS Powys Food Links, Pembrokeshire College, Graig Farm Producer Group and other producer groups, to ensure a combined approach and an economic use of resources.
- To provide administrative support and advice to those [COG] groups that choose to continue, or form in the future. There needs to be flexibility within any support to meet the different needs of different groups. Of the autonomous and farmer led groups, some may not need any support, others will require some sort of co-ordination or administrative support. As well as regional groups there may also be specialist groups, e.g. beef, sheep, dairy, small-holders, buyers groups etc.
- To develop the facility for collection of organic and in-conversion farmer details towards the development of a members directory for Wales.
- Support and advice for processing, adding value and marketing Welsh organic products must be developed.
- OCW should include the following resources in it’s provision of services for organic farmers:
 - A free ‘chat room’ service for exchange of information and adverts between farmers who have internet access.
 - To act as a point of contact / mentoring system for individuals and groups looking for contacts and requiring administration support, advice, etc
- OCW should also act as a voice for farmers, expressing their views to formal bodies, including the National Assembly, Wales, UKROFS and the European Union.
- Marketing information and advice must be provided, this should include:
 - Ideas and advice on how to market and who to sell organic produce to.
 - Ideas and advice on processing and marketing initiatives
 - How to establish your own marketing system, co-op, etc.
 - Where to go for advice, financial aid, health & safety regulations, etc.
 - Processing opportunities and facilities.
 - Where to go for business / practical training (e.g. butchery).
 - Who and how to lobby to ensure local supply opportunities are made available.
 - Adding value to other resources, e.g. wool.

“The COG has been a useful advisory service and communication tool throughout Wales while interest in organic farming has been increasing...this has now been superceded by OCW. The contacts made should continue”
(RK, North Wales)

APPENDICES

- 1. Copy of questionnaire and mailing sent to COG members.**
- 2. ‘Focussing on the Future’ meetings – feedback notes.**
- 3. Subjects identified by responders for Evening Meetings.**
- 4. Improvements to evening meetings, as suggested by the responders.**
- 5. Suggestions, by responders for Organic Demonstration Farm Network services.**
- 6. Subjects identified by responders for Technical Training Days.**
- 7. Examples of future support for organic farming in Wales, provided by the Organic Centre Wales.**



Re: Focusing on the Future for Organic Farmers in Wales

Dear

The Cambrian Organic Group (COG) project was formalised in 1999 with EU Objective 5b funding. Many technical events and farm walks have been held and we continue to send out the bi-monthly newsletter to around 2500 people in Wales and the Borders. COG is funded to the end of this year, as are some projects run through the Organic Centre Wales. These include Technical Training Days. These projects will change, along with funding arrangements, and as a result of your discussions at the meetings detailed below.

Throughout the project we have been guided by you, particularly the COG Committees, in regard to the type of events that should be held to support organic farmers. We would like to see this approach carry on - this is only achievable with your continued input.

In October we are holding a series of 'Focusing on the Future' meetings. These meetings, with the attached questionnaire, aim to collate your thoughts on COG, and other projects; provide you with the opportunity to tell us your ideas regarding future support projects, and initiate discussion. All feedback is welcomed - strengths, weaknesses and where you think improvements could, and should be made. As a producer already involved in organic farming your comments may influence support projects available to future organic farmers.

Your presence at the meetings, to discuss the future is vital. If you don't come we won't know your opinions. Comments will be passed to the Organic Centre Wales (OCW) which will provide many support activities for organic farming in Wales from 2002. As ADAS is part of the consortium of OCW, this feed-back is guaranteed!

Enclosed with this letter are the meeting dates and a questionnaire. Please complete this and bring it to one of the meetings. If you are unable to attend a meeting please return the questionnaire to Colin / Jenny at: ADAS Pwllpeiran, Cwmystwyth, Aberystwyth, SY23 4AB.

We do apologise for the timing of this mailing as you may also receive a second one regarding the Organic Conversion Information Service (OCIS).

Look forward to seeing you in October.

Yours Sincerely

Richard Collyer
COG Manager

Colin Porter
COG Co-ordinator, South & Mid West Wales

Jenny Lampard
COG Co-ordinator, North & Mid East Wales

Tony Little
Advisory Services Co-ordinator
Organic Centre Wales

P.S. As a member of the Cambrian Organic Group, if you are not also a member of the Soil Associations Producer Service you can join for half price. This reduces the cost, from £50 to 27.19 (inc. VAT). Places are limited and the offer only lasts until the end of December.

Organic Producer Information Support In Wales 1999 - 2001 / Focusing on the Future

The following questionnaire is designed to gain feedback on existing organic support projects from you the farmer. It also asks for your opinion on the type of support that should be available in the future. As there are a number of projects we have also asked questions about these.

SECTION A - YOU & YOUR FARM

Name (not essential) _____

Address (not essential) _____

1. Nearest town to where you live: _____

(this is to see if there is any relation between area and comments)

2. Are you..(please tick, and specify dates, as appropriate).

Organic? When did you start conversion? Month _____ Year _____

In-conversion? When did you start conversion? Month _____ Year _____

Considering Conversion ?

Other - (please say) _____

3. What do you produce on your farm? (please tick all that apply)

Beef	Sheep	Dairy	Pigs	
Poultry	Eggs	Vegetables	Fruit	Arable

Other (please specify) _____

What is your MAIN enterprise? _____

SECTION B - ORGANIC FARMING EVENTS

4. Which COG evening meetings have you attended? (please tick all that apply)

Marketing	Grassland Management
E.U. Livestock Regulations	Internal Worms
Buyers Groups & Machinery Rings	Tir Gofal
Processing / adding value	Grassland Management
Grassland species for organic farming	Veterinary care / Medicines
Other (please identify subject) _____	

Were these: Interesting? Yes No Useful? Yes No

- Was any literature available? Yes No

- If yes, was it useful? Yes No

5. What distance would you travel for an evening meeting (round trip) please circle?

10 miles 11-20 miles 21-30 miles 31-40 miles 41-50 miles >50 miles

6. Are there any subjects not covered that you think should be? (please specify): _____

7. Are there any subjects that should be repeated? (please specify): _____

8. How could evening talks be improved? _____

COG & the Welsh Organic Demonstration-Farm Network have run farm walks since early 2000 (there have been no walks in 2001 due to FMD restrictions. The Farm Network has 6 demonstration farms, which will increase to 10 over the next year. The farms are working organic / in-conversion farms and aim to benefit any farmer interested in organic production.

9. Have you heard of the Welsh Organic Demonstration Farm Network? Yes No
 If yes, where did you learn of the Network? _____

10. Have you attended any FARM WALKS in Wales? Yes No
 If yes, were they run by:
 The Cambrian Organic Group Organic Demonstration Farm Network
 Don't know Other (please specify) _____

11. How many farm walks have you attended? (please circle) 1 2 3 4 >4

12. Which subjects did the farm walks encompass? (please tick all that apply)
 Beef Sheep Dairy Arable Horticultural
 Fruit Other:

13. What service(s) do you think the Demonstration Farm Network should provide? _____

14. What distance would you travel for a farm walk event (round trip) please circle?
 10 miles 11-20 miles 21-30 miles 31-40 miles 41-50 miles >50 miles

15. How could farm walks be improved? _____

16. In addition to the Cambrian Organic Group events and the Organic Demonstration Farm Network, have you attended any of the following?

EVENT TYPE (please tick)	ATTENDED?			HOW DO YOU RATE THESE?			
	YES	NO		EXCELLENT	←	←	←
Planning the Conversion Day							
One Day Technical Training Courses							
One Stop Shops							

17. Of the One-day technical training courses you attended (if any), which courses did you find the most useful? (please specify). _____

18. Are there any areas that are not currently covered by the courses that you would like to be included in the future? (please specify). _____

27. How interested in the following resources are you (please circle rating) ?

RESOURCE	VERY INTERESTED Û NOT INTERESTED			
	1	2	3	4
Organic Conversion Information Video	1	2	3	4
Organic Technical Advice Notes/ Booklets	1	2	3	4
Organic Events & Farming Ad's sheet	1	2	3	4

28. What type of support in the FUTURE do you think you will be of use to you?

Please circle a rating for the following Services (1 = of little use / 4 = of definite use):		Little Use	Definite Use		
EVENTS:					
A:	Large open meetings	1	2	3	4
B:	Smaller focus groups	1	2	3	4
C:	One-stop-shops	1	2	3	4
D:	Farm Walks	1	2	3	4
E:	Technical Training Days	1	2	3	4
F:	Organic Newsletter	1	2	3	4
INFORMATION PROVIDERS:					
G:	Organic Demonstration Farm Network	1	2	3	4
H:	Organic Centre Wales Website	1	2	3	4
I:	General Newsletter	1	2	3	4
J:	Regular mailing: 'Organic Events in Wales'	1	2	3	4
K:	Organic Telephone Helpline	1	2	3	4
TYPE OF INFORMATION / ADVICE:					
L:	Regular updates: local organic marketing developments	1	2	3	4
M:	Regular updates: other local food & farming initiatives	1	2	3	4
N:	Regular updates: business/farm grant advice	1	2	3	4
O: Free One - to - One Advisory Visits on:	- Technical organic issues	1	2	3	4
	- Business / conversion plans	1	2	3	4
	- Environmental issues	1	2	3	4
	- Marketing	1	2	3	4

29. Which 4 of the services identified (A - O) would be most useful to you ? (please circle)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please bring it with you to your chosen meeting, or return it to Colin / Jenny, ADAS Pwllpeiran, Cwmystwyth, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 4AB. If you have any queries please contact Jenny Lampard on 01970 871090.

AREA	VENUE	DATE
		<i>All meetings starting at 7.30 p.m.</i>
SOUTH WALES		
Carmarthen	The Boars Head	Monday 8th October
Llandovery	The Castle Hotel	Wednesday 10th October
Narbeth	Nant y Ffyn Hotel, Nr Narbeth	Monday 1st October
MID WALES		
Machynlleth	Plas Dolgoug Hotel	Tuesday 9th October
Aberaeron	The Feathers Hotel	Tuesday 2nd October
Welshpool	Welshpool Leisure Centre	Tuesday 23rd October
Llandrindod Wells	The Metropole Hotel	Monday 29th October
NORTH WALES		
Dolgellau	Dolgellau Leisure Centre	Tuesday 16th October
Caernarfon	Prince of Wales Hotel	Monday 22nd October
Bala	Plas Coch Hotel, Bala	Wednesday 24th October
Ruthin	Bryn-Morfydd Hotel (A525)	Monday 15th October

For more information please call Colin Porter on 01437 765238, or Jenny Lampard on 01970 871090

**Feedback from COG “future” meetings held from 01/10/01 - 10/10/01
Organised by South Group Co-ordinator Colin Porter.**

- 1). “Has COG achieved what you, the producer wants”.
- 2). “What future improvements can be made”.

SOUTH REGION	COMMENTS
<p align="center">SOUTH WEST 1 NARBETH 1/10/01 OCW Carolyn Wacher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Has the committee enough communication with the rest of the group? · Not enough feedback to the members from the committee’s. · Focus groups, with specific themes, more effective than large general meetings. · COG should do more lobbying on behalf of the individual members . · COG is more for “new” producers, less emphasis on more experienced producers. · Farm walks should be more practical, inc, machinery demonstrations and theme days. · Events should be smaller to cater for different groups, e.g. New / experienced producers, Groups such as Co-operative, Soc, Clubs etc given the opportunity to make use of COG events within their own groups. · COG should be more involved with specialist groups - focus groups, forum groups etc. · Newsletter - Small ad’s and events list, very important.
<p align="center"><u>MID WEST 2</u> ABERAERON 2/10/01 <u>OCW</u> Dr. Nic Lampkin Neil Pearson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · High value on farm walks, although small groups work better on specialised subjects. · COG to get more involved in market development - marketing groups, importance of growing markets and educating the public. · Newsletter is very well received, high praise, if newsletter is lost, then there must be a way of continuing to produce small ad’s, event listings and specialist articles. · Up-to-date Information on standards - COG should publish this as ongoing information. · General interest and specialist groups, should keep going to stop fragmentation of COG. · There is a place for COG to be used as a pressure group. · Help with self assessment.
<p align="center">SOUTH WEST 2 CARMARTHEN 8/10/01 <u>OCW</u> Tony Little</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Impression of COG being only for new producers, long-standing producers feel there is no point in attending meetings, because they have knowledge of the subject already. · Because of the above the impression was that COG did not establish many “new” ideas, although it was mentioned that ideas for events were taken from the committees. · Encourage more member contact with each other. · Mentor farmers & consultancy surgeries, though the group thought individual consultant / producer contact, although expensive is best. · More to help “small” producers, maybe getting more involved in bringing groups of small producers together to help them convert as one unit. · Encourage larger producers to make use of renting smaller producers land which is not a viable production unit in it’s own right. · Carmarthen and surrounding area is a long way from the six “nominated” places, the group agreed that smaller more local groups would be better - 12 groups instead of six. · Bearing in mind the word Cambrian tends to relate to Mid Wales, does COG have the right name, should it be change for the new era. · Importance of newsletter & small ad’s. Will miss the newsletter if it goes.
<p align="center">MID WEST 2 MACHYNLLETH 9/10/01 OCW Neil Pearson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Beef / Sheep hill farming area meetings on local farms / management needed. · Need for more work on marketing · Need to lobby local abattoirs and butchers to get them interested in organic production. · The Newsletter is an important part of COG, and they looked forward to reading articles and making use of events sheet and particularly the small ad’s page

<p>SOUTH EAST</p> <p>LLANDOVERY</p> <p>10/10/01</p> <p>OCW</p> <p>Tony Little</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Hold farm walks on all types of farms, e.g. where the some / all income is from the farm. · Farm walk show what is going on and give members a chance to meet and discuss. · Education should be developed. · More work on organic by-products eg wool, again COG should lobby this type of work. · More marketing officers to work locally and on a more one-to-one basis with producers. This along with more information on marketing aspects. · Importance placed on small focus groups. · Great interest in all parts of the Newsletter. Maaybe funding should be found to keep the newsletter going. · Repeat meetings such as Tir Gofal, Marketing and organic management.
<p>NORTH REGION</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COMMENTS</p>
<p>NORTH EAST 1</p> <p>RUTHIN</p> <p>15/10/01</p> <p>OCW</p> <p>Tony Little</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Different needs of converted farmers and those just beginning / considering conversion to organic farming. · In favour of TRAINING DAYS and 1-STOP-SHOPS. <p>Does the group want to continue, and in what form?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Aim of group – to pass on and exchange organic farming knowledge and experience. · Broad reflection of different farming enterprises in area. Events should target 2 groups: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specialised, e.g. organic dairy production 2. General e.g. homeopathy (would fit all livestock). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Group agreed a small discussion group. · To be recognised as an autonomous group. · To be kept informed and up to date with organic developments and work run through/by OCW. <p>Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A ‘Who’s Who? In the organic and grant provider world for farmers. · Existing database CONTACTS for area. · Financial / in-kind contributions towards e.g. mailings, speakers, possibly administration support from OCW. · <i>The group formally asked for a copy of the COG accounts to assess past costs and potential finance needed to continue.</i> · Contacts, contacts, contacts, (scatter map) · Local information resource bulletin (i.e. Denbighshire) · Access to findings from research / e-mail updates · Involvement in research, e.g. able to offer farms to be part of research projects / trials. · For OCW to provide a chat room for organic and in-conversion farmers in Wales, etc. <p>In short: Involvement Information Autonomy Support</p>
<p>NORTH WEST 1</p> <p>DOLGELLA U</p> <p>16/10/01</p> <p>OCW</p> <p>Neil Pearson</p>	<p>(Dewi Williams, local resident and soil tester, wide knowledge of local / regional farmers).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Discussed in general the need for more political security and support, guarantee cost income, more priority given to home-produce over imports. · Suggesting that OCW could act, in part, as communication link between farmers and e.g. the National Assembly for Wales, and others. · The need for produce to show its origin more thoroughly, i.e. TRACEABILITY - Wales, British produced.

<p>NORTH WEST 2</p> <p>CAERNARFON</p> <p>22/10/01</p> <p>OCW Carolyn Wacher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Support projects to reflect different farmer needs. · Access to CONTACTS of other organic and in-conversion farmers in the region. · The opportunity to meet like farmers...to Develop a network in the area, between organic and in-conversion farmer and growers. · In favour of FARM WALKS <p style="text-align: center;">Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Projects to avoid supermarkets and establish and support local and regional markets / outlets wherever possible. · Support to enable farmers to understand, and develop organic produce markets, etc. · Develop buying groups (feed & seed, sources & resources).
<p>MID EAST 1</p> <p>WELSHPOOL</p> <p>23/10/01</p> <p>OCW Neil Pearson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · In favour of LOCALISED EVENTS (e.g. 25 mile radius). · In favour of ADVERTS. (<i>newsletter highlighted for concentrating on content and not having a 'glossy' approach</i>). · In favour of SURGERIES, e.g. form filling, grant advice. · Events should be FREE to enable ALL to attend. · Suggested a farmer mentoring system, therefore the need to have CONTACT information on other organic and in-conversion farmers in the region. · For formal organisations, e.g. OCW to provide direct financial support, ADMIN SUPPORT and act as a point of contact for information, source of speakers, etc. · For OCW to act as a lobby body or, at least, with previous meeting a communication link to the National Assembly regarding farmers opinions, needs. E.g. on-going subsidies. · For organic bodies to have more definite and open contacts with other farming organisations, such as NFU, FUW, etc. · Investment of time, finance, support provision to processing and MARKETING. · Development of TRACEABILITY – e.g. Welsh products, ‘Welsh Dragon’ label. This should mean production; i.e. that the product was produced at least 80 % in Wales. · Support should concentrate on INFRASTRUCTURE, i.e. newsletters and other information provision, networks, dissemination of advice, events and capital grants. · Other investment, i.e. financial to processing and marketing. · Information should include practical and technical advice, marketing opportunities / information, exchange of farmers ‘own experiences’. · Education of all. · The group asked that funding be sought to provide administrative support to continue the COG regional group.
<p>NORTH EAST 2</p> <p>BALA</p> <p>24/10/01</p> <p>OCW Tony Little</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · In favour of REGIONALISED EVENTS (e.g. 25 mile radius) · In favour of FARM WALKS, local, for those considering to those already organic / in-conversion. · Access to information on CONTACTS for other organic, in-conversion and interested farmer in the region. · Information on BUYING feed/seed/breeding stock. · Information on MARKETING: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where, who, how. - Opportunities. - Slaughtering opportunities and facilities. - Processing opportunities and facilities. - Ideas and outlets.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to do-it-yourself. - Where to go to advice, financial aid. -
<p>MID EAST 2</p> <p>LLANDRINDOD WELLS</p> <p>29/10/01</p> <p>OCW</p> <p>Carolyn Wachter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Events, technical days on: form filling, feed / livestock rationing, internal worms and fecal egg count testing, developing processing and marketing initiative. · Events set for two main interest groups: i.e. interested / newly converted and established converting and converted. · In favour of FARM WALKS – (more localised). · Information sent to / more technical courses for vets on organic standards, health plans, etc. · Visiting advisors should know about different farm enterprises and also at different, e.g. implications of land-height above sea level. · Newsletter should include a ‘farmers own’ section, i.e. interview or write up from a farmer on their experience of organic and in-conversion farming. Challenges and accesses. · CONTACTS – a list of other like-producers in the area. Members directory. – should be Wales-wide contact list, separated into regional sections (e.g. NE, NW, ME, MW, etc). · Communication access to organic farmers and groups in border counties, i.e. Cheshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, etc. · The absolute need to develop supply for local and regional area(s), and for regional / UK labeling on [organic] foods.

KEY ISSUES (identified at all meetings) INCLUDE:

1. **ACCESS TO INFORMATION TO OTHER FARMER DETAILS IN EACH REGION**
(e.g. members directory)
2. **MARKETING INFORMATION, ADVICE, ENCOURAGEMENT, SUPPORT.**
3. **MORE FARM WALKS**
4. **MORE LOCALISED EVENTS.**
5. **MORE TECHNICAL EVENTS.**
6. **TRACEABILITY & REGIONAL LABELLING**

APPENDIX 3**Meeting attendance of the main events up to November 16th 2001.**

At the time of report production there was one more event in 5 / 6 groups to be held.

These do not include events with other bodies or cancelled due to F&MD.

Farm Events (No of Members) – Aberystwyth	Evening Events (No. Of members) – Aberystwyth
	Grassland Management - 25
In-con. Sheep/cereals & Tir Gofal - 38	Marketing Options - 22
	Marketing Org Beef/Sheep - 16
	Crop varieties - 30
	Worm Control - 36 (joint with Narberth)
	Tir Gofal / OFS - 38
Overall Aber average – 28	Woodland Management - 18
Farm Events (No of Members) - Narberth	Evening Events (No. Of members) - Narberth
	Grassland Management - 45
Mixed Farming Org & In-con - 26	Winter Feeding - 35
Field Scale Horticulture – 12	Crop varieties - 38
Dairy/Grassland – 47	Worm Control - 36 (joint with Aberystwyth)
	Tir Gofal / OFS - 29
Overall Narberth average - 31	Marketing Org Beef/Sheep - 12
Farm Events (No of Members) – Brecon	Evening Events (No. Of members) - Brecon
Upland Sheep/Beef – 35	Grassland Management - 12
Small-scale Permaculture – 15	Homeopathy - 29
Tir Gofal / Organic Farming – 15	Marketing Organic Meat - 14
	Worm Control - 36 (joint with Llandrindod Wells) - 26
Overall Brecon average – 21	
Overall South average - 27 per meeting	
Farm Events (No of Members) – Caernarfon	Evening Events (No. Of members) – Caernarfon
Farm walk (b/s) & buyers groups – 16	Grassland Management – 33
Upland sheep - in-conversion – 18	Marketing Options – 22
	Processing & adding value – 25
	Homeopathy – 31
Overall Caernarfon average – 23	<i>EU livestock Regulations (joint: Denbigh) - 16</i>
Farm Events (No of Members) – Denbigh	Evening Events (No. Of members) – Denbigh
<i>Mixed Farming – beef/sheep/arable – 57</i>	<i>Grassland Management – 30</i>
	<i>Buyers group & Agri-Links - 8</i>
	<u>Homeopathy – 35</u>
	Worm Control - 22 (joint with Caernarfon)
	<u>Tir Gofal / OFS – 10</u>
	<i>Marketing Options – 17</i>
Overall Denbigh average = 26.5	<u>Exploration into organic farming: 42</u>
Farm Events (No of Members) – Lland'd Wells	Evening Events (No. Of members) – Lland'd Wells
Org sheep & arable – 87	Grassland Management – 6
Social – 15	Homeopathy – 24
	EU livestock Regulations (joint: Brecon) – 16
	Worm Control - (joint: Brecon) - 26
Overall Llandrindod Wells average = 27	Manure management – 15

Overall North Average = 26 per meeting

APPENDIX 4

Suggested improvements for evening meetings

- More time for discussion, including discussing opportunities
 - More advertising
 - More "local" locations
 - Hold some at weekends
 - Translation facilities, more opportunity for circulation and networking etc
 - Good chairmanship to move questions along from single issue.
 - More practical, aimed at small enterprises
 - Group talk and feedback is very helpful
 - A4 programme and back up material
 - Smaller rooms
 - More visual resources, e.g. video / films / slides
 - Refreshments - not always time to eat prior to coming to meetings
 - More time for questions
 - Help with products to use that are organic friendly
 - FREE BEER
 - Good speakers
 - Afternoon meetings more effective, Very well organised with professional speakers
 - Fit size of room to number of people
 - Separate subject groups - focus groups
 - Additional information sent prior to meeting, so more can be achieved at meeting (i.e. people are more prepared)
 - Arrange seating in a circle
 - Small discussion groups / workshop format if applicable
 - Case studies
 - More input from local producers regarding local problems and opportunities
 - More practical advice
 - Literature to all topics available on the night of the meeting
 - The Q/A session is frequently more informative, providing the speaker can cope and is prepared for the often wide variety of questions.
 - Encourage more participation
 - Send out more information about forthcoming events
 - More specialist - less general
 - More discussion groups
 - Begin on time
 - "hands on" experience from farmers
 - Encourage more people to attend meetings
 - Have to milk in the evenings
 - More talk from farmers actually farming organically
-

APPENDIX 5

Suggested services:

What should the Organic Demonstration Farm Network Provide?
Practical demonstrations and techniques, standards etc. = 16
Comparisons with conventional farming profitability / financial advice = 6
"Why go organic and what are the benefits = 4
Visible evidence & practical commentary on how crops/stock grown
Trials of livestock types specifically geared to organic farming e.g. Blue Albion Goats
Walks through a working farms / or research farms
To reach wider audience
To be closer at hand
"They were good"
Marketing information
To represent a good selection and cross-section of farm enterprise
Regular updates on techniques
Information leaflets / publication of advice and experiences of the farms
Visits for [potential] pre-converters
Opportunity to learn how other farmers have overcome problems
Opportunity to discuss production methods and produce outlets
Opportunities for small producers to link up for sales, maybe a computer database.
Open discussion driven by facilitator
Open day with specialists speakers
on-going management structure
Look at natural / Environmental aspects of farming, including Tir Gofal
Examples of tourism and renewable energy within organic farming
Group activities
Good sound advice with regard to future developments
Forum for technology transfer of current knowledge
Focus groups (for the increasing numbers of organic farmers)
Feedback and research results to COG members
Farm walks, Open days , individual advice, practical courses
Examples of good practice crop trials, technique demonstrations, seed production, etc.
Evidence of successful LOCAL marketing
Advice on different suitable livestock breeds, rotations, stocking rates
Demonstrations on slaughter and cutting, for sale
An opportunity to visit farms and talk to other farmers, etc also attending
Advice on beef, sheep and dairy breeds, stocking, and breeding clinic
A chance to see other farmers situations and receive advice based on experience
A positive insight into local farming, efficiently

APPENDIX 6

Most useful technical- training - day subjects

In order of preference (i.e. no. of times mentioned)

• (Planning the Conversion)
• Homeopathy
• Parasite control
• Form filling
• Manure management
• Grassland management
• Soil science / structure / management
• Rationing dairy cattle
• Permanent pasture management
• On farm demonstration of management, ideas and techniques.
• Forward planning
• Feeding rations
• ATB - dry-stone walling, hedge-laying
• "E" commerce
• Vegetable growing
• Would have attended all if in-conversion
• The workshop part was useful, although not enough time left
• "All useful"

Appendix 7:

Realised and potential support from the Organic Centre Wales

Key points

- As the Objective 5b funding window is closing there are insufficient funds to continue previous level of input
- If COG wishes to continue as more independent producer groups, there will be a network of services to support them, and OCW will have a major role in providing and maintaining this:

General Support from the Organic Centre Wales

Marketing intelligence officer:

- Statistics
- Price Surveys
- Fact sheets
- Market development
- Market identification

Technology Transfer:

- Demo Farms (Expanding). What priorities do farmers have? What types of farm do farmers want?
- Horticulture group (Welsh College of Horticulture)
- Training – Future not covered by FC. What training needs?
- Conversion Planning Courses (Part of OCIS)
- Surgery approaches

Advice:

- OCIS Review being prepared
- Conversion support under FBDP
- Specialist advisory groups

COG Groups (No commitment to amount of time)

- Farm events and training courses
- **Supporting local facilitators**
- Lobbying – better links between Farmers/ Centres/ Agri-food Partnerships
- Newsletter – Supplement to FC magazine (event listing, small ads etc).

(Support is there – How do farmers want this to work?)