

## Biofertiliser Certification Scheme Newsletter August 2022



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.

### BCS Forum and TAC

We held the last meeting of the BCS Operators' Forum in May, which was held as a hybrid meeting in Cambridge, the first time the forum was not wholly online since the Covid-19 pandemic began. The key topics of discussion at the meeting included: an update on the progress of the ADQP revision; which led to a discussion on the EA position on manure based digestate; an update from the Research Hub; and queries on the funding of the QP revision.

Comments from operators on manure based digestate were then raised at the June TAC meeting for discussion with the EA. This meeting also included discussion around requiring attendance at PAS training courses, and a discussion around how to further involve AD operators in meetings. This meeting was attended by representatives from Defra who delivered an update on the GB FPR and by Richard Fairweather from the EA, who gave an update and was open to questions on the QP revision.

### 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

#### Twitter

@biofertcert

#### Operators Twitter

@BCSOperators

### 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](#)

## Market Development Working Group Update

The MDWG met in April; the meetings last year had been postponed into 2022 due to uncertainty over the QP revisions and delays to the Defra consultation on the implementation of the EU FPR.

The group discussed market-related changes over the last year, for example the increased value of digestate. David Tompkins from Aqua Enviro also attended to discuss the WRAP project on plastics in compost and digestate and the BEIS "Mitigation of environmental impacts of Anaerobic Digestion digestate" project. Following this meeting, the MDWG submitted a proposal to the Research Hub to gather evidence for potential future revisions to the plastic limits in PAS 100 and PAS 110. The group is awaiting the outcome of the current Hub selection process.

REAL are now reviewing the Terms of Reference for the group going forward as well as looking to appoint a new chair.

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## Laboratory Reappointment

Both BCS Approved Laboratories were reappointed this year to undertake PAS 110 testing of digestate for the BCS, following the independent audit round in 2021. The approval process involved independent audits, review of the audit report and findings, and discussion with the Certification Bodies.

The laboratories were appointed on a revised set of terms of conditions, which were revised by REAL last year in consultation with the laboratories and Certification Bodies. Several changes have been introduced, though the most significant change is the introduction of the requirement to participate in the LGC Animal Feeds Proficiency Testing Scheme (AFPS) for microbial pathogens. This replaces the VETQAS scheme and uses a real matrix rather than freeze-dried ampoule, it has more robust statistics, and is run by a UKAS approved PT programme provider.

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## Understanding Test Results Webinar

The most recent BCS Understanding Test Results webinar was held in May. The webinar is designed for operators to gain an insight into the test methods used under BCS. We encourage both applicants and certified operators to join, as this opportunity complements any existing training on this key aspect of PAS 110. The understanding of test results is important for maintaining compliance and deciding how to respond to test failures. The webinar includes detailed explanation of the RBP test, which has been discussed at length at the BCS TAC and Operators Forums due to the challenges presented by inoculum inhibition experienced by some operators.

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## Scheme Rules Review and Revision

Earlier this year, a review of the BCS scheme rules was carried out, and the decision was made to revise the rules.

## ADQP Revision

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The scoping meeting for the ADQP took place in December 2021, followed by the EA circulating their cost estimates for revision of both QPs. The next meeting of the Task and Finish group will take place on Monday the 5th of September, the process is anticipated to take 6 months following this meeting.

REAL Scheme's contribution to the QP revision includes: financial contribution to cover the cost of the revision process, attending Task & Finish group meetings to clarify the Scheme's perspective, and, providing data & analysis when readily available, including into plastics content in certified digestate and compost.

REAL Research Hub's contribution is focused on evidence gathering support including: R&D to allow constructive debates & decisions, access to the Hub's reports for the EA, and access to the Research Library for the EA.

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## GB FPR

In 2021 the Defra Fertilisers Team began engaging with Industry and REAL on the GB FPR. Defra are currently reviewing the domestic fertiliser regulations and how retained articles of the EU FPR could be utilised in a new framework.

REAL have recently held a series of liaison meetings with Defra, in which policy developments and the structure of CCS and BCS were discussed in detail.

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## Covid-19 and audits

A review meeting took place between REAL and the environmental regulators in January. The previous agreement with NIEA was reintroduced until 31st March allowing remote audits in Northern Ireland under exceptional circumstances. This agreement has since lapsed, meaning a return to all audits on-site across the UK for the first time since March 2020.

## Engagement with

The revision process began in May and the revised rules have been sent out for consultation to all scheme participants and stakeholders. The aim is to implement them from the beginning of next year. The key proposals and changes include: re-introducing remote auditing at intervals, the reintroduction of independent sampling, and additional audit questions to enable information gathering and research.

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## Research Hub

### Completed projects

#### The First Project

The Organics Recycling Research Library continues to be updated with new publications reflecting current research relevant to compost and digestate/AD. This resource is available free of charge for all CCS and BCS Participants and for an annual fee to all other parties.

#### The Second Project

Upon completion of the project in December 2021, the Solidsense Ltd Consortium produced two reports: a standalone Digestate Data Pack and an associated Digestate Valorisation Report. The Digestate Data Pack contains database analysis of key digestate characteristics, whereas the Valorisation Report provides a comprehensive examination of viable alternative uses for digestate.

CCS and BCS Participants and government employees can request access to the Digestate Data Pack and Valorisation Report free of charge. All other parties can request access to the two reports for a one-time fee of £216 (more info [here](#)).

Since its completion, the project's technical reports have been distributed to 12 individual recipients from various government agencies and the industry.

To request access to the Research Library and/or the Second Project Reports, please email [megan@realschemes.org.uk](mailto:megan@realschemes.org.uk)

### Current Projects

#### The Third Project

This project did not receive any tender submissions during the open tender period which closed in December 2021. The Hub sourced stakeholder feedback as to why the project received no response. Concerns included the timings of the contract and the objectives of the project being too broad and lacking clarity.

REAL's Plant Response Test Technical Working Group, who developed the proposal accepted the feedback from the Hub's investigation and decided to amend the proposal to make it more relevant and clearer. The updated version has been shared with the Research Panel and its Project Management Team for review.

#### The Fourth project

The tender period for the fourth project, titled "Evaluation of the potential for the improvement of the Residual Biogas Potential test and investigation of alternative test procedures for PAS110 biofertilisers"

## Environmental Regulators

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REAL have been meeting with each of the environmental regulators for the annual liaison meetings. REAL has been seeking the regulators' views on any scheme-specific issues of relevance which have arisen, as well as discussing broader policy and regulatory changes.

### Tender for Certification Services

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REAL opened a tender for provision of certification services under the Biofertiliser Certification Scheme on the 25th of July. The tender period is running for 6 weeks, closing on the 4th September.

REAL wish to appoint a number of certification bodies (number not specified) to run BCS on its behalf. The selected certification bodies will provide certification services on behalf of REAL, in compliance with the most recent issued version of the REAL Biofertiliser Certification Scheme Rules.

The tender invitation document is available on the BCS website [here](#).

### BCS Website Updates

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REAL have recently made two updates to the BCS website, the first being the inclusion of a map showing where our certified operators are located, which you can view on the 'Overview' page of our website [here](#).

In addition, following feedback from operators at recent BCS forums regarding awareness of events, we have introduced an events page on our website. This page will show information regarding upcoming webinars, workshops, and forum meetings, as well as REA training courses or other industry events and how to attend these. This page is available [here](#).

closed in December 2021. After a thorough consideration of the tenders received, Aqua Enviro was appointed to complete the project. They have begun work and are projected to complete the project in April 2023.

The full project brief can be found [here](#).



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