

# Organic Cereals

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Trials carried out by the Scottish Agricultural College show that organically grown cereals can produce satisfactory yields in northern Britain. Oats yielded up to 4.5 t/ha and barley up to 5.5 t/ha. The trials have been running since 1987, and have involved an examination of spring oat and barley varieties grown under organic systems to assess yield potential, disease resistance and ability to compete with weeds. There are indications from the trials that shorter oat varieties do not perform so well under organic conditions, possibly because a certain length of straw is required to promote competition with weeds in the absence of herbicides. Similarly, disease can reach high levels in organically grown cereals, so it is even more important to choose varieties with the strongest possible genetic disease resistance.

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