



RDS Climate Smart Agriculture  
Sustainable Farming, Sustainable Living

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# Growing Organics

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**Teagasc-RDS**  
(in association with Horizon 2020 LIFT)

RDS Minerva Suite/Online  
Friday, April 1, 2022  
**2.00pm – 4.00m**



In association with



The LIFT ('Low-Input Farming and Territories – Integrating knowledge for improving ecosystem-based farming') project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 770747



**Background:** The Irish government has set a target of having 7.5% of utilisable land area farmed organically by 2027. Given that there is currently 2% of the land area farmed organically, this presents a significant challenge for the Irish organic sector but may also provide opportunities to diversify the current agricultural model to add more value to Irish agri-food products.

Trebling organic production will require major changes, agronomic and cultural and the involvement and support of the entire organic value chain from policy makers, research, extension and farm families to processors, marketing agencies and consumers. The aim of this event is twofold: to elicit expert opinion from a broad range of sectoral stakeholders on the what changes are necessary to achieve this goal and secondly, to discuss practical solutions for the implementation of these changes.

### Event Outline

14.00 - Welcome: Prof. Cathal O'Donoghue, Chair, RDS Foundation Board, and Established Chair of Public Policy, NUI Galway

Opening Address: Pippa Hackett, Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Moderator: Mr Damien O'Reilly, RTE

### Session 1 – Opportunities and Challenges in 'Growing Organics' – what are they?

Keynote speaker: Ms Elena Panichi, Head of Organics Unit, DG Agriculture & Rural Development, European Commission

Research presentation: Prof. Andrew Barnes (Scotland's Rural College & H2020 LIFT) – Adoption of Agro-ecological measures

#### Panellists:

- Prof. Jane Stout (Professor in Botany, Trinity College Dublin) - Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services, Natural Capital
- Mr John Kiersey (Dairy farmer/RDS Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee) – What would conversion to organics involve?
- Mr John Purcell (Good Herdsmen Organic Meat Processor) – Opportunities and Challenges?
- Mr Jack Nolan (Head - Organic Division, Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine)

Feedback from/to participants - questions raised in chat function & SLIDO polls



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## **Session 2: What is necessary to Grow Irish Organic Production?**

**Keynote speaker:** Mr Paul Holmbeck, Former Director Organic Denmark –  
Insights from Denmark

**Research presentation:** Dr Kevin Kilcline (Research Economist - Lift project, Teagasc) –  
Learnings from LIFT

### **Panellists:**

- Dr Stan Lalor (Head of Knowledge Transfer Directorate, Teagasc) – What can Teagasc do to support organic expansion?
- Organic markets – Opportunities and barriers to organic market development
- Mr Mark Gillanders - Organic Grower/ Organic Wheat Milling/IFA Representative - Increasing supply to meet demand
- Ms Gillian Westbrook (MOPS: Maximising Organic Production Systems & Irish Organic Association) - Experiences from a European Innovation Partnership

**Feedback from/to participants - questions raised in chat function & SLIDO polls**

**16.00 - Closing Address:** Prof. Frank O'Mara (Director, Teagasc)



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