

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 related industry news.

Research Hub

Governance

The REAL Compost and Biofertiliser Certification Schemes' Research Hub has taken shape with the first Research Fees charged, the first project tenders anticipated for release this year, and the first Research Panel meeting taking place this month. A Research Panel is in place to propose to a Governance Committee which projects should be funded, agree the process for appointing organisations to deliver the objectives of projects funded by the Hub,

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Media platforms

LinkedIn

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

Twitter

www.twitter.com/biofertcert

Review of PAS 110

PAS 110:2014 is a quality standard owned by BSI. It is required to be

appoint members of the Project Panel, and determine the ways in which the results from the projects may be used. The Governance Committee is in place for the Hub to manage the funds, sign off which projects will be funded, and oversee the work of the Hub.

Research projects

We have invited and received ideas and proposals for potential projects. These will soon be presented to the Research Panel and a list of projects will be finalised and then circulated to scheme participants (operators). All operators will be able to vote to prioritise which projects should be funded by the Hub.

During stakeholder meetings like the BCS Operators' Forum, individuals discussed ideas for potential research projects. There were suggestions to use the funds to support evidence gathering for future digestate markets such as forestry or amateur horticulture.

Benefits

Funding for R&D is vital if we are to see any significant changes to PAS 110, the test methods, or other aspects affecting certification under the scheme. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this with anyone and more information can be found on our website [here](#). We look forward to sharing the benefits of the Hub!

Market Development Working Group

We are making progress with our plans for market development. The first meeting of our Market Development Working Group took place recently with a wide range of topics on the agenda from plastic contamination to organic certification. This group has been set up to provide industry with the opportunity to build and develop new and existing markets for *biofertiliser and quality compost*. We will be liaising with the markets for certified digestate and compost, the environmental regulators, the Research Hub, certified digestate and compost producers, and reporting to our Technical Advisory Committee. More news on this work to come!

BCS Scheme Rules

Following a period of consultation, the rules that set out the certification scheme requirements have been revised. The BCS Scheme Rules now open up the possibility of certification for a wider variety of digestate producers, introduce new certification marks, require the collection of more data on processes and production,

reviewed every two years or sooner if the technical need arises. The standard was last reviewed in 2016.

A 'review' does not necessarily lead to a 'revision' but involves evaluating whether any technical changes are required and ensuring that any legislative details, for example, are up-to-date. A 'revision' will result in technical changes.

We began discussions last year around whether there is a need for PAS 110 to be revised at the Operators' Forum and Oversight Panel meetings. Potential issues we have considered are the costs involved for a revision, availability of scientific evidence to support changes, timings with respect to the Research Hub and the upcoming review of the ADQP.

Suggestions for technical changes we have discussed include; the limits for physical contaminants, the introduction of new HACCP requirements, and requirements when a drying step is part of the AD process.

We are in the process of setting up another stakeholder workshop to inform the decisions and we envisage this taking place in spring/summer. We will first be circulating a survey to everyone - more news on this is to come!

Resources & Waste Strategy

The Resources and Waste Strategy was published and announced plans for the introduction of mandatory food waste collections for local authorities. On top of this welcome news, the strategy also highlights support for the AD industry:

- Government plans to carry out and publish a review of policies to support bio-waste recycling through AD (and composting) to ensure the maximisation of the benefits whilst managing the risks.
- Defra would like to ensure that what is recycled is good quality, and that contaminating materials such as plastic are kept within recognised limits.
- Support for digestate and compost quality standards, noting it is important

introduce further checks to the certification process, and introduce the Schemes' Research Hub and Research Fees. The rules have also been revised to ensure the document is suitable for UKAS accreditation. We have addressed UKAS' technical comments on the BCS Scheme Rules and we will be taking into account their comments on PAS 110 during the upcoming review.

Quality Assurance Scheme

The new version of the Scheme Rules introduces a third category of certification. The 'Quality Assurance' category provides the opportunity for operators to join a quality assurance scheme.

If AD operators do not require or do not wish to attain 'end-of-waste' status for their digestate, they can apply to the scheme for certification to PAS 110 and the Scheme Rules. This might be desirable for farm-fed or crop-fed operators spreading digestate onto their own land. Certification will assure a well-managed process and a safe, good quality digestate without the need to achieve 'product' status. Certification will provide guarantees that the production process is well-managed, based on a robust quality management system, and the digestate has been produced in a hygienic manner, is consistently safe, and good quality.

However, digestate certified to PAS 110 and the Certification Scheme Rules under this quality assurance scheme will continue to be supplied, stored and used under 'waste' regulatory controls (i.e. not as a 'product'), if derived from biodegradable wastes.

The Certification Bodies' application forms have been updated to reflect this and can be found in this section of our website [here](#).



they are fully adopted and regularly reviewed to check fitness for purpose or whether they can be improved with evidence.

- Defra is also exploring how Government policy can address issues surrounding plastic contamination.
- The strategy announced that they will review the quality protocols, which includes the ADQP.

The full strategy paper can be found [here](#).

Clean Air Strategy

The Clean Air Strategy was published last month and can be found [here](#). We are liaising with Defra in relation to these policies. The main changes in the Strategy relating to AD, with respect to the consultation are:

- Removal of the proposal to require AD plants, in receipt of government incentives, to spread using best practice. Instead, they have brought forward the requirement to use low emission spreaders for all organic manures to 2025 (previously 2027) and may phase this in sooner for those spreading digestate (or large amounts of slurry).
- Digestate (and slurry) stores must be covered by 2027 but they may also phase this in sooner for those storing digestate or large volumes of slurry.
- They kept the requirement to incorporate solid manures and solid digestate spread to bare land within 12 hours but said this will be brought in as soon as possible rather than the set date of 2022, and clarified that this will not be required of no-till systems.
- Rather than commit to setting fertiliser limits, they have committed to regulate to reduce pollution from fertiliser use and will ask an expert group to make recommendations on the best approach.
- They have also added, "In order to promote innovation and provide flexibility, wherever possible, we will seek to design a regulatory approach that enables adoption of alternative proven and verifiable techniques for achieving equivalent or greater emissions

Certification Marks

There are now three certification marks that reflect the different certification categories. The 'PAS 110 QUALITY ASSURED' mark will be issued for digestate certified to PAS 110 and the Biofertiliser Certification Scheme Rules; for digestate that does not have 'product' status but is certified to a quality standard, and the digestate and digestion process is therefore, 'quality assured'.



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reductions.”

Full impact assessments and public consultations will be conducted on each policy in due course.

Biofertiliser Certification Scheme is part of Renewable Energy Assurance Limited.
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