

MINISTER SARGENT URGES CONSUMERS TO THINK ORGANIC AND THINK SEASONAL

Launching Bord Bia's "Think Organic" summer campaign, Trevor Sargent TD, Minister for Food and Horticulture at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, reminded consumers that everyone benefits from buying produce in season. *"The benefits to the consumer and the Irish producer are obvious," the Minister said, "but there is also a much wider effect in terms of worldwide sustainability and reducing unnecessary food miles which are a significant factor in climate change."*

The campaign, which runs this year from Monday, 2nd July to Sunday, 15th July, aims to continue raising consumer awareness of organic food, how to recognise it when shopping and where to buy it. Marketing activities during the campaign will include outdoor advertising and consumer information leaflets with tips and recipes as well as information about local farmers market, box scheme deliveries and farm shops. *"The development of the organic sector is a priority in the new Programme for Government. A key objective is to grow the amount of certified organic production in Ireland from less than 1% to 5% of overall agricultural output. As 75% of organic food consumed here is imported much of this growth will also mean many opportunities for import substitution,"* said Minister Sargent.

"Consumers have an important role also in supporting organic production. When shopping it is important to buy in season organic food but also to check that produce has a label from one of the three registered Irish organic certification bodies as well as a producer licence number, Irish Organic farmers operate to the highest standard," Minister Sargent said.

Minister Sargent also confirmed that National Organic Week will be held this year from Monday, 22nd October to Sunday 28th October. This is the third year that the event has been held and it has grown with each year.

"The success of the National Organic Week depends upon the full involvement at local and regional level of as many organic producers and processors as possible" Minister Sargent said.

"I'm calling on all organic producers and processors to play their part this year to make the very most of it."

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