



TECHNICAL UPDATE

APRIL 2025



As we move into British Summer Time, the farming sector will be hoping for a decent growing season to boost morale and farm income. Certainly, the recent spell of good weather has seen Spring sowing on many cereal farms progressing a month earlier than last year, long may this favourable weather continue.

Passports for 2025

The recent Farm Assurance Review has been a hot topic of conversation amongst Scheme owners and certification bodies, like FIA. We do see the review as a great opportunity to bring about effective change to the benefit of members and reduce the burden of assessments and compliance whilst robustly defending the integrity of Scheme brands like SQC.

Recommendations from the FAR report provided clear guidance on which areas required focus, with adoption of technology being a core theme. SQC has not been lacking in its desire to progress digitisation of the Scheme where possible and FIA is delighted to be part of this journey, bringing tangible benefit to members.

The first phase of this advancement will be the release of new Auditee Portals by FIA to all SQC members by June 2025. This will provide direct access to your compliance management requirements, certificates and grain passport. The portal functionality will aim to support a wide range of activities. To ensure the process is managed at a pace to allow all members to engage with ease, the initial focus will be on accessing your 2025 grain passport via the portal.

This process will replace the previous issuing of passports via printing and postage, significantly advancing the sustainability of the process. The passport, accessed via the portal, is not a digital passport but the familiar document which you will be able to access and print copies as required, greatly improving the current process.

FIA is currently testing this process with a group of SQC growers to ensure members can use the new portals with ease. We will provide more detailed updates over the coming months ensuring you are fully informed on this exciting new development.

**** IMPORTANT INFORMATION ******Do we have your most up to date email address?**

Your business email address will be a key factor in the success of accessing the new portal. Whilst every effort is made to ensure FIA has captured your most up to date email address, if you have changed it recently or not previously provided it to FIA or one of FIA's assessors, please contact the office now via the details noted at the bottom of this newsletter.

FIA will be unable to issue your grain passport if we do not have your current email address.

Keeping assessment delivery on track

As mentioned in previous updates, SQC's new Product Certification model allows assessments to be delivered over 12 months. This provides the opportunity to have your SQC assessment at a different time of the year whilst continuing to align with other schemes to allow for joint assessments where feasible.

We would welcome your support to allow assessments to be conducted well in advance of harvest 2025 and ask that if an assessment is booked, it is not cancelled within 48 hours of the appointment. This process helps the assessors and certification team to better manage their workload across the year and minimise the risk of members not receiving their assessment within the Scheme year, which would delay release of grain passports.

If you have not yet received your 2024-25 Scheme year assessment, an FIA assessor will make contact to arrange your next SQC assessment very soon.

Thank you for your support in this.

HELP IS ON HAND

As always, if you require any assistance in relation to the SQC Scheme, please don't hesitate to contact the FIA Team.