

Annual Report

Non-Organic Seed Authorisations 2024

United Kingdom

UK* authorisations to use seed, seed potatoes and vegetative propagating material not produced by the organic production method, in organic farming.

**UK not including Northern Ireland. In accordance with current (at time of writing) trading arrangements with the EU, authorisations for Northern Ireland are reported separately. The term 'UK-GB' is used throughout this report to denote the UK not including Northern Ireland.*

Prepared by Soil Association on behalf of the Department for Environmental, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)

March 2025



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the varieties and quantities of non-organic seed used by organic farmers and growers in UK-GB in 2024.

This information is intended for use by the seed industry, producers, policy makers and organic control bodies to increase the use of organic seed and comply with relevant regulatory requirements. The aim is to improve the diversity, quantity, and quality of organic seed so authorisations for the use of non-organic seed are required only in extreme circumstances. This report also benefits the transparency of the organic sector more broadly.

This report has been produced in accordance with Article 54 of Assimilated Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008. The authorities or bodies designated to grant authorisations for use of non-organic seed (in accordance with Article 45 of (EC) No 889/2008) must register all authorisations and make this information available in a report to the competent authority (Defra) and to the manager of the database. The report and associated dataset are compiled by the Soil Association on behalf of Defra and made publicly available via the OrganicXseeds (UK-GB) website: www.organicxseeds.co.uk

Summary

In 2024, the total number of authorisations granted for non-organic seed in UK-GB was 20,445. An increase of 21% from the previous year when the total number of authorisations was 16,687 (Figure 1). This report covers authorisations for eight of the major crop types: cereals, field peas & beans, fodder & forage, grasses, cover crops, vegetables, potatoes and fruit.

Compared to 2023, there was a decrease in the number of authorisations granted for field peas, field beans, cereals, and potatoes in 2024, and an increase in the number of authorisations granted for vegetables, top fruits, grasses, fodder, forage, and cover crops (Figure 2). In particular, the increase in number of authorisations for top fruits, fodder, forage and cover crops reflects greater uptake of agri-environment schemes such as the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), where the supply of organic seeds has not been able to keep pace with demand. The sector is already working to remedy this situation.

Figure 1. The total number of authorisations for non-organic seed from 2020-2024.

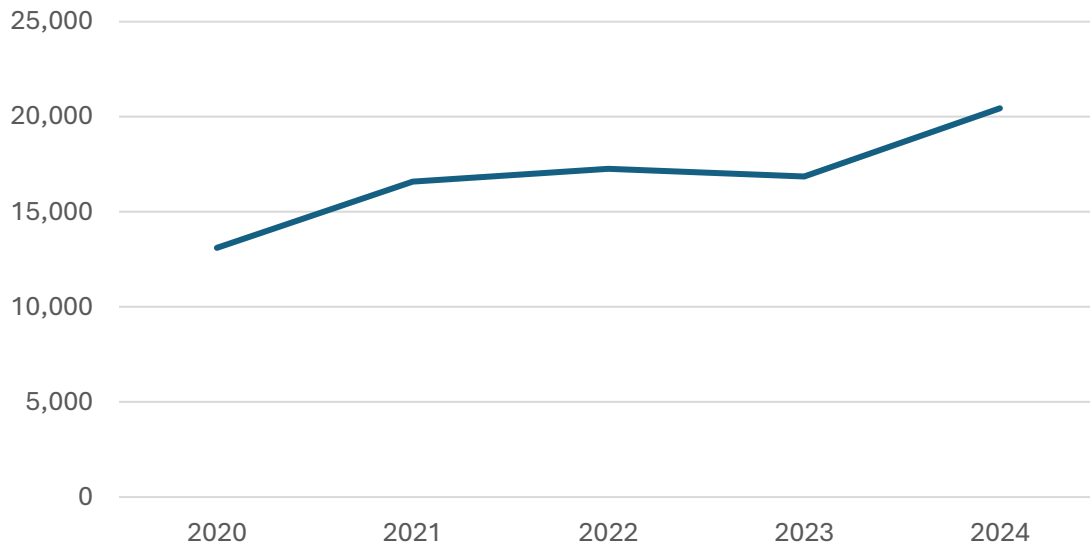
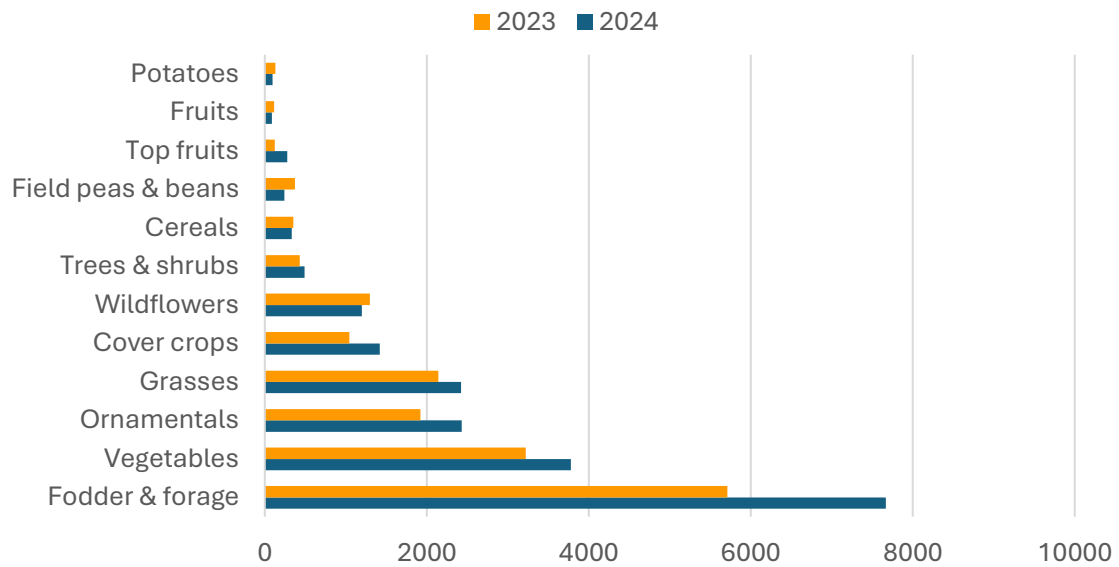


Figure 2. The number of authorisations per category in 2023 and 2024.



Cereals

For the major cereal crops listed in Table 1, there were 324 authorisations granted for non-organic seed in 2024, totalling 835.76 tonnes of seed. Compared to 2023, this is a decrease of 8% in the total number of authorisations, and a decrease of 16% in total tonnage.

Table 1. The number of authorisations for major cereal crops from 2022-2024 and the associated tonnage of those authorisations.

	2022		2023		2024	
	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
Winter wheat	94	302.38	50	153.45	93	104.55
Spring oats	71	174.59	40	128.61	50	193.03
Spring barley	116	357.63	61	218.07	44	231.75
Spring triticale	56	40.89	46	42.56	36	9.46
Winter rye	64	105.89	57	60.63	31	63.52
Spring wheat	20	127.84	26	204.66	29	93.95
Winter barley	44	94.64	27	95.99	15	72.01
Winter triticale	14	27.79	16	37.10	13	33.99
Winter oats	22	103.00	22	40.89	10	25.50
Spring rye	6	9.00	6	9.81	3	8.00
<i>Totals</i>	<i>507</i>	<i>1,343.65</i>	<i>351</i>	<i>991.77</i>	<i>324</i>	<i>835.76</i>

Figure 3. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for major cereal crops from 2022-2024.

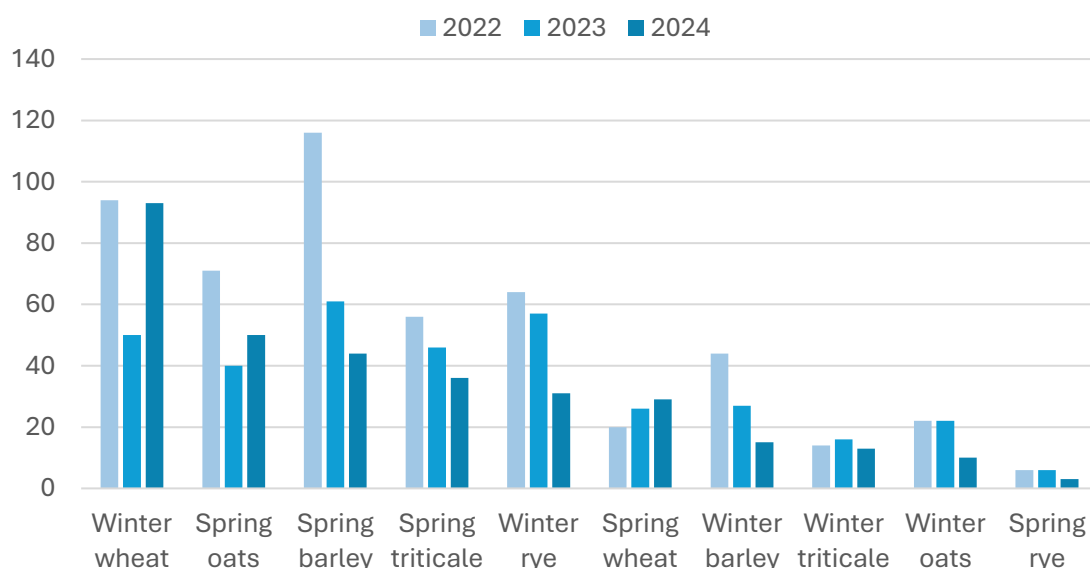
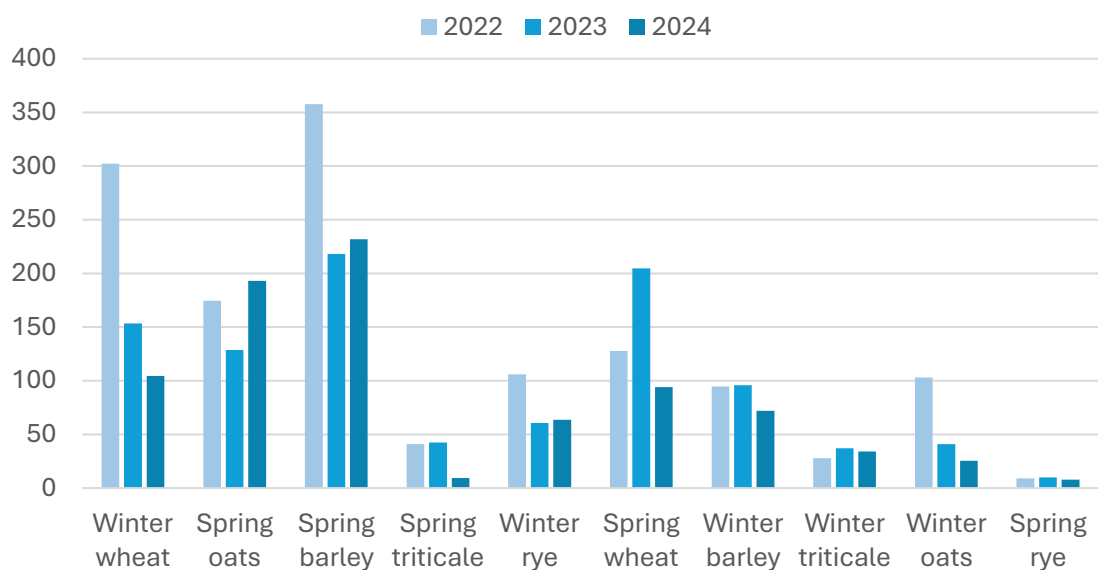


Figure 4. The total tonnage of non-organic seed authorised for major cereal crops from 2022-2024.



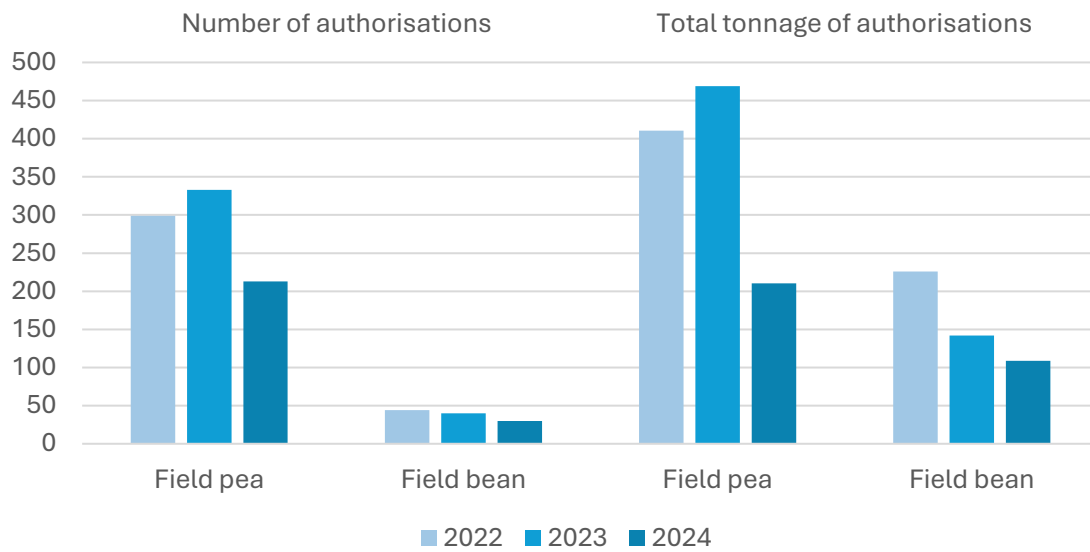
Field Peas & Beans

In 2024, there were 213 non-organic seed authorisations granted for field peas, totalling 210.53 tonnes of seed, and 30 authorisations granted for field beans, totalling 108.77 tonnes (Table 2). For field peas, this is a 36% decrease in the number of authorisations from 2023, and a 55% decrease in the total tonnage. For field beans, it is a 25% decrease in the number of authorisations and a 23% decrease in total tonnage.

Table 2. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for field peas and beans from 2022-2024 and the associated tonnage of those authorisations.

	2022		2023		2024	
	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
Field peas	299	410.74	333	468.76	213	210.53
Field beans	44	225.70	40	142.01	30	108.77
<i>Totals</i>	<i>343</i>	<i>636.44</i>	<i>373</i>	<i>610.77</i>	<i>243</i>	<i>319.30</i>

Figure 5. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for field peas and beans from 2022-2024 and the total tonnage of those authorisations.



Fodder & Forage

For the common fodder and forage species listed in Table 3, there were a total of 7,509 non-organic seed authorisations granted in 2024, totalling 158.35 tonnes of seed. Compared to the same species in 2023, this is a 35% increase in the number of authorisations and a 34% increase in total tonnage.

Table 3. The number of authorisations for common fodder and forage species from 2022-2024 and the associated tonnage of those authorisations.

	2022		2023		2024	
	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
White clover	2,304	37.46	1,946	24.71	2,182	69.43
Red clover	873	35.67	744	31.47	786	29.19
Ribgrass	383	2.78	416	8.53	665	7.88
Forage chicory	347	5.49	377	3.24	600	5.15
Bird's-foot trefoil	261	2.89	270	2.74	488	5.68
Alsike clover	224	2.19	228	3.32	477	6.01
Yarrow	204	1.85	246	0.38	460	1.12
Burnet	105	0.83	163	1.51	377	2.68
Sheeps parsley	137	0.63	126	0.78	301	1.87
Forage rape	325	17.70	298	10.87	241	7.88
Stubble turnip	157	6.97	135	4.19	198	5.23
Fodder kale	156	3.78	174	3.02	182	2.19
Fodder radish	102	1.51	112	2.00	169	2.06
Alfalfa	83	7.05	111	11.93	146	5.09
Crimson clover	123	2.15	95	5.98	120	2.07
Sainfoin	139	8.38	106	3.23	117	4.83
<i>Totals</i>	<i>5,923</i>	<i>137.32</i>	<i>5,547</i>	<i>117.89</i>	<i>7,509</i>	<i>158.35</i>

Figure 6. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for common fodder and forage species from 2022-2024.

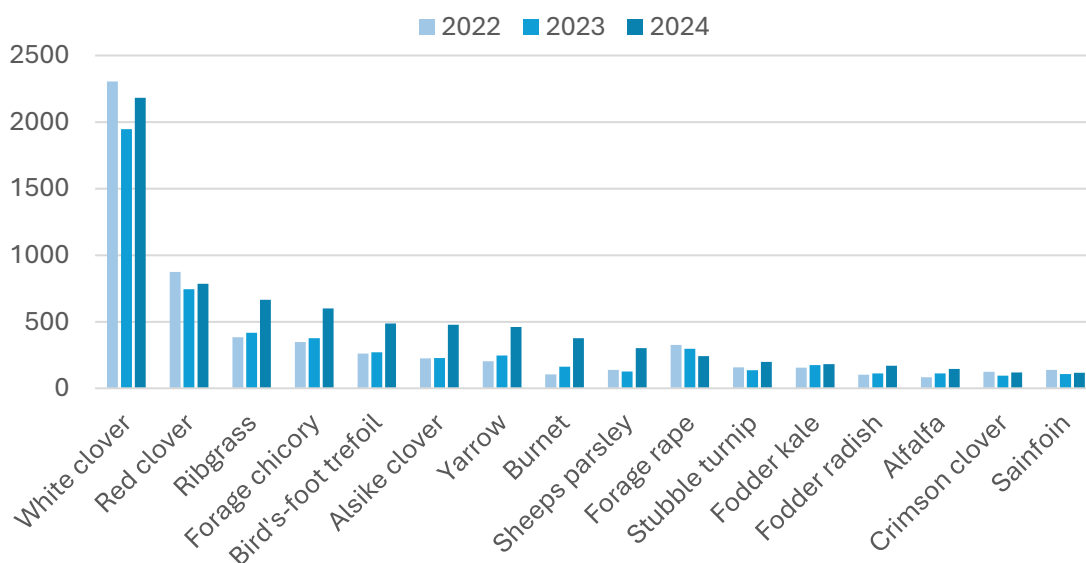
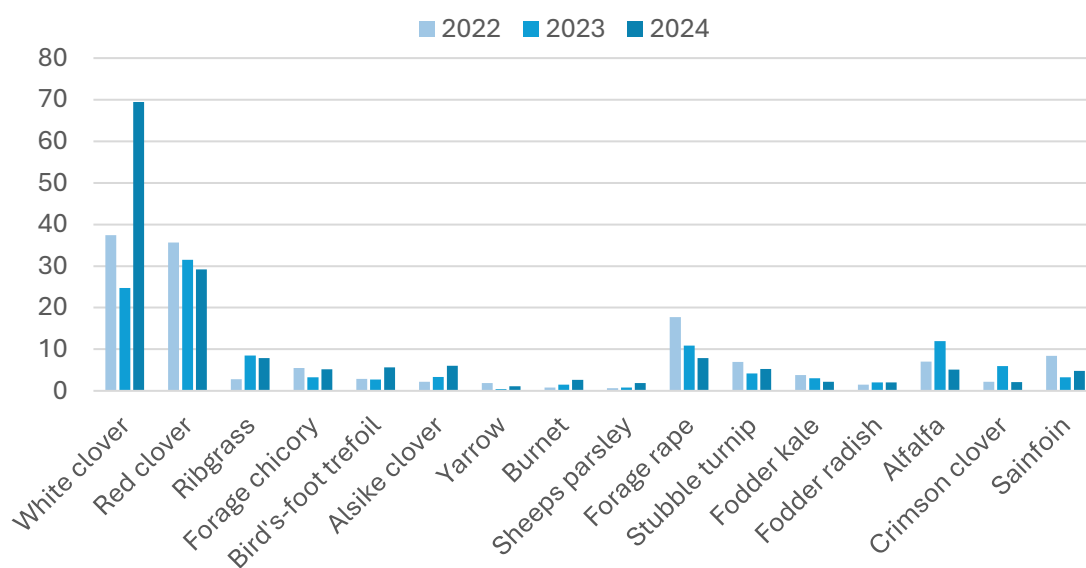


Figure 7. The total tonnage of non-organic seed authorised for common fodder and forage species from 2022-2024.



Grasses

For the common grass species listed in Table 4, there were a total of 2,288 authorisations granted for non-organic seed in 2024, totalling 84.88 tonnes of seed. Compared to the same species in 2023, this is a 17% increase in the number of authorisations and a 2% increase in the total tonnage.

Table 4. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for common grass species from 2022-2024 and the associated tonnage of those authorisations.

	2022		2023		2024	
	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
Perennial ryegrass	1,014	53.34	785	28.03	743	36.03
Timothy grass	330	14.56	331	8.11	318	7.41
Festulolium	99	3.89	94	3.27	168	5.45
Meadow fescue	108	4.26	102	3.95	165	3.99
Cock's-foot grass	138	5.49	120	11.26	127	2.86
Smooth meadow grass	52	0.97	30	0.76	106	2.40
Tall fescue	46	0.93	35	0.97	98	1.57
Hybrid ryegrass	104	4.64	116	4.94	96	5.05
Hard fescue	14	0.60	13	0.78	92	3.98
Red fescue	81	6.35	62	2.94	90	3.50
Chewing's fescue	68	3.49	72	2.49	89	4.47
Crested dog's-tail	61	0.76	59	0.49	81	1.22
Italian ryegrass	111	4.31	101	13.28	72	3.75
Westerwold ryegrass	33	2.82	30	2.21	43	3.19
Totals	2,259	106.40	1,950	83.47	2,288	84.88

Figure 8. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for common grass species from 2022-2024.

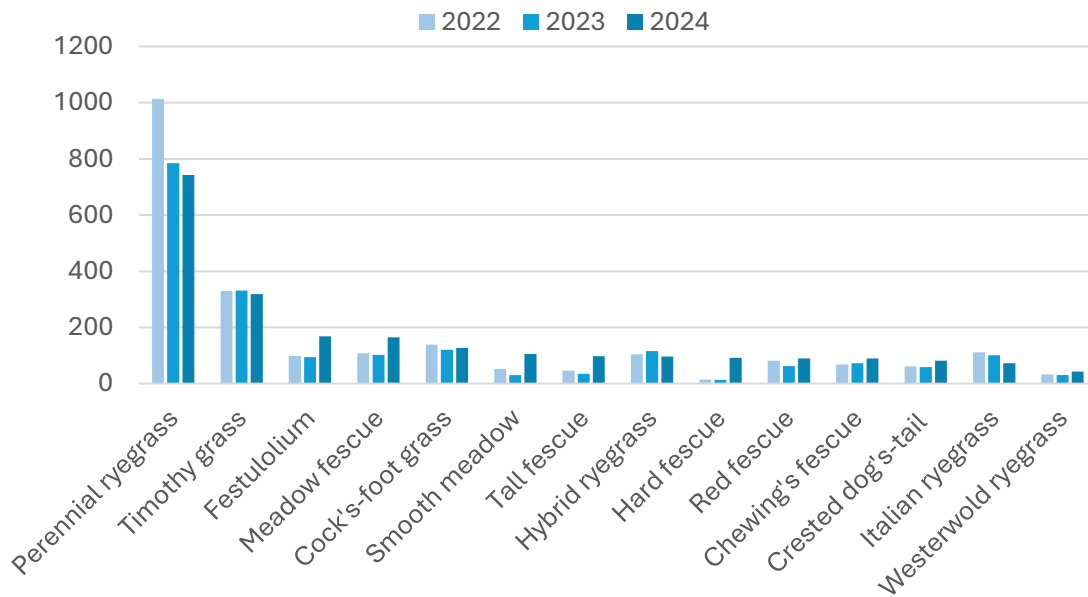
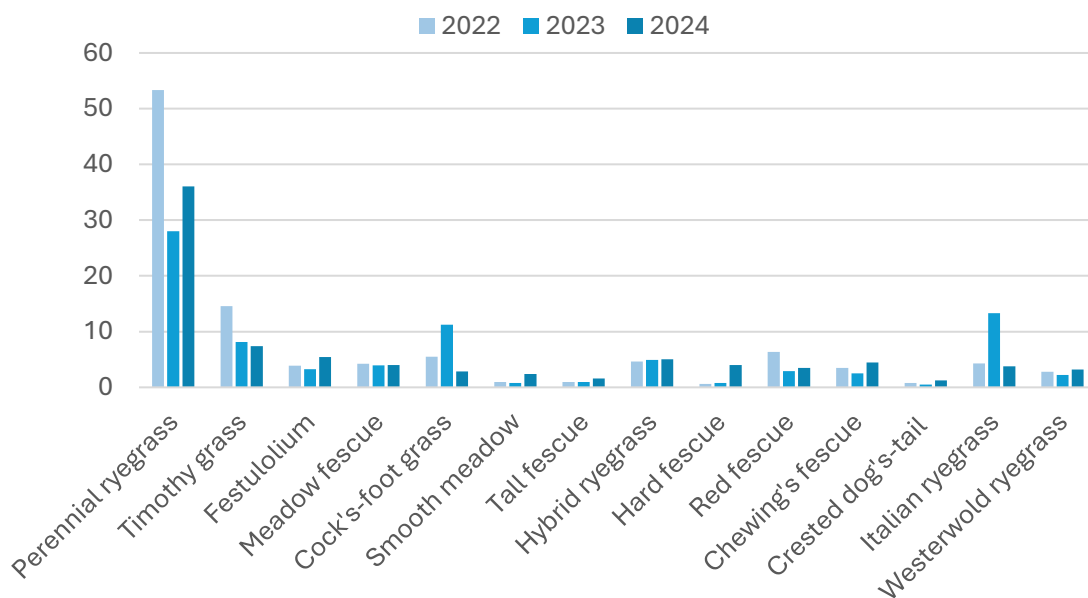


Figure 9. The total tonnage of non-organic seed authorised for common grass species from 2022-2024.



Cover

For the common cover crops listed in Table 5, there were a total of 854 authorisations granted for non-organic seed in 2024, totalling 36.81 tonnes of seed. Compared to the same crops in 2023, this is a 36% increase in the number of authorisations and a 48% increase in the total tonnage.

Table 5. The number of authorisations for common cover crops from 2022-2024 and the associated tonnage of those authorisations.

	2022		2023		2024	
	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
Millet	174	1.32	192	1.74	227	3.39
Yellow trefoil	87	1.21	93	1.27	144	1.80
Linseed	71	4.02	80	3.32	139	11.19
Common vetch	146	24.08	102	9.08	109	15.16
Phacelia	64	1.28	67	1.12	98	1.19
Berseem clover	62	3.27	36	1.75	71	1.62
White mustard	67	2.39	58	6.53	66	2.46
<i>Totals</i>	<i>671</i>	<i>37.57</i>	<i>628</i>	<i>24.81</i>	<i>854</i>	<i>36.81</i>

Figure 10. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for common cover crops from 2022-2024.

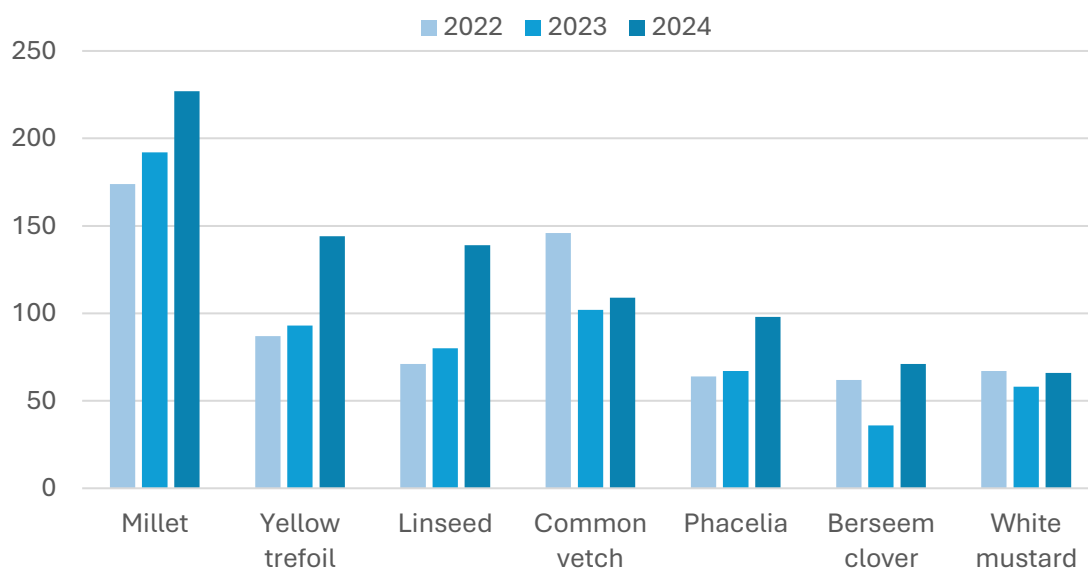
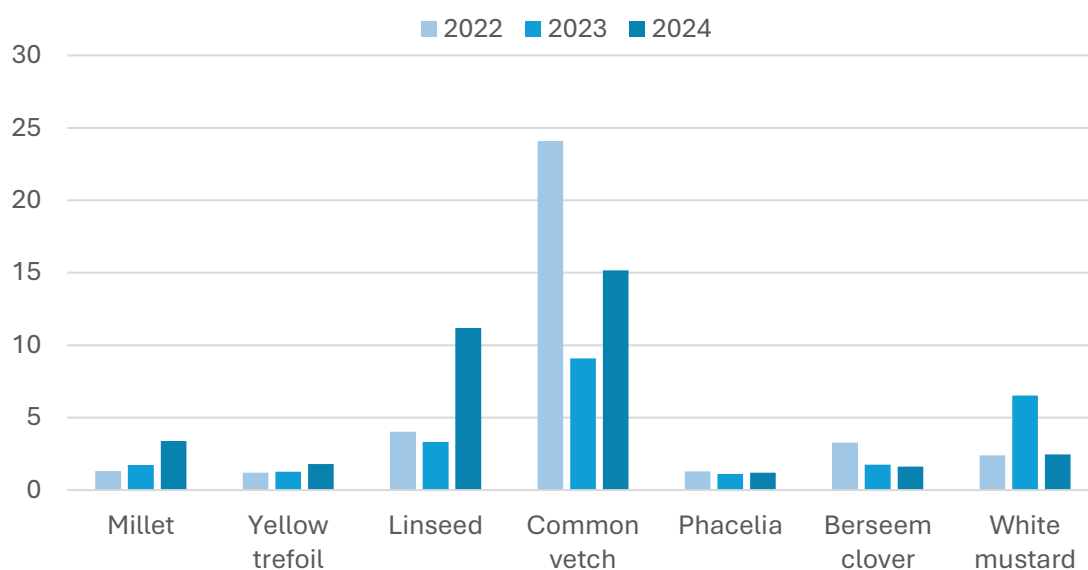


Figure 11. The total tonnage of non-organic seed authorised for common cover crops from 2022-2024.



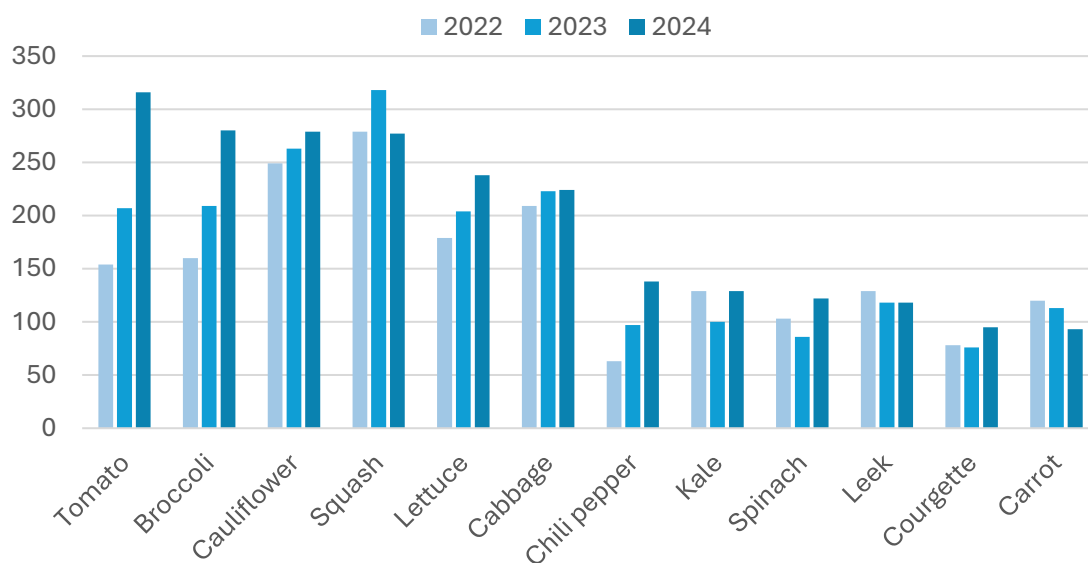
Vegetables

Vegetable crops cover a wide range of varieties and cultivars. For reporting, these have been grouped into core crop types. In addition, vegetable seeds are typically acquired by count, the weight of which can vary widely between varieties of the same species. For this reason, the number of seeds has not been converted to kilograms for reporting. For the core vegetable crops listed in Table 6, there were a total of 2,309 authorisations granted for non-organic seed in 2024. This is a 15% increase compared to the same crops in 2023.

Table 6. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for core vegetable crops from 2022-2024 and the total quantity of authorisations in 2024.

	2022	2023	2024	Total quantity of authorisations in 2024		
	No. of auths	No. of auths	No. of auths	No. of seeds	Seed (kg)	No. of plants
Tomato	154	207	316	352,233	0.39	2,986
Broccoli	160	209	280	38,403,247	1.52	0
Cauliflower	249	263	279	9,505,365	0.22	0
Squash	279	318	277	901,814	1.90	0
Lettuce	179	204	238	206,792,225	2.08	0
Cabbage	209	223	224	9,177,138	2.49	0
Chili pepper	63	97	138	9,542	0.00	0
Kale	129	100	129	5,578,798	2.93	0
Spinach	103	86	122	1,556,035,000	0.06	0
Leek	129	118	118	22,433,810	0.10	0
Courgette	78	76	95	335,897	26.62	500
Carrot	120	113	93	903,765,850	1.76	0
Totals	1,852	2,014	2,309	2,753,290,919	40.06	3,486

Figure 12. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for core vegetable crops from 2022-2024.



Potatoes

The total number of non-organic seed authorisations granted for potatoes in 2024 was 94, totalling 699.13 tonnes (Table 7). Compared to 2023, this is a 28% decrease in the total number of authorisations, and a 62% decrease in the total tonnage of seed potato. Table 8 lists the potato varieties with the highest number of authorisations granted in 2024.

Table 7. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for potatoes from 2022-2024 and the associated tonnage of those authorisations

	2022	2023	2024
No. of auths	104	131	94
Tonnes	930.00	1,826.00	699.13

Figure 13. The number of authorisations for non-organic seed potatoes from 2022-2024 and the associated tonnage of those authorisations.

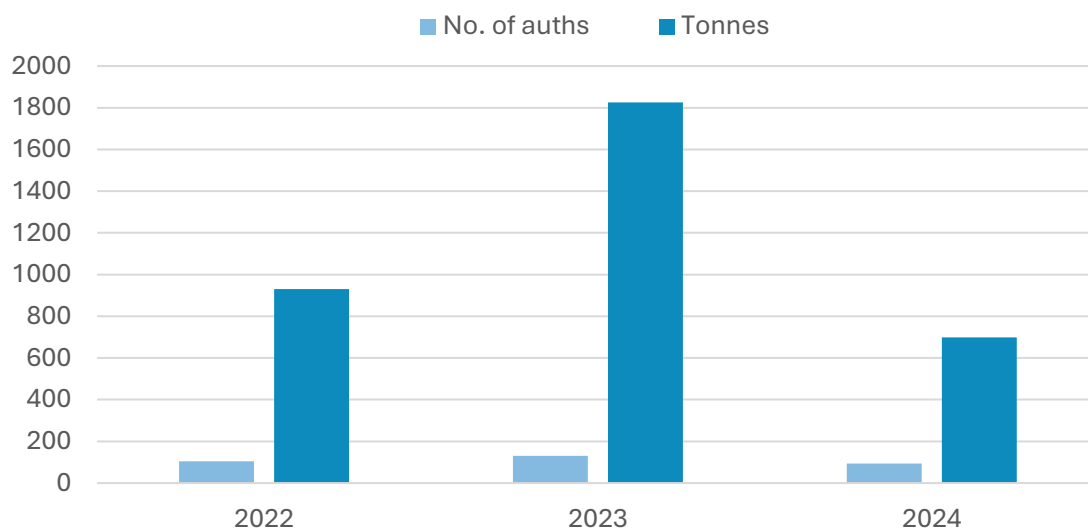


Table 8. Potato varieties with the highest number of non-organic seed authorisations in 2024 and the associated tonnage of those authorisations.

	No. of auths	Tonnes
Acoustic	10	139.67
Pink Fir Apple	10	2.95
Valor	6	77.59
King Edward	4	33.28
Swift	4	0.49
Jersey Royal	3	32.15
Cara	2	39.00
Marfona	2	34.00
Melody	2	32.00

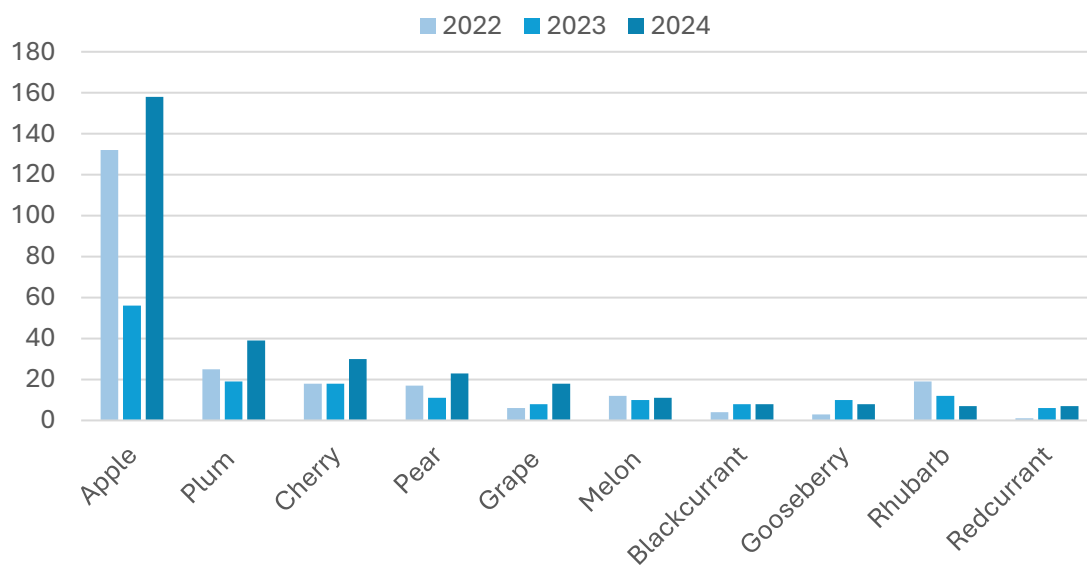
Fruit

For the common fruit species listed in Table 9, there were a total of 309 authorisations granted for non-organic seed in 2024. This is a 96% increase compared to the same species in 2023.

Table 9. The number of authorisations for common fruit species in 2022-2024 and the total quantity of authorisations in 2024.

	2022	2023	2024	Total quantity of authorisations in 2024	
	No. of auths	No. of auths	No. of auths	No. of plants/ plant material	No. of seeds
Apple	132	56	158	6,383	0
Plum	25	19	39	125	110
Cherry	18	18	30	4,513	82
Pear	17	11	23	99	0
Grape	6	8	18	547	0
Melon	12	10	11	0	1,359
Blackcurrant	4	8	8	135	0
Gooseberry	3	10	8	302	0
Rhubarb	19	12	7	1,071	6,000
Redcurrant	1	6	7	114	0
<i>Totals</i>	<i>237</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>309</i>	<i>13,289</i>	<i>7,551</i>

Figure 14. The number of non-organic seed authorisations for common fruit species from 2022-2024.



OrganicXseeds

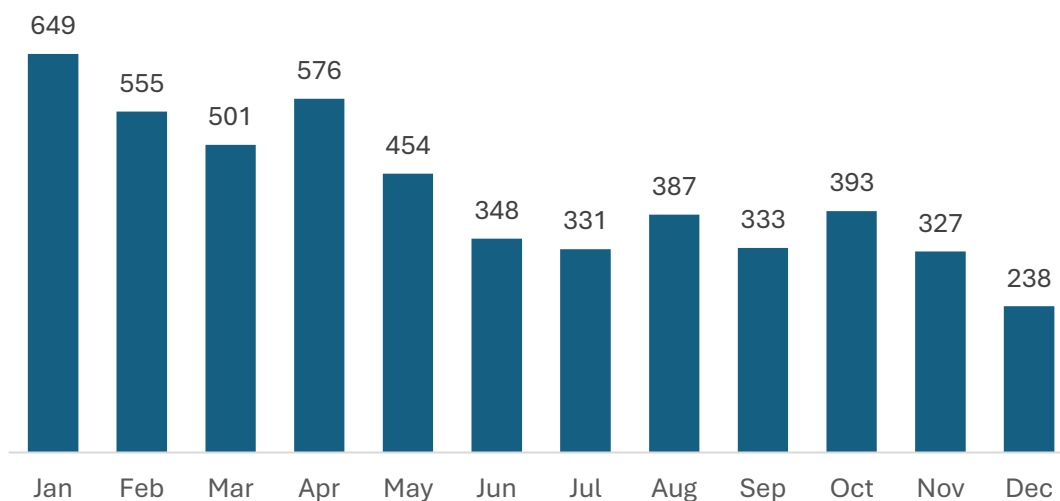
[OrganicXseeds](#) (UK-GB) is the official database of organic seed availability in UK-GB. It is designed for farmers and growers to source organic seed, seed suppliers to list organic seed they have available, and to assist organic control bodies in the authorisation of non-organic seed requests.

The database is a requirement of Assimilated Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and Assimilated Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, which regulate the use of organic seed. The use of this database is funded by Defra and managed by the Soil Association in partnership with database operator [FiBL](#).

Organic farmers and growers are legally obliged to use organic seed listed in the database, and control bodies are legally obliged to check the database for organic seed availability before issuing authorisations for the use of non-organic seed. Seed suppliers can choose to list organic seed on the database and are required by signed agreement with the Soil Association to update their listings in line with current availability.

As of March 2025, there were 31 seed suppliers registered in the OrganicXseeds (UK-GB) database, down from 34 in March 2024. Figure 15 shows the number of monthly visits to the OrganicXseeds (UK-GB) website in 2024 (data provided by FiBL).

Figure 15. The number of monthly visits to the OrganicXseeds (UK-GB) website in 2024



Annual Dataset

The complete dataset of non-organic seed authorisations granted in 2024 can be found accompanying this report on the OrganicXseeds (UK-GB) website: www.organicxseeds.co.uk

In accordance with Article 54 of Assimilated Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, the dataset contains, for each species concerned by an authorisation, the following information:

- The scientific name of the species and variety denomination.
- The English or common name of the species.
- The justification for the authorisation indicated by reference to Article 45(5), (described below).
- The total number of authorisations.
- The total quantity of seed and/or vegetative propagating material authorised.
- The chemical treatment for phytosanitary purposes as referred to in Article 45(2), (there are currently no chemical treatments allowed for phytosanitary purposes in UK-GB).

Note: The unit of measurement used to report authorisations varies. For example, some authorisations are reported in the weight of seeds and others in the number of seeds. These have been recorded in the dataset as they were received. For this report, the number of seeds has been converted to weight of seeds where appropriate.

Justification criteria

The justification for an authorisation is indicated by reference to Article 45(5) of Assimilated Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008. In UK-GB, it has been agreed by Defra to modify the Article and use the following justifications:

- (a) No variety of the species which the user wants to obtain is registered in the organic seed database provided for in Article 48.
- (b) The seed supplier is unable to deliver the seed before sowing or planting despite the user ordering in reasonable time.
- (c) No variety which the user wants to obtain is registered in the database, and the user can demonstrate that none of the registered alternatives of the same species are appropriate for production.
 - (d1) For research purposes.
 - (d2) To test in small-scale field trials.
 - (d3) For variety conservation purposes.
- (e) The seed is part of a grass or forage mix containing at least 70% organic seeds.
- (f) For seed production (for nurseries and plant propagators only).