

**Code of Practice**  
*for*  
**Northern Ireland**  
**Farm Quality**  
**Assured Cereals**  
**Scheme**  
*with*  
**Explanatory Notes**



*This Code of Practice has been jointly produced by the Ulster Farmers' Union and the Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland.*

*It sets out the procedures and minimum standards of the Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured Cereals Scheme.*



*Farm Quality Assured Cereals Scheme –  
Code of Practice with Explanatory Notes 2003*

**Department of Agriculture  
and Rural Development**

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Farm  
Quality  
Assured  
Cereals  
Scheme

# INTRODUCTION

## Aims

The aims of the *Farm Quality Assured Cereals Scheme* (FQASC) are:

- to satisfy legislation which applies to the food chain;
- to enhance the quality of cereals and combinable crops produced in Northern Ireland;
- to maintain cereal markets by meeting customer specifications and obtain access to new markets.

## Participation

Participation in the *Farm Quality Assured Cereals Scheme* is voluntary and membership is open to all Northern Ireland's combinable crop producers and intermediate store owners who demonstrate compliance with the standards.

## FQACS Standards

The minimum standards presented in this booklet complement existing statutory requirements and do not replace them.

## Action required

All responsible persons (owners, family, employees etc.) associated with businesses which adopt the Scheme are required to read this booklet and be fully aware of and comply with its standards and also those of other booklets mentioned within it.

## CODE OF PRACTICE

### 1.0 The Growing Crop

Participants must:

- 1.1 record all the cereal and combinable crop areas and outputs;
- 1.2 read and comply with the standards in the booklet, Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water. Section 7 deals with preventing pollution by pesticides;
- 1.3 complete, sign and date records of pesticides applied and of harvesting, handling and storage – to allow tracing of any crop, batch or load back to source. A Standard Record Keeping Pack is available if your existing records do not meet Scheme requirements;
- 1.4 keep records for at least five years after all grain/seed from all crops has been sold;
- 1.5 ensure all operators are competent and, where legally required, hold the appropriate certificate;
- 1.6 use the correct approved chemicals and follow the manufacturer's instructions;
- 1.7 apply chemicals at the correct time and adhere to the proper intervals before harvesting;
- 1.8 carry out husbandry and management operations with due regard to health, safety and the environment.

## **2.0 Grain Stores**

Participants must use only approved stores which are:

- 2.1 weather-proof and impervious to water;
- 2.2 free from birds and controlled against vermin;
- 2.3 thoroughly cleaned each season before grain is put into them;
- 2.4 routinely sanitised against Salmonella contamination.

## **3.0 Harvesting Equipment**

Participants must ensure that harvesting equipment is:

- 3.1 safe to use and properly guarded;
- 3.2 correctly adjusted;
- 3.3 thoroughly cleaned before harvest;
- 3.4 free from all possible contaminants.

## **4.0 Transport and Handling Equipment**

Participants must ensure that transport and handling equipment is:

- 4.1 thoroughly cleaned before harvest;
- 4.2 free from all possible contaminants.

## **5.0 Drying**

Participants must ensure that grain drying facilities are:

- 5.1 thoroughly prepared and cleaned prior to initial use each season;
- 5.2 available as required;
- 5.3 adjusted so that fumes from the grain drier do not contaminate grain;
- 5.4 managed so that the grain is dried to the appropriate moisture content and allowed to cool before storage.

## **6.0 Grain Treatments**

Participants must ensure that:

- 6.1 preservatives or pesticides are approved with respect to grain type, grain condition and end use;
- 6.2 preservatives or pesticides are uniformly applied using the application method and rate recommended by the manufacturer;
- 6.3 the withdrawal period between application of pesticide and marketing of grain is observed.



## **7.0 Grain Store Operation**

Participants must ensure that:

- 7.1 floors are kept clean and dry;
- 7.2 store doors are kept shut at all times when not in use;
- 7.3 toilet and washing facilities are convenient to the store;
- 7.4 operators wear clean overalls;
- 7.5 there is effective separation and identification of batches of different grain types;
- 7.6 fishmeal and other animal by-products are not stored in the same building as grain;
- 7.7 livestock, farm pets and pests do not contaminate the grain;
- 7.8 reasonable precautions are taken to ensure that grain/seed is not contaminated/damaged by vehicle wheels;
- 7.9 stored grain/seed is regularly inspected and monitored for the presence of insects, birds, rodents, moisture, excess heat and anything else which would cause deterioration or contamination of stored material. Prompt action must be taken to correct any deficiencies noted;
- 7.10 any material which is found not to meet the standard is immediately isolated and removed.

## **8.0 Transport Out of Store**

Participants must ensure that:

- 8.1 all transport vehicles are inspected for cleanliness before loading;
- 8.2 the load is protected at all times using clean sheeting or close fitting covers.

## **9.0 Grain Passports**

Participants must:

- 9.1 complete a grain passport in triplicate for each consignment – the mill and store copies are to accompany the load and the grower's copy should be retained.

Intermediate store owners must:

- 9.2 maintain records of intake, storage and deliveries to provide traceability of consignments. Grain passports for each consignment should be retained for inspection.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is a method of publicly declaring, using recorded evidence, that a product complies with statutory requirements, including The Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, and has been produced to agreed customer quality standards.

One method used to achieve quality assurance status is to adhere to a Code of Practice. The *Farm Quality Assured Cereals Scheme* Code of Practice has been jointly produced by the Ulster Farmers' Union and the Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland. It sets out the standards necessary for farm businesses to achieve quality assurance in cereals and other combinable crops.

The *Farm Quality Assured Cereals Scheme* is complementary to the Farm Quality Assurance Schemes for beef, lamb, pig and poultry production. A significant and increasing proportion of the output from these enterprises needs to meet the due diligence and quality assurance standards specified for modern marketing. This includes animal feed as part of the food chain.

Following the Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 there is increasing need for farm businesses to show that all reasonable precautions have been taken and that due diligence in meeting all statutory requirements has been exercised at all stages during the production, handling and storage of grain.

The maintenance of accurate records is crucial to ensure that each crop, batch or load of grain is fully traceable. Proper record keeping is an essential part of the Scheme.

The standards apply to individual businesses.

## Registration

Businesses applying to join the *Farm Quality Assured Cereals Scheme* must register with the Scheme Administration Office.

Following application for registration, each business, with its storage, handling, transport and processing facilities, will be inspected by the Scheme Auditors for approval and admission into the Scheme.

If at any time a quality assured batch or load does not satisfy the standards, that load will lose its quality assured status. The status of the remainder of the crop may also be affected.

In addition to the registration inspections, random spot checks will be carried out to ensure that quality standards and records are maintained.

## Scheme Administration Office

The Farm Quality Assured Cereals Scheme  
The Ulster Farmers' Union  
475 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 3DA  
Tel: (028) 9037 0222 Fax: (028) 9037 0739

## Scheme Auditor's Office

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Quality Assurance Division, Room 1019, Dundonald House,  
Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3SB  
Tel: (028) 9052 4082 Fax: (028) 9052 4671

## Crop Protection

Standards for the use of all pesticides, which include fungicides, growth regulators, herbicides and insecticides, are designed to satisfy the following legislation:

- Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 (FEPA);
- Control of Pesticides Regulations (NI) 1987 (COPR);
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (NI) 2000 (COSHH);
- Safety (NI) Order 1991.

Some of the requirements of this legislation are:

- to ensure operator and public safety;
- to use approved rates and minimise the use of pesticides;
- to minimise residues of pesticides in grain/seed samples;
- to minimise environmental impact.

## Harvesting, Drying, Preservation, Storage and Transport

The aim is to:

- maintain high standards of hygiene;
- avoid contamination of quality assured grain by injurious agents/external materials;
- prevent deterioration through heating, fungal and insect activity.

## Business Opportunities

The clean green reputation of the Northern Ireland countryside enhances the image and appeal of quality assured cereal products and animal produce to buyers in Great Britain and foreign markets. You will help to ensure future business competitiveness by producing cereals which can be proved to comply with the *Farm Quality Assured Cereals Scheme* code of Practice.

## Practical Guidance

Participants should:

- inform the Scheme Administration of any problems with compliance with Code of Practice procedures and standards.

Practical guidance on compliance with the Code of Practice can be obtained from the Scheme Auditor's Office or your local Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Crops Development Adviser.

## Arbitration

Any dispute between any parties involved with quality assured grain which cannot be resolved within one month from the date of a written notice of such dispute being given by one party to the other, shall be determined by an independent arbitration group comprised of two representatives each from:

- Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association;
- Farmers' Representatives;
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland.

Members of the arbitration group shall have no commercial interest in the quality assured grain with which the dispute is concerned.

## REFERENCES

*Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water* (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Countryside Management Division)

*Guidance on storing pesticides for farmers and other professional users* (Health and safety Executive)

*The UK Pesticide Guide* (BCPC, CAB:Wallingford)

## LEGISLATION

*Control of Pesticides Regulations (NI) 1987 (COPR)* (HMSO: Belfast)

*Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (NI) 2000 (COSHH)* (HMSO: Belfast)

*Food and Environment Protection Act, 1985 (FEPA)* (HMSO: London)

*Food Safety (NI) Order 1991* (HMSO: Belfast)

*Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 (HSW (NI) Order combined code)* (HMSO: Belfast)

*Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978* (HMSO: London)







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