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#### **Publication information:**

Name of the publication:

Good practises in production and storage of combinable crops

Publisher: Finnish Cereal Committee (VYR)

Images: AGCO Finland, Katri Ala-Kleemola, Kyösti Isosaari, Essi Jokela, Jyrki Leppälä, Sari Peltonen, Sampo Rosenlew, Mikko Uotila, Arimo Eklund /Vastavalo.fi, Pirjo Koistinen / Vastavalo.fi

Graphic design and layout: Studio Hipateos Oy

Publication date: October 2016

#### Introduction

These guidelines, Good practises in production and storage of combinable crops have been drawn up in accordance with the current technical and hygiene quality criteria of raw materials laid down by market practices and legislation. According to food legislation, commodities and raw materials must be traceable throughout the entire food chain, including the field it was cultivated in, if necessary. A verified, complete and accurate quality chain has become increasingly important for the entire industry.

As the initial stage of a value chain, agriculture – and plant production as its foundation – creates a solid basis for home-grown food that is appreciated and preferred by the consumer. By together committing to responsible production methods and demonstrating this to buyers and consumers, producers will work to the benefit of the entire value-creating for the chain.

Transparent production processes are a necessity for marketing of the commodities, both on the domestic and export markets. There is a much wider awareness of the principles of traceability and sustainability and it has become a critical condition for marketing and for contract-based production.

In Finland, simply observing legislation governing plant production automatically means the producer is also adhering to the good cultivation practices. The good cultivation practices are further regulated by agricultural subsidy criteria and any special contracting terms and conditions. These guidelines have been created to provide a full information package on all these aspects and it can also be used as an instrument to commit to the conditions.

Good practises in production and storage of combinable crops guidelines introduce best Finnish practices to guarantee the quality of the crops, high technical and hygiene levels in production and traceability. The permissible cadmium level in fertilisers in Finland are lower than in the EU on average, the crops are dried in hot air driers and are stored in individual batches.

The guidelines also serve as a basic checklist for the production of high-quality raw-materials. When performing all cultivation measures with care in practice, this helps ensure well-produced and high-quality crops.

The guidelines are used as reference material in the contracting within the industry and trade. Best production practices, and their strict observation in contract-based production, are an essential element in the national and private-sector risk management programme throughout the food production chain.

The guidelines have been compiled by a working group formed from representatives of the Finnish Cereal Committee, and guideline was authored by Sari Peltonen from the Association of ProAgria Centres.

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The Board of the Finnish Cereal Committee (VYR)

### **Read this first**

The descriptions of good practices in production and storage include the most important factors affecting the success of cultivation, the profitability of cultivation and the high quality of the crops. The guidelines list all the measures that have been assessed important to ensure good production and storage conditions in agricultural production in Finland. Some of the measures are recommendations and are, therefore, presented as suggested improvements of practises.

The measures based on legislative and other regulations are marked by different colour codes:

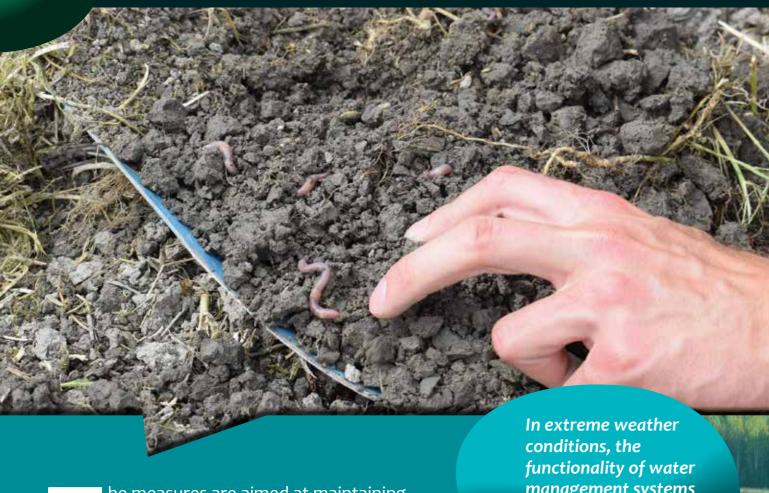


general statutory obligations, such as those based on laws governing the use of fertilisers or plant pesticides or the nitrate directive or other complementary regulations criterion for agrienvironmental measures, provided the farm has filed an agri-environmental commitment for 2015–2020. recommendation

#### **Contents**

| •     | Basic condition of the field                                   | 6  |
|-------|--|----|
| .1.   | Drainage and water management                                  | 7  |
| .2.   | Soil condition and characteristics                             | -  |
| .3.   | The purity of the soil   | -  |
|       | • ,  | •  |
| 2.    | Crop planning  | 8  |
| 2.1.  | Selection of field plot  | 9  |
| 2.2.  | Soil fertility analysis  | -  |
| 2.3.  | Cultivation plan   | -  |
|       | Crop rotation  |    |
| 2.5.  | Selecting the method of tillage                                |    |
|       | Genetically pure, high-quality, certified seed                 |    |
| 2.7.  | Field-specific notes   |    |
| •/•   | Ticla specific flotes  | 9  |
| 3.    | Cultivation-related measures                                   | 10 |
| 3.1.  | Tillage and cultivation-related practices                      | 11 |
| 3.2.  | Application of fertilisers                                     |    |
| 3.3.  | Restrictions in the application of sewage sludge               |    |
| 3.4.  | Storage of manure and organic fertilisers                      |    |
| 3.5.  | Application of plant pesticides                                |    |
| 3.6.  | Integrated pest management (IPM)                               |    |
| 3.7.  | Plant protection certification                                 |    |
| 3.8.  | Testing of the pesticide sprayer                               |    |
| 3.9.  | Pesticide spraying   |    |
| 3.10. | Restrictions in the use of glyphosate products                 |    |
| 3.11. | Restrictions in the use of chlormequat chloride (CCC) products |    |
|       |  |    |
|       | Harvesting, drying and storage of the crop on the farm         | 14 |
| 1.1.  | Harvest  | 15 |
| 1.2.  | Transport and handling of crops on the farm                    | -  |
| 1·3·  | Drying   | -  |
| 1.4.  | Storage  | _  |
| 1.5.  | Rodent pest control  | -  |
| 1.6.  | Stock accounts and follow-up                                   |    |
| 1·7·  | Crop quality analysis  |    |
| 1.8.  | Transportation of the crops                                    |    |
|       |  |    |
|       | Transport  | 18 |
| 5.1.  | Using the Grain Passport                                       | 19 |
| 5.2.  | Transport equipment  | 19 |
| 5.3.  | Loading  |    |
| 5.    | Sustainable production environments and operations             |    |
|       | (code of conduct)  | 20 |
| 5.1.  | The production environment on the farm                         |    |
| 5.2.  | Biodiversity   |    |
| 5.3.  | Groundwater protection   |    |
|       | The condition of fuel storage containers                       |    |
| 5.5.  | Storage of plant pesticides                                    |    |
| 5.6.  | Waste management on the farm                                   |    |
| 5.7.  | Energy consumption   |    |
| 5.8.  | Responsibility   |    |
|       |  | 44 |
| Appe  | endices  | 23 |
|       |  |    |

### 1. BASIC CONDITION OF THE FIELD



he measures are aimed at maintaining a good structure of the soil. Paying attention to the soil condition helps ensure successful cultivation, especially in extreme weather conditions, and prevent the compaction of the soil and nutrient losses. Maintaining soil quality and purity helps ensure the high quality and safety of products.

management systems and the soil structure is important.

### 1.1. Drainage and water management on a field

- Ensure the proper functionality of the drainage and water management systems on a field
- Regularly check the functioning of drainage outlets
- Flush drain pipes to remove corrosion build-up as necessary
- Replace or add drainage in problem areas
- Clear main ditches as necessary

#### 1.2. Soil condition

- Carry out liming approximately at four-year intervals and characteristics to keep the pH level at 'Good' or higher
- Avoid monoculture and cultivation practices that depletes the soil of organic
- Organise traffic on the field to minimize impact on the soil structure and take into consideration axle loads when operating with machines on the field
- Avoid operating with heavy vehicles on the field under wet weather conditions
- Make sure that there are a suitable number of access roads to the field in appropriate locations
- The soil structure is assessed and followed up regularly

#### 1.3. The purity of the soil

- Ensure the purity of the soil by only using products and agents that have been approved in Finland and whose contents are known and analysed
- Analyse and monitor the heavy-metal level in the soil if necessary

Diversifying the cultivated plant species minimizes risks and helps in peak periods.

Measures (colour codes)

general statutory obligations

criterion for agri-environmental measures

### 2. CROP PLANNING



rop planning helps ensure favourable conditions for cultivation and achieve target yields and the quality of the crops that is suitable for the purpose. Good fertilisation planning minimizes the risk of nutrient loss into water bodies and groundwater and reduces ammonium emissions. Planning the inputs helps ensure the purity of the soil and products. Appropriate choice of varieties ensures the correct crop quality for the purpose of use and helps avoid the risks resulting from late harvest, including mycotoxins and mould development in storage. With crop rotation, it is easier to control plant diseases and reduce the risk of mycotoxins. Safe use of plant pesticides ensures high-quality, residue-free products as well as the safety of farm workers while reducing environmental risks.

crop yields by 300-800 kg/ha.

### 2.1. Selection of field plot

- Choose plant species and varieties to fields best suited to them, taking into consideration the desired crop yield and quality and restrictions in the application of plant pesticides
- Maintain the soil structure and make sure that the fields are not sensitive to floods
- Pay particular attention to effective control of perennial weeds, such as common wild oats, couch grass, creeping thistle and sow thistles, including on buffer strips and field margins

### 2.2. Soil fertility analysis

- Carry out soil fertility analyses at least every five years and use it as a basis for the liming and fertilising plan
- Carry out trace element analysis every 5-10 years

### 2.3. Cultivation plan

- Make a written annual cultivation plan for each field
- Select the plant species and varieties according to the designed end use taking into consideration the growth period, resistance to lodging and diseases, the conditions on the field and the area and crop rotation

- Leave field margins along main ditches and buffer strips next to water bodies
- Maintain a plant cover on some fields during the winter
- feed producer or the farmer must be registered with the Finnish Food Safety Authority (Evira) as a feed business operator

### 2.4. Crop rotation

- Avoid monoculture
- Include in the crop rotation perennial and deep rooting crops to improve soil structure and increase organic matter in the soil
- Make use of nitrogen fixing crops in crop rotation to improve the soil condition and optimise the need for nitrogen fertilisation

### 2.5. Tillage

- Select the tillage method according to the requirements of the soil type and the crop
- Ploughing is recommended in monoculture and under the risk of plant diseases
- In reduced tillage and direct drilling, crop rotation is used to ensure that plant debris does not cause problems for sowing or increase the risk of diseases

### 2.6. Genetically pure, high-quality, certified seed

- Use certified seeds
- Select seeds produced on the farm from high-quality crops
- Ascertain the seed quality through germination tests. Seeds are sorted and seed dressing is used when necessary. The thousand seed weight is determined, based on which the amount of seeds required for the desired plant density is calculated

### 2.7. Field-specific notes

- Keep notes of all cultivationrelated measures by parcel and keep the records up-to-date
- To improve traceability and usability of the data it is recommended that digitized farm operation systems are used
- Notes and results can be utilized in the planning for the next year

Crop rotation improves yield stability

Appropriate fertilising plans improve the nutrient balance

Well planned crop rotation maintains the good quality and fertility

Cover and catch crops reduce nutrient losses and improve soil quality

#### Measures (colour codes)

general statutory obligations

criterion for agri-environmental measures

### CULTIVATION-RELATED MEASURES



arefully planned and well-executed cultivation practises ensure a normal growth rate for the crops and a high yield capacity, an efficient uptake of nutrients and safe, good-quality products. Preventive measures help reduce the risk of plant pests and the need for the application of plant pesticides. By more targeted measures, the loss of nutrients into water bodies and groundwater can be reduced. Appropriate use of plant pesticides and strict follow-up of instructions and safety periods ensures that products are free of pesticide residues.



### 3.1. Tillage and cultivation practices

- All tillage and cultivation measures on the fields are conducted in a sustainable manner, which
- ensures that the soil structure is not compromised and soil compacting and erosion is avoided
- ensures that the cultivation do not cause any adverse effects on the environment

### 3.2. Application of fertilisers

- Use products in compliance with the Fertilizer Product Decree, whose composition is known and whose cadmium and other heavy-metal levels are within regulations
- Plan the fertilisation according to the needs of the plant, soil organic matter level and the yield capacity of the field
- Take into consideration the maximum permitted levels of fertilisers as provided in the Fertiliser Product Decree and Nitrates Decree and in the criteria for agri-environmental measures
- Determine the nutrient levels in the manure applied

- When spreading fertilisers on the fields, avoid the loss of nutrients into waterbodies and the compacting of the soil. Never spread fertilisers on snow-covered or frozen soil or one that is saturated with water.
- Fertilising is prohibited on the 5 metre band closest to a waterbody and within the next closest 5-metre band the broadcasting of fertiliser products is prohibited, unless the soil is tilled within the next 24 hours.
- Introduce split application of nitrogen fertiliser and measures for the additional application of nitrogen during the growing period
- Utilize results of the nutrient balance calculations when planning the fertilisation

### 3.3. Restrictions in the application of sewage sludge

- Take into consideration the buyer's conditions for the use of sewage sludge
- Only processed sewage sludge that meets the hygiene and other quality criteria may be used in cultivation
- Fertiliser products containing sewage sludge may only be used in crop fields where cereals, sugar beet, oilseed crops or other crops that are usually not used for human consumption in an unprocessed form or by eating the underground part of the plant or for animal feed

### 3.4. Storage of manure and organic fertilisers

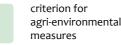
- The storage facilities for manure is determined on the basis of the number of animals, type of barn and the length of the pasture season. Manure storage must as a rule have the capacity for manure accumulated over 12 months.
- Verify the water-tightness of the manure storage
- The manure is piled up in heaps in accordance with regulations. Manure with a dry matter content of 30% or more and organic fertiliser products can be stored on the fields during the application period for four weeks prior to the application.

### 3.5. Application of plant pesticides

- Use only plant pesticides that have been approved for the purpose
- Take into consideration the safety periods and environmental restrictions of plant pesticides.
- Dispose of plant pesticides that are out-of-date or removed from the register at a collection of hazardous wastes
- Store plant pesticides in a dry and locked space in their original packaging

#### Measures (colour codes)

general statutory obligations



### 3.6. Integrated pest management (IPM)

- In plant protection, the general principles of integrated pest management (IPM) are to be observed
- Take into consideration in plant protection measures the preventive plant protection measures, observation and monitoring, which reduce risks for disease, pests and weeds
- Record any observations on pest problems and the measures taken in field-specific notes
- Vary plant protection agents to reduce environmental risks and to prevent the risk of developing resistance in pests
- Cut down fallows, set-asides and similar areas towards the end of bloom to prevent the spreading of weeds

### 3.7. Plant protection certification

Make sure that the person carrying out plant protection measures has a valid plant protection certificate

### 3.8. Testing of the pesticide sprayer

- Test the pesticide sprayer at least every 5 years (from 2020, every three years)
- The condition of the pesticide sprayer is to be checked at the beginning of each spraying season

### 3.9. Pesticide spraying

- Use appropriate protection when spraying
- Identify the major plant pests: weeds, diseases and insects and the threshold levels for their control
- Select the most effective agent and dosage
- The spraying is carried out under good weather conditions
- Take into consideration pollinating insects
- The filling up and emptying of sprays is to be carried without risk to the environment and preventing personal exposure to the agents

# 3.10. Restrictions in the use of glyphosate products

- Take in to consideration the conditions placed by the buyer on the pre-harvest application of glyphosate for crops
- The pre-harvest application of glyphosate for food cereals is prohibited
- The pre-harvest application of glyphosate is not recommended in weed control on crops grown for animal feed
- The use of glyphosate for the purpose of forced ripening of crops for both food and animal feed cereals is forbidden

# 3.11. Restrictions of the use of chlormequat chloride (CCC) products

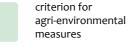
- Take into consideration the buyer's conditions for the use of chlormequat chloride (CCC)
- Chlormequat chloride products are to be used only for cereals from tillering until the first node is detectable, and the straw may not be used as feed for dairy cattle

Varied crop rotation reduces the risk of plant diseases Split nitrogen fertilisation helps a more efficient uptake of nutrients The right product in the right dosage at the right time improves the outcomes in plant protection

Tested pesticide sprayer improves the outcomes of plant protection

#### Measures (colour codes)

general statutory obligations





recommendation



13

### 4. HARVESTING, DRYING AND STORAGE OF THE CROP ON THE FARM



quality and safety of the crops and helps minimise harvest losses. Use crop analysis to ensure appropriate quality for the end use. The quality of the crops as well as their future purpose of use is to be taken into consideration in their storage. Measures related to the transport and storage of crops are in place to verify a reliable and safe origin of the raw material.



#### 4.1. Harvest

- Crops are harvested when fully ripened
- Adjust the combine harvester according to the crops and the end use of the crop
- Areas with poor crops are threshed separately

## 4.2. Transport and handling of crops on the farm

- For transport and handling use equipment and machinery intended exclusively for combinable crops
- Clean the combine harvester, transport equipment and processing machinery carefully before and after the harvesting of each plant crop
- The loads are to be covered with a tarpaulin during the transport

### 4.3. Drying

- Calibrate moisture meters every year before the harvest season
- The grains are thoroughly dried immediately after harvested and cooled down to the outdoor temperature prior to storage. Target moisture content for cereals is 14%.
- Use pre-cleaner
- Do not use the machine room of the dryer for storage purposes

#### 4.4. Storage

- After cooling, store crops in silos designated for storage
- The crops are to be stored separately from fertilisers, plant pesticides and treated seeds
- Clean and inspect silos before taking them into use
- The silos are covered
- Protect lamps and windows from breaking, when necessary
- Batches of different crop quality are stored in separate silos
- Stored crops are not treated chemically

### 4.5. Rodent pest control

- Take appropriate precautions to prevent rodent pest infestations, such as mice, rats, moles and other rodent pests
- Draw up a pest control plan and adhere to it
- Prevent the access of birds into cereal silos
- Keep the surroundings of the dryer and storage silos tidy and trim the edges of any plants within 2 metres

### 4.6. Stock accounts and follow-up

- Keep silo-specific stocks
- Make a record of silo stocks and analysed quality
- Monitor the status, temperature and moisture in storages regularly during the storage period
- Empty silos and their cleaning are also recorded in the notes

Thorough drying and pre-cleaning and sorting reduces the mycotoxin risk

#### Measures (colour codes)

general statutory obligations



criterion for agri-environmental measures

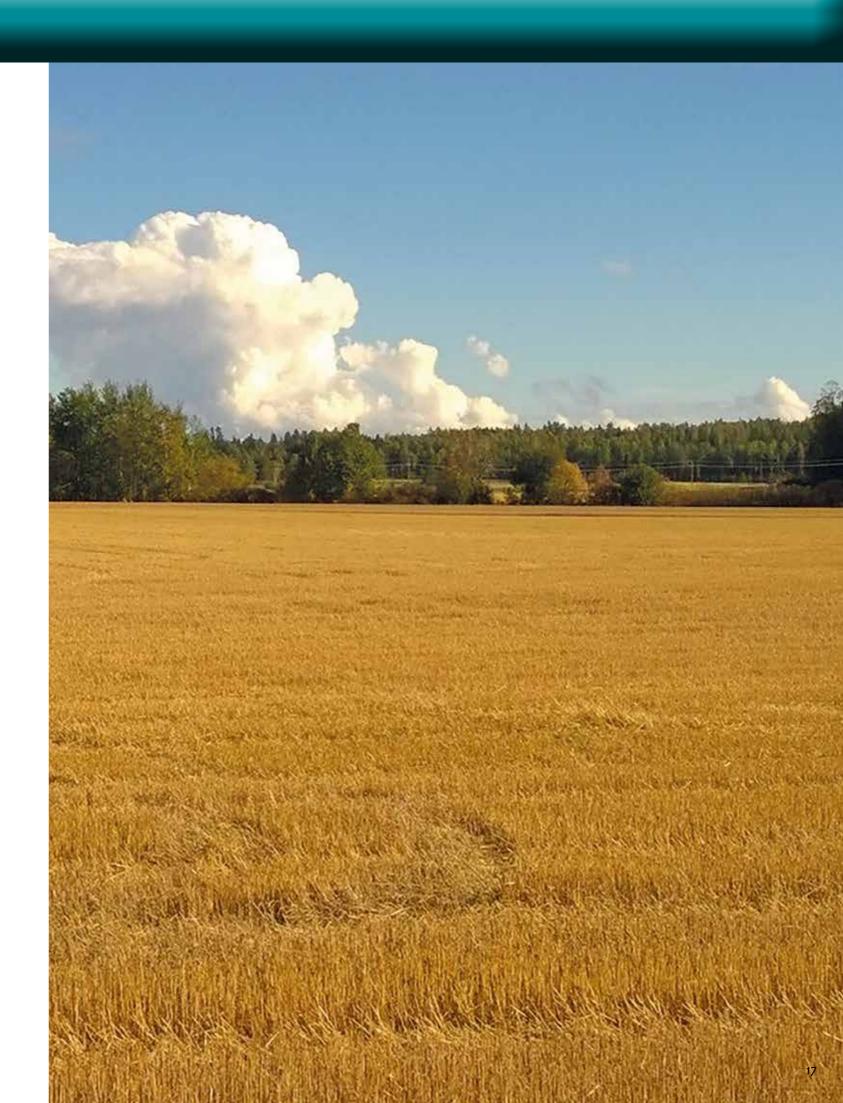
### 4.7. Crop quality analysis

- Ascertain compliance with buyer's criteria by analysing the quality and safety of the crops
- Take a representative sample of each drying batch per silo or sales batch for the preliminary analysis of the harvest
- The use of automatic sample taking at the dryer is recommended
- Keep a control sample for yourself in appropriate conditions at least until the payments are settled

### 4.8. The handover of the crops

- Make sure that the batch to be handed over is ready for transfer and the loading areas are freely accessible
- The roads leading to the loading area, and the junctions and turning areas must be adequately wide and suitable for heavy goods vehicles
- In a good loading area, the clearance is at least 4 metres
- Maintain good loading conditions on the farm throughout the year and clear access routes and loading areas of snow and take care of adequate gritting
- Keep grit in reserve along access routes to loading areas
- Test the equipment to be used in loading
- Notify the buyers and transport firms beforehand of any loading restrictions, such as low clearance in the loading space
- Place signage leading to the loading area if necessary

- Give drivers clear instructions and prepare the loading area properly especially if you cannot be present during the loading. It is advisable that you are available at least by phone during loading.
- Make sure that the loading area is safe.
- The loading area has adequate lighting
- Place and protect lighting in the loading area so that, in case of breakage, broken glass cannot find its way into the crops
- Make sure that the stairs and gangways in the loading area are sturdy
- Plan and equip the loading area so as to minimise shovel work for the driver



Measures (colour codes)

general statutory obligations

criterion for agri-environmental measures

### 5. TRANSPORT



easures related to the transport help ensure the quality and safety of the crops. The buyer ofthe transport is primarily responsible for the compliance of the equipment with regulations. Ultimately it is the driver's duty to check the cleanliness of the equipment and document any findings in the Grain Passport. However, it is recommended that the producer also verify the appropriate condition and cleanliness of the transport equipment. The occupational health and safety of persons involved in the loading and transport of the crops must be ensured. Fast loading may nowadays entitle to a compensation.

Appropriate transport conditions ensure the quality of the grain remains high all the way to the buyer

### 5.1. Grain Passport / Consignment note

- Use the Grain Passport / consignment note in the transfer of information when a batch of crop is sold and delivered from the farm to the recipient's warehouse
- Keep copies of the documents for the farm's own accounts

### 5.2. Transport equipment 5.3.

- Only equipment intended for the transport of crops is to be used
- The cleanliness of the transport space must be checked before filling: the space must be empty, clean, dry and free of odour
- The space cannot be cleaned in the immediate vicinity of loading and unloading areas. The vehicle parts that come into contact with crop during mechanical cleaning are cleaned by brushing, pressure air blowers or vacuuming. The washed and disinfected skip spaces are dried. Keep records of all cleaning measures in the log.
- Protect the transport space from rain and wind by using undamaged clean tarpaulin covers. After unloading the grain, the empty transport skip is covered to protect it against rain and bird faeces. The protective clothing and footwear of the driver must also be easy to clean.

- Make a record of the three previous loads and their cleaning methods
- The previous loads may not present any risk to the quality or hygiene of the grain
- The driver must be aware of or, when necessary, obtain information from the customer on the restrictions placed on previous loads and the cleaning measures required to be performed on the vehicle

#### 5.3. Loading

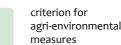
- According to the EU Feed
  Hygiene Regulation, transport
  firms delivering cereals must be
  registered with the Finnish Food
  Safety Authority (Evira) as a feed
  business operator
- Before the transport begins, conduct a visual inspection of the roadworthiness of the vehicle and the condition of the loading space and its covering
- The driver is in contact with the sender well before loading so as to ascertain the location of the loading area and silos and to ensure access to the loading area
- Prior to loading, the driver should verify the correct silos and, if necessary, contact the farmer
- Particular care in loading the grain must be observed and avoid unnecessary rush and moving on top of the load. The driver should always keep a mobile phone on his person so that he can call for help in case of emergency.

- Ensure that the vehicle remains stationary during the loading by, for example, tyre wedges. The driver should also make sure that no unauthorised persons (such as children) are present in the loading and unloading areas.
- Choose access routes to avoid unnecessary risks owing to slippery conditions or the collapsing of the road
- The driver will conduct a sensory inspection of the grain quality during loading. The farmer and the recipient of the crop is to be notified of any impurities and foreign objects in the crop or its poor quality. The transport is discontinued until the buyer of the transport or the recipient of the crop has given further instructions.
- Cover the load carefully prior to transport
- After the loading, it is the driver's responsibility to check that the loading area is left clean and tidy
- The driver confirms in the Grain Passport / consignment note any information and measures recorded with his signature. A copy of the document is left with the farmer and the recipient.

Pay attention to loading conditions
– fast loading may nowadays entitle to a compensation

#### Measures (colour codes)

general statutory obligations



recommendation

### 6. SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT AND OPERATIONS



easures focusing on the production environment help improve occupational health and safety and ensure good working conditions for all employees. The goal is also to maintain good environmental status and to preserve and increase biodiversity and to reduce the amount of waste by exercising good recycling and waste management practices. By paying attention to energy efficiency, the environmental load of agriculture can be reduced whilst improving the performance of farms. Acknowledge in all activities the sustainable methods, labour law and human rights, which are nowadays also required by buyers based on their own guidelines.

practices include the maintenance of the production environment

### (CODE OF CONDUCT)

# 6.1. The production environment on the farm

- The production environment is kept well-tended and the field landscape open
- The machinery is cleaned after use and stored in covered shelters during all seasons of the year
- The fields are kept open and the cultivation landscape well-tended
- The crop storage and handling spaces are kept clean
- Verify the quality of water used for cleaning the spaces: it should be clean and free of foreign odour, taste, microbes or foreign bodies that could risk the safety of products

### 6.2. Biodiversity

- The preservation of biodiversity is taken into consideration in all activities by maintaining different natural habitats and increasing variety in cultivation
- Enhance the conditions for pollinating insects and natural enemies by diversifying cultivated crops and favouring nectar plants

- The margins along field roads and access roads are not to be treated with pesticides
- Field margins are cut down towards the end of bloom to prevent the spreading of weeds, and control measures against common wild oats are taken

### **6.3. Groundwater** protection

Make sure that the operations of the farm do not result in direct or indirect emissions of dangerous or harmful substances (e.g. fuel, lubricants, pesticides) to the groundwater

### 6.4. The condition of fuel storage containers

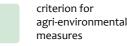
- The condition of fuel storage containers is to be checked every 2–10 years
- All discharge pipes are equipped with anti-siphon valves
- The fuel container has a double casing structure or a leak-proof overflow container

### 6.5. Storage of plant pesticides

- Plant protectants are stored in their original containers
- Store plant protectants in a dry, insulated and locked space with no floor drain
- Powdery substances are stored on top shelves and liquid ones on the bottom shelves
- No other substances or equipment are stored in the same space
- Products that are out-of-date and removed from the register are clearly marked and taken to the collection of hazardous waste
- The storage space has instructions and equipment for emergency situations

#### Measures (colour codes)

general statutory obligations



recommendation

### 6.6. Waste management on the farm

- Hazardous waste is sorted and delivered to recycling
- Organic waste is separated from mixed waste
- Recyclable waste, including fertiliser bags and plastic cans, is taken to the recycling collection point

### 6.7. Energy consumption

- Monitor fuel consumption on at least the yearly level
- Make efficient logistics plans and, where necessary and possible, carry out farm reorganisation for improved logistics
- Servicing of machinery and equipment
- Select the correct machinery combinations and learn an economical driving method
- The dryer is insulated, the crop is dried to the target moisture content only and the possibility of replacing fossil fuels either for preheating or all heating is investigated
- Draw up an energy plan or calculation specifying the key development areas for energy efficiency

### 6.8. Responsibility

- If external workforce is used on the farm, make sure they are treated equally and that their right of organisation, belong to a trade union and negotiate collectively are recognised
- No children are employed who are below the age of compulsory schooling age, which must be at least 15 years (children are, however, allowed to assist with farm work outside school hours and during holidays)
- The employment of workers over the minimum age but younger than 18 must not endanger the young person's education, health, safety or intellectual development
- The employment of workers is based on legally documented agreements
- The wages paid to workers are at least of the minimum level laid down in national legislation or the applicable collective bargaining agreement
- Comply with working hours as regulated by applicable laws and collective bargaining agreements or, in their absence, ensure that the regular working hours do no exceed 48 hours per week and that all employees have at least one rest day during every seven days.
- Make sure all statutory occupational health and safety regulations are being observed and the persons responsible for their monitoring are named

- Assess and aim to eliminate or reduce occupational health and safety risks
- Take environmental responsibility by complying with the regulations related to environmental legislation and by reducing and preventing the adverse effects of production on the environment and the atmosphere
- It is warmly recommended that farms draw up their own environmental management plans and adhere to its extensive goals for the benefit of ongoing development on the farm
- Operate in compliance with the competition law and never participate in corruption, extortion or fraud
- Observe all rules and regulations of client industries or trade regarding the quality and safety of products and services, respect their intellectual property rights and use knowledge, technologies and skills and competencies in a manner that does not violate these rights
- The principles of transparency, openness and honesty are adhered to in production in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing the field

Well-tended production environment and sustainable operations reduce the risks of cultivation and improve its public image

### Finnish Cereal Committee (VYR)

The objective of the Finnish Cereal Committee VYR is to promote the general operative framework and profitability of the Finnish grain production chain. The cereal chain refers to the grain, oilseed and protein crops.

VYR engages in development work and communications for the grain production chain and coordinates collaboration between different stakeholders.

The Finnish Cereal Committee works closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finnish Food Safety Authority, Natural Resources Institute Finland and other stakeholders. www.vyr.fi

#### Measures (colour codes)

general statutory obligations

criterion for agri-environmental measures recommendation

