

Raw material traceability (virgin timber)

This paper reviews how the HETAS scheme Quality Assured Fuel will require traceability documentation for raw material. This covers all biomass product types, but only when using virgin timber as raw material.

Background

Biomass fuel customers want to know where their product comes from and this scheme provides the customer with the option to choose between products on the basis of the declared origin of the product. This is a requirement that comes from EN14961.

The HETAS scheme requirement includes an assurance as to the sustainability of the source material. Sustainability proof is currently limited to traceability that the trees were legally felled where the raw material is virgin wood.

The market for virgin timber offers small lots where the suppliers do not want to be involved with much paperwork because of the margins involved. This tends to be low cost wood with non standard traceability. Overly dogmatic paper work requirements would kill this otherwise good trade.

The policy must ensure that there is no economic demand for illegally felled timber within the certified scheme.

Definitions and evidence requirements applied for the 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 by 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.

Scheme policy

All virgin timber deliveries must be accompanied with a note 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.

While most of the raw material should be covered as above, small lot supplies can use the following option. The 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 sourced after a year's deliveries are not acceptable. Producers using the Firewood Quality Manual will find forms in their pack to help achieve this policy.

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