



REAL'S CERTIFICATION SCHEME FOR QUALITY COMPOSTS

Compost Certification Scheme Newsletter December 2020



The Compost Certification Scheme has been established as a robust and reputable quality assurance and end-of-waste scheme. In this newsletter, you will find various ways in which it has been developed over the past six months, accompanied by related industry news.



Certification Body telephone numbers

OF&G

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NSF

+44 (0)1993 885 610

ACL

+44 (0)1984 624 989

Approved Laboratory telephone numbers

ATL

+44 (0)1449 721 192

D&F

+44 (0)1514 208 741

NRM

+44 (0)1344 886338

Media platforms

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/company/compost-certification-scheme/

Twitter

@compostcert

Producers Twitter

@CCSProducers

Research Hub Website

The Research Hub website is now live! The website was launched on the 12th June 2020 and can be accessed using:

www.realresearchhub.org.uk. The website provides information about the establishment of the Hub, its governance, ongoing research projects and explains how to get involved among other information. The Research Hub website is considered the central platform for the latest Research Hub information, news, and developments.

The second project of the Research Hub

The second project of the Research Hub has been selected and is titled: 'To develop a 'data pack' on the properties, characteristics, and content of digestate that will provide context for the development of new uses of outputs from Anaerobic Digesters'. The project will build on the information gained from the Research Hub's first project and will consist of three phases (data compilation and analysis, identification of alternative digestate uses/operator engagement and commercial viability assessment) with the aim to provide a valuable resource for the anaerobic digestion industry, as well as those concerned with circularity principles and waste-derived products. The Project Brief can be found on the Research Hub website [here](#).

The Research Hub has recently appointed a contractor for the second project of the Research Hub following a competitive tender process; REAL will announce who was awarded the Contract in the New Year. The project is scheduled to start in February 2021 and will run over the course of six months.

The Research Hub Annual Report

The first Annual Report of the Research Hub was recently published and provides an overview of the Hub's activity throughout 2019. The report outlines the reason(s) for the Research Hub's establishment, the governance of the Research Hub, the Research Hub Project Selection Process, the first project of the Research Hub, and the Research Hub fees. The full report can be found on the Research Hub website [here](#).

For Enquiries

Our 'Decision Making Tree' enables scheme participants to identify a point of call (organisation or individual) if they have a scheme related enquiry. The tree can be found on the CCS website [here](#).

Producers Twitter

We have recently created a private Twitter account to share news with scheme participants. This Twitter page is aligned with the 'news' section on our website. All updates, newsletters, and important changes to the Scheme are shared via our tweets and mirror the emails sent straight to Producers' inboxes. Producers are alerted when we tweet through a Twitter notification.

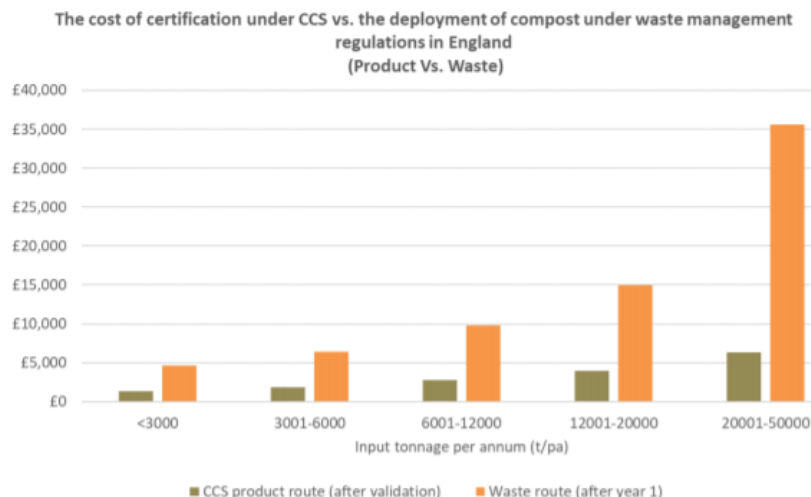
You can request to follow us at:
@CCSProducers

CQP Review

The EA published the outcome of its review of the CQP this week, which can be found [here](#), concluding that the QP needs revising if it is to continue to be used to demonstrate end of waste. Problematic areas highlighted include contaminants and the need for risk assessments to take into account recent soil science.

The EA propose to support a revision process to update the CQP (and republish as a 'Resources Framework'). They expect industry to pay for the revision. Industry can continue to use the QP but, if funding is not agreed to by 30 May 2021, the EA will withdraw their support and full waste regulatory controls will apply.

Once a revision process has begun, industry can continue using the existing QP until either a new Resources Framework is agreed or the process concludes without a successful resolution. If a revision is agreed, the EA will support the



Cost Comparison

We have recently updated our 2018 cost comparison analysis, which compares the average annual costs for renewal of certification under CCS (including research fees) and deployment of waste status composts under waste management regulations in England.

On average, an operator processing 20,001-50,000 tpa would incur an average annual cost of approximately £6,300 for independent certification against the end-of-waste criteria to renew their certification. The spreading of waste compost under waste regulations in England would cost approximately £35,600.

You can find the cost comparison document, with the information used for analysis, on our website [here](#).

CCS Producers' Forum and TAC

The first 2020 meeting of the CCS Forum took place in May. During this meeting, we provided updates on various developments including the Laboratory Approval Scheme, UKAS accreditation, and the Covid-19 position on annual audits. Questions regarding funding for the CQP review were raised and taken to the TAC in June.

Other agenda items for the TAC included an update from the Environment Agency on the CQP review. The Environmental Regulators and Approved Laboratories provided updates at the TAC on the impacts of Covid-19 on the industry and sample testing.

The winter CCS Forum took place in October. The agenda covered updates on plans for development of a Proficiency Testing Programme, CCS webinars for producers, and the Plant Response Test Technical Working Group. Producers also raised issues that

transition from the current QP to the new Resources Framework.

We will continue to liaise with the EA on interactions with PAS 100 and the CCS, as well as implications for the scheme across the whole of the UK.

QP Workshop

We have agreed with the EA to hold a joint industry-wide workshop on **20th January 2021** between 10 – 12 pm, for the EA to provide some further information on their reviews of the AD and compost QPs and plan for the revision process. You can register through this link [here](#) and attendance at this workshop is free of charge.

2019 Annual Report

Our 2019 annual report was published in September, providing an overview of Compost Certification Scheme data and developments over 2019.

At the end of 2019, there were a total of 182 compost processes certified under the scheme. Approximately 1.6 million tonnes of quality compost were produced annually by sites in England, 62,000 tonnes in Wales, 177,000 tonnes in Scotland and 123,000 tonnes in Northern Ireland.

The 2019 CCS Annual Report can be found on the CCS website [here](#).

Scheme Rules

The CCS Scheme Rules were reviewed earlier in the year and a revision process commenced in summer. They have been revised to clarify the 'Quality Assurance' certification category, and introduce improvements to the language and procedural requirements.

Draft version 9 was issued for consultation to all scheme participants and TAC members in August, and advice was sought from the TAC on specific issues in October. The new

they are experiencing when sending samples to the labs. This was raised at the TAC, which also took place in October. Following this, REAL have been reviewing scheme documents, including the CCS sampling guidance, to introduce clarification re sample transit.

SQCS Workshops

We held two workshops for compost Producers in August and September on the Safety and Quality Control System (SQCS) requirements in PAS 100:2018. The SQCS introduces a number of checks and controls, throughout the entire composting process, to ensure that compost is fit-for-purpose. This ensures that hazards relevant for compost quality are identified and controlled.

These SQCS workshops provided a platform for discussion around the implementation of the SQCS and compliance with HACCP requirements. The workshops were held by REAL and delivered online by a HACCP expert. Producers provided feedback that the workshops were extremely useful and a good platform for discussion.

'Understanding Test Results' Webinar

REAL recently developed and held a new webinar, 'Understanding Test Results', for all compost producers under the CCS. The first webinar was held on the 6th November, during which we delivered information on the core PAS 100 test methods.

We hope that by gaining a better understanding of the methods, and how they are executed in the laboratories, will help producers better interpret results they receive. The webinar also provided a platform for discussion on this topic. We received positive feedback for this webinar from Producers that attended. Look out for an invitation to the second Understanding Test Results webinar!

PT Programme EOI

We circulated an Expression of Interest document in September, which was designed to help REAL assess the technical feasibility and financial viability of developing an independently run proficiency testing (PT) programme for the scheme specific methods. You can find the document [here](#).

version will be effective and implemented in 2021.

Covid-19 and audits

In consultation with the Certification Bodies and at the beginning of the national lockdown, on-site audits were suspended in March, and replaced with remote audits. Operators have been required to provide all necessary paperwork to the auditor in advance and use real-time video conferencing technologies during the audit.

In August, the Certification Bodies resumed on-site audits, where possible, and remote audits have continued to take place where necessary e.g. if the auditor or site are assessed as at high risk, following a Covid-19 risk assessment.

The remote auditing process has proven to be robust and effective thus far. REAL agreed with all the environmental regulators to extend this agreement until 31st January 2021. All Operators have been kept up to date with any changes to the position.

CCS Participant Survey

We ran a scheme participant survey from 16th – 30th September, to help REAL assess scheme satisfaction amongst Producers and prioritise areas for further development. The survey was also devised to contribute to compliance with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015.

We received positive results from Producers, showing an overall very good level of satisfaction with the CCS.

Standard Rules Permit Consultation

Publication of the Standard Rules permits consultation outcome is expected in early 2021. We will share any developments in our newsletters when available.

The document asked several questions, and after consideration of the responses to these questions, REAL has decided to run an open tender process. The tender period started this week and the deadline for responses is Friday 5th February 2021. The tender invitation document can be found [here](#).

Plant Response Test Technical Working Group

The Plant Response Test Technical Working Group (PRT TWG) is the working group, facilitated by REAL, to provide producers and the environmental regulators with the opportunity to discuss specific issues that producers experience with the plant response test specified in PAS 100:2018. It has been set up as a sub-group to the CCS TAC to provide a platform for further discussion on this specific topic and will report to the TAC.

The group met for the first time on 8th September and the agenda included an overview of the Plant Response Test method, and agreeing the Terms of Reference. A catch-up teleconference for the PRT TWG was held in November and the next face-to-face meeting will take place early next year.



From everyone at REAL, have a very Merry Christmas and we look forward to working with you in 2021!

EU FPR

As of December 2020, the UK has not yet announced its decision on the EU Fertiliser Product Regulations. Once this decision has been taken, we understand that implementation of the regulations would be done via secondary legislation. We have been engaging with DEFRA regarding implementation and to seek clarification on specific legislative details. We will share any developments in our newsletters when available.



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