

Biofertiliser Certification Scheme Operators' Forum

Programme for the meeting on 24th May 2023

Attendees

Jane Hall (JH)	Chair
Georgia Phetmanh (GP)	REAL
Emma Laws (EL)	REAL
Megan Muller-Girard (MMG)	REAL (Research Hub)
Jo Chapman (JC)	BCS Operators' Representative
Lucy Owen (LO)	Marches Biogas
Rebecca Taylor (RT)	Iona Management
Johan Lourens (JL)	Fraddon Biogas
Tom Brown (TB)	BCS Operators' Representative
Isaac Carswell (IC)	Biotech4
Mark Barlow (MB)	Swancote AD

Registration

General chat and informal introductions took place while waiting for all attendees to join the call. There were no new attendees on the call—all operators had attended previous BCS forums.

Start: 12.00 pm

1. Welcome

EL welcomed everyone to the forum and gave a brief introduction to REAL and the forum, then handed over to JH for roundtable introductions. EL then reminded attendees of the purpose of the forums (aims) and introduced the forum programme.

JH then queried if there were any issues that operators wished to raise to add to the meeting agenda. JC commented that she had mentioned these to EL offline and will be covered later.

2. Previous Meeting Minutes

All attendees accepted the previous meeting's minutes—no comments or corrections were raised.

3. Updates on the CCS

Actions from the previous meeting

REAL to consider feedback from operators when deciding how and what information to collect on the price or value of certified digestate (e.g., price varies seasonally, different to compost, etc.)

Actioned – This item was in relation to the Scheme Rules – REAL have added a note to the rules explaining that REAL are aware of pricing variability and are seeking an approximation. Providing this information is optional.

REAL to check if AC is on mailing list for CCS update emails/investigate why emails weren't sent to AC

Actioned—Angela was on the email suppression list so was not receiving emails. She has been removed from the list and is now receiving emails.

REAL Research Hub to consider contacting universities (e.g., University of Central Lancaster or Preston polytechnic) re research project tenders in case they can be undertaken by MSc or PhD students

Actioned – In principle, REAL is open to postgraduate students conducting work on behalf of the Research Hub. However, REAL is aware that most MSc courses lasting one year may not give students enough time to deliver a Research Hub project (which may take anywhere from a few months to a year or more to deliver). REAL has contacted several university professors about recent tenders to gauge if either they or their students would be interested but received few responses.

REAL Research Hub to consider asking Stephen Nortcliff for university contacts re the action above

Actioned—MMG contacted Stephen about University contacts for tenders.

REAL and operators to await findings from the current Hub project on the RBP test/inhibition issues

Ongoing—The project is still underway and projected to be complete this summer. REAL will make an announcement when the outputs are available to operators.

REAL to consider issuing operators with multiple sites using their own site inoculum for the RBP test with different approval code formats to ease the administrative burden

Actioned – REAL has been in touch with Angela Cronje to discuss this and explored the possibility earlier in the year. However, REAL decided it doesn't make sense to issue a single code as each code corresponds to one round of parallel testing or ongoing site inoculum testing issued. Therefore, REAL would still need to create different codes which wouldn't ease the administrative burden and could further complicate matters. REAL is revising the inoculum guidance to clarify which codes to use and when to request them and expects to publish them soon but is awaiting the Hub's RBP project report to be published. Overall, this approach to the inoculum inhibition issue is still an interim or medium-term solution. In the meantime, REAL are awaiting the Hub project to complete.

REAL to discuss whether the laboratories should check from a quality control point of view if there has been an issue resulting in the VFA and RBP results showing a significant discrepancy

Ongoing – REAL is currently doing some analysis of test results data to establish any patterns and will discuss further before taking to the labs.

REAL Research Hub to consider discussing the VFA discrepancy issue with the RBP project contractors to explore whether they might be able to include in the project some analysis of this

Actioned – This action was related to Angela Cronje’s comment that VFAs were previously suggested to be an indicator of RBP outcomes but in her experience, the two values often do not appear to correlate and a suggestion to discuss with Aqua Enviro whether the project could explore this.

REAL discussed this with Aqua Enviro and the project will include some analysis of the relationship between VFAs and RBP test outcomes.

REAL to consider raising the administrative issues related to previous certificates not being issued in time and operators not knowing who is best to contact with NSF

Actioned – REAL did raise this with NSF during a meeting. Regarding the issue of previous certificates not issued in time, this was previously addressed by NSF—it was noted that this was a past issue, though it was useful to share this feedback from operators.

Regarding not knowing who best to contact, NSF gave a new email to use: recycling@nsf.org. This is available on the NSF page of the BCS website. Any email sent to this will be picked up by the relevant contact. Sophie Arguile will still be the key contact but hopefully the use of a team generic email will resolve communication issues raised at the last forum.

REAL to add REA HACCP training course to the events page on the BCS website

Actioned – REA training courses are added to the BCS Events page as REAL is made aware of them.

REAL and operators to consider offering universities something in return to involve them in Hub research projects, e.g., webinars on EoW, potentially in association with CIWM

Ongoing – REAL has been considering how to develop webinars for universities and how/in what capacity to involve BCS and/or potentially CIWM. This work and discussions are ongoing.

REAL Research Hub to consider developing webinars on Hub project tenders for universities to attract tender responses and further knowledge transfer

Ongoing – REAL has been discussing whether and how to implement knowledge transfer workshops to share the Schemes and Hub tenders. This is still under consideration for the future. If anyone has any further ideas about what this could involve, please let us know.

JH to email Simone Alpin (Anthesis) at CIWM to ask if action above would fit in their agenda on EoW

Ongoing – As REAL is still discussing this internally, the discussion is currently quite speculative. JH is open to revisit this once the details have been fleshed out by REAL.

REAL to hold all BCS forum meetings online going forward with any ‘meatier’ meetings in person

Actioned.

Operators to contact EL if they would be happy to contribute to future blog posts or articles

EL received no further contributions outside of the last forum. REAL is awaiting website upgrades before launching the blog. Ideas for the first blog posts include posts introducing operators’ representatives and subsequently posts on best practice.

Any questions on the summary paper

There were no questions on the Summary Paper sent to all attendees prior to the forum.

4. Update on the ADQP revision

EL explained that scoping exercises to define objectives for the risk assessment have taken place or are currently underway. Within this scoping work, REAL (with REA and ADBA) held a webinar to discuss proposed changes to acceptable feedstocks and circulated a paper for consultation. Consultation responses were taken to the Task and Finish Group for discussion at the end of April. Separate working groups have also been set up for comparators and quality standards.

EL explained that following this scoping exercise, the Risk Assessment (RA) work will begin within the next few months. The EA is aiming for this to be completed by the end of this year, and REAL are trying to provide support for the Risk Assessment to be delivered on time.

JC asked for clarification about what ‘end of year’ means in this context (e.g., final consultation draft?) and whether there is any clarity on the details of the process. JC commented she imagines further consultation will be likely, but maybe not. JC queried whether operators might have any further involvement in the process or will just be presented with the finished revised framework.

EL offered to query this with Justyna at REAL and notes that operators were involved in scoping (e.g., what they want to put in). EL notes that the RA will be carried out and given to the EA technical team. From there, the new resources framework will be produced based on the findings of the RA. The EA have simply stated that they want the work to be completed by end of year.

JC asked if operator representatives are involved in the risk assessment work. EL confirmed this. GP informed that the trade bodies are also involved in the work as representatives of industry.

JC registered her understanding of this and notes that a consultation would be a direct request for input and queried whether the opportunity for operators to contribute is already done within the scoping consultation. REAL will look into this.

Action: EL to ask Justyna for further clarification on the end of year timeframe (e.g., does ‘end of year’ mean completion of RA or the framework revision itself, and does this include a consultation period?)

5. Feedback from the last Technical advisory Committee

Since the last forum, REAL has held the TAC and catch-up call. JC noted the TAC meeting happens immediately following the forum to present updates and discuss comments raised at the forum.

JC noted that issue of VFAs as an indicator of RBP outcomes (initially raised by Angela at the previous forum) was raised at the TAC. Jo summarises the issue—that Angela was working with an operator that had a sample tested which reported a very low VFA reading but when the RBP result came through, it just barely passed. Angela thought this made little sense as she was reassured by low VFA, but perhaps shouldn’t have been. Further discussion at the forum revealed that others had similar experiences (e.g., an experience where the VFA was fine, but RBP test failed—in this case, it had been an issue with the lab). In summary, the question was about what VFA tells us and what this means—is there an issue with discrepancies between VFAs and RBP results?

JC noted that this was raised at the TAC and there's further work ongoing. Emma gave an update earlier in the meeting regarding REAL working with the labs to check for any quality control issues that may result in discrepancies in VFA and RBP results. Also, Fiona Donaldson at SEPA signposted to a 2013 WRAP paper which showed that there's not a convenient linear relationship between VFA and RBP values. So perhaps VFAs can be indicative but should not be taken as a certain indicator that a sample will pass the RBP.

JC further explained that she has been involved with the ongoing Research Hub project which explores this question. Aqua Enviro has provided further technical explanation that will be helpful, and JC said she thinks there will be some useful outcomes from this. Whether providing further information and training to help people interpret their results or if there are other issues ongoing with the labs, JC noted that the discussion has triggered a few streams of enquiry with possible outcomes and wishes Angela Cronje was here to hear the outcomes.

JC also noted there were various discussions around the CCS conformity mark.

The proposal of remote auditing was also raised to seek the TAC's advice. JC noted that operators are still awaiting the outcome of any decisions about the proposal and emphasises that operators would welcome remote auditing but only if it retains integrity of the scheme. REAL will provide an update on the proposal for remote auditing soon.

JC then presented updates, actions, and outcomes from the most recent catch-up call.

REAL stated they will be introducing a new Analysis Request Form for Scottish sites and is currently working with the labs on this development.

JC summarised the ongoing issue with the CCS/BCS database—a software update in 2022 created challenges for storing, reporting, and accessing new test results data via the database. REAL has been working on a solution and hopes to have an update soon. Hopefully the solution will make it easier for the CBs to access the data they need in the way most useful to them.

JC also remarked that there are pending changes to scheme rules and advisory paper and noted these are still under discussion, but we expect a decision soon so encouraged operators to look out for these updates.

JC also noted that the Research Hub's Call for Proposals closed at the end of May and the proposals received have been quite positive this year—with a further update to be given later in the meeting.

JC summarised a technical issue regarding co-storage that came up at the end of the catch-up call—the issue had to do with an operator producing digestate through two different processes and wanting to store together and it was unclear whether that was acceptable. There are no outcomes from the discussion at this stage. However, JC commented that REAL expects that the outcomes will make their way into the Scheme Rules and Advisory Paper soon as a point of reference for anyone wanting to do something similar.

JH concluded the summary and JC had nothing further to add but noted that there would be more to come from the discussions and encouraged operators to watch this space.

TB returned to the issue of VFAs as an indicator of RBP results. TB noted that REAL released a research paper on PCs in digestates/plastics which was interesting to have a look at data for operators on levels of failure in contamination. TB queried whether it would be worth doing something similar (i.e., REAL publishing a report) for VFAs, provided the labs report VFA data.

GP explained that as the VFA test doesn't have a pass/fail limit like the PAS quality and safety parameters, REAL wouldn't look to produce a similar report showing VFA failures, and the plastic paper was developed in the context of the QP revision from a request that came through a specific Research Hub project. This portion of the project was completed by REAL as it was considered more time sensitive. Although, GP confirmed that the labs do capture and report VFA data to the database—REAL will use this data for the ongoing RBP/VFA internal project/investigation.

GP further noted that the Research Hub project is working to determine if there could be a reliable early indicator of RBP and queried whether VFAs would fall under this part of the project. MMG confirmed that VFA analysis is part of the project—i.e., whether VFAs are a reliable early indicator of RBP results. MMG noted that the project is due to be completed and available this summer, so REAL would not be inclined to undertake the analysis internally but to await the findings of the project.

No further questions were raised.

6. Updates on the Research Hub

MMG provided updates on the 2023 Project Selection process. Namely, six proposals were submitted for consideration this year (summarised [here](#)). MMG reiterated that operators can provide feedback on the proposals via a BCS Operators' Survey. The survey will close today, 24th May. MMG also noted that REAL wants Scheme Participants to be involved in the Research Hub, and due to Scheme participants' feedback that the Project Selection process was unclear, the Research Hub had implemented a series of workshops and webinars to improve engagement with Scheme participants. However, the workshops and webinars to date have been relatively scarcely attended by Scheme participants. MMG then asked for any feedback on Research Hub workshops or webinars. No comments were given.

MMG then provided updates on projects selected in 2021. MMG stated that the project entitled *Evaluation of the potential for the improvement of the Residual Biogas Potential test and investigation of alternative test procedures for PAS110 biofertilisers* (BCS-specific) is projected to be completed in June 2023 and will go to the Project Management Team for final review before it is made available. MMG also explained that the CCS-specific project on the Plant Response Test received no bids in 2021 or 2022. REAL is now discussing how to take the project forward in a different way.

MMG then provided updates on projects selected in 2022, titled, *Evaluate possible alternative area-based methods of assessment for plastics* (CCS and BCS) and *How the benefits of applying compost and digestate to soils can be accounted for under the Greenhouse Gas Protocol* (CCS and BCS). MMG explained that the Project Management Teams for each project have appointed contractors and contract negotiations are underway.

MMG then reminded attendees that the Organics Recycling Research Library is available for use and contained a total of 247 articles related to AD as of January 2023. Any participants without an account should get in touch with MMG at megan@realschemes.org.uk to request access.

Finally, MMG reminded attendees to fill out the CCS Proposal Feedback Survey by end of day today (24th May) and to send any thoughts/questions about the Research Hub—and particularly on webinars/webinars—to her.

7. Issues raised with BCS Operators' Representative

JC raised an operators' issue regarding screening.

JC noted that the issue is related to what people understand to be forthcoming thresholds around plastic. JC commented that it's highly likely that the ADQP will be revised to reduce acceptable plastics to the levels currently accepted in Scotland and notes that most people agree this is a good thing in terms of quality, but there are some challenges around how to achieve that, for example, to install the necessary changes while operating an ongoing process. In addition, if there is a significant change to the process, the process requires revalidation.

JC noted there was a recent case of an operator already screening at the end of the process to remove plastics, looking to install a more robust screen to remove a greater quantity of plastic. The site has looked at what they need to do to make this change. The CB informed that this would require revalidation. For this site, revalidation is an issue, as they do not have the storage to hold material until revalidation is achieved; they would have to dispatch the material as waste in the meantime. JC queried why this is a significant change and highlighted that the site, a compliant site, is making a positive change to reduce physical contaminants and improve digestate quality.

JS suggested that as physical contaminant removal is a physical process and therefore a full hydraulic retention time (HRT) between samples would not be necessary to achieve three different batch samples for validation, the site should not have to wait the HRT between samples. For other changes, JC stated she understands why the full HRT is needed, e.g., Salmonella or RBP, but PC is dependent on the screen only, waiting for the full HRT shouldn't impact results. It could be, for example, a week between samples instead.

JC noted that operators want to change/improve their screens, but the requirement for revalidation with samples a full HRT apart seems disproportionate and an unnecessary burden on operators. Given the initial time between samples is defined by the operator, is there flexibility possible to make this process more proportionate? JC expressed that it is important to begin these discussions early, before changes are made to the QP, to reduce barriers for operators before this comes in. It should not be so difficult as reducing physical contaminants is a positive for the environment.

JH asked for any comments or similar experiences that operators may have had.

TB agreed with JC's comments that the PAS standard says that a 'significant change' is a matter of interpretation and notes that the likelihood of digestate quality being screened to a lower quality is very low. TB stated he thinks installing screens would be a good step for industry and comments that it would be a shame if operators were put off. TB then queried if there is a formal process that REAL would allow considering this without revalidation. Alternatively, would REAL be able to amend the BCS position on technical requirements document?

Regarding TB's latter question on amending the Scheme, GP explained that REAL will give an update generally on discussions shortly. On the former question of whether this constitutes a 'significant change', GP summarised that when this issue was first brought to REAL's attention, REAL facilitated a discussion with all CBs around whether this scenario should result in all parameters being tested for and whether the hydraulic retention time between those samples needs to match the initial validation time. All CBs agreed that this change results in revalidation for all parameters to be tested with the same initial retention testing. That was the outcome of the first discussion.

More recently, the operator provided more information on whether this is a significant change. Subsequently, REAL facilitated another discussion with the CBs in the last few weeks and the CBs still agree this is a significant change, so the same requirements apply—changing to a new separator is considered a significant change and requires revalidation across all parameters. GP noted REAL has a call with the CBs tomorrow so will seek further comments. GP also noted that the TAC is coming up and the issue could be raised for further discussion there.

Regarding the BCS position on technical requirements, GP explained that REAL drafts the position and agrees it with the CBs, then sends it to the TAC for final comments before publication. GP stated that REAL will do the same for this topic (if the CBs agree with the draft) as the discussion is still open—in this respect, REAL won't be drafting the document now but will wait to see what the TAC (scheme stakeholders) consider and advise during the upcoming TAC meeting, then may revise the position. Because the CBs are responsible for interpreting the requirements and assessing changes, REAL can't introduce new positions without their agreement, as the Scheme Owner. However, REAL does consult all stakeholders, so will do this at the upcoming TAC in a few weeks' time.

TB asked what would happen if REAL disagrees with the CBs as it is REAL's job to write the scheme rules.

GP explained that REAL will seek technical advice at the TAC and the CBs are present at the meeting. If discussions bring consensus across stakeholders that the CBs' position doesn't make sense in this case, it would be simpler for REAL as the Scheme Owner to continue discussions and maybe reach a different conclusion. If our view outside of this issue in general is different from CBs, REAL can't enforce our own position as the CBs are appointed and responsible for assessing against the requirements.

GP explained that the Steering Group for the PAS revision decides on which technical requirements will be included in the PAS for compliance with the PAS. REAL is responsible for the BCS Scheme Rules but the rules don't set technical requirements.

Once REAL and the CBs reach a shared agreement on a scheme position of technical requirements (those open to different interpretations), and have received any final comments from TAC members, then that's when REAL would update the BCS position on technical requirements with the new section/position.

TB said that this explanation makes sense.

JC commented that the technical requirements/position document informs the CBs' interpretation but that the document comes from the TAC—it's a consensus position or at least has been decided in discussion with TAC. JC queried whether REAL or the CBs would be able to provide more rationale about the need for retesting and full hydraulic retention time in advance of the TAC.

GP said that the information provided to date has been provided by email and all CBs agree this constitutes a significant change but will discuss this with the CBs during the call tomorrow.

TB noted that Clause 10.6 and table 4 in PAS 110 refer to the initial validation point.

JC noted that this was helpful preparation for the TAC meeting to give the operator's issue the best case at the TAC.

JC stated that she has reviewed the wording of clause 10.6 which outlines the requirements for determining the minimum time between samples for sampling a batch or portion of production. Her interpretation is that the clause does not specify a single way of determining time between samples but outlines the factors that must be taken into consideration. Hydraulic retention time is a significant

factor when determining batch and sample frequency for other suite parameters. However, it does not have the same significance when determining suitable batches for sampling for re-validation following installation of a new screen designed to remove physical contaminants at the end of the process. Is there any reason why the operator could not make allowance for this eventuality in their QMS?

JC noted she is still struggling to see how you couldn't interpret this clause in a manner that would allow a more proportionate approach to this change and reduce unnecessary burden to the operator, given what's in the PAS and comments that she can still see the case for the operator based on what's in the standard. JC said she will ask the CBs to give their rationale during the TAC.

Action: GP to discuss the position with CBs during a conference call (feedback to JC on rationale)

JC commented that there seems to be flexibility within the wording of the standard to allow something more proportionate on this issue.

GP stated she doesn't want to pre-empt the discussions but thinks these are fair questions to ask at the TAC with the CBs present.

JC suggested that REAL can give the CBs a heads up that the questions are coming at the TAC. JC queried whether any other operators want to comment on interpretation or any further experience.

TB noted it's helpful to understand where things are at and how JC can take this forward and to discuss how to formulate the questions. TB does not understand why, but if the CBs can provide an explanation that makes sense to everyone, that will be useful in its own right. TB notes they're glad the issue is being discussed early.

No further comments.

Compostables Session

Question 1—Would you like to be able to easily identify certified compostable liners/bags. What would you find helpful to be able to easily identify certified compostable liners/bags in the feedstock? (Appearance)

TB commented that his site takes all municipal type waste, which all goes through a de-packaging process and is disposed of. So, there is no real use to distinguish between compostables and standard plastics.

GP queried whether the de-packaging process removes compostables as much as plastics.

TB stated that he doesn't have data on this but states he thinks it may be slightly more difficult with compostables but relatively similar.

JC commented that one site she's working with does not take bagged waste—only factory food waste (branded food packaging that's being removed in packaging machines) so compostables don't come through plant in large volumes.

GP queried whether anyone is receiving compostable packaging.

IC commented that they receive a bit of compostable packaging, but not much as their site is not taking in food waste. IC noted that compostable packaging gets stringy and nasty so having regular plastic is preferable.

RT commented that they just take food waste which is de-packaged before treatment from municipal sources.

JH commented that she doesn't know many sites that can successfully process compostable bags, so if received, the site would have to remove the compostable bag (as well as standard plastic bags) as sites have issues with compostable bags clogging up machinery. JH noted that some sites are using plastic bags and some using compostables, but she assumes that both go either to landfill or incineration. JH stated she can't think of a scenario where a different appearance of the bags will result in compostable bags are actually sent to a composting site and queried if anyone can think of an instance where it would be useful to be able to tell the difference between LDPE and compostable plastic bags.

JC agreed and noted that at her site all packaging is removed and goes to one skip. So even if operators could tell the difference between plastics and compostables, there wouldn't be the infrastructure at plants to treat it differently to prevent compostables and plastics from all ending up in one big skip together.

GP noted that if no one disagrees, the other questions are probably not relevant, aside from perhaps Question 5—apart from what everyone's mentioned already, what issues, if any, do you experience with compostables in feedstocks? GP noted that this may be more relevant for composters if all packaging is rejected at AD sites.

JH queried why compostable bags are used for food waste.

TB stated he has read that providing compostable bags increases uptake of domestic food waste recycling.

RT stated that before working in AD, she worked for a big contractor doing collections which found that providing bags increases uptake. In terms of plastic, RT recalled even if compostable or digestible, it will float on the top. They had an issue with it getting stuck in the heat exchanger.

JH queried whether the group could feedback to LAs about stopping the use of compostable bags for food waste collections.

GP commented that the initiative REAL is taking on now is to find a suitable design for compostable marking on bags and liners (as well as labelling) so JH's suggestion would be a significant change of direction. GP noted that REAL is trying to work on the composting side of things.

JH queried if the design is for food waste caddies.

GP confirmed that the design REAL is discussing with compostable packaging sector would be for food waste caddy liners and bags used to transport food waste but REAL is focussing on benefits for the food waste sector.

No further feedback given at this time.

8. An opportunity to discuss other issues raised by producers

JC had a couple of items to raise. First to note that listing the HACCP course date on the BCS website was very helpful and to query whether it would be held again as an operator wished to take the course but struggled to find one.

EL replied that they list the HACCP course and any other events on the site as the REA informs them of the events occurring. JC reiterated the usefulness of the course and having it listed on the BCS site.

JC then commented that as a part of UKAS requirements, CBs should be asking operators for feedback. JC noted CBs sometimes issue surveys after audits but considers that the uptake may not be very high. JC queried whether the forum could be an opportunity to collect general feedback to provide to CBs—i.e., as a regular slot on the Forum agenda.

Action: REAL to consider adding operator feedback to CBs to the Forum agenda

EL noted that REAL has a scheduled call with the CBs the following day and this item is on the agenda—to query whether the CBs would like help collecting feedback. If CBs would like help, will consider ways to support them in collecting feedback (there may be certain ways they wish to collect feedback). EL noted that the Forum already is in place to gather people so seems like a missed opportunity if not used as a way in, provided CBs do want to help collect feedback.

9. AOBs

EL queried whether producers have any ideas/issues they would like to see resolved through research. EL noted that the Call for Proposals does not formally open until January but encourages operators to begin thinking about research ideas. If anyone has suggestions for research ideas, they can contact MMG and Stephen Nortcliff (Advisor to the REAL Research Hub) and they will receive ample support drafting their idea into a proposal.

No one had any research ideas to raise.

GP commented that she has been asked to seek feedback about why no operators have volunteered to take part in an APHA Study following a request for participation via email circulated last month.

GP summarised that she has been liaising with APHA regarding an ongoing research project entitled *Impact of waste treatment plants on reducing AMR organisms*, which will ‘study the effect of livestock industry biosecurity and hygiene measures on the occurrence and control of antimicrobial resistance.’ APHA will need to visit AD plants for the project and REAL has offered to help identify relevant sites. GP queried if anyone is willing to contribute—if yes, they could send details to APHA to get involved.

GP noted that the main benefit to participating is that the APHA report is to be sent to the EA, Defra, and industry. GP further explained that the results would be anonymised, but also individual results would also be sent directly to sites and benchmarked against other sites. GP queries if anyone is interested in contributing.

TB queried whether this project is related to pig and cow slurry use as TB’s site only takes food waste.

JC agreed that similarly, there are no more pigs at Shropshire and therefore no pig slurry to contribute. When talking about animal health, sites may have a fear reaction if researchers are asking about animal health and if there are animal health officers coming onsite. JC noted she would not be surprised if people are quite cautious about getting involved.

GP commented that either APHA or Tom Aspray said the same. GP noted that there has been no take-up from anyone on the scheme so far and can understand that may be the reason why.

JC suggested that APHA may need to think about how they package the proposal differently to encourage people to take part.

GP thanked JC for this good suggestion.

Actions

- REAL and operators to consider offering universities something in return to involve them in Hub research projects, e.g., webinars on EoW, potentially in association with CIWM
- JH to email Simone Alpin (Anthesis) at CIWM to ask if action above would fit in their agenda on EoW
- REAL to feed back to operators with more detail on the EA's QP revision timeframe by email before the next forum
- JC to include operator issue re screening in updates given at the next TAC meeting
- REAL to mention to CBs during conference call that operator issue re screening will be raised at the upcoming TAC meeting with a focus on questioning the rationale behind the interpretations of significant change and the initial validation testing regime, and further discuss their interpretations of significant change
- REAL to consider operators' feedback on compostables in general and for the liners/bags initiative
- REAL to ask CBs if they would find REAL collating feedback on their behalf useful
- REAL to consider sharing operator feedback on APHA study with APHA

End 2:30pm