



DIGESTATE BIOFERTILISER PRODUCER ACCREDITATION SCHEME

DBPAS 01 Version 2
May 2025

Bioenergy Association

Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Scope	1
3.0	Benefits of Producer Accreditation	2
4.0	Accreditation Scheme Criteria	3
5.0	Accreditation Application Process	4
6.0	Accreditation Scheme Details	5
7.0	Scheme Logo Use	8
	Appendix A: Accreditation Application Form	8
	Appendix B: Accreditation Renewal Form	9
	Appendix C: Fees	10
	Contact us	10

Legal Disclaimer:

Biofertiliser producers are not legally obliged to obtain accreditation. Accreditation is voluntary for those producers who wish to demonstrate the quality of their fertiliser and also benefit from membership of the Bioenergy Association Digestate Biofertiliser Producer Accreditation Scheme.

Please note that the terminology 'digestate biofertiliser' and 'biofertiliser' are used interchangeably within this document.

The purpose of this document is to assist biofertiliser producers demonstrate their facility meets industry best practice in the production of digestate biofertiliser. Best practice is when the digestate meets the criteria set out in the *Guidelines for the Production of Digestate Biofertiliser for the Application to Land DBPAS05 (the Digestate Guidelines)*.

While not a statutory requirement, consent authorities may choose to recognise the *Digestate Guidelines*, and the Producer Accreditation Scheme as an acceptable path to demonstrating compliance of digestate as a biofertiliser.

Compliance with this publication cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

When a biofertiliser is labelled with the Bioenergy Association Producer's Accreditation mark this solely represents the producer's declaration regarding conformity. It is important to note that the accuracy of this claim is the sole responsibility of the person or organisation making it.

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application. In addition to the requirements of this, for application in New Zealand attention is drawn to the following statutory requirements:

Animal Products Act 1999

Animal Products Regulations 2021

Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997

Biosecurity (Ruminant Protein) Regulations 1999

Resource Management Act 1991

Document Control

This is a Bioenergy Association controlled document.

The document is intended to be a "living document". It will be reviewed and updated as it is considered appropriate.

It is based on current knowledge about the use of digestate in New Zealand and overseas and will be regularly reviewed in light of future research findings and management experiences. Selective updates based on the latest science may be issued without prior consultation.

Triggers for review could include new information from research including field trials, pollution incidents, correction of errors, a change in the market, or a change in legislation or case law.

Updates to will only be made if approved by the Bioenergy Association. The process for suggesting an edit of a controlled document is set out on the Information Sheet 11c

Each version of the document will have a version number and a control sheet which will record its status and a brief comment about the changes that have been made to it.

The document and any associated papers will be published on www.biogas.org.nz

Version	Status	Bioenergy Association approval	Date	Significant changes from previous version
1	Consultation draft	Brian Cox	September 2024	
2	Publication Version	Brian Cox	May 2025	Suggested edits from consultation

1.0 Introduction

The Digestate Biofertiliser Producer Accreditation Scheme (hereafter referred to as *the Scheme*) is designed to provide robust support and advocacy for anaerobic digestion facilities in New Zealand that produce digestate biofertilisers in compliance with the *Digestate Guidelines*¹. The Scheme promotes the production of renewable energy and high-quality fertilisers derived from the anaerobic digestion of source-segregated biodegradable organic materials.

By maintaining annual accreditation, producers demonstrate to an independent third party that they are capable of manufacturing quality biofertiliser and have appropriate quality assurance systems in place to ensure consistent product standards.

Administered by the Bioenergy Association, the Scheme delivers significant benefits to accredited producers. It confirms that facilities operate in accordance with industry best practices and encourages continuous improvement, drawing on both national and international experience. The Scheme also supports producers through training, access to technology and procedures, and raises awareness among digestion facility owners about the value of producing high-quality biofertiliser.

The Scheme also hosts the *Biofertiliser Producers Forum*, which is open to all individuals or organisations interested in the production or use of digestate biofertiliser. The Forum offers networking opportunities, facilitates research on behalf of producers, and disseminates information about the benefits of biofertiliser to farmers and other landowners.

How to obtain accreditation

To become accredited, producers must ensure their digestate is produced in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Production of Digestate Biofertiliser for the Application to Land (DBPAS05)*.

Accreditation requires compliance with the Risk Management Programme outlined in the Digestate Guidelines. This programme includes:

- A Quality Management System
- A Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Plan
- A Facility Management Plan

Detailed accreditation criteria can be found in Section 4.0 of the Digestate Guidelines.

The Bioenergy Association oversees the accreditation process. Producers can access the application form and further information at: www.biogas.org.nz/biofertiliser.

Accreditation is granted once the Scheme Administrator has received the completed application and an independent auditor's report confirming that the facility operates in accordance with documented procedures. A list of approved auditors, along with guidance materials to help producers adopt best practices, is also available on the website.

2.0 Scope

This Accreditation Scheme applies to facilities that produce digestate through the anaerobic digestion of biodegradable organic materials, in accordance with the *DPAS 05 - Guidelines for the Production of Digestate Biofertiliser for Application to Land*².

The document covers:

¹ Guidelines for the Production of Digestate Biofertiliser for the Application to Land DBPAS05

² www.biogas.org.nz/resource/dbpas-05-guidelines-production-of-digestate-biofertiliser-producer-accreditation

- The benefits of facility accreditation
- The systems and documentation required for accreditation
- The steps involved in obtaining Bioenergy Association accreditation
- Scheme administration details, including application and renewal procedures

Detailed examples of the documentation required for accreditation can be found on the Bioenergy Association's website³.

Producers are also encouraged to familiarise themselves with *Technical Guidance 8 (TG8): The Production and Use as Biofertiliser of Digestate Derived from Source Segregated Organic Waste*, which outlines current best practices in anaerobic digestion. TG 8 is available on the Bioenergy Association's website.

3.0 Benefits of Producer Accreditation

The Accreditation Scheme is designed to uphold the professional standards of producers and suppliers of digestate biofertilisers. Participation in the Scheme brings recognition, trust and support to producers while promoting the use of high-quality biofertilisers.

Key benefits for accredited producers include:

- Guidance and support during the accreditation process
- Access to promotional materials highlighting the benefits of digestate biofertilisers
- Training opportunities and best practice resources for production and application
- Enhanced customer confidence with products meeting rigorous quality assurance standards
- Assurance of sustainability with feedstocks and fertilisers compliant with regulatory requirements
- Exclusive access to the Annual Biofertiliser Forum including events for producers, facility operators and technical advisors
- Support via the Bioenergy Association's complaints resolution process in the unlikely event of a dispute

Additional benefits through stakeholder groups commitments include:

- Ensuring all members comply with the Bioenergy Association's Code of Conduct
- Providing ongoing advice and guidance to both producers and users of digestate biofertilisers
- Advocating for favourable policies related to the sale, distribution and land application of biofertilisers
- Engagement in research and development including participation in field trials to grow the biofertiliser market

Figure 1 (see overleaf) provides a visual summary of these benefits.

³ <https://www.biogas.org.nz/resource/biofertiliser-certification-scheme>

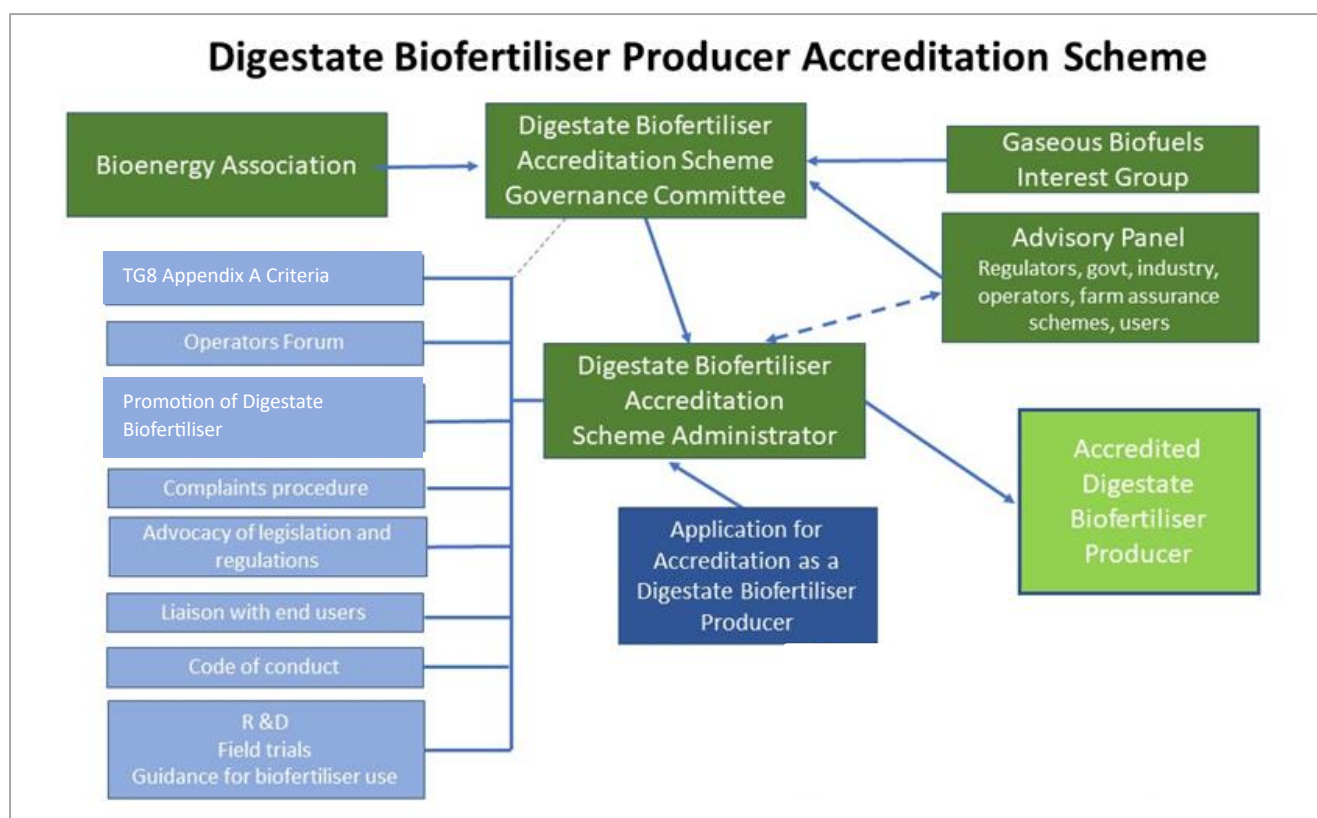


Figure 1: Key benefits and structure of the Digestate Biofertiliser Producer Accreditation Scheme

4.0 Accreditation Scheme Criteria

To achieve accreditation under the Scheme, digestate producers must ensure that their facility complies with the following core requirements:

- Meets the microbial and chemical limits as specified in the DBPAS 05 *Digestate Guidelines*
- Implements a Risk Management Programme that aligns with the requirements set out in the *DBPAS 05 Digestate Guidelines*
- Operates in accordance with its documented Risk Management Programme

The Risk Management Programme consists of three key components:

- A Quality Management System (QMS)
- A Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Plan
- A Facility Management Plan

Table 1 (below) summarises the key criteria for each of these components. Compliance can be demonstrated through various forms of evidence, such as site documentation, company policies, photographs and physical site inspections. The Scheme Administrator will work closely with producers during the application process to clarify evidence requirements outlined in DPAS 05. A list of approved auditors is available on the Bioenergy Association's biofertiliser webpage.

A check list of criteria for accreditation is in Table 1.

Table 1: Accreditation Criteria

Criteria		Evidence	Pass/ Fail
Quality Management System	Management, engagement and leadership		
	Adequate operational people resourcing		
	Clear roles and responsibilities		
	Quality commitment		
	Effective communication processes		
	Regular reviews		
	Reporting		
	Appropriate product labelling		
	Appropriate documentation and document control		
Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Plan	Hazard analysis		
	Critical control points		
	Critical limits		
	Monitoring systems to control CCPs		
	Corrective actions		
	Verification procedures		
	Adequate documentation of procedures and records		
Facility Management Plan	Facility details		
	Input controls		
	Process management, separation and storage		
	Process equipment		
	Process monitoring		
	Sampling of digestate		
	Actions in the event of test failure		
	Distribution and storage		

5.0 Accreditation Application Process

Producers seeking accreditation for their digestate facility may apply by submitting a completed Application Form (DBPAS02), available in Appendix A, to the Scheme Administrator at accreditation@bioenergy.org.nz

Pre-application requirements

Before submitting an application, the producer must:

- Engage an approved third-party auditor to review all supporting evidence
- Ensure the auditor has personally visited the facility and verified that the producers quality assurance systems comply with
 - The DBPAS 05 – Digestate Guidelines
 - The Bioenergy Digestate Biofertiliser Accreditation Programme Scheme Rules (DBPAS15).

A list of approved auditors is available on the Bioenergy Association biofertiliser webpage.

Submission Requirements

The application must include:

- The completed Application Form (DBPAS 02)
- The auditor's signed Declaration (DBPAS 16)
- A copy of the Scheme Rules (DBPAS 15)
- Verified, externally produced test report supporting the application

Upon receipt of a complete and compliant application, the Scheme Administrator will issue the producer a Certificate of Accreditation (DBPAS 14)

Maintaining Accreditation

- An on-site renewal audit must be conducted 12 months after the initial audit and annually thereafter, following the same process as the initial audit
- To maintain accreditation, producers must submit the Annual Renewal Form (DBPAS 03) along with the Auditor's Renewal Declaration
- The Scheme Administrator will maintain and publish an up-to-date list of accredited producers on the Scheme website.

Ongoing Compliance

The Scheme Administrator will monitor accredited producers to ensure ongoing compliance with accreditation requirements. If non-compliance is identified, accreditation may be temporarily suspended until corrective actions are taken.

Appeals Process

If a producer is not granted accreditation, they have the right to appeal the decision to the Accreditation Scheme Governance Committee. Appeals must follow the Bioenergy Association's formal complaints and appeals process, available at www.bioenergy.org.nz/BPP10-professional-standards-complaints.

Fees and Contact Details

Details of application fees and further contact details are provided in Appendix C.

6.0 Accreditation Scheme Details

The Accreditation Scheme is supported and governed by a network of key stakeholders who contribute to its administration, strategic direction, technical oversight and end-user engagement. These stakeholders include:

- Bioenergy Association
- Accreditation Scheme Administrator
- Governance Committee
- Producer's Forum
- Gaseous Biofuels Interest Group
- Technical Advisory Panel
- End Users

Each of these stakeholders play a vital role in ensuring the effectiveness, credibility and continuous improvement of the Scheme.

Table 2 (below and overleaf) outlines the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group involved in the Accreditation Scheme.

Table 2: Accreditation Scheme Stakeholders roles and responsibilities

Bioenergy Association	Scheme owner providing overall governance of the Digestate Biofertiliser Producer Accreditation Scheme. The Bioenergy Association will appoint a Scheme Administrator to coordinate and manage the day-to-day operations of the Scheme as well as to support the work of the Accreditation Scheme Governance Committee.
Accreditation Scheme Administrator	<p>Provides support to digestate producers in obtaining and maintaining accreditation. The Accreditation Scheme Administrator has the following responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive and assess applications for accreditation • Assist producers in preparing the required documentation prior to third-party audits • Process all applications submissions and supporting material • Respond to enquiries related to the Scheme • Provide guidance to producers throughout the accreditation and renewal processes • Monitor accredited producers to ensure ongoing compliance with Scheme requirements • Issue Certificates of Accreditation to producers who meet all criteria • Advise the Accreditation Scheme Governance Committee on Scheme performance and recommend improvements as needed • Ensure that compliance criteria reflect current legislation, regulations and technical standards, including updates to the Digestate Guidelines • Approve auditors qualified to conduct assessments of accreditation applications • Maintain an up-to-date list of Approved Auditors • Receive and manage the resolution of complaints related to the Accreditation Scheme • Provide advice to producers and refer formal complaints, where necessary, to the Bioenergy Association's Professional Standards and Complaints Committee • In collaboration with Bioenergy Association members oversee the relevance and adequacy of Technical Guide 8 (TG8) • Coordinate updates to TG8 where mutually agreed upon by relevant parties
Accreditation Scheme Governance Committee	<p>The Accreditation Scheme Governance Committee is composed of three members appointed by the Bioenergy Association Board. One member must be an independent representative – not involved in the ownership or operation of anaerobic digestion (AD) facilities – and serves as Chair. Each committee members holds equal voting rights. The committee is responsible for ensuring that the Accreditation Scheme meets the performance standards of the Bioenergy Association and maintains integrity, transparency and credibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports directly to the Board of the Bioenergy Association • Reviews the overall operation and effectiveness of the Accreditation Scheme • Ensures at least one committee member possesses relevant regulatory experience • Reviews and comments on the Accreditation Scheme rules • Evaluates and advises on strategies to promote the use of accredited digestate biofertiliser • Supports initiatives to raise awareness of the Accreditation Scheme across relevant sectors • Reviews and rules on appeals relating to complaint resolutions involving accredited producers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures active involvement of key stakeholders to uphold the Scheme's credibility, including representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming bodies (e.g. Fonterra) Industry groups (e.g. Fertiliser Quality Council) Government agencies (e.g. Ministry for Primary Industries [MPI]) Scientific and technical advisors Convenes at least twice annually, or more frequently as required
Approved auditors	Engaged by producers to review their biofertiliser accreditation applications, conduct audits and confirm that the anaerobic digestion (AD) producer meets the criteria to be classified as an Accredited Digestate Biofertiliser Producer
Producers Forum	<p>The Operator Forum serves as a platform for producers, facility operators and technical advisers to share information and discuss the technical aspects of digestate biofertilisers. The Forum convenes at least twice a year and is guided by a Steering Group composed of representatives from Accredited Producers.</p> <p>The Forum provides opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable the Steering Group to coordinate events and initiatives Support associate members in achieving accreditation Discuss matters related to scheme administration and broader issues that may affect the scheme Promote best practices across the industry Deliver training for new producers and operators <p>Membership of the Forum is open to associate members, including advisers, researchers, regulators and others involved in the production or use of biofertiliser who themselves are not producers. However, only Accredited Producers hold full voting rights on decisions made by the Forum.</p>
Gaseous Biofuels Interest Group	<p>The Gaseous Biofuels Interest Group is a division of the Bioenergy Association established for members with a specific interest in gaseous biofuels. The Group is led by a Steering Committee that plays a key role in guiding the sector through policy development, government advocacy and the promotion of best practice standards.</p> <p>The Steering Committee's responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing sector guidance and oversight to the Accreditation Scheme Governance Committee and the Scheme Administrator in relation to the valorisation of digestate Offering technical advice to both the Governance Committee and the Scheme Administrator
Technical Advisory Panel	<p>The Technical Advisory Panel was established by the Accreditation Scheme Governance Committee to provide expert advice on the digestate biofertiliser criteria outlined in the <i>Digestate Guidelines</i>, which are used to audit product compliance. The Panel originally comprised members of the Steering Group that developed the digestate biofertiliser and producer accreditation criteria set out in DBPAS 05. Its membership has evolved to include additional experts as new stakeholders have engaged and as specific issues related to the safe application of digestate biofertiliser on land have emerged.</p> <p>The responsibilities of the Technical Advisory Panel include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the scientific and policy context relevant to the Accreditation Scheme and advising the Governance Committee and the Scheme Administrator Assessing the outcomes of technical research, including field trials Ensuring the Panel is chaired by an independent expert appointed by the Accreditation Scheme Governance Committee Inviting representatives from major end users, such as Fonterra and Pāmu, to participate in the Panel

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating the inclusion of other interested end users upon request Convening as required to address emerging issues and developments
End Users	The Accreditation Scheme provides end users with independent, factual and promotional material outlining the characteristics and benefits of using Digestate Biofertiliser from Accredited Producers

7.0 Scheme Logo Use

The DBPAS 04 Scheme logo may be used by producers who are accredited members of the Scheme. The logo serves as a mark of product quality, professional competence, trust and accountability. Its use signifies that the producer's products meet the rigorous standards set by the Scheme, that they adhere to the Bioenergy Association Code of Conduct and that they are subject to the Bioenergy Association Complaints Process.



Appendix A: Accreditation Application Form

DBPAS02: Accreditation Application Form		
Name of producer		
Trading name of the producer		
Date of application		
Producer's representative		
Contact details		
Membership of the Bioenergy Association		Yes/no
Declarations		
	Provide evidence of compliance with DBPAS 05 (DBPAS 18)	Yes/No
	Provide declaration from an Approved Auditor that the evidence of compliance to DBPAS 05 is appropriate (DBPAS 16)	Yes/No
1	Agree to assist in the Accreditation Scheme promotion activities	Yes/no
2	Agree to abide by the Code of Conduct of the Bioenergy Association	Yes/no
3	Declare that there have been no convictions in a court of law or complaints upheld by an investigating body that relates to the production, sale or supply of digestate as	Yes/no

	fertiliser	
4	Agree to assist with research projects run by the Accreditation Scheme	Yes/no
5	Agree to assist with the operation of the Accreditation Scheme to further the interests of all members	Yes/no
6	As agreed from time to time to assist with the financial viability of the Accreditation Scheme	Yes/no
As a member of the Accreditation Scheme the member will:		
	Hold a single voting right for the undertaking of Producer Forum activities	
	Receive all the services of the Accreditation Scheme including participation in the Producers Forum	
Signed:		
Dated:		

Appendix B: Accreditation Renewal Form

Producers accredited under the Accreditation Scheme must renew their accreditation status annually by submitting the declaration below and paying the annual renewal fee.

DBPAS03: Accreditation Renewal Form		
Name of producer		
Trading name of the producer		
Date of application		
Producer's representative		
Contact details		
Membership of the Bioenergy Association		Yes/no
The producer confirms that the following declarations are true:		
	Provide information of any changes in manufacturing processes from those submitted in the original application (DBPAS 18) and evidence that the product produced continues to comply with DBPAS 05	Yes/No
	Provide a declaration from an Approved Auditor that the evidence of compliance with DBPAS 05 continues to be appropriate (DBPAS 16)	Yes/No
1	Agree to assist in the Accreditation Scheme promotion activities	Yes/no
2	Agree to abide by the Code of Conduct of the	Yes/no

	Bioenergy Association	
3	Declare that there have been no convictions in a court of law or complaints upheld by an investigating body that relates to the production, sale or supply of digestate as fertiliser	Yes/no
4	Agree to assist with research projects run by the Producers Forum	Yes/no
5	Agree to assist with the operation of the Accreditation Scheme to further the interests of all members	Yes/no
6	As agreed from time to time to assist with the financial viability of the Accreditation Scheme	Yes/no
Signed:		
Dated:		

Appendix C: Fees

Initial (full) Accreditation Fee (includes first year's membership):	\$700
Annual Accreditation Renewal Fees:	\$400
Annual Associate member fee:	\$200

Contact us

Accreditation Scheme Administrator
 Digestate Biofertiliser Producer Accreditation Scheme
 C/o Bioenergy Association
 Phone: 0274 771 0488
 Email: accreditation@bioenergy.org.nz