Annual Report

Non-Organic Seed Authorisations 2024

Ireland

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

Prepared by Soil Association on behalf of the Department for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)

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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 Ireland in 2024.

As per EU regulation (EU) 2018/848, every member state is required to produce an annual report documenting the authorised use of non-organic seed, seed potatoes and vegetative propagating material, in organic farming. This information is intended for use by the seed industry, producers, policy makers and organic control bodies with the aim of improving the diversity, quantity, and quality of organic seed and therefore reducing the need for non-organic seed. This report also benefits the transparency of the organic sector more broadly.

The report and associated dataset are compiled by the Soil Association on behalf of DAFM and made publicly available via the OrganicXseeds (Ireland) website: ie.organicxseeds.com

Context

The area farmed organically in Ireland continued to grow in 2024, and approximately 218,000 ha (5.5% of utilisable agricultural area) was being farmed organically (converted and in conversion) by 5,000 farmers. There has been a significant increase in demand for livestock feed and food grade organic oats.

Summary

In 2024, the total number of authorisations granted for non-organic seed in Ireland was 3,060, the vast majority of which were for fodder and forage crops with 1,427 authorisations (Figure 1). Compared to 2023, this represents an increase of 5% in the total number of authorisations granted, and an increase of 15% since 2020 (Figure 2). This report covers eight of the major crop types: cereals, field peas & beans, fodder & forage, grasses, cover crops, vegetables, potatoes and fruit.

Figure 1. The number of authorisations per category in 2024.

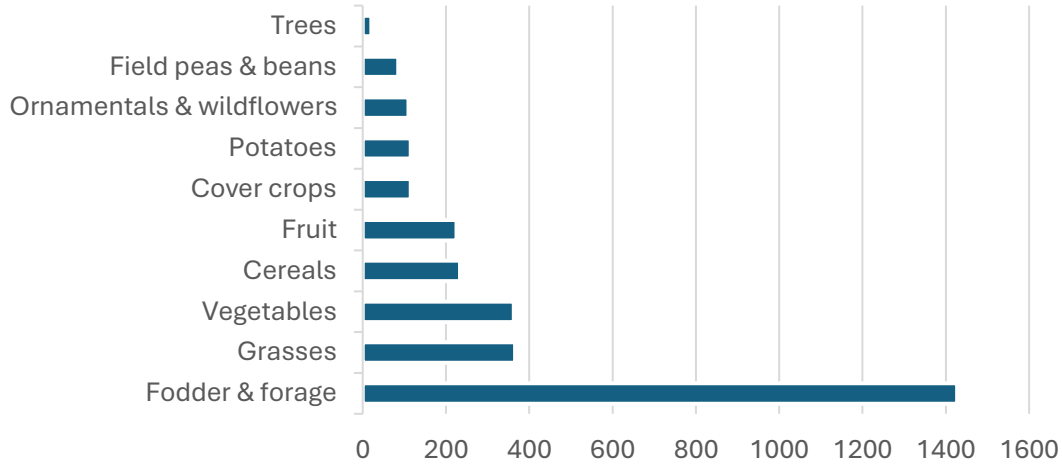
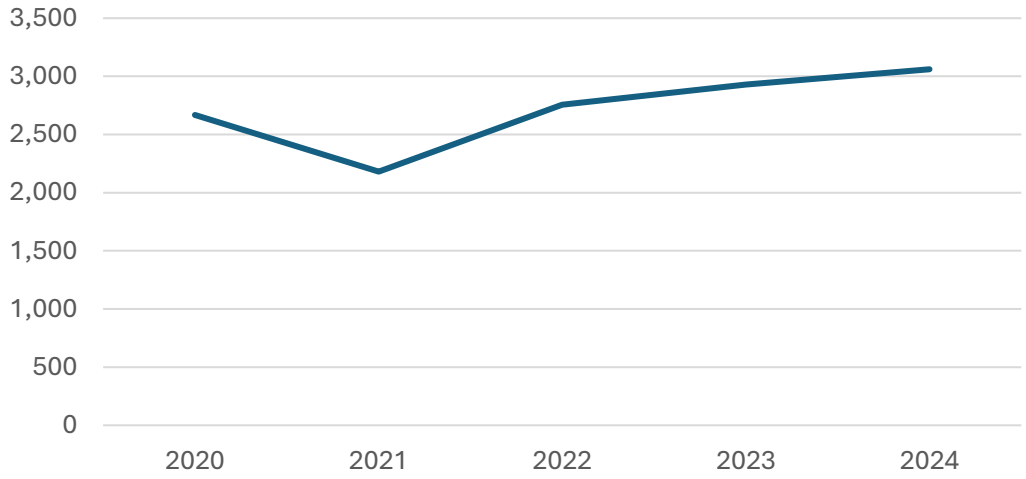


Figure 2. The total number of authorisations for non-organic seed from 2020-2024.



Cereals

For the major cereal crops listed in Table 1, there were 234 authorisations granted for non-organic seed in 2024, totalling 485.95 tonnes of seed. Compared to 2023, this is an increase of 18% in the total number of authorisations and an increase of 55% in total tonnage. As per previous years, the majority of authorisations granted for cereals in 2024 were for oats (Figures 3 & 4) and in particular, for the spring oat varieties *Husky* and *WPB Isabel*. In 2024, these two varieties accounted for 91% of the total number of oat authorisations and 97% of the total tonnage.

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

	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
Oats	155	374.41
Barley	45	96.17
Wheat	27	14.79
Triticale	5	0.35
Rye	2	0.23
Total	*234*	*485.95*

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

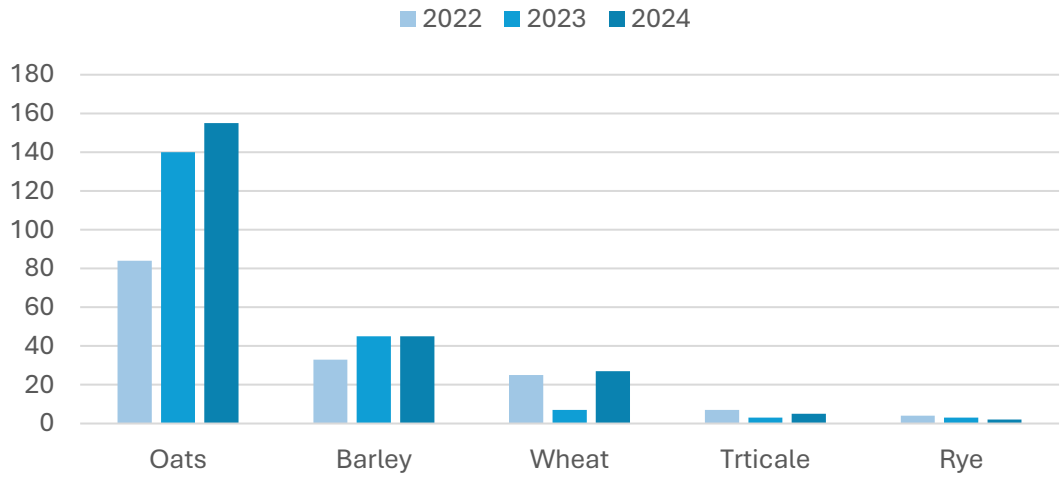
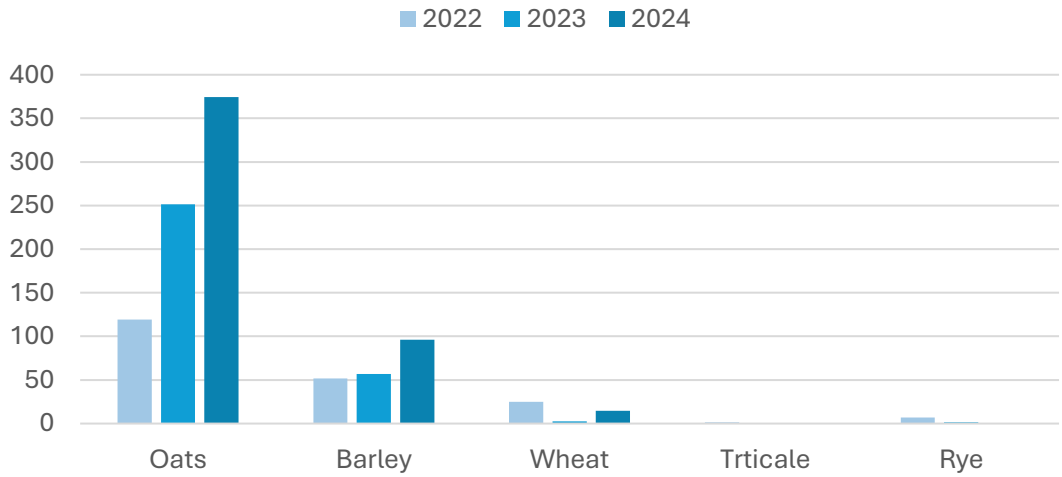


Figure 4. The total tonnage of non-organic seed authorised for major cereal crops from 2022-2024.



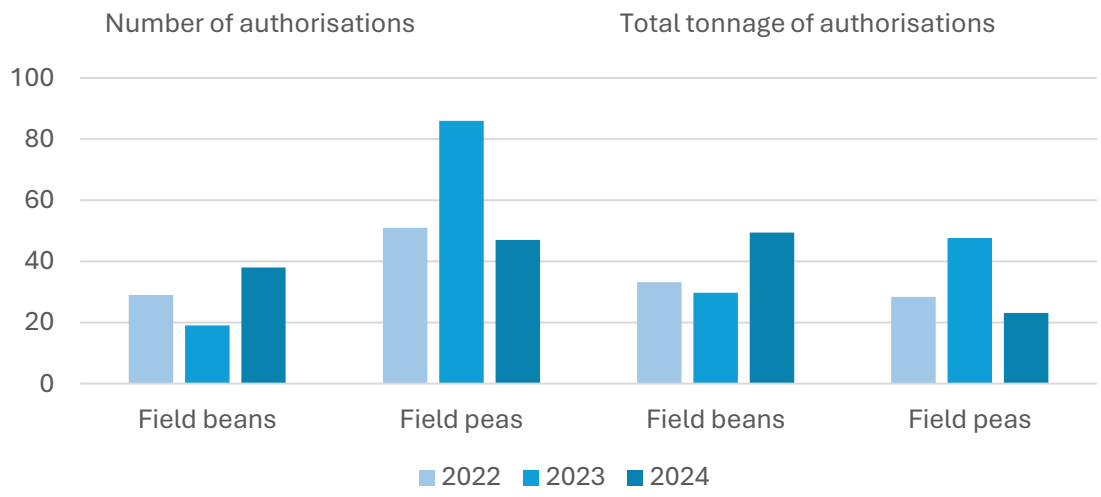
Field Peas & Beans

In 2024, there were 47 non-organic seed authorisations granted for field peas, totalling 23.11 tonnes of seed, and 38 authorisations granted for field beans, totalling 49.44 tonnes (Table 2). For field peas, this represents a 45% decrease in the total number of authorisations from 2023, and a 51% decrease in the total tonnage (Figure 5). For field beans, it is a 100% increase in the total number of authorisations from 2023, and a 66% increase in the total tonnage (Figure 5).

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

	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
Field beans	38	49.44
Field peas	47	23.11
Total	*85*	*72.55*

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 1,371 non-organic seed authorisations in 2024, totalling 28.83 tonnes of seed. Compared to the same species in 2023, this is a 14% increase in the number of authorisations and an 11% increase in total tonnage. Over the last three years, the number and tonnage of authorisations granted has consistently been highest for red clover, white clover and forage rape (Figures 6 & 7).

Table 3. The number of authorisations for common forage and fodder species in 2024 and the total tonnage of those authorisations.

	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
White clover	357	4.49
Red clover	329	9.52
Forage rape	173	7.54
Forage chicory	173	1.74
Ribgrass	166	1.82
Stubble turnip	73	2.43
Fodder radish	34	0.43
Yarrow	23	0.03
Alsike clover	18	0.04
Fodder kale	16	0.20
Crimson clover	9	0.59
Total	*1,371*	*28.83*

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

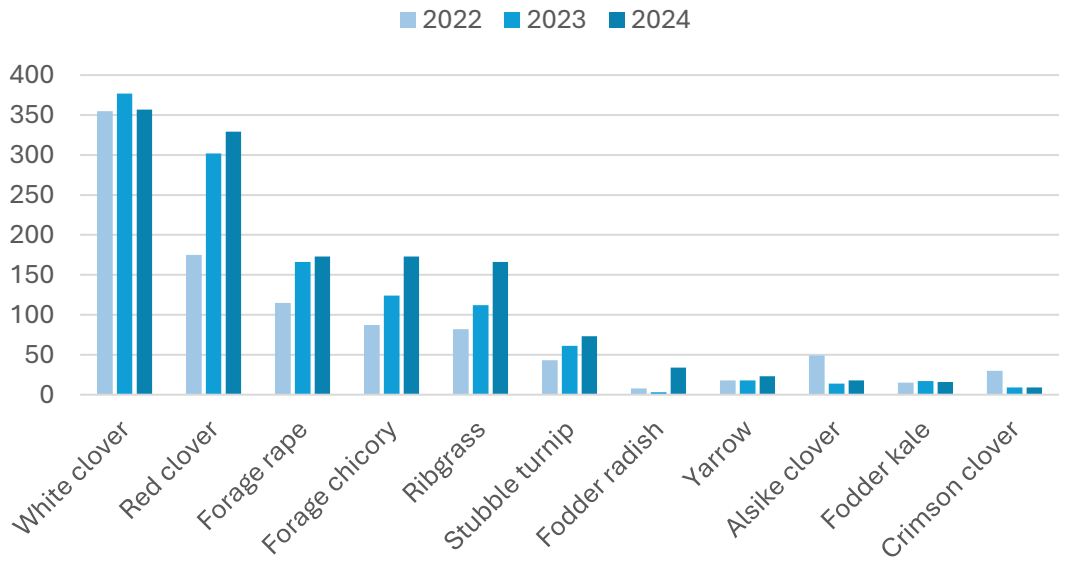
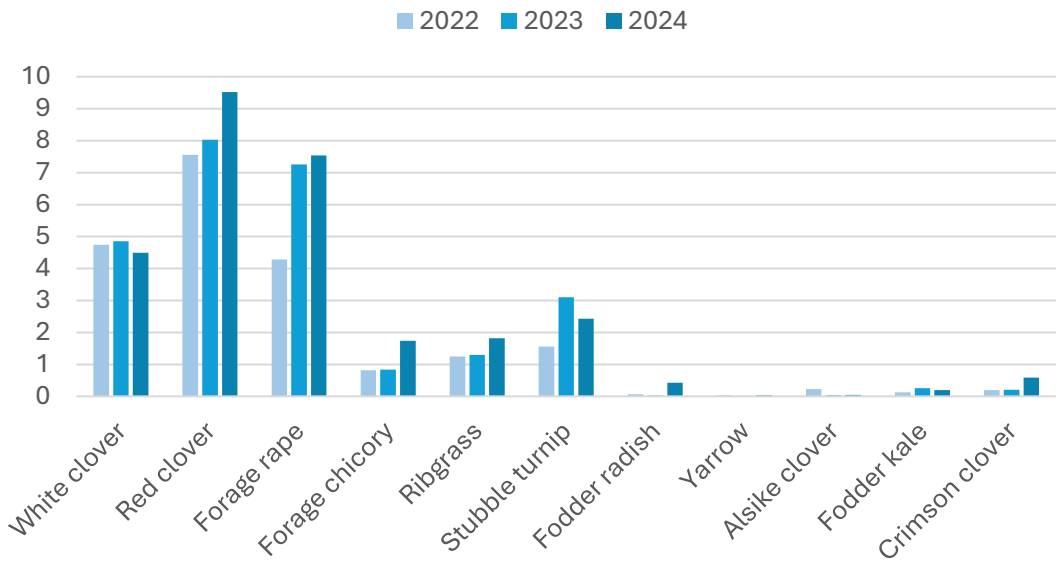


Figure 7. The total tonnage of non-organic seed authorised for common fodder and forage species from 2022-2024.



Grasses

For the common grass species listed in Table 4, there were a total of 351 authorisations granted for non-organic seed in 2024, totalling 10.83 tonnes of seed. Compared to the same species in 2023, this is a 26% decrease in the total number of authorisations and a 6% decrease in the total tonnage. As per the last three years, the majority of grass seed authorisations in 2024 were for perennial ryegrass, however the total number and tonnage of authorisations for this species has continued to decline (Figures 8 & 9).

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

	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
Perennial ryegrass	180	6.20
Timothy grass	110	1.19
Smooth stalked meadow grass	30	0.23
Meadow fescue	7	0.38
Cock's-foot grass	5	0.10
Red fescue	5	0.04
Festulolium	5	0.39
Hybrid ryegrass	4	0.32
Westerwold ryegrass	3	1.38
Italian ryegrass	2	0.60
Total	*351*	*10.83*

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

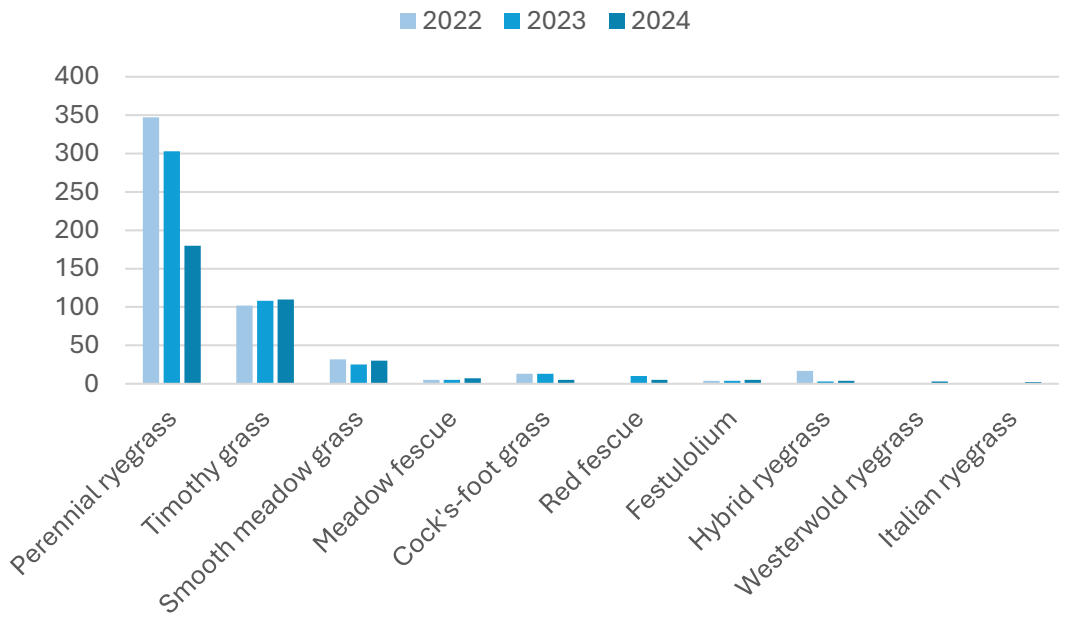
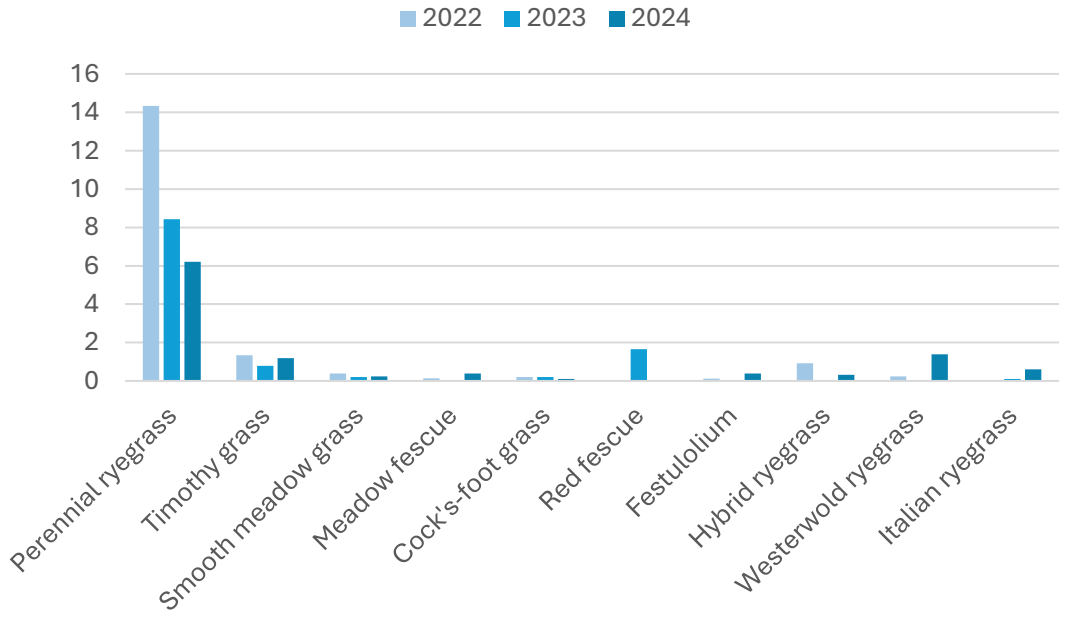


Figure 9. The total tonnage of non-organic seed authorised for common grass species from 2022-2024.



Cover

For the common cover crops listed in Table 5, there were a total of 100 authorisations granted for non-organic seed in 2024, totalling 2.47 tonnes of seed. Compared to the same crops in 2023, this is a 32% increase in the number of authorisations and a 27% increase in the total tonnage. The highest number of cover crop authorisations in 2024 were for phacelia (Table 5). Compared to 2023, the total number of authorisations for this species increased by 57% and the total tonnage by 116% (Figures 10 & 11).

Table 5. The number of authorisations for common cover crops in 2024 and the total tonnage of those authorisations.

	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
Phacelia	36	0.54
White mustard	27	0.43
Linseed	15	0.63
Common vetch	11	0.82
Yellow trefoil	9	0.01
Berseem clover	2	0.04
Total	*100*	*2.47*

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

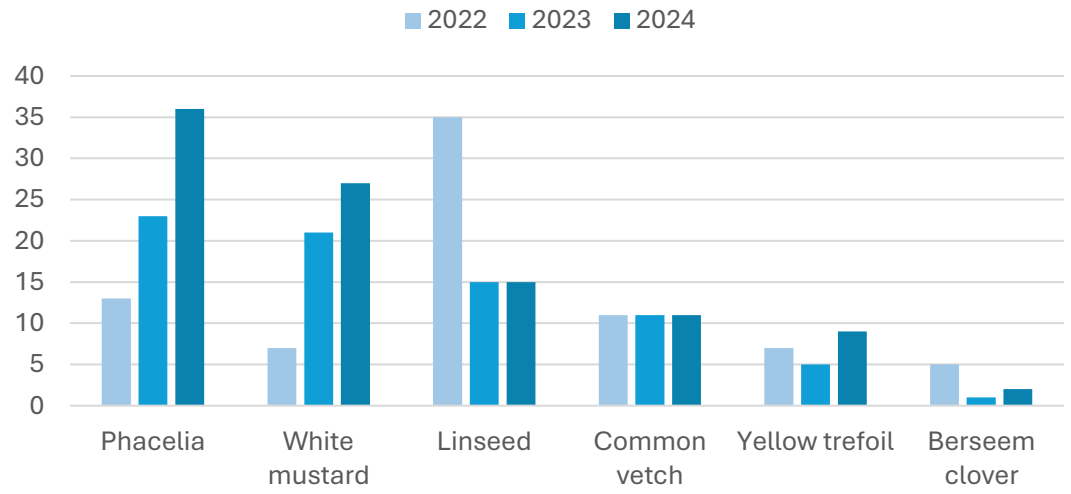
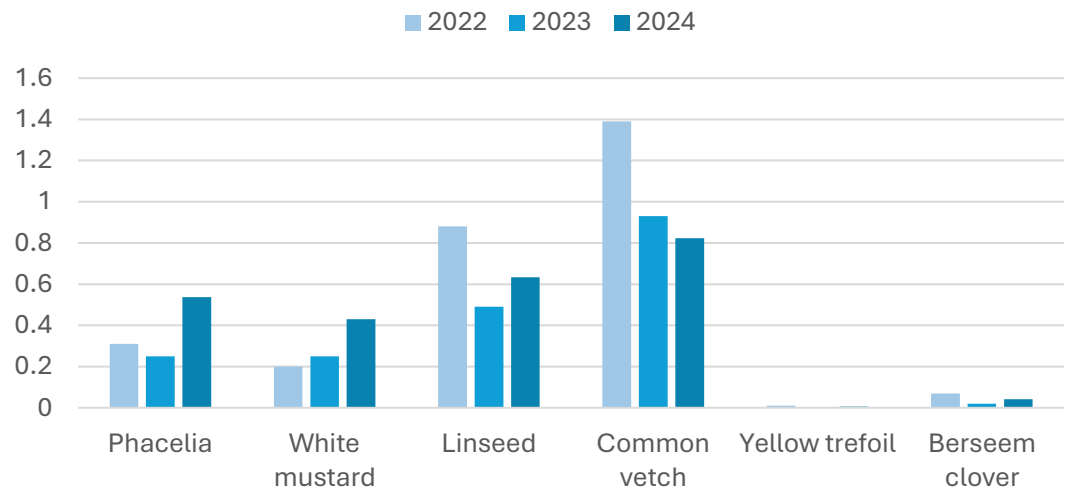


Figure 11. The total tonnage of non-organic seed authorised for common cover crops from 2022-2024.



Vegetables

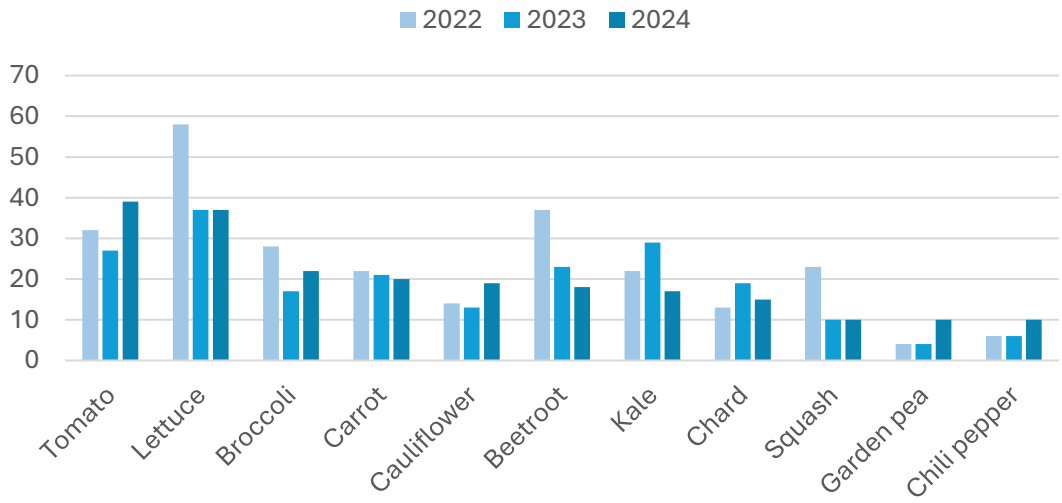
Vegetable crops cover a wide range of varieties and cultivars. For reporting, these have been grouped into core crop types, and the core crop types with the highest number of authorisations are reported here. In addition, vegetable seeds are typically acquired by count, the weight of which can vary widely 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 217 authorisations granted for non-organic seed in 2024. This represents a 5% increase compared to the same crops in 2023. For the last three years, non-organic seed authorisations for lettuce and tomato have consistently been among the highest for vegetable crops. Compared to 2023, the greatest increase in number of authorisations has been for tomato, cauliflower and garden pea, and the greatest decrease has been for kale, beetroot and chard (Figure 12).

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

		Total quantity of authorisations		
	No. of auths	No. of seeds	Seed (kg)	No. of plants
Tomato	39	1,343	1.055	20
Lettuce	37	159,560	1.06	0
Broccoli	22	693,065	10.9	0
Carrot	20	80,788,400	5.75	0
Cauliflower	19	50,000	0.005	0
Beetroot	18	1,440,400	0.545	0
Kale	17	169,905	0.55	0
Chard	15	732,200	2.725	0
Squash	10	2,118	0	0
Garden pea	10	865	0	0
Chili pepper	10	175	0.003	0
Total	*217*	*84,038,031*	*22.593*	*20*

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



Potatoes

The total number of non-organic authorisations granted for seed potatoes in 2024 was 115, totalling 76.92 tonnes. Compared to 2023, this is a 117% increase in the total number of authorisations, and a 332% increase in the total tonnage of seed potato. However, as was the case in 2020, 2021 and 2022, the increased demand for non-organic seed in 2024 was driven by a single variety, *Orla*. In 2024, this variety accounted for 75% of the total tonnage of non-organic seed authorised (Figure 13). Table 7 below lists the potato varieties with the greatest number and volume of non-organic seed authorisations in 2024.

Figure 13. The tonnage of non-organic seed authorised for Orla potatoes from 2020-2024 compared to the tonnage authorised for all other varieties.

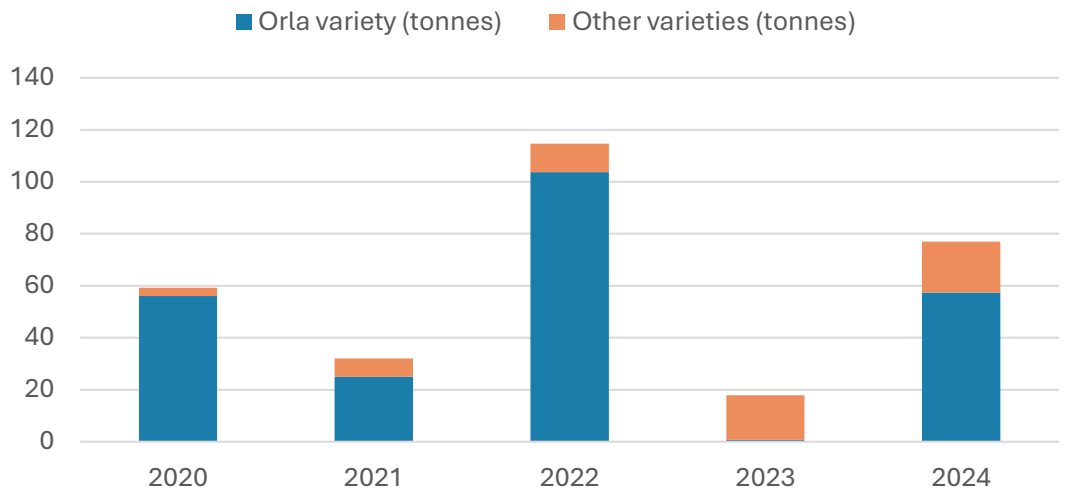


Table 7. Potato varieties with the highest number of non-organic seed authorisations in 2024 and single authorisation varieties with volumes greater than 1 tonne.

	No. of auths	Seed (tonnes)
Orla	35	57.43
British Queens	9	1.41
Solist	9	1.24
Agostino	7	1.00
Premiere	7	0.21
Kelly	5	0.37
Charlotte	4	0.11
Home Guard	4	0.25
Sharpe's Express	3	0.24
Setanta	2	0.39
Acoustic	1	10.00
Galante	1	2.00
Navan	1	1.00

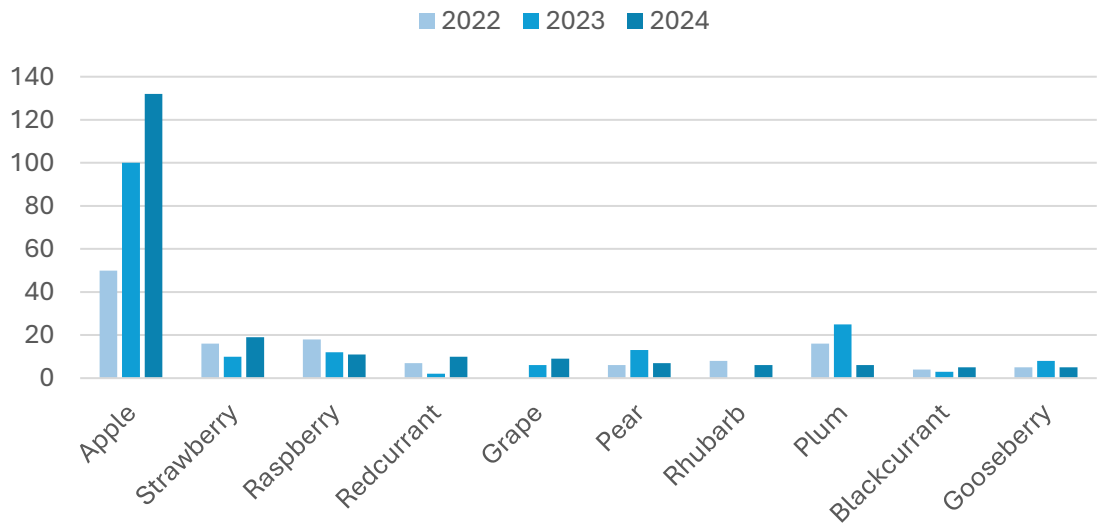
Fruit

For the common fruit species listed in Table 8, there were a total of 210 authorisations granted for non-organic seed in 2024. This is a 17% increase compared to the same species in 2023. As per previous years, this is largely due to an increase in the number of authorisations granted for apples which consistently account for the majority of fruit authorisations. In 2024, there were 132 authorisations granted for apples, an increase of 32% from 2023 and 164% from 2022 (Figure 14).

Table 8. The number of authorisations for common fruit species in 2024 and the associated quantity of those authorisations.

		Total quantity of authorisations	
	No. of auths	No. of plants/ plant material	Seed (kg)
Apple	132	352	
Strawberry	19	1,750	0.57
Raspberry	11	452	
Redcurrant	10	36	
Grape	9	776	
Pear	7	7	
Rhubarb	6	70	20
Plum	6	29	
Blackcurrant	5	88	
Gooseberry	5	17	
Total	*210*	*3,577*	*20.57*

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



OrganicXseeds

OrganicXseeds (Ireland) is the official database of organic seed availability in Ireland. It is designed for organic 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 EU Regulation (EC) 2018/848, which regulates the use of organic seed in organic farming. The use of this database is funded by DAFM 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 to update their listings in line with current availability.

As of March 2025, there were 29 seed suppliers registered in the OrganicXseeds (Ireland) database, up from 25 in March 2024 (Figure 15). Figure 16 shows the number of monthly visits to the OrganicXseeds (Ireland) website in 2024 (data provided by FiBL).

Figure 15. The number of seed suppliers registered to the OrganicXseeds (Ireland) website in 2024.

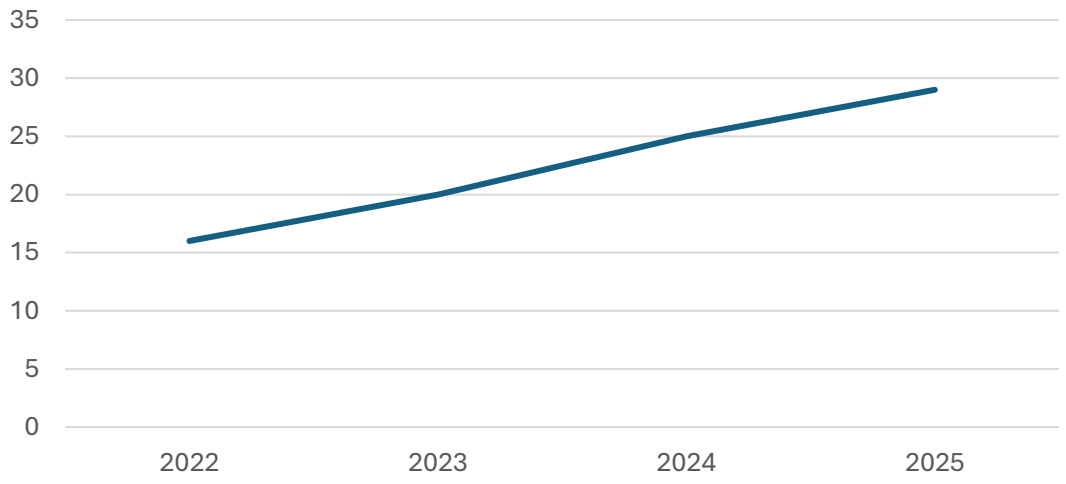
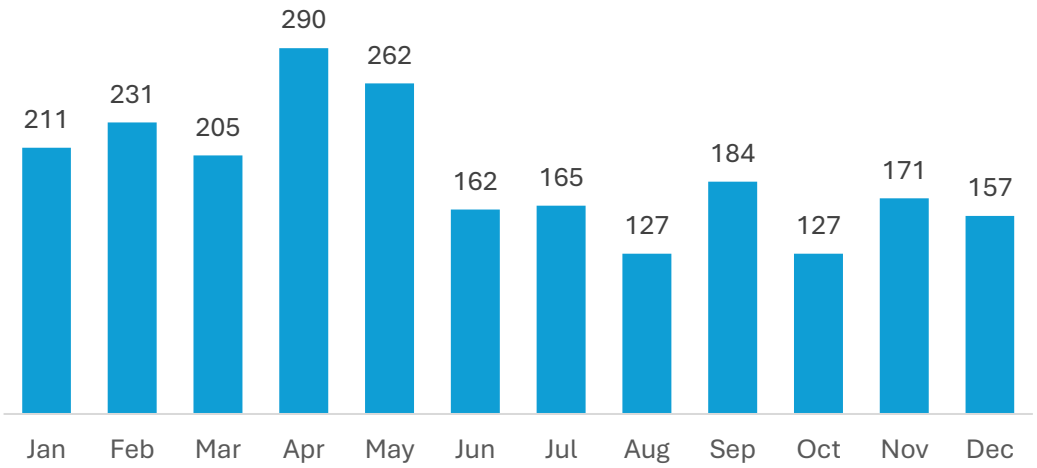


Figure 16. The number of monthly visits to the OrganicXseeds (Ireland) website in 2024.



Annual Dataset

The complete dataset of non-organic seed authorisations granted in 2024 can be found accompanying this report on the OrganicXseeds (Ireland) website: ie.organicxseeds.com

In accordance with Article 12 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1452/2003, 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 5(1), (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 3(a), (there are currently no chemical treatments allowed for phytosanitary purposes in Ireland).

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 5(1), (a), (b), (c) or (d):

(a) No variety of the species which the user wants to obtain is registered in the organic seed database provided for in Article 6.

(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.

(d) For research purposes, to test in small-scale field trials or for variety conservation purposes agreed by the competent authority of the member state.