

SQC - STANDARDS SETTING PROCESS

Following a full review of the SQC Standards Setting Process back in September 2022 and considering industry and accreditation requirements for full transparency in the SQC quality assurance scheme, we have revised the process flowchart to allow for additional consultation on the Standards within SQC, the supply chain and with SQC growers. And, we have produced new guidance as below to further explain each step that is indicated in the flowchart diagram on the next page.

- **Benchmarking** – Our Certification Body, FIA, will continually benchmark the SQC Standards throughout the Scheme year. Benchmarking underpins the full Standards Setting Process.
- **Consultation (February)** – SQC will undertake a dual consultation process to ensure that the full industry and supply chain can provide comment:
 - Scottish Crop Supply Chain Hub – The Hub will meet each February with an agenda item to cover discussion on SQC Standards
 - Request for written comments from stakeholders and growers (including SQC Co-op partners) – we will consult with stakeholders and growers and give them an opportunity to provide comment and views on the SQC Standards
- **Provision of summary report (April)** - (following benchmarking and consultation) to incorporate the following:
 - Feedback from consultation
 - Non-compliance update report against current standards
 - Changes to other quality assurance scheme standards
 - Internal comment of any additional proposed changes to the SQC Standards
- **Standards Review Committee meeting (May)** to review and discuss the summary report:
 - Note - should there be any suggested substantive changes to the SQC Standards, an additional consultation may be undertaken with Stakeholders and SQC growers (with provision of adequate time – through to July)
- **Standards approved by SQC Board of Directors (by end of July)**
 - At this stage, any changes (whether substantive / change of wording to Standards etc) will be communicated to our Certification Body, FIA, to allow for updating of assessment checklists / training of assessors and with SQC growers
- **Publication of new Standards document – 01 October** – in line with scheme year

