



Introduction to new Product Certification model – SQC Assurance Scheme

On 01 October 2023 – and in line with the start of a new scheme year - we plan to update the membership and certificate process to align with product certification.

Currently the SQC certification is operated as a time limited cycle (annual certificate) meaning that all assessments must be completed before harvest.

Under this model, the assessment and certification process must be complete – to provide the grower with assured status – prior to the issuing of passports.

The move to product certification will still require all growers to have an annual assessment. However, there will be more flexibility in terms of when the assessment takes place. This will allow the Certification Body and Assessors to more effectively manage the allocation of assessments and certification process across the scheme year. And, because it allows for ongoing certification (subject to conditions as below), passports can be issued earlier in the season and prior to harvest commencing.

Product certification will also bring SQC in line with other assurance schemes – who already undertake product certification – making it easier for joint assessments to take place (where applicable). It will increase integrity to the SQC scheme and enable easier joint working with other schemes when required and ability to meet future industry developments.

Note – ongoing certification is subject to the grower paying his annual renewal fee; undertaking an annual assessment and completion of certification process (subject to compliance with all Standards).

In addition to this document, the following guidance is also available via the SQC website:

- FAQ's for growers
https://www.sqcrops.co.uk/uploaded/sqc_653586_1694529058.pdf
- Product certification flowchart
https://www.sqcrops.co.uk/uploaded/sqc_245374_1694529396.pdf

- Product certification flowchart descriptive
https://www.sqccrops.co.uk/uploaded/sqc_763930_1694529590.pdf
- Industry guidance https://www.sqccrops.co.uk/uploaded/sqc_954503_1694773793.pdf