

Biofertiliser Certification Scheme Newsletter June 2021



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 it has been developed over the past six months, accompanied by related news.

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

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

Twitter

@biofertcert

Operators Twitter

@BCSOperators

Research Hub

TO SUPPORT THE
ORGANICS SCHEMES



The first Project of the Research Hub- Research Library

REAL is pleased to announce the completion of the first project funded by the Research Hub earlier this year. The Research Library, which is an online platform compiled of research undertaken across the composting and anaerobic digestion industries, is now live. The Library brings together research that has been carried out across the industries and highlights notable research gaps. The Library will advance industry knowledge, inform areas of focus for future research project proposals, and in turn drive the industry forwards. CCS and BCS Scheme Participants, who fund the Research Hub, have been granted priority access to the Research Library. Wider industry stakeholders may request access to the Library.

The Second Project of the Research Hub (Digestate Data Pack)

Following a competitive tender period, the contract for the second project of the Research Hub *'To develop a 'data pack' on the properties, characteristics, and content of digestate that will provide the context for the development of new uses of outputs from Anaerobic Digesters'* has been awarded to Solidsense Ltd. Solidsense will be sub-contracting AquaEnviro and Cambridge Eco Ltd to carry out specific elements of the project.

The project has commenced, and the work is projected to be finished at the end of November 2021. The project will gather information on the diversity of digestate characteristics produced across the UK, and how these characteristics relate to the feedstocks of the digesters. Currently, most digestate in the UK is applied directly to agricultural land; however, there are limits on the land available and restrictions on the timing and quantity of application. The work is designed to investigate alternative markets for digestates and explore technologies to develop new products from digestates.

For Enquiries

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](#)

BCS Website

The BCS database has now been integrated with the website. As part of this integration, we have recently launched a new producers page. New features include; a postcode, BCS Number, and operator / company name search function. The postcode search function allows users to find a plant which is geographically close to the postcode entered within the search.

Find the new producers page [here!](#)

ADQP Review

The ADQP review outcome was published in December 2020 on the government website with a deadline of the 30th of May 2021 for industry to commit to funding a revision.

We have since learnt that there will be a 'task and finish' group (T&FG) to advise on the revision process. We are also aware that sufficient pledges have been received by the EA to fund the required estimated costs of a revision process.

The EA have now confirmed that following the commitment for funding, the QP will not be withdrawn until the end of the revision process.

REAL's work in relation to the QP includes; a call for evidence submission to the EA, discussions and evidence gathering with the MDWG, a letter to the EA outlining our funding proposal and request to

Third Project of the Research Hub

The Research Hub has initiated the process of selecting its next project for commissioning. A six-week call for research ideas concluded in February '21. The Research Panel met on the 26th of May 2021 to shortlist projects and will meet again in July to select the project that will be taken forwards. Look out for updates on the Research Hub website [here!](#)

Market Development Working Group

A joint industry-wide QP workshop organised by REA, REAL, CIWM, and ADDBA, took place in January 2021. Following this, we held an MDWG teleconference to discuss any outputs that would be of relevance to the group, how the group could contribute to a QP revision process, and further consider the other potential workstreams we had identified before the end of the year.

We also explored other potential market development workstreams based on ideas put forward by a scheme participant. One example was to look into the use of digestate as a flea beetle deterrent. We are researching this application, as we are aware other projects are being carried out, but evidence is anecdotal. We are also utilising the Research Hub's Research Library for this work.

The group met again in May, where the QP reviews (ADQP and CQP) were discussed in depth, and will meet again later in the year.

ADQP workshop

The REA are holding an event for industry on the ADQP review tomorrow. Industry are invited to sign up for the workshop [here](#).

BCS Scheme Rules

Last year, we reviewed and revised the BCS Scheme Rules. A revised draft version was circulated for consultation to all certified operators, certification bodies, and TAC members. Following this consultation period and further discussions with stakeholders, we finalised the new version of the rules in February. Version 6 was issued and became effective in March, and is available [here](#).

Key changes to the rules include:

- Reference to the Environment Agency's outcome of the ADQP review
 - Removal of the 'Quality Assurance' category of certification
-

sit on the T&FG, and discussions with other UK regulators.

We are liaising with the EA to discuss the details of the revision process and its timeline going forwards.

EU FPR

We are engaging with DEFRA, and the EA, on the implementation of the EU FPR, of which we expect an announcement and consultation period on later this summer.

Covid-19 and audits

In consultation with the Environmental Regulators and the Certification Bodies in January 2021, and in light of the current situation regarding COVID-19, we extended our agreement for remote auditing under the BCS.

Both remote inspections and on-site/physical inspections have continued to take place since 1st February. On-site inspections take place where possible, following a COVID risk assessment; where the auditor and operator can comply with government guidance including social distancing, hygiene practises, and PPE. Remote inspections take place where the auditor or site cannot comply with government guidance, there are local or national lockdowns in place, or there are issues with staff affecting their ability to carry out a physical audit.

We agreed a third extension to this agreement in England until 31st May 2021, and in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland until 31st July 2020. This position was reviewed again in May 2021 and will be in July 2021, respectively. All operators will be informed of any changes.

The agreement with the EA has since been extended until September 2021. We have now agreed that on-site inspections are presumed for all

- Display of certificate and contact details on the BCS website

There was a two-month transition period during which operators were required to make any changes to documentation. This period ran from the 1st of March to the 1st of May 2021. The audit checklist was also updated during this time and in use by the certification bodies for audits. It can be found on our website [here](#).

Certification Body Tendering Results

We are very pleased to announce that following a tender process, REAL reappointed Organic Farmers & Growers (OF&G), NSF Certification (NSF), and Aardvark Certification Ltd (ACL) as certification bodies for the Biofertiliser Certification Scheme. We created an open invitation for Certification Bodies (CBs) to tender for this role, and following a period of careful examination, the same three CBs were successful in securing these positions again.

We work closely with these organisations to ensure that the Scheme continues to provide assurance to users and the markets that quality digestate is safe, reliable and of consistent high quality. For more information on our CBs, you can access the main information page on our website [here](#), and individual profiles for each CB.

PT Programme

We circulated an Expressions of Interest document in September, which resulted in the decision to open a full tender process for the development and delivery of a proficiency testing (PT) programme. This PT programme would be limited to scheme specific methods.

The tender period started in December and ended in February. We received no full tender submissions so concluded the tender process in February. We have since been holding internal discussions, with the Approved Laboratories, operators, and our TAC, on potentially proceeding with a focus on specific parameters.

BCS Operators' Forum

We held an Operators' Forum in May and agenda items included; an update on the ADQP review, BCS sampling guidance, Scheme Rules, and the Research Hub. There was in depth discussion surrounding the RBP test, where operators raised issues they have

sites but in certain circumstances, where an on-site inspection is not possible (e.g. there are area restrictions in place), a remote inspection can take place. The CBs will document the reason for choosing a remote inspection. Additionally, second remote renewal audits must be avoided. If this cannot be done then the reasoning will be given by the CB to the local EA officer.

If you would like any further information or have any questions regarding audits during this time, please feel free to email REAL.

Standard Rules Permit Consultation Outcome

The outcome of the Environmental Permitting Standard Rules Consultation was published on the government website in February.

There were 45 responses to the consultation from industry. The full summary of responses outcome document can be found [here](#).

Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England- Consultation Open

We would like to raise awareness regarding the consultation that DEFRA have opened, which details specific policy proposals for increasing consistency in recycling collected from households, businesses and other organisations. They are seeking views on the materials included in each recyclable waste stream, exemptions, statutory guidance and transition timelines for local authorities and businesses.

This survey is currently open and will close at **23:59 on 4th July 2021**. Find more information and access to the survey on the Defra website [here](#).

faced with the test. These issues raised at the Forum in May will be taken to the TAC meeting, which is taking place tomorrow.

Comments on technical issues provided at the Forum will be recorded by REAL for the next PAS 110 review, if it is not possible address them outside of a PAS revision process.



+44 (0)207 981 0875



www.biofertiliser.org.uk



info@realschemes.org.uk

Biofertiliser Certification Scheme is part of Renewable Energy Assurance Limited.
Biofertiliser Certification Scheme, Brettenham House, 2-19 Lancaster Place, London WC2E 7EN
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