

Biofertiliser Certification Scheme Newsletter December 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.

Research Hub

TO SUPPORT THE
ORGANICS SCHEMES

The First Project of the Research Hub

January 2022 will mark the first anniversary of the completion of the Research Library. The first annual review meeting was held this month and the decision has been made for NNFCC to continue maintenance of the library for 2022 to 2023.

The Second Project of the Research Hub

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

For Enquiries

Our 'Decision Making Tree' enables scheme participants to identify a point

The second project, 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, was completed this month.

The outputs from the second project of the Research Hub include a 'data pack' presented in Excel and a supplementary report, which are available to all CCS/BCS operators and the report is available to purchase for the wider industry.

To request the project outputs please email olivia@realschemes.org.uk and CC: info@realschemes.org.uk

The 3rd and 4th Projects

REAL is pleased to announce that this year, two research projects were selected for funding. The selected projects are titled: 'Plant Response Test Failures: Investigation of contaminants and phytotoxins in 'End of Waste' composting feedstocks and finished composts' and 'Evaluation of the potential for the improvement of the Residual Biogas Potential (RBP) test and investigation of alternative test procedures for PAS110 biofertilisers'.

2021 marks the first year since the Hub's inception whereby more than one project has been funded in a single year. This is an exciting and important milestone for the Research Hub, our CCS/BCS operators, and the composting and anaerobic digestion communities.

A Tender Invitation Document for each has been released and REAL are seeking a suitable contract for the respective projects.

BCS milestone

The BCS hit a milestone of 100 plants on the Scheme in August, after the first plant achieved certified in 2011 – 100 plants in 10 years! Certified plants are collectively processing 5 million tonnes of biowastes and/or biodegradables materials on an annual basis, contributing greatly to the national food waste recycling rate.

BCS RBP Position Statement

In July, we published our external position statement outlining the BCS position on RBP inoculum inhibition and invalid test results. Having worked with several operators experiencing the issue of inoculum inhibition, we showed that their inocula taken from site was better acclimated to digestate sample chemical makeup than a laboratory's standard inoculum. We now have a system in place to approve the use of site own inoculum for RBP testing in certain circumstances. We continue to work with operators and the Approved Laboratories to actively monitor and investigate the issue.

The position statement can be found [here](#).

Understanding Test Results Webinar

REAL developed a new webinar earlier in the year, 'Understanding Test Results', for AD operators. It was developed following positive

of call (organisation or individual) if they have a scheme related enquiry. The tree can be found on the BCS website [here](#)

ADQP Revision

REAL signed the Environment Agency's Terms and Conditions for the ADQP revision process and confirmed our place on the Task and Finish Group. The first meeting of the Task and Finish Group took place on the 21st Decmeber and we are looking forward to being involved in ongoing discussions.

EU FPR

We are engaging with DEFRA, and the Environment Agency, on the implementation of the EU FPR. The consultation period for which was delayed, however a report on the work of the Nutrient Management expert Group is expected in March 2022 and a full consultation of options will be held following this before finishing the final framework.

Covid-19 and audits

In consultation with the Environmental Regulators and the Certification Bodies in July, the agreements for remote auditing were extended until 31st September. During this period, in England and Scotland, on-site inspections were presumed for all sites but in certain circumstances, where an on-site inspection was not possible, a remote inspection could take place. In this event, Certification Bodies documented the reason for choosing a remote inspection and additionally, second remote renewal audits were avoided. If it was not possible to avoid a remote audit, the reasoning was given by the Certification Body to the local EA officer or SEPA. In Northern Ireland and Wales, a remote audit could only take place under exceptional circumstances and the Certification Bodies notified the regulators prior to the audit.

A further review meeting took place between REAL and the Regulators in September. REAL presented two proposals for auditing arrangements from 1st October. Following this discussion, the previous agreements with the EA, NRW, and SEPA lapsed, meaning a return to all audits on-site across England, Wales, and

feedback from CCS producers who had attended the CCS Understanding Test Results Webinar. It provides an overview of the methods used for various PAS 110 tests as well as the importance of reviewing results and how these can best be understood. It also covers in particular the RBP test, and why inoculum inhibition has been experienced by some operators on the scheme, as well as the current procedure for operators to follow if they experience this.

The first Understanding Test Results Webinar was held on 1st October. We received positive feedback on this webinar with attendees finding the content clear and useful, agreeing that they would recommend attending to others. We will be scheduling another and encouraging more AD operators to sign up in the new year

BCS Forum and TAC

We held the winter meeting of the BCS Operators' Forum in October where we were joined by Professor Stephen Nortcliff. As Advisor to the Research Hub, Stephen provided an overview of the Research Hub project selection process and updates on the projects funded by the Hub. Stephen also offered operators the opportunity to contact him directly if they have an idea that they would like to develop further into a research proposal before the next call for proposals. Following this, a presentation was delivered by Tom Aspray on the progress of the Research Hub's second project: the Digestate Data Pack. Discussion also took place in relation to sample courier delays and reseedling using unpasteurised slurry.

We said goodbye to Gaynor Hartnell and thanked her for her time as independent chair of the BCS forum over the last few years. REAL are currently seeking a new chair for the forums. If anyone has suggestions for suitable individuals or would like to discuss this opportunity, please send an email to info@realschemes.org.uk.

The issues raised at the Operators' Forum were then taken to the TAC meeting in November, where the agenda also covered RBP inoculum inhibition. We sought advice on whether we should be taking any further action to address the issue in the short to medium term and there was consensus that no further action is needed. We provided an update on the Environment Agency's new RPS241 and how REAL could provide guidance on this position to operators.



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Scotland. The previous agreement with NIEA was extended until 31st December 2021.

We are monitoring the evolving situation and will take into consideration any changes to Government guidance or restrictions.

2020 Annual Report

Our 2020 annual report was published in September. The report found that by the end of 2020, there were 92 plants certified under BCS by the end of 2020, with a total registered annual of throughput of approximately 5 million tonnes. Of the 92 plants 68 were located in England, five in Northern Ireland, 11 in Scotland, and eight in Wales. Out of the total number of certified plants, 52 plants were producing only certified whole digestate, 16 producing only certified separated liquor, and only three producing certified separated fibre.

The report can be read in full [on the BCS website](#).

Participant and Research Hub Surveys

We ran two surveys in October: the Scheme Participant Survey and the first Research Hub Survey. The purpose of these was to help REAL assess scheme satisfaction amongst producers, prioritise areas for further development, and to assess how operators use and interact with the Research Hub. We received positive survey results, showing an overall good level of satisfaction with the BCS. The Hub Survey identified that there is a good understanding of the aims and benefits of the Hub and there is an opportunity to improve understanding around how projects are selected for funding

WRAP Roadmap for the Organics Sector

WRAP published their roadmap for addressing the key challenges facing the organics sector in September.

These key challenges include the need for quality, reducing ammonia emissions and fully valuing the products produced by the organics sector. In order to ensure that the roadmap remains live and relevant, WRAP, on behalf of Defra, will manage the roadmap and will work to

convene the actions owners, including REAL, and monitor progress made



From everyone at REAL, have a very Merry Christmas and we look forward to working with you in 2022!

Biofertiliser Certification Scheme is part of Renewable Energy Assurance Limited.
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