

Compost Certification Scheme Newsletter August 2022



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.

Producers' Forum and TAC

We held the last meeting of the Producers' Forum in May, which was held as a hybrid meeting in Cambridge, the first time the forum was not wholly online since the Covid-19 pandemic began. The key topics of discussion at the meeting included: an update on the progress of the Compost Quality Protocol revision, which led to a discussion on possible comparators for compost; an update from the Research Hub; and a discussion on contamination levels in Local Authority contracts and how this manifests in incoming loads.

Comments from producers on contamination were then raised at the June TAC meeting and an action was taken for this to be discussed outside the TAC with Local Authority and trade body representatives. It was suggested that REAL consider expanding those invited to the TAC including Defra's Peat Team and those involved in important industry research. This meeting included an update on the technical discussions over PTE testing and discussion over the inclusion of Molybdenum in the PAS testing suite. This meeting was also attended

Certification Body telephone numbers

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ACL

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Approved Laboratory telephone numbers

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D&F

+44 (0)1514 208 741

NRM

+44 (0)1344 886338

Media platforms

Twitter

@compostcert

Producers Twitter

@CCSProducers

For enquiries

Our 'Decision Making Tree' enables scheme participants to identify a point of call (organisation) if they have a

by representatives from Defra who delivered an update on the GB FPR and by Richard Fairweather from the EA, who gave an update and was open to questions on the QP revision.

Market Development Working Group

The MDWG met in April; the meetings last year had been postponed into 2022 due to uncertainty over the QP revisions and delays to the Defra consultation on the implementation of the EU FPR.

The group discussed market-related changes over the last year, for example the increased value of digestate. David Tompkins from Aqua Enviro also attended to discuss the WRAP project on plastics in compost and digestate and a BEIS project relating to digestate. Following this meeting, the MDWG submitted a proposal to the Research Hub to gather evidence for potential future revisions to the plastic limits in PAS 100 and PAS 110. The group is awaiting the outcome of the current Hub selection process.

REAL are now reviewing the Terms of Reference for the group going forward as well as looking to appoint a new chair.

Plant Response Test Technical Working Group

The group met in March and gave feedback on the Research Hub's Tender Invitation Document for the third research project (focussed on plant response testing), which has been collected in a paper sent to the Research Hub Panel for consideration

The group also discussed different Plant Response Tests (i.e., Spring Barley and Field Bean) to determine appropriateness for different end markets. This was considered valuable and as such the group has amended the proposal submitted for the third Research Hub project to investigate the Spring Barley test in comparison to the PRT.

Laboratory Reappointment

All three Approved Laboratories were reappointed this year to undertake PAS 100 testing of compost for the Compost Certification Scheme, following the independent audit round in 2021. The approval process involved review of the audit report and findings, and discussion with the Certification Bodies.

Scheme Rules Review and Revision

Earlier this year, a review of the scheme rules was carried out, and the decision was made to revise the rules.

The revision process began in May and the revised rules have been sent out for consultation to all scheme participants and stakeholders. The aim is to implement the rules from the beginning of next year. The key proposals and changes include: re-introducing remote auditing at intervals, the reintroduction of independent sampling, and changes to the display requirements of the certification mark.

scheme related enquiry. The tree can be found on our website [here](#).

CQP Revision

The scoping meeting for the CQP took place in December 2021, followed by the EA circulating their cost estimates for revision of both QPs. The next meeting of the Task and Finish group will take place on Monday the 5th of September, the process is anticipated to take 6 months following this meeting.

REAL Scheme's contribution to the QP revision includes: financial contribution to cover the cost of the revision process, attending Task & Finish group meetings to clarify the Scheme's perspective, and, providing data & analysis when readily available, including into plastics content in certified compost and digestate.

REAL Research Hub's contribution is focused on evidence gathering support including: R&D to allow constructive debates & decisions, access to the Hub's reports for the EA, and access to the Research Library for the EA.

GB FPR

In 2021 the Defra Fertilisers Team began engaging with Industry and REAL on the GB FPR. Defra are currently reviewing the domestic fertiliser regulations and how retained articles of the EU FPR could be utilised in a new framework.

REAL have recently held a series of liaison meetings with Defra, in which policy developments and the structure of CCS and BCS were discussed in detail.

Covid-19 and audits

A review meeting took place between REAL and the environmental regulators in January. The previous agreement with NIEA was reintroduced until 31st March allowing remote audits in Northern Ireland under exceptional circumstances. This agreement has since lapsed, meaning a return to all audits on-site across the UK for the first time since March 2020.

Workshops and Webinars

Since December we have run two more webinars, on sampling and understanding test results. The Sampling Guidance Webinar was held in March, and the Understanding Test Results Webinar in April. Feedback on these webinars has been positive and REAL are considering the development of further webinars as well as a return to on-site sampling workshops in 2023.

Early in 2022, we also held our SQCS Workshop; this workshop is led by a HACCP expert and provides a platform for discussion around the implementation of the SQCS and compliance with HACCP requirements. Following the workshops, REAL disseminates the guidance document presented in the workshops to all attendees. Feedback on this workshop was very positive, with all attendees agreeing that the interactive exercises were very beneficial. REAL will be holding the next SQCS workshop in September.

Research Hub

Completed projects

The First Project

The Organics Recycling Research Library continues to be updated with new publications reflecting current research relevant to compost and digestate/AD. This resource is available free of charge for all CCS and BCS Participants and for an annual fee to all other parties.

The Second Project

Upon completion of the project in December 2021, the Solidsense Ltd Consortium produced two reports: a standalone Digestate Data Pack and an associated Digestate Valorisation Report. The Digestate Data Pack contains database analysis of key digestate characteristics, whereas the Valorisation Report provides a comprehensive examination of viable alternative uses for digestate.

CCS and BCS Participants and government employees can request access to the Digestate Data Pack and Valorisation Report free of charge. All other parties can request access to the two reports for a one-time fee of £216 (more info [here](#)).

Since its completion, the project's technical reports have been distributed to 12 individual recipients from various government agencies and the industry.

To request access to the Research Library and/or the Second Project Reports, please email megan@realschemes.org.uk

Current Projects

The Third Project

This project did not receive any tender submissions during the open tender period which closed in December 2021. The Hub sourced stakeholder feedback as to why the project received no response.

Engagement with Environmental Regulators

REAL have been meeting with each of the environmental regulators for the annual liaison meetings. REAL has been seeking the regulators' views on any scheme-specific issues of relevance which have arisen, as well as discussing broader policy and regulatory changes.

Tender for Certification Services

REAL opened a tender for provision of certification services under the Compost Certification Scheme on the 25th of July. The tender period is running for 6 weeks, closing on the 4th September.

REAL wish to appoint a number of certification bodies (number not specified) to run REAL's Compost Certification Scheme on its behalf. The selected certification bodies will provide certification services on behalf of REAL, in compliance with the most recent issued version of the REAL Compost Certification Scheme Rules.

The tender invitation document can be found on the CCS website [here](#).

Website Updates

REAL have recently made two updates to the website, the first being the inclusion of a map showing where our certified operators are located, which you can view on the 'Overview' page of our website [here](#).

In addition, following feedback regarding awareness of events, we have introduced an events page on our website. This page will show information regarding upcoming webinars, workshops, and forum meetings, as well as REA training courses or other industry events and how to attend these. This page is available [here](#).

Concerns included the timings of the contract and the objectives of the project being too broad and lacking clarity.

REAL's Plant Response Test Technical Working Group, who developed the proposal accepted the feedback from the Hub's investigation and decided to amend the proposal to make it more relevant and clearer. The updated version has been shared with the Research Panel and its Project Management Team for review.

The Fourth project

The tender period for the fourth project, titled "Evaluation of the potential for the improvement of the Residual Biogas Potential Test and investigation of alternative test procedures for PAS110 biofertilisers" closed in December 2021. After a thorough consideration of the tenders received, Aqua Enviro was appointed to complete the project. They have begun work and are projected to complete the project in April 2023.

The full project brief can be found [here](#).

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