

## Biofertiliser Certification Scheme Newsletter December 2020



The Biofertiliser Certification Scheme (BCS) 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 the scheme 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

#### NRM

+44 (0)1344 886338

#### ATL

+44 (0)1449 721 192 (Chemistry) /  
+44 (0)1449 721 637 (Microbiology)

### Media platforms

#### LinkedIn

[www.linkedin.com/company/biofertiliser-certification-scheme/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/biofertiliser-certification-scheme/)

#### Twitter

@biofertcert

#### Operators Twitter

@BCSOperators

### For Enquiries

## Research Hub Website

The Research Hub website is now live! The website was launched on the 12th June 2020 and can be accessed using:

[www.realresearchhub.org.uk](http://www.realresearchhub.org.uk). The website provides information about the establishment of the Hub, its governance, ongoing research projects and explains how to get involved among other information. The Research Hub website is considered the central platform for the latest Research Hub information, news, and developments.

## The second project of the Research Hub

The second project of the Research Hub has been selected and is titled: 'To develop a 'data pack' on the properties, characteristics, and content of digestate that will provide context for the development of new uses of outputs from Anaerobic Digesters'. The project will build on the information gained from the Research Hub's first project and will consist of three phases (data compilation and analysis, identification of alternative digestate uses/operator engagement and commercial viability assessment) with the aim to provide a valuable resource for the anaerobic digestion industry, as well as those concerned with circularity principles and waste-derived products. The Project Brief can be found on the Research Hub website [here](#).

The Research Hub has recently appointed a contractor for the second project of the Research Hub following a competitive tender process; REAL will announce who was awarded the Contract in the New Year. The project is scheduled to start in February 2021 and will run over the course of six months.

## The Research Hub Annual Report

The first Annual Report of the Research Hub was recently published and provides an overview of the Hub's activity throughout 2019. The report outlines the reason(s) for the Research Hub's establishment, the governance of the Research Hub, the Research Hub Project Selection Process, the first project of the Research Hub, and the Research Hub fees. The full report can be found on the Research Hub website [here](#).

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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 BCS website [here](#)

## Operators Twitter

We have recently created a private Twitter account to share news with scheme participants. This Twitter page is will be aligned with the 'news' section on our website. All updates, newsletters, and important changes to the Scheme are shared via our tweets and mirror the emails sent straight to Operators' inboxes. Operators are alerted when we tweet through a Twitter notification.

You can request to follow us at:  
**@BCSOperators**

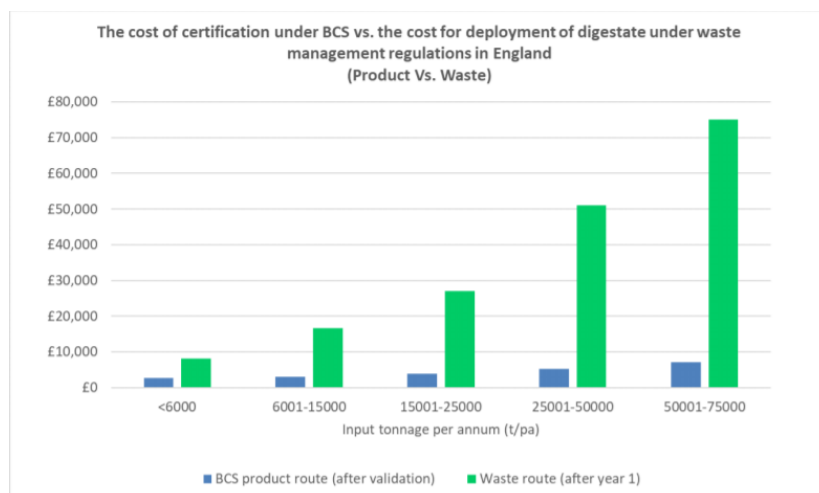
## ADQP Review

The EA published the outcome of its review of the ADQP this week, which can be found [here](#), concluding that the QP needs revising if it is to continue to be used to demonstrate end of waste. Problematic areas highlighted include contaminants and the need for risk assessments to take into account recent soil science.

The EA propose to support a revision process to update the ADQP (and republish as a 'Resources Framework'). They expect industry to pay for the revision. Industry can continue to use the QP but, if funding is not agreed to by 30 May 2021, the EA will withdraw their support and full waste regulatory controls will apply.

Once a revision process has begun, industry can continue using the existing QP until either a new Resources Framework is agreed or the process concludes without a successful resolution. If a revision is agreed, the EA will support the transition from the current QP to the new Resources Framework.

We will continue to liaise with the EA on interactions with PAS 110 and the BCS,



## Cost Comparison

We have recently updated our 2018 cost comparison analysis, which compares the average annual costs for renewal of certification under BCS (including research fees) and deployment of waste status digestates under waste management regulations in England.

On average, an operator processing 25,001-50,000 tpa would incur an average annual cost of approximately £5,200 for independent certification against the end-of-waste criteria to renew their certification. The spreading of waste digestate under waste regulations in England would cost approximately £51,000.

You can find the cost comparison document, with the information used for analysis, on our website [here](#).

## Operators' Forum and TAC

The first 2020 meeting of the BCS Forum took place in May. During this meeting, we provided updates on various developments including the Laboratory Approval Scheme and Covid-19 position on annual audits. The PAS 110 and ADQP reviews were also presented and discussed. Issues surrounding dried digestate and RBP testing were raised by Operators at the meeting.

Issues from the Forum were further considered at the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, which took place in June. Operator issues surrounding RBP test results based on duplicate rather than triplicate measures were discussed in depth. REAL have since published a position statement on this issue, which can be found [here](#). Other agenda items for the TAC included an update from the Environment Agency on the ADQP review.

as well as implications for the scheme across the whole of the UK.

## QP Workshop

We have agreed with the EA to hold a joint industry-wide workshop on **20th January 2021** between 10 – 12 pm, for the EA to provide some further information on their reviews of the AD and compost QPs and plan for the revision process. You can register through this link [here](#) and attendance at this workshop is free of charge.

## Covid-19 and audits

In consultation with the appointed Certification Bodies and at the beginning of the national lockdown, on-site audits were suspended in March, and replaced with remote audits. Operators have been required to provide all necessary paperwork to the auditor in advance and use real-time video conferencing technologies during the audit.

In August, the Certification Bodies resumed on-site audits, where possible, and remote audits have continued to take place where necessary e.g. if the auditor or site are assessed as at high risk, following a Covid-19 risk assessment.

The remote auditing process has proven to be robust and effective thus far. REAL has agreed with all the UK environmental regulators to extend this agreement until 31st January 2020. All Operators have been kept up to date with any changes to the position.

## 2019 Annual Report

Our 2019 annual report was published in September, providing an overview of the Biofertiliser Certification Scheme data and developments over 2019.

There were 84 plants certified under BCS by the end of 2019, with a total registered annual throughput of approximately 4.5 million tonnes. Of the 84 plants, 62 were in England, 11 in Scotland, eight in Wales and three in Northern Ireland. Out

The winter BCS Forum took place in October. The agenda covered the recent CB tendering process, an update on the Research Hub, and a presentation from NNFCC invited to provide an update on the development of the Research Hub's Research Library. Discussions surrounding inoculum used for the RBP test took place at the TAC, which was also held in October.

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## BCS Sampling Guidance

We have recently published a new guidance document, which replaces the previous 'Sampling guidance for liquid materials'. This former version has been updated to bring it in line with BSI PAS 110:2014, introduce it as an REAL document, reference other relevant scheme documents, and provide a basis for the development of future BCS sampling webinars.

Our BCS liquid sampling guidance will guide Operators to take representative samples of liquid digestate and ensure consistency of sampling. It can be found on our website [here](#).

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## PT Programme EOI & TID

We circulated an Expression of Interest (EOI) document in September, which was designed to help REAL assess the technical feasibility and financial viability of developing an independently run proficiency testing (PT) programme for the scheme specific methods. You can find the EOI document [here](#).

The document asked several questions, and after consideration of the responses to these questions, REAL has decided to run an open tender process. The tender period started this week and the deadline for responses is Friday 5th February 2021. The tender invitation document (TID) can be found [here](#).

of the total number of certified plants, 49 were producing certified whole digestate, 14 producing certified separated liquor, and three producing separated fibre.

The 2019 BCS Annual Report can be found on the BCS website [here](#).

## BCS Participant Survey

We ran a scheme participant survey from 16th – 30th September, to help REAL assess scheme satisfaction amongst Operators and prioritise areas for further development. The survey was also devised to contribute to compliance with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015.

We received positive survey results from Operators, showing an overall good level of satisfaction with the BCS.

## Scheme Rules

The BCS Scheme Rules were reviewed earlier in the year and a revision process commenced in summer. They have been revised to clarify the 'Quality Assurance' category category, and introduce improvements to the language and procedural requirements.

Draft version 9 was issued for consultation to all scheme participants and TAC members in August, with advice sought from the TAC on specific issues in October. The new version will be effective and implemented in 2021.

## EU FPR

As of December 2020, the UK has not yet announced its decision on the EU Fertiliser Product Regulations. Once this decision has been taken, we understand that implementation of the regulations would be done via secondary legislation. We have been engaging with DEFRA regarding implementation and to seek clarification on specific legislative details. We will share any developments in our newsletters when available.

## Standard rules permit





Publication of the Standard Rules permits consultation outcome is expected in early 2021. We will share any developments in our newsletters when available.

**From everyone at REAL, have a very Merry Christmas and we look forward to working with you in 2021!**



+44 (0)207 981 0875



[www.biofertiliser.org.uk](http://www.biofertiliser.org.uk)



[info@realschemes.org.uk](mailto:info@realschemes.org.uk)