



SCOTTISH  
QUALITY CROPS

# NEWS UPDATES

September 2026

In our latest SQC enews, we introduce you to our SQC Technical Director and Standards Setting Committee Chair, Fiona Burnett who will provide you with an update on our full Standards review and insight into what comes next.

Fiona plays a critical role in the SQC team helping to progress the annual Standards review and this first full review in a number of years. Fiona also provides technical advice and expertise to the SQC Board and to myself as Managing Director.

Finally, we have a link to a new SQC video which focuses on SQC assurance from the perspective of the supply chain. Please do take a couple of minutes to read through both Fiona's article and also to have a look at the video.



**Teresa Dougall,**  
SQC Managing Director

## SQC STANDARDS – RELEVANT & PRACTICAL



**Fiona Burnett,** SQC Technical Director and Standards Setting Committee Chair

**Being Technical Director of SQC and Chair of its Standards Setting Committee is a role I relish. Scotland produces some of the highest yielding and highest quality combinable crops anywhere in the world, and being able to evidence and showcase this to our key markets is so important in keeping demand for Scottish produce strong.**

Over the 30 years of working in the arable sector, as a crop specialist

at SRUC and latterly as a director at SQC, I've seen how discussion, collaboration and open communication have been vital in progressing the Scotland arable industry.

The Standards Setting Committee at SQC is here to help and always works hard to keep the standards relevant and practical. This means keeping an overview of the challenges and opportunities facing Scottish farmers and then assessing whether this

is something that can be supported through adapting the SQC standards.

Feedback from assured growers and from our key markets is always something we consider when making changes to standards, and our aim is to keep them as succinct and pragmatic as possible.

Although reviewing and adjusting the standards is a continuous process, we only make changes where

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there is clear evidence through consultation it would be advantageous. This year we decided to do a top to bottom review of the standards for the first time in many years, to make sure they were all as relevant and clear as possible. It was a big undertaking and one that was important to get right. To that end, we held 40 meetings with stakeholder organisations.

The SQC standards evidence the safety and sustainability of the harvested crop, and every one of the 67 standards (across seven sections) was reviewed with growers and the wider supply chain to explain why it was relevant and exactly which markets were asking for it. This identified which standards were vital for strong market access and reinforced that evidence of sustainable production and the safety of produce remain crucial. We also reviewed the standards for duplication, redundancy and clarity and were able to identify several we can remove. We will order them more logically so that they better follow through with farm operations.

We will launch the fully reviewed standards in October 2027. This means that the standards you will

see for the new scheme year starting on 01 October will have minimal changes, for example capturing more flexibility in how you can evidence that digestate is from green feedstocks.

Launching the fully reviewed standards in October 2027 allows time for UKAS (the UK national accrediting body) to audit them, which in turn means members retain access to

both conventional markets and to additional markets such as biofuels. That is an example of where the additional demand for SQC assured produce from this sector helps to strengthen the market and hence then price. The October 2027 date also gives us time to communicate any changes, and the reasons, to you and to the wider supply chain.

The minimal changes for the new scheme year starting on 01 October 2026 will be communicated shortly followed by further updates on the full review.

I am often out and about at arable events, and always happy to discuss SQC technical matters so do come and say hello.

**Fiona Burnett**

SQC Technical Director

## The Full Standards Review Consultation



There will be some minimal changes for the scheme year starting 01 October 2026

Fully reviewed standards launch 01 October 2027

For more about how standards are set, see **Standards Setting Process – Scottish Quality Crops**



### Why does the supply chain value SQC?

In our new SQC film, the supply chain tells us why SQC assurance matters to them.



### Contact Details

For further information on the assurance scheme, visit [www.sqcrops.co.uk](http://www.sqcrops.co.uk) or contact [teresa.dougall@scottishqualitycrops.co.uk](mailto:teresa.dougall@scottishqualitycrops.co.uk)

For enquiries about assessments and certification, please contact FIA on 0131 609 0558 or [info@foodassurance.co.uk](mailto:info@foodassurance.co.uk)



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