



**SCOTTISH  
QUALITY CROPS**

# NEWS UPDATES

July 2024

## Product Certification and Passport Update

**I think we can all agree that it has been a challenging few months – at least weather-wise, and it's good to see some better growing weather in recent weeks.**

Since our last newsletter, we have been sharing some key updates on our scheme via our Certification Body, FIA, and you may remember from earlier communications that we have now moved to a new Product Certification Model. This allows for delivery of assessments over 12 months - thus providing the opportunity to have your SQC assessment at a different time of the year whilst continuing to align with other schemes to provide joint assessments where feasible.

We are also pleased to reiterate that under the new ongoing product certification model, grain passports have now been issued to all approved members prior to harvest 2024.

There are two key points to note as a result of this change:

- 1. All members need to maintain their approval to the SQC Scheme via ongoing certification which requires every member to be assessed during the Scheme year (1st Oct – 30th Sept). If you have not yet had your SQC assessment, your assessor will be in touch to arrange a date shortly.**
- 2. The ongoing product certification model removes the need to have individual harvest years printed on the SQC passport, so you will note that the new passport does not have a specific harvest year.**

All members should have now received their passports but if you have not yet received any please contact FIA on 0131 609 0558 or email: [info@foodassurance.co.uk](mailto:info@foodassurance.co.uk)

Our new top team – Chair John Hutcheson and Vice Chair Mark McCallum – have been settling into their respective roles and working to strengthen your quality assurance scheme even further.

We have been continuing to work hard to increase our visibility and build on our member communications – keep your eyes open for a new SQC video that we are currently working on. And work continues to improve the service – with potential for a new Risk Management Programme (to replace the current spot checks); member portals (to potentially reduce assessment time on farm) and looking at how we can reduce duplication (through working with Government and stakeholder bodies to seek scheme equivalence measures where possible).

We've met with a number of assured growers and stakeholders across the country this year – giving updates at the Scottish Agronomy Conference, an event for the Scottish Corn Trade Association, attendance at the Food & Agricultural Stakeholders Taskforce (FAST) Parliamentary Reception at Holyrood; the Royal Highland Show, Arable Scotland and various trade meetings, conferences and dinners.

We will also be at Turriff Show on Monday 5th August – so we hope to



**Teresa Dougall,  
SQC Managing Director**

meet and speak with many of you there.

SQC continue to engage with key stakeholders to ensure we are kept up to date with issues and opportunities affecting the arable and assurance sectors. Rest assured that we fight your corner to protect your access to market and to seek opportunities to identify new markets and better returns for your produce.

We have held discussions recently with NFUS, NFU, AIC and AHDB to address matters such as the Digital Grain Passport, Grain Imports and future policy. We are also committed to work with those organisations currently undertaking reviews of our food quality assurance schemes.

Please don't forget that we have a **Twitter** account – follow us at **@ScotQualCrops**.

And, as always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact FIA whose details are below or email me at **Teresa.dougall@scottishqualitycrops.co.uk**

## SQC success on maintaining Renewable Energy Directive (RED) II assurance recognition

SQC has been working hard to ensure that our quality assurance scheme maintains its recognition to the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) II via the European Commission. We are delighted to announce that the EC confirmed that SQC Standards now meet with all their requirements and RED II Implementing Regulations. This provides SQC assured growers with ongoing opportunity to access the European biofuel market.

However, we still await clarification from the EC with regards to their Implementing Regulation 11(1) on accreditation and certification. At the end of 2023, the EC announced that "more time is needed for the implementation" of this Regulation – and their changes to it. For UK schemes this change meant that UKAS was no longer recognised as a National Accredited Body – as the UK are no longer within Europe and UKAS are not located within a Member State.

In May, SQC and the other voluntary schemes wrote to the Commission to request an urgent meeting to discuss this matter. It has been requested that representatives from the Commission, Member States, Certification Bodies, EU and non-EU Accreditation Bodies and the Voluntary Schemes are present. We still await a date for this meeting and will keep SQC members informed of progress on this matter.

It is a requirement of RED II that nations assess the typical emissions from the cultivation step of biofuel supply chains at a regional level.

In early May, recalculated NUTS 2 values for UK regional emissions for biofuels cultivation were submitted by the Department for Transport (DfT) to the Commission for approval, and it was made clear that approval was needed as soon as possible.

It is understood that this is currently being reviewed by the Commission, along with many other EU Member States.

SQC maintains a 'watching brief' on this matter to ensure that we hold the necessary information required by the industry within our assurance database.

## SQC undertakes mid-term review of its Five Year Strategy

Your SQC Board of Directors recently undertook a mid-term review of our Five Year Strategy – to ensure its relevance and that it remains fit for purpose.

SQC will continue to prioritise the quality assurance scheme – with a focus on "consolidation". This is to continue what SQC is currently doing but simply doing better in all areas – across Scheme Developments;

Certification Body; Scheme Relevance and Communications; and SQC Governance.

We hope to provide all members and industry with an updated and redesigned Five Year Strategy Summary briefing in the next few weeks.

The full strategy document covers the period 2022 to 2027.

## SQC review of Standards Setting Process

Your SQC Standards Setting Committee has also been working hard to review the Standards Setting Process – which was last updated in September 2022.

We are currently undertaking a review of the Committee membership – to ensure its transparency and relevance to the work required. There is also opportunity to further involve the industry via our Scottish Crops Supply Chain Hub as well. However, all final decisions on Standards will be taken by your Co-op members i.e. your Board of Directors.

In addition, we are looking to strengthen the process by implementing additional consultation within the industry – when reviewing Standards – to provide opportunity for wider feedback and suggestions from across the sector.

The aim will be to introduce the new Process in line with the Assurance Scheme Year i.e. 1st October 2024.

We will be consulting on this with Co-op partners and SQC members this month.



## FIA Contact Details

Telephone: 0131 609 0558 or [info@foodassurance.co.uk](mailto:info@foodassurance.co.uk)  
Website: [sqcrops.co.uk](http://sqcrops.co.uk) (where you will find an enquiry form) or [foodintegrityassurance.co.uk](http://foodintegrityassurance.co.uk)



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