A CHANCE TO CUT RED TAPE?

For many years, scheme members have been frustrated by too many farm inspections. The regular Red Tractor Farm Assurance inspection shows that farmers and growers comply with legal requirements, but until now that has had little or no influence on whether a government inspector also visits. Since the new Government came into power, there are growing signs that this might be about to change.

In August, Defra appointed a Task Force on Farming Regulation under the direction of former NFU Director General, Richard Macdonald. Early comments from Government ministers, and Macdonald himself, suggest that there might be benefits for assured farmers. Scheme membership demonstrates that the producer meets the right standards and Government inspectors should not need to duplicate this. Similar arrangements have already been in place for four years, but they only apply to food hygiene regulations and not to dairy farms.

From April 2010, a new scheme with the Environment Agency on pollution controls has meant not only fewer inspections of pig and poultry farms, but also a significant saving in the annual registration fee paid to the Government Agency. Until these principles are extended to all types of farm and to other official inspections, producers will not see the full benefit. The Red Tractor Scheme has been meeting with the task force and others to discuss the details of a possible new approach, which could be more efficient both for the farming industry and the public purse.

CHAIRMAN’S LETTER

It has been a busy year for AFS and the Crops & Sugar Beet sector. The new harmonised standards came into force in April and feedback from audits using the new standards has been positive.

The re-branded scheme provides a clear link between the farm standards and the Red Tractor logo on pack, which can only help promote understanding of the logo for farmers, as well as consumers. This year also saw the commitment of Carling and Sunblest to Red Tractor, adding to the long list of leading brands in our sector using the logo.

June was a particularly busy month with the Cereals event and Red Tractor Week marking ten years of the logo. The Cereals event, a first for us on this scale, was a huge success with many members visiting our stand to talk about the Red Tractor Scheme. We will be at Cereals 2011, so please take the time to come and visit us within the HGCA area.

We also feature news on the Renewable Energy Directive and the submission of the Red Tractor Scheme to the Commission for consideration under the sustainability criteria. Should we gain acceptance from the Commission, it will enable assured farmers to access the emerging biofuels markets without having to undergo additional audits from other organisations.

Finally, the DEFRA Red Tape review looks as if it could provide some exciting opportunities for the Red Tractor Scheme and will hopefully result in some real benefits for our members.

Matthew Read
RENEWABLE ENERGY DIRECTIVE (RED)

The Renewable Energy Directive comes into effect in December 2010. This new legislation, which introduces targets for renewable energy use, opens up new market opportunities for farmers within the UK who will be able to supply home grown crops for green industries such as biofuels. The introduction of renewable energy is an environmental policy that is aiming to reduce the reliance on fossil energy to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve fuel security.

The UK will have two large wheat bioethanol plants, alongside the sugar beet bioethanol plant, operating in 2011 and there are additional production facilities for bioethanol and biodiesel on the continent. As well as biofuels, bioliquids for energy uses from cereals and oilseeds are also becoming more common. Growers will, however, only be able to access these growing markets by demonstrating the sustainability of crops.

The European legislation requires independent verification of compliance with sustainability criteria in order to supply these markets. The Red Tractor Crops and Sugar Beet Scheme is ideally placed to provide the verification of evidence required by the EU Commission to confirm that crops have been produced on land that has no restrictions on biofuel production with respect to sustainability criteria. The scheme standards have therefore been submitted to the EU Commission as a qualifying standard under the Renewable Energy Directive. Certification body assessors will collect and verify data provided in response to two additional voluntary questions added to the membership application or renewal forms.

If producers decline to provide this information this will not have any effect on certification status for other markets, but it will mean that they have to find an additional means of confirming compliance to the supply chain if supplying crops to the biofuel and bioliquid markets.

The questions are designed to identify the arable land in use in January 2008, and any areas of permanent grassland or woodland, or other protected areas, which may have been converted to arable use since 2008.

Crops produced on areas that have been converted to arable production from protected land categories will not be able to access the biofuel and bioliquid markets. This does not affect other land on farm in crop production at 1st January 2008.

The verification of information in response to these questions will enable the Red Tractor Crops and Sugar Beet Scheme to confirm to the supply chain that the sustainability criteria have been met by individual producers on the crops supplied into the biofuel and bioliquids chain. This information will be shown on the assurance member checker.

Traceability is also an important element of the Renewable Energy Directive requirements and it will be important for producers to record the destination point of grain on the passport and to ensure that this information is retained as part of the farm records.

If the EU Commission accepts the submission of the Red Tractor Crops and Sugar Beet Scheme it will make access to these growing markets easy for the participating farmers and prevent additional auditing on farm by the supply chain.

CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO STANDARDS

Red Tractor Farm Assurance will be issuing a stakeholder consultation at the beginning of 2011 outlining proposed amendments and changes to the standards to be introduced with effect from October 2011. The proposed changes to the Crops and Sugar Beet standards are not radical but are required as a result of amendments to legislation; developments in best practice; deletion of duplicated and unnecessary requirements or the addition of further clarification or guidance for producers. Examples of the proposals are as follows:

Legislative changes –

- Crops and sugar beet used to produce biofuels and bioliquids must not be produced on land that had a high biodiversity value or land with high carbon stock or land that was peatland (unless the cultivation and harvesting does not involve drainage of previously undrained soil).

Best practice changes –

- Inventory of pesticides stored must be easily accessible
- It is recommended that growers retain records of the destination/point of first tipping of loads leaving the farm (for traceability purposes)

Other amendments –

- Option to record active ingredient or product name
- Deletion of requirement to obtain heavy metal content of fertilisers
- Deletion of requirement to label bins/bulks replaced by requirement to keep traceability records to identify where specific crops are stored on farm
- The addition of several new guidance notes providing producers with additional information about compliance with particular standards.

If members wish to receive a copy of the consultation and submit comments they should contact the secretariat [see back page for contact details].
Always follow the directions for cleaning supplied with the sprayer. Guidance for sprayer cleaning is also given at [www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk](http://www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk)

Best practice starts with planning the last load to allow tank-rinsing water to be sprayed out.

- Many products are applied at less than the recommended label rate, in which instance it is good practice to rinse dilute spray on to a previously sprayed part of the field without exceeding the maximum dose.
- If you do apply the spray at full rate, know the size of the last field to be sprayed and under fill the sprayer to ensure that at least a 10% dose reduction is applied to an area where you can spray out the tank rinsings. This is often the last headland, but if a high level of control is wanted here, another area can be reserved.
- If the sprayer is fitted with a low level induction hopper, as most are, ensure that this is cleaned right out with clean water and a tank cleaning additive where specified, using the washing lance or other device.
- Washing out the spray tank must start with completely emptying the sprayer, as one is diluting any residues remaining.

### Rinse sprayer in the field

- Tank rinsing can be carried out in the field. Sprayers with clean water rinse tanks and internal rinse nozzles make this process easy.
- Completely empty the sprayer so that air is coming out of the nozzles.
- Tank cleaning additives help with this and are essential when using sulfonyl-urea based products.
- In all cases triple rinsing and a standing recirculation period used before the washings are sprayed out.
- Dividing the contents of clean water into 3 equal small rinses cleans the sprayer 4 times more effectively than one big rinse.
- If rinse tanks are not fitted, they can often be retrofitted at a reasonable cost, sometimes as a front mounted tank. Otherwise a small towed bowser of water taken out with the last load solves a disposal problem back at the yard.

### Cleaning booms, nozzles and filters

- Triple rinsing does much to clean out the nozzle bodies, but they should all be thoroughly cleaned when changing products especially when moving onto a different crop.
- If the sprayer does not have a re-circulating boom, then the boom end caps should be removed to clean chemical residues from this dead space.

### Washing down the sprayer

- Washing the outside of the sprayer is good practice. Many sprayers now come fitted with a washing lance, using clean water from the rinsing tank to clean the sprayer in the field.
- Washing a sprayer in the field has been shown to have no greater concentration of spray product than the spraying process itself.
- To ensure minimal environmental impact, do not carry out operation where the soil is compacted and ensure you are at least 10m from a watercourse. Also ensure there are no deep soil cracks and the sprayer is not stood over a known tile or field drain.
- Alternatively, a wash down area can be designated on an Environmental Agency approved area with ground water permit.
- On a concrete yard, washings should be collected in a central drainage tank and disposed of safely by an authorised disposal company.
- Another option is to use a Biobed – a lined pit with high humus filling and two wheeling tracks for the sprayer. Washing down is carried out over the bed and bioactivity in the humus inactivates and makes safe the pesticide residues.
- Information on building a Biobed – [www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk](http://www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk)


Visit [www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk](http://www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk) for more details.
**CEREALS 2010**

Leading lager brand, Carling, announced their Red Tractor certification at Cereals Event 2010.

Jerry Dyson, Carling’s Sourcing Manager said: “We’re really pleased to be able to tell our customers that 100% of our barley has met the high quality standards set by Red Tractor throughout its production, from grain to glass.”

Red Tractor also wishes to thank all members who took the time out at Cereals to come along and visit the Red Tractor Crops and Sugar Beet stand, which was part of the HGCA display area. A number of useful comments were received about the new harmonised standards and these have been taken up by the Red Tractor Cereals and Sugar Beet Board.

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**SLUG PELLET APPLICATION**

Best practice recommendations for Red Tractor Farm Assurance Producers

The following recommendations are for slug pellets based on metaldehyde. However, the generic best practice guidance within these recommendations is also appropriate to follow when using any slug pellet so as to minimise off target impact.

1. Use minimum amount of active substance per hectare to avoid drainage and run-off losses.
2. No metaldehyde based pellets to be applied within 6 metres of a watercourse or ditch.
3. Specifically for metaldehyde – based products, use an application rate of no more than 210 grams of active ingredient per hectare. For the additional protection of water, your advisor may recommend rates reduced to 160 grams or less.
4. Maximum metaldehyde total dose to a crop from 1st August to 31st December is no more than 210 grams of active ingredient per hectare. For the additional protection of water, your advisor may recommend rates reduced to 160 grams or less.
5. Maximum total dose rate is 700 grams metaldehyde active substance per calendar year.
6. Do not apply when heavy rain is forecast.
7. If drains are flowing, do not apply metaldehyde based slug pellets.

More detailed information on actions to be taken in various scenarios that may arise when using slug pellets is available on the website [www.redtractorassurance.org.uk](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Guide to Rectification</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC.9</td>
<td>Pesticide spraying equipment must be checked regularly to ensure accurate and efficient application of pesticides.</td>
<td>Ensure that documentation confirming certification by manufacturer or valid pass certificate is available at inspection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC.2.4</td>
<td>It is recommended that the store, including any doors but not the roof, must be made of materials which will resist fire for 30 minutes or longer. In addition, it is recommended that the store is away from areas that present a risk of fire and at least four metres from other flammable materials or sources of ignition.</td>
<td>Investigate other potential storage options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC.3.4</td>
<td>It is recommended that general hazard warning signs are displayed where over 25 tonnes of fertiliser containing more than 27% nitrogen are stored. Members should be aware of and comply with the Dangerous Substances (Notification and Marking of Sites) Regulations 1990.</td>
<td>Further advice is available from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NACTSO): <a href="http://www.secureyourfertiliser.gov.uk/">www.secureyourfertiliser.gov.uk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP.1</td>
<td>Producers must have available a copy of the documents and codes of practice as indicated.</td>
<td>A full list is provided in the scheme manual, Appendix DP.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC.9.2</td>
<td>Where members use the services of a third party such as a spray contractor, it is the member’s responsibility to obtain a copy of the relevant NSTS Certificate for the active sprayer used.</td>
<td>Ensure that a copy of the contractor certificate is available at inspection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC.10</td>
<td>Fertilisers, manures and composts must be applied to land in ways which prevent pollution, contamination and spread of disease.</td>
<td>Further information and templates are provided in the scheme manual, Appendices EC.10 and EC.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC.10.3</td>
<td>It is recommended that a cropping/nutrient management plan is developed based on risk and soil analysis, together with the timing, frequency and quantity of applications of nutrients to ensure that nutrient loss is minimised; fertiliser applications are optimised and soil potential is maximised.</td>
<td>Recommendations can be found on the Defra website: <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/landmanage/land-soil/nutrient/index.htm">http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/landmanage/land-soil/nutrient/index.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC.12</td>
<td>All farms using organic waste and manures must have and implement a written Manure Management Plan to prevent pollution, contamination and spread of disease.</td>
<td>See Appendix EC.12 in the scheme manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC.13</td>
<td>All wastes, including surplus pesticides, other chemicals and empty containers must be disposed of in accordance with legislation and relevant codes of practice to prevent risks of contamination and pollution.</td>
<td>See Appendix EC.13 in the scheme manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM1.1</td>
<td>It is recommended that producers know the classification of soils on their farms; understand their characteristics and production potential and that producers have a written policy on the conservation of soil organic matter. It is also recommended that production practices are adjusted to maintain soil structure and control erosion. This can be demonstrated by a written Soil Management Plan which includes reference to conservation.</td>
<td>A soil management plan can be downloaded from: <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/landmanage/cogap/index.htm">http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/landmanage/cogap/index.htm</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NEW ASSURANCE WEBSITE**

Red Tractor is to launch a new assurance website following the harmonisation of the six sector farm schemes in April. The new site, which will be launched in December, includes areas for each sector scheme, with all the relevant information and services as before but in a more consistent and easy-to-use way.

[www.redtractorassurance.org.uk](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk) is the new site, and is split into four areas:

- **Pre-Farm** – Animal feed and schemes, such as Safe Haven for seed potatoes and plant propagators.
- **Farm** – The six Red Tractor Farm Assurance Schemes; Beef and Lamb, Dairy, Pigs, Poultry, Crops and Sugar Beet and Produce.
- **Post-Farm** – Schemes for livestock transport, market and collection centres, abattoirs, cutting and packing plants, poultry catching, transport and slaughter and cold crush oilseeds.

**Checkers and Services** – Assurance checking for industry buyers, self assessment and post-audit questionnaires for members.

The site now complements the existing redtractor.org.uk site, which provides information on the Red Tractor Logo for consumers, press and users of the logo.

Visitors to the old websites will now automatically be diverted to redtractorassurance.org.uk and existing checker users will be sent further details by email. More information about the member services will be provided in the next newsletter.

![New Assurance Website](image_url)
RED TRACTOR WEEK IS A ROARING SUCCESS

Red Tractor celebrated its 10th anniversary this year with Red Tractor Week – a seven day campaign that ran from the 14th to 20th June nationwide.

The campaign, fronted by Red Tractor ambassador, Janet Street-Porter, was a roaring success generating significant media and consumer interest, as well as support from the new government.

Red Tractor events were held across the country, with farmers and licensees celebrating with beer tasting, school visits, chef competitions, a giant straw lady and a farm visit that resulted in a real life lesson in food origin for pupils, when their teacher helped deliver a calf.

David Gregory, AFS Chairman, commented: “We are delighted with the success of Red Tractor Week, which provided a great platform for us to raise the profile of the Red Tractor mark amongst the industry and consumers.”

RED TRACTOR REACHES RECOGNITION OF 57%

This years report by consumer research experts, Corporate Edge, found that Red Tractor is becoming increasingly meaningful to consumers, and that the mark is now recognised by 57% of consumers.

The increased recognition follows a surge in uptake from the food service industry, as well as strong commitments on British sourcing by supermarkets such as Morrisons.

“The next part of the journey is ‘understanding’,” said Chairman, David Gregory. “We need to get people to understand the simple message that if they buy these products it means they are independently audited throughout the whole chain and farmed and packed in the UK.”

“THE RED TRACTOR MARK IS NOW RECOGNISED BY 57% OF CONSUMERS”

USEFUL CONTACTS

For any queries relating to Crops and Sugar beet assurance contact:
Red Tractor Farm Assurance
Crops and Sugarbeet Scheme
Unit 4B, Highway Farm, Horsley Road,
Downside, Cobham, Surrey KT11 3JZ
Tel 01932 589 800
Fax 01932 589 800
Email info@assuredcrops.co.uk
Web www.redtractorassurance.org.uk

For all other Red Tractor Scheme queries contact:
Assured Food Standards [AFS]
4th Floor, Kings Building
16 Smith Square,London SW1P 3JJ
Tel 020 7630 3320
Fax 020 7630 3321
Email enquiries@redtractor.org.uk
Web www.redtractor.org.uk
www.myredtractor.co.uk

IN BRIEF...

MORRISONS BACKS 100% ASSURED BRITISH FOOD
Morrisons became the first major supermarket to be awarded Red Tractor certification across its entire fresh meat range, reaffirming its commitment to British farming.

Morrisons Group Trading director, Martyn James said: “Being awarded the Red Tractor demonstrates our commitment to ensuring our customers can have complete confidence in the way our meat has been produced.”

RED TRACTOR RETURNS TO THE BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW
Red Tractor returned to the BBC Good Food Show, this November, together with the NFU, AHDB and ABN. The theme of the stall was ‘A Good Food Story’, which emphasised the values behind Red Tractor.

RED TRACTOR GAINS SUPPORT FROM THE CREAM OF THE CROP
Carling, the UK’s number one lager, announced its Red Tractor certification at the Cereals Event this year, in Royston and will carry the logo on all packaging by the end of the year.

New licensees also include Cornish favourite Rodda’s clotted cream; Sunblest who’ve produced Red Tractor’s first certified bread; and leading contract caterers, Compass Group.