

Organic Food And Farming Research Needs In The UK: A Report On A Stakeholder Participatory Consultation Process.

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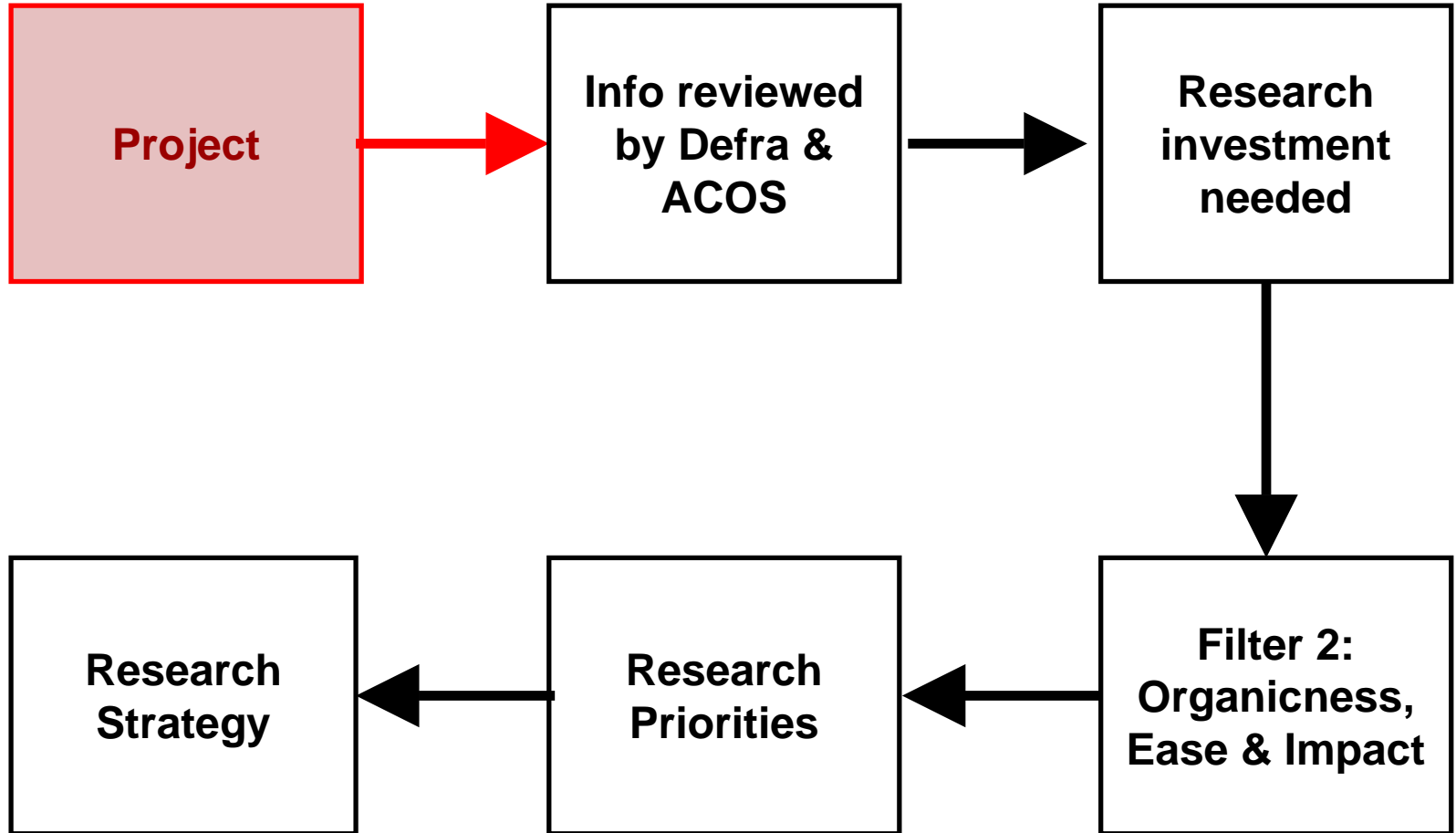


Context.

- The work reported here is part of a larger Defra funded project.
- *“What issues and aspirations do stakeholders feel should be addressed by publicly funded research into organic farming in the UK.”*
- February – July 2005.



The Whole Process.



Five Objectives.

1. Create a collated directory of existing organic research priorities.
2. Create a directory of existing current and completed research in the UK particularly in relation to the priorities identified in objective 1.
- 3. To consult organic stakeholders to identify the issues and aspirations they feel should be addressed by publicly funded research into organic farming in the UK.**
4. Facilitate exchange of information on the project to the ACOS R&D sub-committee.
5. Provide a full final project report that is sufficiently detailed to provide an audit trail of the report's projects findings and output.



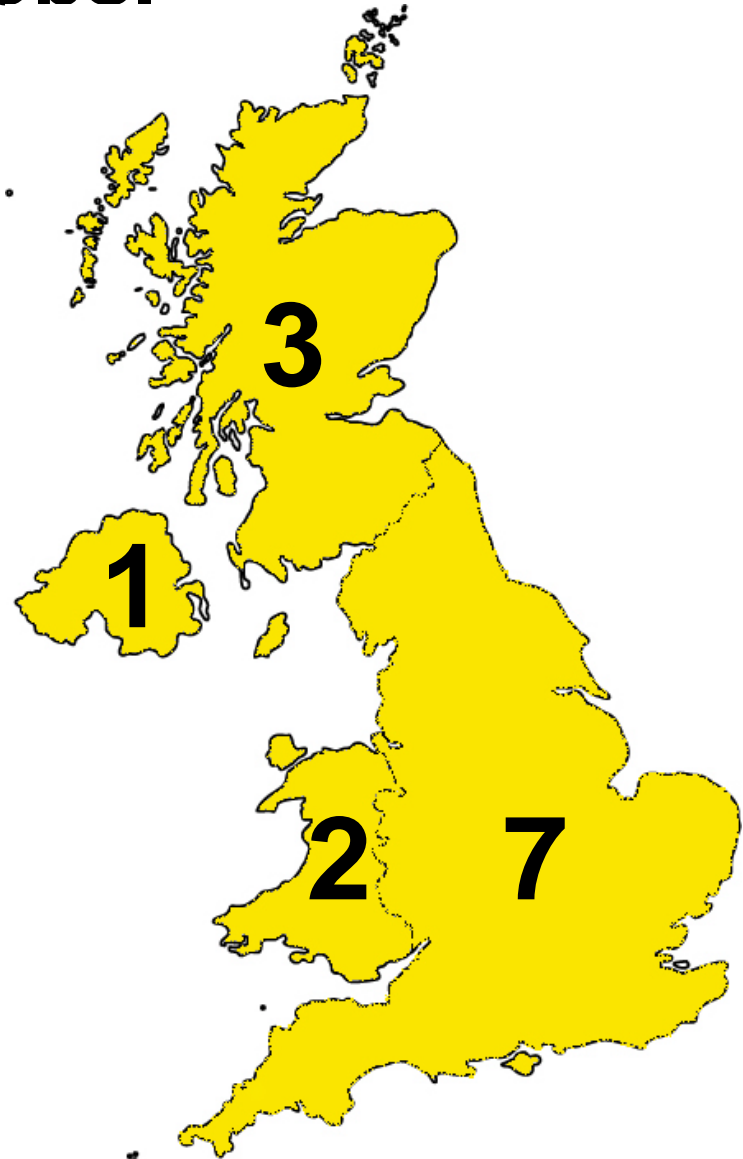
Public Consultation.

1. **Workshops:** Organise and facilitate up to fifteen regional public and stakeholder engagement workshops.
2. **Analyse & Report:** Analyse & Collate and analyse the information from the workshops to identify the issues and aspirations that should be addressed by publicly funded research into organic farming in the UK.
3. **Study & Report the Process:** Analyse and report of the consultation process.



1. Workshops.

- Different from previous approaches.
- All stakeholders.
- Public Workshops.
 - Throughout UK.
 - Appropriate time & location.
 - Stakeholders to fully participate.
 - Facilitated meetings.



1. Workshops.

- **Widely Publicised.**
 - ◆ **Existing Organic Networks.**
 - ◆ **Existing Research Networks.**
 - ◆ **Existing Food Networks.**
 - ◆ **County or Local Councils.**
 - ◆ **Organic consumers – Direct mailing to Henry Doubleday Research Association members local to the meetings.**
 - ◆ **Publications, fliers & web sites.**



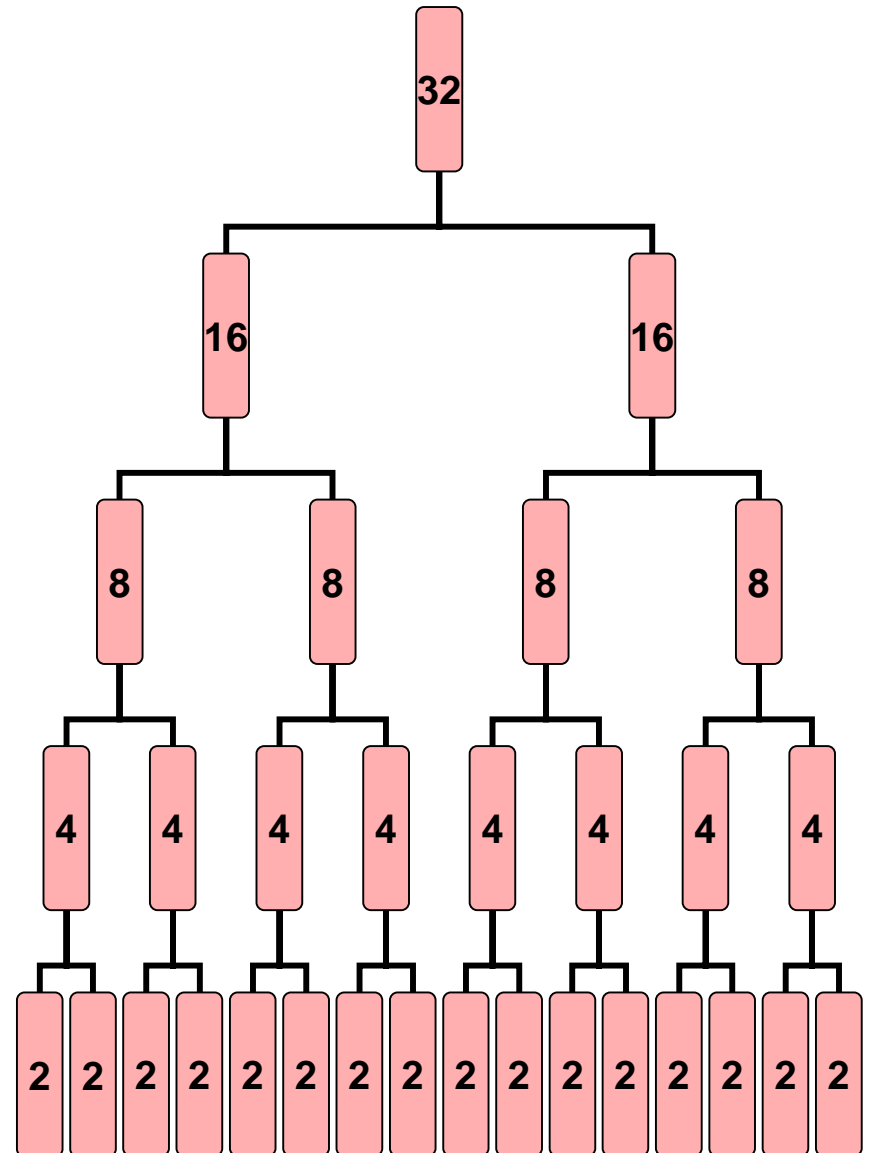


1. Workshops: Method.

- **Questions.**
 - ◆ **What should R&D deliver for the organic sector by 2015?**
 - ◆ **What are the most urgent information or knowledge gaps that R&D should address?**
- **Boundaries.**
 - ◆ **Need to address the Organic Action Plans.**
 - ◆ **Within Organic Principles.**
 - ◆ **Deliverable through Research & Development.**

1. Workshops: Method.

- Progressive doubling.
 - ◆ Into pairs.
 - ◆ About 15 minutes.
 - ◆ Produce a maximum of 5 points.
 - ◆ Find another pair.
 - ◆ About 15 minutes.
 - ◆ Consolidate and produce a maximum of 5 points.
 - ◆ Repeat.....!





1. Workshops: Method.

- The methodology was reviewed and refined as we progressed.
- During the processes the groups were watched and facilitated if needed.
- Record of all statements kept.
- Resulted in 10 – 15 final level statements.
 - ◆ Reviewed by the stakeholder attendees for overlap or duplication.
 - ◆ Asked to prioritise.

1. Workshops: Method.

- **Why workshops?**
 - ◆ **Participatory.**
 - ◆ **Allowed all stakeholders to be involved.**
 - ◆ **Brought together usually disparate groups.**
 - ◆ **Allows all to have an equal say.**



1. Workshops: Method.

- **Why progressive doubling?**
 - ◆ **Participatory.**
 - ◆ **Manages conflict.**
 - ◆ **Allows all voices to be heard.**
 - ◆ **Ownership of statements.**
 - ◆ **Unattributed.**



2. Analysis.

- **Produced a database of first and last statements (nearly 1500 statements).**
- **Statements checked against boundaries.**
- **Allocated to one of 11 categories.**
- **Data passed to Defra and ACOS.**





2. Analysis: Categories.

- 1. Policy & Standards**
- 2. Supply Chain & Marketing**
- 3. Soil**
- 4. Cropping Systems**
- 5. Livestock Systems**
- 6. Processing & Storage**
- 7. Environment & Resources**
- 8. Economics & Rural Development**
- 9. Human Health & Food Quality**
- 10. Research Methodologies**
- 11. Communication, Knowledge Transfer & Education**



2. Analysis: Workshop Statements.

- *“Locally sources food is fresh food and affordable.*
- *Environmental impact of food production (organic with conventional)”.*
- *“The health benefits of organic farming”.*
- *“The role of organic farming systems in releasing and removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere”.*
- *“Breed of poultry for organic”.*
- *“How to extend growing season and retain nutritional content”.*
- *“Effective knowledge transfer”.*

3. Study & Report the Process.

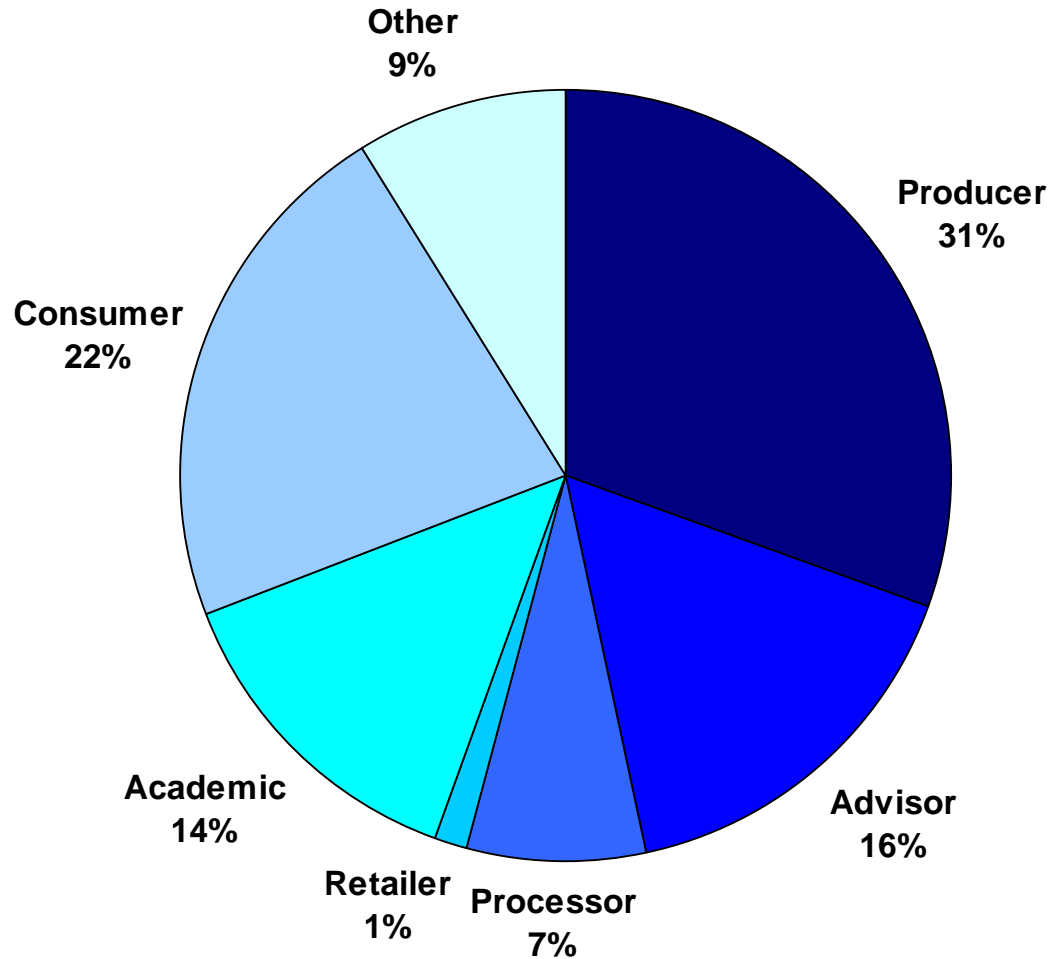
- **Undertaken by Social Scientist.**
 - ◆ Questionnaires & information from workshops.
 - ◆ Follow-up phone call or e-mails.
 - ◆ Face-to-face interviews.
 - ◆ With stakeholders.
 - ◆ With project delivery team.





3. Study & Report the Process.

Producer	Advisor	Processor	Retailer	Academic	Consumer	Other	Total
90	47	22	4	40	65	26	294





3. Study & Report the Process.

- **Stakeholder feedback.**
 - ◆ **Did not expect to do all the work!**
 - ◆ **Good interaction between stakeholders.**
 - ◆ **Many stakeholders were new to a participatory approach.**
 - ◆ **Most became quickly engaged.**
 - ◆ **First question too general and demanding for some.**
 - ◆ **Fun!**



3. Study & Report the Process.

- **Delivery team feedback.**
 - ◆ **Number attended were optimal (15-20).**
 - ◆ **More than this number would not be manageable.**
 - ◆ **Mix of stakeholders was good and comprehensive.**
 - ◆ **Dominant actors were an issue in some cases.**
 - ◆ **Exhausting, Rewarding and fun!**



Conclusions: “Failures”.

- More people at some meetings.
- Stakeholders naive to the process.
- “Wrong” type of statements.
 - ◆ Too challenging wording of questions.
 - ◆ Many statements were “research themes” not outcomes or aspirations.
 - ◆ Highlighted important issues for organic farming that were outside the boundaries.
- Tried to do too much for one meeting.



Conclusions: “Successes”.

- **Novel effective process.**
- **Wide range of stakeholders engaged.**
- **The highly participatory style was appreciated.**
- **Mitigated dominant characters.**
- **New interactions were established resulting in new understandings (ie consumer & farmer).**
- **Produced a significant number of new and challenging R&D statements.**
- **Highlighted important issues for organic farming that were not R&D.**

Conclusions: Outcomes.

- **Raised expectations of participants.**
- **Important that the contributions are seen to be taken into account through the next stages.**
- **Would like to see this undertaken again.**
- **Report from Defra/ACOS will be published in June.**



Acknowledgements.

- **All participants in the workshops.**
- **Defra for funding the work.**
- **Research partners.**
 - ◆ **SAC.**
 - ◆ **RULIVSYS.**
 - ◆ **Organic Centre Wales.**
 - ◆ **DARD – Greenmount College.**

