

# Organic Farming: Conversion

**This is an old version of the page**

**Date published: 14 January, 2021**

**Date superseded: 20 January, 2023**

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#).

## Aim

The aim of this option is to encourage the participation in organic production in Scotland by supporting farmers and groups of farmers to convert their land to organic status.

Organic farming seeks to work with natural processes using methods that are designed to achieve a sustainable production system with limited use of external inputs.

These options provide support to farmers or groups of farmers to use organic farming methods and to encourage the expansion of organic production in Scotland to deliver environmental benefits.

## Eligibility

Any land in Scotland is eligible.

You should not include areas of land covering rocks, scree, water, dense bracken etc. We will check this using the same approach we use to check land for the Basic Payment Scheme.

### Assessing your land eligibility

To apply, you must provide evidence with your application that conversion of the land is viable through the submission of an Organic Viability proposal (OVP), endorsed from a UK-approved Organic Certification Body.

### List of UK approved organic control bodies



[Organic Viability Proposal Template \(MS Word, Size: 47.1 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-Update-2018----organic-viability-proposal---23-November--2017.docx>



[Organic Viability Proposal guidance \(PDF, Size: 43.2 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/aecs\\_update\\_2018\\_-\\_organic\\_viability\\_proposal\\_guidance\\_-\\_23\\_november\\_2017.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/aecs_update_2018_-_organic_viability_proposal_guidance_-_23_november_2017.pdf)

[Livestock calculator \(PDF, Size: 25.0 kB\)](#)

[Other sources of information \(PDF, Size: 43.1 kB\)](#)

## Spatial targeting

This option is available throughout Scotland.

## Requirements

You cannot formally apply for conversion of the land included in your application before the full application is submitted. However, you must submit an organic viability proposal OVP endorsed by a UK-approved Organic Certification Body.

After your AECS application is submitted you can apply to your chosen Certification Body to convert the land and they must formally approve your preferred date of conversion (which must be no earlier than 1 January of the first year of management covered in your application) and your detailed conversion plan.

Additionally, you must note that if your application is approved you must begin conversion within six months from the date of your authority to start work letter.

The authority to start work letter is the letter we send to you acknowledging receipt of a signed copy of the contract.

- you must submit, along with your first annual recurrent claim, confirmation from your organic certification body of the conversion start date of the area subject to conversion payment, showing that you have begun organic certification within the permitted timescales as set out above. [Further claims and payment information](#).
- you must comply with the organic standards (as laid out by European Commission Regulations and the UK Organic Products Regulations) and additionally the [Organic Production and Care of the Environment Standards](#) as advised in the UK Compendium of Organic Standards for the duration of your contract for the area subject to conversion for each payment category
- you must enter a viable production unit (as agreed by an Organic Certification Body), manage it according to organic standards, be an active farmer and remain registered with a Certification Body throughout the period of the agreement
- each year of your contract, you must submit a copy of your annual production (Land Parcel) schedule and your most recent certificate(s) in support of your annual recurrent claim. The certificate(s) provided must cover the whole period of the year of claim. You should send these to us as soon as they are supplied to you by your organic certification body
- if you enter land into the Fruit and Vegetables Conversion option you must grow a fruit or vegetable crop on **that** land at least **once** in years three to five of your contract
- land which was registered as fully organic at any time since 1 January 2000 is not eligible
- you should also refer to the [checklist of requirements](#)

## Payment

Organic conversion payment rates per hectare		
Conversion rates per hectare	Years one and two	Years three to five
Arable	£280	£65
Improved Grassland	£140	£55
Unimproved Grassland / Rough Grazing	£12.50	£8.50
Fruit and Vegetables	£400	£200

We will pay you for the duration of your contract on each eligible hectare of land entered into the relevant Organic Conversion option.

Payments to support conversion will be made up to a maximum of 1000 hectares per business or common grazing.

Within this, maximum payments for arable land, improved grassland and vegetable and fruit land will not be made for more than 300 hectares of any such land taken together or separately.

A minimum payment of £500 per annum per IACS registered business for conversion applies.

The description of land categories can be found below:

### [Description of land categories](#)

As this support is to help farmers with the cost of converting their land to organic systems, capital items, such as stock fences, are not normally eligible. An exception **may** be where the land was previously under a continually cropped arable system which is being converted to an organic system where grass and grazing are being re-introduced. Consequently you must supply a justification for any capital items applied for in your application detailing why these should be considered as exceptional by the case officer.

## Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- you have valid copies of organic certification reports and production schedules
- the land meets the eligibility criteria

## Additional guidance

[Supporting guidance is available for this option.](#)

## Recent changes

Section	Change
Payment	Capital items
Requirements	Text change

## Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

## Download guidance

Click 'Download this page' to create a printer-friendly version of this guidance that you can save or print out.