



**SCOTTISH  
QUALITY CROPS**

# NEWS UPDATES

**November 2023**



**Teresa Dougall,**  
SQC Managing Director

It's been another busy few months for us here at SQC. With the launch of the new Scheme Year (01 October), we have been working hard to update all documentation, make the move to Product Certification and launch the SQC Membership Rules – more information on all of this can be found later in the newsletter.

I have also spent a couple of days with FIA and the SQC assessors – holding another SQC Assessors Consultation Group meeting and attending their annual (calibration) training, where I provided an update on some of the work underway for our assurance scheme.

And, we're getting to the time of year where conferences are a standing item within the diary. I attended the recent Future Farming Expo in Aberdeen and joined a number of excellent and informative seminars as part of it. I'm looking forward to meeting and speaking with many of our partners and growers over the next few months when out and about.

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](mailto:Teresa.dougall@scottishqualitycrops.co.uk)**

## **Update on Pesticide Enforcement Officers (PEO) Inspection Visits**

Further to the update on our last enews, NFUS has produced an Information Sheet with more detail on the PEO visits. This document is also attached to the email.

## **Message from our Certification Body, Food Integrity Assurance (FIA)**

With harvest almost over and winter sowing well underway I'm sure many SQC members are looking forward to some quieter weeks ahead, although the recent deluge of rain will have no doubt caused significant challenges for many. This means that there may still be grain stored in temporary stores which should be empty by 31 October. Please note SQC has introduced a derogation to allow temporary storage of grain to continue to the end of November 2023, more details on how you apply for the derogation can be obtained from the **[SQC website](#)**.

The whole FIA team would like to thank all SQC members for their positive engagement in support of the delivery of assessments over the last scheme year and we look forward to working with you all as we begin the new scheme year.

SQC have now moved to a product certification model which replaces the previous harvest year model and allows for members to maintain their certification approval providing they pay their membership and are assessed and certified within the scheme year (which continues to run from October to September). The new model allows for the delivery of assessments to be spread over 12 months

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. This means that your FIA assessor may make contact to arrange your next SQC assessment shortly and we would welcome your support to allow more assessments to be conducted during the winter months.

Passports will be issued in the early summer, prior to harvest, next year. We will provide more details in our next update.

Thank you to those who have responded to our customer survey and for the useful comments included about how FIA could help you prepare for your next assessment. Several respondents suggested that it would be helpful to know the most common non-compliance raised. Last year it was the annual sprayer test and we would urge you to get this planned and booked before the due date.

On the subject of spraying, we also remind you that the SQC annual sprayer operator courses – run through Ringlink – are available to book over the next few months. The various dates and areas are listed overleaf.

## Ringlink Sprayer Courses

To book your place on any of the courses, please contact Tracey Walker at Ringlink on 01561 376000 or by email:

[tracey@ringlinkservices.co.uk](mailto:tracey@ringlinkservices.co.uk)

Month	Area	Date	Month	Area	Date
November	Laurencekirk	23 Nov 2023	February	Dunfermline	01 Feb 2024
	Keith	27 Nov 2023		Coupar Angus	02 Feb 2024
	Cupar	28 Nov 2023		Falkirk	05 Feb 2024
	Forfar	29 Nov 2023		Laurencekirk	07 Feb 2024
December	Perth	01 Dec 2023	Blackford	08 Feb 2024	
	Inverurie	05 Dec 2023	Lanark	09 Feb 2024	
	Falkirk	06 Dec 2023	Banchory	12 Feb 2024	
	Coupar Angus	07 Dec 2023	Arbroath	14 Feb 2024	
January	Coupar Angus	08 Jan 2024	Inverurie	16 Feb 2024	
	Cupar	09 Jan 2024	Cupar	20 Feb 2024	
	Dumfries	10 Jan 2024	Laurencekirk	21 Feb 2024	
	Ellon	11 Jan 2024	Musselburgh	21 May 2024	
	Arbroath	12 Jan 2024	Kelso	22 May 2024	
	Laurencekirk	15 Jan 2024	Keith	28 May 2024	
	Inverurie	16 Jan 2024	Inverurie	29 May 2024	
	Kelso	17 Jan 2024	Ellon	30 May 2024	
	Berwick	18 Jan 2024	Coupar Angus	31 May 2024	
	Rothbury	19 Jan 2024	Cupar	04 June 2024	
Cupar	23 Jan 2024	Falkirk	05 June 2024		
Musselburgh	25 Jan 2024	Laurencekirk	06 June 2024		
			May		
			June		

## SQC Communication

As noted in the last update newsletter, we're now working with Jane Craigie Marketing on ways to progress both our internal (co-op members and SQC assured growers) and external (stakeholders and industry) communications. Improvements have been made to the SQC website and we continue to work on this. Within the website you'll find new technical updates, press releases, newsletters alongside all documentation for the SQC Assurance Scheme. We welcome feedback on how we can continue to strengthen and enhance our comms and support.

## Renewable Energy Directive (RED) II

We continue to work on our application to the European Commission to secure recognition that SQC assurance standards comply with the sustainability and greenhouse gas saving criteria required by Directive 2018/2001.

This is important to ensure that growers continue to have seamless access to the European biofuel market, via the SQC Standards. We will keep all SQC members informed with updates as we progress.

## 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)

## SQC New Scheme Year – 01 October 2023

Further to feedback from SQC members, industry and stakeholders, we've been working hard to improve transparency and efficiency across the scheme. The following were launched in line with the new SQC scheme year, which commenced on 01 October 2023:

► **Membership Rules** – the purpose of the Rules document is to provide transparency in SQC (and FIA related) processes. The production of this document has meant that we have removed Section 1 of the SQC Annual Manual (Standards). The Membership Rules is now a standalone document to provide members with a breakdown of how the SQC membership works – in terms of assurance, certification and membership. It also contains full details on how to join SQC.

In addition to the Membership Rules, we have also updated all Complaints and Appeals Processes – details of which can be found at **Scottish Quality Crops – Complaints and Appeals Documents**.

► **Move to Product Certification** – this is a significant move in favour of our grower members and in the integrity of our assurance scheme through the following measures:

- Passports can be distributed earlier in the year – removing any grower concerns by ensuring passports can be received prior to harvest
- In terms of integrity for the scheme – FIA can now undertake audits across the full scheme year. This will allow for greater efficiency

in organising assessments and finalising certification. This means that your FIA assessor may make contact to arrange your next SQC assessment shortly and we would welcome your support to allow more assessments to be conducted during the winter months

- Full details were circulated to all grower members and stakeholders – and can be found on the SQC website at **Scottish Quality Crops – Scheme Documents Documents**.
- **Publication of new SQC Manual (Standards)** – following a review of the SQC Scheme Standards, the October 2023 edition is now available. There are no substantive changes to the Standards. However, we have made a few changes to the layout – to include additional guidance via links and highlighting those Standards where any changes have been made. We have also produced a separate document which lists all changes to the wording of the Standards (from the Oct 2022 version). Copies of both documents were emailed to all SQC assured members and are available at **Scottish Quality Crops – Scheme Documents Documents**.



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[X@ScotQualCrops](https://www.instagram.com/ScotQualCrops)