



REAL'S CERTIFICATION SCHEME FOR QUALITY COMPOSTS

## Compost Certification Scheme Spring Newsletter May 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.

**Research**  
**Hub** TO SUPPORT THE ORGANICS SCHEMES

### Certification Body telephone numbers

#### OF&G

+44 (0)1939 291 800

#### 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/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/compost-certification-scheme/)

#### Twitter

[www.twitter.com/compostcert](http://www.twitter.com/compostcert)

## First Project of the Research Hub – Successful Contractor

Following a tender period that concluded in December '19, REAL are delighted to announce that NNFCC have been appointed as the contractor for the first project of the Research Hub: 'The development of a research library for the Organics Recycling industry'. NNFCC submitted an impressive tender document in response to REAL's invitation for tenders, and following an interview at the REAL's offices in November '19, REAL took the decision to offer NNFCC the contract, which has been accepted. We look forward to working with NNFCC on this project in the coming months!

## Research Hub Logo

We are pleased to announce that the Research Hub logo has now been finalised. The logo will be used for all Research Hub official documents and communications. See the final logo above.

## The Third and Fourth Meetings of the RH's Research Panel

The third meeting of the RH's Research Panel took place in October in Edinburgh. The Panel discussed the selection and evaluation processes for future projects funded by the Hub. The Hub's new Submission Form and Evaluation Matrix were finalised following the meeting in October, ready for the Research Hub's second call for proposals, which ran from 23rd January to 4th March 2020. During this time, all Scheme participants and industry stakeholders were invited to submit a Research Project Proposal to the Hub.

The fourth meeting of the Research Panel took place on the 17th March, where all submitted research proposals were assessed against the Evaluation Matrix. Detailed discussions took place surrounding each project, and after careful consideration, Panel members submitted a score for all Research Project Proposals submitted. The Panel shortlisted three project proposals to progress to the second phase of evaluation. It is our intention to send a survey to all Scheme Operators via SurveyMonkey. Surveys provide an opportunity for Scheme Participants to score and voice their opinions on the shortlisted proposals; the results of a survey are considered advisory and would be taken into account during the second phase of evaluation by the Research Panel. This mechanism provides Operators with the opportunity to influence the decision surrounding the selection of a research project for the Research Hub.

Please note, a decision has been taken that Research Project Proposals can only be submitted to the Hub within designated 'call periods'. We will ensure to provide enough notice for future call periods, so as Operators and the

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## For enquiries

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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 under the certification tab.

## Review of PAS 100

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PAS 100 was last revised in 2018 and a review was due this year, as this takes place every two years or sooner if the technical need arises.

The standard was officially reviewed again this year by BSI and REAL. This review process has now been finalised through a meeting with BSI in March. REAL does not consider that it is the right time to trigger a revision process of PAS 100. Although technical comments provided by industry through the CCS Producers' Forum on potential updates to the standard have been recorded for the next review.

The outcome of the ongoing CQP review has the potential to inform and influence a PAS 100 review/revision process. We will wait for the CQP review process and timeline to be defined before taking any decisions regarding a further review and/or revision of PAS 100.

REAL will be in touch with BSI in the autumn regarding future plans to review the standard.

## CQP Review

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In December, the Environment Agency announced the Quality Protocol Review Call for Evidence period, which invited industry to comment and provide evidence to inform the decision on whether to continue, or withdraw support, for those QPs. The closing date for this consultation was 31st January 2020.

wider industry stakeholders alike will have ample time to gather and prepare their ideas for project proposals.

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### **Market Development Working Group**

Our MDWG met for the third time in January. The focus of this meeting was the QP reviews. Prior to this, the MDWG had issued a survey to gather views from operators on potential changes to the QPs. The survey asked for views on the addition of new markets, waste inputs, and whether operators had any evidence to support the suggestions put forward. There were a number of survey responses which were analysed by REAL and discussed at the meeting. This work carried out by the MDWG informed REAL's QP call for evidence submission to the Environment Agency.

The MDWG also held a meeting with the Soil Association in September 2019. During this meeting we discussed the use of certified compost on organic land and shared an update on the revision of PAS 100. The Association had announced that there was a new interpretation of the EU standard regarding food waste from commercial sources. The new interpretation allows the use of compost where feedstock contains food waste from commercial kitchens, including any processing facility that produces food waste. More information can be found on their website.

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### **CCS Producers Forum and Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**

The last CCS Forum took place in October in Leeds. Agenda items included; updates regarding the Approved Laboratories, the Market Development Working Group, and the CQP review. During the meeting, discussions took place around the CCS Position on Technical Requirements and the submission of evidence for the Environment Agency's CQP consultation.

Issues surrounding plant response test failures and appropriate corrective actions were raised at the Forum and further escalated to the subsequent meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which took place in November in Edinburgh. In response to this and following discussion at the TAC, we are forming a working group to explore these issues further. Additional topics that were discussed at the TAC included implementation timeframes for changes within the CCS Position document and modes of communication with producers.

REAL submitted a response to the Agency with views gathered from operators through the MDWG QP survey. This response was informed by work carried out by our MDWG and based on discussions with UKAS.

The Agency had hoped to publish their initial review outcome in April/May but the unforeseen nature of COVID-19 may push this back further.

The outcome document will announce the Environment Agency's view on whether they support the existing QP's as demonstrating end-of-waste. We also expect the Agency to set out their views on the evidence they have received to date. The expected position is that they do not support the QP's as they stand, but that they are prepared to continue to support them subject to suitable revision. In this scenario, following publication of the response document, there would be a three month period for industry to commit to funding a revision. The EA would set up a review panel and co-ordinate closely with environmental regulators in the UK.

The Environment Agency has been clear that industry would be expected to fund a revision, which is estimated to cost around £20,000 per QP.

### **CCS Sampling Workshop and Webinars**

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We hosted a half-day sampling workshop near Edinburgh in October 2019. The workshop was based on our CCS sampling guidance and aimed to guide operators to take representative samples of their compost and ensure consistency of sampling. The day was split into three parts; a run-through of the CCS sampling guidance followed by a practical sampling demonstration and ended with helping compost producers to develop their own sampling SOPs.

In April 2020, we hosted a webinar for compost producers also based on our

## Plant Response Test TWG

We are in the final development stage of setting up the technical working group which will aim to discuss and explore issues that have been raised at the CCS Forum surrounding the plant response test.

Members of this Plant Response Test Technical Working Group will include representatives for REAL, certified compost producers, and the environmental regulators. We have finalised a draft Terms of Reference for this group and appointed two producer representatives after an invitation was sent to all CCS operators and responses evaluated. We are in discussion with the environmental regulators regarding representation on this group and will schedule the first meeting when the members are confirmed.

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## Laboratory Approval Scheme

We have established a new framework for laboratories approved to undertake testing under the CCS. The Laboratory Approval Scheme (LAS) has been in place since the beginning of this year.

The LAS involves the Certification Bodies in the approval process and introduces new requirements for the laboratories; a revised scope of auditing, UKAS accreditation for 'standard' test methods, and participation in a PT programme for non-standard methods. REAL continues to manage the approval process and the Approved Laboratories continue to participate in the on-going performance assessments and annual independent audits to assess their conformance with the T&C's.

The LAS document on our website [here](#) outlines the roles and responsibilities of REAL, the Certification Bodies, and the Laboratories in the approval process.

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## CCS Approved Laboratories Reappointment for 2020

All three CCS approved laboratories were successfully reappointed for 2020, following their audits against version 3 of the laboratory T&C's in 2019. The laboratories will now be approved under our new Laboratory Approval Scheme and will continue to be audited on an annual basis.

## Appointment of a new Independent Laboratory Auditor

We are also happy to announce that through an open tender process, we have appointed the Open University to carry out independent audits to check CCS Approved Laboratories' conformance with their Terms and Conditions. The audits will be led by Graham Howell who has extensive research and development experience related to several of the PAS 100/110 test methods.

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CCS sampling guidance. The webinar had a similar structure to the workshop in Edinburgh, and we received very positive feedback from operators that attended. Suzanne Lewis from Avergavenny Green Waste commented 'the webinar was a very good and time efficient method of training to update on rules and processes'. Look out for future invitations for webinars.

If you missed our first sampling workshop in Scotland, don't worry! We are planning on holding two more workshops, when possible, at various locations in the UK - look out for the details of these.

If you would like to host a workshop at your site in the future, please contact Molly at [info@realschemes.org.uk](mailto:info@realschemes.org.uk).

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## 2020 Plans

### CCS UKAS Pilot Programme

Since 2015, we have been working with UKAS to set up specific accreditation for Certification Bodies to be able to gain accreditation to ISO 17065 for the CCS. This is the first time that any Certification Body will be able to apply for accreditation to provide certification services for CCS. With UKAS, we are now launching a pilot programme and will invite Certification Bodies to apply for accreditation. We are in ongoing discussion with UKAS regarding project timescales and plans for the pilot due to COVID-19. We will share more news about this soon!

### Why Not? Project

We are currently undertaking a marketing project; the 'Why Not? Project', which aims to understand why a portion of UK producers are not currently certified under CCS, promote the benefits of the Scheme, and encourage more producers to join.

Following a careful evaluation period and interview at REAL, the Open University was offered the contract. Graham will bring a fresh approach to the auditing regime with the audits now focussing on scheme-specific tests. We look forward to working with him and the OU team!

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### Certification Bodies and UKAS

Through our Laboratory Approval Scheme, we have invited the Certification Bodies to provide comments on current issues related to the work of the Approved Laboratories and testing compost. We have so far held two/three teleconferences this year and the engagement has been positive.

We held a successful roundtable meeting with all the Certification Officers and auditors in March and will continue to liaise with the Certification Bodies on a monthly basis. We also look forward to working with UKAS and the Certification Bodies as we launch the CCS Pilot Programme this year.



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### Other initiatives to look out for:

Review of the CCS Scheme Rules  
PT Programme Tender  
Workshops and Webinars  
REAL engagement with DEFRA on the EU FPR  
Laboratory T&Cs review

Compost Certification Scheme is part of Renewable Energy Assurance Limited.  
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