



**Soil Association**

the heart of organic food & farming

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Soil Association  
Food and farming department

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**Organic action plan consultation meeting:  
West Midlands provisional outcomes  
18 October 2006, St Andrews House Hotel, Droitwich.**

Rural enterprise scheme – GEOrgE project  
(Growing England's Organic Regional Enterprise)

**To contribute your comments to the planning process please return pages 2 and 3 (if appropriate) to A Rollett in the SAE provided or fax (0117 314 5001)**

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Preliminary outcomes from the West Midlands consultation meeting (<sup>1,2,3</sup> indicates the three discussion groups)

**Please indicate your top three priorities (1,2,3) from each section of the table below and return by fax or via the enclosed SAE. If you wish to add your own priority/priorities please do so on the comment sheet (page 4) and return as above.**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Technical Issues</b>	<b>Market Intelligence</b>	<b>Supply Chain</b>	<b>Market Development</b>
<i>What changes or additions to current policy would have the most benefit for an expanding, viable and well-balanced organic sector in the West Midlands?</i>	<i>What are the greatest technical issues affecting your organic business in the West Midlands and what are the best mechanisms for dealing with these?</i>	<i>What additional market intelligence would be most useful to you?</i>	<i>What do you see as the weakness of the current supply chain structure in your area of organic business in the West Midlands and what are the solutions?</i>	<i>In which areas do you see potential for further market development in the West Midlands and what support for market development would be most useful?</i>
Better communication with organisations such as AWM and AONB and the ability to influence their policy <sup>1,3</sup>	Lack of understanding of quality requirements and how to achieve these <sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support to achieve high quality (e.g. milk, produce with few grade outs etc)</li> </ul>	Consumer profiling <sup>1,2</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How many people in the region (by county) buy organic and in what category<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Where do local consumers buy their food? What influences this choice? Is it organic? If not why not?<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	Lack of and distance to abattoirs <sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Investigate the potential of mobile abattoirs</li> </ul>	Organic ethnic food <sup>1,2,3</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Investigate the potential for crops/livestock for ethnic food<sup>1,2,3</sup></li> <li>➤ Increase funding to develop ethnic market/appoint a facilitator<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Policy should maintain a balance between rural and urban that reflects the region <sup>3</sup>	Problems with access to technical support <sup>1,2</sup> (locating, price, reliability) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Online forum<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ A broker and signposting<sup>2,3</sup></li> </ul>	What is being processed and where <sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Demand for mobile abattoir and processing facilities<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	Limited access to organic food <sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rural hubs/food centres to ensure regular supply<sup>1,2</sup></li> <li>➤ An organic supermarket to push forward growth in the sector<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	Connect more with green markets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Educate green groups about what organic can offer them<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Sustainability to be central to policy not an optional extra <sup>1,2,3</sup>	Better technical support to all in the supply and buying networks <sup>1</sup>	A central information point for county, local and regional data and individual to help co-ordinate this information (possibly by county) <sup>1,2</sup>	Lack of collaboration <sup>1,2</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Link up producers to increase power, critical mass and the level of production<sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>➤ Farmers to get together and discuss working. An advisor or producer group mentor to facilitate this<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	Promote the CSA model of working <sup>1</sup>

Policy	Technical Issues	Market Intelligence	Supply Chain	Market Development
Environmental benefit to be valued equally with economic and social benefit <sup>1</sup>	Climate change and related issues, carbon neutral farms, energy use, waste, environment, water quality <sup>1</sup> ➤ Technical support to address the issues above <sup>1</sup>	Data for procurement <sup>3</sup> (who is producing, wholesaling, able to sell direct)	Bring together consumers into some form of buying group to inform consumers better about local/organic/what is available <sup>1</sup>	Public procurement <sup>1,2,3</sup> ➤ Suppliers need to learn more about the market <sup>2</sup> ➤ Help to understand how the PP system works <sup>3</sup>
Success should be measured/monitored by both qualitative and quantitative methods <sup>1</sup>	More co-ordinated technical support for new entrants <sup>2</sup> ➤ A directory, information sheet and well signposted support <sup>2</sup>	Benefits of organic and how it delivers sustainability <sup>3</sup>	Organic sector unwilling to think outside the box <sup>1</sup> ➤ Widening trade to include non-food sustainable products <sup>1</sup>	Organic viticulture, Cider and Perry production <sup>1</sup>
Changes to public procurement (PP) regulations <sup>1,2,3</sup> (sustainable, more incentive to use organic and/or local, identify barriers)	Farmers and growers don't make the best use of the support available <sup>3</sup> ➤ Funding towards cost of support <sup>3</sup> ➤ Person/team to collect information, broker links and help find solutions, (a technical programme) <sup>3</sup>	Statistics on production from converting farms, forecasts	Poor trade links between producers and market (including PP) <sup>3</sup> ➤ Web based database of all organic businesses ➤ Work with local food links ➤ A co-ordinator to facilitate links between producers and buyers	Further development potential for home delivery and box scheme (cross selling) <sup>3</sup>
Improve the link between conservation, the environment and organic <sup>2</sup> Integrate organic messages with other environment programmes <sup>2</sup>		Be careful not to over simplify market information <sup>3</sup>	Poor links between rural and urban communities <sup>1,3</sup> ➤ Engage/educate rural and urban communities <sup>1</sup> ➤ Twinning rural/urban areas <sup>3</sup>	Work with urban wholesalers and distributors and supply into these new markets <sup>3</sup>
Encourage policy makers to remember the West Midlands region is also rural <sup>3</sup>				Better coverage of organic story, 'organic ambassadors' <sup>3</sup>
The messages from this consultation to be fed into the regional implementation plan to direct new Rural Development Programme <sup>3</sup>				

## Comments Sheet

<p><b>Policy</b></p> <p><i>What changes or additions to current policy would have the most benefit for an expanding, viable and well-balanced organic sector in the West Midlands?</i></p>	
<p><b>Technical Issues</b></p> <p><i>What are the greatest technical issues affecting your organic business in the West Midlands and what are the best mechanisms for dealing with these?</i></p>	
<p><b>Market Intelligence</b></p> <p><i>What additional market intelligence would be most useful to you?</i></p>	
<p><b>Supply Chain</b></p> <p><i>What do you see as the weakness of the current supply chain structure in your area of organic business in the West Midlands and what are the solutions?</i></p>	
<p><b>Market Development</b></p> <p><i>In which areas do you see potential for further market development in the West Midlands and what support for market development would be most useful?</i></p>	

What changes or additions to current policy would have the most benefit for the organic sector?

**NB:** In this and all subsequent tables the superscript<sup>1,2,3</sup> refers to the three discussion groups

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Details</b>
<p><b>Better communication with organisations such as AWM and AONB and the ability to influence their policy<sup>1,3</sup></b></p> <p>Change the perception that the region is urban and increase understanding of the rural areas and the rural/urban link<sup>1</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ AWM main targets involve the delivery of new jobs, safeguarding jobs, providing training etc. It is often hard for the organic sector to tick the right boxes for these targets<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Ensure local authorities have an understanding of policies such as the West Midlands SSFF and how to effectively implement them<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Need to focus on communicating organic to regional decision makers, perhaps through existing hubs<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ AWM needs to be aware of the bigger picture and to adopt a rural focus<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ AWM needs to be a target for Soil Association political lobbying<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy should maintain a balance between rural and urban that reflects the region<sup>3</sup></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Currently the focus seems to be more urban<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Encourage policy makers to remember the importance of rural in the region<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustainability to be seen as central to policy not as an optional extra<sup>1,2,3</sup></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sustainability should be addressed in all political issues<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Organic policies to tie in with energy use and climate change<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Get people talking about what sustainability is rather than just using the word, organic would then move up the agenda<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Need to show local authorities how organic fits into the sustainability agenda<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Clear messages on how organic delivers sustainability<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Organic needs to link in much better in sustainability debate, perhaps through a person/group<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Different monitoring/measuring systems should be put in place for measuring success<sup>1</sup>.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Not just quantitative but also qualitative measures of success<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Changes to public procurement(PP) regulations<sup>1,2,3</sup></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ PP rules to encompass sustainable long-term thinking<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ PP to be geared to organic, local, sustainable procurement<sup>2,3</sup></li> <li>➤ A derogation type system where public bodies have to source local organic food unless they can prove that its not available (e.g. it is out of season etc)<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ An incentive for schools to source organic, subsidies for using organic produce?<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ A PP hub to help organic producers to supply consistent quantities to the PP market<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>➤ Use Food For Life targets to open dialogue with policy makers<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Improve the link between conservation, the environment and organic</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ AONB, National Parks, Natural England etc do not promote organic in their policy<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Environmental/conservation advice to farmers does not mention organic<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ If a farmer is in an environmental scheme/area cannot also enter the OELS<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Conservation advisors do not mention all the environmental benefits of organic farming<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<p>Improved understanding of organic and rural issues in policy makers<sup>1</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The organic message is sometimes not directed towards the correct people or put across strongly enough<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ There is a failure to see the organic/sustainable link<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>

<b>Policy (continued)</b>	<b>Details (continued)</b>
Change the emphasis from quick fix solutions that ticks all the boxes to longer-term more sustainable solutions <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Need to push towards long-term support in funding<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Shift thinking towards the long-term<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
The environment should underpin all rural support <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Should take into account triple bottom line accounting or similar (considers social, environmental and economic impact of any action or policy)<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Give priority to environment and health and be clear where organic fits into these<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Better delivery of policies at local level <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ More support on the ground to enable people to understand and implement policy<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>
Need to link policies with practical issues on the ground <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New policies need to recognise what happens on the ground<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Policy in urban and rural areas should be different<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Specific organic policies <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Policy tends to be focused on local not organic<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
More good advice about OELS available <sup>1</sup>	
Changes to the Single Farm Payment <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Press for more favourable conditions for organic farmers<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Improved policy support for organic conversion in cider orchards <sup>1</sup>	

### **Other comments**

<b>Messages from this meeting should be used to influence the Regional Implementation Programme<sup>3</sup></b>	
What action should the organic sector take to influence political decisions <sup>3</sup>	

What are the greatest technical issues affecting your organic business and what are the best mechanisms for dealing with these?

<b>Technical Issues</b>	<b>Mechanism</b>
<b>Problems with access to technical support<sup>1,2</sup></b>  <b>Advice is expensive (How do people afford it?)<sup>1,3</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ But don't want more meetings, prefer one to one advice<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Also useful to explore other ways to communicate<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Support and signposting to producers groups that offer organic farm walks to share advice and information<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Set up an online Soil Association technical forum (password protected and monitored by technical advisors) similar to the British Farming Forum to provide quick, easy to access information<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Funding to keep costs low for attendees at technical events<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Farmers and growers don't make the best use of the support available<sup>3</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Could use a facilitator to broker links<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Local/regional producer mentors to deal with technical issues<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Peer support and exchange of ideas between farmers (practical, informal 'on the farm' approach)<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Difficult to know what technical support/information is available<sup>2</sup></b> (Particularly for new entrants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ An online document updated as regulations change<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Signposting to information for new entrants<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Could create a directory of who to contact for specific types of support<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Information sheet for those in-conversion detailing who to contact for support with various basic steps<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Advertisements in the conventional press<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Climate change is a challenge the organic sector must respond to<sup>1</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Address the technical issues associated with carbon neutral farming<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Examine, organic bio-fuel production (in the context of organic farming as a whole and in relation to climate change)<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Concerns about water quality and how this should be maintained and improved<sup>1</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implement water management plans<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Learn from Landcare Australia (partnership between the community, government and business to 'do something practical' about protecting and repairing the environment)<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Quality, e.g. higher price for better milk, high-grade animals or fewer grade-outs<sup>1</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide technical support to help achieve high quality<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Animal conformation and fat content usually determine meat price <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Taste/flavour should be taken into account in pricing<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Some training required to achieve the increased knowledge/expertise needed to do this<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Mismatch between breeds and feed regime <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is a need for people to advise on this issue<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Reliability of technical advice/data <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Need reliable regional advice – technical issues in Wales might not apply in the West Midlands<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ How to know that data is genuine and from a reliable source<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Lack of direct marketing support and support to set up diversification enterprise <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Help with trading standards, labelling, environmental health etc<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
How to deal with Potato blight and how to grow protein crops successfully? <sup>1</sup>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Advice on what else new could be grown to meet demand<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
Lack of information and advice about appropriate waste management procedures and packaging materials <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Group/individual to organise events, provide advice/information (e.g. information sheet for retailers, a meeting or workshop)<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Link in with existing advice e.g. HEFF on packaging, waste<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Better dissemination of information on bio degradable packaging, via one point of contact<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>

What additional market intelligence would be most useful to you?

<b>Market Intelligence</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Consumer profiling</b> <sup>1,2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How many people in the region (by county) buy organic and in what category<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Use the information to identify supply gaps and clarify what products are in demand<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Local consumer research - where are local consumers buying their food? Is it organic? If not why not? Why do consumers go to certain shops?<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Micro level consumer surveys into shopping habits e.g. everyone in a village<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Information about processors</b> <sup>1</sup>	➤ Where they are located and what processors exist <sup>1</sup>
Where to access information <sup>1</sup> <b>One location for information and/or with links to other sources</b> <sup>1,2</sup>	➤ A list of useful web addresses could be compiled <sup>1</sup>
<b>Information targeted at public procurement (PP) decision makers</b> <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is produced in the country<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ What is seasonally available<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ What is produced in the region<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Who to buy from i.e. who are the traders<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Whether it is possible to buy direct from a producer (in order to cut out middle trader costs)<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>The benefits of organic production</b> <sup>3</sup>	
<b>Statistics on production from converting farms, forecasts</b> <sup>2</sup>	
Do consumers want fair-trade, local, organic and/or free-range products <sup>1</sup>	➤ Use the information to target local trade <sup>1</sup>
Extend local Soil Association consumer research in the North (Action Organic) <sup>2</sup>	
Make market reports more accessible. (Mintel reports cost over £1000) <sup>1</sup>	➤ Ensure the relevant information is disseminated concisely and clearly by the Soil Association <sup>1</sup>
More regional level reports <sup>1</sup>	
A list of organisations prepared to collaborate on information dissemination/provision <sup>1</sup>	
Retail price comparison <sup>1</sup> (supermarket premium range with organic)	
Price of a non-organic meal in comparison with the organic equivalent <sup>1</sup>	➤ Show how the price could be made similar by adjusting portion size <sup>1</sup> (but emphasise quality not just price) <sup>1</sup>
Information on imports – amount, supply and price <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Why is this import taking place?<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ What is making it cheaper?<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Can anything be learned in regard to best practice?<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Why farmers are not becoming organic <sup>2</sup>	
Organic supply <sup>2</sup>	➤ Is there a lack of supply or is it that people are not working together? <sup>2</sup>
Who has what, who wants what? <sup>3</sup>	
How much of the cost of food reaches the producer (e.g. milk) <sup>2</sup>	➤ Compare different outlets such as farm shops and supermarkets. Information could be publicised to perhaps encourage people to buy direct – useful marketing tool, UK fair trade <sup>2</sup>

## Other comments

<p><b>Be aware that over simplified information can be detrimental<sup>3</sup></b></p>	<p>Information is complex, needs careful consideration as to how to communicate it effectively to the right people<sup>3</sup></p>
<p>Price information<sup>2</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It was felt that producers do not need price information although also that HDRA report high demand for their price exchange so maybe it is sector dependent<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ It was also felt that producers selling directly set their own prices depending on the local area and that it was easy to find out wholesale prices etc if necessary<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<p>Need a person/team to facilitate PP information gathering and broker links with PP suppliers<sup>3</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Presentation/farm walk, to sustainable procurement network<sup>3</sup> (organic benefits and how organic delivers sustainability)</li> <li>➤ May help to have regular meetings with a few suppliers<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Clear/detailed information and education on availability, factors affecting prices, supply constraints<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>

What do you see as the weakness of the current supply chain structure in your area of organic business and what are the solutions?

<b>Supply chain weakness</b>	<b>Solutions</b>
<b>Lack of collaboration<sup>1</sup></b> <b>Lack of producer co-operation<sup>2</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Link up producers to increase power, critical mass and the level of production<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Create consumer groups to complement/work with producer groups<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Small groups of farmers need to get together and talk about working collaboratively (start small). An advisor could help set up the initial meeting and help with ideas. Alternatively a producer group mentor could act as an information point<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Poor trade links between producers and markets (gaps in supply)<sup>3</sup></b>  PP, where to source organic? <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Web based database of all organic businesses<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Better feedback of data from certification bodies<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Work with local food links<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Co-ordinator to facilitate links between producers and buyers<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ A land bank where producers commit areas of land to particular crops<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Formal trading link between producers, retailers, markets<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Poor links between rural and urban communities<sup>1,3</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Engage rural and urban communities<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Educate the large urban population in the West Midlands who are an important market for organic<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Twinning rural and urban areas<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Limited access to organic food<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Set up rural hubs/food centres could ensure regular supply<sup>1,2</sup> (Important to make access to organic food easy if the amount purchased is to increase)</li> <li>➤ Set up an organic supermarket to push forward growth in the organic sector<sup>1</sup> (May be perceived as expensive. Perhaps better to get organic into existing systems rather than increase segregation)</li> <li>➤ Need to persuade larger wholesalers to get licensed<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Distance to abattoir for organic stock (particularly Worcestershire)<sup>1</sup></b> <b>Results in some producers selling to the non-organic market<sup>1</sup></b> Can act as a deterrent to those considering organic livestock production <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mobile abattoirs could be used to go direct to farms<sup>1</sup> (Good for animal welfare and also for producers engaged in direct selling, especially if the unit includes cutting facilities)</li> </ul>
<b>Difficult to get people to think outside the box and beyond just the organic sector<sup>1</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Compile a directory of all sustainable/green organisations to increase awareness in consumers that are interested in green issues but haven't previously engaged with organic<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Widening trade to include non-food sustainable products<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Link organic food to slow food centres<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Limited consumer knowledge <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ More information and awareness of the benefits of organic<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Bring together consumers into some form of buying groups to inform consumers better about local/organic/what is available<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Resistance to organic by some consumers who want local first <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Educate consumers to remove the current confusion between local and organic<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
It is difficult to get organic consumers to buy local – it is all geared to supermarkets <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Products can be regionalised but it is important not to lose individual farm identities<sup>2</sup> (The region is too big to develop a regional/county brand).</li> </ul>
Distribution is an issue <sup>2</sup>	

<b>Supply chain (continued)</b>	<b>Solutions (continued)</b>
Lack of information about who wants what <sup>3</sup>	➤ E.g. increase communication between vegetable producers and box schemes <sup>3</sup>
Farmers markets: challenge to go beyond the current level of production and sales <sup>1</sup>	➤ A network of markets (not just confined to organic production) <sup>1</sup>
There are no certified cutting plants <sup>2</sup>	
Lack of milk marketing opportunities <sup>2</sup> (OMSCo don't cover the area so producers have to sell to Dairycrest)	
Poor labelling <sup>2</sup>	➤ Set up a beef-labelling scheme (easier and cheaper to put UK on the label rather than a county). Labels should also show the breed, age, diet etc <sup>2</sup>
SFP constraints on vegetable production <sup>3</sup>	➤ Increase producer communication about who has entitlements to SFP that can be transferred <sup>3</sup>

In which areas do you see potential for further market development and what support for market development would be most useful?

<b>Market Development</b>	<b>Support</b>
<b>The production of organic ethnic food for the large ethnic population in the West Midlands</b> <sup>1,2,3</sup> (e.g. organic flour sold for chapati making, rye bread for Polish community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Investigate the potential for growing crops such as Sweet Potato in the region<sup>1,2</sup></li> <li>➤ Or rearing non-traditional livestock, e.g. goats<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Increase funding to develop markets such as ethnic and appoint a facilitator for such projects<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ How to find out if there is interest for chemical free food amongst ethnic groups<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Link to other groups (e.g. those concerned with climate change) to promote organic eating</b> <sup>1</sup> More integration between the organic and wider green sector <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Educate green groups that may not be aware of exactly what organic can offer them<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Organic awareness should be linked in to climate change, health and the environment<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Promote the CSA model of working</b> <sup>1</sup>	➤ Link consumers and farmers <sup>1</sup>
<b>Development of cross selling in box schemes</b> <sup>3</sup>	➤ Link producers together <sup>3</sup> (e.g. a meat producer with a local vegetable box scheme)
<b>Public procurement (PP)</b> <sup>1,2,3</sup> (but very difficult to do affordable food)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Learn from successful examples<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Utilise practical support from Ashlyns<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Suppliers need to learn more about the market<sup>2</sup></li> <li>➤ Help to understand more about how the PP system works<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Work with a sub-group from this meeting to explore/develop organic supply to public sector<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Events to explain PP opportunities and tender procedure<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Better coverage of organic story, 'organic ambassadors'</b> <sup>3</sup>	➤ Increase consumers understanding about organic <sup>3</sup>
<b>Organic viticulture, Cider or Perry</b> <sup>1</sup>	
<b>The huge urban market in the region</b> <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with urban wholesalers and distributors and supply into these new markets<sup>3</sup></li> <li>➤ Affordable technical advice to help develop markets<sup>1</sup></li> <li>➤ Set up a direct link between a group of farms and inner city communities<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Increased consumer education, and awareness <sup>2</sup>	➤ E.g. what is organic? Information needs to be very simple <sup>2</sup>
Encourage disadvantaged communities to grow organic <sup>2</sup> (To expand the market, raises awareness and educate about seasonality etc)	
Local organic food <sup>1</sup>	➤ Clearer labelling to promote the fact that food both local and organic <sup>1</sup>
Specialist salad crops and herbs <sup>1</sup> (E.g. Coriander for ethnic market)	
Supermarkets <sup>2</sup>	➤ Need fixed price contracts, there are opportunities but at what cost? <sup>2</sup>
Improve farmers' markets <sup>1</sup>	
A diverse and mixed farming system <sup>1</sup> (West Midlands can grow crops as appropriate to meet market demand)	
Care farms <sup>1</sup> (Work experience for people with special needs)	