

For retail grocery buyers of real foods and natural products

# organic&natural business

SPRING 2024 VOL. 21, ISSUE 1

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## It's show time

We are just weeks away from the NHT Summit in Manchester – have you registered to visit? Page 14.



## Organic accessibility

The Soil Association details its new road map to make organic more accessible. Page 32.



## Product praise

We reveal your winners in the Organic & Natural Business Product Awards. Page 16.

## Organic market grows two per cent in 12th year of growth, but call issued for radical rethink to attract UK farmers

**T**he organic market grew two per cent last year to now be worth £3.2bn but a call has been issued for a radical rethink over how UK farmers can reap the benefits.

Soil Association Certification launched the 25th *Organic Market Report 2024*, sponsored by RBOrganic, which revealed the organic food and drink market delivered its 12th year of positive growth, despite the global political and economic turmoil and the cost-of-living crisis. The total market grew two per cent in 2023 ending the year at £3.2bn – almost double its value in 2011. Independent retail rose 10 per cent to £475m.

Speaking at the launch of the report, Alex Cullen, Soil Association Certification Commercial Director (pictured), explained certain areas bounced back from last year, including supermarkets and independents.

"Independents I know for many of you will be a really important player in your overall performance. The channel is now worth nearly half a billion pounds, and we are seeing two thirds of respondents to our survey seeing growth and anticipating growth next year so it really has bounced back. The beauty of independents is that speed and agility and ability to operate locally and really connect with customer base locally," she commented.

Looking at the report generally, Alex went on: "We have seen the cost-of-living crisis take a hit in a couple of specific areas. One is home delivery, where people have cut back on what they might see as discretionary spending, and also beauty and wellbeing has fallen back for the first time this year. Having said that, there is a strong level of confidence we are seeing

from businesses in both those parts of the market. That really reflects where we are seeing broader shopper confidence start to bounce back. It's been a pretty volatile time but where we have nipped out at the end of December 2023, we have seen confidence climb back up 13 percentage points in the last 12 months. We are not out of the woods yet, and yes, there is still an awful lot of headline news that certainly takes its toll on people's outlook on the world. But equally in terms of people's individual household resilience and that feeling they have a bit of cash in their pocket, that is starting to come back."

However, despite this solid performance, the sector's heavy reliance on imports means many farmers are missing the potential benefits organic can bring – and the UK environment is missing the benefits for nature. Shopper spend on organic is a third higher versus five years ago, but UK organic farmland has stayed at a static three per cent.

Alex went on: "Organic has delivered a positive and resilient performance, despite challenging financial and political conditions and without the support that organic food and farming receives in Europe and elsewhere in the world. The market and macro trends are



pointing to an upward trajectory but there are still many challenges and barriers to the level of growth that UK organic should be delivering for farmers – with price the biggest barrier.

"We need a radical rethink if organic is going to reach its full potential and bring organic farming into the mainstream. The entire supply chain must work together to grow the market and unlock demand for homegrown UK organic fresh produce, supported by the government. And we can learn valuable lessons from Europe, where there is greater support and commitment from governments and retailers for farmers and from some exciting innovations taking place right here across the UK – to make organic more available and affordable."

Continuing at the launch webinar, Alex added: "We know organic is the most trusted and sustainable practice on the table at the

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# On-demand production of any shape and eco-friendly labels

Learn how to make products greener by using resource-friendly label printer, LX610e, and sustainable label materials from DTM Print.

**T**he LX610e Color Label Printer is the only full-colour, desktop label printer/plotter in the world that delivers photo-quality labels in any size and shape. It combines colour inkjet label printing with a built-in digital die-cutting mechanism.

The included software for laying out print and cut files allows the fast production of custom labels of virtually any size or shape all in one process. The LX610e can also be fed with standard pre die-cut labels and tags for just printing.

Small businesses can print their own short runs of hundreds or a few thousand custom labels, without incurring delays and die costs, while continuing to send their longer runs to label production shops. That provides them even more value and flexibility. Large manufacturers, advertising agencies, and graphic design shops will find the LX610e invaluable for producing accurate label samples, prototypes and short runs for client approval before ordering expensive hard-tooled or flexible dies.

Two different types of ink are available. Dye-based ink produces vibrant colours that are perfect for prime label applications. Pigment-based ink prints labels that are slightly less bright but stand up to sunlight and water for years.

Because the printer utilises an ultra-high capacity single CMY ink cartridge, users will only need to replace and keep on-hand one item instead of multiple. In addition, they get a brand new printhead each time they change the cartridge, simplifying maintenance and dramatically lowering on-going operating costs for cleaning and service.

## A sustainable solution

LX610e supports an eco-friendly and sustainable business approach with a very low energy consumption, ultra-low weight by using less material, non-toxic ink



supplies, as well as 100 per cent recyclable components.

The sustainability of packaging can be increased by using environmentally friendly labels, such as the eco-friendly, recycled or natural labels of the DTM EcoTec Label Line:

■ **DTM EcoTec Hemp Paper** consists of 100 per cent hemp fibre. Hemp can be harvested up to three times a year, plantation trees only every seven years. Thanks to its fibres, which are five times longer than wood pulp, the material is particularly tear-resistant and can be recycled very often.

■ **DTM EcoTec Grass Paper** reduces the amount of process water needed in the

production process because of the natural grass fibres that are used. The adhesive is an acrylic dispersion, permanent, solvent free and can be in direct food contact according to EU regulation No 10/2011.

■ **DTM EcoTec Paper Matte Nature** is a paper label made from 100 per cent recycled backing from used label rolls.

■ **DTM EcoTec Poly Clear Gloss R90** is a glossy clear poly label, which consists of 90 per cent post-consumer recycled (also known as PCR) PET material.

"To produce exceptional product labels for all kinds of applications, you not only need advanced and resource-friendly print technology as integrated in our colour label printers but also high-quality material," explained Albion Bekolli, Label Specialist at DTM Print. "Every product leaves a footprint on our planet and using label material that is environmentally-friendly and sustainable helps to keep it as small as possible."

■ Visit DTM Print at Natural & Organic Products Expo (April 14-15) to learn more about the LX610e and DTM EcoTec Label Line.