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By Fred Searle

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## Northern Ireland announces organics funding



Farmers with at least three hectares of eligible land and the right business ID can now apply for funding for organic conversion

**F**inancial support has been made available to Northern Irish farmers and landowners converting to organic as the UK's organic market continues to grow for the eighth consecutive year.

Today (19 August) the country's Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) opened a funding application window for organic conversion with a closing date of 20 September 2019.

Farmers and landowners with a DAERA category one or two business ID,

and at least three hectares of land that is eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme, can apply.

The funding comes after the Soil Association Certification's *Organic Market Report 2019* revealed the market to be worth £2.33 billion following a 5.3 per cent growth in sales in 2018.

The latest Nielsen Scantrack data showed sales growth of a further four per cent so far this year.

Chief executive of Soil Association Certification, Martin Sawyer, said: "Organic

farmers in Northern Ireland are leading the way in innovation and we're really encouraged to see young farmers emerging to try new things that benefit both their business and the environment.

"We expect post-Brexit policy to drive some major long-term changes with sustainability and diversification going to become much more important, so this is a really important moment in time to convert to organic."