



REAL'S CERTIFICATION SCHEME FOR QUALITY COMPOSTS

Compost Certification Scheme Newsletter June 2021



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

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NSF

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ACL

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Approved Laboratory telephone numbers

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D&F

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NRM

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Media platforms

LinkedIn

[linkedin.com/company/compost-certification-scheme/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/compost-certification-scheme/)

Twitter

@compostcert

Producers Twitter

@CCSProducers

Research Hub

TO SUPPORT THE
ORGANICS SCHEMES



The first Project of the Research Hub- Research Library

REAL is pleased to announce the completion of the first project funded by the Research Hub earlier this year. The Research Library, which is an online platform compiled of research undertaken across the composting and anaerobic digestion industries, is now live. The Library brings together research that has been carried out across the industries and highlights notable research gaps. The Library will advance industry knowledge, inform areas of focus for future research project proposals, and in turn drive the industry forwards. CCS and BCS Scheme Participants, who fund the Research Hub, have been granted priority access to the Research Library. Wider industry stakeholders may request access to the Library.

The Second Project of the Research Hub (Digestate Data Pack)

Following a competitive tender period, the contract for the second project of the Research Hub 'To develop a 'data pack' on the properties, characteristics, and content of digestate that will provide the context for the development of new uses of outputs from Anaerobic Digesters' has been awarded to Solidsense Ltd. Solidsense will be sub-contracting AquaEnviro and Cambridge Eco Ltd to carry out specific elements of the project.

The project has commenced, and the work is projected to be finished at the end of November 2021. The project will gather information on the diversity of digestate characteristics produced across the UK, and how these characteristics relate to the feedstocks of the digesters. Currently, most digestate in the UK is applied directly to agricultural land; however, there are limits on the land available and restrictions on the timing and quantity of application. The work is designed to investigate alternative markets for digestates and explore technologies to develop new products from digestates.

For enquiries

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

CQP Review

The CQP review outcome was published in December 2020 on the government website with a deadline of the 30th of May 2021 for industry to commit to funding a revision.

We have since learnt that the revision process will have a 'task and finish' group to advise on the revision. We are also aware that sufficient pledges have been received by the EA to fund the required estimated costs of a revision process.

The EA have now confirmed that following the commitment for funding, the QP will not be withdrawn until the end of the revision process.

REAL's work in relation to the CQP review includes; a call for evidence submission to the EA, discussions and evidence gathering with the MDWG, a letter to the EA outlining REAL's funding proposal and request to sit on the task and finish group, and discussions with other UK regulators

We are currently liaising with the EA to discuss the details of the revision process and its timeline going forwards.

EU FPR

We are engaging with DEFRA, and the EA, on the implementation of the EU FPR, of which we expect

Third Project of the Research Hub

The Research Hub has initiated the process of selecting its next project for commissioning. A six-week call for research ideas concluded in February '21. The Research Panel met on the 26th of May 2021 to shortlist projects and will meet again in July to select the project that will be taken forwards. Look out for updates on the Research Hub website [here!](#)

Market Development Working Group

A joint industry-wide QP workshop organised by REA, REAL, CIWM, and ADBA, took place in January 2021. Following this, we held an MDWG teleconference to discuss any outputs that would be of relevance to the group, how the group could contribute to a QP revision process, and further consider the other potential workstreams we had identified before the end of the year.

One area we focussed on was looking at whether we can gather evidence from Scotland to support the addition of compost use in animal bedding as a market for compost in the CQP. We are now pulling together relevant materials and looking at how this market was developed in Scotland to inform these considerations. We also planned how we could promote compost to the growing media industry. One of the key outcomes from this telecon was the development and submission of a research project proposal to the Research Hub for new clear and concise marketing material for producers to sell into the horticulture/amenity gardening markets.

The group met in again May and agenda items included compost use for animal bedding, and composting oversize. The QP reviews were also discussed in depth during the meeting.

CQP workshop

The REA held an event for industry today on the CQP review. Industry was invited to sign up for the workshop and attendees encouraged to come prepared to contribute to discussions.

Plant Response Test TWG

The second meeting of the Plant Response Test TWG took place in February. During this meeting, we presented data analysis based on the CCS database test results spanning January 2020 – January 2021 (N=440). The pass rate for weed plants after 28 days and

an announcement and consultation period on later this summer.

Covid-19 and audits

In consultation with the Environmental Regulators and the Certification Bodies in January 2021, and in light of the current situation regarding COVID-19, we extended our agreement for remote auditing under the CCS.

Both remote inspections and on-site/physical inspections have continued to take place since 1st February. On-site inspections take place where possible, following a COVID risk assessment; where the auditor and operator can comply with government guidance including social distancing, hygiene practises, and PPE. Remote inspections take place where the auditor or site cannot comply with government guidance, there are local or national lockdowns in place, or there are issues with staff affecting their ability to carry out a physical audit.

We agreed a third extension to this agreement in England until 31st May 2021, and in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland until 31st July 2020. This position was reviewed again in May and will be in July, respectively. All producers will be informed of any changes.

The agreement with the EA has since been extended until September. We have now agreed that on-site inspections are presumed for all sites but in certain circumstances, where an on-site inspection is not possible (e.g. there are area restrictions in place), a remote inspection can take place. The certification bodies will document the reason for choosing a remote inspection. Additionally, second remote audits must be avoided. If this cannot be done then the reasoning will be

tomato plant abnormalities was 100%, the pass rate for plant germination was 97.5% and for plant top growth 96%.

The PRT TWG members agreed that the test was supporting the scheme in showing the majority of compost produced was of high quality based on this criterion. Although, despite the low number of failures, it was agreed that compost producers struggle to interpret certain test failures and thereby what corrective actions to apply.

Following this meeting and in relation to the open discussion, the group submitted a research project proposal to the Research Hub, which seeks to investigate the anthropogenic compounds/phytotoxins present in composting feedstocks and compost. It will then look to define a suite of chemical tests to enable release to restricted markets following PRT failures on germination/top growth.

An update paper detailing REAL's work surrounding the Plant Response Test, the formation of the Plant Response Test TWG, and the meetings of the group, was published for industry in April. The paper can be found on our website [here](#).

CCS Scheme Rules

Last year, we reviewed and revised the CCS Scheme Rules. A revised draft version was circulated for consultation to all certified producers, certification bodies, and TAC members. Following this consultation period and further discussions with stakeholders, we finalised the new version of the rules in February. Version 9 was issued and became effective in March, and is available [here](#).

Key changes to the rules include:

- Reference to the Environment Agency's outcome of the CQP review
- Removal of the 'Quality Assurance' category of certification

There was a two-month transition period during which producers were required to make any changes to documentation. This period ran from the 1st of March to 1st of May 2021. The audit checklist was also updated during this time and in use by the certification bodies for audits. It be found on our website [here](#).

Workshops & Webinars

Since December, we have held two more webinars for producers; one sampling webinar in February and one 'Understanding Test Results' webinar in March. Both webinars were well attended and we

given by the certification body to the local EA officer.

If you would like any further information or have any questions regarding audits during this time, please feel free to email REAL.

Standard Rules Consultation Outcome

The outcome of the Environmental Permitting Standard Rules Consultation was published on the government website in February.

There were 45 responses to the consultation from industry. The full summary of responses outcome document can be found [here](#).

Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England- Consultation Open

We would like to raise awareness regarding the consultation that DEFRA have opened, which details specific policy proposals for increasing consistency in recycling collected from households, businesses and other organisations. They are seeking views on the materials included in each recyclable waste stream, exemptions, statutory guidance and transition timelines for local authorities and businesses.

This survey is currently open and will close at **23:59 on 4th July 2021**. Find more information and access to the survey on the Defra website [here](#).

PT Programme

We circulated an Expressions of Interest document in September, which resulted in the decision to open a full tender process for the development and delivery of a

received positive feedback from each session. We encourage all producers to attend webinars and provide feedback, as this shapes the content and direction of future webinars.

We also received positive feedback from the 2020 SQCS workshops and held two more in April and May 2021, which were both successful with plenty of discussion. We have disseminated the guidance document presented in the workshops to all attendees of the SQCS workshops. This document provides an indication of what is expected for compliance with the SQCS requirements of BSI PAS 100: 2018.

CCS Producers' Forum

We held a producers' forum meeting on the 12th of May and agenda items included; an update on the CQP review, the Scheme Rules, the Plant Response Test Technical Working Group, and the Research Hub. Furthermore, discussions took place around third-party suppliers, bagged product labelling, and stones in compost.

We posed questions to producers at the forum in relation to compostable materials and received informative feedback. Input from producers and the composting industry is extremely beneficial in informing the work that REAL carries out in to the Compostable Materials Certification Scheme.



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proficiency testing (PT) programme. This PT programme would be limited to scheme specific methods.

The tender period started in December and ended in February. We received no full tender submissions so concluded the tender process in February. We have since been holding internal discussions, with the Approved Laboratories, operators, and our TAC, on potentially proceeding with a focus on specific parameters.

Compost Certification Scheme is part of Renewable Energy Assurance Limited.
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