

Grandfather Rights

We are never too old to learn but if you were born before 31 December 1964 and don't hold a certificate of competence for spraying, this will be the year to make important decisions about your use of pesticides.

You have until 26 November 2015 to continue to operate under the 'grandfathers rights' exemption. However after this date all sprayer operators applying pesticides on their own holding (or that of an employer) will have to hold a Recognised Certificate when they next spray. In addition, anyone purchasing a professional product must ensure that the intended end-user holds a certificate. This means everyone who does not currently hold a pesticides application (PA) qualification will have to think carefully about their spraying qualifications before the end of November 2015, to ensure they can legally apply pesticides.

Three Options to Consider:

1 Grandfather Certificate.
This is a new Level 2* Award called the *Safe Use of Pesticides* Replacing Grandfather Rights.

2 PA Qualifications
These are the existing Level 2* *Safe Use of Pesticide (PA) Certificates*, appropriate to the type of equipment you use.

3 Contracting out
Use a qualified contractor for all professional pesticides applications.

In making the decision, it is useful to consider your time and enthusiasm for training, the amount and type of spraying that you are likely to do and whether your sprayer can pass a test, so that you can cost out your options (see overleaf).

Training for Level 2 Qualifications

Even if you have been spraying for many years you may find refresher training useful. This may be minimal, for example, if you have been keeping up-to-date collecting CPD points for the National Register of Sprayer Operators (NRoSO).

Costs of training and assessment will vary depending upon the amount of training you need (workbooks or under the guidance of a trainer), the training provider and where it takes place.

When deciding which Level 2 qualification to take, the amount of spraying you are likely to be doing will play a big factor. If you are only using a knapsack on your own farm then the best option may be the new Grandfather Certificate. However, if you use a range of application equipment you may find very little difference in cost or time away from the business between the two qualifications. If you plan to do any contract spraying, whether for a neighbour or further afield, you must take the PA certificate.

It may be helpful to talk to your local

training and assessment centre for guidance. This can be found with a postcode search at www.nptc.org.uk

Sprayer Testing

With the exception of knapsack and hand-held sprayers, all pesticides application equipment in use must have been tested once by 26 November 2016, unless it is less than five years old. However, all equipment in use must still pass inspection once before the fifth anniversary of its purchase. Machinery must then be tested at a minimum of five year intervals, going to three year intervals after 2020. However it is best practice, and required by many farm assurance schemes, to have an annual sprayer test.

It is therefore important to consider if your sprayer is in good working order and can pass the National Sprayer Test Scheme (NSTS). If the equipment is unlikely to pass the test without substantial investment then your best option may be to use a suitably qualified contractor with up-to-date well maintained equipment.

See: www.nsts.org.uk



Keeping Water Clean

Many important pesticides are found in drinking water sources; resulting in treatment costs to water companies and risking further restrictions on pesticides use. Application by trained and qualified operators, following best practice with well-maintained equipment, can significantly reduce the risks to water quality.

* Level 2 City and Guilds qualification, equivalent to GCSE.

1. Grandfather Certificate

This is a new Level 2 award in the Safe Use of Pesticides, replacing Grandfather Rights, specifically designed to take into account the extensive experience that applicants will have accumulated over their years of spraying.

The assessment is less specific than existing certificates such as PA1 and PA2, but still covers four units, the first of which is compulsory. One or more optional units must then be chosen covering various types of application equipment:

Unit 1: Safe handling and application (compulsory)

Unit 2: Handheld pesticide application

Unit 3: Operating machines to apply pesticides

Unit 4: Applying pesticides using other specific equipment

To help applicants prepare for the assessment, a range of training and support materials is available at www.nptc.org.uk including:

- Qualification guidance, which gives details of each unit
- Four PowerPoint Presentations
- A workbook and self-test questions, are available for £5 from any assessment centre
- Training days are available at local training centres. These are usually 1-2 days.

Assessment centres details can be found at www.nptc.org.uk

The assessment will cover all the units chosen and will take into account previous knowledge and experience. Very proficient operators should have no trouble meeting the standard. It comprises oral questions and observation of practical activity and is expected to take two to three hours.

The assessor will watch how you prepare for pesticide spraying, application and clean up afterwards. The emphasis is firmly on safe application for the operator, bystanders, the crop and the environment.

Assessment can take place on your farm using your own equipment, or at a local test centre. Training and assessment costs will vary depending on location, operator ability and the modules covered. Typically costs for training and assessment can vary from £280-£500/operator.



2. Safe use of Pesticide (PA) certificate

This long established Level 2 qualification allows you to spray on your own land or as a contractor.



The qualification is divided into 15 units. Unit PA1 is the mandatory foundation unit covering the legislation. The units PA2 - PA13 and PASC apply to different application methods.

Candidates must complete PA1, which is tested on-line, and at least one other application unit. These are practical tests with verbal one to one questioning.

Training for PA1 usually takes a day, with additional training needed for other modules. Typical costs of training and assessment for PA1 are £190-250; PA2 (crop sprayer) £350-450 and PA6 (hand-held) £250-320.

More information at www.nptc.org.uk

3. Use a contractor for all professional spraying operations

If you don't want to take a qualification your other option is to use a contractor.

Before using a contractor you should ensure you have details of their qualifications, training and sprayer test certificates (farm assurance and other inspection schemes will need these). You will also need to agree who is responsible for supplying the chemical and disposing of empty packaging and where washing and filling will take place. Spray records need to be supplied and check that they are insured.

Contractors costs vary widely depending upon the area to be sprayed, the land type and the amount of work.

More information at www.naac.co.uk



Grandfather Rights Exemption

Grandfather Rights currently allow sprayer operators born before 31 December 1964 to apply pesticides without needing a certificate of competence* providing they use pesticides on a holding that they (or their employer) own or rent. However, the EU Sustainable Use Directive has set minimum, legally binding standards for pesticide users that have put an end to this exemption.

*all contractors applying professional pesticides must hold a Recognised Certificate.

For more information visit: www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk

This article has been funded by the Crop Protection Association. Whilst the Crop Protection Association has endeavoured to ensure the accuracy of this information in this newsletter, it cannot accept any responsibility for any liability from its use.



**A clear solution
for farmers**
CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING



Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) is a farm training and advice project funded by Defra and RDPE and run jointly by Natural England and the Environment Agency. This article is part of the strategic partnership between the VI-CIC and Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF), however the content does not necessarily reflect the agreed policy of Natural England, Environment Agency or Defra.