
New measures to sustain market growth for quality composts and digestates

Standards and tools for the organics recycling industry are more relevant, valuable and user-friendly than ever before thanks to updates, introduced recently by WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) and industry partners.

The British Standards Institution's PAS 100:2005 specification for composted materials has been reviewed, resulting in publication PAS 100:2011¹. Developed by BSI, WRAP and the Association for Organics Recycling, taking account of steering committee and feedback from consultation with stakeholders, this latest edition has been reformatted to make it easier to use and references new legislation, guidelines and scientific reports. The review included a re-examination of test methods, resulting in laboratory use of a different, more practical method for testing *E. coli*, and more stringent upper limits for stones in compost used as mulch and physical contaminants in compost however it is used. In addition PAS 100:2011 does not allow the composting of sewage sludge and its derivatives, although it does allow digestates from anaerobic or aerobic digestion of source-segregated biodegradable wastes and materials as inputs for composting.

To help composters and anaerobic digestion (AD) operators meet the requirements of the respective Quality Protocols for composts and digestates² WRAP, AfOR and REAL have worked with software specialists on updating an on-line tool now called 'QP Manager'³. It provides a secure mechanism for land managers to find suitable composts and digestates, plan how and where they will be used (as per the relevant Quality Protocol's rules), record receipt and storage of each consignment and record spreading of the compost or digestate. Composters and anaerobic digestion operators enter information about their products in the 'QP Manager' and use it to record orders and deliveries to each customer. Now easier to navigate, this useful tool not only helps composters, AD operators and land managers to plan and use composts and digestates according to Quality Protocol rules; it can also be part of a composter's or AD operator's product marketing toolkit.

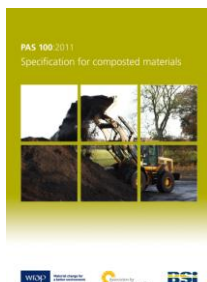
Jeremy Jacobs, Managing Director of the Association for Organics Recycling said:
"Composts and digestates that meet relevant quality specifications - and quality protocols where they apply - can be used in a range of markets, as valued 'products'. The PAS 100 and PAS 110 specifications underpin supply chain and end-user confidence in these resources, which is important for continued growth of compost markets and for emerging markets for digestates made from biodegradable waste types the UK has not widely digested in the past."

The latest survey of the organics recycling industry, published in September last year, showed that nearly three-quarters (71%) of all compost was produced at sites certified compliant with PAS 100, almost double the amount in the previous year. Three-quarters (76%) of this compost was produced at sites in England and Wales, these also being certified compliant with the Compost QP. According to Biofertiliser Certification Scheme⁵ figures, there are now 3 AD operators in Scotland working towards becoming certified compliant with 'PAS 110 and Additional Scheme Rules for Scotland', and 6 AD operators in England working towards becoming certified compliant with 'PAS 110 and AD QP'.

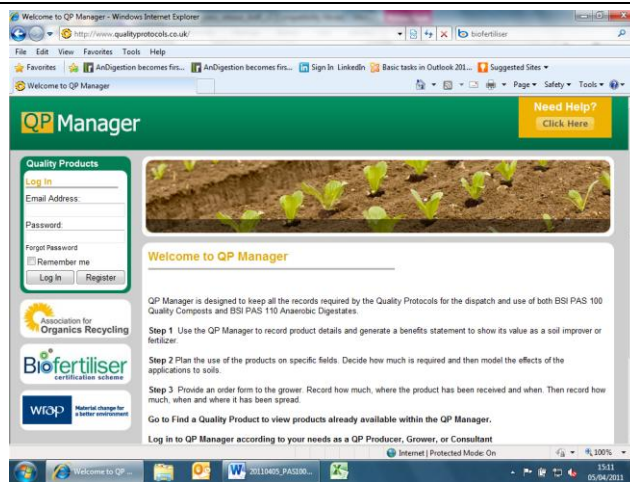
David Collins, Head of the Renewable Energy Assurance Ltd's Biofertiliser Certification Scheme, said: "We are pleased with industry participation in our scheme and expect further AD operators to apply for certification when they become operational. PAS 110, the AD QP, our scheme rules and position statements from regulators in the countries of the UK set clear criteria for quality digestates that can be used as 'products' in a variety of markets. This will help secure the investment needed for further development of the UK's AD industry and enhance the value of digestates as biofertiliser replacements for mineral equivalents. The 'QP Manager' should prove a useful on-line resource for demonstrating compliance and providing potential customers with key information about quality digestates."

Notes for Editors

1. PAS 100:2011 is available via http://www.wrap.org.uk/recycling_industry/information_by_material/organics/production.html



2. Compost made from source-segregated biodegradable wastes and supplied for use in England, Wales or Northern Ireland is normally regarded as 'product' if it meets all requirements set in 'The quality protocol for the production and use of quality compost from source-segregated biodegradable waste'. Digestate made from source-segregated biodegradable wastes and supplied for use in England, Wales or Northern Ireland is normally regarded as 'product' if it meets all requirements set in 'End of waste criteria for the production and use of quality outputs from anaerobic digestion of source-segregated biodegradable waste'. These quality protocols can be downloaded from <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/waste/114395.aspx>
3. The 'QP Manager' is available at <http://www.qualityprotocols.co.uk> Support on how to use this on-line tool is provided by AfOR to composters participating in AfOR's Compost Certification Scheme and land managers who use their composts. Similar support is provided by the Biofertiliser Certification Scheme to its participating AD operators and land managers who use their digestates.



4. The Association for Organics Recycling's Compost Certification Scheme provides a framework for independent assessment and certification of conformance to 'PAS 100 and the CQP' (Compost Quality Protocol) or 'PAS 100 only'. See <http://www.organics-recycling.org.uk/page.php?article=1932&name=PAS+100%3A2011> for more information. 'PAS 100 only' is an abbreviated name for end of waste criteria applicable to biowaste-derived composts that can normally be used as 'products' in Scotland; please see the 'Composting Position – September 2004' downloadable from http://www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_regulation/guidance_position_statements.aspx



5. The Biofertiliser Certification Scheme (BCS) is managed by Renewable Energy Assurance Ltd, which is owned by the Renewable Energy Association.



<http://www.biofertiliser.org.uk/>

This scheme provides a framework for independent assessment and certification of conformance to 'PAS 110 and the AD QP' (Quality Protocol for Anaerobic Digestates, referred to in Note 2 above) or 'PAS 110 and Additional Scheme Rules for Scotland'. The latter is an abbreviated name for end of waste criteria applicable to biowaste-derived digestates that can normally be used as 'products' in Scotland; please see 'Position Statement – The Use of PAS 110 certified digestate from anaerobic digestion' downloadable from http://www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_regulation/guidance_position_statements.aspx

6. Contact for further information: Emily Nichols, Technical Manager, Association for Organics Recycling, tel +44 (0)1933 446442, emily@organics-recycling.org.uk

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