

INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW EN 17700 STANDARD FAMILY



INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR BIOSTIMULANT FIELD TESTING

INTRODUCTION

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The **EN 17700 harmonised Standard family**, published in November 2024, **introduces a series of new definitions and methodological approaches** that significantly modernise how the efficacy of plant biostimulants can be demonstrated under the **2019/1009 (EU) Fertilising Products Regulation**.

Among these updates, the most impactful innovations are the definitions of strip trials and trial series, enhancing **the practical relevance of field data**.

According to EN 17724:2024 – Plant Biostimulant Terminology, **strip trials** offer a flexible, field-realistic method of conducting comparative tests. These trials allow **efficacy evaluation without replications**, requiring only a **minimum of two treatments** within the same production area, typically a **control plot and a biostimulant-treated plot**.



A key change introduced by the EN 17700 Standard series is the requirement for **substantially larger minimum plot sizes** than in traditional replicated trials. This shift is intended to ensure that results closely reflect real-world cropping systems and production-scale conditions. Importantly, these **larger plots and simpler layouts make strip trials more compatible** with on-farm research, creating opportunities for closer collaboration with farmers.

MINIMUM PLOT SIZES:

- »» Broadacre crops: 200 m²
- »» Woody perennials: 12 plants
- »» Vegetables, ornamentals, and AMP crops: 40 m²

The EN 17700 family also refines the concept of the **trial series**, defined as a group of **independent field trials** conducted on the same crop under harmonised experimental conditions. To qualify as a trial series, all trials must follow the **same experimental design, protocol, crop type, timing, and measured parameters**, ensuring strong comparability and statistical reliability.

A TRIAL SERIES CONSISTS OF:

- »» **Four independent field trials** (following the same criteria as those outlined in EN 17700-1:2024), or
- »» **Fifteen strip trials.**

**TRIAL
IMPLEMENTATION
ACCORDING TO
EN 17700:2024
STANDARD
SERIES**

Trials within a series may be carried out in **different years and at different locations**, offering greater flexibility while maintaining the required methodological alignment. However, they **must be conducted under open-field or protected cropping conditions**. Trials performed entirely under controlled environments, such as fully climate-controlled greenhouses, are not eligible for demonstrating efficacy.

It is also essential to note that EN 17700-1:2024 specifies **new minimum requirements for trial series**, detailed in **Table 3 of General Principles**.

The EN 17700:2024 standards introduce stricter expectations for data reporting and documentation:

»» **Phytotoxicity data must always be recorded.**

It is now mandatory to explicitly state when no phytotoxic effects are observed, not only when symptoms occur.

»» **Photographic evidence is required.**

Trials must include photos taken during the experimental period to support observations and results.

These requirements aim to reinforce transparency and strengthen the evidentiary basis of efficacy claims.

Despite the new rules, **trials conducted before 2024 remain acceptable** for evidence and conformity assessment. The 2024 update **does not introduce** any new restrictions that would invalidate or exclude historical data from the assessment process. However, **all trials carried out from 2024 onward must comply** with the updated EN 17700 quality requirements.

NEW APPROACHES IN THE HARMONISED STANDARD

