



SCOTTISH QUALITY CROPS

A message to SQC growers of potential changes to recognition of Renewable Energy Directive II (RED II) Assurance by European Commission

from Teresa Dougall, Managing Director of Scottish Quality Crops

Crops being grown for biofuel is an important developing market both in the UK and Europe. Trade with the European bioenergy sector is underpinned by the European Union's (EU) Renewable Energy Directive (RED), which validates growers' commitment to sustainable production and respect for biodiversity, soil, water and minimising Greenhouse gases (GHGs).

This is currently verified by voluntary certification schemes such as SQC, Red Tractor Farm Assurance for Cereals and Sugarbeet and AIC, which are all accredited by UKAS, the UK National Accreditation Body.

In June of this year, we were informed that under new conditions set by the European Commission, a National Accredited Body must be one operating within the European Union and as such, UKAS is no longer recognised, as it is not within an EU member state. Alongside the other voluntary schemes, UKAS and farming bodies, we have been actively fighting this technicality. Without recognition by the European Commission of UKAS, which will come to an end on 31st December 2023, there would be major disruption and cost to the biofuel and crops' supply industry, and we urgently need this to be resolved.

With less than six months to rectify the situation, we have called [urgently](#) on the European Commission to continue to recognise UKAS and all that it represents through our schemes in the UK. The best-case scenario for all parties is that the EC adopts this, and trading continues seamlessly.

There are a number of alternatives that SQC, Red Tractor and AIC are currently reviewing but all of which will be costly with no tangible gain over the requirements already in place through our voluntary schemes.

We are also in the process of organising a joint industry letter to Mark Harper, Secretary of State for Transport and the Department for Transport to apply pressure to recognise that, without this, we stand to lose access to the EU as a vital outlet for biofuels, which would not only impact on farm incomes, but it would seriously undermine the UK's ambition in renewable fuels and decarbonising the wider economy. Upon completion, a copy of this letter will be made available on the SQC website (under the RED header).

SQC continues to act on the behalf of all growers to protect the mechanisms that are in place to ensure Scotland's growers have access to the widest available and most lucrative markets.

As always, we will keep you informed on progress made. Should you have any immediate questions in relation to these potential changes, please email info@foodassurance.co.uk

Finally, we have also produced a Member Technical Briefing which provides some additional detail. This can be viewed on the SQC website under the RED header by clicking [here](#) (then scroll down to relevant document).

