



**SCOTTISH  
QUALITY CROPS**

# NEWS UPDATES

April 2026

## SQC FULL STANDARDS REVIEW

### PHASE 2

End April 2026

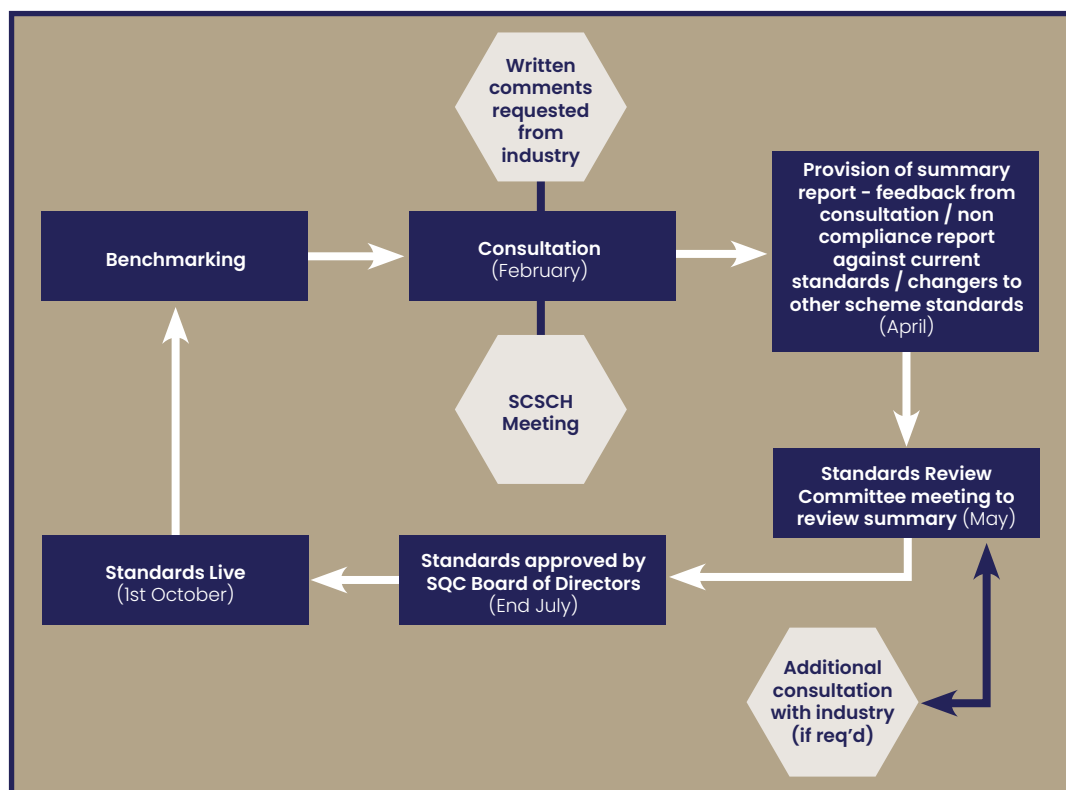
Further to our update to all SQC assured growers at the end of January, we are pleased to announce that the first phase of the Full Standards Review is now complete.

The full review is all about ensuring that the SQC Standards remain relevant and necessary across the supply chain – and remain manageable for growers.

We were delighted with the level of comment and feedback received from the industry during the initial phase of consultation. This was shared with the Scottish Crops Supply Chain Hub to provide feedback and gather their views. The SQC Standards Setting Committee then met twice to review all SQC Standards aligned to feedback received.

From this, we propose to make the following changes to the Standards:

- ➊ reduce the overall number of Standards and requirements by removing areas of duplication and merging some Standards as appropriate.
- ➋ potential creation of one new standard as outlined in the attached document



➌ suggestion of including a new requirement looking at provision of evidence around responsible sourcing of fertiliser.

There are also a number of proposed minor wording changes to the Standards, however, these will not change the meaning or affect what is required of the grower.

The second phase of consultation and engagement on these proposals is now open to

all stakeholders. It closes on Friday 29 May 2026.

Internally, we have also discussed the actual audit delivery with our Certification Body, FIA, and intend to review the order of the Standards. This means that when an assessor visits a farm to undertake the audit, the flow of Standards to be reviewed should be more aligned to the crop growing and harvest process – meaning that the actual ‘flow’ of the audit (once implemented) will improve.

It is our hope that all of the above will help to decrease duplication and reduce audit burden on growers.

In line with the recommendations as outlined within the Farm Assurance Review report – which highlights the need for greater transparency in how Standards are set and who is requesting these – we have now updated the SQC Standards Justification document to highlight the following:

*(Continued overleaf)*



## Would you like to engage in this second phase consultation?

We are inviting all assured growers to provide comment on the proposed changes to the SQC Standards (as outlined in the attached Standards Justification document) and ask that this be emailed direct to myself at [teresa.dougall@scottishqualitycrops.co.uk](mailto:teresa.dougall@scottishqualitycrops.co.uk) by close of play on Friday 29 May 2026.

We look forward to hearing from you.

**Teresa Dougall,**  
SQC Managing Director

*(Continued from overleaf)*

- 📌 Queries received on specific Standards and by whom
- 📌 Discussion and proposals – as indicated by the SQC Standards Setting Committee
- 📌 **NEW** – worksheet outlining proposed Standards to be removed / merged
- 📌 **NEW** – worksheet outlining proposal for new Standard(s)

This document is attached to your email and we now invite feedback on any of the comments therein. It is our intention to give both assured growers and the supply chain four weeks to provide feedback – with a closing date of **Friday 29 May 2026**.

**PHASE 2** of the consultation will be undertaken as follows:

- 📌 **End Apr to end May 2026** – second stage consultation with assured growers and the supply chain with feedback to be received by Friday 29 May 2026
- 📌 **June 2026** – Meeting of the SQC Standards Setting Review Committee to review 2nd stage feedback and agree next steps
- 📌 **July 2026** – If no further changes are required, the SQC Board will meet to discuss and agree changes to the Standards

**NOTE – Substantive**

Requires UKAS approval – e.g. any changes to the Standards which may result in changes to the process undertaken by the Certification Body or by changes to the audit which may impact farmers.

- 📌 **Aug 2026** – provision of review process to SQC assured growers and supply chain with next steps. The date of publication of new Standards will be determined by the level of change required. As an accredited scheme, UKAS must be informed of any changes within our Standards and if they are substantive (\*see note), UKAS will review the scheme to ensure it still meets their accreditation requirements. We would, however, still expect that new Standards will be introduced in either October 2026 or October 2027 (dependent on requirement for review by UKAS).



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