LESS INSPECTIONS FOR RED TRACTOR FARMERS

Red Tractor Assurance welcomes Defra’s Task Force recommendations to reduce government inspections for assured farmers.

Over the past two decades, the UK food and farming industry has developed robust private sector assurance schemes. Now Defra’s Task Force has recognised that membership of an assurance scheme indicates that the business has a good level of competence and understanding of regulations.

David Clarke, CEO of Red Tractor Assurance commented; “It makes sense for the Task Force to recommend that assured farms should be considered lower priority for routine regulatory inspections. Through membership of the Red Tractor Assurance schemes our farmers have ‘earned recognition’ of their high standards and it should not be necessary for government bodies to routinely re-inspect the same points”.

“This is very good news for assured farmers and growers. Their investment in farm assurance should bring the added benefit of fewer government inspections.

Red Tractor Assurance has been operating ‘earned recognition’ arrangements since 2007 with Trading Standards Inspectors with regard to food hygiene regulations, and since April 2010 with the Environment Agency and IPPC. These arrangements have reduced inspection burdens on producers and resulted in more efficient use of public funds with no compromise in levels of protection.

More information and a link to the report can be found at our special webpage www.redtractorassurance.org.uk/earnedrecognition

NEW MEMBER LOGOS

Last year saw the alignment of all six Red Tractor Farm Assurance Schemes and the introduction of interim logos. These included the old scheme logos (ABM, ACCS, ADF, ABP, ACP & APS) beside a uniform Red Tractor Farm Assurance logo which helped to explain the former schemes’ relationships with Red Tractor.

Red Tractor Assurance has now developed new member logos which will help individuals communicate how they are involved in the scheme.

RTA encourages its farmer members to utilise the new member logos to promote their role within the scheme [e.g. on stationary, invoices, websites or farm gate signs]. Any new materials should use the new artwork. For an electronic version of the members’ logo or more details on the RTA Poultry Scheme please contact poultry@redtractorassurance.org.uk or call 01932 589800.

This rebranding ONLY affects the Red Tractor Assurance Schemes & Supply Chain members - there is NO change & this does NOT affect the Red Tractor Logo on pack or in consumer communications.

Producer members are reminded that the stand alone Red Tractor logo is only for use on food products, and then only with a licence to do so.

Above: New member logo for member use.
THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY IPPC PIG AND POULTRY ASSURANCE SCHEME – UPDATE

In the first year of the scheme the Environment Agency invited 582 farms out of the 1016 permitted sites to join. 443 farms accepted the invitation - 85% of scheme farms were poultry and 15% pigs.

Each farm received one visit from their chosen Certification Body (CB) and one visit from their local Environment Officer (EO).

120 farms were found to have no non-conformances (NC); 75 had one NC; 55 had two NCs. The average number of NCs on a scheme farm was 1.5. Most non-conformances were relatively minor, e.g. identification of all emission points on the permit, failure to display the permit, minor inaccuracies in the site plan. Others were potentially more serious, such as failure to provide bunds.

The Environment Agency has carried out shadowed inspections of most of the CB auditors. It has been satisfied that the auditors are carrying out the inspections accurately and are assessing the module standards to its requirements. This arrangement has enabled EOs to focus a higher proportion of their time dealing with the remaining, more demanding farms. Overall, the first year of the scheme has been a success, giving farmers a choice and allowing the Environment Agency to concentrate on the higher risk farms.

Out of the 433 farms that were invited to renew their membership for year 2 of the scheme, 426 have re-joined. An additional 405 farms were invited to join the scheme for the first time in year 2, 307 of these have accepted.

In total 733 farms will be in year 2 of the scheme - 84% are poultry; 16% pigs. There are an additional 290 farms in the second year of the scheme compared to the first year.

REVISED STANDARDS – OCTOBER 2011

Following a review of the Red Tractor Assurance (RTA) for farms standards there will be a few revisions introduced from 1st October 2011. All members will be sent a copy of the changes by their certification body in the summer. The main changes that will affect the RTA Poultry standards are summarised below.

AH.5.4 Flock records
This standard will be amended to refer to “Cumulative daily mortality rate”. It is now a legal requirement that this relevant food safety information is recorded for birds stocked above 33kg/m² and so the standard has been revised accordingly.

AM.9.11 Cleaning & Disinfection Point
As advised in the last newsletter the recommendation introduced on 1st April regarding a clearly defined cleaning and disinfection point will be upgrade to a full standard. Producers will have to provide effective power wash and disinfection facilities for vehicles and equipment leaving the farm as well as boot cleaning and disinfection facilities for personnel. This will help to enhance biosecurity and prevent the spread of disease and contamination.

HF.6.3 Planned Stocking Regimes
Details of the verification process for stocking regimes will be highlighted in the guidance accompanying the standard so that producers can ensure that their assessment of planned stocking density is aligned to that of the scheme.

EC.10 Recycled materials
Farmers and growers have always recycled material such as farmyard manure to the land and nowadays a wide range of recycled materials originating outside of the farm can have similar benefits. At the same time they must be used carefully to avoid contamination. For many years assurance standards have included controls on the use of sewage sludge included in the ‘sludge matrix’. From 2010 we included reference to composted materials and this will now be expanded further.

In effect the standard provides a reminder of the legal position. Recycled materials can only be applied to land if they provide an agricultural benefit and have been properly permitted by the Environment Agency, NIEA, or SEPA according to region. In addition national specifications PAS100 for compost and PAS110 for anaerobic digestion provide further safeguards and the revised EC.10 recommends that you look for certification to the PAS before taking in these materials from recycling companies.

For livestock producers EC.10 also flags up the statutory grazing intervals that apply after certain products have been applied. And for fruit and vegetable growers there is a reminder that the possible risks from recycled materials must be built into the risk assessments required in other assurance standards.
The new Red Tractor Assurance (RTA) website; www.redtractorassurance.org.uk, brings together all six RTA sectors to one domain. The new site, launched at the NFU Conference, is designed to make it easier and more consistent for RTA scheme members to access important information and new features that RTA provides are explained below. Some are new and exclusive to members and will help them through the assurance process.

GETTING AROUND THE SITE

To make information more accessible, visitors to the homepage will notice the website is split into four sections along the top right hand side; Farm, Pre-Farm, Post-Farm (scheme areas) and Checkers and Services. Quick links to sector scheme areas are also available along the left hand side on the home page. The layout and information available within each scheme area is the same so visitors can easily find what they need.

As part of RTA’s harmonisation project all the elements of the RTA chain now share a clear single branding to offer more clarity and consistency to the whole assurance chain (see branding article on front page).

USEFUL INFORMATION

The new website has lots of useful information within each scheme including:

- ‘latest news’ section with all the latest activity in assurance (sector specific news and links to wider marketing of the Red Tractor logo);
- ‘about the scheme’ areas with details of boards, technical committees and certification bodies;
- ‘request a pack’ forms making it easier to request application packs from licenced certification bodies (not applicable for dairy).

HELPING MEMBERS THROUGH THE ASSURANCE PROCESS

Each RTA sector is represented on the website with business specific libraries that contain useful tools to help members keep-up-to date with their assurance.

Under the heading ‘Scheme Documents’ all RTA materials are now available to download electronically. Here members can find the latest Standards, record templates, copies of all required publications (e.g. Codes of Practice) and other recommended documents.

All documents come with added information and external links to help members understand legislative requirements, including appendices full of relevant information to help guide members through the assurance process.

Members can demonstrate compliance with requirements to have certain documents and copies of the standards if they have access to electronic versions, also helping to cut down on wasted paper.
The Red Tractor Assurance (RTA) website; www.redtractorassurance.org.uk is now up and running and brings together all six RTA sectors to one domain. The new site, launched at the NFU Conference in February, is designed to make it easier and more consistent for RTA scheme members to access important information and new features that can help them manage their assurance. The information and services available to members and will help them through the assurance process.

**INDUSTRY CHECKER SERVICES**

Demand for Red Tractor assured produce continues to attract the support from all major retailers, brands, processors and packers. The checker services available on the website allow buyers to check farm members’ assurance status at the click of a button. This is also useful for other Red Tractor members who need to check the assurance status of other farmers before buying livestock or products from them.

The new service saw over 400 industry users on its first day and now has over 1,100 signed up across all sectors.

**FARM MEMBER SERVICES**

For each sector scheme there is now a dedicated members’ area where the following services are available:

- Online self assessment system to help members prepare for their audits (see guide below);
- Post assessment questionnaire – to send us feedback on recent visits
- Checker report – members can see their certification details as displayed to checker users;
- Contact Certification Bodies – to update changes to membership details

Members need to apply for access to these services via the Checkers and Services home page and confirming their farm assurance membership information. A username and password will be issued. To then get access to other sector services or the checker services members can expand their registration by clicking on the relevant ‘Apply for additional services’ button.

**GUIDE TO ON-LINE SELF ASSESSMENT**

- Registered farm members can access the on-line self assessment system enabling them to go through the standards before the assessment and address any issues or prepare questions for the assessor in advance of the visit.
- The self assessment home page provides a summary of the standard sections which when clicked on will take the user to the individual standards and details within the section.
- For each standard there are options to click it has been met, not met or is not applicable.
- Once completed, the summary page shows standards not met highlighted red and those met will be green, so members can easily identify areas they need to work on to avoid non-conformances.
- All information is saved so members do not have to do it all at once and can go back into the system to update at any time.
- The results of the audit are not scored and do not form any part of the certification.
INTEGRATING ANITA

Red Tractor Assurance (RTA) has appointed Anita Roberts as Head of Assurance for Red Tractor.

Filling a new role, Anita will work with our RTA Scheme Managers and Marketing Department to head up and manage the technical activity associated with all RTA schemes and Red Tractor Licensing & Traceability systems.

Since joining in October, Anita has looked into how Red Tractor currently works with the Certification Bodies (CB’s) who carry out assessments and spent considerable time appraising current Licensing procedures for Processors, Packer and Food Service companies and their traceability auditing processes.

Anita said “As the new Head of Assurance, I’m looking to see whether improvements can be made to the efficiency and consistency of farm assessments through the cooperation with all CBs. At other stages of the assurance chain I’ve been working with our licensees to ensure that we get maximum use of the Red Tractor logo, ensuring all our systems are robust and do not compromise the integrity of the logo.”

Anita joined Red Tractor from Tesco where she was Head of Supply Chain Technology. She has extensive experience in the strategic formulation and implementation of strategy, policy and procedures for the management of reputational risks across the international and UK food and non-food industries.

In addition, Anita has a Food Science & Technology degree, is a Fellow of the Institute of Food Science & Technology and has previous experience of working with Superdrug, Nurdin & Peacock and Wm Morrisons.

UPDATE ON THE VETERINARY MEDICINES REGULATIONS

The revoking and remaking of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2009 (VMR 2009, SI 2297) is undergoing scrutiny as part of the government initiative for better regulation. It is expected that the updated legislation will come into force in October 2011. Meanwhile the VMR 2009 is still in force.

REDA TRACTOR POUlTRY FARMERS STAR IN ONLINE VIDEOS

The NFU and ASDA have both launched separate videos online to promote the high standards that their committed Red Tractor Poultry farmers work to all year round to deliver quality chicken to the public.

The NFU’s latest video addition to their Love Chicken campaign site features David Speller talking about the 180,000 birds he rears to Red Tractor Standards on his farm in Derbyshire.

In the short film he says: ‘We all know as livestock farmers producing animals for meat that ultimately that animal will be consumed. But that doesn’t mean the bird doesn’t deserve to have a nice life and therefore my responsibility is to give them the best I can for the time that they are here.’

Leading supermarket ASDA have also produced a new Meet the Farmer video that features on their website available to view by all their customers. The video stars Red Tractor Poultry farmer, Oliver Hoddinott, who shows viewers the latest technology he uses on his farm to ensure his chickens live happy, healthy lives.

The two videos aim to educate consumers about the high standards that Red Tractor poultry farmers are dedicated to all year round.

Visit www.greatbritishchicken.co.uk and http://your.asda.com/ to watch the videos.

ABOVE: David Speller, Red Tractor Poultry farmer who featured in NFU online video.
RED TRACTOR ROLLS OUT ITS 4 WHEELS

Red Tractor is calling the nation to ‘Get behind Red Tractor’ by pledging their support to its 4 wheel manifesto and signing its tractor wheel, as part of the latest initiative to increase engagement and understanding of the values behind the mark.

The 4 wheel manifesto represents why it’s worth getting behind Red Tractor, to support good farming practices, safe quality food, traceability and a guarantee of food origin.

The ‘Get behind Red Tractor’ campaign will be backed up throughout the year through a digital campaign and tailored events that will take place across the country featuring a 5ft tractor wheel for supporters to sign.

Right: David Clarke, CEO of Red Tractor Assurance and Adam Henson get behind the new campaign at Pig and Poultry Live. Below: Lord Speaker, Baroness Haymen kicked off Red Tractor’s latest campaign.

To launch the campaign, Red Tractor used Westminster Youth Fete as the platform to get young people engaged as well as signing up politicians and other key stakeholders. Red Tractor also had a presence at Pig & Poultry Live that helped to attract support from many of the industry’s leading figures.

Show your involvement and support by signing the wheel online and be in with the chance of winning £50 worth of grocery shopping. Visit www.redtractor.org.uk

YOUNG PEOPLE SEE VALUE IN RED TRACTOR VALUES

Almost one in three 18-24 year olds (31%) say the Red Tractor logo placed on pack is an important factor when choosing which foods they buy, according to a new survey by YouGov.

18-24 year olds are also significantly more likely to recognise the Red Tractor logo than the population generally, with two thirds (62%) of young people aware of the mark compared with the national average of 52%.

David Clarke, CEO Red Tractor Assurance says: “It’s exciting that the next generation is demanding clear and simple communication that they can trust to ensure their food is produced to high standards of animal welfare, safety, quality and origin.”

USEFUL CONTACTS

For any queries relating to Poultry assurance contact:
Red Tractor Assurance (RTA) Poultry Scheme
Unit 4B, Highway Farm, Horsley Road, Downside, Cobham, Surrey KT11 3JZ
Tel 01932 589 800
Fax 01932 589 800
Email poultry@redtractorassurance.org.uk
Web www.redtractorassurance.org.uk/poultry

For all other Red Tractor queries contact:
Red Tractor Assurance (RTA)
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
Twitter @RedTractorFood

IN BRIEF...

OPEN FARM SUNDAY
Red Tractor, is taking ‘Get behind Red Tractor’ and the campaign tractor wheel to an Open Farm Sunday on 12 June 2011.

The annual event, organised by LEAF, gives the public the chance to meet Red Tractor farmers and learn more about where their food comes from.

KFC SET TO GAIN RED TRACTOR STATUS
KFC is set to become the first convenience food chain to be certified by Red Tractor Assurance.

KFC sources all its chicken-on-the-bone products from Red Tractor certified suppliers, Director Chris Fells said the logo would be “a great way” to communicate KFC’s commitment to quality and provenance.

FOLLOW RED TRACTOR ONLINE
Supporters can now keep up-to-date with all the latest news, discussions, videos and pictures by following Red Tractor on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

Visit the main Red Tractor website for links to our social media pages at redtractor.org.uk

Red Tractor Assurance for Farms – Poultry Scheme

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