

Self Assessment Procedure for Using Approved Potash Fertilisers

Introduction

The organic agricultural industry is not large enough to be self sufficient in many raw materials and other inputs and, for the time being, has to be reliant on materials and livestock brought in from non-organic agriculture.

In addition, some practices, which are not fully compliant with the principles of organic production, are also only permitted during a conversion period or for specific reasons.

Most of these practices and inputs require the approval of the Control Body responsible for inspecting and certifying the producer concerned. This is identified in the Organic Standards and Certification Manual (OSCM) by the term 'Must be approved by OF&G before use'. As the organic industry becomes more self sufficient, the Standards are slowly being tightened up and advanced approval is being demanded for more practices and materials, which were formerly permitted without restriction.

The Self Assessment Approach

This self-assessment form has been written to allow producers to give themselves approval to use a potash fertiliser without contacting OF&G.

To use this procedure, the Self-Assessment Questionnaire must be used for each restricted practice or input. The questions must be completed in sequence and the relevant 'Yes' or 'No' boxes ticked for each. Completing the Self-Assessment Questionnaire will arrive at one of the following results:

- Where there is an unequivocal approval, the producer may go ahead and use the potash fertiliser in compliance with the conditions stated in the questions. Keep the form on farm for future inspection.
- Where any question comes up with a 'Not approved' answer, the producer may not use the potash fertiliser. Keep the form on farm for future inspection.
- Where the producer is uncertain over the process or result, an OF&G Record Sheet 9 can be sent to OF&G with a copy of the soil analysis.

This procedure must be used in conjunction with the criteria set out in Sections 7.15 and 7.16 of the OSCM.

Soil Analysis

Before an approved water-soluble potash fertiliser can be used, a soil analysis must be completed for each field or group of fields with the same soil type and management history. The analysis must also measure the clay content of the soil.

Period of Eligibility

This Self-Assessment procedure applies to potash fertilisers to be brought in during the current calendar year only. An additional procedure must be completed each year.

Recording and Auditing

This procedure puts the responsibility on the producer to carry out the self-assessment process correctly.

The Self-Assessment Questionnaire and the accompanying documents mentioned in the Questionnaire (e.g. soil analyses) must be kept for future inspection and be made available to the OF&G Inspectors, Defra inspectors, Trading Standards Officers and any other officials entitled to check your records.

Penalties for Misuse of the System

The failure to obtain prior approval to use a restricted practice or input from OF&G is a non-compliance and will be recorded as such by the inspector. Where the self-assessment system is used and the procedure is ignored, or the producer fails to complete the Record Sheet correctly, then this also will be recorded as a non-compliance in each case.

The Certification Officer will apply the appropriate penalty in such cases, which may involve an additional inspection at the producer's expense or, in more serious cases, the withdrawal of organic status from the affected land, crop or livestock.

Organic requirements are in addition to other statutory requirements

Statutory information is for guidance only and is correct at time of going to print

Self Assessment Questionnaire for Using Approved Potash Fertilisers

Operator name:		Year of Application:			
Completed By:		Position (Producer or Manager):	Signed:	Date:	
Approved By:		Position (Inspector or Certification Officer):	Signed:	Date:	
	Self Assessment Questions	YES		NO	
1	In the case of an arable rotation, have any problems with the rotation been highlighted by OF&G that have not been resolved?		Not approved. Resolve these issues		Go to next question
2	Are the fields given applications of manures or slurries to replace nutrients lost in the crops?		Go to question 5		Go to next question
3	Is there justification as to why the fields cannot be given manures or slurries to maintain the nutrients lost in crops or forage?		Go to next question		Not approved. Use Manure or Slurry
4	Give justification e.g. Stockless rotation, NVZ	(when completed go to next question)			
5	Has a soil analysis been done for each field or representative group of fields, including the clay content?		Go to next question		Not approved. Obtain soil analysis including K index and clay content
6	Indicate the field reference numbers for each field on which you will be applying the potash fertiliser.	(when completed go to next question)			
7	Is the K index for each field 2- or below?		Go to next question		Not approved
8	Does the soil have a high clay content (more than 20%)?		Go to next question		Application approved
9	If the soil clay content is above 20%, is the land in-conversion, or is the soil K index at 0?		Application approved		Not approved
<p>If this self-assessment is approved, the use of a potash fertiliser is allowed at an application rate sufficient to raise the K index to 2-.</p> <p>Crude Potassium Salt or Potassium Sulphate from natural origin, not chemically refined, and possibly containing Magnesium Salts, can be used. Please refer to OSCM 7.16.02.</p>					
Form completed by:			DATE:		
Form checked by (OF&G Inspector):			DATE:		

Do not send this form to OF&G unless you are having difficulty completing it.

For your organic business