

Compost Certification Scheme

Notes from the Producers' Forum Meeting – 30th September, Edinburgh

1. Introduction of compost producers

The third meeting of the Compost Producers' Forum was held on 30th of September in Edinburgh. There were 9 compost producers represented at the meeting. They represented a range of technologies, processing various feedstocks and producing compost to different end markets. The meeting started with a quick roundtable introduction. For this meeting we also invited a representative from Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

3. Scheme Update

Justyna gave an update on the size of the scheme and the recent developments, which includes:

- a) Database development
- b) Plant response test
- c) Labs work: terms and conditions, independent auditors, proficiency testing scheme and inter lab trials
- d) UKAS accreditation for scheme
- e) Sustainable growing media
- f) Update from producers representative (Gregor Keenan) at Technical advisory committee

Gregor was frustrated at lack of enthusiasm within TAC over changes to PAS100. He highlighted elements of PAS100 testing that he feels need to be considered as part of a review. Progress has been made by the scheme with certain things and not others but unclear over who makes decisions about allocation of resources.

2. Legislation / Regulation updates

The update considered only the most relevant areas of legislation and regulatory changes.

- a) EU fertiliser regulation
- b) EU Circular economy
- c) Scottish government circular economy consultation
- d) ASORI
- e) SEPA update

SEPA is keen to gather more data on where we are currently with regards to compost quality and is looking to work with industry to get better quality compost. They are putting more focus on waste producers as realise that sites can only do so much.

4. Discussion

This part of the meeting was an open discussion with all present. The main focus of the discussion was around the need for a review of PAS100 and what parameters various producers felt needed to be reviewed.

Summary of comments:

- There was lots of discussion about how PAS is not fit for purpose and currently there is a gap between end user requirements and the standard. i.e standard is higher than end user requirements in some respects and lower than requirements in other respects. The operators concluded that the standard needs to be driven by what the end market (mainly agriculture) needs, whilst ensuring regulators are comfortable maintaining their end of waste positions.
- Particular issues highlighted were stability, stones, physical contaminants, *e.coli*, compostable plastics classified as contamination. Along with a general check that all requirements are led by the end user requirements.
- General agreement that changes are only wanted where they are supported by the end market and not talking about an overall 'lowering' of the standard, but making it more relevant to today's market needs.
- Cost when split across operators is not likely to be major issue.
- Discussion around the lack of consensus demonstrated at the ORG Sector Group meeting. The difference between ORG and REAL CC PF was explained.

The general feeling was that the producers forum are keen to see PAS100 reviewed but to establish more details and allow all to contribute, round the room questions were asked. These were about:

1. Should it be reviewed?
2. Stay as a PAS? (options being full BSI standard / PAS / industry own standard)
3. What particular parameters would each producer like to see changed.

Each operator was given chance to comment.

1. Yes should be reviewed. Not sure about the standard status. Most concerned with plant growth test, stones and physical contaminants.

2. Not sure if should be reviewed. Really dependent on EA being involved and agreeing to maintain end of waste position. If so, then reasonably happy for review to go ahead.
3. Thinks we should leave it alone as will be superseded by the Fertiliser Regulation. Time and money better spent ensuring Fertilisers Regs are fit for purpose.
4. Happy to leave it alone. Important the standard continues to be recognised so prefer to leave as PAS standard. Not sure if all the current elements and levels are relevant.
5. Yes should be reviewed, even if ultimately nothing is changed. E.coli is top priority. Want to ensure not returning to days of shred and spread.
6. Yes should be reviewed and need to ensure EA are on board, but most importantly customers. Possible to do in stages? Tackle the easy things first.
7. Yes should be reviewed. Need to make sure parameters in table 3 are applicable and relevant. Want the standard to ensure compost is safe and sustainable but remove parts that are not relevant. It is worth looking at all parameters in table 3.
8. Yes should be reviewed, let's not be afraid. Needs to be relevant and appropriate. Remain as PAS.
9. Yes but not sure of details as fairly new to PAS100. Will email REAL with further comments.

Total operators (not people) for review: 4

Total operators not fussed: 3

ZWS – Yes ZWS's view is that a review is needed. Action is needed and progress would be good. It should remain as a PAS. Need to look particularly at physical contaminants but could be worth considering all parameters, i.e. e.coli comparison with other farm materials. Needs to be done properly and robustly and ZWS may have some funding to assist. Not concerned about the impact of the Fertiliser Regs review.

SEPA – Yes a review would tie in nicely with SEPA considering their position. Need to be clear what we want to have by the end of the process, for example PAS100 for agriculture and PAS100 for other markets?

There was lots of discussion about how to take this forward, and who is responsible for deciding to progress with a review. REAL CCS will discuss this and communicate to all scheme members.

5. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is likely to be in February. Birmingham was suggested as a location for the subsequent meeting.

Close

Update following the meeting:

PAS100 is owned by BSI. PAS0 – Principles of Standardization states...

‘Post-publication, unless otherwise agreed in the contract, a PAS has an initial life of two years after publication. At the end of this period, the original sponsor is invited to participate in a review of the document. This can result in minor amendments, a more extensive revision or consideration for development as a formal standard at national, European or international level, subject to the approval criteria of the relevant bodies (for further details see BS 0:2011, 5.2). If the original sponsor is no longer interested in the project, BSI will undertake further consultation, including identifying other potential sponsors, before taking a decision on the future of the document. BSI reserves all rights as to the future of a PAS at the end of its initial two-year lifespan’

PAS100 Foreword: ‘It will be reviewed as and when the technical need arises or after two years, whichever is sooner.’

Summary of Key Actions

- REAL CCS to work on a proposal & timeline to review PAS100. The proposal will be presented and discussed at the next Technical Advisory Committee meeting in November. Once it has been agreed the proposal will be available on the CCS web site. We will keep all scheme members up to date with progress.
- REAL CCS to contact WRAP and ask for publication of reports relevant to composting.

Attendees

1	Jenny Grant	chair
2	Virginia Graham	REAL
3	Justyna Franuszkiewicz	REAL
4	Ciaran Burns	REAL
5	Gregor Keenan	Keenan Recycling
6	Grant Keenan	Keenan Recycling
7	Mark Svaasand	Tiphereth Ltd.
8	Howard Everson	Tma Bark Supplies Ltd
9	Felicity Richards	The Green Waste Company
10	John Richards	The Green Waste Company
11	Agnes Starnawska	Veolia
12	Andrew Thompson	
13	Alison McKinnie	Zero Waste Scotland
14	Fiona Donaldson	SEPA