

An Introduction to the Compost Certification Scheme (PAS 100 and the Compost Quality Protocol)

Statutory information is for guidance only and is correct at time of going to print

Why certify with OF&G?

Organic Farmers & Growers (OF&G) provides compost certification on behalf of Renewable Energy Assurance Ltd (REAL). As the first organisation approved by the Government to inspect and licence organic food and farming we have many years of certification experience. OF&G is renowned for its efficient and friendly service.

Why should I get my compost certified?

Compost can now be certified to the Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 100 and the Compost Quality Protocol (see below for definitions). When approved under these standards compost is no longer considered waste and is therefore not liable to the same restrictions and financial penalties as waste material. This is important because it makes the product far more marketable and allows for certified compost to be spread on land without the need for Environment Agency spreading licenses or deployments.

Compost complying with PAS 100 but not complying with the Compost Quality Protocol will still be considered a waste and relevant laws and controls will apply to its handling, transport and application. This applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland, in Scotland PAS 100 alone may be sufficient, for the full position in Scotland consult SEPA.

Composters complying with PAS 100 can use REAL's Quality Mark. This assists buyers in determining a product that is safe, reliable and produced in line with the key requirements of the standard.

Purchasing compost accredited to PAS 100 and the Compost Quality Protocol assures the user that the compost conforms to a recognised and approved standard designed to protect the environment (including soil) and human health.

PAS 100: 2011

PAS 100 has been sponsored by Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and developed by AfOR (now REAL). Accreditation to PAS 100 ensures composters are able to demonstrate proper procedures and practices in the recovery of bio-degradable materials and that the resulting compost is 'fit for purpose'. The PAS is a non-statutory document, therefore all composters must comply with the existing statutory requirements (see below).

PAS 100 specifies the requirements for the whole composting process including: the feedstock (input material), process record keeping, minimum quality of the finished compost, labelling, storage and traceability of compost products. PAS requires the establishment of a Quality Management System (QMS) which includes Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).



The Compost Quality Protocol

The Compost Quality Protocol has been developed by the Business Resource Efficiency and Waste Programme (BREW), WRAP, the Environment Agency and AfOR (now REAL). It is applicable in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It sets out the criteria for the production of quality compost from source separated bio-degradable waste.

The certification bodies which independently audit composting sites that comply with PAS 100 and the QP are themselves audited annually by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS). This ensures that there is high level of impartial assessment by an approved accreditation body.

Quality compost will normally be regarded as having ceased to be a waste and therefore no longer subject to waste regulatory controls when it has been dispatched to the customer, provided that it meets the following criteria:

- i) The compost is produced using only source separated input materials, listed in the Protocol.
- ii) The compost meets the requirements of an approved standard (e.g. PAS 100).
- iii) The compost is destined for appropriate use in one of the designated market sectors, i.e. land restoration and soft landscape operations, horticulture, agriculture and soil-grown horticulture.

Additional criteria to PAS 100 include: ensuring all feedstocks are of a type listed in the Protocol's input list, for each consignment of compost dispatched a 'Contract of Supply' must be issued and records must be kept of compost being spread on agricultural or soil-grown horticultural land. This can be carried out using an online web-tool to which licensed composters are given access.

Composters complying with the Compost Quality Protocol can use the REAL's Quality Mark and will also be given a unique Certification Number to use on 'Contracts of Supply' to aid traceability.

What is compost/composting?

The terms 'compost' and 'composting' have different meanings in different situations.

For the purposes of certifying compost to PAS 100 and the Compost Quality Protocol, *compost* can be defined as a stable, sanitised solid that is the result of *composting*. *Compost* confers beneficial effects when added to soil and/or used in conjunction with plants.

Composting is the process whereby biodegradable materials are decomposed, under managed aerobic (in the presence of oxygen) conditions. These conditions allow for the multiplication of micro-organisms which break down the material, producing carbon dioxide, water and heat energy. Through controlled management practises this heat is used to sanitise the material.

Composting may take place in a variety of systems, including turned windrows, aerated static piles and in-vessel systems. The systems vary to suit the feedstock (material to be composted) but the principles remain the same.

For more information and the WRAP definitions of compost and composting, please refer to the documents listed in the 'References' section of this document.

Where can I get help and advice on composting?

- Organic Farmers & Growers (OF&G) can provide guidance on matters relating to compliance with the composting standards and assistance with finding further information; please feel free to phone us for a chat.
- Renewable Energy Assurance Ltd (REAL) owns the PAS 100 Compost Certification Scheme. They have developed the rules, procedures and documentation. They produce a range of technical guides and can provide advice on compost and compost certification.
- WRAP has been established to promote resource efficiency particularly in the area of creating stable markets for recycled materials.

Certification

Organic Farmers & Growers are one of the approved certification bodies contracted to operate the compost certification scheme. We assess compliance to PAS 100 and the Compost Quality Protocol.

If you are interested in applying for compost certification please contact us for application forms and further information. The application forms are available via our website – www.organicfarmers.org.uk

Why choose Organic Farmers & Growers as your Certification Body?

OF&G was the first organic certification body to be accredited by the Government in the UK and has long experience in the certification sector.

OF&G also inspect and certify the Biofertiliser Certification Scheme (PAS 110 and the AD Quality Protocol) and are the only certification body to certify both the Compost and the Biofertiliser schemes.

Organic Farmers & Growers also inspects and certifies:

- All organic agricultural sectors including: arable; dairy; beef; sheep; pigs; poultry and horticulture;
- All organic food processing sectors including: abattoirs; food manufacturers; importers: retailers and wholesalers;
- Organic animal feed compounders;
- Approved farm inputs;
- Approved food processing inputs such as non-organic ingredients;
- Organic cosmetics and bodycare products;
- Organic textiles.

All of our technical staff have many years experience in the relevant industry and can speak with knowledge and confidence on a variety of issues. All of this is under-pinned by our excellent administration team with considerable experience in handling enquiries and sourcing relevant information.

References

WRAP (Jan 2011) PAS 100:2011 Specification for composted materials : BSI

WRAP (March 2007) Compost. The quality protocol for the production and use of quality compost from source segregated biodegradable waste: Environment Agency

Relevant Legislation

The following legislation must be considered when dealing with waste and compost.

This is not a definitive list.

- Acts of Parliament and Regulations are published by Her Majesty's Stationary Office. More information is available from Public Sector Information: www.opsi.gov.uk;
- The Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 (as amended), especially Schedule 3, paragraphs 7 and 12;
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990;
- The Animal By-Product Regulations 2005;
- Environmental Protection, The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 1998.

Contact List

For information regarding the certification scheme, to apply to the scheme (PAS 100 and the Quality Protocol) or to request an application pack please contact Organic Farmers & Growers:

Tel: 01939 291800 or 0845 330 5122

Website: www.organicfarmers.org.uk

For further information on the scheme and composting in general you can contact REAL

Tel: 020 7925 3570

Website: www.r-e-a.net

For composting and recycling in general, contact WRAP:

Tel: 0808 100 2040

Website: www.wrap.org.uk/composting

Waste Management Licences or Exemptions. Environment Agency:

Tel: 08708 506 506

Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/permitting/default.aspx

Northern Ireland Environment Agency:

Tel: 0845 302 0008

Website: www.ni-environment.gov.uk

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA):

Tel: 01786 457700

Website: www.sepa.org.uk

For the policy position of Sepa regarding when compost is no longer a waste:

Website: www.sepa.org.uk/guidance/index.htm#waste