



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

# Explanatory Guide to the Seed Potato Classification Scheme and Approved Stock Scheme 2025 to 2026

April 2025



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APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

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# Introduction

This is a guide to the Seed Potato Classification Scheme (SPCS) and much of the guidance is taken from the relevant legislation, in accordance with which the scheme operates and growers in England and Wales have their seed potato crops classified. For the full details and legal requirements, you should refer to The Seed Potatoes (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Seed Potatoes (Wales) Regulations 2016 (as amended). Under these Regulations, it is an offence to market any seed potatoes that have not been officially certified in accordance with specified requirements. The Plant Health (Phytosanitary Conditions) (Amendment) (EU exit) regulations 2020 (as amended) also set conditions for regulated non-quarantine pests (RNQPs) related to seed potato production and movement.

Copies of the Regulations may be purchased from HMSO or are available on the [legislation.gov.uk website](https://www.legislation.gov.uk).

The Official Certification Bodies in England and Wales are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Welsh Government. In practical terms, the SPCS is administered on behalf of Defra and the Welsh Government by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) – further details about the scheme are available at [The Seed Potato Classification Scheme - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-seed-potato-classification-scheme).

The SPCS provides certification at various grades depending on the grade and field generation of the parent seed, the health of the crop at the field inspection and of tubers after harvest. Results of inspections, which are available to crop applicants (and where permitted, growers) are based upon visual symptoms.

As well as the standard SPCS, which covers the majority of seed potato production and sales, there are two additional and parallel tracks to facilitate other aspects of seed potato production. The different aspects of the scheme are outlined in the section below.

Charges apply for all SPCS work. [A list of current fees is available online](#). The fees are subject to change.

See paragraph 18.4 ('Fees') for more information about SPCS fees in England and Wales.

A 'Dear Grower Letter' will be sent to existing SPCS applicants and growers in the spring detailing any changes to the scheme for that season.

If you have any questions or comments about the SPCS, contact your local Plant Health and Seed Inspector (PHSI). If you need details of your local PHSI, contact APHA – telephone 0300 1000 313, or email [customeradvice@apha.gov.uk](mailto:customeradvice@apha.gov.uk).

# 1. Comparison of the 3 tracks for the SPCS in England and Wales

## SPCS standard scheme

The standard scheme covers the growing and marketing of the majority of commercial and retail seed potatoes in England and Wales. All varieties must be on the GB national list.

This aspect of the scheme determines all the key criteria for the SPCS.

## Approved stock (AS) scheme

This aspect of the scheme is used to officially approve promising new varieties. It facilitates their multiplication in the early stages of selection and for test and trial purposes, or while they are undergoing national listing evaluation.

Where approved stocks carry an SPCS classification, the AS scheme operates to the same criteria and grades as the main scheme. This facilitates the movement of such AS material into the standard scheme as soon as all necessary testing and listing criteria have been met. Some additional controls apply to the AS scheme. The certifying authority will inform you of any applications that are affected by these.

## Conservation varieties scheme

Seed potatoes may be classified in the conservation category if they have some conservation value because they are naturally adapted to the local and regional conditions or are threatened by genetic erosion.

The conservation varieties scheme is operated to the same standards and criteria as the main SPCS. Further details are given in Commission Directive 2008/62/EC.

# 2. Applications

Applications for an SPCS entry may be made by growers or by holders of plant breeders' rights who wish to enter crops produced either by themselves or by others on their behalf. All applications will be verified before being approved and if any errors are found, the applicant will be contacted and may be requested to resubmit the application.

Applications should be made online on the [eDomero website](#) – contact your local Inspector for details on registration if you wish to use this option.

Alternatively, [legacy crop application forms can be downloaded from GOV.UK](#).

The crop application form is a legacy form as almost all stocks are now applied for using the online application, so some parts are out of date. The current rules outlined in this guide still apply.

Completed forms should be sent to the address given at Appendix 2.

## Notes on completing applications

Each crop application must be accompanied by a label (or colour scan of the label) taken from the parent seed stock. A label is not required where the seed will be grown from a stock produced by the same applicant and grower, and no labels were issued.

A planting plan should be provided showing where individual seed stocks and any ware crops within 50 metres of the seed have been planted. If possible, the official field map sent with the soil sampling certificate should be used.

Authority to apply for labels and applicant printers – where applicants wish to allow delegated label printers (DLPs) to print the labels for a stock, it is essential that 'Other' is selected in the 'Authority to apply for labels' section of the application form, and details of the DLP entered. If the DLP's details are not included, they will not have access to print labels for a stock for which they are not the applicant. This cannot be amended at a later stage.

Paper applications will incur an administration charge of £14.76 per application.

## 3. Seed categories and grades

There are 3 categories of seed potatoes – pre-basic, basic and certified. These categories can be subdivided into 7 grades.

### 3.1 Pre-basic TC (tissue culture) and pre-basic (field grown)

Pre-basic material may be produced for a maximum of 5 years (a maximum of 4 years in soil) from the original source material. Pre-basic TC material must be grown in isolation from soil.

### 3.2 Basic grades

S, SE and E.

### 3.3 Certified grades

A and B.

## 4. Field generation (Fg)

### 4.1 Generation limits

The maximum number of generations of seed potatoes that can be grown is limited to 9.

For each grade there is a field generation maximum after which the seed automatically drops to the next grade. Having the field generation of seed to be entered into the scheme is vital if it is to be correctly entered. This information must be on the official label and no other documentation will be accepted in place of this.

Parent seed stocks with no field generation on the label will be assumed to be at the maximum field generation for its grade. The stock entered for certification will therefore only be eligible to be entered at the grade below. Certified seed with no field generation on the label will not be eligible for entry.

**Table 1. Field generation limits**

Category	Grade	Maximum Fg
Pre-basic	PB	Fg4
Basic	S	Fg5
Basic	SE	Fg6
Basic	E	Fg7
Certified	A	Fg 8 or Fg9
Certified	B	Fg 8 or Fg9

## 4.2 Generation control

Seed can be entered for any grade providing that it does not exceed the field generation maximum for that grade.

If field generations are skipped either at the applicant's choice or as a result of a field downgrade, the additional field generations may be used until the maximum for that grade is reached.

For example, planting pre-basic Fg3 to produce S Fg4 would allow a further year at S Fg5 (assuming field standards are met).

A maximum of two generations of certified seed can be produced irrespective of the field generation reached.

## 5. Entry conditions

### 5.1 Growing areas

#### **Pre-basic TC**

Multiplication of micro-plants must take place in a laboratory, which is acceptable on both technical and administrative grounds to Defra or Welsh Government, and under the supervision of a PHSI. This material may then be grown on under protection or in the open air to produce pre-basic TC but must be isolated from soil.

#### **Pre-basic (field grown), Basic S, SE, E**

May be grown in any part of England and Wales.

#### **E Fg7**

Cannot be entered in the protected region. See section 18.5 ('The protected region').

#### **Certified A and B**

May be produced in any area of England and Wales except the protected region.

### 5.2 Statutory pests and diseases

You must not grow crops for certification on any land which is subject to a statutory notice declaring it to be either:

- contaminated with or in a safety zone for potato wart disease
- contaminated with potato cyst nematode (PCN)

Land is eligible for entry if it has been satisfactorily tested within 4 years prior to the crop and no potatoes or other PCN host crops have been grown on it since the last certificate was issued. For details of official soil sampling, fees and, where in doubt, to ascertain the status of the land, contact APHA.

If a crop is contaminated with ring rot or brown rot or any other quarantine disease, contact APHA for further information.

### 5.3 Eligible varieties

#### **SPCS**

- Only varieties on the GB National List of Plant List are eligible for entry into the scheme. Contact APHA for clarification on particular varieties. Varieties very similar in appearance may not be grown in the same field due to the difficulties of identification of plants and tubers and risk of admixture.
- It is not recommended to grow varieties of a similar appearance on the same holding, however if it is necessary to do so then then all

personnel involved in the storing, processing, and planting the seed must be made aware of the risks involved and any varieties of similar appearance should not be handled or planted consecutively.

## AS

In addition to those above, varieties awaiting National Listing may be entered into the AS Scheme. Approved stocks on either yellow or orange labels are acceptable for entry into the Approved Stock scheme. Details of the country and National List trial reference number must be supplied when making an AS application.

## Conservation varieties

Those varieties which have been listed as Conservation varieties in the Seeds (National List of Varieties) (amendment) Regulations 2009 (as amended).

## 5.4 Eligible parent stocks

Seed may be entered into the SPCS to produce progeny, providing that the maximum field generation (Fg) for the grade will not be exceeded.

Table 2 shows the eligible grades and Fg limits for parent stocks entered into the SPCS. The top row shows the grades and Fg limits for parent seeds. Column 1 shows the eligible grades and Fg limits for progeny stocks.

**Table 2. Eligible grades and field generation (Fg) limits for parent stocks**

Eligible grade and Fg limit	PB TC Fg0	PB Fg1	PB Fg2	PB Fg3	PB Fg4	S	SE	E	A	B
PB Fg1	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
PB Fg2	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
PB Fg3	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
PB Fg4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
SE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
E	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

<b>A</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>								
<b>B</b>	<b>Yes</b>									

Seed potatoes which have been bagged and labelled for retail sales are not eligible for entry into the SPCS, as reproduction for commercial purposes is not a ‘retail activity’ and the provenance and integrity of such seed potatoes cannot always be guaranteed.

## 5.5 Rotation

Seed potatoes may only be classified if the land upon which they are grown has been potato-free for the following minimum period:

- Pre-basic: 7 years
- Basic S, SE, E: 5 years
- Certified A and B: 4 years

## 5.6 Isolation (from other potato stocks)

See ‘Appendix 1. SPCS: isolation requirements’.

## 5.7 Stocks planted with multiple parent stocks

Entering stocks with multiple parent stocks is no longer permitted. Each stock entered can only be planted with seed from a single parental source.

If a stock is planted with seed of the same variety and grade but with more than one parent stock, then each input parent stock must be grown separately in the field. Each stock must be separated from the adjacent stocks in the field by a blank isolation row. We will no longer accept posts and markers at both ends of the fields. If no blank row is present, then one must be created prior to the second inspection. Planting plans should also indicate where the different parent stocks have been planted. If each individual stock cannot be identified certification may not be possible. Each stock must be entered into the scheme as an individual unit and will be inspected separately and certified on its own merit. This may impact on the other stocks next to it.

Stocks that pass at the same grade can be bulked together following the procedures at para 10.4.

## 6. Crop inspections

Seed stocks will be inspected as follows:

- Pre-basic, S, SE, E – twice, with a gap of approximately 2 weeks between
- Certified A and B – once

For pre-basic, S, SE and E: if for any reason stock applications are delayed and the crop has grown beyond a point at which two effective inspections can be made, the crop may only be inspected to a certified grade irrespective of the grade entered.

Additional inspections will be made where:

- PB stocks must be completely destroyed within 21 days of final inspection
- stocks subject to compulsory haulm destruction 21 days after the final inspection
- stocks have been rogued to meet grade standard and a re-inspection is requested. Stocks over tolerance for virus alone cannot have a third inspection

## 7. Inspection tolerances

### 7.1 Field tolerances

Crops must meet the following tolerances at field inspections.

#### **Table 3. Inspection tolerances**

Table notes:

- Note 1. Ground keepers, planted rogues, bolters, semi bolters, undesirable deviations from the variety and wildings
- Note 2. Plants infected with any other virus will be scored at the 'Other mosaic virus' tolerance

Defect or disease	Pre-basic	S	SE	E	A	B
<b>Not true to type (see note 1)</b>	0.01%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
<b>Blackleg</b>	0	0.1%	0.5%	1.0%	2.0%	4.0%
<b>Virus Y, A Leaf roll (see note 2)</b>	0	0.02%	0.1%	0.4%	2.0%	6.0%
<b>Other mosaic virus</b>	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%	2.0%	6.0%
<b>Total virus</b>	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%	2.0%	6.0%

For pre-basic stocks, all the tolerances in this table apply to both first and second inspections. For other grades, the virus tolerances apply to all inspections, while all other tolerances apply at the final inspection only.

## 7.2 Downgrading seed stocks

When a stock exceeds any of the above tolerances it will be downgraded to the next appropriate grade.

For virus this applies after the first inspection and after the final inspection for all other defects.

If stocks of different grades are planted with only a blank isolation row, the virus found in the lower graded stock must not exceed the tolerance of the higher grade stock.

If a stock is downgraded, all adjacent stocks within 10 metres of it will be downgraded in their entirety. The option of partial downgrading of stocks has been removed.

## 8. Conditions for growing seed potatoes

### Pre-basic stocks (TC and field grown)

1. Randomly selected samples may be grown on by Defra or the Welsh Government to assess varietal type. However, it may not be possible for prebasic material grown under protection to be certifiable/approved to variety.
2. The growing crops must be kept free from aphids at all times and all reasonable husbandry practices for the prevention of the occurrence, development or spread of pests and diseases must be carried out. This is particularly important in the period between the final official inspection and haulm destruction.
3. Roguing of any diseased plants is not permitted prior to the first inspection. Roguing is only permitted between the first and second inspections to maintain the health status of the stock.
4. The mother plants must have been kept free during the propagation period from Blackleg spp., Potato leafroll virus, potato viruses A, M, S, X and Y.

### All seed crops

1. Seed crops should be desiccated as soon after the final official inspection as possible. Any regrowth before harvest should be destroyed.
2. It is recommended that stocks be voluntarily pre-harvest tuber virus tested.
3. Growers should avoid planting seed and ware crops in close proximity. In situations where the isolation requirements allow ware crops to be grown with 10 metres of seed stocks, the ware crop will be inspected to assess the level of virus within it and this may affect the certification of the seed crop. Where an adjacent ware crop is being grown by a third party it will be the responsibility of the applicant to arrange access to the ware crop with the grower. If access cannot be obtained, the seed stock may be downgraded. See Appendix 1.

## 9. Haulm destruction

For all crops you are advised to desiccate the foliage as soon as possible after final inspection. There are specific requirements as follows:

- **Pre-basic (field grown)** – stocks must be completely desiccated, without regrowth, within 21 days after the second inspection. A haulm destruction inspection will be made and if the stocks haulm has not been completely destroyed or any green haulm remains, it will be downgraded to S.
- **Other grades** – compulsory haulm destruction will be required where the virus found exceeds one third of the grade tolerance. The tolerances are listed below.

### Table 4. Virus %, at any inspection, above which compulsory burn off is required

Table note: PLRV means potato leaf-roll virus, Y means potato virus Y, A means potato virus A.

Grade	PLRV, Y or A	Other mosaic virus
<b>S</b>	0.006%	0.06%
<b>SE</b>	0.03%	0.16%
<b>E</b>	0.13%	0.26%
<b>A</b>	0.66%	0.66%.
<b>B*</b>	2%	2%

Applicants and growers will be notified by the PHSI if individual crops require haulm destruction to meet grade standards. If all the haulm has not been completely destroyed by the required date the crop will be downgraded to the next lower grade or, in the case of a B grade crop, no certificate will be awarded.

## 10. Classification: administrative and procedural details

### 10.1 Stock number

Each stock entered into the scheme will be allocated a unique stock reference number prefixed by the year.

### 10.2 Stock certificate

Entered stocks will receive a certificate after the final inspection which will show whether the crop:

- met the standards at which it was entered
- met the standards of a lower grade
- fails outright

Copies of the inspection results and the final certificate will be emailed to the addresses on the stock application form (applicants must ensure all parties they wish to be notified have their emails included on the application).

Stocks entered into the AS scheme will receive an AS letter. Approved stock approval will be withdrawn if the application for National Listing is withdrawn.

The stock will be eligible for marketing at the grade indicated on the certificate but will require a pre-marketing tuber inspection before it is finally certified.

### 10.3 Production of register

To minimise administrative costs, the register will be produced exactly as per the crop entry details, as the scheme cannot finance the costs of subsequent changes to grower, applicant, or any other details. Consequently, it is essential that the entry details are exactly as you wish them to appear on the register. For protected varieties, this includes obtaining any necessary permission from the variety maintainers.

### 10.4 Bulking stocks

Stocks of the same variety, grown on the same holding and entered and classified at the same grade and with the same national parentage can be bulked together for grading and marketing. Applications for bulking can only be made by the applicant and must be made immediately on receipt of the classification certificates. A revised stock number for the bulked stock will be issued. This number will appear in the register, so all bulking applications must be received before the register is published. Subsequent applications for labels must quote the bulked stock number.

## 11. Storage of tubers

All stocks must be stored separately, clearly labelled and handled so as to avoid admixture with other seed stocks and stored separately from ware stocks.

Seed tubers must not be stored in any container or building where growth regulating chemicals have been applied.

## 12. Tuber inspections

There is a nil tolerance for the following diseases on all classes of seed potatoes:

- Colorado beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*)
- ring rot (*Clavibacter michiganensis*)
- brown rot (*Ralstonia solanacearum*)
- potato cyst nematode (*Globoderra pallida* and *rostochiensis*)
- wart disease (*Synchytrium endobioticum*)
- potato spindle (Tuber Viroid)
- root knot nematode (*Meloidogyne fallax*)
- zebra chip (*Candidatus liberibacter*)
- potato flea beetle (*Epitrix Cucumeris*)

Graded lots of seed potatoes for marketing must comply with the minimum standards set out below.

**Table 5. Minimum standards for seed potato inspections**

Table notes:

In this table, n/a means 'not applicable'

	Surface area tolerance	PB	Basic S, SE and E	Certified A and B
<b>Total of all rots</b>	Not applicable	0.2	0.5	0.5
<b>Wet rot not above</b>	Not applicable	0.2	0.2	0.2
<b>Black scurf</b>	10%	1	5	5
<b>Common scab</b>	33%	5	5	5
<b>Powdery scab</b>	10%	1	3	3
<b>Shriveled tubers</b>	Not applicable	0.5	1	1
<b>Skin spot</b>	12.5%	0.2	0.5 (S,SE) 2 (E)	2
<b>Damage</b>	Not applicable	3	3	3
<b>Soil</b>	Not applicable	1	1	1
<b>PVYTN necrosis</b>	Not applicable	0	0.1	0.1
<b>Total of above faults</b>	Not applicable	6	6	8
<b>Over or under size</b>	Not applicable	3	3	3
<b>Varietal purity</b>	Not applicable	0.01	0.1	0.2

To enable the official inspection of tubers, growers or applicants printing their own labels **must** inform their local PHSI or the PHSI in whose area the stock is being graded when

**the first lot of any stock** is labelled and ready for marketing. Ideally this should be by email.

Where APHA prints the labels, the printing office will notify the local inspector via eDomero, however **the grower is responsible for arranging the tuber inspection**. The subsequent marketing of lots from a stock is dependent on the inspection findings and growers will be notified by the PHSI of the necessary subsequent inspection requirements.

At the time of the inspection, growers must present any labels already printed to the inspector who will note serial numbers.

Tubers with surface diseases are included as infected when, in the case of:

- skin spot, one-eighth of the surface area is covered or there are less than 2 unaffected eyes on the tuber.
- powdery scab, 10% of the surface area is covered, or there are less than 2 unaffected eyes on the tuber– however, all tubers are counted as defects when they exhibit the cankerous form of the disease
- black scurf, 10% of the surface area is covered, or there are less than 2 unaffected eyes on the tuber
- common scab, one-third of the surface area is covered, or there are less than 2 unaffected eyes on the tuber

## 13. Size and Variety

The minimum size for pre-basic, basic and certified seed potatoes is 25mm. Sizes over 35mm must be stated in multiples of 5mm.

The maximum variation between tubers in a lot is 25mm.

To meet current industry practices, a permissible derogation is available to market seed potatoes with a wider size range than specified in the current regulations. This is only available with the approval of the PHSI and is only permitted where the customers are in the UK and have given agreement to accept this size range and that they will not move them on for further marketing.

## 14. Official labelling and sealing

### 14.1 Containers, label details and sealing

Bags and containers of seed potatoes must be either new and unused or cleaned and disinfected to the satisfaction of the local PHSI, and they must not be marketed unless they carry official labels and are correctly sealed. The official label is also the UK plant passport.

There will be a fee covering the label and seal as per the current fees legislation.

## **Label colours**

Official label colours are as follows:

### **Main SPCS:**

- Pre-basic – white with a diagonal violet line
- Basic S, SE, E – white
- Certified A and B – blue

### **Approved stocks (AS):**

- all other approved stocks – yellow

Applications for AS labels will be printed on yellow labels unless we are notified that a stock has been entered under the test and trial scheme.

### **Conservation stocks**

- labels are buff coloured

## **Container sealing**

- small bags (25kg or 50kg) – the label must be stitched into and through the mouth of the bag
- large bags, boxes and bulk loads – the label must be attached with a separate plastic pull tie seal

Plastic pull ties can be obtained from your Inspector.

## **14.2 Label printing**

For the 2025 to 2026 season, applications for printed certification labels can be made for a stock prior to passing a tuber inspection. Please note that this dispensation has been given on the proviso that the first consignment of all stocks must be inspected prior to leaving the grading premise. Noncompliance could see this dispensation being removed.

Growers or applicants can apply to become a delegated label producer (DLP) and print their own labels. Those who have already done so have found it has brought significant advantages in speed and flexibility. Anyone who wishes to do this should contact their local PHSI who will provide details of the label printing protocol that lists the conditions that have to be met.

Labels by APHA or a DLP printed prior to the first inspection must be presented to the inspector during the inspection.
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For growers and applicants who are unable to arrange to print their own labels, APHA can produce labels to order. Applications should be made online, allowing 5 working days for delivery. Visit [Seed Potato Classification Scheme: application for official labels](#).

Applications can be submitted by post or email using the details on form SPCS3.

You must maintain a record of each block of labels used and make this available for inspection by APHA. This includes spoilt or wasted labels and labels returned where new or amended labels have had to be produced. All labels must be accounted for. Where the months of 'Date of closing' is printed on the labels they will be valid during that period only.

Defra or the Welsh Government will remain the owner of official labels after they have been issued and all unused labels must be returned to the appropriate office when requested.

### 14.3 Movement of as grown seed

Where final grading of a stock for marketing is not taking place, seed from stocks entered into the SPCS or AS may be moved in an 'as lifted' state by the owner to other premises for storage or grading, provided they are accompanied by a plant passport. In these cases, the owner of the potatoes must apply for registration and authorisation to issue plant passports. In some circumstances (for example, where the distance is less than 50km and no plant health risk is involved) these movements may be exempt from the passporting requirement.

Please contact APHA if you are in doubt about this requirement.

### 14.4 Declared chemical treatments

If seed potatoes have been chemically treated at any time between harvesting and marketing, a trade label providing all relevant product information must be attached to each bag. This information is no longer included on the official label.

## 15. Records

You must keep records of purchases and sales of seed potatoes for at least 2 years. They should show:

- date of purchase and/or sale
- name and address of supplier or consignee
- variety or varieties
- label or clone reference number(s) of seed purchased
- certificate number(s) and approval number(s) of stocks sold
- the quantity of each stock and variety

Growers of pre-basic (TC) material should ensure that sufficient evidence of the source of the original material is retained and that stocks kept in micro-propagation are fully labelled and referenced.

APHA may request to examine records at any time.

## 16. Separate particulars to purchasers

You must give purchasers of classified stocks a sale note, delivery note, invoice or similar document providing the following information:

- seller's name and address
- net weight
- species (for pre-basic)
- variety
- pre-basic, basic or certified seed potatoes
- class (for pre-basic)
- grade (if appropriate)
- size (except for pre-basic)
- producer's identification number
- details of any chemical treatment
- field generation, if requested

If a variety has been genetically modified, this must be stated on the sale note. This statement must be given within 14 days of sale or, if the seed potatoes are not delivered at the time of sale, within 14 days of delivery.

## 17. Complaints

If you have any complaints about a stock of seed potatoes you have received, please contact your local PHSI for advice within 14 days of delivery.

## 18. General

### 18.1 Roguing seed crops

Crops may be rogued during the growing season to keep them free from disease and deviations. However, a growing crop certificate or approval may be refused if roguing appears to have been excessive. Inspections cannot be delayed to allow for roguing.

Roguing will only improve the quality of the stock where the tubers have been removed, if this is not evident, inspectors will factor this into their findings.

Pre-basic crops cannot be rogued before first inspection – see section 8.

## 18.2 Varietal purity

Growing crop classification and approval will be based solely on the foliage as seen during the growing season. If classified or approved crops are sold as being of one tuber colour (whether the normal colour of the established variety or of a variant), it is the seller's responsibility to dress out tubers which are not that colour.

## 18.3 Organic seed production

Stocks produced organically must meet the same tolerances at field and tuber inspections as other stocks. Organic crops will be identified as such in the SPCS Register of Growers if you provide details of your accreditation provider.

## 18.4 Fees

Fees are payable for crop and tuber inspections. Since 2019 there are also fees for paper crop applications, crop inspections, soil sampling, tuber inspections and labels. Crop applicants are invoiced after the first field inspection and after the first marketing inspection.

Details of fees can be found in the relevant regulations:

- [England: SCHEDULE 5 Seed potatoes: fees](#)
- [Wales: SCHEDULE 5 Seed potatoes: fees](#)

## 18.5 The protected region

The protected region effectively comprises:

- Scotland
- the counties of Northumberland (excluding the districts of Blyth Valley and Wansbeck)
- Cumbria (excluding the districts of Barrow-in-Furness and South Lakeland)

If you are unsure if land you intend to plant falls within the protected region, contact APHA.

## 18.6 Aphid control

Crop certificates are based on the crop as it was when inspected. Unless measures are taken during the whole growing season to prevent the spread of virus disease by aphids, any subsequent crops from that seed may be severely affected by virus. Failure to control aphids could result in certification being withdrawn.

## 18.7 Voluntary tuber virus testing

APHA strongly encourages all seed potato growers to voluntarily test tubers for virus particularly for seed intended for further multiplication.

Test results obtained under this service will not contribute to the certification process.

## 18.8 Chemical treatments on growing crop

Chemicals that alter the normal growth and appearance of plants must not be used. Crops, which at growing season inspection appear to have been treated with such chemicals, may be considered un-inspectable and classification or approval refused.

It is an offence to market any seed potatoes that have been treated with a product that is produced primarily as an application for inhibiting germination.

## 18.9 Plant breeders' rights

As applicant, you are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that you have obtained all necessary consents to grow varieties of potato that are subject to plant breeders' rights. You should not enter crops for classification at any class other than that permitted by your plant breeder's licence.

## 19. The SPCS register of growers and 'sole traders'

At the close of the inspection season, a register will be published giving names and addresses of those whose stocks have been granted growing crop certificates. Every effort will be made to ensure that the register is complete, however Defra and the Welsh Government do not guarantee that all such growers and stocks have been included.

Sole traders should indicate on the crop application form if they do not want their name and address to appear in the Register. In such cases the Register entry, for the individual's crop, will be limited to variety, area and grade. The definition of a sole trader is a person who trades by himself or herself without the use of a company structure or partners and alone bear's full responsibility for the actions of the business.

The SPCS register can be found here: [The Seed Potato Classification Scheme](#).

## 20. Disclosure of information

Requests to Defra or Welsh Government for disclosure of information relating in any way to the SPCS will be considered in accordance with current Data Protection legislation.

# Appendix 1. SPCS isolation requirements

## Isolation between seed stocks

The isolation is based on the grade of input seed planted irrespective of grade entered for certification.

**Table 6. Isolation requirements for seed stocks**

The abbreviation 'm' stands for metres – for example, 50m means 50 metres

Grade*	PBTC or PB	S	SE	E	Certified A or B
<b>PBTC/PB</b>	1 row	1 row	10m	50m	50m
<b>S</b>	1 row	1 row	1 row	10m	50m
<b>SE</b>	10m	1 row	1 row	10m	50m
<b>E</b>	50m	10m	10m	1 row	10m
<b>A or B</b>	50m	50m	50m	10m	1 row

### Examples:

- the isolation between a PB stock and an SE planted stock (be it to produce SE, E, A or B) is 10 metres
- the isolation between an E stock and an E planted stock (be it to produce E, A or B) is 1 row

### Downgrade distances

When a stock is downgraded for virus, this has implications for adjacent stocks. When stocks of different grades are planted alongside each other the virus levels in the lower graded stock must meet the tolerances of the higher graded stock. If it fails to do so the higher graded stocks up to 10 metres away will be fully downgraded.

## Isolation between seed stocks and ware crops

**Table 7. Isolation requirements for seed stocks and ware crops**

The abbreviation 'm' stands for metres – for example, 50m means 50 metres

Ware crop grade	Seed stock grade: PB	Seed stock grade: S	Seed stock grade: SE	Seed stock grade: E	Seed stock grade: Certified A or B
<b>PB, S or SE</b>	50m	50m	10m*	10m*	10m*
<b>E</b>	50m	50m	50m	10m*	10m*
<b>A or B</b>	50m	50m	50m	50m	10m*
<b>All other potato crops grown with unidentified seed</b>	50m	50m	50m	50m	50m

### Notes

1. For ware crops grown from basic or certified seed within 50 metres of a seed production crop, proof of acceptability must be presented in the form of a classified seed label and an invoice, delivery note or similar proving that sufficient seed was available to plant the area in question.
2. Where a ware crop is within 50 metres of a seed crop, 1,000 plants (10 x 100 plants) in the ware crop will be inspected for virus. If virus is in the ware crop, the level found will be used to determine the grade of the adjacent seed crop, as if the ware crop had been entered for certification.
3. It is the applicant's responsibility to arrange access to any adjacent ware crops.
4. Where there is insufficient isolation, up to 50 metres of the adjacent seed crop will be downgraded to ware.

## Appendix 2. Contact details for paper applications

Email applications to [spcslabels@apha.gov.uk](mailto:spcslabels@apha.gov.uk)

Or post to:

Animal and Plant Health Agency  
SPCS CROP APPLICATION  
Foss House, Kings Pool  
1-2 Peaseholme Green  
York  
YO1 7PX