



**SCOTTISH**  
**QUALITY CROPS**

## **SQC MOVE TO PRODUCT CERTIFICATION – FAQ's for growers**

**Q. Why the move to a Product Certification model?**

A. We have been listening to SQC members for some time and concerns around the issuing of passports in time for harvest. Under the current annual scheme model, all growers must be assessed prior to harvest and successfully complete the Certification process to gain assurance. Only at this stage can passports currently be issued. With the move to Product Certification, we can provide rolling certification meaning that passports can be issued earlier in the season and before harvest starts.

In addition, it will bring us in line with other assurance schemes; add integrity to the SQC scheme; allow for assessments to be more evenly spread across the scheme year i.e. 12 months - providing the Certification Body and Assessors with more time to allocate assessments and complete the certification process.

**Q. For me as a farmer, what will be the main change from an annual scheme to product certification?**

A. As a farmer / grower, you will notice little or no change – except that your assessment may be scheduled earlier or later in the year than normal. As noted, this will allow Assessors to better manage their assessment allocations and hopefully ease the pressure on the Certification Body and their team. If assessments are spread evenly across the 12 months – rather than across 6 to 7 months – the full assessment and certification process can be managed more effectively and efficiently.

**Q. Will I still require an annual assessment?**

A. Yes. The scheme year will continue to run from 01 October to 30 September. Assessors will contact you to organise an assessment date (and you should remember that the SQC Standards do state that growers must agree a date within 2 weeks of contact). It should also be noted that as assessments will take place across the 12 months of the scheme year, it is not likely that your assessment will take place at the same time each year.

**Q. When will I receive my renewal notice (for payment)?**

A. There will be no change to the renewals process – all renewals will be issued in time for 01 October (annually at the start of each scheme year). This means that for those paying by Direct Debit, the payment will be taken from your account mid October. For those who pay by other methods, you will be given a deadline date for payment to be made.