

BASIS Explained



BASIS

Stephen Jacob, BASIS Business Development Manager, explains what BASIS is and why all turf managers should be involved in it

BASIS Training and Certification has been an industry standard for over 35 years. In that time the BASIS certificate became a statutory requirement for sellers, suppliers and advisers and has been retained in the new regulations, the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012.

So who needs a BASIS certificate and why?

Greenkeepers who are applying pesticides or fertilisers to sports turf surfaces are required to hold the appropriate pesticide application (PA) certificate. And those who are advising on the use, selling or supplying of plant protection products for amenity turf are required to hold the BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection (Amenity grass and sports turf areas) and/or the FACTS Golf and Sports Turf Certificate if they are advising on fertiliser use.

New entrants to the industry can study the BASIS Foundation Award in Agronomy (Amenity). This foundation level course is a sound introduction to agronomy, integrated crop protection and crop nutrition. The foundation award is also an excellent course for greenkeepers who wish to know more about alternative methods to chemical applications and how to get the best from the products they are applying to their turf.

The Foundation Award has been particularly successful and for the third year running, a course has been held at BTME, trained by technical staff from the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) and sponsored by Sherriff Amenity, Bayer and Everris.

Many candidates take the Foundation Award to improve their knowledge to a level where they can have informed conversations with their sales representative. For others it serves as a preliminary course for the BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection (Amenity grass and sports turf areas).

The BASIS certificate in Crop Protection-Amenity Horticulture for field, sales and technical staff (FSTS), is the national qualification for all those advising on the use, selling or supplying of plant protection products in the amenity industry. This includes contractors, distributors and plant protection products manufacturers.

It also incorporates all suppliers, consultants, course managers and local authority managers involved in pesticide sales or advice.

During the 12 days that training

typically takes for the full crop protection course, you will learn how to recognise the major weeds, pests and diseases that are commonly found in sports turf and also about their lifecycles in order to ensure that control measures are justified both from an economical and integrated point of view.

Further course modules cover the composition and activity of pesticides, application procedures including the safe storage, handling and transportation of pesticides and finally the impact of amenity activities on biodiversity, the environment and water.

Candidates are required to sit an examination at the end of the training which will assess their level of knowledge and experience within the sports turf industry. Successful candidates will receive a certificate of competence and are then eligible to join the BASIS Amenity Register (BAR).

Due to the practical nature of the training we do recommend that prospective candidates have at least 12 months prior experience within the industry.

If you have more of an interest in ensuring that your sports turf has the optimum nutrient balance and that fertiliser products are being applied in the most effective manner and in compliance with UK legislation, the FACTS (Golf and Sports Turf) certificate is the course for you.

FACTS is an independent non-statutory Certification Scheme for advisers and sellers within the fertil-

about the author



Stephen Jacob

Stephen is employed as the Business Development Manager of BASIS Registration Ltd. Prior to joining BASIS three years ago Stephen was employed as a Farm Business Consultant and before that he worked in seed production and plant breeding for a number of multinational companies.

iser industry. It was established in 1993 following discussions with the trade associations connected with the industry and BASIS.

At the present time there is no legal requirement for advisers and sellers to be certificated; however it was considered that setting up such a scheme was the responsible action to take in light of the environmental pressures on the industry and increasing technical requirements. The Scheme and initiative are fully supported by Defra, the Environment Agency and other organisations.

The FACTS syllabus is typically taught over five days and covers: the soil or playing surface in relation to turfgrass nutrition; nature and properties of fertilisers and liming materials; plant nutrients and the basis of choice of fertilisers; transport, storage, handling and application of fertilisers and codes of good practice and legal and other environmental protection measures.

All fertiliser staff who sell and give advice are strongly recommended to obtain a Certificate of Competence within three years of entering the industry, during which time they should be working under the supervision of a qualified member of staff and again we strongly recommend that candidates have industry experience prior to sitting the course.

All BASIS courses are accredited through Harper Adams University to ensure that they are of the highest educational standard. Once qualified, advisers are further required

to demonstrate their competence by way of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Professional advisers are encouraged to join the BASIS Amenity Register (BAR) which maintains confidential records of members' CPD activity and enables them to demonstrate a record of continued learning and show that their knowledge is up to date. To maintain membership of the BAR, members must accrue 20 CPD points per annum for full member status which is equal to 10 – 20 hours of CPD activity.

Members of the BAR gain both internal and external recognition that the individual is a member of independent professional CPD scheme which provides evidence that they are compliant with the requirements of EU law.

Where are training courses held?

All training is conducted by BASIS Approved Trainers, details of which can be found on the BASIS website.

How do I apply to take a BASIS training course?

Contact one of the BASIS Approved Trainers directly for information regarding the dates and cost of their next training course.

If you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me directly: stephen@basis-reg.co.uk or visit our website: www.basis-reg.co.uk

Over the course of 2014 keep an eye out for more educational BASIS articles, watch this space!

