



REAL's Certification Scheme for quality composts

CCS Newsletter December 2024



### Producers' Forum and TAC

CCS held its latest Producers' Forum on 16 October. The forum was well attended, with three first time attendees. Several key topics were discussed at the meeting including the upcoming Compost Resource Framework (CRF).

CCS had received a final draft version of the interim framework and announced that the framework will be published alongside a Regulatory Position Statement (RPS) detailing a two-year transition period for producers to comply with the reduced plastic limits of 50% of the PAS limit. We understand that while England-specific, Wales and Northern Ireland may adopt the CRF later; Scotland maintains its separate position.

The forum discussed contamination challenges with Local Authority waste, and producers were encouraged to use the

### Certification Body telephone numbers

#### OF&G

+44 (0)1939 291 800

#### NSF

+44 (0)1993 885 610

#### ACL

+44 (0)1984 624 989

### Approved Laboratory telephone numbers

#### Eurofins

+44 1902 955300

#### D&F

upcoming plastic limit changes as an opportunity to renegotiate supplier contracts. Several success stories were shared regarding improved terms.

Sample courier reliability issues were discussed, with producers sharing alternative solutions, including local couriers and Royal Mail services. CCS remains committed to supporting efforts in finding a solution to these challenges.

Policy updates were provided including the expected amateur peat-use ban delay and the March 2025 Simpler Recycling rollout. Research Hub updates covered the upcoming Plastic Method Assessment Report and the Plant Response Test Improvements project launch.

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### **New CCS webinar**

In October, CCS held an insightful webinar on interpreting PAS100 test results. This session formed part of a comprehensive webinar series including the Compost Sampling and Sample Testing webinars. This interactive session provided guidance to producers in analysing both passing and failing outcomes.

CCS shared scheme-level data on minimum quality parameter failures and explored anonymised real-world case studies, sparking productive discussions among attendees. Producers actively engaged with the material, particularly in addressing failures and implementing corrective actions. These discussions utilised analytical and problem-solving skills.

This webinar complemented the testing webinar held earlier in October by providing more in-depth analysis and interpretation guidance.

CCS thanks all participants for their engagement and contributions to the discussions. If you have any questions or requests regarding this webinar or other scheme webinars, please contact [oliver@realschemes.org.uk](mailto:oliver@realschemes.org.uk).

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### **Updated scheme documents**

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+44 (0)1514 208 741

**NRM**

+44 (0)1344 886338

### **Compost Quality Protocol/Resource Framework**

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The Compost Quality Protocol (CQP) is being revised into the new Compost Resource Framework (CRF). In October, the Task & Finish Group met to confirm the final drafts of the new CRF and to set out the process of final internal review and publication by the Environment Agency (EA).

Once details have been confirmed internally, the EA will inform the Task & Finish Group stakeholders of the date of publication and will distribute the final CRF.

Over the last months, we have been engaging with the EA on the implementation of the CRF and how the CCS can be prepared for this date. We will continue to have these discussions to ensure a smooth transition between the CQP and the new CRF for the CCS producers.

Once we receive the final version of the CRF, the CCS will host a webinar on the changes between the CQP and the CRF and what this means for Scheme producers.

We recently sent out an email looking for producers to register their interest in the webinar, so if you're interested in attending,

CCS is undertaking a comprehensive update of its scheme documentation, with the CCS Scheme Rules progressing to its 10th edition, in preparation for the new CRF. As part of this process, several key guidance documents are also being revised to align with the new CRF.

This initiative underscores CCS's commitment to ensuring clear and up-to-date documentation. Once finalised, the revised materials will be accessible to all scheme participants through the usual channels. Participants are encouraged to review the updates once published, as they incorporate important changes in terminology and requirements under the new Framework.

CCS will provide further updates soon. The new CCS Scheme Rules will be published following completion of the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) review with publication expected in early 2025.

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### **KPIs for CBs**

CCS has implemented a new framework of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to evaluate Certification Bodies (CBs). Developed and introduced this year, the framework is designed to maintain a consistently high standard of service for producers and guides the annual performance evaluations of the CBs. The framework also seeks to ensure high standards of assessment, along with UKAS accreditation.

The evaluation process incorporates feedback from multiple sources, including the annual scheme participant survey, to provide a comprehensive assessment of CB service delivery. This initiative reflects the commitment to continuous improvement and upholding standards. By aligning evaluations with the scheme's goals, CCS aims to foster continuous improvements in certification services. CCS works closely with the CBs to address any identified areas for enhancement.

Scheme participants are encouraged to contribute to this process by completing the annual survey, as feedback helps to refine certification services and shape the scheme's future.

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please email [Duncan@realschemes.org.uk](mailto:Duncan@realschemes.org.uk).

### **Other policy updates**

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#### **Simpler Recycling:**

The new Labour Government is committed to rolling out the Simpler Recycling reforms. The reforms are due to commence on 31 March 2025 for non-municipal households which have more than ten employees, and 31 March 2026 for households. Businesses and other non-municipal households with fewer than ten employees, will need to comply with the reforms from 31 March 2027. On this date, plastic films will also need to be collected as part of the plastic waste stream.

Most businesses will only need three bins to be compliant with the reforms: a dry recycling bin for paper, glass, metals and plastics; a food waste bin and a general/residual waste bin for any materials that cannot be recycled. However, should it be feasible, larger businesses which produce a lot of waste may find it easier to separate the recycling to prevent the bin from filling up too quickly.

Local authorities will still have the choice to co-mingle food and garden waste once the reforms are rolled out. This means that despite anaerobic digestion remaining the preferred method of organics recycling, there will still be an expectation of significant amounts

## CCS Research Hub

### Powering research and development in the organics recycling sector.

#### Projects Selected in 2024

Three projects were selected for funding in 2024. We're pleased to work with Jackie Robinson, who will be managing these projects.

Appraisal of the Impact on digestate quality with a final screening step, from introduction of a smaller screen size - We will be accepting tender submissions for this project until Friday 20th December 2024. More information on the project scope how to tender can be found here.

End of waste case information for digestate derived products - We will invite tenders for this project in early 2025. More information to come.

Alternative control growing media for REAL CCS plant response tests - We will invite tenders for this project in early 2025. More information to come.

#### Project completed - Plastic contamination method assessment

Solidsense completed this project with support from Cambridge Eco. The final report, which assesses the current PAS100/PAS110-specified test method for physical contaminants (PCs) (incl. plastics) and explores the use of other potential methods—including trialling the use of an area-based method and limited testing of microplastics in compost—is now available. The report will also be used to inform discussions about updates to the current PC&S test methods.

#### Project commenced - PRT interpretation and comparison

This project aims to better understand the challenges associated with the PAS 100 Tomato Plant Response Test (PRT) by running a Spring Barley test in parallel to aid interpretation of test results. The Research Hub is working with Earthcare Technical and CCS-approved labs (Eurofins and Stockbridge Technology Centre) to deliver this project.

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of food and garden waste being directed towards composters.

#### Compostable materials accepted at CCS processes:

This year the CCS produced a report on the number of CCS processes that accept compostable materials as part of their feedstock. We're very pleased to see this number increase from twenty-four in 2022 to twenty-nine in 2024. As the efforts to move away from single-use plastics continue, the role of compostable plastics will only increase. Compostable accepting composters will play an ever-increasing role in demonstrating the viability of these materials.

#### Annual report 2023

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CCS published its eighth annual report for the CCS in August, providing an overview of the scheme and a summary of developments in 2023.

This year's report is our longest yet at over 35 pages, containing 30 graphs and tables to provide clear and accessible insights into the state of the schemes. The report shows that by the end of 2023, there were 175 composting processes in the UK, handling over 4 million tonnes of material on an annual basis. There were 134 in England, 6 in Northern Ireland, 21 in Scotland, 13 in Wales, and 1 in the Republic of Ireland. 113 of the 175 composting processes were operated as open air, turned windrows, as 34 in-vessel composting only processes and 7 as

Data collection commenced in December and will proceed for the next 12 months, followed by further analysis.

### **Project forthcoming - Risk Assessment to support End-of-Waste framework revision**

This project aims to inform revision of the End-of-Waste frameworks for compost and digestates (formerly Quality Protocols, soon to be called 'Resource Frameworks'). A gap analysis of hazards will be undertaken, followed by further risk assessment where necessary. We're currently in the process of evaluating tender submissions and will announce a contractor and commence work in early 2025.

### **Organics Recycling Research Library**

We continue to keep the Research Library up to date with new information. The platform now contains hundreds of articles on composting and AD. To access this valuable repository of research on organics, please visit [www.realresearchlibrary.org.uk](http://www.realresearchlibrary.org.uk).

### **Share your research ideas with us!**

The Research Hub will soon launch the annual Call for Proposals in January 2025. We want to hear from professionals across the organics sector about your priorities and research interests to be considered for funding next year. While we can't guarantee that your idea will be selected, we want to ensure you've had an opportunity to raise your interests and concerns for consideration. Look out for more information on how to submit your idea in January 2025!

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aerated static pile processes with no subsequent process step.

Collectively, producers on the CCS were producing 2 million tonnes of quality compost annually.

We encourage you to view the full CCS report [here](#).

### **Participant survey**

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The CCS Annual Participant Survey, conducted over the summer, gathered important feedback from certified producers about their experiences with the scheme.

Although the response rate was relatively low, the detailed comments provided valuable direction for future improvements in the scheme. Over 80% of participants agreed that certification adds value to their organisation, with the majority selecting "strongly agree" or "agree." Satisfaction with certification costs was high, with no reports of dissatisfaction.

CCS places great importance on participant feedback and will use the survey results to inform scheme developments. This input helps to ensure the scheme continues to meet the evolving needs of the composting industry. We encourage all CCS participants to complete the annual survey when it is distributed to help drive continuous improvement.

### **Creation of test method review working group**

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REAL is pleased to announce the formation of a new working group dedicated to managing the review, revision, and development of test methods.

The group's primary focus will be ensuring the test methods used for assessment of compost and digestate products are always improving, ensuring ongoing quality and safety of materials produced under the schemes. The inaugural project will concentrate on reviewing Physical Contaminants test methods. The group is comprised of a diverse range of independent stakeholders from across the industry.

Further details about the working group's specific activities and progress will be shared next year.

### Contact Us



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