



REAL Re-launches Compost Certification Scheme

Updated scheme rules published on new CCS website

Users and producers of high quality compost have a new online resource to help them do business.

The Compost Certification Scheme (CCS), formerly managed by the Association for Organics Recycling (AfOR), has today been re-launched by REAL with a new website, new logo and updated scheme rules. The CCS ensures the safety and quality of compost made from source separated organic waste, such as food waste and green waste, in line with the criteria set out in the PAS 100 specification and the Compost Quality Protocol. Certified compost can be used in a range of applications, such as farming, forestry, horticulture and growing media.

Today's announcement marks a major milestone for REAL, which has been gradually taking over responsibility for AfOR's certification schemes since AfOR merged with REAL's parent company the Renewable Energy Association (REA) in 2012.

The new website (www.qualitycompost.org.uk) is designed to make it easier for producers to find the information they need to gain and maintain certification under the CCS, and also to enable farmers and growers to find local certified compost. The new scheme rules should be simpler for producers to use, with 70 pages of rules condensed down to just 30 pages plus technical annexes.

REAL Chief Executive Virginia Graham said:

"Having taken on the certification team from AfOR, we are stronger than ever when it comes to certifying the products of organics recycling. We hope the CCS members and their customers find the new website and updated scheme rules easier to use and we welcome any feedback. We are fully committed to growing the markets for recycled products made from organic materials that would otherwise have been landfilled."

Benefits of compost

Compost is an important renewable resource in the development of a circular economy and efforts to reduce the risks of dangerous climate change. On one hand, compost makes use of organic waste that would otherwise rot in landfill, releasing the potent greenhouse gas methane into the atmosphere. On the other hand, a greater supply of compost means less demand for peat and artificial fertilisers.

Peat is an excellent carbon sink, but once it has been extracted it becomes a part of the live carbon cycle, contributing to climate change in a similar way to fossil fuels. Artificial fertilisers also tend to be very carbon intensive. Compost is a more natural and sustainable way to boost soil health and fertility with organic matter and plant nutrients, such as nitrogen, phosphate and potash (NPK).

Benefits of the Compost Certification Scheme

CCS certification gives a number of commercial advantages to compost producers. For instance, CCS-certified composters are often preferred partners for local authorities in Scotland and Wales looking to recycle their food waste and green waste collections, because CCS certification means composting can count towards their recycling targets. Similarly, certified compost tends to sell for a better price in the market, because consumers know it's a high quality product that they can spread to land without having to pay for waste-handling controls or environmental permits.

David Tompkins, Sector Specialist at WRAP, said:

“Certification of quality compost to the PAS100 specification is important for market confidence, and WRAP hopes that the simplification of the certification scheme rules will encourage greater uptake of the PAS.”

Harmonising the Compost and Biofertiliser Certification Schemes

The new website and logo both reflect an increased harmonisation between the CCS and REAL's Biofertiliser Certification Scheme (BCS). Just as the BCS guarantees the safety and quality of digestate from anaerobic digestion (in line with the PAS 110 specification), the CCS guarantees the safety and quality of compost from source-separated food waste and green waste (in line with the PAS 100 specification). The CCS dates back to 2002 and has 179 members producing certified quality compost.

REA Technical Director Jeremy Jacobs, formerly the Chief Executive of AfOR, said:

“This is a timely moment to relaunch the CCS that we first set up 12 years ago. Decision-makers are beginning to grasp the vital role of compost in efforts to build a sustainable economy. More and more players are joining REA in calling on England and Northern Ireland to follow Scotland and Wales and introduce a ban on sending organic waste to landfill.

“Meanwhile at EU level and in many mainstream UK businesses, the notion of the circular economy – with zero organic waste to landfill – is really gaining traction. Composting has a crucial role to play in pursuit of these objectives, so it's great that the CCS is now more accessible for producers and consumers than ever before.”

REAL, in conjunction with the REA's Organics Recycling Group, will be running workshops explaining PAS 100 and the new-look Compost Certification Scheme in the autumn. Organics recycling professionals can log in to the REA website to book tickets for the first workshop, which will take place at the CCS-certified Hollybush Nurseries in Wolverhampton on 21st October.

The re-launch of the CCS follows yesterday's publication of the revised PAS 110 specification for anaerobic digestate, which sets the criteria for REAL's Biofertiliser Certification Scheme.

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