



Promoting Professional Standards

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BASIS responds to Sustainable Use consultation

Following wide consultation with its own stakeholders, BASIS has submitted its response to the Government's consultation on how to implement the Sustainable Use Directive in the UK.

Key to the BASIS response was the need for Government to avoid 'gold-plating' the directive. The submission also emphasised the idea that regulation should concentrate on 'risk reduction not pesticide use reduction'.

Some of the other major points made:

- It should be recognised that the UK already operates and implements many of the measures proposed in the directive. However there is a requirement for certain elements to be strengthened through additional regulation in order to deliver a consistent industry-wide approach to these issues.
- In the Amenity sector the number of qualified individuals (operators, contract sprayers, supervisors, managers and advisers) needs to increase
- Compulsory adherence to Amenity Assured Standards would ensure compliance with best practice in handling, storage and disposal in this sector
- Greater participation in pesticide training for the amateur sector should also be encouraged
- BASIS supports a statutory requirement for annual CPD for advisers which would not increase the burden for the majority but would ensure a consistent approach to maintaining up-to-date knowledge for all professional advisers.
- BASIS supports the maintenance of CPD through the BASIS Professional Register for all advisers
- For water protection voluntary approaches should be considered as the preferred option with emphasis on an updated and improved LERAP scheme.
- For professional stores, the 200kg limit above which a qualified storekeeper is required is no longer valid and should be reduced to zero. The requirement for a qualified storekeeper should also be extended to the amenity sector and to larger stores in the amateur sector.
- BASIS is in favour of amnesties to ensure old/out-of-date product is disposed of safely and legally. The likelihood is that such products will be held in farm stores, amenity/local authority stores and in stores of companies that are not part of the BASIS Annual Stores Inspection Scheme.
- The publishing of advance spray schedules is unworkable since spray schedules are subject to change, at short notice due to a variety of factors including adverse weather conditions.

In many respect when it comes to the sustainable use of pesticides the UK is ahead of other EU countries. This is particularly true for the agriculture and horticulture sectors where over the past 25 years, ever since the Food & Environment Protection Act 1985, great progress been made in improving the way in which pesticides are managed and applied. In other sectors there is perhaps more remaining to be done and it is in these sectors where the Directive will have its biggest impact.

Sustainable Use Directive requires action now

If you hold a BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection, whether through grandfather rights or by exam, then you may need to take action now in order to maintain your status when the Sustainable Use Directive is implemented in November 2011.

Managing Director of BASIS Rob Simpson explains: "The Sustainable Use Directive will oblige all advisers and

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...Sustainable Use Directive requires action now continued

agronomists to renew their qualifications regularly. That will probably mean every three years, so it is something that everyone needs to be aware of and start planning for now," he warns. "There are likely to be two ways of meeting the requirement to renew. Re-sit the BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection exam, or demonstrate three years of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through membership of the BASIS Professional Register. It is not yet clear when the regulations will require advisers to be certificated but it could be as early as 2014; although more likely 2015.

Whatever date is chosen by Government, those wishing to use the Professional Register route to re-qualification will need to be able to demonstrate a number of years (probably three) of CPD involvement. So, as an example, if the date is set as 1 January 2014 then people will need to have joined the Register by the end of this year.

Calling all exemption holders

BASIS is particularly keen that those advisers who were granted an exemption from the now statutory requirement to pass the BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection exam should be made aware of the situation. They need to join the Professional Register soon or they may be faced with the prospect of sitting the exam."

Letters of exemption were issued by BASIS to experienced advisers before the Control of Pesticide Regulations came into effect. "Quite a number of these exemptions were granted. We know that there are 370 exemption holders currently on the BASIS Professional Register but what is not clear is how many other exemption holders are still practising agronomists and how many of these will wish to continue after 13 December 2013 when the Sustainable Use Directive must be implemented."

Storekeepers also take note

The requirement for certificate renewal will also apply to pesticide storekeepers so it is likely that all BASIS qualified storekeepers will need to attend refresher training every three years. Experienced storekeepers were also granted exemption letters and these people will also have to complete refresher training since all letters of exemption will be invalid under the new regulations.

Although the fertiliser sector is not covered by the Sustainable Use Directive it is likely that the industry will follow a similar path to verify standards of certification in the future.



Join the Professional Register to avoid having to re-sit the BASIS Certificate exam, says Rob Simpson

Spreading the word

"Our new corporate booklet 'BASIS Promoting Professional Standards' has been widely circulated within the sectors we operate in – food, agriculture, amenity and public health pest control – and has been generally well received," says BASIS Chairman Ian Smith. "Perhaps even more importantly it has also gone to all Ministers, MPs, MEPs, Members of the House of Lords, and Members of the devolved administrations."

"Whilst BASIS is well-known and respected in the specialist arenas in which it operates, it is essential that the organisation widens its circle of influence. Communicating with politicians and Ministers so that they have an appreciation of the role of BASIS is a good first step. It was particularly timely with the new coalition government and many new MPs taking up their seats. Hopefully this will raise the profile of BASIS and the standing of its members, as well as encouraging dialogue over legislation which affects us," he explains.

New booklet

The new booklet outlines the aims and objectives of BASIS and puts these into the global context of a rising world population with its associated increased demand for food, amenity and public health. It also describes the activities of BASIS in providing examinations and qualifications, pesticide store audits, Professional Registers and Continuing Professional Development schemes and so on. If you've not seen the booklet then you can [download a copy here](#).



The new BASIS booklet

Busy Cereals event for BASIS

Cereals 2010 was another very busy event for BASIS. Professional Register Manager Michele Williams and her Assistant Nick Smith were kept fully occupied over both days of the event which took place on Wednesday 9 and Thursday 10 June, near Royston, Cambridgeshire.

"It was good to meet so many members of the Professional Register, albeit often very briefly as, at times, queues formed to register attendance at the event," says Michele. "Fortunately those who remembered to bring their ID cards along could take advantage of the bar code readers and register for their CPD automatically," she adds.

There were still a number of members who had to use the paper system having left ID cards in the car or at home. This autumn BASIS plans to issue personalised key fobs to all Professional Register Members, complete with their unique bar code. "That should mean that the overwhelming majority will be processed electronically at Cereals 2011," adds Michele.



Queues to register for CPD points often formed



For those who don't know the event, Cereals is the leading technical gathering for the UK arable industry with over 64ha of stands and live demonstrations. Around 400 leading suppliers come together to update 26,500 visitors on the very latest products, ranging from seeds to sprayers, crop varieties to cultivation equipment, fertilisers to finance.

The full BASIS team; left to right: Paul Singleton, Nick Smith, Michele Williams and Rob Simpson

Nutrient Management Planning – why all this fuss?

There are important changes to the actions that all FACTS Qualified Advisers (FQAs) will have to take over the next few years to maintain their FQA status. We asked AIC's Jane Salter to put the new professional requirements into context.

In summary within the next five years FQAs who qualified before 31 December 2009 will have to complete six Nutrient Management Planning



AIC's Jane Salter

training modules and an online assessment to maintain their status but why are these changes being implemented? Some have suggested that they serve little purpose and are merely an additional burden, introduced to make FQA's lives more difficult. But this is far from the truth.

Government spotlight

"Quite simply a lot has changed since the FACTS qualification was first introduced back in 1994; crop assurance and environmental initiatives such as the Campaign for the Farmed Environment to name but two. In particular nutrient management has climbed up the political agenda," says Jane Salter. "Crop nutrients have come under the Government's spotlight for two reasons. Firstly because they have been recognised as essential to the effort to increase domestic food production but,

secondly, because they contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and to diffuse pollution of water." In practical terms this means that Government needs to be reassured that nutrients are being used responsibly. To achieve this level of reassurance Governments, whatever their persuasion, essentially have two options.

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....Nutrient Management Planning – why all this fuss continued

They can regulate or they can encourage industry to develop voluntary approaches.

“From an industry perspective we much prefer the voluntary route. It minimises red tape and avoids the inevitable anomalies that spring up when regulation is introduced,” adds Jane. “

It is also important to realise that it is not just AIC or BASIS who have come up with these ideas. The new requirements have been drawn up by the FACTS Committee which represents a wide cross-section of the industry. Effectively that group has promised government, on behalf of FQAs, that it will deliver and be seen to deliver enhanced levels of professionalism across the sector.

“In summary the Government has been convinced that FQAs have an important role to play in the achievement of key policies such as Catchment Sensitive Farming and the Greenhouse Gas Action Plan. They also see FQAs as essential to the success of the Campaign for the Farmed Environment. To demonstrate that FQAs have an understanding of these policy issues and are fully equipped to deliver on the promises made on their behalf, all FQAs are being asked to complete the new training modules.”

[Click here for more information on Nutrient Management Planning](#)

BASIS tailors training for Environment Agency

BASIS has been working closely with the Environment Agency (EA) to adapt the existing BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection (Aquatics) training to better meet the needs of EA staff involved in the sensitive area of using pesticides ‘in or near water’.

“Anyone who needs to use a pesticide ‘in or near water’ must apply to the Environment Agency for a consent,” explains BASIS managing director Rob Simpson. “EA staff involved in issuing consents are the biggest group taking the BASIS aquatics certificate so what we have done is to adapt the training to cover the EA’s internal consent procedures. The result is that EA staff can now get all the knowledge they need in one place,” he adds.

BASIS has worked with specialist training providers, Kingcombe Aquacare, on this project, which has also included the development of a conversion course for those who already hold the certificate. Over the next 12 months the EA intends to put all 88 of its staff with this qualification through the conversion course.

The new course *Herbicide Agreement Officer Training* will commence in 2011 for all new EA candidates involved in granting consents to spray in or near water.

Stored combinable crops successful pilot held

A new stored combinable crops course and examination leading to the BASIS Certificate of Competence in Crop Protection (Stored Combinable Crops) has been put together for BASIS by approved trainer James Christian-Ilett. The first pilot event, which was run exclusively for Bayer Environmental Health, was successfully completed in May.

“The training is designed for people who are involved in providing advice and treatments for stored product pests in grain stores. Most of these individuals operate in the public health pest control sector rather than agriculture but they do need to hold the appropriate qualifications to comply with legal and quality assurance scheme requirements,” comments James. “It’s important that farmers and their advisers check that any stored crop treatments are being done by qualified people,” he adds.

The formal training and examination takes 2½ days but a workbook also has to be completed outside the formal training days.

Following the success of the pilot James plans to run further training sessions in the autumn and in early 2011. If anyone is interested in attending these courses then please keep an eye on the BASIS website where dates will be published as they become available.

Where next for conservation management training?

Should you be strengthening your conservation management skills? With the new coalition Government getting into its stride it might well be a good career move.

Many members of the Professional Register already hold the BETA (Biodiversity and Environmental Training for Advisers) qualification but far fewer have taken the next step and completed the BASIS Conservation Management Certificate. However with the new Government looking to save public money and reduce the burden of red tape, the administration of environmental payments to farmers is likely to come under close scrutiny. One way in which the admin costs could be cut is by placing greater reliance on qualified advisers to approve stewardship plans.



Dr Alastair Leake who developed the conservation management training

Dr Alastair Leake of the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust's (GCT) Allerton Project believes this could be a step in the right direction but only if there is a large enough pool of qualified advisers available. "What has tended to happen with Environmental Stewardship is that people have simply found enough actions to earn the points and claim the payment," he says. "But if Stewardship is to actually deliver real conservation benefits, the process needs rather more joined up thinking," he suggests. "For example there is little point in providing new habitat for birds if there is no provision for food especially over winter."

Beyond BETA

This is precisely where the Conservation Management training programme comes in. It is the only conservation management qualification in the land-based sector and, unlike BETA which focuses primarily on crop protection, it offers a comprehensive grounding in practical farm conservation.

The training has been developed to suit farmers and farm managers but it is equally relevant for advisers and agronomists and it fits extremely well with the NFU's Campaign for the Farmed Environment. The flexible course requires 2.5 days, including the half day exam. "It can be run as a block but a better format might be to have two separate 1 day sessions a month apart. The classroom day can be held anywhere in the country but Day 2 does need to be on a suitable farm," explains Alastair.

For further information email: aleake@allertontrust.org.uk

[To view the syllabus click here](#)

New Professional Register for the Amenity sector

Amenity professionals now have their own BASIS Professional Register. Membership is open to all those who are responsible for pesticide use in the sector. This includes pesticide decision makers, contract managers and those who provide professional advice to pesticide users. It will provide these groups with the means to prove that they are not only qualified, but have also kept their pesticide knowledge up-to-date.

In common with many other professions this will be achieved through the concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). "For a number of years those amenity professionals looking to demonstrate that they are up-to-date have joined the BASIS Professional Register for Agriculture," explains BASIS managing director Rob Simpson. "However in the light of the anticipated requirements of the Sustainable Use Directive (SUD), we believe the time is now right to provide a tailor-made scheme for the amenity sector, hence this development."

Whilst the precise impact of the SUD has yet to be finalised, it is extremely likely that it will include a requirement for ongoing training and CPD activity. [Click here to learn more about the SUD.](#)

"In future it is likely that professional qualifications will need to be renewed regularly," adds Mr Simpson. "Evidence of CPD activity will be one way of demonstrating ongoing competence so avoiding the need to re-take the BASIS certificate examination."

New environmental qualification for Amenity sector

BASIS is finalising a new qualification in environmental pesticide management for the amenity sector.

“We have worked closely with NPTC to develop this new qualification which will replace the old POWER certificate,” explains BASIS consultant Paul Singleton. “When it is launched it will complete the amenity suite of pesticide qualifications; namely the full BASIS Certificate in Amenity for Field Sales and Technical Staff who provide advice on pesticide choice, timing, doses and so on, the Foundation Award (Amenity) for those who need a broad understanding of pesticides but do not require the full certificate and the new Environmental Management Certificate (Amenity).



Paul Singleton

Managing pesticide use in a way which is sympathetic to the environment is clearly an important consideration. Candidates achieving this new qualification will have the knowledge and understanding to make sure pesticides are used in a way which protects the wider environment whilst achieving the necessary levels of weed, pest and disease control.

PROMPT promotional campaign continues

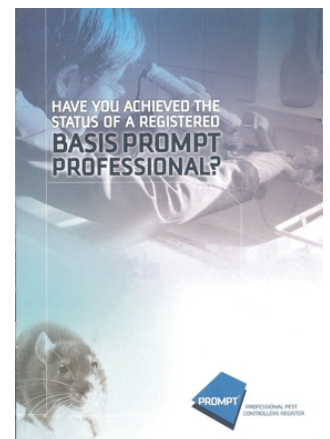
The promotional campaign to explain the benefits to pest technicians, their employers and customers, of membership of the PROMPT register for professional pest controllers is now in full stride.

To encourage people to try the scheme out for themselves free membership is being offered to suitable qualified pest professionals for the remainder of the PROMPT year which ends on 31 December.

Industry-led

To date, uptake has been disappointing with only 420 accredited members however with requirements on the horizon for proof of professionalism to become mandatory, there is a new impetus for pest controllers to join. Industry leaders have certainly lent their support with the UK Pest Controllers Organisation insisting that all members are registered and the bigger British Pest Control Association announcing plans to make joining the register compulsory for all relevant practising technicians of member companies from 1 January 2013.

The key trade magazines in the sector are also supporting the drive to increase membership running free advertising and leaflet insert campaigns. The leaflet pictured is the first in a series funded by the industry with three others in production. Together these explain the benefits of PROMPT to potential members, employers and customers. There will also be a special leaflet for local authorities.



The new PROMPT promotional booklet for pest technicians.

Syllabuses for new Foundation Awards published

Full details of the syllabuses for the new Foundation Awards – one in Agronomy (Agriculture & Vegetables) and one for the Amenity sector are now available on the BASIS website – [click here for agriculture and vegetables](#) and [here for amenity](#).

Both Awards have been designed to provide a basic introduction to pesticide use in their respective sectors. They will be useful for staff who do not need to hold the full BASIS qualification and for people with limited experience as a preliminary course before embarking on the full BASIS Certificate training.

Wildlife Aware first events held

The new BASIS accredited Wildlife Aware course for pest control technicians has got off to a flying start with Killgerm Chemicals Ltd successfully staging the first two events.

Launched at the PestTech event last November, the new course is a collaboration between BASIS and the Campaign for Responsible

Rodenticide Use (CRRU). Candidates attending the first two events came from both private pest management companies and local authorities with a wide geographical spread. A number of future courses are planned.

Wildlife Aware is designed to increase delegates' understanding of the ways in which wildlife can be contaminated by rodenticides. It explains the primary and secondary routes of exposure and highlights the techniques that should be adopted to minimise wildlife exposure during rodent control in rural settings. It is aimed primarily at those who offer a rodent control service to farming enterprises and other rural businesses.

Following the course, candidates will take the Wildlife Aware examination online. This is the first exam to use this method of assessment and marks a new venture for BASIS. Successful candidates will become 'Wildlife Aware Accredited'. This accreditation is intended to signal to prospective customers that those who hold the accreditation work to the highest standards to achieve effective pest control, with minimum adverse effects on wildlife and the wider environment. [Click here for syllabus](#)



Green Book now worth points

From 16 June 2010 members of the BASIS Professional Register can claim CPD points when they order *The UK Pesticide Guide* (the Green Book) or the online resource www.plantprotection.co.uk from BCPC Publications.

The UK Pesticide Guide now features over 1,300 products and is worth two CPD points. The online resource www.plantprotection.co.uk offers all that appears in the book and more. It is regularly updated throughout the year and has been allocated three CPD points. The *UK Pesticide Guide 2010* costs £43.95 with a 12 month individual subscription to the online resource priced at £60– network and intranet subscriptions are also available. For further information or to order you copy visit the [BCPC online bookshop](#).



BCPC's pesticide resources now come with CPD points

More trainers needed

The hunt is on to appoint more BASIS Approved trainers to cover an anticipated increase in demand for Nominated Storekeeper training and the new Nutrient Management Planning modules.

"One of the requirements of the Sustainable Use Directive is likely to be that qualifications will have to be renewed every three years," explains BASIS Examination & Training Manager Sue Mason. "Whilst for Advisers and Agronomists holding the BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection renewal will probably be achieved through CPD and the BASIS Professional Register, the most likely renewal option for BASIS Nominated Storekeeper Certificate holders will be refresher training and a re-sit of the end of course exam," she explains. "This will inevitably mean re-training for large numbers of currently qualified Nominated Storekeepers and consequently an increase in demand for the services of BASIS Approved Trainers for the NSK refresher course."

Anyone wishing to apply should contact [Amanda](#) for an application form. [Click here](#) to download the course syllabus.

A similar rise in demand is expected for the Nutrient Management Planning modules with over 3000 FACTS Qualified Advisers in line to complete the training over the next five years. Anyone who is interested in offering this training should contact [Sue Mason](#)

[Click here](#) for further information on NMP modules, including training syllabuses.

Comings and goings

Over recent months there has been a new treasurer appointed, a change in the leadership of one of the key BASIS Committees, the departure of a long standing Board member and of an equally long standing Assessor as well as a number of new faces arriving at the BASIS head office in Ashbourne. Here's a round-up of the comings and goings.

New faces

Chris Clarke is the new BASIS treasurer. Chris who holds a degree in agriculture and a diploma in business studies has a long association with the crop protection industry which began in 1970. On his retirement in 2007 he became chairman of the BASIS Logistics Committee; a role which he is now combining with the treasury function. As treasurer Chris' duties include keeping the Board and the Executive Committee apprised of the financial performance and advising on the organisation's investment portfolio.

Professor Andy Cobb has taken on the chairmanship of the BASIS Education and Training Committee. Andy has over 30 years experience in teaching and research in herbicide and fungicide modes of action. During his academic career he was based at Nottingham Trent University and, more recently, as Dean of Agriculture and Academic Affairs at Harper Adams. On his retirement he was made Emeritus Professor of Plant Sciences. Andy has a long association with BASIS and is currently a BASIS board member. He was previously chairman of the Professional Matter Committee. Accepting the appointment Andy explained that he is a great supporter of the philosophy and rational of BASIS and that he was looking forward to working with industry trainers.

At the BASIS head office in Ashbourne there are a number of new faces. Of particular note for many of the people telephoning the office, there is a new Assistant to the Professional Register Manager, Nick Smith. Nick has taken over from Jemma Burke. For a full listing of who's who in Ashbourne [click here](#).

In addition, BASIS has appointed a Health & Safety Consultant to make sure the offices are up to scratch H&S wise. He is Mark Mason.

Farewells

In April, BASIS said farewell to stalwart Dennis Tate who for the past five years has chaired the Education and Training Committee. In that time Dennis has overseen amongst other things, the expansion of the BASIS Diploma and the introduction of the Foundation Awards. Thanking Dennis for his contribution, BASIS managing director Rob Simpson said, "We are most grateful for the experience and guidance Dennis has brought to the Chairman's role."

Richard Butler who represented the NFU on the BASIS Board for more than six years has also stepped down. "Richard made a first class contribution and on behalf of the board I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his unstinting service," says Rob.

Last but by no means least, BASIS Assessor Tony Bates is also retiring. "Tony has been an Assessor in the South of England for about 16 years and also a NSK trainer," says Logistics Manager Lindsay Smith. "He has been a valuable and experienced member of the Assessment Team and a wonderful support to both the other Assessors and the office staff. We all wish him a long and happy retirement."

Apologies to UAP

In the last issue of the printed BASIS news and in the new corporate brochure we featured photographs showing best storage practice which were taken in the impressive UAP store at Alconbury Hill, near Huntingdon.

Unfortunately on both occasions we neglected to acknowledge the source of the pictures so, we would like to put the record straight now and say a big thank you to [UAP](#) for the use of their pictures.



UAP's impressive Alconbury store

Could you be a BASIS examiner?

BASIS is looking to strengthen its network of external examiners. “In particular we are looking for suitably qualified individuals to examine candidates for BASIS/FACTS/PPA and Advanced courses,” explains BASIS Examinations & Training Manager Sue Mason.

Since BASIS began it has operated with one particular and enduring core principle for examinations. That is that for each candidate to achieve a BASIS qualification, they have to demonstrate a combination of theoretical competence as well as a sound practical base to their knowledge. For this reason, in-field and in-person, face-to-face *vivas* are an important part of the exam process for many BASIS qualifications. “This is where our volunteer external examiners come in,” explains Sue. “From day one BASIS has requested and received excellent support from expert in-field practitioners/agronomists which has allowed us to ensure relevance and topicality for the practical discussions with candidates,” she adds.

These are voluntary positions and as such BASIS will usually only call upon the services of any individual a maximum of two times a year. “We also understand that some times of year are difficult, if not impossible, for examiners to be away from their job so every effort is made to avoid requests for examination help at times which are not convenient.”

“Taking on a BASIS examiner role is a great way of putting something back into our industry and it carries at least 4 CPD points, which is a useful contribution to the points needed to stay on the Professional Register,” concludes Sue.

If you would like to know more about becoming a BASIS examiner please contact [Sue Mason](#)

Keep documentation up-to-date

Members of the Professional Register are being reminded to keep their records safe and up-to-date following a recent incident in which one member narrowly avoided prosecution.

The farmer complaint centred on the use of a desiccant in a crop saved for seed and, in particular, whether the adviser/agronomist was aware that the crop was to be used for the following year’s planting,” explains Michele Williams, who manages the BASIS Professional Register. “The recommendation sheet did not contain enough detail to put the issue beyond doubt. There are a number of reasons, including protection from litigation, why it is essential that agronomists/advisers write their recommendation sheets with sufficient detail. This needs to include harvest intervals and restrictions on use, such as ‘crops used for seed’. This time no harm was done, but the incident does serve as a timely reminder of the benefits of good recordkeeping,” she concludes.