



Client: OF&G Yellow News
Source: Darlington And Stockton Times
Date: 15/03/2019

Keyword: Business
Page: 68
Reach: 11053
Size: 138
Value: 561.66

Support service offers advice to organic farmers

A SUPPORT service has been launched to provide free advice and technical guidance to organic farmers and those considering organic conversion.

The Organic Advice, Support and Information Service (OASIS) has been developed collaboratively by independent farm consultancy Abacus Agriculture and OF&G (Organic Farmers and Growers), who certify over half the organic land in the UK.

The aim is to help farmers decide whether organic conversion is right for their farm business, as well as providing existing organic farmers with the latest management and technical guidance.

Ian Knight, director at Abacus Agriculture, said: "Many producers and growers we speak to question whether organic is right for their business and want to know more about what it takes to successfully convert.

"We've created OASIS to help answer some of these fundamental questions, allowing farmers to assess whether the changes required to become certified organic could suit their farm."

Alongside a website, OASIS has a helpline to a team of advisors that farmers can call. "Qualified consultants are on hand to provide additional advice and talk through any queries.

"If organic production seems feasible, there's then the option to purchase an advisory package which includes a farm visit to consider feasibility and to develop an organic conversion plan," said Mr Knight.

Steven Jacobs, business development manager at OF&G, said there's huge opportunity for organic in the UK and globally.

He said: "The UK organic market has grown at around five per cent year-on-year for the past eight years and as a regenerative food production system it provides a viable business option for many.

"But conversion is a significant commitment.

"It can take around two or three years and the decision to switch must be backed up by sound economic sense."

For more information about organic conversion, visit the OASIS website at organicinfo.org.uk or by calling 0844 800 0091.