

Detailed guide: VCU protocols and procedures for testing agricultural crops

Updated: Procedures for 2019 harvest, Winter oilseed rape document updated

As part of the application process to add an agricultural crop to the National List, the plant must be tested to confirm whether the variety has satisfactory value for cultivation or use (VCU).

The growing trials for all crops, except potatoes, are organised by the British Society of Plant Breeders (BSPB). The trials for potatoes are organised by Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA).

These trials are normally carried out for a minimum of 2 years, comparing the performance of candidate varieties with varieties already on the National Lists.

The trials use the VCU protocols and procedures approved by the Plant Variety and Seeds Committee, which represents the national authorities on seed issues to establish VCU.

Protocols

Crops

- [Cereals \(wheat, barley, oats, triticale, rye, spelt wheat\)](#)
(PDF, 119KB, 15 pages)
- [Field beans](#)
(PDF, 96.3KB, 11 pages)
- [Field peas](#)
(PDF, 96.1KB, 10 pages)
- [Forage and grain maize](#)
(PDF, 118KB, 11 pages)
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[Grasses \(perennial, Italian and hybrid ryegrass, timothy and festulolium\)](#)

(PDF, 57.5KB, 12 pages)

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[Minor crops](#)

(PDF, 69.2KB, 19 pages)

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[Red clover and lucerne](#)

(PDF, 118KB, 12 pages)

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[Potato](#)

(PDF, 104KB, 9 pages)

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[Spring oilseed rape](#)

(PDF, 102KB, 10 pages)

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[Sugar beet](#)

(PDF, 39.6KB, 8 pages)

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[White clover](#)

(PDF, 49.8KB, 10 pages)

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[Winter oilseed rape](#)

(PDF, 39.5KB, 11 pages)

Trials

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[Trial inspection and data validation](#)

(PDF, 62.7KB, 3 pages)

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[Test, trial design and data handling](#)

(PDF, 60.9KB, 3 pages)

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[Data review, standard setting and decision making](#)
(PDF, 129KB, 4 pages)

Procedures – for 2019 harvest

- [Field peas](#)
(PDF, 682KB, 30 pages)
- [Spring oilseed rape](#)
(PDF, 233KB, 25 pages)
- [Winter oilseed rape](#)
(PDF, 405KB, 33 pages)

Minor crops

- [Minor crops introduction](#)
(PDF, 140KB, 4 pages)
- [Linseed](#)
(PDF, 350KB, 23 pages)
- [Mustard](#)
(PDF, 236KB, 21 pages)
- [Soya bean](#)
(PDF, 270KB, 22 pages)
- [Spring lupin](#)
(PDF, 203KB, 22 pages)
- [Sunflower](#)
(PDF, 196KB, 21 pages)

Procedures – for 2018 harvest

- [Cereals \(wheat, barley, oats, triticale, rye, spelt wheat\)](#)
(PDF, 547KB, 57 pages)
- [Field beans](#)
(PDF, 381KB, 33 pages)
- [Field peas](#)
(PDF, 644KB, 31 pages)
- [Forage and grain maize](#)
(PDF, 265KB, 30 pages)
- [Grasses \(perennial, Italian and hybrid ryegrass, tall and meadow fescue, timothy and festulolium\)](#)
(PDF, 371KB, 36 pages)
- [Potato](#)
(PDF, 429KB, 28 pages)
- [Red clover and lucerne](#)
(PDF, 222KB, 24 pages)
- [Spring oilseed rape](#)
(PDF, 234KB, 25 pages)
- [Sugar beet](#)
(PDF, 234KB, 29 pages)
- [White clover](#)
(PDF, 230KB, 26 pages)

- [Winter oilseed rape](#)
(PDF, 441KB, 33 pages)

Minor crops

- [Minor crops introduction](#)
(PDF, 140KB, 4 pages)
- [Fodder kale](#)
(PDF, 193KB, 21 pages)
- [Forage rape](#)
(PDF, 194KB, 21 pages)
- [Forage rye](#)
(PDF, 193KB, 20 pages)
- [Linseed](#)
(PDF, 348KB, 23 pages)
- [Mustard](#)
(PDF, 236KB, 21 pages)
- [Soya bean](#)
(PDF, 271KB, 22 pages)
- [Spring lupin](#)
(PDF, 204KB, 22 pages)
- [Sunflower](#)
(PDF, 196KB, 21 pages)

Procedures – for 2014 harvest

Trials

- [Trial inspection and data validation](#)
(PDF, 93.2KB, 13 pages)
- [Test and trial design and data handling](#)
(PDF, 54.7KB, 8 pages)
- [Guidance note for data review, standard setting and decision making](#)
(PDF, 54.2KB, 8 pages)

[Guidance: CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme: conversion factors](#)

Updated: Annual update to CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme: Table of Conversion Factors

Compliance requirements

Organisations which participate within the CRC are required to monitor their energy use, and report their energy supplies annually. The Environment Agency's reporting system applies emissions factors to calculate participants' carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions on the basis of this information.

Participants must purchase and surrender allowances for their emissions. Allowances can either be bought at annual fixed-price sales, or traded on the secondary market. One allowance must be surrendered for each tonne of CO₂ emitted.

In the current phase, participants have the option of buying allowances in advance in the lower price 'forecast sale' at the start of a compliance year, or in a higher price 'compliance sale' after the end of the year.

For the current phase, the following prices have been announced:

CRC Scheme Year	Forecast Sale Price	Compliance Sale Price
2014/15	£15.60	£16.40
2015/16	£15.60	£16.90
2016/17	£16.10	£17.20
2017/18	£16.60	£17.70
2018/19	£17.20	£18.30

At Budget in March 2016, HMT announced the decision to close CRC following the 2018-19 compliance year, with no purchase of allowances required to cover emissions for energy supplied from April 2019.

Further guidance

Official guidance on [all aspects of complying with the CRC Scheme](#) is available from the Environment Agency webpages.

[Collection: Countryside Stewardship](#)

Updated: Link to guidance for those finding it difficult to meet scheme requirements due to hot and dry weather conditions.

Hot and dry weather conditions

See the [guidance](#) for farmers finding it difficult to meet scheme requirements.

See the 4 new [Countryside Stewardship Offers for Wildlife](#) for the 2018 application round.

Information for agreement holders is available on the [agreement holders](#) page.

About the scheme

Countryside Stewardship (CS) provides financial incentives for farmers and land managers to look after their environment by:

- conserving and restoring wildlife habitats
- flood risk management
- woodland creation and management
- reducing widespread water pollution from agriculture
- keeping the character of the countryside
- preserving historical features in the landscape

- encouraging educational access

The scheme is:

- open to all eligible farmers, woodland owners, foresters and other land managers
- suitable for many types of land use, for example conventional and organic farmland, coastal areas, uplands and woodlands
- competitive
- scored against local priority targets to maximise environmental benefit

There are 4 main elements to the scheme:

- [Mid Tier](#)
- [Wildlife Offers](#)
- [Higher Tier](#)
- [Capital grants](#)

Contact

Contact Natural England if you have any queries, including woodland options and grants:

Enquiries

Natural England
County Hall, Spetchley Road

Worcester

WR5 2NP

Email

enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Telephone

0300 060 3900

Opening times: 8:30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays)

Find out about call charges at www.gov.uk/call-charges.

Applications

Send paper-based applications and supporting information for online applications to the office for your county.

For woodland grants (woodland creation, woodland tree health and woodland management plan), send all supporting information to Crewe.

County	Office	Address, email, telephone
Avon, Cheshire, Cleveland, Cornwall, Cumbria, Devon, Dorset, Durham, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Hereford and Worcester, Isles of Scilly, Lancashire, Merseyside, Northumberland, Shropshire, Somerset, Staffordshire, Tyne and Wear, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Wiltshire, Worcestershire	Crewe	Countryside Stewardship Delivery Services, Natural England, PO Box 380, Crewe CW1 6YH – Email ts.crewe@naturalengland.org.uk – Telephone 020 8026 1806
Derbyshire, Humberside, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire	Nottingham	Countryside Stewardship Delivery Services, Natural England, PO Box 10276, Nottingham NG2 9PD – Email ts.nottingham@naturalengland.org.uk – Telephone 020 8026 2018
Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, East Sussex, Essex, Greater London, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, West Sussex	Reading	Countryside Stewardship Delivery Services, Natural England, PO Box 2423, Reading RG1 6WY – Email ts.reading@naturalengland.org.uk – Telephone 020 8026 7254

[Transparency data: Climate change regimes: civil penalties imposed](#)

Updated: The Environment Agency has removed penalties 16 to 18 for EU ETS installations and penalties 21 to 54 for EU ETS aviation. This is because these penalties have been published for 1 year.

Participants or operators who have not complied with their legal requirements and received a penalty.

Climate change regimes include all the regulatory regimes that aim to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

Civil penalties imposed by the Environment Agency, in accordance with [annex 2 of the enforcement and sanctions policy](#) are now published on data.gov.uk.

Official Statistics: UK farm animal genetic resources (FAnGR): breed inventory results

Updated: Minor revisions to UK FAnGR Breed Inventory dataset.

This release presents results from a pilot annual inventory for monitoring livestock breed populations and breeding structures. It provides data on the status and trends in the domestic pig, goat and horse farm animal genetic resources (FAnGR) with continuous data from 2000 to 2017 for around 100 breeds of cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and horses which are present in the UK.

In 2018 an interactive data explorer was added to increase the usefulness of the data to the stakeholders and to give more insights into historic data for individual breeds.

Next update: see the [statistics release calendar](#)

For further information please contact:

fangr@defra.gsi.gov.uk

[Twitter: @DefraStats](#)

Defra Helpline: 03459 33 55 77 (Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 5.30pm)