

Biofertiliser Certification Scheme newsletter



The Biofertiliser Certification Scheme (BCS) has been established as a robust quality assurance and end-of-waste scheme. In this newsletter, you will find various ways in which the scheme has been developed this year accompanied by industry related news.

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Laboratory contact details

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Media platforms

We recently set up our first LinkedIn and Twitter pages for BCS - please follow us using the links provided below!

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/company/biofertiliser-certification-scheme/

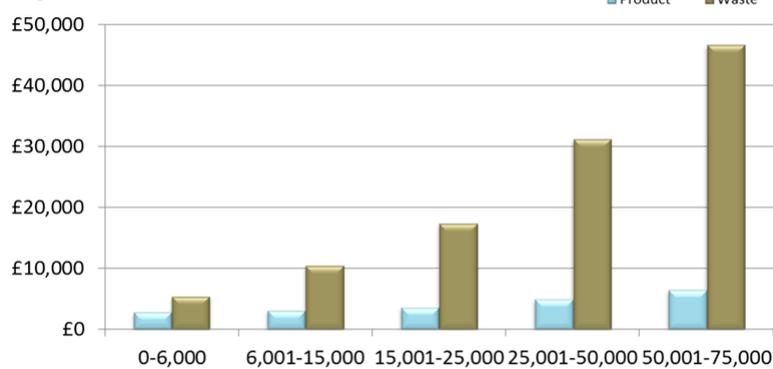
Twitter

www.twitter.com/biofertcert

Strategic Review of Charges

Following a consultation, the

England



Throughput tonnage per annum

Product vs Waste

The graph above compares average annual costs for the renewal of certification against the end of waste criteria for digestate ('Product') and the deployment of digestate to land under waste management regulations ('Waste'). The costs used for this analysis include the new deployment charges introduced by the Environment Agency this year. Operators processing between 25,001 and 50,000 tonnes of feedstock on an annual basis could incur an annual cost of approximately £5,000 for renewal of *biofertiliser* status or £30,000 for the spreading of waste digestate.

The cost comparison document detailing all of the assumptions and supplementary information can be found on our website [here](#).

Independent certification through BCS could be cheaper in England than spreading 'waste' digestate but there are many other benefits for producers, including these listed on our website [here](#).

Research HUB

We have made more progress with the development of REAL's Compost and Biofertiliser Certification Schemes' Research HUB!

At the recent BCS Operators' Forum, we discussed the potential Research & Development (R&D) work that the HUB could support in the future and the benefits that operators would like to see or envisage the HUB will bring to the industry. These views were discussed further with stakeholders at our Oversight Panel meeting.

The Research HUB will allow us to undertake vital analysis and technical projects to inform any future improvements as we ensure that the schemes are robust and fit for purpose. REAL welcomes the

Environment Agency published its new [environmental permitting charging scheme](#), effective from April 1st 2018. New mobile plant deployment charges were introduced for land spreading and the graph above provides an indication of the average costs that producers spreading digestate under waste management regulations could now incur on an annual basis.

PAS training course

In June, we contributed to the delivery of the REA's PAS 110 training course to explain how the certification scheme works and present the latest scheme developments. It was interesting to learn about the different systems that producers manage in accordance with PAS and their relationships with the certification bodies and laboratories.

Organics Recycling Conference 2018

In March, we gave a talk at the annual Organics Recycling Conference amongst dynamic speakers working in the field of organics recycling. The emphasis on 'quality' was clear with a need to focus on cleaning up waste inputs and producing good quality outputs. We presented our plans for market development and the Research Hub, which was mentioned as a great initiative by the Agency.

Bioenergy Sector Group meetings

We presented at two of the REA's Bioenergy Sector Group meetings, where attendees could learn more about the regulatory issues and policies shaping the AD industry. We were proud to show how rapidly the BCS has grown over the last few years and in effect, the growth in the contribution of BCS operators to the national food waste recycling rate.

BCS Annual Report 2017

Our [Annual Report](#) has been published, providing an overview of scheme data and developments from 2017. There

support from other stakeholders and we think that this initiative will greatly benefit everyone involved in the organics recycling industry.

The Research HUB has been widely supported and is regarded as an exciting development that will support growth in the organics recycling industry. It will contribute to the evolution of the industry and it could also provide a better link between industry and the R&D world (e.g. universities, academics, researchers, and consultancies).

Through our technical discussions with stakeholders, we recognise the need for this more and more. Without the relevant research taking place, the industry could stagnate. WRAP used to play a vital role but the funding and resources are no longer available. We would like to fill this void and provide the revitalisation that the industry needs.

We are now in the process of finalising the governance details and we will share more information about the HUB soon. In the meantime, we have provided an overview in this section of our website [here](#).

BCS Operators' Forum and Oversight Panel

At the recent Forum meeting, we discussed with operators; the Research Hub, market development, our plans to develop aspects of testing and certification, and proposals for changes to the BCS Scheme Rules. There was a lot of debate and reflection on the direction that the industry is moving in. Operators were keen to share their positive success stories about the production and spreading of a good quality fertiliser product - we will consider how these stories on best practice could be shared more widely!

The Oversight Panel meeting that took place a few weeks later proved very useful for Panel members to discuss the technical issues experienced by the operators. We also learned more about the environmental regulators' views on certain practices. It was an effective meeting with plenty of discussion on market development, research and development, and scheme development.

Laboratories

We liaise regularly with the appointed laboratories and independent laboratory auditor. Through this collaboration, we can seek to improve and address testing-related issues. REAL's Technical Manager focusses on developing aspects of testing, working closely

were a total of 70 AD plants certified under the scheme by the end of 2017, collectively processing around 3.4 million tonnes of biowastes and / or biodegradable materials annually!

In this report, we also shared updates from the Compost Certification Scheme, Green Gas Certification Scheme, and Compostable Packaging Certification Scheme, which are owned and administered by REAL.

Clean Air Strategy

Defra is consulting on its Clean Air Strategy and the consultation period ends on 14th August. Proposals to reduce ammonia emissions from farming include the introduction of nitrogen (or fertiliser) limits. REAL will be submitting a response to this consultation after we also attended a workshop to discuss the proposals in the Strategy. We will continue to explore how the issues associated with the spreading of biofertiliser could be addressed.

There is still concern over the rise of ammonia emissions from the storage and spreading of digestate and Defra has now published the [Code of Good Agricultural Practice for Reducing Ammonia Emissions](#), which provides best practice guidance and recommendations.

25 Year Environment Plan

The Government published its [25 Year Environment Plan](#) earlier this year, which sets out policies for using and managing land sustainably. The actions to achieve the goals of improving soil health and protecting peatlands involves; developing better information on soil health, restoring vulnerable peatlands, and ending peat use in horticultural products by 2030.

This will hopefully create more space for the use of digestate in agriculture and provides a great opportunity for the industry to flourish!

Resources & Waste Strategy

with the Laboratory Terms & Conditions (T&Cs). We are revising the Laboratory T&Cs again this year to introduce new requirements and we are also in the process of drafting a tender invitation document for the development and / or provision of proficiency testing schemes - more news on this soon!

Our new BCS database is under development for the collection of certification data, which will enable us to carry out more data analysis and potentially monitor results uploaded to the database.

Certification Bodies and UKAS

We work very closely with certification personnel to maintain strong, collaborative relationships with the appointed certification bodies. We regularly discuss new scenarios and share views on certification-related queries to form a shared position when necessary.

In April, we hosted a roundtable meeting for the certification officers and inspectors to facilitate discussions on technical requirements and potential improvements to the certification process. It was great to engage with highly competent certification personnel who have backgrounds in farming, AD, soil science, and auditing.

We are also working with the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to set up specific accreditation for the BCS and we will be engaging with UKAS this summer as we revise the BCS Scheme Rules. Certification scheme accreditation will provide even more assurance in certification services with extra checks carried out on the certification process. Accreditation will make BCS even more robust and we look forward to working with UKAS!



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As we anticipate the forthcoming Resources & Waste Strategy, we are engaging with Defra in relation to this Strategy, digestate, and compost. We had a positive meeting during which we discussed the importance of quality standards for the recycling of biowaste / biodegradable materials and the importance of clean inputs and good quality outputs to reduce contamination.

We will continue to engage with Defra going forward on the Resources & Waste Strategy, Fertilisers Regulations, and the Clean Air Strategy.