

Fertiliser Quality Council

Provision of Auditing Services for Fertmark and Spreadmark schemes

Expression of Interest for undertaking the service

Table of Contents

Purpose	3
About us.....	3
Fertiliser Quality Council.....	3
How the FQC operates.....	3
Our principles.....	3
Key duties of FQC.....	4
Fertmark.....	4
Spreadmark.....	4
What we require.....	5
Specific responsibilities.....	5
General responsibilities	5
Key Performance Indicators.....	6
Term of the Agreement	6
Useful reference documents	6
Responses	7
Company and/or individual overview.....	7
Team and Experience.....	7
EOI work undertaken by the applicant	7
Timeline.....	7

Purpose

The purpose of this Expression of Interest (EOI) document is to invite individuals or organisations to submit EOI to undertake the independent auditing and verification of existing organisations and new applications to the Fertmark and Spreadmark quality assurance schemes.

About us

Fertiliser Quality Council

The FQC was established “for farmers, by farmers” in 1992 to develop and provide an assurance programme for the use of fertiliser products or Fertmark, its mandate has expanded in recent years to include accurate and on target fertiliser distribution known as Spreadmark. The FQC is responsible for the Fertmark and Spreadmark initiatives. Fertmark was introduced in 1992 as a quality assurance scheme where fertiliser products are independently audited and only those that reach the standard are provided with the Fertmark tick. There are currently 14 companies in Fertmark and 69 registered products. Spreadmark is the fertiliser quality assurance scheme for proof of placement founded by the New Zealand Groundspreaders Fertiliser Association (NZGFA) and the logo is on the trucks of 75 companies throughout New Zealand.

How the FQC operates

The FQC is made up of four components including the Society, the Executive Committee, the Forum and the operations and administration team. The society includes representatives from Federated Farmers (4), Horticulture New Zealand (1), New Zealand Institute of Primary Industry Management (1), NZGFA (1), Aviation Industry Association/Agricultural Aviation Association (1), Fertiliser Association of New Zealand (1) and the Chairperson of the FQC. The Executive Committee is made up of members of the society plus representatives from users of fertilisers and those representing industry organisations. The society currently has co-opted representatives from AgResearch (1), Massey University (3) and the Waikato Regional Council (1), these members do not have any voting rights. The FQC Forum includes the Executive Committee and all accredited users of Fertmark and Spreadmark. The FQC and Executive Committee meet twice a year (January and August) to consider all matters relating to the FQC. The Society, Executive Committee and Forum are supported by the Executive Director and Finance Officer provided by Federated Farmers of New Zealand; a Communications Manager and Fertmark and Spreadmark Auditor.

Our principles

- The FQC operates independently, transparently and credibly for the benefit of all users of fertiliser in New Zealand.
- The FQC plays a key role in supporting reliable access to quality assured fertiliser which is used in a sustainable manner.
- The FQC maintains significant farmer input to ensure the services required by farmers are delivered.
- The FQC promotes effective nutrient management and the critical role of nutrients as an integral part of New Zealand’s primary industries.
- The FQC industry forum provides an opportunity for fertiliser users to play a critical part in the strategic direction of the fertiliser industry in New Zealand regarding fertiliser quality.

- The FQC actively promotes good environmental stewardship with regard to nutrient management and placement.

Key duties of FQC

In addition to our guiding principles, the FQC has some key duties which it undertakes. This includes the provision of independent quality assurance of nutrients present in fertiliser as well as independent audits ensuring fertiliser application is made in the “right spot”. The FQC’s other duties include:

- Establishing and maintaining the Fertmark Test Methods Reference Group charged with developing laboratory test methods.
- Establish the Agronomic Expert panel to adjudicate issues of agronomic trials and promotional claims on all fertiliser products sold in New Zealand.
- Promoting to farmers the value of Fertmark and Spreadmark schemes.
- Promoting to regulators, including those from central, regional and local government, the role of fertiliser products for New Zealand’s primary industries.

In summary, the FQC provides a quality assurance programme for the use of fertiliser products and accurate “on target” fertiliser distribution. The next section will discuss in greater detail the Fertmark and Spreadmark programmes.

Fertmark

The FQC is seeking applications from interested parties to independently audit users of Fertmark accreditation. Gaining Fertmark accreditation (or the Fertmark tick) means that the fertiliser submitted has been independently audited to ensure what is on the label, is actually in the bag. The Fertiliser Code of Practice relates to all fertilisers made and sold in New Zealand and describes the conditions which must be met to qualify for the Fertmark tick; requirements of the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act are now also included which require fertilisers to be supplied in a manner that minimises risk to food safety and animal welfare. The Fertmark tick provides end users (farmers) with the confidence that fertilisers supplied from Fertmark registered companies are reliable and if used properly do not pose any risks. The FQC requires that all Fertmark accredited companies are independently audited to ensure they meet the standard and for any new applicants that their fertiliser is true to label.

Spreadmark

Spreadmark was established by the NZGFA in 1994 and is a fertiliser placement quality assurance programme. The objective of the programme is to ensure the placement of fertilisers is in locations where they can be of the most agricultural benefit and the least environmental harm. The scheme registers spreading companies provided they have certified their spreading machinery, are trained operators and have appropriate quality management systems in place to ensure farmer/grower outcomes are met and environment sustainability is protected. If operators have the Spreadmark tick, farmers and others know that spreader operators have been trained, equipment is independently assessed and systems audited, fertiliser is being applied at an even rate and distribution pattern and they are confident a Spreadmark operator will place the fertiliser where it is required. The FQC is seeking applications from interested parties to independently audit users of the Spreadmark accreditation.

What we require

The FQC is now seeking expressions of interest from parties to undertake independent verification services for the Fertmark and Spreadmark schemes. There are some specific and general tasks associated with these schemes and these are described below in detail.

Specific responsibilities

- Maintain a register of all Fertmark and Groundspread Spreadmark member companies and nominated company contacts, and ensure this is available to the FQC Executive Director as required.
- Develop and apply a system to conduct timely Fertmark and groundspread Spreadmark audits and provide evidence of the audit systems to the FQC Executive Director.
- Assess company systems and records against Fertmark and the groundspread part of the Spreadmark Code requirements and provide timely reporting of performance under the Fertmark and Spreadmark Codes to Fertmark and Spreadmark companies.
- To arrange the signing and sending of Fertmark and Spreadmark certificates for registration.
- Provide the FQC Executive Director with clear recommendations regarding the suitability of individual products and/or companies for Fertmark or Groundspread Spreadmark certification.
- Maintain a current register detailing the status of all member companies, including Spreadmark test certificates and mark this available to the FQC Executive Director when required. The methodology to best achieve this is to be determined with the successful applicant.
- Ensure that the FQC webmaster is provided with updated versions of documents regarding the Fertmark and Spreadmark codes to ensure current documents are available at all times.
- Coordinate the Laboratory Test Methods Group record the minutes and manage delivery on agreed actions that arise from meetings.
- In conjunction with the FQC Executive Director, seek ways to promote and develop the Fertmark and Spreadmark to wider industry.
- In the execution of the duties of the Fertmark and Spreadmark auditor, the auditor will only act in ways that reflect positively on the schemes and FQC.
- Seek to better integrate the outcomes of the Fertmark and Spreadmark schemes to the benefit of the wider fertiliser industry.
- Carry out any other activities that may be requested by the FQC Executive Director prescribed within the Fertmark or Spreadmark Codes of Practice.

General responsibilities

In terms of general responsibilities, the auditor of the Fertmark and Spreadmark schemes must be appropriately qualified¹ and will be responsible for ensuring that all audit staff are appropriately qualified to undertake delegated audit responsibilities. The auditor will provide the following general services and responsibilities:

- A competent and reliable service.
- Continuity of experience and qualified expertise.
- Confidentiality regarding all aspects of the audit processes.
- Adhering to the Fertmark and Spreadmark auditor protocols.

¹ The FQC would view appropriately qualified to be someone with a combination of experience and academic qualifications

- Provide regular reporting to the FQC Executive Director.
- Attendance at the FQC Executive and forum meetings.
- Develop synergies to link between the Fertmark and Spreadmark schemes.
- Uphold the good name and credibility of the Fertmark and Spreadmark schemes within the member companies and the industry at large.

Key Performance Indicators

The FQC has a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which it uses to assess the performance of the successful applicant. The KPIs include:

1. Timely reporting to the FQC Executive Director and FQC Forum in an agreed format.
2. Demonstration of competent service provision to companies seeking Fertmark and Spreadmark auditing services through document management and maintenance of auditing databases.
3. Audits are completed on time to ensure that companies retain their Fertmark and/or Spreadmark status. If companies fail to have their audits completed before the due date then these companies must be removed from the list of registered companies. Any overdue audits will also be reported to the FQC.
4. A complete record of Spreadmark and Fertmark registered company status reports are maintained and available to the FQC Executive Director and are available, without delay, upon request.
5. A complete record of declared value reports are maintained.
6. Reports of recommended testers are provided to the FQC Executive Director for approval.
7. Cadmium update reports are provided at six (6) month intervals to the FQC.
8. Codes are updated as required and these updates are provided to the Webmaster who ensures the codes are available through the FQC website.
9. Coordinating the Test Methods Group and ensure that changes and/or additions to the Fertmark Code of Practice are incorporated.
10. The auditor will strictly observe confidentiality at all times, as detailed in the Fertmark Code of Practice² and the Groundspread Spreadmark Code of Practice³

Term of the Agreement

The term of the agreement will be from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2023. The agreement will be reviewed annually. Renewal of the contract after three (3) years can be arranged by mutual agreement between the FQC and successful applicant.

Useful reference documents

More information about FQC: <https://fertqual.co.nz/>

Spreadmark Code of Practice: <https://fertqual.co.nz/?ddownload=83>

Fertmark Code of Practice: <https://fertqual.co.nz/?ddownload=747>

² Pages 25 and 26

³ Pages 22 and 23

Responses

The FQC encourages interested parties to structure their proposals to provide the necessary information outlined in this EOI and the additional information below. The provision of this information will enable the FQC to make an informed decision.

Company and/or individual overview

The proposal should provide a general overview of the company, its structure, size and capability to perform the work that is required of you by the FQC. This section should highlight recent and relevant experience that demonstrates your suitability to undertake this work. If you are applying as an individual, then you should highlight your work experience and suitability for the position. A minimum of two (2) references relating to relevant project experience should be provided including names and contact details.

Team and Experience

The proposal will clearly identify the proposed team members performing the work required by FQC and the level of involvement of each team member in this work. This section should address the team structure and that of the organisation, and how the team members identified have the requisite experience to perform the work. Brief resumes of all team members should also be provided in the appendix to your proposal.

EOI work undertaken by the applicant

All expenses incurred by the respondent in preparation and submission of this proposal are to be borne by the respondent, with the express understanding that no claims for reimbursement against FQC will be accepted. The FQC shall not be responsible for any costs involved in or associated with any meetings, discussion or negotiation following submission of the EOI that could lead to the acceptance of the respondent and award of the contract.

Timeline

Date	Item
12 June	EOI from interested parties sent
26 June	EOIs close
29 June	Interviews are undertaken with parties, if required
16 July	Decision made and respondents informed of the decision
1 September	Work commences