

HETAS Quality Assured Fuel

Prompts to getting yourself ready for applying



These guidance notes are written for fuel producers who want to prepare for applying for their fuel to be registered as a quality assured product. The process of getting ready can be broken down into steps, so changes can be implemented at a speed to suit your business.

There are five sections which need to be implemented in any order:

- Point of sale product description
- Checking that your product meets your description
- Good process for consistent quality
- Raw material ordering
- Customer orders

'Point of sale' product description

Your product description at 'point of sale' must declare a set of information as defined by the scheme. This enables the customer to be clear about what is being offered in respect of suitability for their needs and essential characteristics when comparing between suppliers. A 'point of sale' is whenever the customer is offered the product for a price and may apply for telephone, web, advertising, sale by third party and product packaging.

Steps to take:

- Define compliant description
- Define current 'points of sale'
- Define future 'points of sale' (so you plan to use appropriate description)
- Integrate your product description into your 'points of sale'
- Identify how you will manage your descriptions at each 'point of sale' if you change your product
- Training/ awareness for all parties involved (staff/ third party sales/ marketing/ contractors ...)

Checking that your product meets your description

Test or check that each characteristic of your current product offering meets your product description.

Steps to take:

- Check that your raw materials are consistent with your product description (country of origin, clean virgin wood, wood species ... as applicable)

- Measure samples of your product and check conformance with your product description
- It may be appropriate to have test done on your product by a third party test house (essential for pellets)

Good process for consistent quality

This is the most involved stage and a bit of a shock for those who run their production with no paperwork. HETAS are insisting on the minimum documentation that shows that you have identified the main features for ensuring that your product is always consistent with your product description. We expect that the detail will be proportionate to the size of business and the risk of the product going wrong. So a small firewood processor with one product will have a small document whereas a pellet producer will have a much more detailed document.

Steps to take:

- Define the specification for the product to be produced (refer to your product description, HETAS 'point of sale' requirement and European standard as required)
- Document the process steps from receipt of raw material through to delivery to customer. This is best done with a flow diagram, which can identify different processes for different feedstock and different processes for different product lines.
- Analyse the factors that can influence fuel quality and customer satisfaction (moisture content, over long pellets, foreign matter, broken packaging, poor delivery e.g. open bag left in the rain)
- Identify and document stages at which you might do a check to ensure that your process achieves good quality in the final product (e.g. moisture content of cordwood before processing, product conformance before delivery)
- Manage your company support systems to ensure consistent product is delivered with customer satisfaction. Staff responsibilities need to be clear, training as required, product testing needs to be backed-up with calibrated testing to provide suitable confidence, record sheets need to be maintained, complaints process ...)
- Process in place for managing product that fails at any process point e.g. put back for re-processing or extract and quarantine in defined area

Raw material ordering

There is a minimal requirement to maintain records for your incoming raw material. This enables us to check it is legally felled and comes from an area consistent with your product declaration. In this way we ensure that there is no economic demand for illegally felled timber within the certified scheme.

Legal felling can be demonstrated by FSC, PEFC, other third party assurance scheme, felling licence number, Forestry Commission management plan, Planning Permission clearance, plus other by negotiation with HETAS. Some lots may have an unconventional felling history; these lots should be described and signed-off by the supplier.

Country of Origin is where the tree was growing (for virgin timber). Where the raw material is co-product or by-product then different rules apply.

Most raw materials (by weight) should be covered by notes describing their legal felling and their 'country of origin'. This might be provided on the delivery note or the invoice so that each delivery batch has its own traceability.

For the remainder, the raw material supplier must sign a declaration to cover the year's deliveries. The declaration should state the 'country of origin' and that only legally felled timber is to be supplied during the period. Declarations must be signed before first delivery and be renewed annually, so that all materials at a producer's site are covered by a traceability note. Declarations made after deliveries are not acceptable.

Steps to take:

- Establish a filing system for all raw material receipts
- Establish a system with suppliers to record 'country of origin' and legal felling record on each goods receipt (or similar to meet objective)
- Organise declarations for other suppliers who cannot satisfy above
- Maintain a record of all your suppliers
- Document your process for adding new suppliers

Customer orders

Suppliers should make reasonable steps to ensure that a customer gets appropriate fuel for their needs. Orders should be managed in a way that ensures that they get what they asked for in a timescale that is managed and delivered in a manner that maintains the quality.

Steps to take:

- Review how you handle customers to help ensure they are offered a product appropriate to their needs
- Establish an ordering system (appropriate to typical requirements)
- Ensure the ordering system can manage changes
- Establish a product delivery process
- Review the delivery process for risks to product quality (rain, transport vehicles, customer's venue)
- Establish a record sheet for delivery (as required). This might identify pre-drop-off checks and record quality issue observations like leaking lid on woodchip bunker

Next

Once you have completed these steps, it should be easy to document your production process in line with the Quality Assured Fuel scheme application pack.

Download at <http://www.hetas.co.uk/fuel-quality> , or call Mark Russell 01242 681 270