



Summary Notes of the first joint meeting of the Oversight Panel for the Biofertiliser Certification Scheme, and the Technical Advisory Committee for the Compost Certification Scheme

Tuesday 23 June 2015 11.00 – 14.30 REAL Offices, London

Attendees:

Prof Stephen Nortcliff (SN) – Chair; Ciaran Burns (CB) - REAL – Biofertiliser Certification Scheme; Justyna Franuszkiewicz – REAL – Compost Certification Scheme; Virginia Graham (VG) – REAL; Emily Nichols (EN) – ORG; Nina Sweet (NS) – WRAP; Will McManus (WM) – WRAP; Martin Rogers - NFU; Roy Lawford (RL) – OF&G; Claire Eaton (CE) – NSF; Rebecca Foster (RF) – NSF; Rob Evans (RE) – NSF; Duncan Rose (DR) – NRM; Gregor Keenan (GK) – the CCS Producers' Forum representative.

Teleconference:

Allison McKinnie (AM) – ZWS; Fiona Donaldson (FD) – SEPA

1. Introductions & welcome

Professor Stephen Nortcliff welcomed everybody to the meeting and explained that due to the amount of repetition and personnel overlap it was decided to merge the Compost Certification Scheme Technical Advisory Committee and the BCS Oversight panel into one meeting. Hopefully this will reduce the time and resource required from participants.

2. Update on the Compost Certification Scheme – JF

A brief outline of the current status of the scheme was presented. The number of operators remained broadly the same, with producers leaving the scheme and new entrants joining, but the situation is very dynamic with weekly changes at times. The departures do not appear to be because of concerns over quality of the product. There may be some diversion from compost to AD processes.

a. Update from certifying bodies

RL reported that two complaints had been received. The most significant was relating to material that was heavily contaminated with plastic. The compost had been spread on the field leaving very visible plastic. The plastic was hand picked from the field. The problem was found to be a broken screen which had not been identified by a visual inspection of the

compost before it was dispatched. The screen has been repaired and the importance of the visual inspection has been brought to the producer's attention. This example reinforced the importance of visual inspection of the final product. This example should be shared with all members of the Scheme.

b. Update on the plant response test review

An update on the progress made on the plant response test was presented. It is planned that the revised test method will be published by the end of July and there will be two months transitional period to allow the laboratories implement the new requirements. It was noted that REAL should develop a mechanisms to interpret/assess invalid test results.

c. Technical guidance

More technical guidance has now been made available on the CCS website

d. Producers Forum

The Producers' Forum is important and there should be efforts to encourage participation by all producers. The most recent forum meeting took place in Bristol.

Notes from the recent meeting are available on the CCS web site. Next meeting of the Forum will be in autumn (September/October) and it is very like to take place in Scotland.

3. BCS Scheme Update

a. Scheme update

Data were presented showing the significant recent growth in the numbers of certified plants. There are now 36 certified plants with a throughput tonnage of nearly 1.5 million tonnes per annum. The scheme had effectively doubled in number since the December 2014 and the throughput tonnage has increased by over 50%.

b. BCS Scheme rules

A summary of the changes to the scheme rules were presented. These will be available on the website once they have been approved by Solicitors. Many of the new Scheme Rules are relating to developments that the Scheme hopes to put in place later in the year, including spot samples, spot visits, producers' forum, etc. The revised Scheme Rules are focused on the need to produce a quality product.

c. Update from Certifying Bodies

Following the withdrawal of SFQC because of a developing conflict of interest REAL considered it important for producers to have a choice of certifying bodies. In the short term NSF, who are one of the certifying bodies for CCS have been offered a 1 year interim contract to offer producers a choice of certifying bodies. In 2016 a full tender process will be required.

d. Quality Meat Scotland additional requirements

The CCS produced a guidance document for compost producers supplying to QMS member farms. An equivalent document for the Biofertiliser members has been produced and will be available from the website soon.

4. WRAP projects

An update on current WRAP work relating to both schemes was presented.

1. ASORI – WRAP funded a report on the AD industry in 2014 and are likely to do again in 2015 but due to budget not likely to perform study in 2016 and beyond. Hopefully the industry (REA or ADBA) can use the format provided by WRAP. Budget may be made available for a dedicated contact at WRAP or to organise meetings etc.
2. ZWS will fund ASORI (composting and AD) in Scotland. Maybe need to see if NRW are interested in doing this in Wales. WRAP could carry out the research but would need funding from industry.
3. Quality Action Plan – Feedback received indicated that it was a good exercise and brought stakeholders together. Alison - it has formed a large part of ZWS programme, Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) were involved.
4. WRAP are running a programme looking at impact of effective and cheap and simple measures to improve local authority collections of food waste
5. WRAP have several reports due to be published including:
 - Proficiency scheme for testing compost and digestate;
 - compost stability test methods;
 - alternative uses of digestate, i.e. horticulture;
 - renewable fertiliser matrix
 - peer reviewed risk assessment of the use of composts and digestates by the food industry; outcome is that generally the risks are acceptable if all the materials are used and applied in the correct manner – WRAP have yet to decide how to publicise this report. Very difficult to get the correct message across to general public without causing alarm. Possibly only publicise in trade news.

5. Laboratories

The Terms & Conditions for laboratories under the CCS was introduced in January and following a tender process Herriot Watt University has been appointed as the organisation to audit the CCS appointed laboratories against those T&Cs. Dates for the audits have been agreed and they will take place in the coming months.

The next step for the laboratories is the introduction of proficiency schemes. The CCS appointed laboratories are already participating in an APHA proficiency scheme for ecoli and salmonella testing. REAL are looking at extending to other parameters and are investigating possible schemes.

REAL have reviewed a slightly different RBP test developed by one of the Laboratories used on the BCS. The test is the same Residual Biogas Potential test where the biogas produced is captured to give a measure of stability. The test method includes an automated method for

measuring the biogas liberated. A number of samples have been tested and a set of results provided for REAL will to consider.

A set of T&C's for the BCS are under development and it is hoped to move forward with this by the end of 2015 following consideration of comments from Panel Members.

6. Database update

A large part of the database has now been completed. The CCS Certifying Bodies are now using the database to update records which in turn update the website on a daily basis. The next step is to use the database to gather test data.

The BCS certifying bodies are not yet using the database but this will be developed over the summer.

7. Update on the EU wide Fertiliser Regulations

There is a consultation on these Regulations as part of the circular economy package and a decision on new EU fertiliser regulations is anticipated, although this does not appear to be likely until the end of 2015 or in 2016. Even when the new regulations are produced, they would probably take around 2 years to introduce and there could be a transition period of around 3 years for implementation. Much of the proposals come from the original JRC report on an EU wide end of waste position for composts and digestates and there were many contentious issues in those proposals. The likelihood is that eventually there would be an EU wide end of waste position for digestate and composts but this does not seem likely for 5 years.

This indicates that a PAS100 review in the near future would be of benefit as an overriding EU position would not take affect for several years.

8. Update from SEPA

SEPA may consider what they want for their EoW standards in Scotland and are keen that industry is involved with this review. Plastics is the key and the QMS position on physical contaminant levels is an indicator of what is being considered. Stones may also be considered. The main challenge for SEPA during this review is the availability of resource to carry out the research required.

9. AOB

The Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) is set to include medium combustion sites which cover any engines sized from 1MW to 50MW. The main issue is the emission levels of sulphur. EA hope that there will be a relaxation for waste fed AD.

It was also suggested that burning biogas may require an additional permit from the environmental regulator. The industry may consider developing Quality Protocol for biogas to avoid the need for additional waste regulatory controls.