



**SCOTTISH  
QUALITY CROPS**

# NEWS UPDATES

**December 2024**

## This year's been a full and varied one for SQC

**From meeting with our counterparts across Europe, to going in front of camera and speaking at events, 2024 has been a full and varied year for SQC.**

Meeting other UK and European voluntary assurance schemes in Krakow to discuss how we can together secure the future of the biofuels markets in Europe for growers was an interesting first.

This, combined with a fascinating visit to one of the UK's main bioethanol plants, Vivergo, proved very worthwhile to better understand and learn from the different perspectives, businesses and nations, and how they approach and value assurance.

Access to the European biofuels market for Scottish – and all UK – growers has been under threat, a

fall out from Brexit and a quirk of paperwork. Submitting evidence to meet the European Union's requirements has been a detailed and lengthy process but one which we believe we have to undertake to ensure continued access to this market for our Scottish growers – with no interruption for growers or others within the supply chain – and to try and minimise grain imports.

I've been really pleased over the year to be invited to speak at the Scottish Agronomy conference, to meet with NFUS regional groups and their Combinable Crops Committee and to be part of a panel for the AHDB seminar at AgriScot. It's always good to have a chance to meet and speak to growers face-to-face, and to be able to explain what SQC does (and doesn't do!).



**Teresa Dougall,  
SQC Managing Director**

There's sometimes a misconception that SQC is a levy body and that we provide a wider marketing of produce service. SQC's primary focus is on quality assurance for Scottish crops and, with this, access to market.

Earlier this year the SQC standards setting process was reviewed in collaboration with the supply chain and growers to ensure we encourage full engagement and consultation when making any future changes to the Standards.

In 2025 we will be undertaking a full review of the SQC standards to ensure they remain necessary and relevant for the markets growers want to access – and to take out anything that's not. Keeping the assessment process as simple as possible and avoiding duplication where we can, have again, been central to this.

Integrity is always key. Knowing our standards and processes are

*(Continued overleaf)*

As the sun sets on another growing year, we look towards what lies ahead for Scottish growers in 2025.







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fit for purpose and our governance structure correct has been particularly critical this year, with a review of farm assurance for all sectors across the UK underway. And, we expect publication of the final report in the new year.

Sometimes farmers question the value of assurance but as well as the markets they reach with confidence through SQC accreditation, growers should be proud to be recognised for producing to these standards. It's not a race to the bottom. It's about preserving market trust, market access and creating long-term value. And if there was no SQC assurance, what would there need to be instead to access these markets, and would it be better than what we are doing?

Could we also be using SQC Quality Assurance to, where possible,

minimise grain imports? We all need to take into account the wider processes undertaken across the full supply chain; supply and demand issues; where growers fit into that and the importance that these businesses place on quality assurance and EU/worldwide equivalence.

At SQC, we're constantly keeping an eye on the future, as will all growers undoubtedly be, as you plan the year ahead. We can't sit still nor allow short-termism, and we'll continue to work with growers and the supply chain next year to seek out opportunities and head off challenges.

I'd also like to thank all of those who stepped in front of the video lens this summer to showcase SQC and the role it plays across the supply chain, a short film we hope you've enjoyed watching (it's on our website if not!).



We'd like to wish our growers and stakeholders a rest over the festive season and a good growing year to come.



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