



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Great Britain and Northern Ireland Variety Trials: Trial Procedures for Official Examination of Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU) Harvest 2026

Hemp appendices

April 2025

Changes since last version

- Updated year of document and date of last update
- Updated email link to national archives at end of document
- Updated Appendix 4
- Updated Appendix 5
- Updated references of NL to VL
- Updated NIAB to Niab

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Scope

This document contains the appendices for the main guidance document:

Trial Procedures for Official Examination of Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU) Harvest
2026 – Hemp

Appendix 1 – Approved Trial Organisers/Operators for hemp

Activity	Organisers/Operators Responsible
Trials organiser	BSPB
Seed handling operator	Niab
Trial design and data handling operator	Niab
Pathology trials operator	None
Trial inspection and technical validation operator	BSPB
Quality testing operator	Niab
Data review and standard setting operator	Niab

Appendix 2 – Seed treatment products for use on VL trials

To be advised.

Appendix 3 – Seed despatch deadline dates

VCU seed must be delivered to Niab by 15 January.

Appendix 4 – Growing Trial Operators and trial locations

4.1 Growing Trial Operators/Seed Handling Operators

Growing Trial Operator	Seed Handling Operator (If not trial operator)	Location of trial
Niab	Niab SHU	Cambridge

4.2 Pathology Trails Operator

Pathology Trial Operator	Location of trial
Not applicable	Not applicable

Appendix 5 – Control varieties for VCU assessments

The control varieties are to be confirmed.

Appendix 6 – Dates by which records should be submitted

6.1 To Trials Organiser

Record	Latest date of receipt by Trials Organiser
Site data part 1 (including site sketch)	Within 2 months of drilling trial (autumn sown trials) Within 1 month of drilling trial (spring sown trials)
Site data part 2	By the time trial is harvested
Plot records (in approved electronic format)	Growing Trial Operator should notify Trials Organiser that trial has been harvested within 2 days of harvest

6.2 To Data Handling Operator

Record	Date
Plot records should be sent to Data Handling Operator	Within 10 days of record being taken

6.3 To Quality Testing Operator

Samples	Date
Plot samples for quality testing should be sent to the Quality Testing Operator	Within 2 days of harvest

Appendix 7 – Moisture content determination for yield

Yield data must be corrected to 9% moisture content, to do this, the moisture content of the harvested plot grain is required.

7.1 Oven method

Samples are dried until constant mass is achieved. For expediency it is permissible to dry samples for a fixed time provided it can be demonstrated that this is sufficient to reliably achieve constant mass for samples even when the chosen apparatus is fully loaded with samples.

7.1.1 Apparatus and equipment

Oven

Electrically heated and controlled in such a way that, during normal working, the mean temperature of the air and of the shelves carrying the test samples is 100° C and operates within the range 96° C to 104° C. (Temperature to be reviewed by the Procedures Development Group). The oven should be regularly maintained and regularly checked for correct operation.

Sample drying trays

Durable under test conditions and being of a size which enables the test sample to be distributed evenly within the tray and at depth which does not protract the drying time.

Balance:

Accuracy 0.1 g \pm 0.05 g. The balance should be regularly serviced and calibrated. Frequent checks on its correct operation should be made during the period when the balance is in use.

7.1.2 Method

The test samples are received direct from the combine in hermetically sealed bags or containers. Weigh a fully representative 100g sub-sample or an accurately recorded catch-weight between 100g to 200g and place into the drying tray with an identifying label.

Place the drying trays containing the test samples into the pre-heated oven. Dry the test samples for the pre-determined period or until constant mass is achieved (see below).

Remove the test samples from the oven and allow to cool to ambient temperature.

Record the dry weight of the test sample to 0.1g.

If achievement of constant mass is to be directly measured, five check samples should be removed from a range of positions within the oven after a period of about 16hrs. The dry weight of these samples should be recorded as above. The check samples should be returned to the oven and dried for a further 2 hours and the dry weight again recorded. A dry matter content of less than 0.3% between the two determinations will be accepted as representing constant mass. If constant mass has not been achieved, the check samples should be returned to the oven for further periods of two hours until constant mass is observed.

7.1.3 Results

The dry matter content of the test sample is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Dry Matter (\%)} = \frac{\text{Dry test sample weight} \times 100}{\text{Original test sample weight}}$$

When all samples from a given trial have been recorded, the fresh and dry weights are immediately reported to the Data Handling Operator electronically. When the dry weights are reported as a percentage, the fresh weight should be reported as 100.



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The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government.