



SCOTTISH
QUALITY CROPS



SQC Scheme Standards

**Farm Assurance Scheme Standards
(including Crops for Liquid Biofuels)
by Scottish Quality Crops Limited (SQC)**

October 2025

These Standards must be read with reference to the SQC HACCP Plan and SQC Membership Rules.

www.sqcrops.co.uk

Contents

Introduction and Welcome to the Scheme	3
What the Assessor will check on your farm	3
At the end of the assessment	5
Sourcing and traceability of SQC Crops	5
EU database Revised Directive (RED) EU2018/2001	6
How to contact us	7

The SQC Standards

Section 1 - Standard for the use of Fertilisers, Manures, Water & Fuel	8
Section 2 - Standards for Plant Protection Products	14
Section 3 - Standard for the Production and Harvesting of Crops	21
Section 4 - Standards for Storage	28
Section 5 - Pest Control Procedures	32
Section 6 - Transporting Standards	34
Section 7 - General Standards	35
Appendix 1 – Additional Guidance on Standard 1.9	37

Welcome to the Farm Assurance Scheme Standards by Scottish Quality Crops

This Manual sets out the Standards of Scottish Quality Crops Ltd (SQC) Assurance Scheme and should be read in conjunction with the SQC HACCP plan (Critical Control Points are indicated) and the SQC Membership Rules (which contains a list of definitions as used within this Standards document). The SQC Membership Rules sets out the conditions of participation in SQC and provides information on the structure of the company and how it operates. It is also intended as a guide for prospective new applicants and as a source of reference for existing growers.

We now issue our documents as digital pdf's as this allows you to easily search them and access the additional guidance via the contained links.

Note – Revised Directive EU/2018/2001 was as previously referred to as Renewable Energy Directive (RED) (EU) 2018/2001.

This Manual contains Standards for all crops.

The SQC Standards are designed to increase consumer and trade confidence in both home and export markets by:

- Responding proactively to consumer concerns about crop production
- Improving food safety and meeting the requirements of the Food Safety Act (1990)
- Addressing the environmental responsibilities of crop production

SQC ensures that members' farms operate production systems which encompass high standards of crop management and, particularly, that fertiliser, plant protection products, husbandry, storage and overall farm standards have all been subject to an independent assessment procedure.

What the Assessor will check on your farm

The assessment will cover the entire production system, including all relevant aspects of the Scheme Standards for crop production, storage and haulage.

The starting stage of the assessment will depend on the work underway when the Assessor arrives, and the sequence from then on depends on what is most practical and convenient.

The Assessor will maintain in strict confidence any information gathered during the assessment. If a non-compliance is found, the Assessor will explain this at the time. The [SQC Farm Record Book](https://www.sqccrops.co.uk) which is available on the SQC website (www.sqccrops.co.uk) gives guidance on what records are required to be maintained to prove compliance with the Scheme Standards (use of this book is optional).

Use of fertilisers and manures

The Assessor will check storage and records including timings, rates and application details.

Use of Plant Protection Products

The Assessor will check the plant protection product store, records, plant protection product selection, rates and application details.

Production and harvesting of crops

The Assessor will check that every field has a suitable record of the crop management, including variety, sowing date and all other inputs.

The Assessor will check land eligibility for compliance with the Revised Directive EU/2018/2001 and will require information on the area in the current business which was in an arable rotation (including temporary grass i.e. grass in a crop rotation of not more than five years, or wetlands) at the 01 January 2008 (this will be verified by reference to acceptable documentation as proof of land use e.g. Field Data Sheets as part of Single Farm Payment applications made in 2008, and/or maps or datasets setting out areas of high biodiversity value, farm records etc). The Assessor will check that any evidence of verification of wetland status reflects seasonal changes within a year.

If this total area has increased since 01 January 2008 then it must be established that this area is not from high biodiversity, high carbon stock land.

Storage and haulage

The Assessor will check that crop storage facilities and handling equipment are suitable and that appropriate hygiene measures are carried out. Routine monitoring must be carried out, recorded and, where applicable, appropriate follow-up action must be taken for pre-harvest hygiene, glass protection, vermin/animal control and grain temperatures. The Assessor will also check that vehicles used for transportation on and off farm have had appropriate hygiene measures carried out, where applicable. All grain bulks must be labelled and records must be available for all loads despatched from farm.

Staff assessment

During the assessment, the knowledge and skills of the individual(s) involved in spreading fertiliser, applying plant protection products and operating the combine harvester will be assessed at initial assessment and again be assessed in subsequent years, especially if there is a change of personnel. The assessment is the opportunity to demonstrate competence in crop husbandry. The grower, farm staff, or both, may be candidates for assessment.

For the assessment, the grower must make available the sprayer, fertiliser distributor and combine harvester for use in the staff assessment part of the report.

Assessment of machinery skills

Fertiliser spreader: The Assessor must be satisfied that staff can demonstrate how to set up, calibrate and clean the fertiliser spreader and are competent to apply the selected fertiliser rate evenly and with minimal environmental impact outside the crop. They may ask about headland kits and about the working practices adopted to avoid fertiliser being spread into watercourses or areas of conservation value.

Farm sprayer: The Assessor will check sprayer operators hold a Certificate of Competence and have demonstrated CPD training by completing a BASIS Sprayer Operator Course annually i.e. within 12 months of the last completed course date or proof of membership to NRoSO.

Sprayer operators must be able to demonstrate the following:

- How to calculate and measure out the amount of crop protection product to be placed in the tank for a stated application dose.
- How to set the sprayer for a stated rate of water per hectare and check that the nozzles deliver a spray of the required quality and uniform quantity.

Combine harvester: The Assessor will check that combine drivers can identify the symptoms of a badly adjusted combine and describe or demonstrate how to alter the settings to deal with them.

Assessment of management skills

The Assessor will choose items from the following list, taking into account who is normally responsible for the decision or action:

- Demonstrate how to adjust nitrogen rates for previous cropping and other conditions, using fertiliser recommended advisory notes (SRUC Technical Note 731/ Nutrient Management Guide RB209).
- Those storing produce in long term stores must be able to identify ergot and storage pests from a photograph or sample.
- Be able to recognise from photographs or samples: crop growth stages, common pests, weeds and diseases and also common nutrient deficiency symptoms.
- Growers must be able to describe the correct stage for desiccation or swathing of relevant crops.

At the end of the assessment

The Assessor will carry out a closing meeting and supply the member with a Findings Report. If applicable, they will record any non-compliances found and will detail the type of evidence required to achieve the SQC Standard and the timeframe in which evidence must be provided. The grower will then be asked to sign an undertaking of intention to carry out the action required and provide evidence that the necessary action has been taken to FIA.

The Certification Team will undertake an evaluation of the completed assessment report submitted by the assessor together with any corrective evidence for non-compliances identified during the assessment

that has been submitted by the grower. Note – the assessment team shall have the competence, experience and the generic and specific skills necessary for conducting the assessment taking into account the scope of the assessment. Where there is only one assessor, the assessor shall also have the competence to perform the duties of an assessment team leader applicable for that assessment. The certification body shall ensure that the certification decision is taken by a technical reviewer that was not part of the assessment team.

Sourcing and traceability of crops

Growers will be supplied with SQC Passports. The SQC Passport is unique to each grower, showing the name, address and membership number of the grower. Purchasers will use these SQC Passports as evidence that produce is of assured status.

It is a condition that the SQC Passport is signed by the SQC grower or another authorised signatory to protect the credibility and integrity of the scheme. Applicants are reminded that only the grower or other authorised person must sign the SQC Passport.

Both the grower and haulier (if applicable) must sign the “Inspection of Vehicle” statement on the SQC Passport. Where a haulier is used, the grower must be satisfied that the three previous loads carried are detailed with cleaning process recorded.

Procedure in the event of accidental spillage of a contaminant onto ground with sown/growing crop or onto stored crop to be assured: if such a contamination does take place, either by the grower or a third party, all details must be recorded and the grower must inform the FIA office in writing.

In order for the SQC Passports to reflect compliance with the Revised Directive EU/2018/2001 land use criteria, a declaration on the SQC Passport must also be signed. Growers must keep a record of the date, tonnage and purchaser of loads being delivered for biofuel.

European Union database Revised Directive EU/2018/2001

This is a database held by the European Commission enabling compliant growers the ability to supply combinable crop into Biofuels. SQC plan to retain recognition as an accredited body.

The Revised Directive EU/2018/2001 specifies that relevant economic operators shall enter data onto the European Union database in a timely manner. In summary, this will be the information entered onto the SQC passport for those crops/feedstocks entering the biofuel supply chain plus the information shown on the Certification Body industry checker which includes sustainability criteria.

Grain merchants and grain groups will assist with identifying SQC crops in the markets.

Grain groups and co-operatives whose entire participation is accredited to SQC standards are permitted to use the SQC logo. Such stores must be accredited by a recognised AIC merchant scheme for crops.

How to contact us:

SQC Registered Office (contact for SQC Board and Management)

c/o James Hair & Co, 59 Bonnygate, Cupar, Fife, KY15 4BY

Email: Teresa.dougall@scottishqualitycrops.co.uk

Certification Body (contact for anything related to Scheme standards, membership, scheme documentation, passports etc)

Food Integrity Assurance Ltd (FIA), The Rural Centre, West Mains, Ingliston,
Newbridge, EH28 8NZ

Telephone No: 0131 609 0558 / E-mail: info@foodassurance.co.uk

Website: <https://www.sqcrops.co.uk/> or <https://foodintegrityassurance.co.uk/>

The SQC Standards

Section 1.0

Standards for the use of Fertilisers, Manures, Water & Fuel (HACCP 4)

Ref	Standard	Requirements
1.1	Growers must have access to the relevant PEPFAA Code of Good Practice Do's & Don'ts Guide.	See The PEPFAA plan for further guidance.
1.2	Soil must be regularly tested for pH, P & K.	SQC accepts that 'regular' testing is at least once every five years.
1.3	Records must be kept and made available for fertiliser applications.	Records must include: • Date of application • Type of fertiliser • Amount used on each field.
1.4	All application rates of nitrogen, phosphate and potash must be matched to the crop requirement.	Growers must also consider the following: • Soil status • Previous cropping and yield • Application of organic manures • Natural losses. See Technical Note (TN731): Nitrogen Recommendations for Cereals, Oilseed Rape and Potatoes and Nutrient Management Guide (RB209)
1.5	Growers must comply with NVZ requirements, where applicable.	The following NVZ guidelines are set: • Nitrogen fertiliser must not be applied to crops during closed periods. • There are limited exceptions during the closed period for oilseed rape and early drilled cereals but any applications made must adhere to Scottish Government NVZ rules. • Applications must not exceed crop requirements so an N max calculation must be completed for each crop type before any nitrogen is applied. • No applications should be made where there is a risk of run off or poor utilisation e.g. where land is waterlogged, flooded, frozen or snow covered. • Before making any application, consider climatic conditions (e.g. rainfall), soil type and slope and no applications should be made to

The SQC Standards

		slopes of over 12 degrees if there is a risk of run off. • The total amount of nitrogen that can be spread on any holding from livestock manure (including directly from the animals themselves) must not exceed 170 kg N /ha. • The total amount of nitrogen that can be spread on any individual field from all other sources of organic manure (other than compost) must not exceed 250 kg N /ha. • The total amount of nitrogen that can be spread on any individual field from all other sources of organic manure (other than compost) must not exceed 500 kg N /ha. • All nitrogen fertilisers should be applied accurately. • All applications of nitrogen fertiliser must be recorded (see summary of record keeping requirements here). Note: SQC Assured growers in England must adhere to Defra NVZ Rules and Guidance at this link Restrictions include: • No more than 170kg per hectare of nitrogen in livestock manure (including manure deposited directly by livestock and spreading) per holding in each calendar year. • No more than 250kg of total nitrogen from all organic manures spread in any 12 month period on any single hectare of land. This limit (the field limit) doesn't include livestock manures deposited by grazing animals. • Defra guidance on closed periods must be followed. • Defra guidance aimed at limiting run off must be followed so consideration given to factors such as soil type, climate and slope. • All applications of nitrogen on each crop in each field must be planned and recorded as a fertilisation plan which must be kept as part of your farm records.
--	--	---

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
1.6	Growers must only apply fertiliser (including FYM and slurries) to crops in suitable conditions.	All fertilisers must be applied in suitable conditions. This applies to all organic and artificial fertilisers. Unsuitable conditions are: • Ground which is frozen solid • Ground which is snow covered • Ground which is waterlogged.
1.7 HACCP 4	Growers using biosolids must keep detailed records. Untreated biosolids must not be spread onto SQC ground.	Records must include: • Batch records of origin • Delivery records • Application records. SQC Growers must ensure that the end customer or merchant will accept crops that have received such treatments. Applications must be in line with NVZ regulations. Growers must also adhere to the relevant codes of practice. For further guidance see The Sludge Regulations 1989
1.8 HACCP 4	The use of compost on SQC ground is permitted. However, if the original feedstocks are sourced outside of the SQC farm unit, the compost must be certified to PAS100. Detailed records must be kept.	Records must include: • Batch records of origin • Delivery records • Application records SQC Growers must ensure that the end customer or merchant will accept crops that have received such treatments. Growers must note that home produced compost that is not PAS100 must not include feedstock from outside the farm. Applications must be in line with NVZ regulations.
1.9 HACCP 4	Digestate must either be PAS110 certified or home-produced using feedstock exclusively from the member farm. If feed stock is sourced from out with the farm, it should be entirely 'green' as	Records for both PAS110 Digestate and home-produced digestate must include: • Batch records of origin • Delivery records • Application records

The SQC Standards

	per Appendix 1. Detailed records must be kept.	Advisory note – Growers must note that home-produced digestate that is not PAS110 must not include feedstock from outside the farm. It is accepted that the digester may not be on the member farm but may be offsite e.g. at an industrial estate or on a separate parcel of land owned by the member. SQC Growers must ensure that the end customer or merchant will accept crops that have received such treatments. Applications must be in line with NVZ requirements. Advisory note for producers: The SQC AD Scheme is not currently operational and is under active review with the aim of optimising the sustainable use of digestate and other bulky organic manures in Scottish crops and best aligning this with market acceptability. For producer information only: Appendix 1 shows the acceptable list of green feedstocks previously included in the SQC AD Scheme.
1.10 HACCP 4	Other crop enhancement products are permitted for use on SQC assured acreage, however an appropriate SEPA/EA permit must be in place. Detailed records must be kept.	Records must include: • Batch records of origin • Delivery records • Application records
1.11	Fertiliser spreaders must be maintained and calibrated. Records must be kept.	Records must include: • Maintenance and routine checks on the spreader • Annual calibration If slug pellets are used through the spreader, the spreader must be tested and calibrated for each product.
1.12	Storage of granular/prilled fertiliser must be suitable.	Storage must be: • On a hard surface where spillages can be easily swept up • Not near drains or burns where run off could occur. For further guidance see PEPFAA code

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
1.13	Storage of liquid fertiliser must be suitable.	Storage must: • Be secured against tampering • The grower must have in place a system for contamination, preferably through a bunded system. For further guidance see PEPFAA code
1.14	Domestic water supplies must be protected from fertiliser through protection zones.	A minimum exclusion area of 50 meters must be adhered to from the edge of the fertiliser spread to the start of the domestic water supply. Where 50 meters appears excessive for inorganic fertiliser, evidence is needed to support a lesser protection zone.
1.15	Field boundaries must be protected from fertiliser, FYM, slurry, lime and other crop nutrient or soil improver applications.	For example: • Maintaining safe distances from headlands • Maintaining safe distances from open water sources • Headland kits must be used where available.
1.16	Growers must use a registered FACTs Advisors.	If an advisor, consultant or trade rep advises on fertiliser on the grower's farm, it is the grower's responsibility to ensure the advisor is a member of the current FACTs professional register.
1.17	Where water is used to irrigate crops, a plan must be in place to support the water usage and an appropriate abstraction licence.	A detailed water management plan must be made available. This must include: • Irrigation water usage records • Maintenance plans to reduce usage • Water audit • Details of abstraction licence • Where irrigation is used water quality testing records kept. For further guidance see Water Abstraction Licence - Gov.UK.

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
1.18	All potential pollutants are stored in accordance with legislation.	This includes but is not limited to: • Fuel • Oils Fixed fuel tanks greater than 1250 litres must be bunded. Oils must be stored in bunded building or containers. For further guidance see PEPFAA code.

The SQC Standards

Section 2.0

Standards for Plant Protection Products (PPP) (HACCP 5, 8 and 11)

The word pest applies to any insect, pathogen, weed species or other organism which might reduce the yield or quality of the crop.

Plant Protection Product refers to any chemical or organism which is used to control a pest. This includes seed dressings, granules, soil drenches, powders, dusts, biological control agents or fumigants intended for use with stored products. It also includes plant growth regulators, but not trace elements or adjuvants (wettters and mixers), even when applied from sprayers.

As of June 2022, users of pesticides must be registered:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professional-plant-protection-products-ppps-register-as-a-user>

Ref	Standard	Requirements
2.1	Growers must have access to the relevant Code of Practice for using Plant Protection Products.	For further guidance see Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products in Scotland
2.2	Growers must complete, and demonstrate, an annual review of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan.	The IPM plan must: • Be available for all staff, advisors and contractors • Demonstrate the use of PPPs is justified • Demonstrate improved protection of the environment. For further guidance see the Integrated Pest Management Plan
2.3	Plant Protection Products must be stored in a dedicated store.	The store must: • Be secured and the key kept in another location • Be bundled • Display appropriate signage on the outside of the store • Emergency spillage facilities must be available within the store. For further guidance see Guidance on storing pesticides for farmers and other professional users .

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
2.4	Plant Protection Product containers must be fit for purpose.	Containers must: • Be fit for purpose • Clearly labelled * • In sound condition. Note: Where a product has been decanted into a replacement container, the new container must show the original labelling information (which can be printed from manufacturers websites).
2.5	An up to date Plant Protection Product stock inventory must be kept.	Two copies of the stock inventory must be kept. One must be in the chemical store and one must be kept within the farm office, or somewhere that could be easily located in the event of a fire within the store.
2.6	All Plant Protection Products must be currently approved by CRD for use on the target crop.	Growers must ensure that all products used are on label and CRD approved. If a product being used is an Extension of Authorisation for Minor Use (EAMU), a copy of the relevant notice of approval must be kept and documented. All Plant Protection Products must, at all times, be used in accordance with product labels or EAMU. Key points include e.g. Harvest intervals are observed and recorded; maximum permitted dose rates are not exceeded; check product labels before use. For further guidance see Pesticides Register of UK Authorised Products
2.7	Expired or withdrawn Plant Protection Products must be kept segregated from approved stock pending disposal by an approved waste disposal contractor.	Growers must ensure that all withdrawn PPPs are not kept on farm past their withdrawal date or expiry date.

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
2.8 HACCP 5	Growers must keep accurate records and up to date spraying records which must be retained for a minimum of five years.	Spraying records must be kept for growing and stored crops. The records must include: • Date of application • Time of spraying • Crop growth stage • Wind speed and direction • Pest being controlled • Label name of product • Dose used • Water application rate • Spray quality • Sprayer operator • LERAPS • Buffer zones. Care must be taken to avoid applying products during unfavourable conditions that would encourage drift onto conservation or sensitive areas, i.e. Hedgerows, private homes and public places.
2.9 HACCP 5	Contract sprayers must provide the SQC grower with the spray records within seven days of application.	Spraying records must be kept for growing and stored crops. The record must include: • Date of application • Time of spraying • Crop growth stage • Wind speed and direction • Pest being controlled • Label name of product • Dose used • Water application rate • Spray quality • Sprayer operator • LERAPS • Buffer zones. Care must be taken to avoid applying products during unfavourable conditions that would encourage drift onto conservation or sensitive areas, i.e. Hedgerows, private homes and public places.

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
2.10 HACCP 5 & 11	Growers must follow all statutory label requirements.	For example: • Never exceed the maximum dose at any one application • Compliance with maximum total doses in repeated applications • Compliance with all other statutory label requirements.
2.11	Application of insecticides to oilseed rape must be during appropriate times of the day. Growers must avoid bright weather and mid-day applications to protect and minimise any potential harmful effect on bees.	Applications must be during: • Early morning • Late evening • Dull days.
2.12	Waste materials must be disposed of via a registered waste carrier. Waste disposal notes/receipts must be retained.	Waste materials include: • Metal • Plastics (including PPP containers) • Fertiliser tote bags • Glass • Paper. Excess spray washing must be disposed of either by spraying an under dosed area of the field or via a registered waste carrier. The Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection in Scotland must be followed and can be viewed here
2.13	Growers must use a registered BASIS advisor.	If an advisor, consultant or trade rep advises on the grower's farm, it is the grower's responsibility to ensure the advisor is a member of the current BASIS professional register.

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
2.14 HACCP 5	At the time of spraying, all sprayer operators must hold an NPTC Certificate of Competence (CoC).	This CoC must be relevant to the sprayer/applicator and are as follows: PA1: Principles of Safe Handling and Application of Pesticides PA2: Safe Application of Pesticides Using Self Propelled, Mounted, Trailed Horizontal Boom Sprayers PA3: Safe Application of Pesticides Using Variable Geometry Boom or Broadcast Sprayers PA4: Safe Application of Pelleted or Granular Pesticides Using Mounted or Trailed Applicators PA5: Safe Application of Pesticides Using Boat Mounted Equipment PA6: Safe Application of Pesticides using Pedestrian Handheld Equipment PA7: Safe Application of Pesticides from the Air PA8: Safe Mixing and Transferring of Pesticides PA9: Safe Application of Pesticide Mists, Fogs and Smokes PA10: Safe Dipping of Plant Material in Pesticides PA11: Safe Treatment of Seeds with Pesticides PA12: Safe Application of Pesticides to Plant Material During a Continuous Flow Process PA13: Safe Sub Surface Application of Liquid Pesticides PA-SC: Safe Application of Pesticides Using Specialist Equipment PA-RPM: Responsible Pesticide Management

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
2.15 Revised HACCP 5	All sprayer operators must undergo annual Continual Professional Development (CPD).	Operators have two options regarding maintaining their CPD: - Complete a BASIS approved Sprayer Operator Course annually i.e. within 12 months of the last completed course date OR - Become a NRoSO member and maintain the NRoSO annual CPD points requirement. Please note: attendance on any other sprayer operator course i.e. not a BASIS course, will NOT cover the operator without NRoSO membership. Sprayer operators who have passed their NPTC exam during the current Scheme year will be granted a year's grace for CPD. Sprayer operators attending a BASIS approved Sprayer Operator Course which takes place AFTER the scheme assessment must notify the Certification Body, FIA, on completion of the course.
2.16 HACCP 5	Standards 2.14 and 2.15 also apply to sprayer contractors and it is the SQC grower's responsibility to have this information available at the time of the assessment.	Sprayer contractors must hold the relevant NPTC and CPD in line with SQC Standards 2.14 and 2.15.
2.17 HACCP 5	All trailed, mounted and self propelled sprayers with a boom of over 3 metres, air blast sprayers and aerial sprayers, including those used by contractors, must be tested under the National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS) in line with their requirements.	These sprayers must be: - Tested under NSTS annually - If new, application equipment must be tested before use - Issued with a NSTS certificate if imported with a mutually recognised foreign test certificate

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
2.18 HACCP 5	Pesticide application equipment, including that used by contractors, with a boom less than 3 metres, slug pellet applicators and granular applicators must be tested in accordance with NSTS requirements	• Boom sprayers less than 3 metres must be NSTS tested before 5 years old and retested every 6 years • An annual SQC Sprayer Self-Assessment form must be completed for sprayers with booms less than 3 metres which have not been NSTS tested • The SQC Sprayer Self-Assessment form must detail a record of maintenance checks and replacement parts • Slug pellet and granular applicators must be NSTS tested before 5 years old and retested every 6 years
2.19	All PPP applicators, including any contractor applicators, must be calibrated and a record kept.	Calibrations must be carried out: • At the beginning of each season (Autumn and Spring) • After changing nozzles • After replacing any part of the delivery system • Regularly during the season • This includes knapsacks, handheld and pedestrian sprayers. • Applicators used for granular PPP's and slug pellet applicators must be calibrated at every change of product.
2.20	Pesticides must be used in a manner that reduces the risk to water, birds and small mammals. Growers must have a record with a farm map, clearly highlighting areas of high pollution risk.	Applications must not be made during: • Heavy rain • When field drains are flowing • When excessively windy • Periods/conditions identified on labels as unsuitable.

The SQC Standards

Section 3.0

Standards for the Production and Harvesting of Crops (HACCP 1 and 6)

All crops produced on the unit must conform to the SQC Scheme's Standards. The intention is that all crops produced on a grower's farm must qualify for the Scheme, but occasions may arise (e.g. possible contamination) when this is not possible.

In that event, arrangements for the segregation of such produce (excepting for Standards 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3) must be agreed with the Assessor and SQC must be informed. The grower must make satisfactory arrangements for segregation and separate marketing; on no account may the grower use SQC Passports for such unassured bulk.

Detailed information on high biodiversity land, high carbon stock and peatland can be found on the SQC website – and is also available at the end of this section.

Ref	Standard	Requirements
3.1 Revised	Growers must provide information on the area in their business which was in an arable rotation (including temporary grass) at 01 January 2008.	Growers must provide this information to produce biofuel crops (biofuels, bioliquids and biomass fuels produced from agricultural biomass) compliant with the Revised Directive EU/2018/2001. Growers must comply with the Articles 29 (3) to (7), the land-based sustainability criteria, of Revised Directive EU/2018/2001. Crops (raw materials) must not be obtained from land with a high biodiversity value, namely land that had one of the following statuses on or after 01 January 2008. • Land with high biodiversity or • Land with a high carbon stock or • Land that was peatland unless evidence is provided that the cultivation and harvesting of those crops does not involve drainage of previously drained soil. If this evidence is not available for all of the land in their business at 01 January 2008, that land will be assumed as non-compliant to the Revised Directive EU/2018/2001

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
3.2	Growers must provide information on the area which is in an arable rotation (including temporary grass) for the current scheme year. Documents for verification of previous land status must be retained for a minimum of 5 years, or longer where it is required by the relevant national authority.	It must be established that this area is not from high biodiversity land, high carbon stock land or peatland drained since January 2008. Assessors may review the documentation which may include official records showing field location and classification/use, maps, Single Farm Payment documentation etc. If this evidence is not available, it will be assumed as non-compliant to the Revised Directive EU/2018/2001.
3.3	All growers must use a mass balance system and retain records for a minimum of five years, or longer where it is required by the relevant national authority.	Records must include: • A record of the actual or estimated weights of the Revised Directive EU/2018/2001 compliant crop going into store • Records of loads taken out of store must be kept, with reference to weighbridge tickets • The amount of each type of crop for biofuel taken out of store must not, at any time, exceed the total amount of compliant crop of that type which was loaded into the store • The total mass balance must be for a twelve month period, aligned to the calendar year or the economic year used for bookkeeping purposes, and the balances within that period must be updated and recorded at the end of every three months. The time frame must be transparent, documented and consistent • If a grower has grain stores in more than one location, each site must have an individual record • If requested, all growers shall make available all mass balance data in advance of the planned assessment For further guidance see the Mass Balance Record

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
3.4 HACCP 1 & 6 CCP 2	Growers are required to identify fields at risk from crop contaminants and take specific management action.	Examples include: • Fields with ergot present in the previous scheme year should be recorded • Fields where ergot is identified in season should be harvested and stored separately to avoid contaminating larger bulks • Management plans may include actions such as controlling grass weed hosts • Crop contaminants such as HEAR oilseed rape • Crops that might contain allergens • Physical contaminants such as plastics from compost applications, or lead pellets from shooting.
3.5 HACCP 1 CCP 1	All wheat growers must complete a Mycotoxin Risk Assessment	Complete the current AHDB risk assessment for managing mycotoxin risk in wheat. For further guidance see the Mycotoxins Risk assessment
3.6	Detailed fields records must be kept.	Records must include: • Variety • Dates of sowing • Crop treatments • Harvest dates. Please note that harvest dates must observe harvest intervals from PPP's. Organically grown crops must also have a field record.

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
3.7	SQC growers must have a Biodiversity Action Plan.	The Biodiversity Action Plan must include: • A map of the location of areas or features important to biodiversity on and around the farm. • Details of how provision is made for wildlife habitats and food sources through hedges, field margins, extensive pasture, etc. • Measures to avoid degradation and deforestation of High Conservation Value (HCV) areas or other ecologically sensitive areas. • Assessment of possible disruption of biological corridors because of farm activities and, if required, must include the assessment mitigation measures. For further guidance see the Biodiversity Action Plan

SQC STANDARDS 3.0 – PRODUCTION AND HARVESTING OF CROPS ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Scope and definitions	‘Biomass’ means the biodegradable fraction of products, wastes and residues from biological origin from agriculture, including vegetal and animal substances from forestry and related industries, including fisheries and aquaculture as well as the biodegradable fraction of waste including industrial and municipal waste of biological origin. ‘Agricultural biomass’ means biomass produced from agriculture. ‘Biofuels’ means liquid fuel for transport produced from biomass. ‘Bioliquids’ means liquid fuels for transport produced from agriculture. ‘Biomass fuels’ means gaseous and solid fuels produced from biomass.
Additional definitions	“High biodiversity land” is defined as: • Primary forest and other wooded land, namely forest and other wooded land of native species, where there is no clearly visible indication of human activity and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed, and old growth forest. • Highly biodiverse forest and other wooded land which is species-rich and not degraded, or has been identified as being highly biodiverse by the relevant competent authority, unless evidence is produced that the production of the crops did not interfere with those nature protection purposes.

The SQC Standards

	• Areas designated: i. by law or by the relevant competent authority for nature protection purposes or ii. for the protection of rare, threatened or endangered eco-systems or species recognised by international agreements or included in lists drawn up by intergovernmental organisations or the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, subject to their recognition in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 30(4) (unless evidence is provided that the production of that raw material did not interfere with those nature protection purposes) • Highly biodiverse grassland spanning more than one hectare that is: i. natural, namely grassland that would remain grassland in the absence of human intervention and that maintains the natural species composition and ecological characteristics and processes: or ii. non-natural, namely grassland that would cease to be grassland in the absence of human intervention and that is species-rich and not degraded and has been identified as being highly biodiverse by the relevant competent authority, unless evidence is provided that the harvesting of the raw material is necessary to preserve its status as highly biodiverse grassland. • Heathland¹: Heathland vegetation occurs widely on mineral soils and thin peats (0.5m). For the purposes of this plan upland heathland is defined as lying below the alpine or montane zone (at about 600–750m) and usually above the upper edge of enclosed agricultural land (generally at around 250–400m but descending to near sea-level in northern Scotland). Lowland heathland occurs below the upper limit of agricultural enclosure and supports a range of birds, reptiles and invertebrates not found on upland heath; this habitat is covered by a separate habitat action plan. Montane heaths, restricted to high-altitude mountain summits and ridges, are also excluded from the upland heathland plan. Blanket bog and other mires, grassland, bracken, scrub, trees and woodland, freshwater and rock habitats frequently form intimate mosaics with heathland vegetation in upland situations. This plan recognises the importance of this habitat mosaic. Habitat action plans have been produced for some elements of this complex, for example, blanket bog and upland calcareous grassland. Upland heath in ‘favourable condition’ is typically dominated by a range of dwarf shrubs such as heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i>, bilberry <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>, crowberry <i>Empetrum nigrum</i>, bell heather <i>Erica cinerea</i> and, in the south and west, western gorse <i>Ulex gallii</i>. In northern areas juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i> is occasionally seen above a heath understorey. Wet heath is most commonly found in the wetter north and west and, in ‘favourable condition’, should be dominated by mixtures of cross-leaved heath <i>Erica tetralix</i>, deer grass <i>Scirpus cespitosus</i>,
--	---

¹ [UK BAP Priority Habitat Descriptions \(Dwarf Shrub Heath\) \(2008\) | JNCC Resource Hub](#)

The SQC Standards

	heather, and purple moor-grass <i>Molinia caerulea</i>, over an understorey of mosses often including carpets of <i>Sphagnum</i> species. This habitat is distinct from blanket mire which occurs on deeper peat and which usually contains frequent occurrence of hare's-tail cotton grass <i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i> and characteristic mosses. High quality heaths are generally structurally diverse, containing stands of vegetation with heather at different stages of growth. Upland heath in 'favourable condition' also usually includes areas of mature heather. Upland heathland encompasses a range of National Vegetation Classification (NVC) plant communities. <i>Ulex gallii</i> - <i>Agrostis curtisii</i> (H4) and <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> - <i>U. gallii</i> (H8) are restricted to southern Britain. <i>Calluna</i> - <i>V. myrtillus</i> (H12) is particularly widespread in the east. <i>Calluna</i> - <i>E. cinerea</i> (H10), <i>Calluna</i> - <i>V. myrtillus</i> - <i>Sphagnum capillifolium</i> (H21), and <i>Scirpus cespitosus</i> - <i>E. tetralix</i> (M15) are especially characteristic of western margins. <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i> - <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i> (H18) is generally widespread in the uplands but other communities are more local in distribution, notably <i>Calluna</i> - <i>D. flexuosa</i> (H9), <i>Calluna</i> - <i>Arctostaphylos uva-urii</i> (H16) and <i>E. tetralix</i> - <i>Sphagnum compactum</i> (M16). The distribution of these communities is influenced by climate, altitude, aspect, slope, maritime influences and management practices including grazing and burning. An important assemblage of birds is associated with upland heath, including red grouse <i>Lagopus lagopus</i>, black grouse <i>Tetrao tetrix</i>, merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> and hen harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>. Some forms of heath also have a significant lower plant interest, including assemblages of rare and local mosses and liverworts that are particularly associated with the wetter western heaths. Note: The following definitions shall be applied: • 'Old growth forest' means a forest stand or area consisting of native tree species that have developed, predominantly through natural processes, structures and dynamics normally associated with late-seral developmental phases in primary or undisturbed forests of the same type. Signs of former human activities may be visible, but they are gradually disappearing or too limited to significantly disturb natural processes². • 'Degraded' means characterised by long-term loss of biodiversity due to, for instance, over- grazing, mechanical damage to the vegetation, soil erosion or loss of soil quality. • 'Species-rich' means it is: i. a habitat of significant importance to critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable species as classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species or other lists with a similar purpose for species or habitats laid down in national legislation or recognised by a competent national authority in the country of origin of the raw material; or
--	--

² COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, Commission Guidelines for Defining, Mapping, Monitoring and Strictly Protecting EU Primary and Old-Growth Forests, SWD(2023) 62 final (section 2.3)).

The SQC Standards

	ii. a habitat of significant importance to endemic or restricted-range species; or iii. a habitat of significant importance to intra-species genetic diversity; or iv. a habitat of significant importance to globally significant concentrations of migratory species or congregatory species; or v. a regionally or nationally significant or highly threatened or unique ecosystem. • “High carbon stock” is defined as: i. Land that was wetland • A wetland is land that is covered with or saturated by water permanently or for a significant part of the year ii. Land that was continuously forested • Continuously forested areas are defined as land spanning more than one hectare with trees higher than 5m and a canopy cover of more than 30% or trees able to reach those thresholds in situ • Continuously forested areas do not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban land use. Agricultural land refers to tree stands in agricultural production systems, such as fruit tree plantations, oil palm plantations and agroforestry systems when crops are grown under tree cover. iii. Land that was forested with canopy cover between 10% and 30% • Land spanning more than one hectare with trees higher than 5m and canopy cover of between 10% and 30%, or trees able to reach those thresholds in situ, unless evidence is provided that the carbon stock of the area before and after conversion is such that, when the methodology laid down in Part C of Annex 5 of the Directive is applied, the conditions laid down in Article 29 (10) would be fulfilled. These provisions shall not apply if, at the time the raw material was obtained, the land had the same status as it had in January 2008.
--	--

The SQC Standards

Section 4.0

Standards for Storage (HACCP 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12)

Ref	Standard	Requirements
4.1 HACCP 8	Temporary/intake stores must be suitable.	Suitable stores must: • Be rainproof with a roof • Have a clean floor with solid construction • All temporary stores must be emptied by 31 October. External storage is not permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances on a concrete pad prior to drying. Growers must inform SQC if they plan to do this. A derogation may be granted at the Certification Body's discretion where crops may need to be retained in a temporary store after 31 October. It is the grower's responsibility to seek this derogation.
4.2 HACCP 11	Long term storage must be suitable.	Suitable stores must: • Be fully waterproof • Have walls • Have floors of solid construction • Have properly fitted doors.
4.3 HACCP 11	Oilseed rape must not be stored on a bituminous (tarmac) floor.	Bituminous materials must be avoided in oilseed storage areas, as they can impart toxic aromatic chemicals (PAHs) tainting the seed. Prevent oilseed rape encountering tarmac/bituminous painted surfaces.

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
4.4 HACCP 8, 11 & 12	Growers must avoid all potential glass or hard plastic contamination and provide records of checks.	All glass fittings must be protected to prevent broken glass contaminating crops. A recording system must be in place and must include: • Vehicle glass and mirrors • Grain store light fittings • Skylights • Any lightbulbs or lamps that may be near any crops at any time. If broken glass or hard plastic is found, this must be swept away, and any contaminated grain segregated. This must also be recorded.
4.5 HACCP 8	Pre-harvest hygiene must be undertaken and recorded.	The following must be pest and insect free: • All stores (including temporary) • Reception pits • Driers • Cleaners • Conveyors. This must be accurately recorded. Insect bait bags must be used to demonstrate effective management and they must be removed before grain is stored. All stores must be treated as follows: • Clean store • Remove all sweepings • Disinfect where appropriate • Use insect bait bags for infestations • If evidence of infestation, use appropriate fumigant to control • Repeat if necessary to achieve control.

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
4.6 HACCP 8	Livestock housing that is used as storage must be cleaned appropriately.	All storage that has previously housed livestock must: • Have walls and floors cleaned, with the use of a pressure hose • All walls and floors must be disinfected with a food grade disinfectant. This must be accurately recorded. If insecticides are used, the following must be recorded: • Date of application • Reason for treatment • Application rate • Dilution rate as applicable.
4.7 HACCP 8, 9 & 10	Regular maintenance must be carried out on grain driers and records kept.	During drying, every effort must be made to avoid contaminating grain with fuel or the products of combustion.
4.8 HACCP 1, 7, 8 & 11	All crop handling equipment must be checked and cleaned pre-harvest and records kept.	All handling equipment must be maintained before harvest to ensure there are no fuel or oil leaks. A record of this maintenance must be kept. All loading buckets, combines and tarpaulins used to cover grain during transit must be cleaned thoroughly and a record kept.
4.9 HACCP 8	Moisture meters and temperature probes must be calibrated annually.	Growers can either choose to calibrate their moisture meter by: • Using a standard sample • Using a dedicated moisture meter clinic. A record of this must be kept.

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
4.10 HACCP 8, 9 & 10	Temperatures of crops after drying must be checked and recorded regularly.	To avoid spoilage, temperatures must be reduced to at least 12°C by the end of December. Each grain bulk must: • Be checked weekly until 12°C is reached • After this, temperatures must be recorded on a regular basis • Any rise (more than one degree) between inspections must be investigated. There must be detailed records kept.
4.11	Grain bulks must be identifiable.	Long term stored grain bulks must have records of: • Variety • Field(s) of origin • Harvest dates • Dates of temperature and general inspections • Details of any PPP applied or other remedial treatments.

The SQC Standards

Section 5.0

Pest Control Procedures (HACCP 8 and 11)

Ref	Standard	Requirements
5.1 HACCP 8 & 11 CCP 3	Rodent control measures must be in place.	A detailed record must be kept of the following: • Bait location plan/map • Number of bait stations • Date of bait station inspections • Level of activity observed • Bait type used with full label requirements • Signature of person in charge of the control procedures. Growers must note that bait stations do not need to contain rodenticides. After effective treatment, any rodenticides that have been used must be removed and disposed of according to the label requirements.
5.2	In all stores, each bulk must be inspected for deceased and dying rodents.	Each bulk must be checked on a weekly basis for signs of deceased and dying rodents. If any are found, these must be dispatched as quickly as possible and disposed of safely in line with label requirements of the product used. Records must be kept of this.
5.3 Revised	A Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU) environmental risk assessment must be carried out.	CRRU environmental risk assessment forms must be completed for each site to demonstrate the need to use first and second generation anticoagulants. A CRRU form must be updated if there is a significant change of practice on the site, or a major infestation occurs. This must be retained on the site. Note: From 01 October 2025 to 31 December 2025, second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) can be purchased (if required) by SQC scheme members. From 01 January 2026 all users of SGARs will need a specialist training certificate to purchase SGARs. Further details on this are available here

The SQC Standards

		For further guidance see the CRRU Environmental Risk Assessment Form
5.4	Third party rodent control contractors must be fully qualified.	If 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.
5.5 HACCP 11	Long term storage must be protected against pests.	All grain bulks must be protected against ingress by birds or domestic animals (including cats). Bulks must be checked weekly for the presence of birds, and a record of these checks must be kept.

The SQC Standards

Section 6.0

Transporting Standards (HACCP 7 and 12)

Ref	Standard	Requirements
6.1 HACCP 7	On farm transportation equipment must be clean and fit for use.	- It is the grower's responsibility to ensure that all lorries and trailers are clean and dry prior to use - If equipment is non-dedicated or has ever been used for transportation of organic material, it must be washed with a foodgrade disinfectant prior to use - Cleaning records must be kept.
6.2 HACCP 12	Off farm transportation equipment must be clean, fit for use and each load must be accompanied with a grain passport with Section 2 completed.	It is the grower's responsibility to ensure: - All lorries and trailers are clean and dry prior to loading - All lorries and trailers are fit for purpose to carry crops - Non-dedicated trailers have been washed with food grade disinfectant and proof of this has been seen and retained - All lorries/trailers are covered during transit - Individual merchant requirements are met - Cleaning records of lorries/trailers and tarpaulins must be kept.
6.3	Growers must keep detailed records of all loads dispatched. These records must be retained for five years.	Records must show: - Date of dispatch - Haulier and number plate of lorry/tractor - Crop dispatched - Amount dispatched - Confirmation of biofuel use, if applicable.

The SQC Standards

Section 7.0

General Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
7.1	A detailed complaints register must be kept and maintained regularly	Growers are required to maintain a complaints record for the marketing of their crops. This must include: • Official complaints (including grain rejections) • Complaint details • Corrective action. The complaints record must be kept up to date and reviewed annually. For further guidance see the Complaints Register template
7.2	The farm appearance must be maintained to a high standard at all times.	SQC maintains a good public perception and appearance is important to this. Growers must make every effort to minimise the amount of redundant machinery, weeds and overgrown areas around the farm steading. A high level of hygiene and tidiness must be maintained across the interior and exterior of the farm.
7.3	A detailed emergency action plan must be available and visible on ALL SQC farms.	Every SQC farm must have a detailed emergency action plan in place, with relevant locations and contact numbers recorded. This plan must be visible and a copy held within the farm office or relevant location. This plan must be visible in case of an emergency (e.g. fire) for when the persons responsible are not on site. For further guidance see the Emergency Action Plan template

The SQC Standards

Ref	Standard	Requirements
7.4	All staff or contractors are competent to carry out their roles.	- Contractors can provide certificates of competence if requested - For all employed staff, records of all relevant training should be kept and accessible if required.
7.5	Where labour providers are used, growers are required to ensure they are Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) registered.	It is the growers responsibility to ensure that records of Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) licence check is kept and up to date. For further guidance see GLAA licence

Advanced notification:

The SQC Standard Review Committee/Board will continue to consider the introduction of a Soil Management Plan (that aligns with customer requirements and emerging Government policies).

SQC Scheme Standards – 01 October 2025

Appendix 1 – Guidance on Standard 1.9 (information only for producers)

Appendix

Appendix 1: Approved feedstock

Cereals	• Wheat • Barley • Oats	• Triticale • Rye • Oilseed Rape
Cereal By-products:	• Straw	• Chaff
Root Crops:	• Beet (Fodder and Sugar) • Carrots • Parsnips	• Potatoes • Swedes • Onions
Green Vegetables:	• All farm supplied green vegetable material (excluding material which originates from third party packhouses).	

Appendix 2: Approved distillery co-products

• Pot ale syrup • Draff (Distillers' grains)	• Distillery process washings • Spent yeast
---	--

Appendix 3: Approved brewery co-products

• Brewers' grains • Spent Yeast	• Brewery process washings • Hop waste
--	---

Appendix 4: Approved waste products (Classified as waste products by the Waste Framework Directive)

• Farmyard manure (cattle, pigs or horses) deemed a waste when used in a biogas plant. • Farm livestock slurry (cattle/pig) deemed a waste when used in a biogas plant. • Spoilt vegetables (excluding material which originates from third party packhouses) providing the causes of spoiling is known and not deemed a risk.
--

Appendix 5: PATHOGENS based on Publicly Available Specification upper limits.

Parameter	Method of test	Upper Limit
Non-ABP Digestate E.coli	SCA MSS Part 3A or BS ISO 16649-2	1000 CFU / g fresh matter
Non-ABP digestate: Salmonella spp	Method as specified by appropriate ABP regulation, according to nation in which digested material is produced, or SCA MSS Part 4A	Absent in 25 g fresh matter