

# North East Organic Programme

The North East Organic Programme (NEOP) has been developed by the Soil Association working closely with the Northumbria Organic Producer Group (NOP) with support from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and One North East. The programme is funded by Defra via the England Rural Development Programme.

It aims to provide greater security and prosperity for food and farming businesses through the development of organic farming and food within the region, contributing to the region's economic, environmental and social agendas. Any business with organic interests in County Durham, Northumberland, Tees Valley, Tyne and Wear may benefit from the services and support available through the programme.

This service is for all farmers, growers, processors, food manufacturers and retailers, irrespective of certification body. The programme and its staff will work closely with other food and farming organisations in the region – and throughout the UK – to share information, experience and good practice.



## North East Organic Programme

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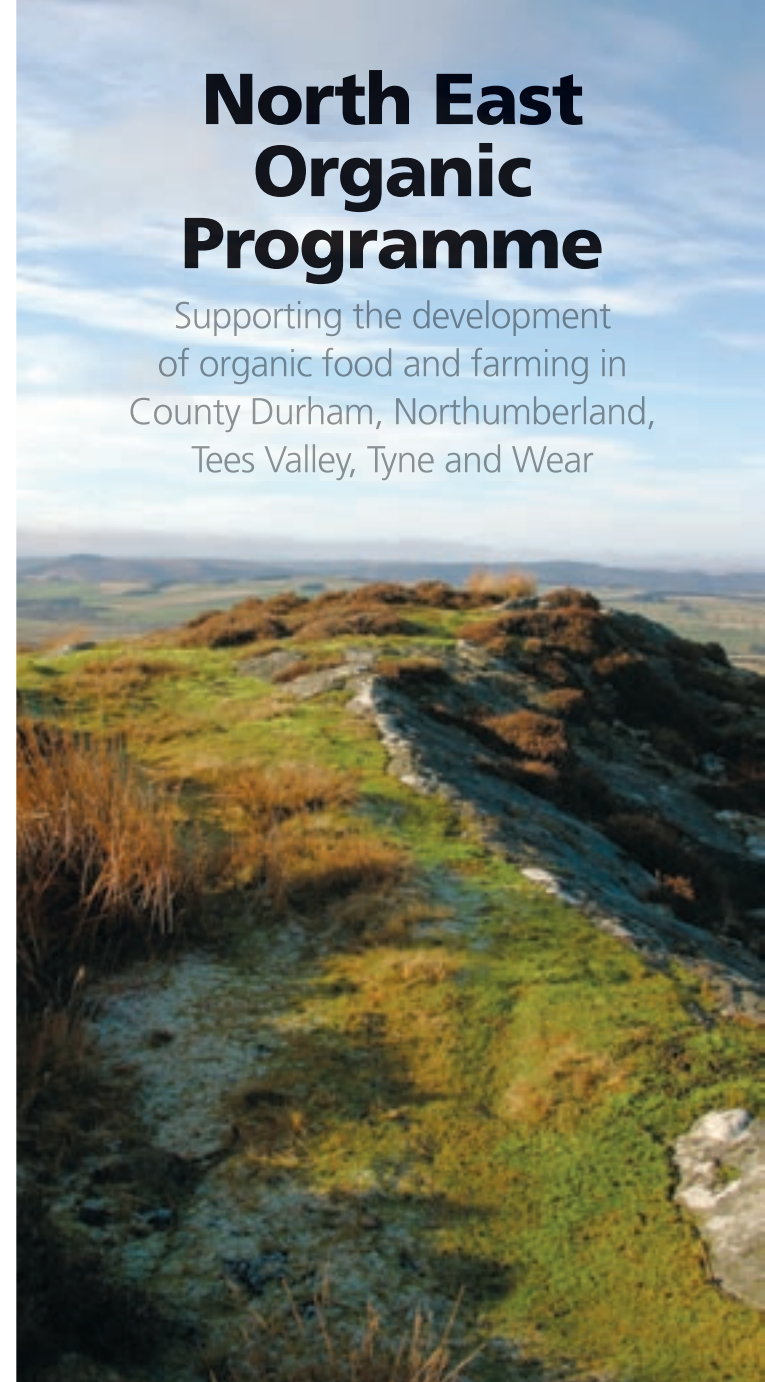
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This **Soil Association** project is supported under the England Rural Development Programme by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund. The project's aim is to work with the main certification bodies; Biodynamic Agricultural Association, Organic Farmers & Growers, Organic Food Federation and the Soil Association Certification Limited. Soil Association registered charity no. 206862

# North East Organic Programme

Supporting the development of organic food and farming in County Durham, Northumberland, Tees Valley, Tyne and Wear





## Improving business skills

Improving business skills is the key to prosperity for many farms and food related businesses. By working closely with, and providing support for, the regions organic producer group (NOP), this programme plans to help existing organic farmers, new entrants, processors and related food businesses in the following areas:

## Providing information and advice

A wide range of technical and market related information is tailored for activities within the region. The programme is delivered by staff who are trained and experienced in their work areas, with additional enterprise-specific support available.

Staff can be contacted by phone, fax or email and site visits are available for face-to-face advice. The programme can also provide training opportunities and will closely link with The Organic Pathfinder Programme (TOPP) for farmers in the North East region which is funded by the Vocational Training Scheme (VTS).

## Linking local producers

Working strategically with NOP, the programme, will encourage cooperation between producers and throughout the supply chain. This will improve knowledge and understanding, identify cost savings and secure new markets.

## Market intelligence

Accurate data, statistics and analysis of trends are crucial for businesses in order to make decisions. The programme will collect, analyse and disseminate statistics on regional production levels, processing capacities and retail trends within a national context.

## Building new markets

Using market intelligence, the programme will assist businesses in identifying and stimulating new market opportunities. Web based and printed directories for organic food and product availability will help the public and food businesses to source more efficiently, while a range of activities will build awareness and interest in the region's finest organic food.

In addition, by working closely with producers, opportunities can be explored for new product developments and new market opportunities, such as catering and public procurement markets.