



SCOTTISH QUALITY CROPS (SQC) – INTEGRITY CHECK PROGRAMME – FAQ's

Q. Why has SQC introduced a new integrity check programme?

A. At SQC, we are constantly reviewing our Standards and the assessment process to ensure that the quality assurance we give is relevant and integral to the whole supply chain, and those who use it retain trust and pride in the association.

The new Integrity Check Programme (ICP) will replace the current spot checks required by the Scheme and will be dynamic in responding to changes in the markets and supply chain requirements, whilst continuing to protect the integrity of the SQC assurance scheme.

Q. How are members selected for an integrity check?

A. In a similar manner to the previous spot checks, an SQC ICP is triggered based on risk criteria selected from the SQC Scheme Standards i.e. where Standards are highlighted as a critical control point (CCP). This aligns the risk to the SQC Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Plan (HACCP) on which the Standards are based. Additional checks can be triggered by a non-compliance identified during the annual check or if a concern is raised by a credible third party.

Q. How are integrity checks delivered?

A. The checks will be performed through three different processes:

- *Desk top based* – a short call from the certification body validating, for example, that a sprayer course has been completed (copies of documents may be required).
- *Physical on farm* – a short visit check to confirm compliance where a physical non-compliance(s) has/have been detected during the full surveillance assessment, such as bird ingress into grain store.
- *Remote* – using video link technology to confirm compliance where a risk to the standard was identified during the full surveillance assessment.

Q. What will happen during an integrity check?

A. On farm and remote integrity checks will be conducted by a different assessor to the one who last visited and will be focussed to the specific risk identified - in other words it will not be an additional full assessment.

Q. Who pays for the integrity check?

A. The costs of delivering the current spot-checks are currently covered by SQC and this fund will remain in place to cover the cost of the new integrity checks.