

Gafta Ring Test Scheme – Rules & Protocol

1. Objectives of the Gafta Ring Test Scheme

- 1.1. To assess the ability of an analyst to produce accurate, reliable and reproducible analytical data on a continuing basis.
- 1.2. To assess the ability of an analyst to correctly analyse those commodities typically traded under Gafta contract terms according to usual contractual requirements for quality.
- 1.3. To enable an analyst to demonstrate compliance with one of the requirements of the Gafta Approved Register of Analysts.

2. Related Documents/References

- 2.1. [Gafta Code of Practice for Analysts](#)
- 2.2. [Gafta No.130 Register of Analytical Methods](#)
- 2.3. [Sciantec PT Portal Instructions](#)
- 2.4. Applicable ISO Analytical Methods

3. Scope of the Gafta Ring Test Scheme

- 3.1. Analysts opt to be assessed for the compulsory element of membership which is Grain and/or Feed testing. They can also opt to undertake mycotoxin testing (see section 8 for further information).
- 3.2. Assessment is for Grain and/or Feed analysis of specified parameters (see below) and does not necessarily relate to the activities of the laboratory as a whole.
- 3.3. The Gafta Ring Test Scheme is an interlaboratory proficiency testing scheme. All Gafta Analyst members are sent the same samples, and their results are assessed against each other.
- 3.4. The Gafta Ring Test Scheme is conducted twice in a year, referred to as Round 1 and Round 2. To maintain approval, analysts are required to participate in both rounds of testing each year.
- 3.5. The Gafta Ring Test Scheme is not accredited to ISO17043.

4. Application and Pre-Round Process

- 4.1. New Analyst members apply for the Ring Test Scheme when first joining Gafta. They must opt for the compulsory element of membership which is Grain and/or Feed testing. They can also opt to undertake mycotoxin testing (see section 8 for further information).
- 4.2. Analysts are allocated a 3-digit unique laboratory identification number – “Lab Number” - known only to themselves, Gafta and Sciantec, who run the Ring Test Scheme on behalf of Gafta. Analysts must use their Lab Number on all communications to Gafta and Sciantec regarding the scheme.
- 4.3. Existing Analyst members who have not previously participated must apply for the next round by emailing RingTest@gafta.com
- 4.4. The deadlines for participation of each round are 1 January and 1 July each year.
NOTE: Members **must** notify Gafta prior to this date of any changes to their laboratory which may affect their participation (e.g. address, contact person, EORI number, adding or removing grain or feed testing....).
NOTE: Members **must** notify Gafta prior to this date of any specific requirements relating to choice of courier, import permits/requirements.
NOTE: Members **must** ensure all outstanding debt is cleared prior to each of these dates. Outstanding debt will exclude members from participation and will impact their approval status.
- 4.5. Participating Analysts are sent a pre-advice for each round of testing with details of the samples to be sent, the approximate date of dispatch and the last date for submission of results. Pre-advice documents/information is sent at or before sample dispatch.

- 4.6. New Analyst members, and new contacts for the Gafta Ring Test Scheme, will be issued with user details for the Sciantec PT Portal. Any issues with user accounts for the Sciantec PT Portal should be emailed to Sciantec.

5. **Sample Dispatch**

- 5.1. Samples are dispatched by Sciantec, or by another appropriate distributor (see Section 6 – Special Arrangements), by courier or mail as appropriate and are accompanied [where required by the importing country] by the original phytosanitary certificate. A duplicate copy is kept by Sciantec if required.
- 5.2. Analysts can advise Sciantec of preferred courier company to be used, although there is no guarantee this request can be accommodated.
- 5.3. Where quarantine/import permits are required, members must make the appropriate local arrangements and provide Sciantec with the information before the participation deadline date (as this is required for the phytosanitary application).
- 5.4. Any special requirements for labelling of the samples, or special requirements for customs clearance at arrival should be notified to Sciantec prior to the participation deadline date.
- 5.5. Analysts within the EU are required to supply an EORI number before samples can be shipped. EORI Numbers are in the format of a two-letter country code followed by up to 15 alphanumeric characters.
- 5.6. Analysts will be sent courier tracking information to enable them to facilitate receipt of samples. Analysts are advised to notify Gafta immediately if there is any issue with receiving samples so that Gafta can liaise with Sciantec to help resolve the issue e.g. issuing duplicate samples as appropriate.
- 5.7. Analysts accept that for them to receive samples they may be charged fees to release samples from customs. Failure to pay these fees, or to cooperate with customs to release samples, may result in additional charges for sample to be returned to the UK or to be destroyed. These fees will be charged to the Member along with the original delivery and sample fees.
- 5.8. Analysts are advised to consider paying the fees so they can complete the ring test and investigate claiming it back from the local authority once the round has ended.
NOTE: Failure to facilitate receipt of samples may result in the laboratory being unable to participate in the Ring Test Scheme which will impact their approval status.
- 5.9. Samples should be carefully examined immediately upon receipt and any concern over the integrity of the sample reported to Gafta so that duplicate samples can be dispatched as appropriate.
- 5.10. Any Analyst who has not notified Gafta of issues with their samples prior to the deadline for submission of results will not be considered for exemption under exceptional circumstances.

6. **Special Arrangements for Sample Distribution in country**

Country	Samples sent to, and then redistributed by:
Argentina	A representative of CADECRA in Buenos Aires.
Brazil	Envirologix in Jaguariúna.
China	A Gafta representative in Beijing.
India	Aashvi PT in Hyderabad.
Ukraine	A Gafta representative in Kyiv.

6.1. **Russia**

Until further notice, ring test samples for Russian analysts are prepared and distributed by SGS Vostok. Results are received and processed by Sciantec as a separate scheme.

6. Sample Analysis

- 6.1. Samples must be analysed using the latest version of appropriate ISO methods as listed on the Gafta No.130 Register of Analytical Methods. Analysts are expected to have a process for selecting the correct method of analysis to use.
- 6.2. Samples must be analysed, and results uploaded to the Sciantech PT Portal **within two weeks of receipt.**
NOTE: PT Portal reminders are automatically issued to any Analysts who haven't uploaded their test results throughout each round and this information is made available to Gafta regularly.
- 6.3. Analysts who hold or have applied for Grain Approval must submit results for Moisture and Protein, using the appropriate ISO methods from the Gafta No.130.
- 6.4. Analysts who hold or have applied for Feed Approval must submit results for Ash, Fibre, Moisture, Oil and Protein, using the appropriate ISO methods from the Gafta No.130.
- 6.5. Care should be taken to report results on the appropriate moisture basis and using the correct Nitrogen factor.
- 6.6. Analysts who fail to submit a full set of results for Grain and/or Feed will automatically be suspended from the Gafta Approved Register until successful completion of the following round.
- 6.7. Results must be uploaded to the Sciantech PT Portal before the closing date for submission of results. Care must be taken to upload accurate results as mistakes cannot be rectified after the closing date.
- 6.8. The method used must be reported on the Sciantech PT Portal. When selecting "other" method, Analysts must notify Gafta of the method used.
- 6.9. Analysts will receive an email receipt once their results have been successfully uploaded. If you do not receive this email, please notify Sciantech before the closing date for submission of results. Please check the email receipt carefully. Mistakes can be corrected within the Sciantech PT Portal before the closing date for submission of results by logging back into the portal.
NOTE: Instructions for the Sciantech PT Portal are provided separately.
- 6.10. An extension to the date for submission of results may be made in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of Gafta and/or Sciantech. Other factors may also be considered such as previous Ring Test Scheme performance, ISO accreditation status and/or audit performance (for audits to the Gafta Standard for Analysis & Testing).

7. Results and Reporting

- 7.1. After the closing date Sciantech will tabulate all results received and produce a detailed final report for circulation to all Analysts.
- 7.2. Alterations to results submitted will not be permitted under any circumstances after circulation of the final report.
- 7.3. Performance for each analyte will be identifiable as a "Pass" or "Fail".
- 7.4. Performance in the ring test is assessed on the target standard deviation for each analyte chosen from either the appropriate form of the Horowitz equation or the trial standard deviation after removal of outliers. Z-Scores are deemed satisfactory ("Pass") if $|z| \leq 2$.
- 7.5. Results may also be removed from the population if an obviously incorrect method has been reported.
- 7.6. Analysts shall be identified in reports by their Lab Number. Published analytical data shall not be attributable to an identifiable laboratory, and thus remain confidential.
- 7.7. Analysts that "Fail" one or more analyte(s) in a round are considered to be under a warning concerning their performance. Analysts are expected to review their procedures/protocols for that analyte(s) and make improvements to their methodology to prevent further failures. Analysts will remain listed on the Approved Register of Analysts for those analytes.
- 7.8. Analysts who "fail" the same analyte(s) in two consecutive rounds of testing, Gafta Approval will be suspended for grain and/or feed testing depending on the analyte(s) failed.

- 7.9. Suspension is only lifted upon successful participation in the subsequent round of the Ring Test Scheme.

NOTE: Being suspended as a result of unsatisfactory results and/or failure to submit a full set of results means Analysts are unable to provide their services on goods traded on Gafta contract terms. Analysts must not advertise their services as “Gafta Approved” and must cease using the Gafta Approved Analyst logo until such time as the suspension is confirmed as lifted. Analysts are advised to inform their clients of the change in their status.

- 7.10. After each round of ring testing is complete, the Approved Register is updated. The Approved Register is maintained online, accessible via the Gafta website, and may be amended at any time.
- 7.11. Analysts must have a process to download and review the report from each round of the Gafta Ring Test Scheme and compare its results against the other participating laboratories, taking appropriate corrective and preventative action as required. Gafta reserves the right to request further information and/or analysis of additional samples for Analysts with continuing poor performance.
- 7.12. Gafta will only notify those members who have been suspended and reserve the right to notify the wider Gafta membership through the online Gafta Approved Register and/or by email Circular (or any other medium at Gafta’s sole discretion).

8. Mycotoxin Samples - Optional

- 8.1. Samples are offered for each round for the testing for mycotoxin(s). Participation in the test for mycotoxins is voluntary.
- 8.2. Results returned are tabulated in the normal way stating which method of analysis was used by the participant.
- 8.3. These results are not certified or recorded as part of the scheme nor is any approval conferred.

9. Reference Samples

- 9.1. A quantity of reference samples is retained from each round of ring testing and are held for up to five years. The number of samples retained are limited, but Analysts wishing to use any samples from the reference supply as a means of checking performance and methodology, may apply to Gafta.
- 9.2. A charge will be levied by Gafta for each sample requested from the reference supply plus postage and administration fee, packaging and (where applicable) for the provision of a phytosanitary certificate.

10. Fees and Invoicing

- 10.1. With effect from Round 2:2024, the fees for participation are:

Grain	£195
Feed	£285
Mycotoxin	£130

- 10.2. In addition to the above fees, distribution/courier costs and costs associated with phytosanitary requirements and/or additional samples are also passed on to the Analyst and added to the invoice. VAT will also be added where applicable.
- 10.3. Fees for Round 1 each year will be included with the annual membership fees sent on or around 1 July each year. Payment of this invoice must be made before 30 September each year to avoid further action being taken and/or impacting the Analyst’s approval status.
- 10.4. Fees for Round 2 each year will be invoiced before the end of the year. Payment of this invoice is expected within 30 days of receipt.
- 10.5. Fees for Reference Samples will be invoiced as required.

10.6. Any Analyst with outstanding fees on 1 January or 1 July (the start of each round) will not be permitted to participate in the round and will therefore become suspended due to non-participation.

NOTE: “Outstanding fees” on 1 January are any Gafta membership and Ring Test invoices not paid after 30 September.

NOTE: “Outstanding fees” on 1 July are any invoices from Round 2 of the previous year, or earlier.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR GAFTA RING TEST SCHEME

Please always quote your Lab Number in email correspondence.

Contact	Reason
Paul.Allison@sciantec.uk.com Sciantec (Paul Allison)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despatch/receipt of samples • Courier queries to include delivery status • Phyto certificates and customs documents • Access to and issues with the Results Portal including issuing results at close of round • Database updates
RingTest@gafta.com (Holly Sisman)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything regarding participation in the Ring Test Scheme (except dispatch/receipt of samples and Results Portal) • Lab status • Database updates • All general enquiries re Ring Test Scheme
ApprovedRegisters@gafta.com (Sarah Mann, Holly Sisman)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything regarding the Gafta Approved Registers i.e. audits to the Gafta Standards, certification, ISO accreditation • Technical queries regarding the Gafta Standards, Codes of Practice and Rules • Logo requests
Membership@gafta.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queries regarding general membership of Gafta • General database/contact details updates
Accounts@gafta.com (Paul Collins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queries regarding invoices only
Events@gafta.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queries regarding training and events • Issues with registration for Agribility Short Courses

Please avoid copying more than one email address. Should you direct a query to the wrong place we will redirect it internally.