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## **SOIL & WATER MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE FROM BASIS®**

Soil and water are two essential components of agriculture. The management of these two vital resources is at the centre of farming activity. Both elements are under pressure from modern living and current farming practice.

The development of roads, houses and other buildings has encroached on the countryside putting pressure on water / drainage management to reduce flooding risk. The changes to cropping practice with more cereals, more oil seed rape and more forage maize, as just 3 examples, have exerted their own dynamics on the way that soil and water are managed on the farm. The power and capability of today's tractors and equipment means that soil can be cultivated and seedbeds produced where previously it would have been difficult or impossible to do so. That facility is of enormous help to farmers, but it can also lead us away from the best practice of soil management.

The creation of larger fields over the last 50 years has also changed drainage patterns and in some cases filling in ditches and hedge removal have taken away natural borders to areas previously contoured to minimize erosion or recognise soil type changes. All these issues make the careful and considered use of the two vital resources of soil and water, a most important element of on-farm agronomy advice. As the agricultural industry moves to a more environmentally conscious approach, the focus of advice is changing and the "food at all costs" type of management will not be, in the current way of thinking, the way for the future.

The new BETA qualification was introduced in 2003 and ICM is a part of that qualification. A new revised Plant Protection Award was introduced in 2004. Hence the Soil and Water Management Certificate is now positioned alongside those two modules (BETA and Plant Protection Award) as part of the new BASIS Diploma in Agronomy.

The primary content of the Soil & Water Management Certificate is concentrated on:- soil and air protection; cultivation techniques and systems; erosion risks; soil water, drainage and irrigation; plant nutrient and fertiliser planning; the use of bulky organic materials to enhance crop growth and their effects on diffuse pollution.

The syllabus contents above link together to form the composite soil and water management certificate.

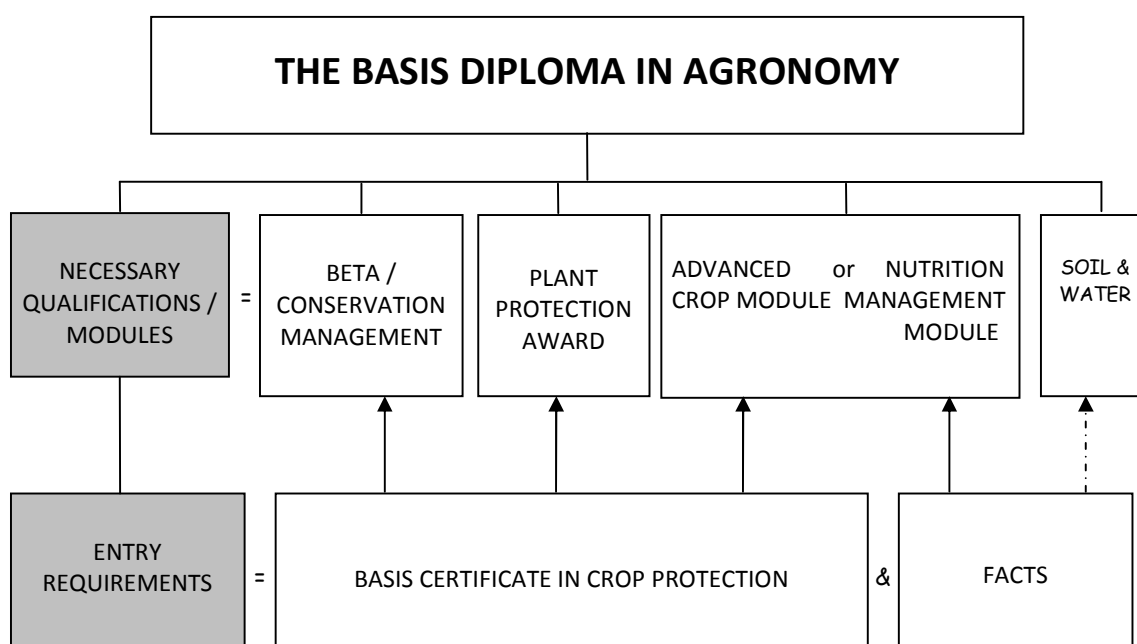
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## THE BASIS DIPLOMA IN AGRONOMY

The breadth and scope of knowledge needed for crop protection use, sales and advice grows every year. New products, new techniques and the way that crop protection fits with other farm and crop management activities all add to the skills needed by those involved on-farm in Crop Protection. To cover the range of factors involved, the new BASIS Diploma in Agronomy, as set out below, gives a comprehensive training and qualification framework for those involved in on-farm advice and sales. The Plant Protection Award covers the technology of Crop Protection. The BETA qualification covers Environmental and Biodiversity considerations coupled with Environmental Information Sheets and Crop Protection Management Plans.

The Soil and Water Management Certificate sits alongside and complements the areas covered in the Plant Protection Award and BETA qualifications and leads overall to a more rounded agronomy advice profile.

Each of the 4 qualifications within the Diploma (PPA, BETA, Soil & Water & Crop Module) carries its own certification and in that respect can stand alone. If candidates wish to achieve the BASIS Diploma in Agronomy then all 4 components need to be achieved.



### TOPICS COVERED

#### **ADVANCED CROP MODULE / NUTRITION MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

Weed, Pest & Disease Control, Crop Protection Programmes, Marketing, Food Industries, Crop Assurance, Nutrient Management

#### **BETA / CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT**

Environment, Biodiversity, EIS's, CPMP's, ICM, Climate Change

#### **PLANT PROTECTION AWARD (PPA)**

Systems & Society, Formulation, Mode of Action, Application, Health & Safety

#### **SOIL & WATER**

Cultivation Types and Properties, Cropping Systems, Water Quality, Drainage, Pollution/Waste, Plant Nutrition

For the PPA and the Advanced Crop Module the prior achievement (by examination, exemption or validated certificate) of the BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection is an entry requirement. For the Nutrient Management Planning Course the prior achievement of the FACTS qualification is required.

Prior qualification of the BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection (or exemption or validated certificate) or the Crop Protection Management and / or POWER Certificates are required for the BETA examination. In some circumstances, it may be possible for other types of prior qualification to be taken into account for BETA examination eligibility. BASIS Approved Trainers must ensure that in such cases, the prospective candidate is capable of assimilating the knowledge imparted during the BETA course to enable them to pass BETA examination.

It is **strongly** recommended that candidates should have had at least two years experience of on-farm practical agronomy before attempting any of the modules which contribute towards the BASIS Diploma in Agronomy, but in particular before taking the Plant Protection Award.

BASIS CPD points are available for training and certification in all modules of the BASIS Diploma.

The accreditation process for our qualifications has enabled BASIS to demonstrate a high standard of training and certification for our BASIS courses. The BASIS Diploma comprises a number of modules and 6 are required to complete the qualification.

A further consequence of accreditation by HAUC and the Higher Education qualifications framework has been the development by HAUC of a Graduate Diploma in Agronomy with Environmental Management.

This is a 120 credit graduate level qualification.

BASIS courses have all been awarded a number of credits based on the time spent on the course (Targeted Learning Hours). This is a recognised formula including face to face tuition time, research, reading and experiential learning. The credits are awarded at a level that reflects the intensity / difficulty of the learning materials, for example A-level equivalent or 1st, 2nd or final year honours degree etc.

The qualifying BASIS courses with credits and levels awarded are shown below:

<b>FACTS</b>	
<b>Credit Value</b>	15
<b>Level</b>	Intermediate

<b>SOIL &amp; WATER</b>	
<b>Credit Value</b>	15
<b>Level</b>	Honours

<b>BASIS CROP PROTECTION</b>	
<b>Credit Value</b>	30
<b>Level</b>	Honours

<b>BASIS PLANT PROTECTION AWARD</b>	
<b>Credit Value</b>	15
<b>Level</b>	Honours

<b>BASIS ADVANCED MODULES / NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING</b>	
<b>Credit Value</b>	15
<b>Level</b>	Honours

<b>BETA / CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Credit Value</b>	15
<b>Level</b>	Intermediate

Intermediate = 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of university degree qualification.

Honours level – final year university degree.

Eg. FACTS 15 credits = 150 hours notional teaching time

The six modules required for the BASIS Diploma add up to 105 credits. In order to qualify for the HAUC Graduate Diploma in Agronomy with Environmental Management, candidates will need to accumulate 120 credits (ie one extra 15 credit module in addition to the BASIS Diploma). This can be any of the Advanced Crop Modules or the Nutrient Management Planning qualification..

Further details of the BASIS Diploma in Agronomy can be obtained from the BASIS office or by e-mail to [training.courses@basis-reg.co.uk](mailto:training.courses@basis-reg.co.uk).

**SOIL & WATER MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE  
EXAMINATION GUIDELINES**

**EXAMINATION STRUCTURE**

The examination is comprised of 4 elements

- Written - 20 multi-choice questions  
- 3 short answer questions
- Completion of a Farm Management Plan incorporating a Soil Protection Review, plant nutrition, cultivation options, etc. and with assessment of erosion risk (soil texture, slope, rotation, cultivations) – open book exam.
- Viva - discussion about the Farm Management Plan completed for the examination.
- Viva - re in-field – discussion with a soil expert covering practical knowledge issues eg. Soil profile, texture, drainage, use of manures, irrigation and others from within the syllabus.

**EXAMINATION TIMING**

08.15 am	Candidates gather at prior notified examination venue - enrol - coffee meet Independent BASIS appointed chairman & invigilator	
08.30 am	Examination begins and consists of - 20 multi-choice questions - 3 short answer questions	<b>1 hour</b>
09.30am	Coffee	
09.45am	Farm Management Plan - open book	<b>2 hr 30 mins</b>
12.15pm	<u>Lunch</u>	
12.30pm	Viva examination – in-field Viva examination re project	<b>15 - 20 mins</b> <b>15 - 20 mins</b>

The viva examinations will be scheduled through the afternoon as one to one discussions with the examiners for each viva.

## **EXAMINATION PROCEDURE**

Depending on numbers, candidates may be split into two groups with a written examination for the first part of the group in the morning and the second part of the group in the afternoon. Those not working on the written part will be doing the viva / practical part of the examination and vice versa. The sequence listed above may vary if numbers require it.

## **FACTS QUALIFICATION**

The Soil and Water Management Certificate course does not cover plant nutrition up to FACTS standard. It does cover some broader issues of fertiliser use and its impact on Soil and Water.

Candidates needing in-depth knowledge and the capability to give advice on plant nutrition and fertilisers are strongly recommended to attend training and achieve the FACTS qualification.

Candidates who take the Soil and Water Management course / examination will find it helpful to be pre-qualified with the FACTS Certificate.

## **EXAMINERS**

There will be two examiners at each examination session – neither of them related to the candidates or their tuition. They will undertake the viva examinations.

- an independent BASIS appointed chairman
  - a professional soils expert
- an invigilator will be present for the written examination.

If candidates are split into two groups they will be kept apart during the day to ensure no transfer of examination information (or mobile telephone call / texts!).

## **NUMBERS**

Each Soil & Water Management examination day will examine a minimum of 7 candidates, with a preferred number of 10 candidates (maximum of 12 candidates).

## **VENUES**

Examinations may be conducted at Colleges / Universities, business premises or other suitable locations as long as appropriate fields (or other capable facilities) are available on-site for the practical, separate rooms for the written and project viva examinations and a quiet environment are all available. Where possible, BASIS will endeavour to organise examinations within easy travelling distance for the majority of candidates.

## **TIMING**

BASIS will be as flexible as possible to accommodate candidates / employers wishes. Usually, examinations cannot be conducted at particularly busy times of year, i.e. spring and autumn. Winter is preferred by many as a time when less field based activity is happening.

## **BOOKING AND EXAMINATION**

Please contact the training department on 01335 340857 or 01335 340854 or by email to [training.courses@basis-reg.co.uk](mailto:training.courses@basis-reg.co.uk). Please allow at least 8 weeks notice in advance of an examination request date.

# OBJECTIVE SYLLABUS

## MODULE 1 - SOIL AND AIR PROTECTION

### 1.1 Competence

Candidates will know the principles governing the maintenance of soil organic matter content, the maintenance of good soil structure and methods for the prevention of erosion by water and air. They must have knowledge of the legal and quasi legal requirements for the protection of soil and air and the maintenance of soil health and clean air.

### 1.2 Performance Criteria

Candidates must:

- be conversant with the Defra Code of Good Agricultural Practice (Protecting our Water, Soil and Air)\*.
- know the soil related aspects of 'cross compliance' within the framework of the Single Farm Payment.
- be able to prepare a soil protection review to include an assessment of erosion and run off risk.
- demonstrate a good knowledge of methods used to reduce the risk of soil erosion by water and wind.
- be conversant with good livestock husbandry practice and it's importance in Soil and Water Management.

### 1.3 Essential Knowledge and Skills

- Be able to texture soils as per the details given in the Defra booklets 'A Field Guide for an Erosion Risk Assessment for Farmers and Consultants' (PB4092) and 'Erosion and Controlling Soil Erosion' (PB4093)
- Be able to explain how erosion control methods work and the importance of field history
- Understand the reasoning behind soil related 'cross compliance' requirements appropriate to the UK region they work in
- Be conversant with agricultural/horticultural aspects of the England Soil Protection Review or equivalent in devolved areas
- Be able to explain Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC)
- The reasons why soil material should not be allowed to enter the aquatic environment
- Know the reasons why topsoil should not be removed

- How to increase soil organic matter levels to improve soil structural stability using cropping and organic manures
- Know the importance of crop rotations and crop selection linked to erosion and run off risk
- Know the place for and the role of livestock in the best practice of Soil and Water Management
- Be conversant with the protection of river banks from erosion
- Understand the pathways by which soil can reach watercourses (eg. roads / ditches etc.)

\* For Scotland the Scottish Executive Code of Good Agricultural Practice (PEPFAA) and the Farm Soils Plan

\* For Wales the Cross Compliance Soil Assessment Record

## **MODULE 2 - CULTIVATION TECHNIQUES AND SYSTEMS**

### **2.1 Competence**

Candidates must have a good understanding of the mechanics, economics and environmental aspects of cultivation

### **2.2 Performance Criteria**

Candidates must be able to:

- identify different soils and describe how their physical properties influence soil/plant/water relationships.
- identify practical field management problems.
- explain how the basic implement geometry affects the performance of tillage tools
- choose the most appropriate tillage systems for various cropping/weather/soil scenarios.
- be aware of the costs of various field operations.
- plan field mechanisation strategies to minimise soil compaction and/or alleviate its effects.

### **2.3 Essential Knowledge and Skills**

- Assess soil physical properties – texture and structure.
- Techniques for field and laboratory examination of soil properties. The recognition of the effect (both positive and negative) caused by farming practices by field and laboratory examination of soil.
- Be able to explain the effects of implement geometry on soil failure and soil implement forces. The selection of tillage equipment required to produce the soil conditions required for a given crop type.
- Understand the influence of cropping system, rotation, topography and seasonal considerations on the choice of tillage regime adopted.
- How to assess soil workability and the number of available working days at critical periods.
- Be able to recognise soil compaction damage, how it occurs and its effects on soil properties and crop performance. Know the difference between ‘compaction’ and ‘consolidation’.
- Describe the effects of wings and leading tines, tine spacing and tine depth on the cultivation process.
- Know the different types of cultivation machinery and role and place for each.

- Know methods used to minimise soil compaction and improve traction: improved wheel and tyre systems, field operational practices.
- Be aware of how cultivation may contribute to or reduce diffuse pollution.
- Be conversant with the varying economics of using different cultivation techniques and equipment.

## **MODULE 3 - SOIL WATER, DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION**

### **3.1 Competence**

Candidates must understand the relationships between soil and water management to enable best use of land and the minimisation of diffuse pollution.

### **3.2 Performance Criteria**

Candidates must be able to:

- recognize the basic relationships between soils and water and describe the effects of soil and water management practices in controlling pollutant loss.
- plan field management systems to effectively control drainage imperfections.
- plan controls for diffuse and point source pollution to water meeting the current, and potential, legislation and advisory requirements.
- understand the implications of the Groundwater, Nitrates and Water Framework Directives.

### **3.3 Essential Knowledge and Skills**

- Soil water properties - water status, hydraulic conductivity, moisture holding capacity and infiltration.
- Methods of field drainage, including the use of secondary treatments, and their impact on water tables, hydraulic conductivity, runoff and through flow pollution.
- The objectives for water quality.
- Methods of irrigation and the planning of irrigation applications to obtain best crop yield at least environmental damage.
- Use of irrigation to improve crop quality
- How to reduce diffuse pollution of water by cultural methods appropriate to varied soil types and cropping systems.

## **MODULE 4 - PLANT NUTRIENTS AND FERTILISER PLANNING**

### **4.1 Competence**

The role of plant nutrients in crop production and their application all with due regard for the protection of the environment.

### **4.2 Performance Criteria**

Candidates must be able to

- appreciate the principles of supplying nutrients or lime to a soil to supplement soil supply and/or replace crop removals.
- understand the economic and environmental consequences of inaccurate fertiliser spreading and poor storage.
- understand the mechanisms by which nutrients are lost to the environment.
- be able to produce a manure management plan.

### **4.3 Essential Knowledge and Skills**

- How to take soil samples and interpret the resulting analysis.
- The need for and use of lime, including optimum pHs for different crops and soil types.
- How to prepare fertiliser plans for single crops and rotations.
- An awareness of the need to avoid fertiliser application to non-crop areas, especially field margins.
- Know the storage requirements for different forms of fertiliser.
- Know the consequences and effects of plant nutrition options on soil, water and the environment and how nutrients are lost from plants and the soil.

## **MODULE 5 - THE USE OF BULKY ORGANIC MATERIALS TO ENHANCE CROP GROWTH AND THEIR EFFECTS ON DIFFUSE POLLUTION**

### **5.1 Competence**

Candidates must be aware of the advantages, risks and legal aspects of the application of farm manures and other organic manure products such as sewage sludge (as called bio-solids) and green waste composts to land. They must show that they are able to integrate the use of these materials in a nutrient management plan.

### **5.2 Performance Criteria**

Candidates must be able to

- plan the use of organic manures and other organic materials to give best use of the nutrients they contain.
- explain methods of application of manures and other organic materials to land which reduce the loss of nutrients to water and air (Code of Good Agricultural Practice Protecting our Water, Soil and Air or equivalent in devolved areas).\*
- understand the requirements of the 'Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations'
- plan the application of sewage sludge in accordance with the 'Safe Sludge Matrix'

### **5.3 Essential knowledge and Skills**

- The legal requirements for the application of organic materials to land (Environmental Permitting Regulations).
- The difference between total and available nutrients in manures and other organic materials.
- How to integrate nutrients in organic materials into a fertiliser plan, including the use of computer systems such as MANNER and PLANET.
- How to reduce the potential for gross and diffuse pollution to water and air during and following the application of organic materials to land.
- Be able to prepare a Farm Manure Management Plan.
- The use of organic materials to enhance soil organic matter contents.
- Rules for the application of organic materials in NVZs.
- Be able to produce a crop / nutrient requirement plan taking into account organic materials.

- Which elements are regarded as phyto and mammalo toxic and how the effects of excesses might be mitigated.
  - An appreciation of the risks to human health from the application of organic materials to cropped land.
  - With the knowledge from this and the fertiliser module be able to produce a Farm Nutrient Plan.
- \* For Scotland the Scottish Executive Code of Good Agricultural Practice (PEPFAA) and Farm Soils Plan.
- \* For Wales the Cross Compliance Soil Assessment Record.

## **SUGGESTED READING:**

Defra 'Code of Good Agricultural Practice' (Protecting our Water, Soil and Air) or Scottish Executive 'Code of Good Agricultural Practice' (PEPFAA)

Defra booklet 'Fertiliser Recommendations for Agricultural and Horticultural Crops (RB209)' (or SAC technical notes)

Defra 'Guidance for Farmers in NVZs' (or Scottish equivalent)

'Manure Planning in NVZs' (or Scottish equivalent)

Defra booklets on soil erosion control PB5820A, B and C, PB4091, PB3280, and PB4092 AND PB4093

Making Better Use of Organic Manure booklets 'Arable, Grassland, Application and Organic Farms'

Soil Management Davies, Finney and Eagle

AIC Codes of Practice for the Storage of Solid and Liquid Fertilisers

Defra Booklets

- Cross Compliance Handbook
- Soil Protection Review
- Guidance for Soil Management
- Entry Level Stewardship Handbook

Environment Agency Booklet – 'Best Farming Practices' and 'thinksoils'

Welsh Assembly Government – 'Cross Compliance Soil Assessment Record'

Scottish Executive – 'Farm Soils Plan'

## TRAINING FOR THE EXAMINATION

A number of organisations and companies have their own in-house training facilities. The training course for the Soil & Water Management Certificate is currently available from Harper Adams University College, and members of AICC. It is also available from a number of Independent Trainers and / or educational organisations. These change from time to time and an up-to-date list is kept at the BASIS office. Please contact the training department on 01335 340857 or 01335 340854 or by email to [training.courses@basis-reg.co.uk](mailto:training.courses@basis-reg.co.uk). The extent of training required will vary by individual. The more experience and knowledge a person has, the less training will be required to be able to pass this examination.

Examinations can be conducted for groups of candidates (e.g. all from one company). In addition, exam sessions will be conducted for individuals or smaller groups collectively as required. Exam dates will feature on the BASIS website so that additional candidates can join collective exam sessions.

**The following Colleges, Trainers and Training Providers are successfully running Soil & Water examinations and have been accepted as BASIS Approved Trainers for Soil & Water.**

### **Chelmsford & West Essex Training Group**

2 Salisbury Cottages  
Maldon Road  
Hatfield Peverel  
CHELMSFORD  
Essex  
CM3 2HS

Contact and Trainer: Debbie Wedge  
Tel: 01245 381193  
email: [debbiewedge@aol.com](mailto:debbiewedge@aol.com)

### **DJL Agronomics**

Highgrove House  
Cassbrook Drive  
Fulstow  
LOUTH  
LN11 0XR

Contact: Dr Jim Lewis  
Tel: 01507 363698  
email: [djlagronomics@gmail.com](mailto:djlagronomics@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.djlag.co.uk](http://www.djlag.co.uk)

### **Hampshire Training Providers Ltd**

c/o Hampshire Grain Limited  
Overton Road  
Micheldever Station  
WINCHESTER  
Hampshire  
SO21 3AN

Contact: Jenny Lewis  
Tel: 01962 774430  
email: [jenny@hampshire-training.co.uk](mailto:jenny@hampshire-training.co.uk)  
Trainer: Julian Lewis

### **Harper Adams University College**

Edgmond  
NEWPORT  
Shropshire  
TF10 8NB

Contact: Lisa Chapman / Emma Welch  
Tel. 01952 815300  
email: [lchapman@harper-adams.ac.uk](mailto:lchapman@harper-adams.ac.uk)  
[e.welch@harper-adams.ac.uk](mailto:e.welch@harper-adams.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.harper-adams.ac.uk/shortcourses/](http://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/shortcourses/)

**Landbased Training**

c/o Garth Training  
Garth Cottage  
Wintringham  
MALTON  
North Yorkshire, YO17 8HX

Contact: Linda Bower  
Tel: 01944 758379  
Email: [linda@landbased-training.com](mailto:linda@landbased-training.com)  
Web: [www.landbased-training.com](http://www.landbased-training.com)

**The Training Association (West)**

Northfield  
The Row  
Wereham  
KINGS LYNN  
Norfolk  
PE33 9AY

Contact: Jo Bruce  
Tel: 01366 500050  
email: [jo@traineast.co.uk](mailto:jo@traineast.co.uk)

**University of Lincoln**

Short Course Unit  
Riseholme Park  
LINCOLN  
Lincolnshire  
LN2 2LG  
Web: [http://www.lincoln.ac.uk/riseholmecollege/courses/fe-short\\_courses/agriculture/sc\\_soil\\_water\\_management\\_new.asp](http://www.lincoln.ac.uk/riseholmecollege/courses/fe-short_courses/agriculture/sc_soil_water_management_new.asp)

Contact and Trainer: Dr Simon Goodger  
Tel: 01522 895295  
email: [sgoodger@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:sgoodger@lincoln.ac.uk)

**The following Colleges, Trainers and Training Organisations have expressed an interest in running some, or all, of the training modules and / or the Soil & Water examination.**

**Dorset Training Ltd**

PO Box 5002  
DORCHESTER  
DT1 2WD

Contact: Amanda Smith  
Tel: 01305 263125  
email: [dorsettraining@btinternet.com](mailto:dorsettraining@btinternet.com)  
Web: [www.dorsettraining.org.uk](http://www.dorsettraining.org.uk)

**Duchy College**

Stoke Climsland  
CALLINGTON  
Cornwall  
PL17 8PB

Contact: Kath Strang  
Tel: 01579 372222  
email: [kath.strang@duchy.ac.uk](mailto:kath.strang@duchy.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.cornwall.ac.uk/duchy](http://www.cornwall.ac.uk/duchy)  
Trainer: Alex Stephens

**Holbeach Marsh Training Group**

Hawthorne Farm  
Station Road  
Swineshead  
BOSTON  
Lincolnshire  
PE20 3NZ

Contact: Lynne Richardson  
Tel: 01205 821628  
email: [lynne@hmtg.co.uk](mailto:lynne@hmtg.co.uk)

**Mid Kent Training**

Kempes Corner Farm  
Boughton Aluph  
ASHFORD  
Kent, TN25 4EN

Contact: Dianne Quested  
Tel: 01233 813688  
email: [info@mkt.uk.net](mailto:info@mkt.uk.net)

**Royal Agricultural College**

Stroud Road  
CIRENCESTER  
Gloucestershire  
GL7 6JS

Contact: James Foster  
Tel: 01285 889873  
email: [rsc@rac.ac.uk](mailto:rsc@rac.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.rac.ac.uk](http://www.rac.ac.uk)

**Simon Draper Agronomy Ltd**

Keepers Cottage  
West Street  
Rickingham  
DISS  
Norfolk  
IP22 1LZ

Contact: Simon Draper  
Tel: 01359 251804  
email: [simon@indagronomy.co.uk](mailto:simon@indagronomy.co.uk)

**The Training Association (East)**

High Cottage  
St Andrews Lane  
Congham  
KINGS LYNN  
Norfolk, PE32 1DS

Contact: Jayne Parsey  
Tel: 01485 600225  
email: [jayne@traineast.co.uk](mailto:jayne@traineast.co.uk)  
Web: [www.traineast.co.uk](http://www.traineast.co.uk)  
Trainer: John Purslow