



Letters of Exemption and the (BASIS) Industry Qualifications - Implications of the Sustainable Use Directive.

The Sustainable Use Directive consultation is now published and industry is actively participating in discussions about how we wish to see the directive translated into regulations:

BASIS is involved in a number of areas covered by the directive, not least Article 5 on Training and Certification requirements.

One aspect of this, which is highlighted from 5.30 to 5.33 of the directive, covers Letters of Exemption which were issued by BASIS some years ago and before COPR made the BASIS certificate a statutory requirement.

Sellers / suppliers and advisers who had five years experience of the industry in 1979 could apply for a 'Letter of Exemption' from the requirement to undertake the BASIS examination for the Certificate in Crop Protection.

Quite a number of these 'exemptions' were granted at the time though it is now not clear how many of the original exemption holders are still practising agronomists or indeed if they are still working in the industry in any capacity. We do know that there are 370 exemption holders who are currently members of the BASIS Professional Register.

The Sustainable Use Directive places obligations on member states to implement the directive and the requirement for certification and on-going CPD is not a negotiable point; it is a requirement and therefore the UK along with other member states will have to comply.

Those agronomists / advisers with a BASIS certificate will have to 'renew' their qualification, probably every 3 years. We could do this in two ways:

- Undertake the examination for Crop Protection every 3 years
- Demonstrate 3 years Continuing Professional Development through membership of the BASIS Professional Register.

BASIS fully understands that people will not want to take an exam every 3 years and would urge people to support the option to 'renew' qualifications through CPD and Professional Register Membership.

How does this leave exemption holders?

Exemption holders do not have a certificate in the same way that those who have taken and passed the exam do.

We propose that CPD is the way forward for this group and where individuals can demonstrate 3 years Professional Register Membership (CPD) then their qualification can be 'renewed' in the same way as certificate holders.



BASIS[®] (Registration) Ltd.

Promoting Professional Standards

St Monica's House Business Centre
(37 - 39) Windmill Lane - Ashbourne
Derbyshire - DE6 1EY

Once individuals have qualified (examination or exemption letter) there should be no difference in the methods of keeping up to date through regular, monitored CPD activity.

We would encourage everyone to support the use of CPD and the BASIS Professional Register as a recognised method for qualification renewal in the new regulations.

It is likely that individuals will need to be able to demonstrate 3 years on-going CPD activity (history) by 2014.

It is therefore vitally important that those who wish to maintain their qualification post 2014, register for CPD (BASIS Professional Register) before the end of 2010. This will ensure that we can demonstrate to government that those individuals have a recognised qualification and 3 years relevant on-going CPD.

Obviously the 4200 people currently on the BASIS Professional Register are already doing what is and will be required of them to maintain their professional status. It is important that these individuals continue to maintain their BASIS Professional Register membership.

The requirement for certificate renewal will also apply to storekeepers and it is likely that all BASIS qualified storekeepers will need to attend a refresher training course every three (3) years.

Those holding an exemption letter for the storekeeper's qualification will need to attend refresher training in the same way as current certificate holders. All letters of exemption will be invalid under the new regulations.

Although FACTS is not covered by the Sustainable Use Directive, it is likely that the fertiliser industry will follow the same (or similar) path to verify standards of certification in the future.

The future for Plant Nutrient advice lies with FACTS Qualified Advisers (FQA's) and renewal of qualification is likely to be recognised through Professional Register membership in the same way that the BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection is recognised for pesticides.

Rob Simpson
Managing Director
BASIS (Registration) Ltd