



Red Tractor Assurance

Climb aboard



News, updates and practical advice from your Red Tractor Assurance team // NOVEMBER 2016

memberhelp@redtractor.org.uk • Combinable Crops, Fresh Produce, Pigs & Poultry, Dairy, Beef & Lamb - T. 0203 617 3670

Protecting the integrity of the Red Tractor logo

Strengthening our assurance scheme standards as modern consumer demands evolve.

An industry-wide consultation has opened to review proposed updates to Red Tractor standards.

This process happens every three years to ensure that the scheme remains focused on what farming's customers and consumers want, as well as reflecting some changes in legislation.

Farmers, trade associations, vets, processors and retailers have all been involved in drawing up the revisions so that they represent the entire supply chain.



Assured Food Standards chief executive, David Clarke, said: "The UK farming industry is immensely proud of the standards it adheres to and we want to work together to ensure that we

have a modern, progressive scheme that is something to shout about across the world.

"The needs of UK farming's customers continually evolve and it's vital that we do the same to stay ahead of the game.

"The proposals provide positive

reassurance on some topical issues and address new issues that have emerged in the minds of shoppers who buy our products."

With the UK farming industry being asked to play its part in reducing antibiotic use by around 19% by 2018 Red Tractor is proposing to make updates to its own scheme in line with best practice advice from RUMA, the alliance for Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture.

The continued importance of biosecurity has also been recognised and improvements have been recommended to strengthen protocols on all assured livestock farms.

In the fresh produce sector, standards have been significantly upgraded to minimise the risk of product contamination. This ensures that assured fruit, vegetable and salad standards keep ahead of food safety matters at a time when imported products have been identified as the lead cause of microbiological food safety risks.

Simple environmental protection measures are also being added to some livestock standards.

Responses are being invited through farming organisations, and further information can be found at <http://bit.ly/2eNNxvA>

Key focus areas

» Biosecurity

Minimising the risk of disease spread both on and off farms and to humans is key. We continue to recognise the importance of good biosecurity controls and we have strengthened some standards and added some in order to deliver improved preventative disease management. The new requirements vary across sectors.

» Animal medicines and husbandry procedures

With the farming industry being asked by the Government to play its part in minimising the risk of antibiotic resistance to humans and animals, some standards have been strengthened and some new requirements introduced. Read more about antimicrobial resistance on the back page of this newsletter.

» Vermin control

The Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use has produced a Code of Best Practice which sets out responsible rodenticide use to reduce the risk to non-target species. Red Tractor has added to and strengthened its vermin control standards so that assured farmers continue to be recognised as competent users.

» Environmental protection

Robust controls around weeds, waste and the use of plant protection products and fertilisers reduce the risk of environmental contamination. We have strengthened and added standards, some of which reflect changes in legislation.

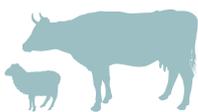
» Product contamination

Product contamination whether microbiological, chemical or physical is a concern for consumers buying fresh produce. Standards have been updated to improve food safety by reducing the risk of contamination.



SECTOR NEWS AND UPDATES

DAIRY, BEEF + LAMB NEWS



Beware mycotoxin risks

Livestock producers are being reminded about the risk of mycotoxins in feed this winter.

Feed can become contaminated before harvest or during storage and can be toxic to livestock as well as affecting performance.

The AHDB recommends crop management and storage as the best method of controlling mycotoxin contamination and avoiding the health problems it can cause.

Mycotoxin binders are available which reduce the risks associated with continued feeding.

It is important to investigate any health issues in stock, as symptoms of contamination are similar to other diseases. If in doubt, contact a vet.

Mouldy feed should be discarded as not only does it pose a high risk of mycotoxin contamination, it can also be associated with other health issues including abortion and mastitis.



Assessment of green bedding systems

English, Scottish and Welsh governments have agreed to continue to allow the use of recycled manure solids, or green bedding as it is commonly known.

It was first permitted in 2014 and will be reviewed again next summer.

In the interests of protecting the Red Tractor scheme's reputation, all farms using green bedding will be assessed over the next few months to ensure that they are adhering to the conditions of use.

Regular assessments will be made midway through normal assessment cycle - approximately

nine months after the routine assessment - and any non-conformances will need to be corrected within 28 days.

The conditions of use can be found on the AHDB Dairy website at <http://bit.ly/2eKTVWl>

Your Red Tractor assessor will also check that you review the use of green bedding with your vet annually. A recycled manure solids assessment and review template has been created for simple recording of this on the Red Tractor website at <http://bit.ly/2eTxT1N>

BVDFree England - get involved

A national scheme to eradicate Bovine Viral Diarrhoea is calling on all cattle herds in England to get involved.

The national scheme was launched in July 2016 and is supported by Red Tractor.

The key elements of the scheme focus around vaccination, biosecurity, monitoring herd status using serological or antigen tests and elimination of persistently infected animals.

For more information about controlling BVD on your farm, visit www.bvdfree.org.uk

Red Tractor scheme members can actively engage in BVD control with the following steps:

- Assess the level of biosecurity and disease risk on your farm
- Define the BVD status of your herd
- Put an action plan in place to control BVD on your farm
- Monitor progress via an annual status check.

Preventing medicine residues in milk

RUMA has produced a poster to help farmers avoid medicine residues in milk. It covers general guidelines, avoiding accidental contamination during the milking routine and specific procedures for dry cows. You can download the poster from <http://bit.ly/2evsQDF>

Bovine TB hub updated

An updated bovine TB hub service provides tools and advice to help livestock farmers minimise the risk of a breakdown.

Included on www.tbhub.co.uk is a new poster containing the five main recommendations which will protect herds from contracting TB, and a number of practical guides to help farmers achieve them.



Renewal of transport authorisations

Type 1 authorisations for the transportation of animals over 65km and up to 8 hours will not be renewed automatically.

Instead, they must be applied for to the APHA's Welfare in Transport team using forms and information available on www.gov.uk

Transport authorisations are valid for five years and are individual's responsibility. Failure to do so risks heavy penalties if transporters are found to be operating without valid authorisation.

Get familiar with the e-MB

Pig farmers are being urged to familiarise themselves with the e-Medicine Book (e-MB).

The digital development is a website that enables UK pig producers to provide total antibiotic usage data and, optionally, act as the full legal medicine book.

It was launched by AHDB Pork in April 2016 to supply accurate total antibiotic data for the pig sector to the Government's Veterinary Medicines Directorate. The Red Tractor standards consultation proposes that the use of the e-MB for uploading collated usage data becomes a mandatory measure from next year.

More information in the form of videos and a quick guide is available via the AHDB Pork website and AHDB regional teams are able to assist producers wishing to upload usage. AHDB will shortly be posting a user guide out to all producers.

For more information on the proposed Red Tractor requirement to use the e-MB, please visit <http://bit.ly/2fDOaJi>

Tail biting survey

Red Tractor-assured pig producers are being encouraged to complete an online questionnaire on tail biting.

The survey has been produced by AHDB Pork and the RSPCA in collaboration with the University of Helsinki with the anonymous results destined for the Pig Health and Welfare Council.

The Council brings together industry and government to share and exchange knowledge, in the hope that better information on tail management and tail-related issues could be provided. To take part go to <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/taildamage>



CROPS + FRESH PRODUCE NEWS



BeeConnected tool for farmers and beekeepers

Farmers can now communicate directly with beekeepers to inform them when they plan to spray insecticides.

The BeeConnected service launched in

September and is an online tool, allowing farmers to quickly identify which fields they are intending to spray.

The system then alerts beekeepers with hives in the nearby vicinity so they have time to take action to protect the bees.

Red Tractor is encouraging all farmers and beekeepers to make full use of the site and register by visiting www.beeconnected.org.uk.



Red Tractor removes feed hygiene registration regulations

Red Tractor will no longer be assessing standard DP.a.1, and it will be removed from the standards from 1 November 2016.

Previously this required feed grain producers to retain a copy of their letter of registration with their local authority as part of farm assurance.

The requirement to register, however, is still required by law and must be carried out by assured farms.

Temporary holding of grain

Food safety and quality concerns have been raised by processors surrounding the issue of temporary holding of grain outside of a building for short periods before drying and storage.

This is related to vermin, wildlife and birds potentially contaminating the grain when stored outside, as well as extreme weather conditions affecting quality.

While Red Tractor's revised standards do accommodate this practice in some difficult situations, the processors/purchasers are urging the industry to consider phasing out this practice.

Red Tractor would like farmers to start to consider alternative storage and what they can do in future to ensure that their grain is under cover at all times after harvest.

Spray equipment must be tested

In line with UK legislation, Red Tractor standards are changing to require all used pesticide application equipment over five years old to be tested by 26 November.

This includes boom, air blast, train and air-mounted sprayers as well as slug pellet applicators, granular applicators and other vehicle mounted specialist

equipment. Knapsack and hand-held equipment are exempt.

From 26 November, this will be included in Red Tractor assessments and failure to provide proof of testing of relevant equipment will result in a non-conformance.

For more details and information on the new Red Tractor requirements go to <http://bit.ly/2fUX1XC>.



Assured farms continue to earn recognition

Red tape is a constant source of frustration for farmers – adding cost and taking time away from their core operation.

But did you know that as a Red Tractor scheme member you actually receive fewer inspections than non-assured farms?

Earned recognition is the phrase used to demonstrate that assured farmers are already compliant on a range of relevant issues, so the Government and their agencies need to visit them less frequently if at all.

Using professional rodenticides is the latest example; Red Tractor farms are exempt from the Health & Safety Executive's requirement to hold proof of competence when buying professional rodenticide bait.

Assured Food Standards chief executive David Clarke said that securing these benefits for scheme members doesn't come easily.

"It has required a lot of education and

some hard evidence," he

said. "For example our earned recognition arrangement with Animal and Plant Health Agency is underpinned by a three-year study by the University of Warwick which found that Red Tractor farms were twice as likely to comply with animal welfare legislation as non-assured farms."

Some farmers have expressed concerns about how much of their data is shared with agencies.

Mr Clarke said: "Very little data is shared between Red Tractor Assurance and enforcement bodies.

"Clearly the official bodies need to know which farms are in the Red Tractor scheme but essentially, earned recognition operates on that information alone and we do not share information about non-conformances."



Earned recognition agreements

- » Reduced food hygiene inspections from the FSA and local authorities since 2006
- » Ten-year dairy hygiene inspections rather than every two years
- » Only 1% of Red Tractor farms can be selected for Animal and Plant Health Agency inspections
- » No inspections for assured farms from the RPA on SMR 4 issues
- » One annual inspection, not three, on the Environment Agency's PPC regulations
- » No proof of competence required for purchase of professional rodenticides.



No escaping the challenge of antimicrobial resistance

By Gwyn Jones, chairman of the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture alliance

While resistance issues within the human population are largely developing through medical use, around 35% of the UK's antibiotic sales go to livestock farming.

A recent review of several northern European studies might confirm that farm animal use could be responsible for as few

as one in every 370 human clinical cases, but this could change as resistant bacteria and the mechanisms that cause resistance can pass from animal to human.

Resistant bacteria are found on large and small farms, organic and conventional, as well as in pets and horses.

Careful reduction, refinement and replacement of antibiotics in farming without compromising welfare is the best weapon we have at this point.

The Government has challenged the industry to reduce average antibiotic use by around a fifth by 2018, based on 2014 sales. But we have also been given an opportunity to develop our own sector-specific objectives to work towards this and beyond. Included is our use

of antibiotics of critical medical importance, which we have been given the chance to steward effectively and potentially preserve as a last resort to protect animal welfare.

So it's time to challenge ourselves, our co-workers and staff, and our vets. Start with records, be aware of what you are using and whether it's an antibiotic critical to human medicine; improve natural immunity, reduce disease pressure and investigate alternatives that won't compromise welfare.

The challenge has been laid down and the support is there. But make no mistake. If we don't deliver, we will be made to. Better we find ways to reduce, refine and replace antibiotic use than have solutions 'imposed' by others.

The poultry sector has made huge strides in reducing use of antibiotics



What do the new Red Tractor standards say?

Antibiotics are a crucial part of livestock farming, and members of assured schemes use them as little as possible and as much as required. Red Tractor farmers already record usage but in the latest review it is being proposed that standards are strengthened and some new ones are introduced around the management of antibiotics, including levels of usage and types used. The new requirements vary across sectors.

