

Organic Team
Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR

Telephone: 0207 238 3000
Direct line: 0207 238 6348 FAX: 020 7238 6148

WEBSITE WWW.DEFRA.GOV.UK

To:
Interested Parties

Our ref : Guidance
Date 12 September 2008

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

12 September 2008

Organic Forage Seed percentages to remain at 65% until 2010.

1. Following a meeting of the Grass Seed Working Group in 2007, Defra accepted the recommendation of the group that the minimum percentage of organic content in seed mixes not requiring prior authorisation should move from the current 60% to 65% for 2008 and 70% for 2009.
2. **However, following industry representations, submissions from the Soil Association with regard to the poor growing conditions for some time and subsequent low availability of organic seed, it has been decided to postpone the move to a minimum organic percentage requirement of 70% until 01 January 2010.**
3. The Defra Organic Control Manual will be amended to read:
 - *At least 65% (by weight) of grass & forage seed mixes must be organic. Producers using a mix containing more than 65% organic seed will not need to apply for approval prior to purchase. However a derogation must be obtained prior to their next inspection.*

- *Producers requesting approval to use a grass or forage seed mix containing less than 65% organic seed will need to apply prior to purchase. Justification will be required for each non-organic variety used. Approval will only be given in extreme circumstances.*
- *The 65% approach applies to grass & forage mixes. These include grass clover mixes and unharvestable mixes. An unharvestable mix is a mix containing species from two or more of the following different groups that is not intended for combine harvesting: Cereals, Pulses, Grass and Clovers, Brassicas and Others e.g. Oil Seeds.*
- *Overall single species seed mixes should be 100 % organic, However, for fodder crops only, organic/non organic varietal mixes of a single species will be allowed with retrospective derogation at 65/35%. (Ref Defra seed book).
A mix containing a single species with a single variety must contain 100% organic seed.*
- *Therefore, an organic operator must use 100% organic seed for crops intended for fodder and harvested as such where a single species is used with a single variety. A 65% organic mix may be used where multiple species mixes are used or where single species are used that are made up of different varieties within that species.*

From 01 January 2010 the above minimum organic percentage will be amended to 70%. The percentages will be reviewed during 2009 to consider how best to increase the 70% figure from 2011.