

Welsh Assembly Government consultation on:

**“Cattle Compensation: Bovine TB, Brucellosis, BSE and Enzootic Bovine Leukosis”.**

Response on behalf of:

**Organic Centre Wales**

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We are pleased to see that the categories to determine compensation rates have been refined and now distinguish between dairy, beef and pedigree/non-pedigree animals.

A compensation concern that we do have is with regard to organic dairy cattle. Currently, under derogation from the EU, if a herd, or part thereof, has to be culled due to disease, conventional animals can be brought to replace them – therefore, compensation for a standard dairy cow is suitable. However, it then takes three months of organic management before milk from that dairy cow can be sold as organic. Therefore, there is a three-month period where the milk price from those cattle is lower – hence the farm income is reduced for that period. Organic farmers do have option of buying organic dairy cows, but the availability of these animals is often scarce, especially so if there is widespread culling due to a disease outbreak.

**The ACOS regulation states:**

Livestock, other than poultry, intended for meat production must be raised from birth on a unit managed in accordance with these Standards. In addition, ewes, goats and sows whose progeny is intended for meat production must be managed in accordance with these standards after mating. Cattle whose progeny is intended for meat production must be managed in accordance with these standards for at least 12 weeks before calving. Otherwise, when a production unit is converted, livestock products may be sold as organic products, provided the livestock are reared according to the rules laid down in these Standards for at least the periods set out below.

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- 6 months in the case of sheep for milk production;
- nine months in the case of cattle for milk production, except that the requirements of these Standards in respect of feed must be complied with for at least six months before the end of the conversion period;
- 10 weeks for poultry for meat production, brought in before they are three days old;
- six weeks in the case of poultry for egg production.

There are several derogations applying to livestock conversion, the two relevant ones are:

By way of a third derogation, the renewal or reconstitution of the herd or flock shall be authorised by the inspection body when organically reared animals are not available, and in the following cases:

- (a) high mortality of animals caused by health or catastrophic circumstances;
- (b) pullets for egg production no more than 18 weeks old;
- (c) poultry for meat production less than three days old;
- (d) piglets for breeding purposes, as soon as they are weaned, of a weight less than 35 kg.

Cases (b), (c), and (d) are authorised for a transitional period expiring on 31 December 2004.

By way of a fourth derogation, subject to a maximum of 10% of adult livestock (20% in the case of sheep) may be brought in, as female (nulliparous) animals, from non organic-production stockfarms per year, for supplementing natural growth and for the renewal of the herd or flock, when organically reared animals are not available, and only when authorised by the inspection body. The rules in 2.2.1 of these Standards shall apply, except in respect of animals for dairy production where the conversion period will be six months.

So potentially you could have 10% of your herd converted after 6 months, and the remainder (obviously depends on what % of herd is culled) will take 9 months.