

## **SQC Member - Food Integrity Assurance Update**

It looks like Spring is at last making an appearance and hopefully some long overdue dry weather will lead to successful spring sowing and completion of winter crop tasks.

As the sole certification body for Scottish Quality Crops, Food Integrity Assurance (FIA) is keen to support SQC members and keep you updated on specific activities relating to the delivery of assessment and certification on behalf of SQC.

We hope that the following update provides insight and opportunity for you as a member and please do not hesitate to contact the FIA Team should you have any questions. Our contact details are noted at the end of this update.

Firstly, FIA is delighted to confirm that it has successfully achieved accreditation to ISO 17065 for the Scottish Quality Crops Scheme. This is a key requisite of the Contract with SQC. It provides reassurance to the Scheme Owner, its members and the wider industry that FIA has been independently assessed by UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) and found to have the necessary expertise and processes in place to deliver the assessment and certification services for the Scheme.

### **Assessment delivery**

One of the key priorities for FIA in support of SQC is ensuring that assessments are conducted and certified in time, allowing for passports to be issued for harvest. Whilst harvest may appear to be a long way off there are still around 2000 assessments to be conducted by our team of ~26 SQC assessors before the end of July 2023.

We would appreciate your support in accommodating your annual SQC assessment as soon as possible once the assessor has made contact to arrange. Where there is the opportunity to conduct your assessment in conjunction with another Scheme, such as QMS Cattle & Sheep, FIA will ensure this is delivered as a combination on the same day to minimise the disruption to your busy schedule.

Please remember that SQC has a new website where you can access resources such as scheme templates to assist in maintaining your records as required by the SQC Scheme. Why not take a look now - [www.sqcrops.co.uk/documents/](http://www.sqcrops.co.uk/documents/)

### **Scheme trends**

SQC monitor Scheme performance trends closely - gaining insight of any key areas of risk or standard compliance that may challenge members. Such insight informs decisions on future standards whilst demonstrating compliance engagement to the wider industry.

SQC and FIA are keen that such insight is provided to members to inform their own on-farm decisions and highlight any particular common areas of non-compliance that can be prevented in future.

The following table outlines the “Top Ten” common areas of non-compliance from recent assessments which we hope provides you with some guidance for focus. Please be conscious that, in almost all cases, non-compliances can be easily rectified if identified and the FIA certification team will be happy to support you where they can.

### Top 10 Non-compliances at Assessment

| Standard | Requirement                                | Guidance (refer to the Scheme Manual for more detail*)                                                                                                                                |
|----------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2.17     | Annual Sprayer Test                        | All trailed, mounted and self-propelled sprayers with a boom over 3m, air blast sprayers and aerial sprayers will need to be tested under NSTS annually.                              |
| 2.20     | Sprayer Contractors Details                | Sprayer contractors must hold a valid NSTS MOT, SQC self-assessment form and a written spray calibration form, which the SQC grower must have a copy of at the time of the assessment |
| 2.2      | Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM)      | The IPM Plan must: be available for all staff, advisers and contractors; demonstrate the use of PPPs is justified; demonstrate improved protection of the environment                 |
| 2.16     | Sprayer Contractor NPTC & CPD              | Sprayer contractors must hold the relevant NPTC and CPD in line with SQC Standards 2.14 & 2.15                                                                                        |
| 2.15     | Sprayer Operator CPD                       | Operators have 2 options regarding maintaining their CPD: Complete an SQC Sprayer Operator Course annually or Become a NRoSO member and maintain an annual record of 10 CPD points*   |
| 3.3      | Mass Balance                               | All growers must use a mass balance system and retain records for five years*                                                                                                         |
| 2.14     | Sprayer Operator Certificate of Competence | At the time of spraying, all sprayer operators must hold an NPTC Certificate of Competence*                                                                                           |
| 2.3      | Spray Storage                              | The store must: be secured and the key kept in another location; be bunged; display appropriate signage on the outside of the store*                                                  |
| 4.2      | Long Term Storage                          | Suitable stores must: be fully waterproof; have walls; have floors of solid construction; have properly fitted doors                                                                  |
| 5.4      | Rodent Contractor Qualifications           | Where a third-party rodent control contractor is used, it is the grower's responsibility to have a copy of the technician's Certificate of Professional Competence                    |

#### **Linking Environment and Farming – LEAF**

FIA are delighted to now be approved to deliver LEAF Marque certification to SQC Members. This globally recognised standard has seen significant uptake in the last year as the supply chain commits to more sustainable sourcing of product, and Scotland can be a major contributor to the truly sustainable production of food.

The standard aims to promote these on farm commitments and FIA are keen to support SQC Members to gain the benefits of becoming LEAF Marque certified. For more information, please visit the LEAF website <https://leaf.eco/> or contact the FIA Team for an application form. Where possible the LEAF assessment will be delivered in conjunction with your SQC assessment to minimise the assessment burden.

#### **FIA contact details:**

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