



**SCOTTISH
QUALITY CROPS**

FIA FOOD
integrity
ASSURANCE

TECHNICAL UPDATE

DECEMBER 2025



LOOKING AHEAD TO THE 2025/26 SCHEME YEAR

As we begin the 2025/26 assessment cycle, we are asking for your support once again—**this time to help us spread assessments more evenly across the year.**

Last season saw a significant concentration of assessments taking place during the harvest period, creating pressure for both members and assessors. To avoid a similar peak this year and to improve the overall assessment experience, we ask members to:

Engage early with assessors when contacted

- Please **respond promptly** when your assessor reaches out to schedule your assessment.
- **Early scheduling** provides flexibility and ensures assessments can be completed at a time that suits you—well before the busy harvest months
- Please **avoid cancelling** your appointment where at all possible – we appreciate that at times there may be a need to cancel an assessment, however as each assessor is a self-employed contractor, cancelling assessments does disrupt the sustainability of the work they do for FIA and it's not always possible to reallocate resource at a later date.

Assessments can be any time

They do not need to be in the same month every year or 12 months apart. The new Product Certification model introduced last year offers this flexibility to help growers fit assessments into their year and FIA to plan resource efficiently.

(Continued overleaf)



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Prepare key documents in advance

Having records and relevant documentation organised ahead of time helps the assessment run smoothly and reduces the need for follow-up visits or additional administration. As a reminder there is a full range of templates for the SQC Scheme available on the SQC website ([Click here](#))

Flag any challenges early

If you anticipate difficulties in accommodating an early assessment, please let your assessor know. The earlier we are aware of potential constraints, the easier it is to find solutions that work for everyone.

Why early assessments matter

Completing assessments earlier in the scheme year allows us to:

- Reduce pressure on members and assessors during harvest
- Ensure consistent assessment quality and adequate time for corrective actions
- Improve assessor availability within your preferred time window
- Provide better overall support to members

A more balanced schedule benefits the whole supply chain and helps maintain the robust assurance that Scottish Quality Crops is known for.

Thank you for your continued support

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to every member for your continued commitment to maintaining the highest standards of food integrity, traceability, and farm assurance.

Thank you for your cooperation, all assessments for the 2024/25 scheme year were successfully completed. We understand that this past year has brought its share of pressures, from unpredictable weather to market challenges, and we are grateful for the time and effort you dedicated to supporting assessors and meeting scheme requirements.

Your efforts play a vital role in protecting the integrity of Scottish crops and maintaining the trust buyers and consumers place in Scotland's arable sector.

HELP IS ON HAND

As always, if you require any assistance in relation to the SQC Scheme, please don't hesitate to contact the FIA Team.